



# Equitable and Inclusive Education- Inclusivity and National Education Policy: A Glittering Hope

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## Abstract

The intersection of education policy and inclusivity is a critical aspect of shaping a nation's future. The National Education Policy (NEP) plays a pivotal role in guiding a country's educational efforts, emphasizing the development of skills, knowledge, and values for personal growth and societal progress. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of inclusivity within education policy. This abstract delves into how NEP can serve as a beacon of hope, promoting inclusivity in various dimensions. It explores NEP's potential to create an educational environment that breaks down barriers related to socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, language, and abilities. The abstract discusses NEP's role in encouraging inclusive curriculum development, teacher training, infrastructure, and assessment methods. It also looks at real-world examples where inclusive education policies have led to positive outcomes while addressing challenges like resistance to change and resource limitations. Ultimately, the abstract emphasizes the broader significance of fostering diverse, respectful, and accepting learning environments. It underscores the profound impact an inclusive education policy can have on future generations, contributing to a more harmonious and equitable society.

**Keywords:** *National Education Policy, Inclusivity, Education Reform, Equity, Curriculum Development.*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In India, a varied and heterogeneous country, social group isolation is a natural result, but with the active support of the state. The importance of education as a tool for social transformation and the advancement of humanity as a whole call for particular policies and attention advocating for inclusive education to improve and accommodate future citizens, as Sonia Sotomayor noted in her statement "Until we get, we won't have an equitable society until there is educational equality. Inclusive education is

more common in India. This is crucial given that the education system stinks of being only available to those in upper social classes since the dawn of time. The 86th Amendment did not become effective until 2002. The right to education was only recognized as a basic right under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution in 2002, with the 86th amendment.

The Right to Education Act of 2009 was also introduced to help impoverished students. The Act was a one-of-a-kind initiative to provide subaltern youngsters a new start in life. Though the state is

required to ensure the same, the act's implementation has proven difficult. Unfortunately, our education system reinforces class divisions due to the disparities in educational standards between private and public institutions. As a result, the state must adopt certain additional steps that can favourably discriminate against others while still providing an inclusive classroom education that can represent the variety inside the Indian state.

The Indian state aims for social, economic, and political justice, as stated in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. With the goal of promoting social fairness and a sense of justice, the state is compelled to enact discriminatory regulations. The 'unequal' class in India is the result of centuries of systemic oppression. Thus, the notion of reserve arose in order to elevate the marginalized and bring them into the mainstream. The reserve was established to allow these people to grow and contribute to the nation.

The reserve is also extended to public educational institutions. Reservation in educational institutions dates back to 1882 when Jyoti Rao Phule proposed proportional representation as well as free and required education before the Hunter Commission was formed. The Indian reservation policy is unique in that it retains caste at the center, which is why the non-reserved portion criticizes it as contradictory to institutional efficiency and merit-based rewards. Since its beginning, the reservation has been restricted to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), although it was later expanded to Other Backward Classes (OBC) in 1993. For the first time, the OBC reservation has advocated for a restriction based on total family income.

Later, in 1992, the same approach was used to provide EBCs with reservation within upper castes, but the SC ruled that this was ultra vires in the case of *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*, making the 50% cap a general rule while allowing some latitude for "extraordinary situations." In the current period, poverty has replaced social illiteracy as the biggest handicap. Even the most recent National Education Policy acknowledges that having a certain level of money is a requirement for admittance since top-tier government schools charge expensive fees for such services.

The establishment of the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservation to excluded socioeconomic categories is well explained by this. There is no greater inequity than the equal treatment of unequal, according to American jurist Felix Frankfurter, therefore this is like giving that statement physical form. Although the EWS Reservation marks a significant change in the doctrine of Indian reservations from providing appropriate representation for underprivileged sections to allowing

for economic underachievement. This time, the EWS reservation has been protected since, unlike in 1992, Article 15(6) now makes material circumstances a need for special treatment. Recent comments on the stated criteria for receiving EWS benefits have brought to light major issues due to the criterion's broad scope, which includes, in some cases. Like other social welfare schemes, the reservation policy is also prone to error of inclusion rather than addressing exclusion. So, prima facie it looks like the government is playing to the gallery. This matter is sub judice and depends on the judicial interpretation of the 'extraordinary situations' standard.

## 2. AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS AND NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

India's educational policy is governed under the National Education Policy 2020 framework. The first NEP was enacted in 1968, and the NEP later took place in 1986. The present NEP is the result of a consultation and writing process that lasted about half a decade, headed by the Kasturirangan committee. This thorough policy addresses all issues, from early childhood to higher education. Consequently, this policy is crucial for obtaining the true picture of how inclusive education is and the methods used by the government to achieve that goal. The necessity for inclusive and equitable education at all levels is covered in great detail throughout the policy. It drew attention to a number of groups, referring to them as Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Groups (SDGs), and acknowledged the significance of their plight, of positive behaviour. Although the policy devotes several paragraphs to recognizing the relevance of inclusive education, it doesn't provide any solutions for improving the current system, a system that is more egalitarian and inclusive. The policy simply makes no recommendations or establishes policies that can help governments or educational institutions become a tool for accomplishing these objectives.

