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The Politicized Indian Woman: India's Agendas on Women's Education

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India's Agendas on Women's Education

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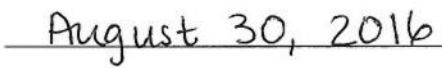
We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality.
We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions
required by the final examining committee have been made.

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The word '*invasion'* worries the nation. The 106-year-old freedom fighter Gopikrishna-babu says, Eh, is the English coming to take India again by *invading* it, eh? – Now from the entire country, Indian intellectuals not knowing a single Indian language meet in a closed *seminar* in the capital city and make the following wise decision known. *Cultural invasion* is much more dangerous than *cultural revolution*. So India is doing what India must do to hold it back.

- From Mahasweta Devi's 1996 short story, *Choli ke pichche* (Behind the bodice)

Contents

Acknowledgments

Omnia mutantus, nos et mutamur in illis. All things change, and we change with them. The story of my education, or any enduring commitment to education, is of transformation. However, in my moments of hubris, I believe that mine is closer to metamorphosis. I didn't merely transfer one form into another; nor leap from form to form. I experienced an insidious relentless descaling, shedding skins and scabs to reveal a raw purposeful core. I am humbled and privileged that this did not happen in isolation or alienation.

First, I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair Professor Kathleen M. Boyle for her ruthless kindness as I struggled with my academic voice and identity. She continually challenged my foundations while ensuring I retained my intellectual independence and curiosity; bringing meaning and purpose to my paper shields and cardboard swords. This dissertation was doomed a vast lost enterprise without her scholarship and friendship. I extend my endless gratitude to my committee members. Professor Sarah J. Noonan; master scholar, and exemplar professor, who saw my potential long before I did and encouraged my doctoral career; and Professor Patricia A. Jensen for her astounding work in public policy, and unique interpersonal style of leadership and pedagogy.

In addition, I would like to thank the vast network at the University of St. Thomas who supported my work materially and personally: the members of the Doctorate in Leadership Cohort 26, the Keffer library staff and resources, the Office of International Student Services, Professors Tom Fish, Robert J. Brown, John D. Holst, and Stephen D. Brookfield, and most importantly, Jackie Grossklaus, for being the advocate everyone deserves but few are fortunate to have.

Introduction

I'm surrounded by Teachers. It is how they identify professionally, in any case. (In other lives) Otherwise, they are my paternal grandmother, my mother, my paternal aunts, my maternal aunts, my sister, and my sister-in-law; three generations of Teachers in one sentence, spanning the 1930s to present day India. Their experiences alone could be an epic saga of one family's women learning and living through India's education system since before it was even a nation. I advance this lineage with two motives; the first being obvious: how it is the family, the deeply personal, that lead me to my line of questioning. The second is how this rich legacy led to valuations of my own Education, the implicit political covenants, and its perverse discontents.

By Indian standards, I received a middle class, cosmopolitan upbringing. My parents are college educated, well-travelled, and well read. Through a series of employment and immigration circumstances –which could be mistaken for serendipity or kismet – my parents ended up in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where my sister and I were raised. My mother taught English at the Embassy of India School in Riyadh city (currently, First International Indian School Riyadh) which catered specifically to the Indian expatriate or Non-Resident Indian (NRI) community. Affiliation to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India, meant we studied an Indian curriculum and graduated after passing Indian standards for evaluation. It fell, naturally, on my mother to take the lead on educating us and frankly, she shone at the charge.

Our nuclear expatriate family acculturated to Saudi Sharia law, wearing *abaayas* or *burkhas*, and *hijabs*, mindful of the *muttawas,[1]* all the while expanding through the school's well stocked library, news, magazines, art, and documentaries. To varying degrees, this was the

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[1] The official Islamic religious police or Mutaween in Saudi Arabia, who on behalf of the state are tasked with enforcing Sharia as defined by the government.

balance of exposure in most expatriate homes. Avenues for social interaction were usually among families and between homes; shopping malls were the closest approximation to a public sphere that included women; the government banned clubs, bars, theater, musical performances, and the sense of separation was overbearing.

Conversation is sacred and dialogue critical in our home, along with an extensive personal collection of classics and contemporary literature. We discussed everything from the inclusion of other nationalities in our school, to the strict segregation of the local and expat communities, and even the First Gulf War and the fall of the USSR. Combined with a plethora of extracurricular experiences in an ethnically diverse, but socioeconomically homogenous community, a challenging yet *sheltered, egalitarian* pedagogy privileged my primary education.

Higher education in India was cognitively violent, ergo dissonant, from my early experiences. India is not only ethnically diverse but wildly culturally heterogeneous, with seemingly chronic socioeconomic inequalities, cradled in its tendency for hierarchy. Through the course of my secondary schooling into my undergraduate degrees, I felt assaulted by the hierarchical taxonomies of caste, color, region/geography, and primarily, gender. At first, I thought there was more freedom; a democracy in all its dialectic dynamism. After all there were no state-sanctioned moral police, or mandatory *abaayas*, no national religion or language, nor any bans or limitations on the public sphere/square. Chaotic, devastating, and disarmingly liberating in its gradual thralling of the senses. But later, in insidious incremental ways, I found myself answering, or playing to roles, stereotypes, and archetypes of who I was supposed to be. If I disregarded those meaning-sets, I would be policed. Not by official and policy institutions alone, but by society and tradition at large. I was becoming intimately aware of the many labels that came to define and disturb me.

The labels remain. I am a woman, catholic, third-culture-adult, Non-Resident-Indian, unmarried, brown with ambivalent ethnicity, bi-lingual, feminist progressive/liberal or left of center but a fiscal conservative, highly educated (well-read/well-traveled), cosmopolitan (global citizen), small business owner/entrepreneur, consultant, writer, orator, heterosexual, short, curvy, ultra-femme/fashionable, from Delhi, India, mostly. My family, friends, mentors, partners, and acquaintances intersected with certain labels at specific moments, challenged them, and altered their meanings for me personally. Performing different things at different times, the labels always remain. Intersectionality was personal. Intersectionality was embodied.

This intense internal conflict externalized; bringing me to researching my labels and the ones I've shared with all the other women in my life. The challenge of experiencing "otherness" as a privilege and an alienation, by virtue of my curious education, was like living an epistemic paradox. Privilege met my phobia of poverty, and outrage with artificial hierarchies. The deeper I delved into my own story, the deeper I felt an accountability to the way labels lived, breathed and moved for women. I collected histories, stories, memoirs, oral interpretations of Indian life, testing it constantly through conversation and interaction. I'm now habituated to a life of translation and interpretation as my odd status as a privileged minority outsider in India, Saudi Arabia, and now, the United States. Thankfully, my doctoral journey gave me language, depth, and discussion to articulate my conflict and learn how to channel my accountability into advocacy through scholarship.

Sometimes the best you can do is pay attention.

Context of the Problem

In 1990, Nobel Laureate and Bharat Ratna economist, Amartya Sen wrote about India's "Missing Women" in the British Medical Journal, which was later reprinted in the New York

Review of Books as "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing." The controversial article

provided damning evidence of Asia's entrenched gender inequalities. Socio-economic

preference for a male child had resulted in culturally normative sexism that denied women life

(female infanticide), healthcare, food, education, and access to gainful employment.

The "women" issue took on explosive dimensions when on 16 December 2012, reports of

a violent gang rape in Delhi took the international and Indian national media by storm.

Widespread public protests, and international outrage, shamed authorities into action, that lead to

amendments in the criminal law and establishment of six fast-track courts specifically for rape

prosecutions. However, the protests had opened the floodgates to a spectrum of public opinion

about gender roles, valuation, and society. Education became a critical part of discussions

because of its culturally reproductive role that maintained the patriarchal status quo, among other

societal asymmetries.

As a response to the zeitgeist, Dr. Sen revisited his controversial article in 2013,

analyzing regional disparities in sex ratios, gendered violence, and systemic sexism in another

issue of the New York Review of Books. He discusses how receiving an education and gaining a

degree of social mobility had not changed the cultural norms about gender roles. On the

contrary, he writes that even educated, empowered women still prefer a male to a female child,

and make family planning decisions accordingly. Without underappreciating the effects of

education for women, this justifies questioning the traditional gender hierarchy, and the socio-

cultural education that fortifies it.[2]

Public policy and policy agendas in India labored under the hangover of post-colonialism

and immense demographic diversity, necessitating systemic campaigns that unified national

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[2] Amartya Sen. 2013. *India's women: The mixed truth.* October 10.
http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/oct/10/indias-women-mixed-truth/.

identity. "Education" was entrusted with preparing an illiterate, communally divided citizenry –

loosely associated as a quasi-federal republic – to practice democracy with a socialist-secular

outlook. The task remains incomplete and ever more daunting today. These concerns are still

vital as shifts in discourse around women's education nationally contribute to discourse about

leadership and gender expectations in a globalized economy with an increasingly younger,

unemployed population coming of voting age.[3]

This socio-economic context requires the exploration of educational governance through

a critical examination of policy language, ideas, and knowledge formation, to ensure that unequal

gender relations do not alienate and propagate violence, silence, and discrimination. Today,

youth activism, social media, rapid urbanization, and transnational economic partnerships,

opened the door to lively debates about gender roles, communal positions, and the function of

political leadership and identity.[4] As the largest, youngest, democracy, India is fertile ground for

research about political identity, agency, leadership, and efficacy as a wide array of thinkers and

writers like Dr. Sen, respond to national events and their transformative potential.

Globally the discussion about women's education is receiving renewed attention and

policy commitments, paralleling the rise of a new generation of feminist scholarship and

women's rights advocacy. The HeForShe solidarity movement[5] launched in July 2014 is the

latest initiative from the United Nations to make gender equality a human rights imperative. It

calls for men to speak up for women, take a pledge, and not propagate or bear silent witness to

gendered violence, civil or domestic injustices, or other human rights violations against women.

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[3] Sunita Sanghi, and A. Srija, *Youth Unemployment in India*, (New Delhi: Confederation of Indian Industry) 2014.
[4] Sen 2013
[5] For more information, see, http://www.heforshe.org/

Apart from the obvious ideological loopholes in the campaign and criticisms by some groups[6], it is undeniable that the United Nations is contributing to a larger dialogue about gender roles in traditionally patriarchal societies, especially where cultural intersections of the public and private effect national attitudes toward gender equivalence.

Education – both formal and informal – is important toward a definitive re-imagination of gender identities, agency, and activity. Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment to provide quality, basic education for all children, youth, and adults. UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 launched the movement.[7] In 2000, ten years later, the international community met again at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, since many countries were far from achieving the 1990 goals. They came up with global and regional frameworks for action, which convened on the necessity for gender parity in educational opportunity in the evolving context of globalization, citizen engagement, and governance gaps.[8]

However, Of the 774 million adult illiterate, 516 million are women,[9] a skewed ratio that has remained unchanged for the past two decades despite recurring commitments to the contrary. The 2014 Millennium Development Goals report showed some scattered gains globally, but admits the enormity of the task ahead especially in South Asia.

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[6] K. M. Deaver, *Why hating the #HeForShe campaign does not make me a bad feminist*, (September 26, 2014), http://www.rolereboot.org/culture-and-politics/details/2014-09-hating-heforshe-campaign-doesnt-make-bad-feminist/; Equality Spectrum, The rhetoric of gender equality: Emma Watson and other public discourse, (October 3, 2014), https://equalityspectrum.wordpress.com/tag/heforshe/.
[7] UNESCO, 2014. *Education*. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/the-efa-movement/.
[8] UNESCO. 2000. *The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments*. Paris: UNESCO.
[9] Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2010. *The world's women 2010: Trends and statistics*. New York: United Nations.

In India, 70.2 per cent girls drop out before 10th grade, twice as many girls dropout of schools as compared to boys, and 9 out of 10 girls do not complete schooling. Of 100 girls in Grade 1, only one girl child reaches Grade 12 in rural areas, and of 1,000 girls in Grade 1, only 14 girls reach Grade 12 in urban areas.[10] The female to male Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is 954:1,000 males.[11] The socio-culturally entrenched preference for the male child leads to the alarming statistic of 36 million missing daughters, despite myriad commitments on the national and international stage to the life, development, and empowerment of the girl child. The Missing Girls phenomenon, as championed by Amartya Sen, percolates into other aspects of civic and social life as well.

India is home to 32.9 per cent of the global poor of which 80 per cent are women.[12] India's labor force participation rate for women fell from just over 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10. Out of 131 countries with available data, India ranks 11th from the bottom (120) in female labor force participation.[13] Female employment in India grew by 9 million between 1994 and 2010, but the International Labor Organization (2013) estimates that it could have increased by almost double that figure if women had equal access to employment in the same industries and occupations as their male counterparts. In fact, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would increase by $1.7 trillion if calculations accounted for the average of six hours per day that women's work in the domestic and informal economy.[14] The reasons for these disparities are as varied as the vulnerability of women's employment, undernourishment,

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[10] Tata Institute of Social Sciences. 2014. *World of India's Girls (WINGS).* New Delhi: Save the Children.

[11] Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India. 2011. National Summary Data Page (NSDP). Accessed September 4, 2014. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/National_Summary/National_Summary_DataPage.aspx.

[12] United Nations (The Millenium Development Goals Report. New York: United Nations), 2014.

[13] International Labour Organization. 2013. *Global employment trends 2013: Recovering from a second jobs dip.* Geneva, Switzerland: ILO publications.

[14] Ibid

unmet demands for family planning and maternal heath, lack of family friendly policies, and low

rates of political representation of women, to name a few.[15]

Significance of the Problem

A sorry lack of political will and vision best describes the specific intellectual malaise

infecting the Indian political experience; manifesting as turf wars among educational agencies,[16]

struggle for resources and funding,[17] and focusing on enrollment rather than achievement data,[18]

Agenda setting for Indian educational policy struggles to account for its disconnect from the

imbricate intersectionality of socio-economic values, technological evolution, and complex

delivery systems. This reactive experience of political leadership has contributed to a confused,

ethnocentric citizenry, energized and antagonized by emerging market forces and the resultant

inequalities. The multi-party system of democratic participation in India conduces discourses

colored with existential angst, tending to veer toward sensationalism, or even, extremism, as

each faction seeks to protect its corner and coalitions at the center. It comes as no surprise that

social media, salon, and pop-culture debates ensue about national identity, cultural homogeneity,

politics of representation and access, and the expansive role of education in the legitimation and

absorption of India's democratic paradoxes; especially as an increasingly younger, unemployed

population comes of voting age.[19]

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[15] United Nations, 2014

[16] Alya Mishra, "*Policy and regulatory uncertainty in higher education*," University World News, January 10, 2014, http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140109111618692.

[17] Parth J. Shah, "*HRD ministry says not enough funds to improve education programmes*," Livemint. August 31. Accessed November 5, 2013, www.livemint.com/Politics/BD4fbUtm5KPayVOlGUOXyM/HRD-ministry-says-not-enough-funds-to-improve-education-prog.html?facet=print 2/.

[18] Suman Bhattacharjea, and Wilima Wadhwa, "*Translating the 'Right to Education': Assumptions and reality*," Livemint. October 18, 2013. Accessed November 5, 2013. www.livemint.com/Opinion/fIrVuLaKfh35TKs6sTMwCL/Translating-the-Right-to-Education-Assumptions-and-realit.html?facet=print.

[19] Sanghi and Srija 2014

It is in this leadership environment that tabloid media reports of violence, disenfranchisement, and discrimination against women in India, titillate the airwaves. The obvious patriarchal condescension, misogyny, and cultural misappropriation aside,[20] part of the problem stems from the social justice ideals and goals of education policy as applied to the lives of 1210.2 million[21] people over the 67 years of India's independence. The numbers alone are staggering and the challenge of implementing the logistics to activate lofty social ideals is comprehendible.

<div align="center">Literature Review</div>

The second half of the 21st century saw the creation of new national boundaries, and subsequently, new national identities. Freedom and democracy are consecrated and negotiated through an engaged network of government and citizen institutions. Instrumentally, national education systems determine the direction of that engagement, degrees of knowledge available, entities controlling the flow of knowledge, and critical participation of a majority.[22] Synchronically reviewing key conceptual scholarship on the structures of Indian education, and analyses of education policies, I argue that there is a gap in the literature for a thematic trajectory about girls and women's education in the Indian cultural context.

I limited the review of literature to those studies that directly interacted with Indian policy or education in the Indian cultural context. Despite finding a wealth of literature about

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[20] Emily Thomas, Indian politician on rape: *'Sometimes it's right, sometimes it's wrong'*. June 5, 2014 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/05/indian-politician-rape-babulal-gaur_n_5454187.html; Suhasini Haider, *U.S., U.N. wade into rape row*. June 5. Accessed September 4, 2014. http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/us-un-wade-into-rape-row/article6082900.ece; The Associated Press. 2014. *Village chief orders gang rape of Indian woman for loving a man outside her tribe*. January 23. http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/indian-woman-gang-raped-loving-man-tribe-article-1.1589102;

[21] Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner 2011

[22] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 2013. "*Transnational feminist crossings: On neoliberalism and radical critique*." Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 38 (4): 967; Madeline Arnot, and Shailaja Fennel. 2008. "*Gendered education and national development: Critical perspectives and new research*." Compare 38 (5): 515-523.

feminist policy analysis, and historical studies of education policy, I found the lack of

scholarship specific to India, compelling. I have categorized the extant scholarship on India's

education policies, broadly as structural compendiums, the political economy of educational

policy, and issues of critical literacy and citizenship.

Structural Compendiums

Comprehensive scholarly monographs, overviews and reports, provided a bird's eye view

of Indian education, detailing infrastructure and administration set up by policy initiatives, with

broad allusions to social concerns that remain inadequately addressed and available for policy

design.

The literature relaying the development of India's education system picks up momentum

in two critical phases: 1989-993 and the mid-2000s to present day. The scholarship of the first

phase largely constituted of reactions to national politics and critique of education policies at the

time. This scholarship coalesced around the infamous Mandal Commission Report of 1979,

which advocated for affirmative action practices to redress caste discrimination and unequal

social and educational opportunities through a rubric of eleven indicators to determine

backwardness[23]. Its recommendation for increased reserved seats or "quotas" for members of

Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in schools,

universities and government jobs, resulted in violent protests in 1989 when Prime Minister V. P.

Singh decided to implement the recommendations.[24] Where there were no objections against the

intent behind the "quota" system, this section of the scholarship questioned the ontological

construction of the category of backwardness and its relation to education and the Republic.[25]

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[23] A. Ramaiah, 1992. "*Identifying other backward classes*." Economic and Political Weekly 1203-1207.
[24] Padma Ramachandran, and Vasantha Ramkumar. 2011. *Education in Indi*a. New Delhi: National Book Trust.
[25] Ramaiah 1992, 1206

The second phase paralleled the growth of the Information Technology (IT) and Business

Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry, and influence of globalization on the national economy and

policy agendas. Status reports and structural handbooks were commissioned by government's

publishing agencies like the National Book Trust,[26] international organizations and research

councils,[27] and private trusts and consortiums.[28]

In both phases, the construction of difference or otherness – in terms of caste, socio-

economic class, disability, or gender – was a structural organizing principle. Seeking to trace

meta-structures that have directed the Indian experience,[29] the literature covers education in

ancient and medieval India and the British regime before moving to key Indian educational

philosophers and policy commissions.

Notably, Ramachandran and Ramkumar revised their expansive overview of the

foundations of the Indian education system to include social issues and religious influences on

the development of key policy foundations. Discussing the mutation of *Vedic* principles of

education for women, they write,

> There were many famous women like Maithrayee and Gargi who excelled in the learning
> and exposition of the Vedas and some even composed new literary works. In the *Atharva
> Veda*, it was exhorted that women should not marry until they finished their education,
> thus laying grea value on women's education. As time went on, this ideal position of
> women gave way to rigid and extreme postures. There emerged a situation when women
> were devalued and not allowed to get educated, reflecting also the insecurity of the times
> because of the invasions which began to rock the country. All this happened slowly but
> surely between 200 B.C. to 1200 A.D. [30]

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[26] Ramachandran and Ramkumar, 2011

[27] Geetha Gandhi Kingdon, 2007. *The progress of school education in India*. Global Poverty Research Group,
Economic and Social Research Council, Oxford: Economic and Social Research Council . http://www.gprg.org/.

[28] Harit Shah, and Sulabh Agarwal. 2008, *Educating India: Education sector report. Research & Investment
Advisory*, Mumbai: Angel Broking.

[29] Gretchen Rhines Cheney, Betsey Brown Ruzzi, and Kartik Muralidharan. 2005. *A profile of the Indian education
system: Paper prepared for the new commission on the skills of the American workforce*. Washington: National
Center on Education and the Economy; Ramachandran and Ramkumar, 2011

[30] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011, xxi

However, this is the only reference to gender inequalities and its socio-cultural genealogy. The rest of the overview focuses on federal and state structures, programs, and schemes in public schooling, but shies away from discussing pedagogical and curricular oppositions. This rationale uncovers an underlying loyalty to the incomplete project of Indian nationalism and a tendency to taxonomize, absorb or synthesize difference.

Abul Kalam Azad, as the first minister of education in post independent India was charged with the daunting task of conceiving and developing a national system of education; a charge he defined as "the development of a national mind."[31] It was imperative to distance the new nation from the colonial imprint by rejecting the educational content and language of communication and still retain its modernizing, progressive tenets. This at a time, when India was reeling under the pressures of a fragile new economy, and rehabilitation after the Partition of 1947. Azad envisioned a humanitarian, liberal education system that conceptualized modernity and democracy through universalizing principles rooted in an Indian philosophical tradition.[32] This foundational vision remained unrealized partly because the cultural and intellectual composition of the Indian middle class was firmly rooted in the colonial concept of a modern state, a modern economy and a modern education system.[33] By linking entrance and advancement in government service to academic education, colonial rule contributed to the legacy of an education system geared to preserving the position and prerogatives of the more privileged.

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[31] K. N. Panikkar, 2011. "*India's education policy: From National to Commercial*." Economic & Political Weekly (Business Insights: Essentials).
[32] Ibid.
[33] Marie Lall, 2005. *The challenges for India's education system*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London: Chatham House.

Post-independence, social mobility and economic aspirations configured to an education system that invested elitism based on access and likeness to the British, a reinforcement of pre-existing elitist tendencies.[34] This resulted in a public-private schooling divide: public schooling becoming the contested site of the nationalist project, vernacular communication, and identity politics, and private schooling geared toward a globalized modernity, preference for the English language, and capitalism.[35] Leadership, gender expectations, and opportunity wove into the ideological nationalist project in India post-independence putting greater onus on middle and higher education and pressure to align with international activity.

