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# **NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL AND LEGAL IMPORTANCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

India has created NEP 2020, its first educational strategy for the twenty-first century, with sensible academic goals. In one approach, NEP 2020 aims to improve the educational system; in another, it seeks to advance national growth while upholding constitutional requirements. Fundamental literacy and numeracy (FLN) are a challenge for NEP 2020. To meet SDG4's global objective of guaranteeing comprehensive education and encouraging opportunities for lifelong learning, an educational goal must be achieved by 2030. This paper aim is to evaluate how the educational system has changed in light of its intellectual and philosophical ties to ancient, pre-British, and independent India.

The paper's primary objective is to note the aims of the policy education of India from ancient times to contemporary situation and also to explore in field of education from the time of the Vedas and Upanishads till its implications on Sustainable development Goals (Padhega Indian tabhi Aage badhega India). We will also see how Western and India Philosophy played a crucial role in making the New Education Policy, how several thinkers' exemplary knowledge was incorporated and reflected in the policy, and, finally, a comparative analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

*“Virtuous deeds remove the veil from knowledge, and knowledge alone can make us see God.” “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man. Therefore, the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way”<sup>1</sup>.*

As the above quote talks about the importance of the Teacher (Guru), who plays a crucial role in manifesting the young minds and youth of the country, it stands essential for us to understand the essence of education for both our mental and physical peace and we must have a goal to achieve or the means there should be an end. So, for that, we need a relevant policy that promotes effective learning and the learning that practical effects and not just so-called rote Learning as it will never reflect in the human character or behaviour. Hence, we have National Education Policy in place for the same. Swami Vivekananda placed a strong emphasis on both physical and mental development. He advised having steely nerves and iron muscles. This notion is the foundation for every government initiative, including the Fit India Movement, because iron and nerves are necessary and should be balanced somehow. Literacy and education at all levels may help achieve that balance.

One way to acquire information and skills is via education, which makes it easier to develop moral principles and socially acceptable behaviour. Education is one aspect that contributes to human growth in contemporary society, enabling social mobility and serving as a means of escaping poverty. The paper’s primary objective is to note the aims of the policy education of India from ancient times to contemporary situation and also to explore in field of education from the time of the Vedas and Upanishads till its implications on Sustainable development Goals (Padhega Indian tabhi Aage badhega India). We will also see how Western and India Philosophy played a crucial role in making the New Education Policy, how several thinkers' exemplary knowledge was incorporated and reflected in the policy, and, finally, a comparative analysis.

## BACKGROUND HISTORY

Using Indian heritage Holistic education has a long and rich history in India. In ancient India,

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<sup>1</sup> VIVEKAVANI (2020) “Education Is the Manifestation Of The Perfection Already In Man,” Available at: <https://vivekavani.com/education-manifestation-perfection-man/> (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

education was not simply about gaining information to prepare students for life and the world or after school but also about full self-realisation and emancipation. According to Swami Vivekananda, knowledge is not the quantity of knowledge fed into your brain and allowed to run uncontrolled there, undigested, for the rest of your life. We need to assimilate concepts in a way that helps people improve their character and their lives. Some of the ideas of the Vedic way of teaching and elements of Upanishads have been highlighted in the new education policy.

“Education is considered the soul in Hindu, Vedic, or Sanatana Dharma civilisation.”<sup>2</sup> The core of the educational system hasn't changed much over time, although changes are usually for the better. In the Vedic era, most Hindu education took place in the centre of a forest. The goal is for teachers and students to pay particular attention to how each person's academic background, academic career, and personality are evolving. Through prior universities in the succeeding era, the Vedic Civilization gained understanding and developed. Similarly, in the new education policy, the makers have focused on practical and field-based learning rather than learning restricted to four walls. *“In the past, there were many phases of schooling systems, starting with Brahmanic Education. Oral tradition refers to this period as education. The Sanskrit of the Vedas, which represent the earliest layers of Indian literature, are where we get our understanding of this period. The oldest of these libraries was the Rigveda”*.

