Indian Government’s National Policy on Education 1968:

Directives on Enrollment

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Abstract

The goal of the study is to determine if the issue of enrollment was addressed in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 — first policy on education legislated by the government of India after independence in 1947. The study uncovers the historical and socio-political agendas behind policy recommendations regarding Medium of Instruction, the Common School System, Gandhi’s Education Ideals, Science and Technology Education, and building the Democratic Socialist Republic of India. The study uses Discourse analysis as the method to unravel the intentions of the dictates in view of the socio-cultural constructs of the time. Postcolonial theory is used to develop an understanding of why some dictates were articulated whereas some ignored.
Introduction

India is the world’s largest democracy with a population of 1,027,015,247 according to the 2001 Indian census data. The population estimate of India in the year 2008 was 1,147,995,904 and is expected to reach 1.5 billion by the year 2030. India has a labor force of 516.4 million as estimated in 2007, out of which approximately 1 million workers are in the service and Information Technology (IT) industry. It is interesting to note that while India is being unanimously heralded as a success story for globalization and viewed as a country that has moved into the premier league of world economic growth with a GDP growth rate of 9%, 25% to 30% of the population still lives below the poverty line (Luce, 2007). This is indeed a strange dichotomy and begs to question why India’s booming economic growth does not translate to a decrease in poverty of India’s masses. The answer, perhaps, can lie in the lopsided growth trajectory. Or, perhaps, the fault lies deeper — in the way the India society and the system are structured which allows for categorical disenfranchisement of the less fortunate.

The problem of leaving behind a significant section of the society in the ravages of poverty, while a select few progress rapidly through the westernized concept of economic prosperity, is manifold. It leads not only to an ideological sense of despondency amongst citizens towards the government, which can lead to political and civil unrest, but also to lowered standard of living consequently affecting factors such as quality of life, child and infant mortality rate, health, longevity, etc. (Landes, 1998; Meier & Rauch, 2000). One of India’s many assets is its people. The adage “strength in numbers” stands true for this country, and what strengthens this country even more is the presence of individual freedom. However, the continuous presence of abject poverty has been working efficiently toward weakening this force. It is about time that every citizen is given the opportunity and the ability to reap the benefits of the economic prosperity that India is witnessing.

“Without a more meritocratic and just state, India’s economy will suffer. To thrive, India’s businesses need good infrastructure, a literate and healthy work-force, a sustainable environment, and the promise of law and order” (Luce, 2007, p.335). We have to create an environment where the citizenry is able to usher in a bigger and better economic revolution than the one we have witnessed in the past ten years. And in order
to do so, we need to create a citizenry that is educated, is well informed in the ways of the world, and has the ability to think independently and creatively. In order to draw the masses out of the shackles of poverty, we need to address the basic right, vis-à-vis, the right to a quality education.

We know that possibly a simple answer to our predicament is providing quality education to each and every child born in India irrespective of race, class, or creed (Blaug, 1967, 1973, 1976; Bishop, 1992, 1998; Psacharopoulos, 1986, 1993; Schultz, 1965, 1980, 1971). We also know that plenty of educationists since the dawn of independence have stressed the need and offered solutions to reform the education system (Kravdal, 2004; Patel, 1996; Rosemberg & Punctch, 2003; Tilak, 1988; Tilak & Varghese, 1991). However, more than 60 years after India’s independence, a third of the nation is still illiterate (Mehrotra, 2006). Where did the educationists, economists, and scholars go wrong? Why did numerous efforts at educational reform fail?

Researchers in the field of education have tried to identify the causes underlying the failure of the Indian education system. Most of the research unanimously points towards the lack of state and central (federal) initiatives being germane to the under-performing education system. Unfortunately, one is hard pressed to find a commentary that tries to explain why the Indian government has failed to provide an effective educational system for its citizens.