Bhatty provides a critical perspective of the marginalized realities and the problematic rhetoric that has hallmarked Indian education policy formulation. Analyzing the State's approach toward education delivery, the article critiques the State's "disproportionate reliance" on incentive schemes for attracting higher enrollment numbers from deprived and excluded sections of society, instead of investing in quality infrastructure, teacher training and, curricula geared to create equality of socio-economic opportunity.[36] Deconstruction of the conceptual approach, formal articulation, and implementation of accompanying instruments in major policies reveals a duality in the rhetoric, and a gap between rhetoric and practice. Rhetorical ambiguity appends practical inability to deal with issues of diversity, exclusion, gender, and communalism in the policies and pedagogy for teacher training in the newly established District Institutes of Educational Training (DIETs). Complexity is absorbed into the homogenizing agenda of Indian nationalism.[37]

> The complex forms of diversity were sought to be straitjacketed into notions of national integration leading not to inclusion but further alienation. But most of all the scope

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Kiran Bhatti, 2014,"*Review of Elementary Education Policy in India,"* Economic & Political Weekly 1-13.
[37] Lall 2005

remained limited to adding small piecemeal inputs into a system struggling to cope with diversity, rather than changing the approach and overall quality of the system. In addition, instead of giving greater priority and resources to education, the government in fact took recourse to a range of cost-cutting, and quality diminishing measures such as setting up Education Guarantee Centres (EGCs) and appointing "para-teachers" - both of which were not required to subscribe to any given norms of quality or training.[38]

The scholarship focused on institutional structures primarily with references to institutional behavior.

The Political Economy of Education

The lion's share of scholarship focused on the political economy supporting national education policies. Expanding on the relationships between individuals, society, market, and the state, the analysis of education policy thrives in three strands.

Firstly, researchers looked at supply side and demand side economics in the framework of educational policy and infrastructure.[39] Supply side economics studied the incentives, nationally and internationally, to maintain budgetary outflows from the center toward infrastructure, scholarships, and governance. Versus the demand side, which is out of the purview of central control, i.e. cultural, religious, caste, and gender norms that effect household allocation to education expenditure, health care of the girl child, enrollment rates, and valuation.[40]

For example, on the supply side, Vaughan analyzed how international collaborations, especially with UNESCO and the World Bank on educational goals has influenced shifts in the Government of India's policies toward girls' and women's education in India since independence

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[38] Bhatty 2014, 8-9

[39] Mehtabul Azam, and Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, 2013, "*Are girls the fairer sex in India? Revisiting intra-household allocation of education expenditure.*" World Development 42: 143–164; Bhattacharjea and Wadhwa 2013

[40] M. Niaz Asadullah, and Gaston Yalonetezky, 2012, "*Inequality of educational opportunities in India: Changes over time and across states.*" World Development 40 (6): 1151–1163. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.11.008; Azam and Kingdon 2013; Rosie Peppin Vaughan, 2013. "*Complex collaborations: Indian and international agendas on girls' and women's education, 1947-1990.*" International Journal of Educational Development 33: 118-12

in 1947. Developing power models to track critical intersections of transnational interest groups over the long term, show how decision making agency was fluid but reliant on complex inter-organizational networks and collaborations. However, successful national initiatives that pressed for substantive equality for women had significant international support or networks where actors had dynamic agency in setting the plan and ideas within the collaborating organizations.

Whereas on the demand side, Azam & Kingdon, studied individual household expenditure on education in urban and rural areas, and found an imbalance in gender allocation. The study found a pro-male bias in household allocation to education expenditure based on two key expense decisions: (1) to enroll in a school, and (b) how much to spend conditional on enrolling. Their findings show a pro-male bias in enrollment in age groups 10–14 and 15–19, though the caveat is the wide range of regional and state disparities. There is greater education expenditure in the 10 – 14 age group for males whereas higher enrollment among males in the 15-19 age group. However, this means that despite the achievement of universal enrollment at the primary level in India, there is a gender gap in the enrollment and expenditure data in the secondary, and senior secondary levels. Data was unavailable to measure or confirm the rationale behind the persisting gap in females' enrollment in the 15-19 age group; especially if it is a supply side constraint (no access to single sex school in rural areas that may be preferred for adolescent females) or a demand side constraint related to lingering cultural and gender norms.

This thread of analysis also discusses the bifurcation of accounting practices – plan and non-plan expenditures – supporting policy and action programs.[41]

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[41] Anuradha De, and Tanuka Endow. 2008. "*Public expenditure on education in India: Recent trends and outcomes*." Edited by Faculty of Education, Research Consortum on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) University of cambridge. RECOUP Working Papers. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-69258; Santosh Mehrotra. 2012. "*The cost and financing the right to education in India: Can we fill the financing gap*?" International Journal of Educational Development 32: 65-71.

For good or for ill, we have a distinction in India's classification of expenditure which is unique to our country: between Plan and non-Plan. Plan expenditure has been defined as that which focuses on new schemes/new projects/new extensions to currently running schemes. As the 11th Plan document notes, this distinction has become 'dysfunctional' and 'illogical', because of two reasons: one, it results in the neglect of maintenance of existing capacity and service levels, and two, it has created the perception that non-plan expenditure is wasteful and has to be minimized. This distinction has increasingly become untenable, since the ban on recruitment for non-plan posts, which are especially important for sectors like education and health, has caused irreparable damage to the quality of service delivery over the last few decades.[42]

The abstruse financial system combined with the colonial bureaucratic structure, complicated center-state fund flows to capitalize programs.[43] This examination highlights the resource bottlenecks within policy and administrative structures.

Secondly, studies looked at international organizations and aid networks that influenced national policy rhetoric and action plans. Analyzed through the lens of world society theory and developmental theory, scholars drew out the relationship between budget allocations, the proportion of GDP expenditure on education, and retention and learning achievement across Indian states.[44] Colclough & De chart investment allocations of aid in India's educational sectors by identifying key phases. Aid flows were conditional but accommodating to the national vision. Prioritizing the development of skilled labor to encourage industrial growth, aid influenced policy investments in tertiary and higher education in the early years after independence. However, this transformed in the 1980s and 1990s as India preempted international educational and human resource development objectives articulated at the Jomtien conference in 1990.[45] Indian planners had already refocused policy commitments toward universal elementary and primary education and through the 1990s and 2000s, elementary

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[42] Ibid, 69
[43] De and Endow 2008; Mehrotra 2012; Bhattacharjea and Wadhwa 2013
[44] Vaughan 2013; De and Endow 2008
[45] Panikkar 2011

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education was the largest recipient of International aid receipts.[46] Though educational policy was determined by India, scholarship shows international aid and inter-organizational networks had significant impact on management practice, financial reporting, accounting procedures, and monitoring arrangements, as well as institutional design around substantive educational foci.[47]

Paralleling scholarship on aid networks, the literature also noted India's unique position in the global arena, where exposure to Westernized modernism, and cosmopolitan educational culture was facilitated through India's colonial legacy.[48] This legacy has influenced domestic policies and research for an exclusively Indian approach to defining women's lived experience, economic participation, and therefrom, education. Indian campaigners for women's education recognized the dual struggle between accommodating for Western Modernism and maintaining traditional Indian Valuations, and actively calling for continuous engagement with international organizations for a critical and practical articulation of globalization as it effects India. Though these articulations come across as theoretically foreclosed categories, they were instrumental in shifting international aid flows away from broad-based, national agendas to the inclusion of nongovernmental actors, and programs, who tailored action agendas, resource flows, and practice according to regional requirements.[49] This economic analyses of policy infrastructures highlights the transnational interface that influenced education agendas, gender conceptualizations, and the complex collaborations that underline it all.[50]

Thirdly, the studies examined exogenous indices i.e. literacy rates, demographic measures, national sample surveys, enrollment, and attendance data and made conjectures about

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[46] Arnot and Fennel 2008; Cheney, Ruzzi and Muralidharan 2005
[47] Vaughan 2013; Colclough and De 2010
[48] Ibid.
[49] De and Endow 2008; Colclough and De 2010
[50] Azam and Kingdon 2013; Vaughan 2013; Colclough and De 2010.

endogenous factors.[51] Developing associative relationships between statistical variables and

gender-based variations of educational attainment and employment, these set of studies refrained

from making causative or correlative claims.

Statistical analysis depended largely on exogenous data and refrained from correlative or

causative generalization because of the wide range of regional discrepancies. As valuable as the

associative claims were, they were temporally finite and did not factor a wide range of socio-

economic and cultural influences. For example, caste and tribal definitions were refined in the

1990s and the effect of these conceptual changes remained unmentioned in the scholarship.[52]

There is an opportunity to develop a broader framework to investigate the inconsistencies

identified in the data and analyze socio-cultural influences on policy implementation.

Critical Literacy and Citizenship

A broader search for feminist theoretical analyses of India's policies led to an emergence

of themes on critical literacy, citizenship, and the construction of gender as a nationalist project.

These did not focus on education policy per se, but purposefully interacted with non-formal

learning structures, movements, and people influencing gendered debates in India.

Kumar developed an illustrative history of feminist activism through the British Raj into

the nationalist era after Independence. Covering populist tropes of the "Mother of the Nation"

and idealized submissive female "Sita-Savitri" archetypes in Indian mythology,[53] the literature

illustrated the alienating, silencing schism between private roles and public action in women's

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[51] Dipa Mukherjee, 2007. *"Women's education in India: Trends, interlinkages, and policy issues*." In Women's Education and Developent, edited by J.B.G Tilak. New Delhi: Gyan Publishers; Kingdon 2007; Asadullah and Yalonetezky 2012; Azam and Kingdon 2013; Bhattacharjea and Wadhwa 2013.

[52] Kemal Dervis, 2014. *The great income divide*. July 18. http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/kemal-dervi--calls-for-potent-policies-to-combat-income-inequality-and-strengthen-social-mobility; Colclough and De 2010; Azam and Kingdon 2013; Asadullah and Yalonetezky 2012.

[53] Radha Kumar, 1993. *The history of doing: An illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India*, 1800-1990. New Delhi: Zubaan; Vaughan 2013.

movements. While making a familiar critique of elitism in 20th century feminism – the exclusive project of middle and upper middle class women with means and access to educative and political systems – the literature also covered case studies of various political petitions against dowry, rape, and sati, but shied away from engaging with educational policy.

However, Chickering and Tyagi, in their case study of a non-governmental organization (NGO) promoting adult education of Indian women, discuss how access to critical literacy – a curricula designed by the NGO – perforates the dividing wall between private roles and public spaces through increased participation in Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the development of key entrepreneurial leadership skills.[54]

Stromquist furthers this with theoretical analyses of trends and public policies on adult literacy programs for women, to apply a critical literacy and participatory theory of citizenship that engages in proactive education, action, and mobilization. Using a feminist critique of normative and spatial claims on citizenship, the research argues that definitions of citizenship are usually in masculine, formal, public spatial and participatory terms, negating the female, informal, domestic, and therefore, private spaces of critical subjectivity. It is imperative to design literacy programs that increase content related engagement, generate encounters for collective agency and self-determination, and create a visible, conscious political project for gender relations.[55]

Fennel and Arnot investigated how global agendas of gender equality have given rise to new frameworks and metrics to better understand and facilitate national growth. Research on gender education and policy making gets limited to developmental organizations, government

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[54] A. Lawrence Chickering, and Anjula Tyagi. 2012. "*The globl schoolgirl.*" Policy Review (August & September): 79-94.

[55] Nelly P. Stromquist, 2006, "*Women's rights to adult education as a means to citizenship.*" International Journal of Educational Development 26: 140–152.

ministries and non-governmental organizations rather than in the academies of higher education or teacher training institutions. This trend has endured because of the reigning discourse that gender education will lead to the alleviation of poverty through economic growth, universal human rights, and democratic governance, which, presumably provides the conditions for empowerment.[56] As a result, gender education research on national educational systems and policies tend to be methodologically varied, diffuse, and ill defined; which makes National gender agendas in education, symbolic products, and channels of contemporary neo-colonialism.

> Mainstream economic categories cast women into one of two roles – those of productive workers and reproductive mothers – in a manner powerfully reminiscent of the Western European and North American feminist debates of the mid-twentieth century. Western feminist research' was 'colonizing' in the manner in which it depicted women from other societies as an essential category of 'Third World Woman'. Women in the developing world were categorized by their female gender (read: sexually constrained) and Third World character (read: poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domesticated). The ideological construction of 'Third World Woman' was based on a presumed social homogeneity, or shared characteristic, despite the existence of major differences in race and social class and experiences in the real lives of these women. The effect was to create a single story of male violence and oppression on subjugated and powerless women who were seen as dependent on men, oppressed by religion and family systems and where the way forward was to create a single sisterhood that was united in its struggle for "freedom."[57]

To move away from the poststructuralist binary of "othering" that underlines Education for All (EFA)'s practical recommendations to "open up individual 'choice biographies' and cultivate policies that release girls from the traditional cultures," Fennel and Arnot propose a movement away from the conflicting dualism of dependence-independence towards a relational understanding of community relations devoid of essentializing cultural narratives. They advocate for an agentive accounting of socio-economic intersections, reflexivity, and interdependencies that construct and sustain learning communities.

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[56] Fennel and Arnot 2008, 526
[57] Ibid., 528-529

The importance of community inter- and intra- relationships to cultivate democratic value and critical participation was observed in India in its transition from a colony to a nation state. Caste associations, both natural and voluntary, have channeled individual agency, by embedding norms, duties, loyalties, and practices with group identity. These penumbral associations gain precedence over public, democratic institutions, because of this subjective, historical, even mythologized ability to mobilize democratic participation.

The case for the caste system's sustained legitimacy is in its active role consolidating a geographically widespread and socio-economically diverse electorate under caste identities when liberal, (read, urban middle class) progressive forms of identification fail at including the lived experience of a majority rural, low-income population. In illustrating the paradoxes in Indian politics Rudolph and Rudolph find that within Hinduism, philosophical, legal, and theological conflicts were not confronted, rather they were compartmentalized, absorbed, or synthesized.

> Rather than providing the basis for a reaction, caste has absorbed and synthesized some of the new democratic values. Ironically, it is the caste association which links the mass electorate to the new democratic political processes and makes them comprehensible in traditional terms to a population still largely politically illiterate. Caste has been able to play this curious political role as bearer of both India's *ancien regime* and its democratic political revolution by reconstituting itself into the *sabha* or *sangham*, with characteristics of both the natural and the voluntary association, of caste defined in terms of both dharma and democracy.[58]

Gaps in the Literature

The literature reviewed the importance of women's empowerment in developmental economics, policy agendas, transnational networks, and democratic studies. A consistent theme is the symbolic conflation of the Indian woman and the Indian nation, where education systems and structures become an intersectional site of negotiations, constructions, and performances of

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[58] Lloyd I. Rudolph, and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. 1960. "*The political role of India's caste associations.*" Pacific Affairs 33 (1): 5-22.

gender identities.[59] Confronting gender norms, or policy metrics and instruments, fall short

because of the symbolic capital within the mechanics of receiving an education and creating

learning communities. As mentioned before, it was compelling to note the paucity of literature

that was specific to Indian educations systems and the Indian socio-cultural context.

Tensions within Structural Compendiums:

Primarily, scholarship reported on general education since independence, focusing on

infrastructural and institutional formation, professional education, teacher education,

administration, and evaluation.

This literature did not necessarily provide a clear delineation of theoretical or analytical

frameworks. With the exception of Bhatty, the scholarship did not engage with critical analysis.

Although the choice of content, philosophers, and influences was conspicuous. There was no

direct engagement with gender issues, let alone a "woman"- question, in educational policy

design, and yet, I found it valuable to note how the literature managed questions of difference

and marginality.

Tensions in the Political Economy of Indian Education:

The literature focuses squarely on policy and developmental frameworks but refrains

from defining sex, sexuality, gender, or, even, education. Centered on educational

infrastructures and money transfers between state, national, and international organizations, the

literature conceptualized women's education instrumentally toward national development and

economic access[60]. Equality varied on a spectrum of positions: as a point of inclusion in the

national identity framework, a human right, and finally as an element of civil gender parity.[61]

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[59] Maitreyee Chaudhuri, 2004. "*Introduction*." In Feminism in India: Issues in contemporary Indian feminism, edited by Maitreyee Chaudhuri, xi-xlvi. New York: Zed Books; Bhatty 2014; Vaughan 2013.
[60] Asadullah and Yalonetezky 2012; Azam and Kingdon 2013.
[61] Vaughan 2013; Bhattacharjea and Wadhwa 2013.

The focus on the nation-state project was repetitive and expected, but shied away from a deeper engagement of political theory about women and women's education. Analysis of the political economy necessarily circumscribes the civic institutions, resources, actors, and frameworks that shape policy formation; however, the political economy described education as a tool toward empowerment, which activates as greater participation in the formal economy. Greater participation in the formal economy for women is advocated as research shows that women reinvestment their income through financial services like saving, and extending credit for small business initiatives, household and health care expenditure, and education.[62] This advocacy ensures a continuous circulation of investment in the economy (as opposed to discretionary spending) positioning and typifying women solely as economic operating in private economic spaces, thereby reinforcing women's valuation in the domestic, subsidiary gender role.

Tensions in Critical Literacy and Citizenship:

The difficulty of identifying tensions in this set of scholarship is the range of topics reviewed, and their tangential relevance to Indian educational contexts. However, it is important to note the existence of this range as it relates to the previous sections of the literature review. The scholarship detailed in this section provided conceptual terminology and frameworks to analyze critical democratic participation of women, and individual-community-state interactions with the imbricate identities, roles, and spaces of women.

Tensions in the reviewed literature led to the identification of critical research areas. The literature is preoccupied with 'measuring' gender equality across the nation and in the process tends to associate with indicators, which relate more to the presence of female students and teachers in schools, or household expenditure on education, or Meta concerns of transnational

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[62] Asadullah and Yalonetezky 2012; De and Endow 2008; Bhatty 2014; Vaughan 2013.

aid networks,[63] rather than the gendered experiences within national educational institutions facilitated by key foundational policy constructs. The literature does not explore the nature of gender and related power differentials, as expressed in Indian society and policies, nor does it interact with new modes of learning about gender in a globalized economy, or how national cultures create gender roles.

> … (Gender) relations can be researched through historical, sociological, and cultural analyses of the role which gender plays in the construction of national cultures and regimes, its place in national development patterns and within public and/or private educational institutions.[64]

National subjects are constituted through exclusionary operations where agency belongs to persons who can confront an external political field, making them instrumental actors. Agency is always and only a political prerogative. Once it become clear that subjects are constituted through exclusionary or segregational operations it becomes politically necessary to trace the operations of that constitution, marginalization, and silencing.[65]

Politics is a representational discourse, and the literature illustrates the complex interplay of the dissonant discourses and discursive practices, that foreclosed gender constructs in the available scholarship.[66] It behooves to question how foundational constructs about gender are activated, or negated. Are they anachronistic, or temporally dependent? How was the political construction and regulation of the subject category of Woman foreclosed in policy discourse? How is the materiality of bodies, of sex, preconditional to agentive definitions?[67] How are the conditions for public and private dualisms constructed in policy discourse, and how are they objectified and activated for public imaginations?

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[63] Asadullah and Yalonetezky 2012; Azam and Kingdon 2013; Vaughan 2013
[64] Arnot and Fennel 2008, 516
[65] Judith Butler, and Joan W. Scott, 1992. *Feminists Theorize the political*. New York: Routledge.
[66] Tata Institute of Social Sciences 2014; Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011; Stromquist 2006.
[67] Butler and Scott 1992

Theoretical Approaches

In reviewing nearly forty peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and essays that directly interacted with Indian educational policy for women or the cultural context of women's education in India, I found only a single incidence in which theoretical paradigms were presented and applied with clarity. However, I find the central tenets of the Women in Development (WID) approach, Gender and Development (GAD) model, and World Society Theory are applicable to other studies in the review, albeit in varying degrees. In this section, I summarize the theoretical frameworks evident in the literature reviewed, and describe contentions and limitation to address the research opportunities identified in the literature.

Developmental Approaches

The Women in Development (WID) approach, and Gender and Development (GAD) model emerged as analytical tools aiding critical policy analysis and global developmental initiatives. In terms of analyzing education systems and their impact on girls and women, these tools have been instrumental in manifesting the complexities of gender definitions and interactions to agendas like nationalism, development, or modernity (Vaughan 2013)

Women in Development Approach: The Women in Development (WID) Approach emerged as a radical extension of the neo-Marxist feminist approach, Women and Development (WAD).[68] WAD focused on the relationship of gender to developmental studies, arguing that women had always been economic actors in their societal contexts, and did not need to be "brought in or integrated into the formal economy." Poverty eradication schemes spear headed by international financial institutions had only sustained international structures of inequality.

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[68] Nataliia̐ Sergeevna Mirovit͡skaia̐, and William L. Ascher, 2001. *Guide to sustainable development and environmental policy.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

WID however, is a critical analytical perspective "dealing with the differential impact of development and modernization strategies by gender": a model that focuses on the relationship of patriarchy and capitalism in critical policy analysis.[69] WID strategizes on instrumental economic models that separate women from the formal capitalist economy and developmental processes, reinforcing patriarchal inequalities of income generation.[70]

The primary criticism with this approach is that it analyzes the economic activity of women from a singularly class-based perspective and fails to account for the intersectionality of women's experiences, especially in terms of race, color, and ethnicity. Greater value is accorded on women's income-generating productivity, as activated by market forces and not on women's reproductive capabilities in domestic, social, and cultural spaces.[71]

Gender and Development (GAD) Approach: The Gender and Development (GAD) Approach departs from the WAD and WID, in that it analyzes the social construction of power structures.[72] It is considered a more comprehensive approach to gendered valuations of economic activity.[73] Political and social institutions, like policy networks and the household, are deconstructed and analyzed as contested sites where gender expectations interact with socio-economic activities, creating essentializing masculinities and femininities.

Unlike WAD and WID's focus on women, the GAD focuses on social assignments of gender. Designed as a developmental rubric of associations, it ultimately applies gender and social relations analysis, to the layers of economic activities and gendered work, to calculate

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Fabiola Campillo, and María Angélica Fauné, 1993, *Gender, women and development: A framework for IICA's action in Latin America and the Caribbean.* San Jose: Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

[71] Mirovitskaia and Ascher 2001

[72] E. Unterhalter, 2005, "*Fragmented frameworks? Researching women, gender, education, and development.*" In Beyond access: Transforming policy and practice for gender equality in education, edited by S. Aikman and E. Unterhalter, 15-35. Oxford: Oxfam.