“Scholars like Charaka and Susruta, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Chanakya, Patanjali and Panini, among countless more, were created by the Indian educational system”<sup>3</sup>. They contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge in various variety of domains, including astronomy, metallurgy, medicine, surgery, civil engineering, architecture, seafaring, yoga, the fine arts, chess, and more”<sup>4</sup>. According to Hu Shih, a former Chinese ambassador to the United States of America, "India vanquished and monopolised China culturally for 20 centuries without ever needing to send “a single soldier across her border," this is due to Buddhism's significant influence on the world, particularly in south-east Asia and particularly

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<sup>2</sup> *The new national education policy and Swami Vivekananda's educational ideas* (no date) Esamskriti.com. Available at: <https://www.esamskriti.com/e/National-Affairs/Ideas-ad-Policy/-The-New-National-Education-Policy-and-Swami-Vivekananda-colon-s-Educational-Ideas--1.aspx> (Accessed: February 25, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> (No date) *Researchgate.net*. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311302593\\_Indian\\_Culture\\_and\\_Indian\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311302593_Indian_Culture_and_Indian_Education) (Accessed: February 26, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> *Education* (no date). Available at: [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English.pdf) (Accessed: February 13, 2023).

in China”<sup>5</sup>. The blending of cultures from the first conquests to the advent of the British only improved education in India. Numerous of these influences have been incorporated into the nation's culture.

With many languages and dialects, up to seven different classical dance forms, two different classical music genres, numerous well-established folk art traditions, and many other culturally diverse elements, India has been. It continues to be a cradle of great diversity in all spheres of life. Through our educational system, these valuable contributions to world history must be nourished, protected for future generations, improved, and put to new uses. For instance, they can be included in a liberal arts curriculum to promote innovation and assist students in growing in their uniqueness and creativity. Remember that the wondrous things you learn in your schools are the product of many centuries, Einstein advised a gathering of young people. All of this is given to you as your heritage so that you might accept it, value it, enhance it, and eventually dutifully pass it on to your offspring. As a result, we mortals become eternal through the enduring things we produce collectively.

## **IDEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION (NEP)**

In this subtopic, I will explain that A complete ideological and philosophical approach for NEP 2020 was developed from the ideology and philosophy of all educational policies in India, from ancient to post-British.

### **Old and pre-British pedagogical ideology and philosophy**

There has been evidence of the growth of the Indian educational system, from classical to angelical literature. This academic structure dates back 5000 years. Throughout these many years, numerous educational policies were developed. Examining these educational practices reveals that the Rig-Veda and Upanishads, two religious’ texts, served as the foundation for ancient education policy. According to the Rig Veda, education cultivates selflessness and independence in people, and according to the Upanishad, education has as its goal salvation. Understanding the old era is ideal. A man should become self-sufficient, unselfish, and saved by education. However, it is regrettable because throughout this period, only the upper caste people, Brahims, specifically the Brahmin males, were taught to read and write. This claimed that the education strategy is religious and that information is intended for

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/modi-deploys-his-culture-skills-in-asia-2>

upper-class communities or elitists. During the Buddhist period, an educational policy was founded on equality and opened the doors of learning to all castes. Later, during the Mughal dynasty, the growth of Islamic education was critical. Similarly, during the British time, several missionaries travelled to India and created academic institutions intending to propagate Christianity.

### **British India's Pedagogical Ideology and Philosophy**

Over time, British Indian education policies were mainly modified to satisfy their administrative objectives,' emphasising the concept and ideology of education policy in India from the 1700s to 1947. According to the report, India's education policy reinforced pre-existing elite inclinations by connecting entry and progress in government service to academic achievement. The Charter Act of 1813 established the country's formal educational policy. Its mission is the restoration and advancement of literature, the support of knowledgeable indigenous of India, and the introduction and promotion of empirical evidence among the residents of British territory in India. Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835) presented the first schooling proclamation in India to promote western science and arts; the language of instruction would be English. In 1853, in response to the unsolved educational challenges in India and the renewal of the Charter, a commission led by Charles Wood was constituted for educational reforms in India. The 'Woods Education Despatch' of 1854 established the goal of education in India, which was to employ English and Indian languages to disseminate European knowledge and to create universities in India. Its philosophical goal is to develop excellent intellectual fitness, moral integrity, and servants. Woods' ideological role of education is to disseminate European knowledge in English and other languages.