The policy has also recommended several changes to the educational system that risk alienating these SEDGs even more. The establishment of a 4-year graduate program is one of the much-lauded aspects of this approach. Despite allowing many exit choices, the policy says nothing about providing these kids with financial aid. Additionally, the rule increases the emphasis on degree certificates in education rather than on comprehensive learning growth and independent knowledge. The degree certificates-only function programs appear to be doing little more than securing work. Furthermore, the policy's emphasis on distance learning programs and vocational education would cause Financially disadvantaged students are gravitate towards these courses when the policy does

not offer about how to equalize vocational training with academic education.

Second, the policy has made it possible to regulate higher education institutions through Public Philanthropic Partnerships. Once more, this is unstructured and might cause kids to become estranged from disadvantaged groups in society as Only the public sector is able to make reservations. The new regulation makes room for the establishment of campuses by international colleges in India, which may potentially negatively impact India's quality of instruction, since they would undoubtedly be eager to offer more incentives to public university teachers, with the intention of eventually extorting the same college students there. Higher education at affordable costs is a significant problem that is unaffected by current policy.

The policy looks to be a collection of empty pledges with no attention paid to its grassroots implementation. The problem with Indian policies is that they appear to be nice and promising on paper, but they are never actually put into practice. Therefore, the government should concentrate on implementing current laws rather than making new promises. Alan Branche emphasized the same point and stated that "Strategy Executives are made or broken by their ability to execute. The significance of the suicide of a Lady Shree Ram undergraduate is evidence of execution. Due to the college's poor scholarship-granting practices, which were made worse by the Education is becoming more digitalized in the aftermath of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The policy at the school level recommends using the local language as a medium in elementary and, if feasible, till secondary education. Although it was promised back in 1968, several governments have not yet carried it through. NEP 2020 has also been refined but has not paid attention to the fact that most countries lack language teachers a school. A similar outcome occurs in the three-language strategy, which means only in states where Hindi is spoken, Sanskrit, English, and regional languages are also used in other states' Hindi.

Therefore, pupils, especially those attending publicly funded schools or low-cost private institutions, have no real options. This widens the gap between the two classes even further. Any social educational institution must be "broadly accessible," "socially useful," and "organizationally flexible," according to the Bologna Declaration of 1999. However, the existing capability of educational institutions to accept students does not match the rising It is challenging because of the number of students, which directly affects the entrance requirements. for 'merit-wise inappropriate' pupils to receive a top-notch

higher education. Any cannot exist justification for the State's failure to provide adequate education to all students, including those who are failing to score a desirable result. Additionally, because Reservation is only available at state-run schools, they tend to attract more members of the reserved class, which puts them in an iron cage, as Max Weber described it.

The Indian school system requires additional proper affirmative action measures outside of the reserve. Due to their lack of expertise in extracurricular activities, SEDG students were exposed to risk in prestigious universities where the privileged were concentrated. students. The policy disregards the requirement for further assistance to overcome the class and cultural differences the pupils were facing. even the victors' reservations found themselves unfamiliar with the competing setting of these facilities has also resulted in mental health problems. and suicide. It should have been obvious that formal and informal systems needed to be integrated. so that any learner may flip between them whenever they want to.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

*"There is in our time no well-educated literate population that is poor; there is no illiterate population that is other than poor." - John Kenneth Galbraith*

These well-known quotes make one consider the value of education in one's life. For the economically disadvantaged groups, it functions as an emancipation wheel. This adequately demonstrates the necessity for comprehensive education in a nation like India where life is challenging even for those with education. The primary goal of the strategy should be to take action to reduce the structural hostility aimed against teachers so that marginalized kids may experience education, the creation of accommodating classrooms, and the implementation of creative educational teaching. Only then can the vision of an inclusive and fair education become a reality. Not The duty to educate children does not just fall on the state but also on parents.

The government can support and build distinct training facilities for vocational education that come with a job guarantee, as is the case in Germany. The main objective must be to open up markets for the trainees' products.

Any pupil should not be evaluated entirely based on their socioeconomic situation. Minimizing social exclusion in a period of privatization will be challenging, but one strategy for doing so is to introduce reservations in the private sector. forcefully. The variable nature of the current reservation policy is one of the biggest obstacles. A more inclusive definition of the "Economically Weaker Section" that takes into

account politicians' allure of power. As the saying goes, "little drops of water make a mighty ocean," it is advised to modify the policy in accordance with the demand and not arbitrarily in one go. An ocean cannot exist without small droplets. Hence, minor adjustments frequently may be more beneficial than a drastic change in lifestyle. Overall, it may be remarked that while the policy first appears to be a dream come true, implementing it would be a tremendous task. challenge for the executive to implement and update a system that had not been changed since 1992, and one may always be hopeful to witness developments in the near future.

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