[73] Campillo and Fauné 1993

efficiencies, reasons, and processes that lead to conventions of access and control.[74] Relying on

quantitative exogenous data to make policy recommendations that are conscious of gender

hierarchies and power differentials in social economies: the most commonly used frameworks

for gender policy and planning in the GAD approach are the Moser Gender Planning Framework

developed by Dr. Caroline Moser at the University of London and the Harvard Analytical

Framework.[75] However, the GAD approach faces criticism for being operatively indistinct from

the WAD and WID approaches. In fact, despite professing a focus on gender constructions,

developmental analyses are been faulted for continuing to associate development and policy

efficiency with greater income generation for women and absorption in to the formal economy.[76]

Application in the literature: Unterhalter elevates the theoretical debates in the WAD,

WID, and GAD approaches of gender conceptions in applications to education, and global social

justice. She identifies policy positions couched in these frameworks that link education to

economic efficiency and national growth.[77] Alternating between understandings of formal

intrinsic rights of women, which focuses on their rights to access education; and substantive

intrinsic rights of women that focus on structural barriers and power differentials in gendered

inequalities in education attainment; Vaughan constructed multilateral networks of organizations

that effected national policy formulations.

Nevertheless, the literature in its entirety suffered from conflations and intellectual

ambiguity in the analytical framework. Moreover, the excessive reliance on quantitative data to

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[74] Mirovitskaia and Ascher 2001; Unterhalter, E., and A. North. 2011. "*Responding to the gended and education Millenium Development Goals in South Africa and Kenya: Reflections on education, rights, gender equality, capabilities, and global justice."* Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education 41 (4): 495-511.
[75] Mirovitskaia and Ascher 2001
[76] Unterhalter 2005; Unterhalter, E. and North 2011
[77] Vaughan 2013

determine economic efficiencies practically subverts the professed inclination of the frameworks to study institutionalized gendered hierarchies, and social constructions.

World Society Theory

World Society theory is truthfully a collection of research positions that analyze how specific policy agendas become national and international dominant preoccupations. In the context of education policy agendas, "world society theory emphasizes the spread of a common educational culture, resulting in increasing policy "isomorphism:" the adoption of increasingly similar national level policies."[78]

The theoretical research explicates a range of cultural mechanisms by which national preoccupations with education policy, and observed similarities across education systems globally are rooted in the spread of a single, hegemonic (read: Western), world culture and its models of legitimation and education. Vaughan consolidates its premises as:

1. Conferring little to no national agency in policy formulations.

2. Perceiving a structuralist inevitability of normative and cultural influence of Western principles due to the current configuration on international relations. In this respect the theory sees policy agendas moving only in a unilateral direction with no reciprocity or agency exercised by national or state actors.

It is impossible to ignore the paradigmatic loopholes in "World Society" theory. Primarily it assumes an uncomplicated, uncontested hegemony of the West over global relations, as a reified core-periphery, unidirectional, influence. Vaughan takes special cares to note how processes by which Western cultural paradigms exert their influence are not detailed, especially regarding education policy and practice. This is not to disregard that there is significant

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[78] Vaughan 2013, 119

theoretical evidence to support the similarities in education systems but the lack of evidence is suspect.

Applications in the literature: Applying select elements of critical and post-colonial theory,[79] Vaughan examines the impact of European colonialism evolving in a world capitalist economy as primarily binary, top-down dynamics where a directive, consumer at the "Core" who own the ideation and innovative means of production; and a subaltern subject at the "Periphery" responding to core demands. In the application of critical theories, the scholarship deconstructs the unidirectional binary, of the Core-Periphery and supplies it with more relational dynamism.

On the other hand, some reviewed scholarship, covering education systems and critical citizenship[80] inadvertently challenged these binary representations by activating a dialogical account[81] and redefining the operant meanings[82] of otherwise binary, associative international relations

Structure of the Dissertation

This study concentrates on national policy articulations of women's educational opportunity and the historical development of women as political objects and subjects. Tracing the meta-narratives of masculinity and femininity that fed into educational initiatives, this historical narrative charts the exercise of post-colonial nationhood and the institution of education aiding this cause.

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[79] M. A. R. Habib, 2008. *Modern literary criticism and theory: A history.* Wiley India Edition. New Delhi: Blackwell Publishing

As a genre of contemporary history, postcolonialism questions and reinvents the modes of cultural perception – the ways of viewing and being viewed. An anthropology, postcolonialism records human relations among the colonial nations and the subaltern peoples exploited by colonial rule. As critical theory, postcolonialism presents, explains, and illustrates the ideology and praxis of neocolonialism with examples drawn from the humanities – history, political science, philosophy, Marxist theory, sociology, anthropology, human geography, cinema, theology, feminism, linguistics, and postcolonial literature.

[80] Arnot and Fennel 2008; Panikkar 2011; Unterhalter 2005

[81] Ramaiah 1992; Mohanty 2013

[82] Stromquist 2006

The questions guiding this endeavor do not take for granted terms or analytic categories, but seek the orchestrations of political commitments and their consequent creation of the Indian Woman as a political agent. How have India's National Policy(ies) on Education articulated and defined women's educational opportunities in post Independent India (post -1947)? Through what means are "foundational" notions of the female subject of history, a female claimant before the law, and a female citizen, qualified in educational policies? How is the Category of "Woman" foreclosed in the ontological politics of articulation and agency? What are the political operations that constrain and constitute the FIELD (in this case, the political field would be educational policies and ideologies) within which women's positions emerge? What EXCLUSIONS effectively constitute and naturalize that FIELD? How is the female experience in education constructed, valued/normalized, and described? What have been the instances of deconstruction and re-description?

Chapter 1 follows the British Raj and the Indian Independence Movement. The twin values of Protestantism and modernity traveled to India with the East India Company, and influenced the reformation of Hinduism first, and much later, Islam. The participation in British institutions created a class of urban anglophilic Indians and introduced India's first universal language, English, which laid the seeds for the independence movement. Christian missionaries and Hindu reformers sought to shake Indian civilization of its petrified spirituality, and perpetual communal turmoil. Evangelical Hindu reformers sought a cultural unity to direct action, purporting a monotheism to Hinduism. In defending Hinduism against the missionaries, the reforms Christianized it; and this fueled nationalist discourse and fundamentalisms. The fusion of the religious and political, the traditional with modernization, the ascetic with the pragmatic,

is the dance of contradictions that underlie women's movements and educational reform through the independence movement.

Chapter 2 reviews the administration of Jawaharlal Nehru and the aftermath of India's Independence from the British in 1947. The mutilation of the Indian Subcontinent along communal lines had invigorated nationalisms born from the political corruption of religion. Balancing the dysfunctions of partition, central leadership operated in the shadow of the independence movement, the assassination of Gandhi, and the herculean task of institution building. Nehru was Mahatma Gandhi's heir, not his disciple, and he took India in an entirely antipodal direction. India embraced modernity and industrialization, and Nehru's legacy was the success of a contrarian democratic process and an unfulfilled appeal for secular democracy. The debates for and about women's education and participation in the new nation betrays their tokenism in the writs of history.

Chapter 3 follows the rise of Indira Gandhi. In some aspects she followed her father's footsteps with aggressive economic intervention by the state. Her tenure is marked by the struggle between centralism and federalism; democracy with modernity and a separation of powers and despotic centralism. Despite a hallmark review of the status of women in India, the Gandhi years were plagued with neurotic sloganeering, crony capitalism, and eventually authoritarianism during the Emergency years. The ensuing political habits are not unfamiliar: patrimonialism, corruption, economic stagnation, and profligate bureaucratization motivated by political, not economic or ethical, logic.

Chapters 4 and 5 account for the entry of global dynamics in national developmental agendas. The gradual liberalization of the economy came out of the extreme deficit in the balance of payments, paralleling the rise of coalition governments at the center and a

renegotiation of federal relations. Separatism and fragmentation saw a violent resurgence; at first as a backlash to the excesses of Gandhi's administration, but later as a symptom of increasing socio-economic inequalities. When education entered policy agendas it came as a panacea, an urgent tourniquet against an exponentially inflating population, suffocated by its own immensity and propensity for old habits. Predictably, women were repositioned as national care-givers, agents of change indecorously charged with their own protection, community development, and empowerment while facing violence and moral enforcement in public spaces.

The culminating chapter sifts through the homilies and looks at the structural and institutional hegemonies influenced by local gendered norms. In the blind critique and rejection of the West as a coercive, modernizing force, Indian nationalism has sanctified local and regional hegemonies which inevitably drew their legitimacy from the oppression and subjugation of feminized populations, most obviously women. For the purposes of this dissertation, the foreclosure of women as supplementary political agents through their education remains the focus. However, feminized populations include Indian Muslims, Scheduled Castes, Tribes, Backward Classes, the physically disabled, and untouchables or Dalits. Conflicts and segregationist tendencies compounded these hegemonies, and many saw legislative legitimacy and accord when electoral ambitions needed to be acquiesced.

Tracing this miniature history is effectually a personal democratic exercise, another piece of discourse to add to a corpus of dialogue. Dialogue – with all its sluggish, contradictory, diverse imaginaries – activates the crux of heterogeneity and educational dexterity; a salve against the passions and fevers of hegemonic pretensions. In the Indian democratic enterprise, education requires a reconstruction as the singular dialectic task ceaselessly demanding a ruthless introspection of historical creations, and inviting multiformity, nuance, and leadership.

Chapter 1. Weaving Destinies

Mr. President, Sir, in the absence of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, it is my proud privilege, on behalf of the women of' India, to present this flag to the Nation through you. I have a list here of nearly a hundred prominent women of all communities who have expressed a desire to associate themselves with this ceremonial. There are hundreds and hundreds of other women who would equally like to participate in this function. It is in the fitness of things that this first flag that will fly over this august House should be a gift from, the women of India. We have donned the saffron colour, we have fought, suffered and sacrificed in the cause of our country's freedom. We have today attained our goal. In presenting this symbol of our freedom, we once more offer our services to the nation. We pledge ourselves to work for a great India, for building up a nation that will be a nation among nations. We pledge ourselves for working for a greater cause, to maintain the freedom that we have attained. We have great traditions to maintain, traditions that made India so great in the past. It is the duty of every man and woman to preserve these traditions so that India may hold her spiritual supremacy over the world. May this flag be the symbol of that great India and may it ever fly high and serve as a light in the bloom that threatens the world today. May it bring happiness to those who live under its protecting care.[83]

At the stroke of the midnight hour, the Women of India, swaddled the infant nation by presenting the *Tiranga* (India's National Flag), with the congenital pact to maintain India's traditions and "*her* spiritual supremacy". The *Tiranga* has a rich nation-state historiography linking *Satyagraha*, the concept of *Swaraj,* and the Independence movement, while unifying the diverse interests, passions, and political actions under the rallying symbol of the flag[84]. In the sweeping historical gravitas of that midnight hour, the women of India sealed themselves as the unifying, rallying symbols of mothers, caregivers, and protectors of India's traditions, spirituality; the keepers of the national private sphere. In that stately metonymy began our charge and education as the independent Indian woman.

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[83] Constituent Assembly Debates (Proceedings). 1947. Volume V. August 14. Accessed March 2016. http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/vol5p1.htm.
PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FLAG by Mrs. Hansa Mehta to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the Flag Presentation Committee.
[84] Arundhati Virmani,, 1999. "*National Symbols under Colonial Domination: The Nationalization of the Indian Flag, March-August 1923*." Past and Present Society (No. 164): 169-197.

Forged through the experience of colonialism, the political symbolism of the *Swaraj* flag was nationalized through a series of party, policy, and popular processes. However, the conflation of the Indian woman with the "soul" of the Indian nation had more amorphous origins in the deeply syncretic socio-cultural processes of educating the many Indias and its many women for their role post-independence. Femininity and Masculinity are defined along strict hierarchical caste, religion, class, and sexual lines. The definitions of each had long effects on the formal and informal policy formulations where rich debates developed the problem of defining, or pinning, the idea of an "Indian" woman. This chapter provides a sweep of Indian educational policies and traditions for women before 1947.

<div align="center">Women's Education Pre-Independence</div>

The earliest records of women with an education are from the nineteenth century. Haimabati Sen rebelled against the superstition that educated women become widows, and went on to become a doctor. Ramabai Dongre was introduced to the Vedas by her mother, who was in turn educated by her husband, a vedic scholar, against social convention and to great opprobrium. Ramabai earned the title *Pandita* and *Saraswati* for her mastery over Sanskrit and the scriptures. Fighting popular convention against "women of learning," Rassundari Devi details her craving for knowledge in her autobiography *Amar Jiban* (My Life) published in 1876.[85] She calls reading "one of the bad aspects of the old system" which displeased elders – "older women"– during her time. However, she teaches herself to read, write, and finally pen her memoir, while raising twelve children and stealing time away from housework.

The old system she refers to, harkens to women like Maithrayee and Gargi, who excelled in Vedic exegesis, even composing their own literary work. The *Atharva Veda* emphasized the

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[85] Forbes, Geraldine. 1996. *"Education for Women."* In Women in Modern India. The New Cambridge History of India, by Geraldine Forbes, 32-63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

necessity of women's education as a precursor to marriage, while Buddhist and Jain traditions

trained women to become monks or *Bhikkunis* (though they were lower in the holy hierarchy

than the *Bhikkus).* One hypothesis is that waves of invaders, and the socio-cultural instability that

ensued between 200 B.C. and 1200 A.D, rocked these seemingly isonomic foundations, which

effectually devalued the status of women and their access to education[86]. On the other hand,

Pandita Ramabai, as a champion of social reform and women's education, in writing *The High*

Caste Hindu Woman in 1887, first identifies and makes the systemic case against traditional

Hindu institutions. Society was acutely segregated by sex: instrumentally, spatially and

temporally, and women's survival depended on maintaining the harsh patrilineal, patriarchal

status quo. The traditional Hindu conception of feminine nature was its inclination toward evil,

depravity, promiscuity, folly, and malevolence; and therefore needing subordination by a rational

male to bring her to dharma[87]. Female literacy was low in comparison to male literacy; which too

was an abysmal 6 to 20 percent depending on the region, when compared against Western

counterparts, or Japan. Traditional or village schools taught boys elementary reading and

accounting, and higher schools for Hindu Brahmins taught Sanskrit grammar, lexicography, and

literature, while Persian and Arabic schools catered to the Muslim population.[88]

The first schools for women were started by English and American missionaries in the

early 1800s and were well received and attended by women in poorer areas. A "home education"

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[86] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011

[87] Hindu law was first encoded in the *Manusmriti* or the Laws of Manu and later the Rules of Right Conduct or *dharma-sastras*. In it women are the combination of the energy-power or *Shakti* and nature. Unfettered she is dangerous. A popular myth presents the male harnessing dangerous female Power, thus rendering her benevolent. The benevolent goddesses in the Hindu pantheon are precisely those who transferred control of their sexuality (*Shakti*/Nature) to their husbands. Mythology is replete with stories of the properly chaste wife who helps her husband win battles by giving him her power (Wadley 1977) and (Doniger, The Hindus: An Alternative History 2009).

Focusing on Hindu law does not mean that Muslim women were not subject to an Islamic interpretation of feminine subordination. The purdah was most strictly enforced in Muslim communities.

[88] Forbes 1996, 35

movement[89] – forays in to the *zenanas* (women's quarters) or *andarmahals* (inner rooms) – also

initiated by English, Scottish, American, for those that could not attend school due to cultural

norms of *ghoonghat* and *purdah* (physical seclusion of women) or segregation, and to cater to

adult women's education. By 1854 – when Charles Wood sent his Despatch on an education

system for India to the Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie – mission schools were

serving about 7000 girls across the British-Indian provinces.[90] By then, fears of evangelical

influence and religious conversions made women's education an active concern among

unorthodox Hindus, Brahmos, and radical students. Schools catering to upper caste Hindu

women (as opposed to the largely lower caste and poor attendees of mission schools) were set up

by the Brahmo Samaj at first, followed by the Prarthna Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Theosophical

Society.

> The movement for women's education is generally described as having been formed by
> the need of a rising middle class to adapt its women to a Western milieu. With the growth
> of British education and new employment opportunities for men, the public-private
> dichotomy grew into an opposition between the world and the home, rather than a
> complementarity of the two. …the home began to represent the dead weight of traditions
> which were scorned as bigoted or barbaric.[91]

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[89] Ibid..40

The moral and financial support of the colonial authorities was essential to the spread of female education, but did not guarantee schools for girls. Unlike education for males, education for females did not automatically enhance the prestige and financial standing of the family. In fact the opposite may have been true. Indian norms and social customs made the British model of schooling difficult if not impossible. Deeply ingrained notions of sex segregation and, in some areas, of complete seclusion, meant girls had to have female teachers and study in separate institutions, the widely accepted ideal of youthful marriage limited a girl's school-going years. Moreover, the demands on women for food production (housework) and nurturing left little time for lessons and studying.
Indians were unaccustomed to sending their daughters to "schools" yet this was the only practical method of accomplishing the task. Zenana education – education given at home – was expensive, cumbersome, and largely ineffectual. Schools were the answer but what kind of schools? Who would teach? Which families would choose to send their daughters to school and for how long? If girls were married prior to puberty, could they continue their education as married women? The (male) leaders of Indian society had to respond to these questions – a far more difficult task than providing moral and material support
[90] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011, 59; R. Kumar 1993
[91] R. Kumar 1993, 14

Social and financial mobility, with employment in the colonial bureaucracy and industry, increased the demand for educated brides. The concern here was not for women as individual actors, or agents, but as "companions to men, scientific nurturers, members of civil society"[92], and a complementarity with the new world outside. This took on two very opposing strands in educative thought. One anglophilic extreme demanded an entirely English education – language, religion, manners, and behavior; a second, championed by stalwarts like I.C. Vidyasagar and Sayyid Ahmed Khan advocated a balance between cultural practice and religion, while a third, set forth by Dayanand Saraswati, envisioned a secular approach buttressed by a powerful myth of India's (Aryan) Golden Age in Vedic India where educated women were highly regarded. Western education would however "unsex" women, and so it was necessary to look to indigenous ideals of womanhood within Hindu doctrine so that she is not "deprived of her national traits of character."[93]

The First Indian Education Commission or Hunter Commission was appointed as a result of two simultaneous movements in India and England. In 1877 Calcutta University began allowing girls to take the matriculation examination, followed by Madras (1881) and Bombay (1882). Indian educationists believed higher education had expanded at the expense of primary and secondary education; while missionaries formed the General Council of Education in India (1878) in London, when the grants-in-aid promised by the Woods Despatch were not implemented to support the English run schools and colleges.[94] The Hunter Commission of 1882-83 was the first major policy directive undertaken by the British and recommended expansion of primary and secondary education, while berating the inadequacy of girl's and

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[92] Forbes 1996, 41
[93] (R. Kumar 1993, 29
[94] Aggarwal, J.C. 2010. *Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education.* 7th. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd

women's education. It also formalized the neutrality of the state regarding religious education and disconnected the state from institutions maintained by representatives of faith. Though partially implemented it did lead to an expansion in higher education with 191 colleges at the turn of the century with private initiative leading the bulk 12 colleges, 442 secondary schools, 5305 girls' schools, 45 training schools, and the Lady Dufferin Fund for girls' and women's education.[95]

The missionaries were left bereft, in a sense, having to now compete with government run schools for funds. With Lord Ripon's Self-Government Act in 1882 primary and indigenous education was entrusted to local/provincial governance bodies, secondary education remained with private bodies with greater governmental oversight. However, they did receive support from the princely families, or the Maharajas of Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, and Baroda who independently gave fillip to women and girls education. Notable moments were the Royal family of Travancore's scholarships, fee concessions for deserving students, teacher training, Labor Corps and a College for Women; which was mirrored by the Maharaja of Baroda who also extended royal patronage to the backward classes.[96]

However, the turn of the century saw large numbers who had taken matriculation exams from the five universities conferring degrees. The now, English speaking and *educated unemployed male class*[97] (not *masses* or *women*), joined the nationalists; finding purpose in mass movements in the absence of gainful employment. The Dawn Society formed under the tutelage of Professor Haridas Mukherjee in The Metropolitan Institution (now, Vidyasagar College) with

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[95] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011, 103
[96] Ibid. 83-84
Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar - Independent India's first law minister and the principal architect of the Constitution of India – was a recipient of the Maharaja of Baroda's scholarship and patronage.
[97] Ibid. 74

many of these young men taking the charge to demand vernacular (Bengali) mediums of instruction. They later pioneered the National Education Movement with support from arguments forwarded by other educationists like Rabindranath Tagore, and Dawn editor, Satish Chandra Mukherjee,[98] gaining momentum as Viceroy Curzon enacted the empire's Divide-and Rule Policy with the partition of Bengal.

Viceroy Lord Curzon (1899-1905) noted these anomalous developments and sought to reform the universities as teaching, not merely testing, bodies; while reforming the administrative sinecure infecting university affiliations. He began by laying down his vision in his convocation speeches at the University of Calcutta, and followed suit at the Conferences of Directors of Public Instruction in Shimla in 1901 and 1905. The deliberations were kept a secret with Curzon drafting 150 resolutions himself; a third on university education alone. It was an outgrowth of these initiatives that the 1902 Indian Universities Commission recommended strengthening the existing system, while the 1904 Indian Universities Act set standards for governance and accountability.

The lack of Indian representation at the conferences and later in decisive posts at the Education Department, Curzon's own scathing rhetoric directed toward the Indians, and the movement by Indian intellectuals for a systemic quantitative expansion with minimal government control, i.e. an "Indianisation" of civic services especially in education; led to a State Paper on Education released as a Resolution of the Governor-General on Council in 1904. It was the first real policy document in the public domain since 1854 that detailed the problems in the Indian education system. Calling for model primary schools and increasing the number of inspectresses;[99] it pointed out the education system's chronic problems like an overemphasis on

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[98] Aggarwal 2010, 26-32
[99] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011, 77

examinations, a more theoretical pedagogy over practical, technical, or vocational, and a neglect of the vernaculars. The flip side of Curzon's call's for reform – viewed as an arrogant imposition of Western values on India – was increased patriotism and nationalism, with frontier violence because of Hindu-Muslim rivalries leading to the first partition of Bengal.[100]

By 1906, when Lord Minto (4th Earl of Minto) succeeded Curzon, he had to bear the brunt of the National Education Movement and the agitated sentiments of nationalists. The National Council of Education was formed as well as Society for Technical Education in 1906. The blueprint recommended by the council and associated societies, was three years of Primary schooling, five years of Secondary-Lower, two years of Secondary-upper, and four years or more at the Collegiate level (3+5+2+4). To nationalize the character of the scheme, moral and denominational religious education was recommended as well as compulsory English and vernacular instruction; while assimilating the best of Indian and Occidental philosophy and including a discipline of respect of different religious communities, rites, practices, and traditions. Meanwhile Lord Minto worked with John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, on the 1909 Indian Councils Act or the Minto-Morley Reforms which would allow for more Indian representation in the Imperial Legislative Council.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale[101] served in this new legislature, having worked with Morley on the reforms. The Maharaja of Baroda had made elementary education compulsory in his state in 1906.