During British India, the Hartog Committee (1928) suggested consolidation and improvements by eliminating the vast quantity of stalling and wastage. According to the research, every youngster with a four-year primary education would be forever uneducated. During the Diarchy system (1921-1937), education policy focused on the quick expansion of mass education and the passage of Compulsory Education Acts in most provinces. The Sargent Commission was established in 1944 to provide a thorough report on India's educational system.

### **Independent India and the era of NEP 1986**

India's education policy developed after freedom primarily to fulfil the requirements for

education outlined in the Indian Constitution. Given the importance of education, it is crucial to examine the Constitution's various educational provisions. Article 45, which requires "free and obligatory primary schooling for all minors" till the age of six, was among the most important.

Towards the end of your fourteenth term. "Articles 28 and 30 (Articles 28(1), 28(2), 28(3) and 30)" refer to humanist education. Regardless of their language or religion, minorities have the right to create and run educational institutions of their choosing (Articles 29 and 30). The academic interests of SEBC, SC, and STs are protected by Articles 15, 17, and 46, putting a high importance on the development of the weaker sections. In order to satisfy constitutional responsibilities and goals, successful administrations have occasionally established education boards to develop India's system of education. "The first definite commission in that field was the University Education Commission of 1948, sometimes known as the "***Radhakrishnan commission***", which broadly commented on the situation of Indian university education". By the Constitution's regulations and obligations, the committee recommends that higher education be made available to all segments of society, regardless of region, caste, or gender, and that education is used to familiarise individuals with their cultural heritage and to impart professional and vocational training. Its main proposal was that English be substituted as soon as feasible as a medium of teaching in higher education with an Indian language.

After that, in 1952, Dr A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar was appointed head of the Secondary Education Commission, which proposed the development of multifunctional high schools, technical institutions, and consistent education patterns throughout India.

## **PHILOSOPHICAL IDEOLOGIES OF DIFFERENT THINKERS**

Humans are social animals, not physiological one. The ultimate purpose of people is to live in society as responsible social human beings. As a result, education forms and moulds human behaviour and nurtures their potential. Education has been seen as the path to growth and wealth from immemorial. Many educationist ideas from both the Eastern and Western sides have explained the term 'education' by the demand of the hour. While Hindu intellectuals strive for mysticism and eternal truth, Western philosophers define meaning differs depending on the situation and comfort. Similarly, all of these intellectuals' beliefs have been included in New Education Policy 2020.

## **WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL THINKERS**

### **PLATO'S VIEWS ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

PLATO regarded education as one of life's most significant benefits. Plato believes education is for the benefit of both the person and the government. Plato believes that education should serve both the person and the community. "Nothing at all in education must be accepted that does not assist to the cultivation of virtue," he states as his guiding concept. Additionally, Plato's attitude towards learning in the "Laws" varies from his attitude towards education in the "Republic." Education in the "Laws" will be general rather than confined to the guardianship classes as it is in the "Republic" and will be mandatory. Children should go to school because their 'families want them to and because it is required. Education addresses the issue by altering undesirable behaviours and one's outlook on life. According to Barker, education is an effort to treat a mental sickness with medication. Education's objective is to bring the soul closer to the light. Plato reportedly stated that the essential aim of education, rather than teaching information, is to bring out the dormant abilities in the soul by guiding it towards the right ends. Plato's explanation of education underlines his purpose and points readers on the appropriate path for deciphering the implications of his educational philosophy.

Plato was the first ancient moral philosopher to create a university, provide a superior course of study, or even discuss education as a notion. The school system in Athens was exclusively responsible for this dedication to learning. Plato thought acquiring knowledge to be as vile as purchasing flesh and drink. Plato was a staunch supporter of a state-run educational system. He felt that a person would stagnate without understanding, much like a patient who felt like treating himself with his love cure while keeping his luxury lifestyle. As a result, Plato claimed that education influences the root of evil and changes one's entire perspective on life.