The current study will, therefore, attempt to unravel the reasons behind the failure of the Indian education system. In order to limit the scope we will exclusively focus on the inclusion of the clause of K-12 public school enrollment for students. The study will develop an understanding of whether or not the issue of enrollment, one of the many issues related to educational reform, was a concern when the National Policy of Education (NPE) was drafted in 1968. It is imperative, in order to develop an understanding of the current educational crisis and the reasons behind it, that a historical path to the current problems be traced. The present is, after all, never independent of the past. Therefore, the goal of this study is to gain a socio-political and historical understanding of the reasons for the enrollment dictates (if there were any) made by the very first policy on education legislated by the Indian government in 1968.
Potential Significance

Findings from this study will attempt to shed light on the reasons for policy implications. Doing so will then enable policy analysts as well as educational researchers formulate programs and initiatives that could perhaps be effective. If we develop an understanding of what circumstances (historical, social, and political) influenced certain actions of our founding fathers, we can then perhaps be at a better position to make more informed decisions regarding the steps we may, as the current citizens of India, take to reform our deficient public education system.

Research questions

In the current study, to begin examining the initiatives of the Government of India in public education, the National Policy on Education of 1968 will be analyzed to address the following research question:

- Were there policy mandates articulating k-12 public school enrollment in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968?

- What were the social, political, and cultural motivations behind the policy dictates?

To answer the second research question, secondary sources such as political and public commentary in the form of critical analysis on policy directives will be used.

Design and Methodology

Discourse Analysis: An Approach Rather than a Method

Discourse analysis was the research method used in this study. Rather than defining Discourse Analysis as a research method, it is helpful to characterize it as an approach to uncover the hidden cultural meaning and references in a written text (Frohmann, 1992). Discourses, whether oral or written, are always embedded in the cultural and the social context of the time (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990; Frohmann, 1992) and no discourse takes place without the overt influences of the historical time and place where the discourse is recorded.

Because the goal of this research was to a) identify the policy dictates regarding or related to the
issue of enrollment, and most importantly, b) unravel the historical, socio-political reasons behind the presence or absence of the policy dictates, the method or approach of Discourse Analysis was most effective. Using this approach and analyzing the data (vis-à-vis, the policy document), keeping the political and historical climate of the time in perspective made for an analysis that was rich in contextual meaning.

Deconstruction, a term coined by Jacques Derrida, forms the founding bedrock of Discourse Analysis. However, "Discourse Analysis is nothing but a deconstructive interpretation of a problem" ("Discourse Analysis," n.d.) and does not provide "a tangible answer to problems based on scientific reason" ("Discourse Analysis," n.d.). Discourse Analysis is a product of the postmodern period (Dickens & Fontana, 1994) -- a period in history quite different than other periods such as the renaissance, enlightenment, modernism, etc. The postmodern period is peculiar in the sense that it is characterized by the lack of a universal truth. In other words, the lack of a universal truth renders the time period open to varied and subjective interpretation based on its historical and political context.

Discourse Analysis then becomes even more relevant in the field of education because education, especially organized mass education, is after all a social construct; a construct of a "civilized" society, the industrialized society and most importantly, a construct of the postmodern world. Researching education is therefore not the same as researching a natural phenomenon, such as determining the growth rate of a particular species of flora in the Amazonian rain forest. Education systems were designed by societies and actors within those societies. These actors are not removed from the socio political or cultural constructs of their environment. Therefore, approaching a study in an environment rampant with layers of constructs with a scientific approach, attempting to determine the effect of one variable on another, will simply not offer a complete picture.

When using Discourse Analysis as a method to unravel hidden meanings of a text, it is largely based on a theoretical framework. Very often the theoretical premise is postmodern as well. In our research, we used postcolonial/neocolonial theory.

**Theoretical Framework**
It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2).

The quote above from Bhabha's "Location of Culture" quite neatly aggregates the predicament that we were trying to address in this study. It is commonly known and noted by various educationists that education systems are instruments through which nations forge national and social identity. If identity falls within the realm of contention in a nation, the question that one is posed with is how then does the education system get designed? In fact, if national consciousness as well as individual awareness of the self is defined by the government, and in this case, the imperialists, what happens when the imperialist leaves? How does the nation then go about re-defining/reviving the collective consciousness? The above-mentioned theoretical perspectives, defined by post-colonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak Chakraborty, were adopted in this study.