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[100] Ibid. 74-80.
Governor-General Hardinge annulled the partition of Bengal in 1911.
[101] Ibid. 80.
Gokhale was a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, serving as president of the Indian National Congress in 1905 and founder of the Servants of India Society. He was also Professor and Principal at Poona's celebrated Fergusson College. It was with his leadership that the Calcutta Congress in 1906 resolved that "the time had arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls, and organize a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control, and directed toward the realization of national destiny."

Within the borders of India itself, the Maharaja of Baroda has set an example of enthusiasm in the cause of education for which he is entitled to the lasting gratitude of the people of the country. His Highness began his first experiment in the matter of introducing compulsory and free education in his state in ten villages of Amreli Taluka. After watching the experiment for eight years, it was extended to the whole taluka in 1901, and finally, in 1906, primary education was made compulsory and free throughout the State for boys between the ages of 6 and 12, and for girls between the ages of 6 and 10. The age limit for girls has since been raised from 10 to 11.[102]

Gokhale moved the legislature for a resolution on compulsory education for boys six to ten years, extending to girls later, but withdrew when the Government promised to create a Department with a grant to extend primary education. When little was done to follow through, Gokhale moved a Private Bill in 1911, modeled on the Compulsory Education Acts of England of 1870 and 1976. After debates over two days, the bill was dropped fearing the consequences of "compulsion," and the fiscal commitment required from the government. He predicted its rejection repeatedly but not without inspiring the provinces of Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Punjab, Bengal, and Madras, to pass Acts for Compulsory Education and recognize its significance.

Women's education remained a secondary issue – as a private enterprise of socially conscious individuals and organizations, charity, or just chance privilege – through the first two decades of the 20th century. The British Raj increased grants to education over the years following Gokhale's initiatives. The 1913 Resolution on Educational Policy reviewed education since Curzon's Acts; noting the same systemic brokenness, underfunding, and widespread illiteracy. Women and girls' curriculum was to be revised, with a reduced emphasis on examination. Overall the State was reducing direct support in secondary and post-secondary institutions, wanted to focus its outflows toward primary education, and recommended a

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[102] Gopal Krishna Gokhale 1911. *G. K. Gokhale's speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on the Primary Education Bill (16 March 1911).* March 16. Accessed March 2016. http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415485432/32.asp.

university for each province, with colleges in each *mofussil*.[103] But the drums of war[104] had already begun to sound in Europe. Technical institutions were established as industrialists like the TATA group, and provincial governments teamed up to meet the production demands of the war efforts.

Towards the end of the Great War, the Calcutta University Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Michael Sadler, Vice Chancellor of Leeds University to explore the directives under the 1913 Resolution on Educational Policy. Though primarily a tool to investigate the engorgement of Calcutta University and its systemic dysfunctions, the problems and recommendations in the report were seen as bearing weight over the university systems across the British Presidencies and Provinces. The fact that the final report was submitted in thirteen volumes after seventeen months of surveying in 1919, is proof enough of the scale it addressed. Apart from structural and administrative recommendations[105] it endorsed "Purdah Schools" for girls up to 16 years old, while authorizing a "Special Board of Women's Education" at Calcutta University, to design curriculum around the needs of women. Around the same time, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (abbreviated to the Montford reforms) in the name of creating

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[103] Originally, the regions of India outside the three East India Company capitals of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; hence, parts of a country outside an urban center; the regions, rural areas. In India, the country stations and districts as distinguished from the residencies; or, in a district, the rural localities as distinguished from a station or official residency; the country as distinguished from towns.

[104] World War I or the Great War was fought between 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918 (4 years, 3 months and 2 weeks)

[105] Aggarwal 2010, 41

Recommendations included the establishment of Intermediate colleges between school and university, vernacular (mother-tongue) instruction in all subjects except Mathematics and English, separate Boards for high school and intermediate school governance, an inter-university board to coordinate the activities across Indian Universities, and a statement on instruction and the erosion of modern Indian languages.

"We are emphatically of the opinion that there is something unsound in a system of education which leaves a young man, at the conclusion of his course, unable to speak or write his own mother tongue fluently and correctly, It is thus beyond controversy that systematic effort must henceforth be made to promote the serious study of the vernaculars in secondary schools, intermediate colleges, and in the university. The elaborate scheme recently adopted by the university for the critical, historical, and comparative study of Indian vernaculars for the M.A. examination is but the coping stone of an edifice of which the base has yet to be placed on a sound foundation, and it is only when such a structure has been completed that Bengal will have a literature worthy of the greatness and civilization of its people.

institutions of self-governance in India (a quasi-federalism), established Dyarchy through the

Government of India Act of 1919. This essentially meant that universities, and education for

Anglo-Indians and Europeans came under central purview and funding, while primary,

secondary, and intermediate education came under provincial governments receiving little to no

administrative support and central funding. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)

was established in 1921 as a provincial-center coordinating agency (as recommended in the

Calcutta University Commission of 1919) with a publishing/information programme that

maintained education records and data, but was folded in a few short years, while the

Department of Education was divested[106]. In the introductory note in his treatise on "The

Problem of National Education in India," Lajpat Rai, documented institutional failure.

> It is not my purpose to give a complete list of "national" schools and college. The object is to review some typical efforts. The only effort of this kind which was, in my judgment, truly national, was that made by the National Council of Education in Bengal, under the impetus of the Swadeshi and the Boycott. The scheme of the National Council was free from the sectarian tinge of the Upper India movements; it took no notice of denominational nationalism; it took ample cognizance of the economic needs of the country as a whole, and it frankly recognized the necessity of ignoring the official University curriculum, on the one hand and State aid on the other. It aimed at national consolidation and independence. It was a direct challenge to the Government, and the Government accepted it whole-heartedly. What came of it is known to everybody, and need not be stated here. It failed, as it was bound to do, because it came into conflict with the State. The National Council of Education still exists, but only in name. Its condition is moribund. The leaders and officers themselves have strangulated it, … the Nationalist schools, started by the Council, have, most of them been disintegrated by the force of circumstances, and the present moment the movement is nothing but a dilapidated and discarded landmark in the education progress of the country.[107]

These developments did not sit well with the Indian National Congress which had

reorganized itself around the Home Rule Movement and Mahatma Gandhi's grassroots

leadership. When an official report absolved atrocities committed under martial law and the

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[106] Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011, 89-92
[107] Lajpat Rai, 1920. *The Problem of National Education in India.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. https://archive.org, 25-26

perpetrators of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre[108] in Punjab, the INC passed a Non-Cooperation

Resolution in 1920. This resolution fueled a resurgence of the National Education Movement as

an INC issued advisory included a gradual withdrawal of children and adults enrolled in

institutions established, operated, affiliated, or aided by the Government. A reactive measure was

the quantitative increase of educational institutions that were under Indian control, especially in

the provinces. The growth spurt was so sharp that within four months of the Resolution, the

National Muslim University in Aligarh, and provincial *Vidyapeeths*[109] in Bihar, Gujarat, Kashi,

Maharashtra, and Lahore were established, along with a large number of national or native

schools with thousands of enrollees.[110]

Women's Movements and Education

At this juncture, it is important to note the development of women's activism through

participation in the Non-cooperation movement and later as *satyagrahis*. Important debates about

the education, nationalism, and the roles of women, were voiced through nationalist movements

rather than through policy documents, often invoking forms of Shakti or the goddess; conflating

it with Indian (read: Hindu) femininity. The worship of Durga, Kali, and Chandi, --

manifestations of the divine feminine or Shakti – gained ground with a goddess-centered

nationalist rhetoric in revolutionary, reactionary terrorist groups especially in Bengal. For many

young nationalists, the mother goddess or Durga, merged with the idea of mother India; and Kali

was frequently invoked to sanction violence in the Indian independence struggle. Many female

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[108] The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on 13 April 1919 when a crowd of nonviolent protesters, along with Baishakhi pilgrims, who had gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab, were fired upon by troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer.
[109] *Vidyapeeth* or *Vidyapith* is the Hindi word for University or College.
[110] Aggarwal 2010, 42
Some estimates say in 1922, 46000 were enrolled in 14 universities and 167 colleges compared to 18,000 students in 5 universities and 145 colleges in 1901; almost all male. However, my data is entirely secondary, and requires further investigation to confirm numbers.

revolutionaries like Kumudini Mitra, Sarala Debi, Madame Bhikaji Rustomji Cama, and to a

degree even Pandita Ramabai, and Annie Besant, showed a mixture of orthodox social reform,

nationalism, and even radicalism. The harnessing of Shakti was not only a way of making it safer

– containing it – but also a way in which women could find a role for themselves in nationalist

struggles. Another interpretation is also turning the threat contained within the immanently

female, uncontrollable, dangerous Shakti away from the Hindu male-self, and directing it against

the "other" of the colonizer.[111]

Madame Cama, an emphatic champion for women's education, criticized the national

education movements, and the swadeshi, non-cooperation movements for ignoring education for

women and the masses. Education for women concentrated on fulfilling their roles as wives and

mothers. Annie Besant prescribes an entire curriculum on the premise that "the province of

women in India is still the home." Focusing on Indian Literature, especially the Bhagavad Gita,

and a knowledge of all the great heroines as exemplars, so,

> … she will be fit to be the Lakshmi of the house, and the hearts of husband and children
> will safely trust in her. Girls thus educated will make the Indian home what it ought to be
> – the center of spirituality, the strength of the national religious life. Among them we
> may hope to see revived the glories of the past, the tenderness and fidelity of Sita and
> Savitri, the intellectual grandeur of Gargi, the all sacrificing spirituality of Maitreyi...[112]

She campaigned vehemently against child marriage, calling it "child-slavery, … chattel

slavery still existing in a land which we are striving to free.[113]" Besant's construction of an

Indian nation is along the spiritual/religious lines of Hinduism with a revivalist strain of Aryan

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[111] R. Kumar 1993, 41-51
[112] Annie Besant, 1917. *The Birth of New India: A Collection of Writings and Speeches on Indian Affairs*. Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 115
[113] Ibid. 161

"simplicity and spirituality"[114], especially as she forwarded an equal but complementary vision

of men and women's roles in an Independent India:

> … Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, a freer, and a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India. The wife inspires or retards the husband; the mother makes or mars the child, the power of woman to uplift or debase man is practically unlimited, and man and woman must walk forward hand-in-hand to the raising of India, else she will never be raised at al … Whatever else women's education may comprise, Hinduism, spiritual and lofty, must be its foundation and its coping-stone; when Hinduism has no longer its temple in the heart of the Hindu woman, the Motherland will be ready for the burning-ghat.[115]

Besant's sentiments are echoed by Sarojini Naidu in other platforms. In a Lecture

delivered at the Indian Social Conference in 1906 she said,

> At this great moment of stress and striving, when the Indian races are seeking for the ultimate unity of a common national ideal, it well for us to remember that the success of the whole movement lies centered in what is known as the woman question. It is not you but we who are the true nation builders. But it seems to me that there is not even an unanimous acceptance of the fact that the education of women is an essential factor in the process of nation-building. … The word education is the most misunderstood word in any language. The Italians, who are an imaginative people, with their subtle instinct for inner meaning of words, have made a positive difference between instruction and education and we should do well to accept and acknowledge that difference. Instruction being merely the accumulation of knowledge, might, indeed, lend itself to conventional definition, but education is an immeasurable, beautiful, indispensable atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being. Does one man dare to deprive another of his birthright to God's pure air which nourishes his body? How, then, shall a man dare to deprive another of its immemorial inheritance of liberty and life? And yet, my friends, mas has so dared in the case of Indian women. That is why you men of India are today what you are: because your fathers, in depriving your mothers of that immemorial birthright, have robbed you, their sons, of your just inheritance. … Educate your women and the nation will take care of itself, for it true today as it was yesterday and will be to the end of human life that the hand that rocks the cradle is the power that rules the world.[116]

The rhetoric is as much a construction on Indian femininity as it is of Indian masculinity.

The place of Indian women in national life would be as mothers. Indian men were complicit in

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[114] R. Kumar 1993, 48
[115] Besant 1917, 155, 160
[116] Sarojini. Naidu, 1925. *Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu*. 3rd. Madras: G. A. Nateson & Co., 11-13. Lecture delivered at the Indian Social Conference, Calcutta in December 1906.

their own emasculation by colonists because they had ignored the vital function of mothers as first, the womb for sons and men, and then as the first educators of men. The education *sons* deserved from their mothers on how to be "men and not emasculated machines[117]" had been denied to them because their mothers were not educated to produce and care for a strong, healthy Hindu Aryan race. At some level this speaks to demands for reforms in maternal health, child marriage, and widow remarriage – as exemplified by the ideals of The Dufferin Fund set up in 1885, passing from vicereine to vicereine until 1947, to pay for the training of female doctors and the establishment of *Zenana* hospitals. But on another level the spectrum of a woman's role ranged and blurred from the spirituality of motherhood, to eugenicist ideals of a healthier Indian race necessary to the creation of an Indian empire (as opposed to a British/Muslim/or Other Colonial empire). The paradigms established by the women's reform movements – be it through education, working-class mothers, middle class women's roles, and later with the swadeshi and satyagrahi civic engagement of women – would remain influential in policy formation and debates long after 1947.

Christian missionaries posed a narrative counterpoint to the Hindu construction and reclamation of Indian femininity through pioneering forays into formal education – setting up missionary schools, colleges and home schooling programs – along with conducting their own surveys of Indian education as their work reacted to successive policies by the Raj. A formidable treatise by Minna G. Cowan[118] in 1912, explains how the influence of Christian missionaries and the spread of Christian ethics through education altered local attitudes to women's education and

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[117] R. Kumar 1993, 50

[118] Minna Galbraith Cowan, 1912. *The Education of the Women of India.* New York: Fleming H Revell Company. Minna G. Cowan is identified in "World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader, By Peter N. Stearns" as a "…British educational authority from a women's college in Oxford University." Her book locates her in Girton College of the University of Cambridge, a notable alumnus of which also happens to be Sarojini Naidu.

role in society. She describes the contemporary means, patrons, and methods of women's

education in Burma, East Bengal and Assam, the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, the royal

endeavors in Bhopal and Baroda, along with tipping her scholarly hat to South India, particularly

the Madras presidency. After recognizing the clash and romance[119] of antagonistic cultures – the

Christian West with the Hindu and Mohammedan (Muslim) East – she advocates for a

Christianizing of every sector of education for Indian women. She does commend the central

government's policy towards secular education in government aided or administered schools, but

pushes the Christian ethos of formal education as the liberating, progressive catalyst in women's

education. She stated the problem as,

> The "secluded ones" of the real India have no corporate life and belong to no society save
> that of the family. The unit of Indian civilization is the family, and where that word
> includes the joint-family to remote degrees, one may perhaps faintly understand what the
> corporate influence of the women of the household means, and measure it against the
> impotence of a mere society. … Hitherto the weight of women's opinion has been
> conservative and religious. A combination of enforced ignorance and overdone religion
> have not only made women in India willing victims of customs unjust and hurtful in the
> highest degree, but it has also made them the most formidable most effective opponents
> of all change and innovation.[120]

Cowan credits the nationalists, especially Goshala, in their calls for more indigenous

control of national education and states, while charting the education "renaissance" effective

through Christian values,

> To some thinkers the most fundamental flaw in the whole system has seemed the
> development of one-half of the community far beyond that of the other. In spite of recent
> progress the literate percentage is 10.50 for men, and only 10.4 for women (1911 Census

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[119] Ibid. 14
… the modern world of the East has its own romance, that of the meeting of diverse civilizations, of the craving for
truth and reality, of multitudes in the valley of decision. The old chivalry is there in a new form…. The new thought
and new ideals which are permeating the whole East have no more striking phase that their manifestation in the life
of women. The tentative attitude towards growing freedom, the hesitation to enter in and possess, the recurring
tragedy of those who are ahead of their times, and of others for whom the new wine is too strong, are only partial
aspects of a problem which cuts deep into modern civilization. The women who live behind the veil in India, or
who, though without, are utterly untouched by modern education and modern ideas, are still the vast majority, and
there is in no sense a Feminist movement…"
[120] Ibid, 19-20

Returns. In 1901, 9.8 per cent men, 0.07 per cent women); the removal of this discrepancy might mean the raising of the whole of social life and far towards the solution of other problems. Hence in every district there are ardent advocates of female education. A realization of the necessity for an educated and emancipated womanhood is now no longer confined to those sections of the community which are directly influenced by Christianity, but is laying hold of Eastern nations as a whole. Hardly a Congress or debating society exists which does not pass resolutions thereon, hardly an Indian journal which does not emphasize the importance of the feminine factor…. There is nothing more striking than the emphasis which is laid in these articles on the sanction found in Vedic classics for the education of women and on the modern movement as a renaissance, and not an overthrow of ancient Aryan ideas.[121]

Cowan concluded her arguments with a persuasive claim for the Christian spirit inherent

in secular policy.

The appeal of this book is thus for the Christianizing of every factor in the education of women in India… Can the Educational Service be supplied in all its branches with women who, while absolutely loyal to the great principle of neutrality, yet seek through it the spiritual in the material, and whose whole work in Empire-building is consciously related to the Kingdom of Christ? India has known men of this type in the Government Service, and has esteemed their strict neutrality the more because of the Christian conviction which lay behind it. The influence of Christian ethics in the Government schools behind such moral instruction as is possible is enormous, and it naturally enters into the teaching of secular subjects. … If the Government policy were ultimately modified so as to permit of parallel religious instruction, the direct opportunity would be present, but in the meantime indirect religious influence has a very definite place. … A spiritual heritage involves responsibility and opportunity. Nearly a century of patient work for the women of India is written in the annals of the Church…. Facts indicate the appointment of in the future of women to act as Tutors or Directresses of Studies to the girl students in the mixed mission colleges. There is the possibility also of women's Christian colleges. On every side the need is apparent, and the power to meet it lies with the women of the English-speaking countries. … The hesitation to respond to it springs in part from the sense of reverence for things sacred.[122]

Some of this ferment found institutional recognition and deliberation through the All

India Women's Conference, operating on the premise that "problems connected with girls'

education are different in provinces and localities." The conference rectified this by conducting

provincial conferences, with proceedings presented at a national conference by an elected

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[121] Ibid. 25-26
[122] Ibid. 246-248

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representative, which were further synthesized for publication and distributed to all Indian educational authorities.[123] The first conference had a whopping 2000 attendees, both male and female, and hosted by the prestigious Fergusson College in Poona University. The memorandum on education drafted as a result called for an education aimed in the service of humanity, an expansion of subject/content matter to include domestic science, journalism, social science, and architecture, and scholarships for women in medicine, and law, as well as the above subjects/study-areas.

However, by the second conference, debate ensued about expanding the conference issue-mandate to support the Sahib Harbilas Sarda's Bill (Child Marriage Restraint Act) which eventually got passed, precisely due to the immense support garnered by conference members and other women's organizations. Gradually the conference took to resolving for more political and legislative measures for women's empowerment with a committee delegated to education. By 1932, the Lady Irwin College for Domestic Science was opened in Delhi with funds collected through the conference while in the following year, representatives from the conference, the Indian Women's Association and the National Council of Women were invited to give evidence in favor of women's franchise to a parliamentary committee in London. The conference was instrumental in presenting a manifesto on the political, social, and educational status of women in India to the League of Nations and the Government of India; launching an English journal, *Roshni* (light) in 1938 to highlight women's issues.[124] Despite the milestones, the Conference lost its more radical members to the nationalist cause, and maintained its legitimacy through a conservative reformist line supporting the nationalist movement.

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[123] R. Kumar 1993, 68-69

[124] All India Women's Conference. 2014. *History.* November. Accessed May 2016. http://aiwc.org.in/data/History.pdf

Gandhi on Education

Meanwhile, Gandhi's principles of nonviolent resistance, satyagraha, and swaraj (self-rule or self-sufficiency) gained momentum through his writings in *Harijan* and *Young India*. He crystalized a pedagogy and system for education radically opposed to the western model of industrialized modernization, and materialist economic progress. He instead held the family as the nucleus, and the community as a larger "joint-family" unit that worked on the "moral basis of cooperation." Drawing from his experiences at the Tolstoy and Phoenix Farms in South Africa in the early 1900s, where communal self-sufficiency blended with a belief in bioregional self-reliance, he began articulating the political ideal of *Sarvodaya*[125] (welfare for all) which depended on a decentralized government and self-sustaining, harmonious communities. Decades later this would translate as the *Nai Talim,* a scheme initially known as *Buniyadi Shiksha* or Basic Education. Gandhi used the word "basic" to contextualize education to Indian circumstance and culture; making it adaptable and flexible to the vocational and socio-cultural needs of the villages[126] that he believed were the moral productive core of Indian society. He addressed his views on education in the *Harijan*:

> What we need is educationists with originality, fired with true zeal, who will think out
> from day to day what they are going to teach their pupils. Teachers cannot get this
> knowledge through musty volumes. He has to use his own faculties of observation and
> thinking and impart his knowledge to the children through his lips with the help of a

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[125] Gandhi coined the term Sarvodaya as a compound from two Sanskrit roots: *sarva* (all) and *udaya* (uplift)
[126] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, 1945. *Educational Resources: Select Letters*. October 5. Accessed 5 14, 2015. http://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/gandhicomesalive/comesalive_selectedletters.htm
In letters to Jawaharlal Nehru through 1945, he clarifies just what he means by "village."
From letter to Nehru on October 5, 1945:
"You must not imagine that i am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague nor cholera nor small pox; no one will be idle; no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour."
From letter to Nehru on November 13, 1945
"…the unity of society should be a village, or call it a small and manageable group of people who would, in the ideal, be self-sufficient (in the matter if vital requirements) as a unit bound together in the bonds of mutual co-operation and inter-dependence."

craft. This means a revolution in the method of teaching, a revolution in the teacher's outlook.