### **BENTHAM'S VIEWS ON COMMON PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Bentham's beliefs about spending on people's education were rooted in a social class prejudice mirrored in his perception of the impoverished. The impoverished were a source of concern for Bentham and other people from the middle classes. They were also a threat. The trouble was that there were too many of them, and their numbers looked to be increasing. Not only that, but they appear to have a worrying penchant for laziness, drink excessively, are vicious, and engage in illegal acts. In sum, they imposed a significant economic strain on the energetic

members of society. Bentham's reaction was different. The issues pushed him to come up with adequate and realistic answers. Education was crucial to these answers. According to Jeremy Bentham, education was the art of teaching humanity where their genuine pleasure resided and of training their mind so that they would understand the order of creation on which their joys and sufferings relied. Education would be practical, giving individuals mastery over their surroundings and, more importantly, authority over themselves.

Because education was intended to promote a person's pleasure, and because Bentham had dedicated himself to satisfaction by articulating the Principle of Utility as he did, it was an axiom that all men should be educated. What did not imply was that all men had to be educated similarly; Bentham's educational recommendations and interest in the topic were intimately tied to his desire to solve contemporary problems like destitution, crime, idleness, and political disaffection. The comprehensive educational curriculum that evolved. If education was to make all men happy, it had to include much government intervention. Its purpose was to make the underprivileged comfortable and, above all, content.

His idea of education based on utility and conscience needs to be more specific when discussing New Education Policy. Its main aim is to provide education for all and open not for maximum happiness to maximum no.

## **INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL THINKERS**

### **IDEALS OF RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY**

Satyameva Jayate is India's central philosophy. India gave birth to many heroes, teachers, and great individuals, including Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Netaji, Vidyasagar, and Ram Mohan Roy. One of those was "Raja Ram Mohan Roy". "Ram Mohan Roy" is inextricably linked to modern India. He was a notable social and religious educator and an exceptional educational thinker and reformer. "Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a brilliant scholar"<sup>6</sup>, a free thinker, and a multilingual. He thought that education was essential for the advancement of Indian civilisation. He pushed for the incorporation of Western education into the Indian educational

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<sup>6</sup> *Raja Ram Mohan Roy biography, history & facts* (2023) *StudyIQ*. Available at: <https://www.studyiq.com/articles/raja-ram-mohan-roy/> (Accessed: February 26, 2023).



system. As a result, he advocated for studying English, Science, Modern Medicine, and Technology in India. He donated his own money to the school system.

On the other hand, Ram Mohan Mohan was a staunch supporter of contemporary education, including scientific study. Raja's main goal was to better the lives of the indigenous people. As a result, he assisted the British government in promoting a more open and progressive educational system. With his innovative academic plan, he combined practical disciplines like Arithmetic, Philosophy, Chemistry, and Anatomy with other essential sciences. In addition, he learned Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic. He also learned English, Greek, and Hebrew. He published works in various languages, including Hindu, Bengali, Persian, English, and others, that he mastered over his life. He transcribed old Indian religious and philosophical texts into Bengali. As a result, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered a contemporary India's inventor. He was the bridge connecting Eastern and Western civilisations. Much of his beliefs and philosophy can be found in the draught of new education, which also encourages cyber and current learning approaches. A perfect illustration of the same can be found in a pandemic.

## **IDEAS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

Swami Vivekananda's teaching background is founded on his overall philosophical outlook. "Education is the expression of the quality is high inherent inside us," he argues. Swamiji, being a Vedantist, believes that Atman resides in everybody. Quality knowledge seeks to achieve the self, the completeness of God in man. He believes in the growth of inner powers. He thought that book study was not education. He saw education as a process of controlling the flow and manifestation of the will of bringing the flow and expression of choice under control and making them beautiful.