**Site Population Selection and Data-gathering methods**


**Limitations and Future Research**

The current study is limited to the National Policy on Education of 1968. Therefore the results will not be directly significant to current times but will explain post-independence conditions in the country.
Three more studies are required to complete the picture--1) A study analyzing the Education Commission Report of 1964; 2) A similar study analyzing the National Policy on Education of 1986 and the Amendment of 1992; and 3) Another similar study analyzing the National Knowledge Commission Report of 2005.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

When analyzing the data, codes were developed modeled on the Cooper and Hedges description of low-inference and high-inference coding.

"Low-inference coding consists of information that is present in the primary study that the synthesists can readily transcribe to coding sheets for future analysis. It is impossible to catalog all the variable of this sort that have been used by synthesists, but some examples are characteristics of a publication, (e.g., year, journal), type of research design, measuring instruments, subject characteristics, and the kind of setting where the study took place" (Cooper & Hedges, 1994, p. 25).

“The second of moderator coding [high-inference coding], often involving considerable inference by the coder, comes not from the primary study directly, but is rather added by the synthesist, usually in the form of ratings of study characteristics” (Cooper & Hedges, 1994, p. 25). High-inference coding entails that the researcher makes interpretations based on the low-inference codes, which are contextually embedded. Due to the nature of such contextual interpretation, validity of such inferences is often questioned as these inferences can vary from researcher to researcher (Cooper & Hedges, 1994).

Because the goal of the study was to unravel the contextual causes of the policy dictates, the process of coding the data using low-inference and high-inference codes was most appropriate. This process enabled the researcher to go beyond the written text and illustrate the context within which the text was embedded. To counter the issues of validity that high-inference codes raise, contextual interpretations was triangulated with the help of published commentaries on the contextual issues identified. In addition, because we were analyzing a policy document, an operational understanding of what policy is, was imperative. Doing so enabled the researcher to unravel what the true intentions of the policy document actually were. In other words, was the policy document simply a political statement made
by an administration in power, as doing so was probably the expected norm? Or, was the intention of the administration actually to bring about the said changes through carefully elaborated goals and implementation plans?

**Operationalizing Policy**

In order to operationalize policy, literature in the field that attempted to define policy was referenced (Ball, 1993; Colebatch, 2002; Torjman, 2005). After having reviewed the literature, we settled on using Sherri Torjman’s definition of what policy is. The definition adopted for the purpose of operationalizing policy is not confined to simply defining what education policy is; rather what is commonly understood as public policy.

Policy can be qualified according to the following characteristics

- **Substantive vs. administrative policy**—
  
  - *Substantive Policy* is “concerned with the legislation, programs and practices that govern the substantive aspects of community work. This dimension of policy includes, for example, income security, employment initiatives, child care services and social exclusion” (Torjman, 2005, p. 2).
  
  - *Administrative Policy* “focuses largely upon administrative procedures. These involve, for instance, the collection of statistical information on neighbourhoods and the evaluation of complex community programs” (p. 2).

- **Vertical vs. horizontal policy**
  
  - “Vertical policy is what we think of as the normal or traditional way in which policy decisions are made. Vertical policy is developed within a single organizational structure and generally starts with broad overarching policy, sometimes called “corporate” or “framework” policy. Such decisions are made at head offices and guide subsequent decisions throughout the organization. At the regional level we might
develop regional or “strategic” policy, which translates the national decisions to the regional level, taking into consideration the specific context. Finally, the regional policy is made specific enough to guide operational decision-making” (Smith, 2003, qtd. in Torjman 2005, p. 3).

“Horizontal policy-making, by contrast, is developed by two or more organizations, each of which has the ability or mandate to deal with only one dimension of a given situation. Horizontal or integrated policy is created between parts of an organization or among organizational components that are similar in hierarchical position” (Smith, 2003, qtd. in Torjman 2005, p. 3).

- Reactive vs. proactive policy
  - “Reactive policy emerges in response to a concern or crisis that must be addressed – health emergencies and environmental disasters are two examples” (Torjman 2005, p. 3).
  - “Proactive policies, by contrast, are introduced and pursued through deliberate choice. The national skills and learning agenda exemplifies this approach. Knowledge and learning increasingly have been recognized as vital keys that unlock the doors to both economic wealth and social well-being” (p. 3).