Prejudices die hard. I will have done a good day's work if I have made you realize this one central fact that the new education scheme is a little of literary education and little of craft. It is full education up to the primary stage through the medium of a craft. … Useful, manual labor, intelligently performed is the means par excellence for developing the intellect. A balanced intellect presupposed a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. That is why we give to manual labor the central place in our curriculum of training here.

True education of the intellect can only come through the intelligent use of the body… for the development of the mind and body must go hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul; by spiritual learning I mean the education of the heart. … But as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfil our obligations to the nation in this respect in the given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting.

Whatever may be true of other countries, in India at any rate where more than eighty per cent of the population is agricultural and another ten per cent industrial, it is a crime to make education merely literary, and to unfit boys and girls for manual work in later life. Indeed, I hold that as the larger part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught the dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to despise labour. There so no reason why a peasant's son after having gone to a school should become useless, as he does become, as an agricultural labourer. It is a sad thing that our school boys look upon manual labour with disfavour, if not contempt.

I am not opposed to education even of the highest type attainable in the world. The state must pay for it wherever it has definite use for it. I am opposed to all higher education being paid for from general revenue. It is my firm conviction that the vast amount of so called education in the arts, given in our colleges, is sheer waste and has resulted in unemployment among the educated classes. [127]

These views gained valuable currency with the Government of India Act of 1935[128]

which, in a manner, dulled the Dyarchy imposed by the Government of India Act of 1919. To the

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[127] M. K. Gandhi, Gandhi: The Heritage of Non Violence 1969, 31-32
Though these excerpts were taken from a UNESCO compilation, Gandhi's complete writings and publications, including his articles in *Harijan* and *Young India*, are digitally archived in https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/ for verification or perusal.
[128] Prominent Gandhian and educator J.P. Naik called the 1935 Government of India Act – where provincial electorates were expanded to Indian nationals – a monumental fifth act in India's education drama. His 1943 treatise titled "A Review of Modern Education in India (1813-1942)" is a uniquely extended literary metaphor on the conflicts of educating pre-independence Indians.

British government's chagrin, the INC swept the provincial polls, and consolidated the Hindu electorate. Education being under provincial, ergo Indian, purview; Gandhi's remarks on education could not be better positioned. As INC president, he called a Conference of National Workers in Wardha, where a committee of educators chaired by Dr. Zakir Hussain[129] were commissioned with developing a system of education that imbibed a Gandhian syllabi, taught in the vernacular or mother-tongue, and would gradually gain self-sufficiency. As a result of the Committee's report presented in 1938's annual Congress session, an All-India Board called the *Hindustani Talimi Sangh* was formed to oversee the programmatic implementation in the seven provinces with Congress ministries.

What came to be known as the Wardha Scheme became the first Indian-led and designed blueprint for a national system of education. Along with a detailed syllabus the Conference report's resolutions to 1) provide free and compulsory education for seven years nationally, 2) instruct in the mother tongue, and Hindustani in both Urdu and Hindi scripts, 3) be conscious of the child's lived social situations, and develop correlative handicraft or productive manual labor along with a curricula of mathematics, social sciences, and music, and 4) ensure the gradual economic self-sustainability of the entire system, was ratified at the INC's Haripura Session in March 1938. The document does not directly address women's education but through a collection of Gandhi's writings[130] on Women's education there is enough to glean what Gandhi envisioned the social environment of women to be and how they as a "special group" should be educated in the new national system of education.

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[129] On Dr. Zakir Husain was the shortest serving president of India but a pre-eminent educator and intellectual. He founded the prestigious Jamia Millia Universityin Delhi

[130] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, 1953. *Towards New Education.* Edited by Bharatan Kumarappa . Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
The collection of writings puts education of women in a section titled "The Education of Special Groups" along with Adult Education and Harijan (backward classes and untouchables) education.

Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another… anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of both. In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of the married pair and therefore it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Not that knowledge should be divided into watertight compartments, or that some branches of knowledge should be closed to any one; but unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.[131]

Gandhi writes on women and English (language) education,

I do not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial enterprises. The few women who may require or desire to have English education, can very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. To introduce English education in schools meant for women could only lead to prolonging our helplessness…. When courses of education have been framed with the needs of an entire society in view, you cannot supply the requirements of the few who have cultivated a literary taste.[132]

He placed the burden of guilt on the shoulders of Indian men as he addressed the illiteracy of women,

As for illiteracy among the women, its cause is not mere laziness and inertia as in the case of men. A more potent cause is the status of inferiority with which an immemorial tradition has unjustly branded her. Man has converted her into a domestic drudge and an instrument of his pleasure, instead of regarding her as his helpmate and 'better half'! The result is a semi-paralysis of our society. Woman has rightly been called the mother of the race. We owe it to her and to ourselves to undo the great wrong that we have done her.[133]

Gandhi's utilitarian emphasis of any education system to fit all that is "a permanent part of a villagers' life," ensconced conflicting views on the status and purpose of women's education. Agrarian-rural culture in India defined social relations and gender roles. Definitions of domesticity included women's unskilled labor in agricultural production doing sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting. In poverty stricken areas with whimsical monsoons,

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[131] Ibid. 85
[132] Ibid. 86
[133] Ibid. 86

where the small farmer tradition is buttressed by Laws of Divided Inheritance[134], women

frequently engaged in subsistence farming without rights to land ownership. Before and after

independence, women remained exploitatively employed and under (or un-) paid in commercial

tea and cotton plantations, mills, and oil-seed and vegetable farming. The agricultural industry's

reliance on female labor is so entrenched that even in 2011 the agricultural workforce was 75%

female[135].

In the harsher light of economies-of-scale, Gandhi's romantic provincialisms grossly

misread the status of the "common" Indian woman and her mandate of domesticity in the

villages. Essentializing Indian femininity in domesticity and calling on the masculine to uplift

women from drudgery and sexual servitude, by educating her to be a better "supplement,"

"helpmate," and a "mother of the race;" Gandhi set up a practically irrevocable double-standard

in the political subjectivity of Indian womanhood. Disregarding her material contribution to

labor – especially in an idealistic education system that sought a holistic union of mind, body,

and context – further regressed her into an abstract caricature, a performative *subject to/in*

India's (or Gandhi's) moral imaginary.

This, however, is a modern criticism of Gandhi's education policy. CABE under the

leadership of Sir John Sargent as Educational Advisor to the Government of India and the

Chairmanship of Sardar Sir Jogendra Singh, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council,

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[134] The small farmer tradition of India can be drawn back to the first farm reforms of independent India. Known as the Laws of Divided Inheritance, the reforms were meant to limit the conglomeration of land, by mandating redistribution as land was divided among male inheritors from the prior generation. The perpetuation of these laws not only limits farm size but also bars women from ownership or inheritance. Furthermore, as small farmers face the increasing competition with larger farm operations an increasing number of men migrate to city centers for higher wages and employment. Women are in turn left to support the family structure and support small farm lifestyle.
[135] Agriculture is only 17.01% of India's GDP in 2014-2015, with agro sub-sector Cropping, contributing 11.77%. This essentially means that the largest number of women are disproportionally employed by the lowest contributing sector to the GDP. Services contribute the most at 52% of the GDP. Thank the many gods for English language education!
http://statisticstimes.com/economy/sectorwise-gdp-contribution-of-india.php

developed a plan for the post-war expansion of a British system of education in India. Drawing

from war-interrupted committee surveys of national and provincial educational activity by

CABE since its reinstatement in 1935, the Sargent report and white paper, sought to rectify the

regnant "rambling edifice" and substitute it with the foundations for a practical, economically

viable, structure. Seen as modelling and aspiring to British standards and expectations for

education at the height of the Independence movement, the plan was grossly neglected. But it

made important recommendations on school facilities, adult education, teacher training, health,

recreational activity, and social services, while recognizing caste and religious divisions and

financial culpability. It referenced the Wardha scheme saying,

> The Board have examined with the attention they deserve various proposals which have
> been put forward with the object of reducing the financial burden of education on a
> national scale. Of these the most interesting and significant is the Wardha Scheme which
> was issued under Mr. Gandhi's auspices some years ago. This aimed at raising the
> standard of craft work in basic schools to such a pitch that the sale of articles produced by
> the pupils would defray wholly or largely the cost of the instruction. While the Board
> gladly recognize that this scheme contains some sound educational doctrine which, as
> mentioned in Chapter 1, they have not hesitated to incorporate in their own system of
> basic education, they are convinced that its financial expectations, even in the very
> doubtful even of their being realisable under any circumstances, could only be realised at
> a cost of educational efficiency which they are not prepared to contemplate. They are,
> therefore, driven reluctantly to the conclusion that if India wants a proper system of
> education, she will have to follow the practice of other countries and pay for it. [136]

The Sargent report conceptualized Indian women and girls in a diametrically opposed

manner than Gandhi in his writings. Advocating for the maternal role and sameness, over

segregationist complementarity or supplementarity, it said,

> Some apology or explanation may be required for the absence of much specific reference
> in this report to the question of education for girls and women. This is certainly not due to
> any failure to recognize the magnitude of this issue; in fact quite the opposite. The past
> tendency to treat girls' and women's education as a problem on its own – it still enjoys a
> chapter to itself in many Provincial education reports – has distracted attention from the

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[136] Bureau of Education, India. 1944. *Post-War Educational Development in India: Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education.* Delhi: Manager of Publications, 45.

fact that in any modern community it is even more important for the mothers to be educated than the fathers and that consequently all educational facilities *mutatis mutandis* – and the differences are by no means so fundamental as the old-fashioned imagine – should be equally available for both sexes. It is therefore, assumed in the following pages that whatever is needed for boys and men, *not less* (emphasis own) will be required for girls and women. [137]

Between 1921 and 1947 the quantitative increase in educational institutions catering to girls and women jumped by 19.6 per cent going from 22,650 to 28,196, marked by a jump in enrollment at all educational levels as well. There is too little data on outcomes, but suffice to say, that at independence issues like the appointment of more female teachers, and lack of hygiene remained an overwhelming infrastructural reality. Despite the influence of Gandhi and modeling of several prominent women as satyagrahis, freedom fighters, and intellectuals through the independence movement, the social constructions of Indian women barely shifted at the dawn of the new nation.

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[137] Ibid. 4

Chapter 2. Trysts with Destiny: The Nehru Administration (1947 – 1964)

At the stroke of the midnight hour on August 15, 1947, India awoke to a destiny far from the romance and glory of the speeches. That unholy tryst at the midnight hour saw the creation of the Dominion of Pakistan and the Union of India from religious nationalism. The primary task of the new Union therefore, was managing the largest exodus/mass migration in history in the midst of immense communal rioting and violence.

According to some estimates – for they are as varied as the statisticians and historians conducing the estimates – anywhere around 14.5 million people crossed the borders. The number is derivative. The 1951 Census of Pakistan identified the number of displaced persons in Pakistan at 7,226,600, presumably all Muslims who had entered Pakistan from India. Similarly, the 1951 Census of India enumerated 7,295,870 displaced persons, apparently all Hindus and Sikhs who had moved to India from Pakistan immediately after the Partition. The First Five Year Plan (1950-55) identified in accordance with the 1951 Census, about 7-5 million persons had moved into India in search of permanent homes, 4-9 million from West Pakistan and about 2-6 million lakhs from East Pakistan. The difference is based on a net increase of population approximately three years after Partition. It is important to note this because one of the biggest challenges in identifying the scale of the partition's ramifications on the demographic make-up of modern India, is numerating the tragedy. The partition was particularly violent for women (as any humanitarian conflict is). Again, estimates are that 75,000 to 100,000 Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women were kidnapped, raped, and killed.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the first Minister of Education in the Government of India's First Nehru Ministry, amidst the angst of Partition. He is India's longest serving Minister

of Education; serving 11 years in Nehru's cabinet. In an office that has shifted hands fluidly, abruptly, and sometimes flippantly, his leadership was the only stable influence in the Ministry's history. As a caveat it bears mentioning that long valorized services seem to characterize Nehru's ministerial team during his tenure as Prime Minister. Fluent in Arabic, Persian, and English; an Islamic studies scholar, Maulana Azad, was the direct ideological antonym to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League who spearheaded the partition of the Indian subcontinent, becoming the first prime-minister of Pakistan. Born in Mecca to a devout orthodox family identifying with a group of *ulama* or Muslim theologians, Maluana Azad received no formal education, and is a far cry from his well-travelled, western educated peers, like Jinnah, Iqbal, and even Nehru and Gandhi.

However, Maulana Azad was a scholar first, who earned his legacy through an assimilative Quranic teaching of Islam vis-à-vis a cultural interpretation, and later as an advocate for community and country as an extension of the religious mission. Against the Partition, and actively assuaging the fears of the Muslims choosing to stay behind in India, he was a proponent of religious harmony as the foundation of a secular nation. He saw education as playing a crucial role to this end.

His first order of business, even as the constitution was still being framed, was the inauguration of the University Education Commission on December 6, 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, then Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford, and later, second President of India. With the mandate to design a national university structure that mirrored the democratic, secular, and intellectual core underlining the aspirations of post-independence India; the ten-member committee set about preparing the first major policy recommendations for educating the "New India." The aims of

University education were broadly detailed under the themes of 1) New India, 2) Democracy, 3) Justice, 4) Liberty, 5) Equality, 6) Fraternity-National, 7) Uninterrupted Continuity of Indian Culture, 8) History of India, and 9) Fraternity-International.[138] The soaring rhetoric of the document argued against intellectual regressivism, and fetishism of Indian culture, advocating a synoptic vision – *Samanavya* – of knowledge, wisdom, leadership, and practice. The legacy of the independence movement and its institutions of higher education, would be the creation of a new breed of Indian, graduating as free individuals, citizens at home and abroad, caretakers of an infant nation. Maulana Azad summarizes the spirit of the document as he stresses the responsibility of education and the educated to the nation, in the conclusion of his Convocation Address at the Aligarh Muslim University in 1949.

> I will now conclude with a few words of advice to the young graduates who have taken their degrees today and are entering into the responsibilities of life. You have yourselves, no doubt, felt the tremendous changes which have taken place since the days you entered the portals of this University. When you first joined this institution, you were members of a subject nation. Today you are leaving this university as free citizens of Independent India. I am not sure whether all of you appreciate fully the extent of this tremendous change. As members of a subject nation you suffered many disabilities. As citizens of a free state you enter into new responsibilities. The widening of opportunities which freedom has brought has also necessarily brought with it the need for greater loyalty and devotion to your state. Today, there are no limits to what you can achieve this very fact imposes upon you the duties which freedom brings.
>
> You are the citizens of a free India – a state which is determined to develop its political and social life on secular and democratic lines. The essence of a secular and democratic state is freedom of opportunity for the individual regardless of race, religion, caste, or community. As members of such a state, you have therefore the right, *provided you have the necessary qualities of character and attainment* (emphasis added), to expect all doors to open to you, whether in the fields of politics, trade, industry, service, or the professions. There is no gainsaying the fact that in the past many of the alumni of this institutions looked to nothing but employment under the Government. Freedom must bring in a widening of the mind and an enlargement of your ambitions. You must,

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[138] Government of India: Ministry of Education. 1949. *The Report of the University Education Commission.* Committee Report, Ministry of Education, Delhi: Manager of Publications.

therefore, look forward in a free India to the utilization of your talents in the manner best suited to the needs of the nation.[139]

Dr. Radhakrishnan and his committee members saw a very specific purpose for women and women's education in the New India. The home was her new frontier, and care-giving her natural ability and responsibility, especially as her mind widened and ambitions enlarged.

> In every country, no matter how far the "liberation" of women has gone, husbands and wives commonly play different parts. In general the man provides the income and the woman maintains the home. For many women who crave to achieve standards of excellence, the home provides an excellent setting. For a woman to give the home design, beauty, order and character, without being herself a slave to home-keeping and without imposing onerous prohibitions and restrictions on the freedom of movement of children, is a high art. It will not be acquired by chance, and for many women its acquisition will be impossible, except through education…. Wise education for a woman will not leave her preparation for home and family to the bitter and wasteful school of experience. Her education as a woman should include practical "laboratory" experience in the care of a home and family….
>
> It is unfortunate that courses in home economics and home management are held in low repute and are shunned by women students, who insist on the same courses as men… There are several reasons for this bias. Women cannot yet take for granted their equality with men, and feel that they need to prove it by being identical in their studies. Also, certain class consciousness and snobbery still remain. There has been little vocational guidance to help girl students to understand and appreciate the nature and opportunities of a woman's world and to prepare for it.
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> It is doubtful whether many men ever achieve orderly and efficient living whose early home environment was one of confusion and disorder. Probably there would be no quicker way to raise the general standard of economy and efficiency in Indian life than to make women interested and competent in the efficient, economical and convenient planning and management of their homes. [140]

The essentialist gender roles are perpetuated through the document with extremely brief departures for certain exceptional life circumstances and stages – like a prolonged single-status, empty-nest syndrome, and familial economic necessities or choices. A carry-over from previous

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[139] Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam. 2007. "Convocation Address, delivered on 20 February 1949, at the Aligarh Muslim University." In *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: Selected Speeches and Writings*, edited by Syed Shahabuddin, Location 1673-1815. Hyderabad: Hope India Publications.
[140] Government of India: Ministry of Education 1949, 344-346

feminist-nationalist debates, the complementarity of genders and their separate spheres of influence and purpose are exhaustively reiterated through the section for women. Citing the core curriculum of the New York College of Home Economics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and the School of Home Economics at Michigan State College, the report makes a passing case for eventually extending home economics to both genders, to dignify the labor involved in home making and its parallel applications in Institutional Management which is identified as a masculine occupation. It was recommended that women needed a university education that fitted their actual lived experiences and the care giving or entertainment vocations best suited for their temperament/reality, instead of aping everything that men did in the name of liberation. Subject areas recommended for women were broadly grouped under Home Economics, Teaching, Nursing, and the Fine Arts. Women are seen as "natural teachers," with vocational callings dependent on social "habits," physiognomy, and temperament. Examinations – a contested, yet overwhelming, assessment preference in Indian pedagogy till date – are seen as an unnecessary "nervous strain" on women. Referring to conditions and ideas prevalent in Europe and America on women's curricula at the time, the report discusses coeducation and education as it has affected women with access in India.

> The principal of a college wrote: "women's present education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste, but often a definite disability." Another wrote, "The present system of women's education, based as it is upon man's needs, does not in any way make them fit for coping with the practical problems of daily life. Their education should give them a practical bias, especially from the point of view of families, for making them good mothers, teachers, doctors and nurses". One experienced woman educator wrote to the Commission "The modern educated Indian woman is neither happy nor contented nor socially useful. She is a misfit in life. She is highly suppressed, and needs opportunities for self-expression, the new education must provide this opportunity."

> To some extent this maladjustment is the price of pioneering. The educated woman is ahead of her time. She is lonely and "out of place" while creating a new social atmosphere in which her daughter or grand daughter can be natural and at home. But to

some extent her discontent is due to her effort, not only to be equal to men, but to be like them in all her interests and activities. One educator wrote: "It is too late in the day to suggest that women should not have the same courses as men. The remaining question is, what additional opportunities shall be provided?"[141]

It suffices to say that the first major policy report recommended women take absolute stewardship of the private sphere, and care-giving labor. This utilitarian inclination bears striking similarities to the American Post-World War II experience, where professional women were actively encouraged, to return to their maternal function over their market and economic functions to create employment for returning veterans. Except in India, the masculine domain was claimed to be political before it extended to the market. The report's recommendations were to expand educational opportunities for women, and ensure that female teachers were paid the same salaries as their male counterparts. The remaining recommendations established standards of expected behavior; with an emphasis that men act as custodians of social responsibility and courtesy when interacting with women. Tellingly the report's recommendations advocated a segregated citizenship and education,

3. … there should be intelligent educational guidance, by qualified men and women, to help women to get a clearer view of their real educational interests, to the end that they shall not try to imitate men, but shall desire as good education as women as men get as men. Women's and men's education should have many elements in common, but should not in general be identical in all respects, as is usually the case today;
4. that women students in general should be helped to see their normal places in a normal society, both as citizens and as women and to prepare for it, and college programmes should be so designed that it will be possible for them to do so
5. that through educational counsel and by example the prevailing prejudice against study of home economics and home management should be overcome…[142]

The University Education Commission set the tenor for education initiatives that followed. It was pivotal in creating the political organum and institutional structure to support India's university system, most importantly the University Grants Commission (UGC) along the

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[141] Ibid. 351
[142] Ibid. 351-352

British model. Maulana Azad would make the UGC a statutory body by 1956 to coordinate and maintain standards of higher education in India. It is also revealing to note that the document frequently refers to curricula and university systems in the United States, recommending exchange programs to boost research and practices, especially in public administration and governance, and even, home economics/euthenics.

Even so, the greater business of framing the Constitution of the Republic of India was underway. Operating since December 9, 1946, the Constituent Assembly would go through a series of inflations and deflations – mainly due to ideo-political rifts between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League – until its final membership would total at 299.[143] Maulana Azad was a steering member of the assembly. His push to reform the universities with the University Education Commission of 1948 goes to prove the miasma of dysfunction in India's higher education. Two women were among the standing members of the assembly – Hansa Jivraj Mehta, President of the acclaimed All India Women's Conference (AIWC), and Durgabai Deshmukh, a *satyagrahi* who began her career with Congress' Girl Volunteer Corps – and contributed to education initiatives, and social welfare planning respectively. Neither chaired the 17 principal committees – not even the Ad Hoc Committee on the National Flag, despite the midnight national swaddling. Steering the proceedings were true national luminaries like Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru. But, the connection between education, franchise/suffrage, and their bases in socio-economic visibility was drawn by the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, an unlikely ally for women and labour rights. In a scathing plea to level the playing field he wrote,

> Beyond the passing of a Compulsory Primary Education Act in the Presidency there has not been any appreciable advance in the direction of mass education. On the contrary there has been a certain amount of deterioration owing to the transfer of education to

[143] http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/facts.htm

local authorities which are manned, comparatively speaking, by people who being either indifferent or ignorant, are seldom keen for the advancement of education.