Swami Vivekananda's pedagogical philosophy is based on his broad philosophical worldview. "Learning is the manifestation of the good quality that is latent inside us," he claims. Swamiji, being a Vedantist, thinks that Atman is present in everyone. Excellent knowledge aspires to the self, the fullness of God in man. He believes in the development of inner abilities. He did not consider a textbook study to be education. He regarded learning as the method for controlling the flow and embodiment of the will, the flow and image of the choice under control while rendering them attractive.

Swamiji believed that learning should be tailored to the requirements of the child. "Their

requirements should be defined in terms of characteristics innate in children, not what the children's parents believe," he argues. Since India lives in her huts, he vigorously campaigned to expand universal public education. The desired socioeconomic improvements in our country are not conceivable sans universal education. He regarded education to be a fundamental human right. It is a physiological, socioeconomic and psychological requirement. He supported female education. Their elevation and welfare were part and parcel of his primary ideology. In terms of educational medium, Vivekananda firmly campaigned for the mother tongue. He desired to Indianize Indian education.

Reflection of most of his ideology we can find in NEP 2020. The "NEP" emphasises the importance of education in realising one's full human potential. But it does not imply that the 'Divinity inherent in the human being' is the capacity to be fully realised. In creating and polishing its adhyatma vidya, or science of the Self, India has provided a spiritual direction to human growth consistent with a person's dignity and boundless potentialities. According to the Upanishads, this pursuit for fulfilment would lead a person increasingly beyond one's finite and restricted bodily and sensate consciousness. This, in turn, will provide a vision of one's unlimited, universal, and fundamental spiritual aspect as the Atman, allowing one to develop a sincere love for and assist one's fellow creatures. 'The NEP promotes establishing education heavily on Indian tradition and value systems and fostering the rich legacy of Indian culture. Swami Vivekananda, who says, 'We must grow according to our nature,' is likewise of the same mind. I do not disparage other races' institutions; they benefit them but not us. We may automatically follow our particular bent, go into our grooves, with our customs and millions of years of karma behind us, and that is what we will have to do.'<sup>7</sup>

## IDEALS OF AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo's entire ideology relies on the integrated education system for well-rounded and comprehensive growth. His ideology was instilled in his famous book 'The Synthesis of Yoga,' published monthly in Arya between 1914 and 1921. It later appeared on the bookshelf in 1955. Aurobindo's other work, A System of National Education (1921), provides his philosophy and essential educational concepts. Both of his books highlighted a comprehensive and integrated approach to teaching. His reflections and comments might help to shape the

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<sup>7</sup> The new national education policy and Swami Vivekananda's educational ideas (no date) Esamskriti.com. Available at: <https://www.esamskriti.com/e/National-Affairs/Ideas-ad-Policy/-The-New-National-Education-Policy-and-Swami-Vivekananda-colon-s-Educational-Ideas--1.aspx> (Accessed: February 25, 2023).

academic structure and operational techniques. The connection of Aurobindo's education philosophy to the central concept of NEP 2020, namely interdisciplinary, comprehensive, and integrative education for all-round development.

“This concept runs throughout his national education and yogic philosophy. Several of his theories have consequences for comprehending the core of education's interdisciplinary and broad-based nature and the design of the curricular framework and its transaction, which NCERT is now processing. Sri Aurobindo asserts in *Synthesis of Yoga* (1955) that "true human existence, therefore, only begins when the intellectual mentality emerges from the material, and we begin more and more to live in mind independent of the nervous and physical obsession and, in the measure of that liberty, can accept rightly and rightly to use the life of the body".<sup>8</sup> The policy states that mother language education will be used up to the primary school level. Also, it is advised that all preschool through first-grade kids study three or more languages. The emphasis would be improving one's ability to speak and understand primary literature. According to the Draft NEP 2019, Indian dialects are the most expressive and scientifically advanced worldwide. Sri Aurobindo opposed the use of the English language in the classroom.