- Current vs. future policy
  - Current policies are those that are currently in the public agenda. An example is policies related to the financial crisis of 2008-2009.
  - Future polices are polices that are not currently in the public agenda. (Torjman, 2005)

As far as what a policy ought to be like, Torjman notes that policies need to have a very clear objective and stated goals. “Public policy seeks to achieve a desired goal that is considered to be in the
best interest of all members of society” (2005, p. 4). “[A]ny given policy represents the end result of a decision as to how best to achieve a specific objective” (p. 4); a decision made by a publicly elected or designated body which is deemed to be public interest.

**Categorizing the Policy**

The National Policy on Education of 1968 is a substantive, vertical, and reactive policy. As far as categorizing it as current or future is concerned, it is problematic to define it as either because of the historical nature of the document. Because policy-related goals in India are commonly established as five-year plans, determining whether or not the policy was current or future in nature becomes difficult. One could perhaps establish this category if political discourses recorded during policy legislation were included in this study for documentation and triangulation. However, given the scope of the current study, establishing whether the policy was current or future, was of little significance. This aspect can perhaps be further scrutinized in future studies.

What is apparent from an initial reading of the policy document is that it seems less like a policy with clear and stated goals and implementation plans and more like a political document replete in political rhetoric — a document which almost borders an effort to gratify the political beliefs of the administration in power. A policy document is supposed to have clear guidelines and measurable goals with stated timelines; the NPE of 1968 reads more like a document with suggestions and is bereft of any plans on how to achieve them.

**Low-inference Codes**

Low inference codes were generated in the first step of the coding process. Following were the low inference codes used:

- Enrollment
- Teachers
- Language of instruction
• Equal educational access
• Social cohesion
• Science education
• Research
• Uniform education across the nation
• Evaluation and implementation

Data were then coded based on the above categories, starting with identifying references made for school enrollment. Attached in the addendum are some screen shots of the coding results for some of the identified low-inference codes.

Having coded for the several low-inference codes in the NPE 1968 and identifying the policy dictates that were made, the findings were then mapped with the educational reform recommendations made in the Education Commission Report of 1964. Due to the scope of this research paper, the Education Commission Report was not coded with as much detail as compared to the NPE of 1968; rather the dominant recommendation themes were identified and mapped with the policy dictates. Attached in the addendum is the table that shows what recommendations were addressed in the policy document.

**High-Inference Codes**

Based on Cooper and Hedges’ (1994) definition of high-inference codes, high-inference codes were identified and analyzed to unravel the cultural and socio-political driving forces behind the policy dictates. Questions such as the following were asked when making subjective inferences:

• Why were there no stated policy dictates/goals regarding school enrollment?
• What were the reasons behind the conspicuous stress on developing national integration?
• What were the reasons driving the issue of what language should be used for instructional purposes
at schools? Why was the medium of instruction such a crucial issue especially at a time when the country was faced with much larger problems such as poverty, famine and illiteracy?

- Why was the development of science and technology at the secondary and higher education levels of such crucial importance when basic educational infrastructure was highly deficient?

Based on the process of high inference coding, subjective inferences were made and then triangulated with published literature that commented on these issues as well. The detailed analysis is presented in the discussion section.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Observed Policy Dictates in the NPE of 1968**

*Enrollment*

As far as the issue of enrollment is concerned, there was no dictate ensuring that every child in the country would be enrolled in schools. Policy dictates were most dominant in addressing issues related to Social cohesion/national integration and language of instruction. These two categories were followed closely in ranks on dictates pertaining to Science Education. All in all, the three major purposes of the National Policy of Education of 1968 were clearly geared towards developing national integration, identifying a common language, and development in the area of science and technology.

To sum it up, the policy dictates addressed the following:

- *Medium of Instruction*
- *The Common School System*
- *Gandhi’s Education Ideals*
- *Building the Socialist Nation*
- *Science and Technology Education.*

*Medium of Instruction*
We observed that the dictate on the medium of instruction was most predominant. The discussion below elaborates why the Government of India placed such importance on this issue.