The question of education like other nation-building questions is ultimately a question of money. So long as money is not forthcoming in sufficient amount, there can be no advance in education. How to find this money is therefore the one question that has to be solved. That a Council elected on the present franchise will never be in a position to solve the problem is beyond dispute. For the simple reason that money for education can only be provided by taxing the rich and the rich are the people in who control the present Council. Surely the rich will not consent to tax themselves for the benefit of the poor unless they are compelled to do so. Such a compulsion can only come by a radical change in the composition of the Council which will give the poor and illiterate adequate voice therein. Unless this happens, the question of illiteracy will never be solved. To deny them that right is to create a situation full of injustice. To keep people illiterate and then to make their illiteracy the ground for their non-enfranchisement is to add insult to injury. But the situation indeed involves more than this. It involves an aggravation of the injury. For to keep people illiterate and then to deny them franchise, which is the only means whereby they could effectively provide for the removal of their illiteracy, is to perpetuate their illiteracy and postpone indefinitely the day of their enfranchisement."[144]

Ambedkar proceeds to differentiate between intelligence (an amorphous term for critical thinking and engagement in his essay on Franchise) and literacy, arguing that the having, or non-having of literacy does not foreclose the presence the intelligence. He argues for political representation and participation irrespective of literacy. In a lifetime dedicated to battling the injustices of class, caste, and colonialism in India, Ambedkar's politics were undeniably visionary; stemming from his own experience as a Dalit with a prolific education[145], a privilege otherwise denied to members of his caste and class. It is no surprise he is celebrated as the principle architect of the Constitution of India. His scholarship is careful, practiced, and advocative; ruthless in its articulation of India's socio-political orthopraxis and ramifications on

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[144] Ambedkar, Bhimrao Ramji. 2002. *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar.* Edited by Valerian Rodrigues. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 65-67.

[145] Dr. B.R. Ambedkar earned doctorates in economics from Colombia University and the London School of Economics. He established himself as a lawyer, economist, and professor, before beginning his political career campaigning against India's caste-based socio-economic inequalities. During the debates in the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar demonstrated his will to reform Indian society by recommending the adoption of a Uniform Civil Code. He resigned from the cabinet in 1951, when parliament stalled his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to enshrine gender equality in the laws of inheritance and marriage.

nation building. His preoccupation with the intra-relationships between the colonists i.e. the British, the elite Indian bureaucracy, caste-class hierarchy, and the injustices perpetuated by a lacking, inconstant, benignly dismissive rhetoric toward mass education; rightfully points out how a new nation cannot, or rather should not be, built by perpetuating social alliances that silence and drive inequalities. He encourages the "governing elite" in the Indian National Congress to reconsider their standpoints for democratic inclusion.

Conflicted debates over education, political agency, and access, endure. As important as it still is to ensure access to the democratic process; it is equally imperative to not base the exercise of franchise on an earthy instinct, provincial identity, or an obfuscating spirituality – all supporting a regression to tribal and othering instincts. It is in this crucial aspect that Indian education has failed every Indian, not just the Indian woman. There are several articles in the Constitution of India that directly and indirectly protect access to education. Beginning with the Preamble, there is a strict commitment to non-discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, when seeking access to public spaces, national infrastructure, education, and public employment. Articles 28, 29, and 30 protect and enforce the freedoms of cultural and religious minorities to establish and administer educational institutions, religious worship and instruction in said institutions with informed or guardian consent, and non-discrimination on State flows of grants-in-aid on the basis of language or religion. Article 46 promotes the educational and economic interests of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other weaker sections – a category frequently interpreted and invoked to include women. Part IX, Article 243 establishes the constitutional mandate of the Panchayats. Article 243 D details the quotas of representation – a form of affirmative action – to ensure that scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) are represented proportionate to the demographics of the panchayat's

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territorial jurisdiction. Women are to form a third of the panchayat (33%), with candidate preference if they are also members of SC, ST, or Other Backward Classes (OBC). In Part IXA, 243 T, the 33% quota of female representation was also established in Municipalities. Despite this constitutional basis, when communal inequities seeped in to the composition of local bodies, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts were passed in 1992 to account for,

> … absence of regular elections, prolonged supersessions, insufficient representation of weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women, inadequate devolution of powers and lack of financial resources.[146]

The concept of self-governance, especially through the panchayat system, has a rich history of positively affecting women's participation and influence in rural governance, with a vociferous scholarship supporting its expansion. Based on this success and support, a proposal is currently floating in parliament to expand women's participation quota in panchayats to 50%[147].

How does this fit in to the larger discussion on women's education and identity? It is imperative that we note the sheer scale of temporality – the breadth of time – it took, to see how entrenched habits of socio-cultural hierarchical exploitation affected women's political agency and influence. Ambedkar was not far off the mark when he noted how barriers to franchise would further spur discriminatory elements in Indian politics. Truthfully, they still do. However, the amendments did make considerable headway in righting the gender balances of power in the rural communities – to a degree. The reactive converse has been the rise of *khap* panchayats – extra-constitutional shadow bodies representing the informal interests of communal electorates – that violently enforce caste, gender, and religious norms through kangaroo courts. It is notable

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[146] Government of India. 1993. "Amendment 73." *India Code.* April 20. Accessed April 12, 2016. http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend73.htm.
[147] The Hindu 2016. *National.* February 5. Accessed March 18, 2016. http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/50-quota-for-women-in-panchayats-planned/article8194551.ece.

they are more active in areas infested with female infanticide and the resultant abysmal sex ratios. It is also notable that it is women from those communities that are staging the greatest defense.[148]

As temporally incongruous as this discussion may seem, it establishes the immanent handicap in Indian policy that at once, invited greater participation and gender parity, and on the other laid down the foundations of a gender-centric, public-private apartheid.

The remainder of Maulana Azad's policy leadership is rightfully preoccupied with the financial and governance structures that would fund and administer State-run mass education. The 1950 Committee on Ways and Means of Financing Educational Development of India established Center-State relations to manage expenditure. Local bodies and provinces would bear seventy percent, and the federal government thirty percent of the cost. Infrastructure would be economized by splitting the school day in to two shifts with a 1:40 teacher to student ratio. The responsibilities of State and Local Bodies were further stratified in the 1951 Committee Report on the Relationship between State Governments and Local Bodies in the Administration of Primary Education. Municipalities, non-authorized municipalities, village school committees, and district school boards, would manage administrative functions and fundraising for primary education as a proportion of total revenues along with Central grants-in-aid earmarked specifically for primary education.

Chaired by Dr. Mudaliar through 1952-53, the Secondary Education Commission's report recommends a structure and character for Junior Secondary and Higher Secondary schooling, as well as advocating for intermediate, technical and vocational colleges to smooth professional transitions. Partition's blood still staining political reality, the commission emphasized the need

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[148] Kaur, Ravinder. 2010. *"Khap Panchayats, Sex Ratio and Female Agency."* Economic and Political Weekly 45 (23): 14-16. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27807097.

to inculcate a democratic personality; educating youth for leadership on non-partisan, non-communal lines, to meet the demands of citizenship and social obligation. On women in secondary education however, it refers and reiterates the recommendations of the University Education Commission (1948) to align curricula with the practical reality of home management. Coeducation and Mixed Education were dependent on girls' and women's ability to attend, facilities and finances. The report rued that,

> …because of the larger expenditure which has to be incurred on buildings, equipment and staff in the case of girls' schools, States have generally responded more readily to the demand for boys' education than to the demand for the education of girls. To promote the pattern of society that we envisage for the future the expansion of girls' education must take place *pari passu* with boys' education.[149]

The ambivalence does not necessary lead to recommendations, except a courtesy expansion of privy facilities for the female teachers wherever women attend schools, and a horror should intellectual variations develop between boys and girls if parity of facilities and instruction are not met. The Ministry of Education entertained a resurgent flirtation with the Gandhian concept of Basic Education as it was iterated by the Wardha Commission, with a 1956 CABE white paper clarifying definition and duration. It was quickly followed with a committee charged with surveying the national landscape structurally and contextually for implementation. But policy documents directly evoking the Gandhian philosophy of craft-based education end here.

Maulana Azad's policies, task forces, and committees grappled with the calls of an infant nation launched into the chaotic twin conceits of identity and formative history. He was all too aware of the schisms that caused the Partition, and saw how communal tensions causing visceral damage to secular, progressive nationalism, were manifesting as language wars in education

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[149] Government of India: Ministry of Education. 1953. *Report of the Secondary Education Commission.* Mudaliar Commission Report, Delhi: Manager of Publications, 43.

policy. It was a battle of communal supremacy: over who were truly the ruling elite, and the

language of power. English was already recognized as the language of the oppressor, and those

who operated and worked with it employed in the British civil services. Just like Urdu had been

the language of the Mughal court, and Sanskrit the language of the upper most Hindu caste, the

Brahmins. In the Brahminic tradition, impurity would seep into the socio-religious structure

should lower castes, and women ever gain access to the language, and read the Shlokas. When

India became a nation with a Hindu majority, the call to cultivate Hindi as a national language

was a call that wanted to destabilize colonial languages, and forms of elitism/access/education.

Calling out these performative paradigms in a debate on language and education, Maulana Azad

defended his approach to national education saying,

> The Central Education Ministry spends about fourteen crore rupees annually. If, out of this amount, a sum of Rs. 60,000 is given to a society that works for Urdu, is it anything against which there should have been such severe complaints and such strong opposition? We should recognize the fact that our mind works in very narrow grooves.… Urdu is not the language of any religious group. Hindus, Muslims Christians and others are equally conversant with this language…. Who is opposed to Hindi? So far as the progress of Hindi is concerned there are no two opinions. Those who criticize the above policy are not motivated by their love for Hindi, but by their aversion to seeing any other language making progress. If you want to rise to great heights, by all means do so, but not by stumping others…. *(It is)* not love for Hindi that caused the furor. The feeling was; why should another language be given an opportunity to make progress? There is a desire that no other language should be permitted to exist. This means that it is not the progress of Hindi…, but the fall of other languages. This is a bad attitude…. We should see to it that we do not oppose any other language of India. We should be happy to see every language prosper. At the same time, we must remember that Hindi is the national language of India, and it is the duty of every Indian to be firm on this issue and make a sincere effort to boost Hindi. But a different attitude is apparent here, …[150]

Given the scale of illiteracy and rehabilitation projects; that the bulk of the Minister of

Education's public addresses remonstrate religious harmony, secularism, and the plural

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[150] Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam. 1954. "*On Education: Reply to Critics in the Indian Parliament*." In *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: Selected Speeched and Writings*, edited by Syed Shahabuddin, Location 1907-1925. Gurgaon: Hope India Publication.

"linguistic" nature of the new nation,[151] is devastatingly compelling. The governing class speaks as if it is more interested in the idea of the new nation, in what language was the new nation going to be narrated (how was the story of India going to be told – for it would be the language of the victors) and who "owned" the corpus of the language symbolically and historically.[152]

Maulana Azad's legacy underscores his humanism and overtures for Hindu-Muslim unity with the establishment of the Indian Institutes of Technology, School of Planning and Architecture, the University Grants Commission; and major cultural and literary academies including the Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Academy, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He passed in office in 1958, but not before commissioning a final task force to investigate the education of women.

Shortly, after the Second Five Year Plan came into effect, the Education Panel of the Planning Commission recommended the "set-up" of a National Committee on Women's Education to investigate the "nature of education for girls at the elementary, secondary and adult stages and to examine whether the present system was helping them lead a happier and more useful life. The committee's mandate included a study of primary and secondary education for women, "wastage"[153] at these levels, the lapsed or inadequate literacy of adult women, a survey

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[151] Press Information Bureau. 2015. "Maulana Azad." *Ministry of Human Resource Development.* November 10. Accessed November 14, 2015. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/MaulanaAzad_2015.pdf.
"Despite being an eminent scholar of Urdu, Persian and Arabic, Maulana stood for the retention of English language for educational advantages and national and international needs. However, he firmly believed that primary education should be imparted in the mother-tongue and emphasised the need to develop provincial languages as the medium of instructions."
[152] In colloquial metonymy: English = British, Urdu = Muslims, Sanskrit, and Hindi = Hindu, Hindustani = pidgin from various dialects i.e. castes/classes
There is no language for or about women. No debate about their education or gendered experience. And in the grand scheme of nation building, it almost seems beside the point.
[153] A term left-over from the 1928-29 Hartog Committee.
"By wastage we mean premature withdrawal of children from schools at any stage before completion of the primary courses.
This statement does not mean there is no wastage in the Secondary Course and Higher Course. Any student, who receives education at any stage, is expected to complete his education with the prescribed period. If one withdraws from the course before completion, then that individual or individuals are deemed to be wastage to the course."

of material facilities and related infrastructure, and the possibility of vocational education. The goal was that women "earn a living and participate in projects of national reconstruction."[154]

The mandate was underlined by an inaugural address to the committee by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He had famously chaired the first, and pivotal Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948 which produced the Report of the University Education Commission. He territorially classifies women as home makers first, saying, "while the great profession of women is, and probably will continue to be, that of home-maker, yet her world should not be limited to that one relationship," and called on the committee to produce a "few, firm practical measures' which would produce results, "if not spectacular, would at least carry us forward towards the goal."

The committee was chaired by Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh who had also served on the Radhakrishnan commission, and headed the Central Social Welfare Board. Members included celebrated educators, like J.P. Naik, and S. Panandikar, and educational administrators, O.C. Srinivasan and P.N, Mathur, with Sarojini Rajan serving as secretary. Other members were, Kulsum Sayani, editor of Raber, Zahra Ahmed, an MLA, and by special request/invitation of the committee Dr. Phulrenu Guha, vice-chair of the West Bengal State Social Welfare Board. In receiving its mandate, the committee foreclosed definitions of its subject as primarily relational, relegated to the private as home-maker, who could syllogistically function toward national reconstruction as a public expansion of her private profession. The conflation of the home-maker and the Motherland in the political rhetoric casts a long shadow on the commission's recommendations, and on further conceptualizations of women's agency in political terms. This does not discount the report's importance as the first of its kind: supplying exhaustive

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[154] Government of India: Ministry of Education. 1959. *Report of the National Committee of Women's Education.* Committee Report, Delhi: Manager of Publications.

commentary on "fundamental considerations," authenticating women's education with historical precedent, social context, and political exigence.

The committee admits that unreliable statistics[155] skew the national picture of women's education: increase in girls' and women's education remain relatively low when compared to the absolute increase in national levels of educational attainment. Defining the problem as a lack of "equality of educational opportunity to women," and the primary need, "to bridge the gap that now exists between the education for men and women."[156] Most importantly, the commission is the first to point to the uneven, inequitable regional distribution of education facilities for women. "Backward States" – those with high fertility rate or a high population growth rate, abysmal literacy rates and access to healthcare, high poverty levels, high corruption levels at district, municipal, and state levels, and high incidences of caste, class, and communal conflicts – received the least attention; with schools, colleges and national institutions concentrated in historically progressive cosmopolitan urban centers. With high "wastage," and "relapse into illiteracy," among women, the commission noted the lack of access to equal educational opportunities as men as a defining issue and called to rectify policy perspective on women's education as "a major 'special' problem and not merely as part of the 'whole' problem of education and that some vigorous 'special measures' have to be adopted to advance it."[157]

Definitively, the commission identifies the split political identity of women as 1) individual, and 2) social i.e. member of society. The first is recognized as a modernist conception born from an industrialized, materially focused society, and the second, from a blend of traditional gender roles, and benign calls for complementarity in gender relationships. The

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[155] The commission reviewed available statistics from 1949-50 to 1956-57
[156] Ibid. 33
[157] Ibid. 34

second encompasses the woman's role as home-maker, primary care-giver, and the *private* moral

core of society. The report made a case against both.

> Only she is a *really good mother who can help the child in developing its full and many sided personality, in inculcating in it right attitudes of life and habits and in giving it a real training for life.* We think that all this would be possible only for the woman who is educated in the real sense of the word, who has full knowledge and varied experiences of wider life, and who is acquainted with their problems and challenges which life presents. Now the above conditions cannot be fulfilled by a woman who has cut herself adrift or kept away from all life outside the home and has been confined only within its four walls…. She must come out in the wider world and share its responsibilities.
> … their (moral standards) real test is to be able to maintain and preserve them amidst every strains, stresses and hazards of life rather than in avoiding life for their sake. Morality that breaks down at the slightest touch and that needs seclusion and exclusiveness to maintain itself is not worth its name. thus it becomes clear that neither for performing the duties of motherhood nor in the interest of preserving the moral standards should it be really necessary to confine women to the home.[158]

In a subtle critique of capitalism's modernity, the report calls for a holistic, almost

spiritual, commitment to national reconstruction, which would necessitate an educated

empowered woman.

> With large scale production has naturally come centralization of economic power, no matter with whom the power lies, whether with the few big capitalists or the State. All these features of modern society have converged in producing a certain approach to life. The emphasis of this approach has been on looking upon the worldly life and its enjoyment, its joys and sorrows as the ultimate end. The modern man (and woman also) is perhaps too engrossed in the material comforts and conveniences of this world. In the name of increasing the standard of life, which in fact is increasing the standard of expenditure only, he sees no end to the multiplication of these material comforts and conveniences…. Man is just a machine-tender. In other words, there is just a perversion of values, … The highest and the ultimate glory is of course the soul and not of the body. Thus the point that we wish to emphasize in that his modern society is dominated by materialistic values of life and that this is the cause of the cultural crisis that our civilization faces.[159]

The educational response is an attempt to carve a socio-political role for women as part

of the "duties and responsibilities of freedom" in this new civilizational crisis.

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[158] Ibid. 8
[159] Ibid. 9-10

It is with this background of respect for ultimate moral and spiritual values of life that we should approach the duties and responsibilities which freedom has brought to us…. We shall have to work without fear and hatred, and not succumb either to narrow nationalism which is out of place in a world of today or to evils of religious conflict and bigotry, of provincialism, linguism, and casteism. We have accepted in India as our objective a socialist pattern of society. That means not only an economic organization but something deeper than that, which involves a way of thinking and living. We want to our education to create this basic respect for ultimate moral and spiritual values of life in our girls as well as boys. How else can this preparation take place except through education?[160]

To state briefly, the committee recommended a National Council for the Education of Girls and Women, with State branches submitting comprehensive development plans; that further recruit from district, local, voluntary, teaching, and extra-governmental organizations to promote the education of women as a "top priority." The planning commission was to set up a permanent accounting machinery to see that women's development and needs were adequately addressed and resourced in the Five Year Plans. Scholarships, awards, and meal-schemes should be adequately funded by States, especially for students below a predetermined poverty level. Fundraising and training is seen as a partnership with voluntary organizations coordinated by Central Social Welfare Board, especially at middle, secondary, higher, and vocational levels of education; and as such, conditions to receive grants-in-aid should be eased. Part time and flexible employment is repeatedly advocated as *the* policy perspective to buttress literacy, professional and vocational education for women, as well as a way to entice them to the teaching profession – a natural fit – while managing their home-lives. To bridge the urban-rural achievement/literacy gap, teacher training institutes were an urgent priority, and facilities, allowances, and other incentives be provided to urban female teachers to accept rural posts.

The report on the status of women, and recommendations are truly compelling; had they translated into policy. It bore the echo of a gendered approach to policy that sought greater

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[160] Ibid. 12

female participation, and drew vital connections between regional socio-economic disparities to low levels of women's education. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education began to see a less stable, quick-changing leadership that scarcely kept pace with the realities of nation building.

Ministers and Ministry – Education for…?

Dr. Kalu Lal Shrimali a prominent educationist with publications analyzing the Wardha Scheme and Gandhian values in education, was appointed to follow Maulana Azad. He served two appointments as Minister of State and then Union/Cabinet Minister for Education through February 2, 1958 to August 31, 1963. With two Masters in Philosophy and Experimental Philosophy, as well as a Ph.D. from Teacher's College at Columbia University; his leadership was preceded by reasoned arguments for a stable political and economic structure to support education for citizenship. Documenting the challenge of education in Indian politics he wrote,

> The real problem before the Congress is to build a democracy suited to the genius of India's people and to her social conditions. India may have had village republics in ancient and medieval times but for centuries she has had no continuous tradition of any form of national government.
>
> Apart from the question of defence against foreign aggressors, the most important problem that India has to tackle today is the preservation and development of democracy against the emergence of dictatorship within the State.
>
> There are two main conditions for the rise of dictatorship – poverty and discontent among the masses and their inertia and indifference. In India both these conditions are present. There is already a growing influence of communistic as well as fascist elements among both Hindus and Moslems. If the Congress wishes to realize the dream of a free and democratic India, this is the critical hour for decision. … (the Congress government) should put the recommendations of the National Planning Committee and the Advisory Planning Committee into immediate effect and go beyond it, if necessary, with the double aim of increased productivity and a better distribution of wealth…. In bringing about this socialized economy it is probably that the Congress will come into Conflict with all the privileged classes which represent vested interests such as Princes, Zamindars and big capitalists.... the Congress must face the situation boldly. It can shirk this responsibility only at the risk of losing hold over the masses. There can be no compromise in securing socially desirable ends.

In the second place, in order to check the menace of dictatorship, every effort should be made to shake off the inertia and apathy of the masses… We have already examined at length how it (the Wardha scheme) aims at cultivating just these personal qualities – capacity for independent judgement, tolerance of other people's views and a high sense of civic duty which subordinated private interest to public good – which will help the individual to fulfil the duties and discharge the functions imposed on him by democracy…. There can be no greater danger to democracy than the ignorance of the masses. Democracy can rest secure only on the basis of widespread education of the masses.