The "India-Centered" learning that is the primary focus of NEP 2020 may be achieved by designing pedagogical strategies that consider Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of the discipline of mind and body. To construct the architecture of a new India, his idea of purity of the body and mind has to be reintroduced. He asserted audaciously in 1921 that "we must be prepared to allow this source of disruption to continue unless we revert to our old system in some of its ideas." For this reason, he contends that the nervous system, which contributes to mental disturbance, might be the source of reality distortion. One such treatment is *Nadhi Suddhi*, which may be acquired via discipline. Aurobindo had a fantastic idea for India's educational system; it may be added. He believed every country's educational system needs to be grounded in its culture and history. His other main areas of interest were equality and social justice. He supports the "universalisation of opportunity" for everyone's success, regardless of caste, class, or colour. The decision-makers have consistently called for this specific issue in the many texts outlining education plans. Significant concepts from Sri Aurobindo's pedagogical philosophy may be found in NEP 2020.

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<sup>8</sup> Zaki, S. (2022). Relevance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education to national education policy 2020. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S3), 9601–9608. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS3.8288>

## **NEP AND ITS ALIGNMENT WITH SDGs**

Education reform is the means of achieving quality education and is the foundation for any society's progress. After thirty years, the present administration in India has unveiled the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020). The Bharatiya Janata Party's 2014 election campaign plan included NEP (BJP). This revamp of India's educational system was urgently needed to improve the country's kids' and teens' futures. The administration has launched the New Education Policy 2020 to reform the educational system and bring it into compliance with SDG Goal 4 (Education). The Policy aims to guarantee that all children get an integrated education and that no student is subjected to inequity or prejudice. NEP not only tries to provide high-quality education but also to help people enhance their talents. The principles of the Indian Constitution state clearly that everyone should have an equal chance at success and that discrimination against anyone is unacceptable. The Basic Right to Schooling is also guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. Education has been covered under the Indian Constitution's Basic Responsibilities, DPSP, and Fundamental Human rights sections.

Although Covid-19 has had a long-lasting impact on the education industry, countries are working hard to achieve the aim of universal education by the year 2030. The interconnected nature of the education sector necessitates international cooperation if the Aim is to be met. With schools and universities reopening again, the world has begun to live its daily life as it did before the Covid period. Governments are developing different policies to pick up the pace and drive aggressively towards the SDGs' objective of universal education. Also, it is necessary for all parties involved to collaborate to order to achieve the goal of 100% literacy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research paper examines educational policies' intellectual and ideological goals intellectual and ideological goals of educational policies from the ancient, pre-British, British, and independent periods. But in the archaic era, education took its cues from religious doctrine to make man self-sufficient and unselfish, with salvation as the ultimate goal. During this time, elitists and high-class society intended to get disgusting instruction. Contrarily, all castes had access to education during Buddhism since educational programmes were founded on equality. Islamic education spread later during the Mughal era, and it was crucial.

In line with this, a large number of pastors arrived in India during the British era and set up

academic institutions with the goal of promoting Christianity. During the British Period, their primary goals were to satisfy their administrative demands and aid the English judicial system in interpreting Hindu and Muslim Laws. Eventually, the goal was to promote European technology and literature. They supported English (Angelic argument) based on its ideology as a modern language, a dialect of the ruling classes, a language of commerce and trade, a language to bring about the renaissance, the eagerness of Indians to learn English rather than the greek and Latin, and on the epistemology to make native Indians good scholars in English. Its pedagogical ideology was to instil in young people a love of morality, leadership, and social order. As far as independent India's education systems are considered, they were mainly created to fulfil the constitutionally guaranteed schooling requirements. For instance, giving secular and free education required elementary education for all children until fourteen. The right of minorities to form and run educational institutions of their choosing—whether based on religion or language—helps to protect the interests of SEBCs, SCs, and STs in education. Priorities included social reform via females' education and educating children with physical disabilities. Later, the focus was on regional languages in secondary schooling, with English as the medium of instruction in schools and Hindi as the national language. And Now, come to the era where we have an Education policy promoting philosophical ideologies of education given to all.

In this research paper, I have referenced several thinkers and shared their inspiring philosophy, highlighted and incorporated in the education Policy 2020 and finally concluded with its good goal of achieving “Sustainable Development Goals”.

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