In the early 1800’s, the East India Company, a trading company which was rapidly annexing states and gaining political foothold, took the responsibility of centralizing and standardizing education through a Charter Act of 1813. The objective was to ensure that the education imparted to the natives was not as stratified as it was in the Pathshalas (for Hindu students) and Madarsahs (for Muslim students). In response to the charter, the very first Christian missionary schools, called the St. Mary’s Charity Schools, were established all across the country. Following the charter in 1813, the education system came to be, for the first time, controlled by the state, both politically and bureaucratically (Annamalai, 2005; Gosh, 2001; Kazi, 1987; Mookerjee, 1944). The purpose of doing so was extremely clear.

“The political objectives of education and the choice of language [of instruction, i.e., English] were made in order to improve the colonial subjects in their temporal usefulness and behavioral morals, and to have a cadre of people to assist the colonial government by working in subordinate positions and by being the buffer between the rulers and the masses” (Annamalai, 2005, p. 21).

In addition, the goal was also to ensure that “[t]he Natives must either be kept down by the sense of [the imperialists’] power, or they must willingly submit from a conviction that [the British government is] more wise, more just, more humane, and more anxious to improve their condition than any other rulers they could possibly have” (Farish qtd. in Viswanathan, 1989, p. 2). The education system and the curriculum were designed to serve this very purpose.

Over the years, the natives were led to believe, by the imperialists, that the culture and language of the rulers were much superior and consequently worthy of aspiring to. Several Indian social reformers of the time, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, supported this belief on the grounds that an education that is more in line with the western worldview, i.e., the modern worldview, would help alleviate some of the inequalities that had plagued the Indian society for thousands of years.

By 1854, education in India was completely centralized, imparted in English, and regional languages were
not accounted for (Annamalai, 2005; Mehrotra, 2006; Mookerjee, 1944).

“While on the one hand [education in English] led to the introduction of what has since become a major language of international discourse—English—into Indian Education, it also had the far more damaging consequences of segmenting the Indian education system into those who received an English education and those who did not” (Mehrotra, 2006, p.11).

Therefore, the purpose of the language component in the policy document was not so much to articulate the damages done by the oppressive imperialist rule, rather it was to give credibility to the other regional languages. From the policy discourse articulating the language policy, the administration acknowledged the ubiquitousness of English in the society and made a pronounced statement to elevate the regional languages to the same social status that English speaking natives enjoyed. The assumption was, if all regional languages enjoyed the same status as did English, the social stratification that the Indian society encountered, based on an individual’s language abilities, would be alleviated.

From a postcolonial perspective, the detail with which the language of instruction was articulated is justified. The act of imposing the ruler’s language and culture on a colonized nation is common among colonizers. Language is the cornerstone of a culture. If a particular society’s language is made insignificant, the culture that the language is linked to follows the very same fate. Therefore, if an imperial power wishes to subjugate an existing culture, the most effective manner in which to do so would be to gradually erase the traces of the existing language. The policy document, therefore, rightly reflects the counter attempts of the government at the time. The goal was to bring back the regional languages into mainstream India in order to rejuvenate the nation back into unison after centuries of imperialist oppression.

In addition, the policy clearly designates Hindi as the *lingua franca* of the nation and recommends that it should become the primary language of instruction. It stipulates that the use of Hindi should be encouraged across the nation at all levels of education. What is not clear is why English is included in the three-language recommendation when the supposed eventual goal was to build a unified Hindi speaking
nation. At the same time, however, designating Hindi as the national language would not come bereft of political baggage. Of the 28 states and 7 Union Territories, residents in only 4 states had been traditionally speaking Hindi. Therefore, mandating that educational institutions especially universities, use Hindi as their medium of instruction, would have placed a lot of people at a disadvantage. The disadvantage lay not only in terms of skill and comfort level with the language, but also would have created the issue of cultural disenfranchisement for students who did not speak hindi. However, the question that one can ask is on what basis or epistemological grounding was the decision made to designate Hindi as the official language? Was the general public in this democratic nation consulted on the choice of the official language?