In the third place, the National government should make an earnest effort to eliminate the disruptive religious factor from Indian politics. Indian cannot develop a truly democratic form of government unless sovereignty is vested in the whole people, not in some special order or restricted class of men… The Wardha Scheme can play a significant part in this task of social reconstruction.[161]

With this outlook, it comes as no surprise that Dr. Shrimali commissioned Committees that studied Religious and Moral Instruction (1959-60), and Emotional Integration (1961); both looking at sustaining the State's secular policies through education against the onslaught of communal violence. He also collaborated with the Central Social Welfare Board over a committee on Child Care (1961-62), that looked at education and pre-primary care for children from 0-6 years of age, and employment for women as teachers and assistants.[162] Humayun Kabir followed Dr. Shrimali but only for a span of two months. However, he was a prominent parliamentarian with Oxford credentials. He is best known as Maulana Azad's biographer, and his work on the infamous 1950 UNESCO document, *The Race Question.*

Kabir was succeeded by Mahommedali Currim Chagla, a jurist, and diplomat. Chagla rose to political prominence as a member of the Muslim League, building a stellar reputation

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[161] Kalu Lal Shrimali, 1949. *The Wardha Scheme: The Gandhian Plan of Education for Rural India.* Udaipur: Vidya Bhawan Society, 292-297
[162] It is important to note the etymology of the words *balsevika* for women and *balmitra* for men who would be hired as teaching assistants in pre-primary child care and education.
Bal is child in Hindi.
Sevika is a female servant, maidservant, or female social worker. Synonym: *dasi,* holy servant
Mitra is a friend, ally or companion. Synonym: *saathi,* commpanion
Etymologically, this is a reinforcement of women's secondary, or "helper" role in social work; and the male role as one of parity. It is these subtle, inconspicuous appellations that cement gender norms.

with Sir Jamshedji Kanga and Mohammed Ali Jinnah at the Bombay High Court. Though retaining loyalties to the Muslim League, he severed ties with Jinnah when he began demanding for a separate Muslim state. Chagla's leadership in post-independence India was frankly after his retirement as Chief Justice of Bombay, Acting Governor, and ad hoc judge to the International Court of Justice at The Hague. He re-entered public life as Ambassador to the United States from 1958 to 1961 and then accepted Nehru's invitation to serve as Cabinet Minister for Education from 1963 to 1966. During his tenure as education minister, he is memorably recorded as being appalled at the state of public education saying, "Our Constitution fathers did not intend that we just set up hovels, put students there, give untrained teachers, give them bad textbooks, no playgrounds and say, we have complied with Article 45 and primary education is expanding…They meant that real education should be given to our children between the ages of 6 and 14." He oversaw the reports of two major committees on national curriculum development: The Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1961-1964) and Committee on Girls' Education and Public Cooperation (1963-1964). Both were authorized in collaborations between the Union Education Minister, and National Council for Women's Education chaired by Raksha Saran[163], which was established on the recommendation of 1957-59 Committee on Women's Education.

The Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls 1961-1964 was chaired by Hansa Jivraj Mehta – an educator, feminist and reformist who came into prominence through her work at the AIWC setting up women's colleges, campaigning against child marriage, and the nationalist movement. The report emphatically defends against arguments of physical, intellectual, psychological differences between the "sexes", and argues against restricting access

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[163] http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/a-pioneers-diamond-jubilee/article1424031.ece

to the full spectrum of disciplines based on "sex" but does concede that psychological paradigms are formed in a social environment. To meet the demands of the social functions of each gender, courses of home sciences, fine arts, music, etc. are recommended as secondary education for women, but not compulsory. Coeducation was proposed for elementary education, however educational managements and guardians have the choice to fund and administer separate secondary and collegiate schools. This is the first report to endorse sex education as a way to gradually eradicate gender norms among the public and encourage it as a part of secondary curriculum.

The Committee on Girls' Education and Public Cooperation (1963-1964) was a response to the low rates of women's literacy in rural or "backward" areas. The committee called for expanded partnerships between official, private, and voluntary organizations to create and sustain a communication campaign through conferences, seminars, media channels, enrollment and women's employment drives, and resource mobilization. It was an ambitious list of recommendations that also called for greater Center-State Cooperation by leveraging the expertise within the networks of the National and State Councils for Women's Education. Expansion of education infrastructure – facilities, hostels, training, and flexible hours, encouraging private schools, and popularizing primary coeducation and socially conscious curriculum; the report repeatedly called for States to take the lead in funding these initiatives. Needless to say, this was not a fiscally sound plan. Underperforming states with high population growth, poverty and corruption rates, overwhelmingly spread across the northern plains – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan – also suffered from the lowest literacy rates.

But by May 27, 1964, these policy investigations and recommendations took a back seat when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru passed away from heart failure and central leadership was thrown in to chaos and disarray[164].

<p style="text-align:center">The Five Year Plans on Education and Women under Nehru</p>

The population of India at independence was about 340 million, climbing up to 361.09 million by 1951. It would continue to increase at an exponential rate; growing threefold through the second half of the 21st century.[165] One-third of the newly drawn republics were ruled by princely states, and were given the choice of joining India or Pakistan. Severe communal rioting in various parts of the country reached a hilt with Partition, leading to unparalleled internal displacement, and bloodshed. The secessionist movement sparked by Jammu and Kashmir's Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh ruling over a state with a Muslim majority, metastasized into the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan today. Similar secessionist movements amongst the North-East tribes, particularly with the Naga National Council, caused further enduring domestic conflicts. Through this, the Indian Constituent Assembly under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, served as an interim legislature while drafting the Constitution, until the general elections in 1951. With the presentation of the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950, India moved to universal adult franchise despite 85% adult illiteracy. Of the total registered voters, 60% exercised their franchise. The grand democratic experiment was led by Sukumar Sen, the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, twice: 1951-52 and 1958.[166] The Indian National

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[164] The New York Times. 1964. "*On This Day*." The New York Times on the Web: Learning Network. 28 May. Accessed July 26, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0527.html.
[165] Government of India 2014. *National Commission on Population: Tables, Maps And Bar Charts.* August 27. Accessed July 6, 2016. http://populationcommission.nic.in/content/932_1_TablesMapsAndBarCharts.aspx.
[166] Election Commission of India. 2014. *Election Statistics-Full Statiscal Reports.* September 29. Accessed January 20, 2015. http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/ElectionStatistics.aspx.

Congress (INC) won a landslide majority and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first democratically elected Prime Minister of India.

The Planning Commission was set up by a March 1950 Resolution of the Government of India with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Chairman. Steeped in ideals of Fabian socialism and developmental economics, the First Plan (1951-1956) sought to dynamically energize India's natural resources and activate the primary sector, i.e. agriculture, irrigation and energy, and land rehabilitation. Chapter 33 of the Plan exclusively dealt with the problem of education, committing Rs.151.66 crores for the plan period – 35.02 crores or 23.09% for Central expenditures and 116.64 crores or 76,91% for State initiatives – for educational development. This averaged about Rs. 30-33 crores per annum. Public cooperation and contribution is seen as essential to making educational agendas a success.[167] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine fiscal outlays in process and effect. However, the plan dwells on "the significance of the problem of women's education in the special circumstances of our country today."[168]

Repeating the "distinctive role" of women in the household, while simultaneously saying no opportunity should be barred for women; the plan assumes a welfare, reformative stance to women's education. The plan incarnates gendered spaces by seeking to expand women's employment in all care-giving or aesthetic professions – nursing, midwifery, handicrafts and cottage industry, and teaching especially at the early childhood, and elementary levels. Every recommendation that outlines specific career-paths for women's professional and educational development is quickly followed up with the ardent claim that women should not be confined to

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[167] Planning Commission. 2013. *Five Year Plans.*
http://planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/index.php?state=planbody.htm.
The planning commission has uploaded all plans, data tables, and resources to their main website. The investigator has done NO ADDITIONAL RESEARCH to obtain secondary data sets, content, or resources other than what is publicly available on the planning commission's website. All figures, policy/plan agendas, and projections are completely reliant on publicly available information; and can be verified as such.
[168] Ibid.

these spheres and access to any career that is open to men is also open to women without prejudice. The other careers are never detailed, just open. Social education to reduce biases, extended education for women who marry early, flexible education and employment opportunities, are recommended along the lines of those available in western countries. The plan does not seem to consider the poverty of wide swaths of the Indian hinterlands, and that rural Indian women are overwhelmingly employed in the agricultural and informal economy, as an extension of, or in addition to their home making responsibilities. The class blinders are palpable.

Prominent women in the INC and nationalist movements played crucial roles post-independence. From the presentation of the national flag at independence, to leading legislative committees, extra-governmental, community and voluntary organizations; the work of Sarojini Naidu, Rameshwari Nehru (Nehru's cousin), Vijaya Lakshmi Nehru Pandit (Nehru's sister), Dakshayani Velayudhan, Hansa Jivraj Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Durgabai Deshmukh, litter the public records of post-independence years. Jawaharlal Nehru personally oversaw the extension of the bureaucratic network under the British, which became the Indian Administrative Services, and the diplomatic wing, Indian Foreign Services. Vijaya Lakshmi Nehru Pandit became the first (woman) ambassador to the Soviet Union and then to the United States. Hansa Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, drafted the Uniform Civil Code to rectify the gender imbalances in Hindu tradition and Muslim shariat. This was vehemently opposed by senior influential Congress leaders, including then President of India, Rajendra Prasad. The conflict over the Uniform Civil Code, which would devolve into the Hindu Code Bill, and further into four separate acts, would come to symbolize the relationship between women and the Government of India. Radha Kumar described this best.

Demands for a reformed, uniform and all-encompassing codification of Hindu personal laws had been first raised by feminists in the thirties… No further action was taken until after Independence, when another committee was appointed under the chairmanship of B.R.Ambedkar, the then Law Minister. The Bill produced by this committee raised the age of consent and marriage, gave women the rights to divorce, maintenance, and inheritance, and treated dowry as *stridhan* (women's wealth/inheritance). Though the feminists and social reformers welcomed the Bill, and the majority of Congressmen supported it, the opposition of men such as Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel was enough to pressurize Nehru into stalling the Bill until 1955-56, when section of it were passed as four different Acts: The Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act. Ambedkar resigned in protest and there was an outcry from some feminists, but the Government took no further action on the question of a uniform Hindu code, the outcry receded, and the matter was dropped. [169]

The inability to see gender equality as politically significant was fatally endemic to Indian nationalists across the board – left, right, center, man or woman. The visibility of select, unrepresentative women in influential roles, cumulated the invisibility of the vast majority. Maitrayee Chaudhuri hypothesizes this skewed development of colonialism; where the ideological thrust of the time contains fragments of the Grand Narratives of the West, but are endowed with new meanings through the lens of the English-educated upper and middle classes through the experience of colonialism. She demonstrates her thesis in an analysis of the National Planning Committee (NPC)'s Subcommittee on Woman's (SCW) Role in Planned Economy (WRPE) of 1939 by examining the dichotomies of thought that were ratified in policy documents.

> In the section on the analysis of labour, the WRPE breaks the public/private dichotomy. In the discourse on family reform, this dichotomy is reaffirmed. I have two possible explanations for this. The first is that the identity of "Indian Womanhood," resting on the attributed of motherhood and other qualities connected with domesticity, is class based. The working class woman is seen entirely in terms of production. Not so the middle class woman. While the need for her economic independence is recognized, her responsibility to "create a proper environment in the home for the proper nurture of the children" and not "merely to cook, wash and attend to the needs and comforts of the family" is emphasized to improve the low standards of life in the country. These differential role expectations draw attention to the ways by which class is itself gendered.

[169] R. Kumar 1993, 97

The second explanation for the selective gendered analysis of the public/private split can be traced to certain limits to the production paradigm, even if production is taken to be both "production of things" and "production of life." Recent feminist philosophy has asked whether the "concept of production, which is based on the concept of an active subject transforming, making and shaping an object fiven to it" can adequately comprehend traditionally female activities such as child rearing and care-giving, "which are so thoroughly intersubjective." The WRPE attaches great "great national significance" to these activities, but thereby reifies them, alienating them from the subject.[170]

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) reiterated the socialist economic ideals, making no further commitment on resources toward education. The focus was an expansion of the public sector, i.e. critical infrastructure for transportation, communication, energy, and irrigation. Most importantly this plan formalized India's closed economy, despite being in effect since 1947. The period between 1947 and 1990 became known as the "License Raj" because of extensive red tape, restrictions, subsidies, and State ownership of key industries. Most firms needed to develop close relationships with the political class to maintain their businesses or gain permissions to expand them. Despite directives in the constitution to make elementary education free and compulsory, and develop a Uniform Civil Code, both were deferred to a later date due to political or financial constraints. Women's education was abridged as a part of social education and development, which was budgeted for Rs.15 crores over the plan period, of which Rs.10 crores was for training social organizers, "national extension and community development programmes."[171]

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) focused on the expansion of agriculture. But the Second Plan period saw the germination of the India-China border conflicts. Jawaharlal Nehru and China's Zhou Enlai in signed the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" or the

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[170] Mary E. John, ed. 2008. *Women's Studies in India: A Reader.* Gurgaon, Haryana: Penguin Books, 148; Maitrayee Chaudhuri, 'Citizens, Workers and Emblems of Culture: An Analysis of the First Plan Document on Women.' *Contributions to the Indian Sociology* 29, No. 1&2 (1995), 211-34
[171] Planning Commission 2013

Panchsheel Treaty in 1954. China was among the claimants of the Aksai Chin area of the

Kashmir valley along with Indian and Pakistani claims; and porous 3,225-kilometre-long

Himalayan border resulted in military clashes through the 1950s. Matters peaked when the

Chinese suppression of the national uprising in Tibet led to the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso

fleeing into India where he was granted political asylum. The Chinese reacted by moving troops

into India with seventeen casualties. Meanwhile, the Third Plan documented the low literacy

rates across the country and hoped to rectify it,

> Over the past decade, while the additional number of boys enrolled in schools was 13.2
> million, in the case of girls the additional enrolment was only 6.8 million. The census of
> 1961 has shown that, as against a literacy rate of 34 per cent for men, only about 13 per
> cent of the women are literate…. It is estimated that of the resources available under the
> Plan for the development of education about Rs.175 crores will be devoted to the
> education of girls, of which about Rs.114 crores are for education at the primary and
> middle school stages.[172]

The escalation of the border conflicts culminated in the Sino-Indian War from 20th

October to 21st November, 1962. It proved a harsh awakening to the holes in the Indian

economic system and the plan objectives for greater expansion of educational sending would be

deferred or delegated to the States, which were already operating in deficits. Two successive

years of drought, devaluation of the currency, inflation, and erosion of resources disrupted the

planning process.

Nehru had placed the burden of women's equality on education initiatives without

ensuring their adequate implementation. The lackluster leadership toward women's

empowerment was evident in the emasculated Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 which made the

giver and receiver of dowry equally liable, and the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act of 1961

which penalized pimps and sex workers, but not the johns, despite Nehru's sarcastic comments

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[172] Ibid

criticizing clients of prostitutes in the legislative assembly. Moreover, women voters were seen as appendages to their male guardians; lacking autonomy in political decision making. Without the British as a common enemy, women's movements and leadership diffused under the pressures of diversity, geography, and agendas. Laws were enacted post-independence but with no evaluation, communication, or accountability mechanism to support their spread amongst the millions of men and women who were distant from Delhi's idealizing halls of power. The greatest tragedy was the disassociation of the educated middle class from the laws that protected women, and in some practices – like dowry, sex-trafficking, and prostitution – the continued impunity with which it was practiced. This was not just a rural or development problem.

> In his assessment of the women's question, Jawaharlal was far more a prisoner of his own class, unable to shake off the view that the women's question was basically one of social attitudes, customs, and traditions. The legacy of 'radical European tradition' made him accept blindly the thesis that solution lay in 'modernization'. Even his diluted 'Swadeshi brand of socialism' did not extend to a class analysis of women's roles, status and problems, and their links with power relations within the family and society. He wrote; 'When I talk of it (socialism), I mean the economic theory and this talk of religion or marriage and morals in connection with it is absurd.' For the same reason, he felt uncomfortable with some of the radical suggestions of the National Planning Committee's Sub-Committee with regard to the family and women's rights as mothers inside or outside wedlock. In a letter to the Chairperson, Lakshmibai Rajwade, he observed, 'many of the subjects dealt with by your Committee related to intimate details of personal life and to all manner of prejudices and customs… but the way to remove them is not always the way of merely denouncing them. One has to approach the subject in a manner which is least offensive to large sections of people… make the approach gently.' Jawaharlal was the epitome of the well brought-up middle class of the post social reform movement, which viewed women as objects of *protection*.[173]

Gulazarilal Nanda – prominent labor economist, and loyal Congress member – became interim Prime Minister while the Congress Working Committee under the party presidency of Kumarasami Kamarajar – better known as K. Kamaraj or Kingmaker – deliberated over Nehru's endorsement of Lal Bahadur Shastri. The party aimed to contain the premiership ambitions of

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[173] Mazumdar, Vina. 1989. "An Unfulfilled or a Blurred Vision? Jawaharlal Nehru and Indian Women." *Nehru Centenary: International Seminar.* University of Sydney, 16.

conservative right-winger but outstanding administrator, Morarji Desai; with K. Kamaraj as a contender, and even requesting Indira Gandhi to carry forward her father's brand of "Nehruvian Socialism." She declined and party leadership abided by Nehru's wishes and swore Lal Bahadur Shastri in as Prime Minister on June 9, 1964. Unfortunately, Shastri's leadership would be short lived.

Chapter 3. Indira Gandhi and the Indian National Congress (1966 – 1984)

Lal Bahadur Shastri's stint as Prime Minister was short but influential. He carried

forward Nehru's foreign policy of Non-Alignment, and boosted his socialist economics by

launching the Green Revolution – using agronomic technologies, especially high yielding

varieties (HYVs) of seeds or hybrid seeds and irrigation infrastructure; to overcome India's

chronic food deficit and reduce grain imports. Border skirmishes along the west Indo-Pakistan

border, the Rann of Kutch, culminated in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. Shastri mobilized the

masses by wringing the war for food sufficiency together with the war against Pakistan with the

iconic slogan, "Jai Jawan! Jai Kissan!" (Hail the Soldiers! Hail the Farmers!). But among the

internal conflicts that would bear weight on education policy would be the constitutional

imposition of Hindi as the sole national language or "*rashtrabhasha.*" This came into effect with

the ratification of the constitution on January 26, 1950, but non-Hindi speaking states were given

a 15 year "grace period" during which English and Hindi would be used as official languages in

communications between Center and the States. Southern, Eastern, and even some Northern

leaders, led by C.N. Annadurai from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)[174] from Tamil

Nadu, began protests when the grace period ended on 26 January 1965. They turned extremely

violent; ending with two self-immolators, "martyrs at the altar of Tamil." Prime Minister Shastri

sided with the senior Congress leadership like Morarji Desai who would have Hindi crystallized

as the national language but he chose national unity over linguistic chauvinism.[175]

Shastri compensated with assurances that every state could conduct business in the

language of their choice or English, inter-state communications would be in English or

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[174] translation: Dravidian Progress Federation
[175] Ramachandra Guha, 2008. *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy.* New Delhi: Harper Perennial.

accompanied by an authentic English translation, non-Hindi states could continue corresponding with the Center in English and no changes would be made to this arrangement without consent, English would continue as the official language of business at the Center, and, crucially, All India Civil Services Examination would continue to be conducted in English rather than in the medium of Hindi alone (as the pro-Hindi zealots desired).[176]

Additionally, Shastri especially collaborated with the Ministry of Education under M.C. Chagla putting forth his agenda for agrarian development and national harmony. Daulat Singh Kothari – defense scientist, educator, and then Chairman of the University Grants Commission – was charged with the leadership of an ad hoc Education Commission through 1964-1966. Primarily charged with the standardization of educational administration and framing a national system of education, his leadership accounted for the famines, conflicts, and ever-present problem of national coherence. The commission was the first of its kind to have internationally renowned members consulting on its twelve task forces, and seven working groups. Extensively varied career and organizational profiles manned the seventeen-member commission like; Dr. B. P. Pal, Director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute; Roger Revelle, Director of the Centre for Population Studies at Harvard University; S. A. Shumovsky, Professor of Physics, at Moscow University; P. N. Kirpal, Educational Adviser and Secretary to the Government of India's Ministry of Education, and M. Jean Thomas, Inspector-General of Education, France; to name a few. Head of the Department of Educational Planning, J. P. Naik served as Member Secretary, and Mr. J. F. McDougall from the Department of School and Higher Education at UNESCO, as Associate Secretary. Meeting with all central senior political leadership including the Prime Minister, and collaborating with national agencies like the National Council of

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[176] Ramachandra Guha, 2005. "*Past and Present: Hindi against India."* The Hindu Magazine. January 16. Accessed July 7, 2016.

Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Institute of Applied Manpower Research, State

Institutes of Education, Teachers Associations among others; the Education Commission covered

a breadth of administrative issues from School Education, Teacher Training and Status,

Pedagogy, Educational Finance, and Student Welfare; and social issues like Women's education,

Backward Classes, School Infrastructure, Educational Statistics, and School Curriculum. J. P.

Naik and P.N. Kirpal were no strangers to the post-colonial educational planning process, having

served on previous education commissions. In fact, J.P. Naik had served on the National

Committee on Women's Education of 1957-59 and ensured the observations and

recommendations of that report bore influence on the Kothari Commission. Aligning itself the

Prime Minister's agenda, the Commission also laid immense stress on Agricultural education – a

sector that employed women as small-scale and subsistence farmers, and domestic and bonded

labor.

The commission was emphatic about a "science-based" approach – a term used

practically synonymously with modernization and technologization. They articulated this

foundational concept as a component of education, morality, and culture,

> The quality of science teaching has also to be raised considerably so as to achieve its
> proper objectives and purposes, namely, to promote an ever deepening understanding of
> basic principles, to develop problem-solving and analytical skills and the ability to apply
> them to the problems of the material environment and social living, and to promote the
> spirit of enquiry and experimentation…. Science strengthens the commitment of man to
> free enquiry and to the quest for truth as his highest duty and obligation. It loosens the
> bonds of dogmatism and acts as a powerful dispeller of fear and superstition, fatalism and
> passive resignation.[177]

Comparing this to the early twentieth century policy narrative for a specifically Indian

conception of culture and education, the scientific educative paradigm attempts to syncretize

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[177] Government of India. 1964-66. *Education and National Development: Report of the Education Commission.*
Commission Report, New Delhi: Ministry of Education, 10.

communal norms with the socialist values of equality. After some self-congratulatory remarks about the phenomenal progress of women, the conception of women as subject changes.

> …the education of women can assist greatly in reducing the fertility rate. In the modern world, the role of the woman goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with man the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects. This is the direction in which we shall have to move. In the struggle for freedom, Indian women fought side by side with men. This equal partnership will have to continue in the fight against hunger, poverty, ignorance and ill- health.[178]

Endorsing the recommendations of the National Committee on the Education of Women (1957-59) and the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula between Boys and Girls (1961-64), the commission report briefly raises the additional threat of an exponentially rising population which scientifically necessitates educating the womb. However, educating women is at best, part of the larger project of national education, or at worst, an aside. It falls under the objective of "Equalization of Educational Opportunity" as, "The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation."[179] This summary recommendation to make educating women a special priority is repeated verbatim in the National Policy on Education 1968 (NPE).