The Common School System

The structure of education, enumerated in the policy document as the common school system, was dictated to be adopted throughout the nation. The existing education system was not really being reformed or re-designed — it was simply being re-articulated and formalized in a political discourse.

The first attempt to standardize the structure of education was made by the British government in the year 1882. The Indian Education Commission, appointed in 1882, made several recommendations defining the structure of education, and the role of government and missionary enterprises in Indian education. The proposed structure was that Primary education become a part of the system of public education; secondary education be bifurcated at two levels, one leading to entrance examinations of the universities, and the other “intended to fit youths for commercial or non-literary pursuits” (Bagulia, 2004, p. 180). The national council of education was registered on June 1, 1906 and the scheme of studies that included Primary Stage, Secondary Stage-lower, Secondary Stage-upper and the Collegiate Stage were adopted.

In addition, the recommendation regarding the primary and secondary education structure drew entirely from the Indian Education Commission Report of 1882. No recommendations were made to revisit the educational system to assess if the system was serving the educational goals of the country. The
only suggestion that the commission made was to add an additional year in secondary education at the university level on top of what was already in place since the Indian Education Commission directives. The education structure under the very first unified National Policy since independence continued to be the legacy of the British government (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1968). The recommendations of the Education Commission, which were adopted, laid the foundations of the Indian education system, which is followed until today and was being followed at the time NPE of 1968 was being drafted.

**Gandhi’s Education Ideals**

Since the 1882 Education Commission recommendations, the most crucial government initiative, as far as the Indian Education System is concerned, came in the form of the Government of India Act of 1935. The 1935 act was the first step toward India’s political independence where it placed provincial administration under a ministry of a majority of elected members. The Act, also for the first time, divided all educational activities into two categories—Central (Federal) and State (Provincial). In 1937, a conference called the Wardha Conference was called under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi to address the issue of education in India. The conference passed the following resolutions:

- Free and compulsory education for seven years on a nationwide scale
- Mother tongue as the medium of instruction
- Education should focus on manual labor

Due to the political clout that Gandhi enjoyed, a committee was appointed which submitted the report from the Wardha Conference, known as the *Wardha Scheme of Education*, to the Indian National Congress in March 1938. The recommendations submitted by the conference were unanimously accepted.

The resolutions of the Wardha Conference ring very closely with the policy dictates of the NPE of 1968. As noted at the coding levels, ubiquitous references to Gandhi and his educational ideals were well adopted in the policy suggestions of 1968. Every single one of the Wardha Conference resolutions of 1937
has been articulated in the policy document of 1968. It does seem strange that educational resolutions established in the year 1937 should be adopted into a document that is to chart the future of a nation in the year 1968. No empirical studies had been published at the time to testify to the efficacy of the above-mentioned resolutions; yet, they were unanimously adopted into the design of India's future in education. The reason for such unhindered adoption is extremely simple. The party in power at the time was the Indian National Congress Party that Gandhi had become quite an active member of since 1901. And the Prime Minister at the time was Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi’s political protégé. Therefore, political pandering by congress-appointed bureaucrats responsible for drafting the NPE of 1968, could best be accomplished by echoing Gandhi’s educational principles and ideals.

Through the proposed structural recommendations, it becomes clear that much of the National Policy and the Commission Report drew heavily on the Gandhian philosophy of education enumerated in the Wardha Report of 1937. Issues such as free and compulsory education, which had been adopted as article 45 in the constitution, were re-iterated in the recommendation as well as supported with a policy directive. The language policy as well drew heavily on the Wardha Scheme where Hindi and the maternal Tongue were recommended as the language of instruction.

Building the Socialist Nation

India after independence in 1947 emerged as the Democratic Socialist Republic of India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the very first prime minister. Educated at Harrows, one of Britain’s rarefied private schools, and then in Cambridge before qualifying as a barrister in London, Nehru was an Edwardian gentleman greatly influenced by the Fabians — a group of left-wing upper-class Englishmen who believed that socialism can be “implemented peacefully through a state run by a qualified class of platonic technocrats” (Luce, 2007, p. 16). Nehru’s economic model and the educational model were greatly influenced by this belief. Nehru viewed capitalistic money-making enterprises scornfully and believed that the country, after gaining freedom, should strive for economic self-sufficiency. Reflections of the ideology come through clearly, not only in the recommendations, but also in the National Policy. There are several instances in the policy document where "national service", "voluntary service", etc., are highlighted as
some of the goals educational institutions should strive for in order to build a socialist nation.

On the economic front, Nehru skillfully forged a consensus to bear fruit for his idealistic visions by having the state lead efforts towards economic self-sufficiency. The plan was to create steel plants, aluminum refineries, and dams and have all such economic pursuits controlled by the state – all this while the country was still essentially agrarian (Luce, 2007; Varma, 2005). The manpower at the time to support such elephantine projects was hard to find, as a majority of the country's population was reeling under extreme poverty and impending famine.

Science and Technology Education

Nehru envisioned that in order to pull the lumbering economy of India into the 20th century and into the Industrial age, India needed to leave its ancient crutches of tradition behind and embrace modernity. “[H]e set out to create the infrastructure of scientific and technical education to provide increasing numbers of Indians with the opportunity to train as doctors, engineers, and scientists” (Varma, 2005). 14% of the nation's education budget in the first Five Year Plan (1951-1956) was allocated to technical education compared to 5% dedicated to secondary education. The second Five Year Plan (1956 to 1961) allocated 18% to technical education and the third (1961-1966), 21%. As the years progressed, the percentage of funds allocated to technical and higher education kept steadily rising to the point where a quarter of the budget was allocated to state run institutions offering higher and technical education. “The resultant educational edifice in which the foundations were relatively neglected while building the super structure” (Varma, 2005, p. 105) explains why today India has the largest reservoir of technologically and scientifically trained and skilled manpower as well as the largest number of illiterate citizens and out-of-school children (Varma, 2005).

To digress from the Nehruvian model of education and to rectify the system, the Education Commission of 1964 in its report made 11 recommendations in the area of primary education and 20 recommendations in the areas of secondary and higher secondary education. As far as technical education is concerned, the commission made merely 4 recommendations. The recommendations ranged from
unified educational structure at both levels (primary and secondary), teacher education at the primary and secondary level, to administration, funding, resource allocation, curriculum, improving attendance, and so on. The National Policy on Education of 1968, however, responded with a rhetorical directive in the realm of both primary and secondary education but with very clear and well articulated goals in the realm of education in science, technology, and research.

**Conclusion**

What is starkly missing in the recommendations and the policy, and illustrated to the very last detail in a myriad of books and essays, is the analysis of the needs of the society at the time the recommendations and the policies were released. At the time of independence, 60% of the population was illiterate. The policy, instead of making provisions on how best to have educational opportunities available to every citizen no matter how remote or inaccessible their town or village, elected to display abundant rhetoric in matters of national language and creating the common school system. Of course, there is no denying that a common language for the nation to function as a unified whole is extremely important. However, how does any government decide what that language ought to be in a nation of 22 languages and an unaccountable number of dialects? Is language really that important an issue when the country at the time is dependent on US food aid to feed its citizens?

On a more sympathetic note, India was faced with tremendous problems at the on-set of independence. Coupled with the absence of national pride and the unanimous desire to completely separate itself from its colonial past, Indian politicians, lawmakers, and policy makers were indeed faced with a gargantuan task. Surprisingly, amidst all its mass poverty, litany of uneducated and unemployed youth, and social and political unrest in various parts of the country, India remained a democracy and did not crumble in face of conditions that could have quite well supported an autocratic regime. Due to the nature of the problems that the nation faced at the onset of independence, education ended up taking a back seat. Perhaps, none of the leaders were perceptive enough to realize that the future of the country depended on how competent its citizens are or will be. Or, perhaps, due to political strife and the race for political dominance, education could never create enough leverage for continued and sustained
government investment. For we all know, to witness the benefits of education, it sometimes takes more than a lifetime.
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