The Education commission is the first to lay out a broadly uniform structure of the 10+2+3 educational progression: the first 10 years is subdivided into 4 years of primary education, 6 years of middle and high school followed by 2 years of higher secondary or junior colleges, and then 3 years of a bachelor's or undergraduate degree. It also reemphasizes a commitment to Directive Principle under Article 45 of the Constitution which guaranteed free and compulsory education for ages 6 through 14. The development of language was given special consideration in the document with the Three-Language formula – a modern Indian or

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[178] Ibid.221
[179] Ibid. xiv

regional language, English, and Hindi. These values, and other recommendations would replicate in to the 1968 National Policy on Education (NPE).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education went through more leadership change. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed would assume the mantle for four months from November 14, 1966 to November 13, 1967. As a Nehru loyalist, lauded administrator, inheriting a political pedigree stretching back to Mughal King Aurangzeb's army leadership; he held important portfolios through this membership with the INC, going on to become India's fifth President. His role in the education ministry though brief, seemed mainly to serve as a place holder while the Prime Minister's Office transitioned to Indira Gandhi.

Lal Bahadur Shastri's last hours were spent negotiating and signing the Tashkent Agreement with Pakistani President Ayub Khan, to end the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. After over 6500 battlefield deaths amounting to a stalemate, a U.N. resolution for ceasefire on September 23, 1965 was accepted by both sides. Shastri passed on January 11, 1966, hours after signing the Tashkent agreement. He would be remembered best for being the engineer of the "Green Revolution" and an able war-time negotiator. Again, Gulzarilal Nanda was sworn is an interim Prime Minister while the Congress leadership battled out succession.

A week later on January 19, 1966, Indira Gandhi was elected by the INC's 'syndicate' of party bosses led by K. Kamaraj, nee Kingmaker, not as a serious candidate of influence "but to take advantage of a youngish, gender-handicapped and not too intellectually formidable incumbent."[180] Their estimation may have been skewed by hubris and desperation to maintain control at the center. Indira Gandhi became President of the Indian National Congress in 1959, served in Shastri's cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting; gaining the bulk of her

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[180] John Keay, 2010. *India: A History*. 2nd. London: Harper Press.

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experience acting as Nehru's official hostess after his 1957 win in the general elections and

assisting in the refugee and rehabilitation efforts after the Partition before that. Topping this

firsthand experience was the simple fact that she was born a Brahmin[181] and a Nehru – daughter

and granddaughter of Congress presidents; politically elite and socially privileged.

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was succeeded by Dr. Triguna Sen, who had served on the

Kothari Commission of 1964-66 when he was Vice Chancellor of Calcutta's reputed Jadavpur

University. He too, got embroiled in language wars when the government was accused of

working against English as a medium of instruction and official usage;[182] reigniting the debates

over linguistic prominence that plagued Shastri. However, his major role was articulating – and

defending[183] – India's first coherent policy formulation on education: The National Policy on

Education (NPE)1968.

<div align="center">National Policy on Education 1968 and After</div>

Directly citing the influence of three commission reports – The University Education

Commission (1948-49), Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), and Education

Commission (1964-66) – the NPE 1968, realigns itself with Gandhi and the independence

movement before celebrating the consensus achieved over its framing. The language of the NPE

1968 is directly influenced by, when not verbatim, the Education Commission (1964-66). Apart

from exactly numerating the principles in its summary as the commission report, it also echoes a

lump of developmental objectives as an educational philosophy. Case in point,

> The government of India is convinced that a radical reconstruction of education on the
> broad lines recommended by the education commission is essential for economic and
> cultural development of the country, for national integration and for realizing the ideal of
> a socialistic pattern of society. This will involve a transformation of the system to relate it
> more closely to life of the people; a continuous effort to expand educational opportunity;

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[181] The highest caste within Hinduism.
[182] Inder Malhotra, 1967. "Indian Call to keep English as an Official Language." *The Guardian*, November 7: 5.
[183] The New York Times. 1967. "Language Policy in India Defended." *The New York Times*, September 12: 10.

a sustained and intensive effort to raise the quality of education at all stages; an emphasis on the development of science and technology; and the cultivation of moral and social values. The educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development. Only then will education be able to play its vital role in promoting national progress, creating a sense of common citizenship and culture, and strengthening the national integration. This is necessary if the country is to attain its rightful plan in the comity of nations in conformity with its great cultural heritage and its unique potentialities.[184]

The entire policy document is essentially, no, *exactly* pages xii to xviii of The Education Commission (1964-66) Report, minus the report and deliberations; or even without a cumulative consideration of past commission reports of the twenty years since independence. Aggarwal's compendium of policy documents[185] details some deliberation was indeed involved. Apparently the Government of India constituted a committee of Parliamentarians based on the recommendations the Education Commission members, who drafted a statement for a National Education Policy, which then went on to CABE. The Board, in its turn, gave unanimous consensus to the aforementioned statement and further recommended it as the guiding principles for educational reforms and plans at Central, State, and Local levels of governance. However, it seems disingenuous to claim such activity considering the final document.

The exercise seems lazy and hurried in effect and retrospect. It appears to respond to political climate rather than civic need or even its own lofty ideals of socialist equality. The policy rhetoric constantly revives Gandhi and the independence movement to maintain coherence, cohesiveness, and unity in increasing material instability and confusion.

India's population in 1967 tipped the scales at 513,782,489 (over half a million), as it entered its fourth general election. Voter turnout remained upbeat at 61.04%[186], but the electorate

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[184] Government of India: Ministry of Education. 1968. "*Documents and Reports*." Ministry of Human Resource Development. Accessed March 2015.
http://mhrd.gov.in/documents_reports?field_documents_reports_category_tid=19, 8)
[185] Aggarwal 2010, 194
[186] Election Commission of India 2014

had lost confidence in the INC. It still remained the incumbent but lost critical seats in the State

polls. Communist parties and regionally coherent parties gained power where the INC lost. A lot

of these parties secured electoral confidence during the lingua franca uprisings and protests that

rocked the early 60s. The economic distress of two wars against China and Pakistan exposed the

fissures in the economic plans with inflation touching 7.7%, as famine plunged the country into

the worst recession since Independence. The Third Five Year Plans were declared a failure; and

the government compensated by devaluing the Rupee. Indira Gandhi inherited a tattered

economy with a party leadership that expected her to act as puppet incumbent.

She soon established herself as an adept Machiavellian politician and administrator. P.N.

Haksar, a Kashmiri Brahmin like Ms. Gandhi, acted as her Principal Secretary and chief

strategist through 1967 to 1973 and is credited with her rise from a ceremonial prime minister to

near-absolute power. She established a coalition of younger, ambitious Congress members and

an independent mandate for herself as she tapped in to the historical reality of poverty in India.

She nationalized fourteen banks and abolished the privy princely purses, with socialism as a

radicalizing philosophy and the catchy pithy, "*Garibi Hatao*" (Remove Poverty).[187] Intervening

in the East Pakistan struggle for Independence, she proved her military ability by winning the

1971 Indo-Pakistan war and securing Independence for the now Democratic Republic of

Bangladesh. Providing the masses – bruised by past humiliating defeats in war, caste and class

inequalities, poverty, and marginalization – with much needed leadership, assertiveness, and

confidence, she began to be associated with the mother goddess, and manifestations of *Shakti*.

She separated from the INC old guard when they disapproved of her independent policy agendas,

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[187] This is an extremely reductive description of Ms. Gandhi's politics, and agendas. There is an immense amount of
scholarship that details the exact machinations that led to the nationalization of banks and later of insurance and
commodity trading institutions especially foreign oil companies. The critiques and appraisals of her motivations are
worth detailing, and make for excellent political-scandal-reading, but are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

forming her own Congress (I) party with younger members in the Congress working party. As a coup de grâce, she astutely disassociated the general election from state elections by calling for general elections fourteen months ahead of schedule in 1971. Women were 48% of a 275 million electorate that would be considered representative of a population of 560 million at a growth rate of 2.26%[188]. National literacy was 29.45%, men accounting for 39.45%, and women a measly, 18.69%; and this was surmounted by the harrowing sex ratio of 931 women for 1000 men[189]. To the rural poor, illiterate, female, marginalized population, Indira Gandhi was "Indira Amma" or "Mother Indira," conflating the maternal with the powerful and political. Indira Gandhi won a comfortable majority, entering her second term as Prime Minister. The triumph, however, was Ms. Gandhi's alone.

Each policy document needed to invoke the independence movement, its leaders, and ideals, because the legitimacy that enveloped nation building had eroded over the two decades since. Unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, inequalities, and entrenched socio-political invisibilities, had dulled the transcendental luster of Nehruvian planned development and the Indian National Congress. Separatist movements like the Telangana movement, apolitical student and anti-corruption movements, and militant left-wing peasant organizations, took to the streets and ruptured the accepted mediums of political engagement and activism.[190] That the political party maneuverings, splits, coalitions, and backroom deals were an established daily circus, did not help.

The Ministry of Education was now led by V.K.R.V. Rao, who was Union Minister of Education between 1969 and 1971. Despite his stellar credentials – Keynesian economist who

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[188] Election Commission of India 2014
[189] National Commission on Population 2014
[190] R. Kumar 1993

actually studied with John Maynard Keynes; politician, and educator – his administration lapsed

into the old habits of commission resolutions and institutional development. Even so, criticizing

him would be unfair. He may not have done much to support women or women's education but

he did set up premier social research institutes, like the Delhi School of Economics, Institute of

Economic Growth, and the Population Research Centers. He also established the autonomous

public body, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), which would inadvertently

play an instrumental role in promoting women's studies through the 1970s and 80s. Dr. J.P. Naik

remained an educational administrator, and planner with the Government of India; chairing the

Working Party on Education Planning, Administration and Evaluation in 1968. As the needs to

implement the NPE of 1968 become pertinent, the National Council of Educational Research and

Training (NCERT) conducted national seminars and conferences on Institutional Planning

(1968), Educational and Vocational Guidance (1968), Population Education (1969), Primary and

Work Oriented Education (1970), and the Open University (1970).[191] These were broadly

attended by global, cross-sectional, interdisciplinary developmental groups, like USAID,

UNESCO, and the Ford Foundation, apart from parliamentarians, teacher's unions, and other

institutional members.

<div align="center">Towards Equality: Committee on the Status of Women in India</div>

On September 22, 1971, the Government of India constituted the Committee on the

Status of Women in India (CSWI) by a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social

Welfare. In part it was a recognition of the grassroots peoples' movements,[192] and the nebulous

social fabric caught between tradition, socialism, and modernization through the tumultuous 60s.

It also harkened the political blurring of education and social welfare; which would manifest

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[191] Aggarwal 2010
[192] R. Kumar 1993

with a combining of the two Union Ministries under historian, Dr. Saiyid Nurul Hassan's

leadership from 1972 to 1977. The objectives of the CSWI were expansive:

1. To examine the Constitutional, legal, and administrative provisions that have a bearing on the social status of women, their education and employment.
2. To assess the impact of these provisions during the last two decades on the status of women in the country, particularly in the rural sector and to suggest more effective programmes.
3. To consider the development of education among women and determine the factors responsible for the slow progress in some areas and suggest remedial measures.
4. To survey the problems of the working women including discrimination in employment and remuneration.
5. To examine the status of women as housewives and mothers in the changing social pattern and their problems in the sphere of further education and employments.
6. To undertake surveys or case studies on the implications of the population policies and family planning programmes on the status of women.
7. To suggest any other measures which would enable women to play their full and proper role in building up the nation.[193]

Members of the ad hoc committee were initially unaware that the report would represent

India at the United Nation's World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico

(1975). Extended deliberations were championed by Dr. Phulrenu Guha, Chairperson of the

CSWI and Minister-in-Charge of Social Welfare, despite pressure to meet early deadlines and

save face on the prominent international platform. Dr. Guha was no stranger to committee work

having served with Durgabai Deshmukh in a state chapter of the autonomous Central Social

Welfare Board[194] and the National Committee on Women's Education (1957-59). The ten-

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[193] Government of India. 1971-74. *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India.* Edited by Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma and C. P. Sujaya. Delhi: Center for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) and Pearson.
I have used a Kindle edition published by Pearson Education India, and the Center for Women's Development Studies (CWDS). It includes introductions by Vina Mazumdar, who served as member-secretary to the CSWI, as well as contemporary scholars Kumud Sharma, and C.P. Sujaya.
Since this is seen as the founding text of women's studies in India, this version was published for wider dissemination. It is not available on government websites or subsidiary portals which is why my version is a commercial reproduction of the original public document. Nonetheless, I attributed the Government of India as the corporate author of the text.
[194] Government of India 1971-74, Loc 797-811
The CWSI members and editors of this volume recall the events leading up to the report's commission:

member committee was a tally of eminent (high-caste, middle class, socio-economically privileged) men and women forming the socio political elite, or rather clique, at the time, including, Maniben Kara, Savitri Shyam, Neera Dogra, Vikram Mahajan, Leela Dube, Sakina A. Hasan, Urmila Haksar, Lotika Sarkar, and Vina Mazumdar. Because of the wide mandate, the committee would collaborate with the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, and the apex social science research body, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) through its prominent member-secretary, J.P. Naik to commission additional investigations.

The report eventually titled *Towards Equality*, would be a severe indictment on the State and its grandstanding rhetoric of progress, egalitarianism, secularism, political righteousness, and inclusive citizenship. The committee, comprised of parliamentarians, academics, career policy bureaucrats and social workers, recognized themselves as the beneficiaries of India's nationalist project and were shocked to discover the *accelerated deterioration* of the status of women since the 1950s. The report is accepted as the genesis of formalized women's studies, and a women's

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The autonomous Central Social Welfare Board, the inspired creation of Durgabai Deshmukh, was set up in 1953 as a supportive mechanism for voluntary effort in social welfare for women and children, but it was not part of the bureaucracy. It was, however, the nearest the country had to a machinery for women. There is an amusing story of the UN letter to the Government of India (with several reminders) asking for a survey on the status of women, creating a situation within the establishment, because it was not immediately clear to whom it would be sent – or which ministry dealt with women! It was then decided to send the letter to the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare as the nearest approximation of an agency that had some relevance to the subject of women. What happens next is better told in the words of three of the dramatis personae (Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma, and Lotika Sarkar) associated with the events of the time:

"This is the point where history appears to have intervened. It was a historical coincidence that the Minister-in-Charge of Social Welfare (which was then part of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare) was Dr. Phulrenu Guha (PG). the letter was placed on her table. According to our "sources" again, PG wrote a note pointing out that apart from the UN's request, there were national imperatives that called for a review exercise. The Constitution had pledged equality to all underprivileged and "unequal" sections of Indian Society. Reviews had been undertaken of the condition and status of scheduled castes, tribes, and backward classes but never of women. The nation was about to complete a quarter century of its existence. She felt it was high time to review what had been happening to women, and proposed the constitution of a Commission for enquiry."

The whole idea remained under wraps for over a year and a half and resurfaced after the General Elections of 1971 returned Indira Gandhi to office as Prime Minister. The CSWI was appointed in 1971 with Dr. Guha as Chairperson. What kinds of interventions were made while appointing the Committee, what determined its composition, who drafted the terms of reference, are little known facts, especially because of the disappearance of "institutional memory" during the last decade or more.

movement in India; transforming "woman" from a monolithic subject to a material, varied subjectivity, and therefore an instrument of change. Vina Mazumdar, member-secretary of the CSWI, and J.P. Naik's mentee, along with Neera Dogra would go on to fundamentally transform the paradigm of their scholarship to redress policies and social practices, calling out the complacency and "persistent ambivalence"[195] regarding the education of women. *Towards Equality* demonstrated the glaring contradiction of systemic patterns of gender inequity and discrimination disproportionately affecting women, with the tokenistic celebration of middle class women's entry in to higher education as an affirmation of "socialist" political agendas. In fact, the latter had effectively insured the invisibility of the former. The importance of this report cannot be understated. It has been variously called a "historic document," "founding text," and a "watershed report."[196]

The report covers an array of topics. It takes a demographic perspective and points out fallacies in the census collection process. It studies the socio cultural context of women through the lens of religious traditions, descent systems, marriage, family organization, gendered spheres of labor, and even special situations like prostitution, unwed mothers, aging women, and imprisoned women. It looks at legal provisions for polygamy, marriage, dowry, divorce, and separate religious conjugal laws; economic participation and employment, political status, welfare programmes, and the influence of mass media. The intersectional[197] scale of this report; warrants a separate study in its own right.[198]

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[195] John 2008, 306
[196] Government of India 1971-74
Chapter titled "Introducing Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India" by Kumud Sharma, and C.P. Sujaya.
[197] It is important to note intersectionality has not been an active or dynamic concept in Indian feminist theory or practice. I am simply noting the effect – not the intent – of the report, when I credit its intersectionality.
[198] As important as all these topics are – and as variously as they are covered in the text – I will focus on Chapter 6, which studied Educational Development, since this would carry weight on the National Policy of Education in 1986

In reviewing the history of women's education the report criticizes the early Indian reformists for framing women's education as a way to strengthen the traditional (Hindu) family structure. It sold an educated wife and mother as a symbol of higher status within and outside the central family unit. As post-independence policies are reviewed the ambivalence of policy making and the detrimental effect of the ambitious, idealistic targets for education are lambasted as negatively impacting women's education. Further, education statistics' focus on enrollment as an indicative of progress; and enrollment – not achievement or completion – as the basis for grants-in-aid, set systemic habits of neglect, oversight, and a preference for quantitative over qualitative improvement of conditions. In reviewing the women's education, the report methodically tears through the structures, assumptions, and measures that have influenced educational development since independence. A section detailing the social attitudes to women's education amplify how political and social apathy are symbiotic.

> Social attitudes to the education of girls vary, ranging from acceptance of the need to one of absolute indifference. The Committee's survey reveals some interesting trends. A statement that girls should not be given any education received a categorical rejection by 77.8 per cent of the respondents. A small minority (16.8 per cent) did, however, agree with this view. In the case of higher education, however, we find a surprisingly hostile attitude since, over 64.50 per cent responded that a girl should not be allowed to go for higher education even if she is very intelligent. In view of the Constitutional directive regarding free and compulsory education up to the age of 14, we tried to elicit public opinion on the question of making education compulsory. In response to our general questionnaire, 77.5 per cent of the respondents, male and female, supported compulsory education for upto the 8th class….
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> In urban areas, by and large, the acceptance of the need of education for girls is greater than in rural areas. Among the affluent, there are teo distinct attitudes. Some families are opposed to it for traditional reasons while other have welcomed it as an accomplishment and a symbol of modernization. Among the middle classes, the acceptance is the highest. The attitude among the lower middle class is more difficult to generalize because today's middle-class consists of white collared as well as manual worker. Though economically one, socially they are two distinct classes, their attitudes being determined much more by their social background rather than by their economic position. While an increasingly

and its Plan of Action in 1992. I will also only refer to political formulations of gender through the section and its recommendations in the conclusion.

large section, conscious of economic necessity, is prepared to make substantial sacrifices for girls' education, a very large number finds itself unable to do so for economic and social reasons. For the majority of people who live below subsistence level, poverty is the predominant factor governing the attitude to girls' education.

Reasons for the variations in social attitudes and the consequent slow progress of women's education are both social and economic: (a) Large majority of girls, by the time they reach the age of eight, are required at home to do various domestic chores, e.g. collecting fire-wood, coal waste, cow dung, fetching water, sometimes from long distances, washing, cleaning, cooking, reaching food and water to parents in their places of work, etc. (b) Majority of girls of this age groups has (sic) to look after siblings especially when their mothers are engaged in earning a livelihood. (c) A substantial number of girls are engaged in contributing to the family income by their own labour. The prevalence of child labour has long been admitted as the greatest deterrent to the spread of education among the poor. The Committee was appalled by the extent and degree of use of young girls of five to fourteen working for twelve hours a day. One 12-year-old girl in Andhra Pradesh informed us that she could not remember any other pattern of existence in her whole life. Similar is the case in fireworks, matches, weaving and many other industries, mostly in the unorganized sector. A very large number of girls in this age group work as domestic servants – either as helpers or as independent earners. In Calcutta we found one 12-year-old supporting a family of six members by working in a number of houses as a part-time domestic servant. This was by no means an exceptional case. These girls are too exhausted at the end of their day's labour to attend evening classes even if they could be arranged. [199]

The section is the first policy deep-dive into the socio-economic fabric that hinders education. Denouncing the quantitative explosion of schools as a measure of educational progress it points out how most schools are single-teacher schools. The drive to meet national enrolment targets means that enrolment in the first grade is open through the academic year without accounting for attendance, engagement, performance, or drop-outs. This unfortunately is still a prevalent practice.[200] Qualified women are hindered by simple logistics like travel,

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[199] Government of India 1971-74

[200] During informal field investigations as I developed my research agenda, I visited two Municipal Schools in North Delhi, New Delhi, India. They fell under the administrative purview of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. It followed a split shift system to maximize efficient usage of facilities i.e. girls attended school from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and boys attended from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The school has innumerable issues – no toilets, no clean drinking water, inadequate staffing, no funding support, administrative and supervisory problems with sharing facilities. However, enrollment came up in conversation with senior teachers – who doubled and tripled as school administrators, poverty counselors, special education and day-care professionals – when I witnessed them accept enrollment of two 3-year-old boys and one 4-year-old girl. The school year was due to end two months from the date of my field investigation in January 2014. They admitted they had no choice because they had to meet enrollment targets enforced by MCD

hygiene, and living arrangements in taking educator positions in rural schools, over and above

societal pressures and ideas of status or prestige in employment. All these are undoubtedly

valuable observations; but the most pioneering would be the recognition of gender constructions

and iterations in educational practice. Though not explicitly expressed as masculinity and

femininity, the gender simulations within educational institutions and their effect in the creation

and sustenance of *implicit bias* is directly addressed.

> The deep foundations of the inequality of the sexes are built in the minds of men and women through a socialization process which continues to be extremely powerful. Right from their earliest years, boys and girls are brought up to know that they are different from each other and this differentiation is strengthened in every way possible – through language forms, modes of behavior of labour etc. They begin to learn very early what is proper or not proper for boys and girls and all attempts at deviation are noticed, discouraged and sometimes punished. The sissy and the tomboy are equal objects of derision. There is nothing wrong in this if it were merely a question of distinction. But it soon gets inextricably tied up with the traditional concepts of the roles of men and women and their mutual relationships which are based on inequality. The process of indoctrination affects the development of individual personalities. The only institution which can counteract the effect of this process is the educational system. If education is to promote equality for women, it must make a deliberate, planned and sustained effort so that the new value of equality of the sexes can replace the traditional value system of inequality. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. In fact, the schools reflect and strengthen the traditional prejudices of inequality through their curricula, the classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on their pupils. We received criticisms of school textbooks in this respect in many places. In Manipur, and Andhra Pradesh in particular, a number of women were highly critical of the inclusion of stories of Sita and Savitri, as ideals of womanhood, since they tend to perpetuate the traditional values regarding the subordinate and dependent role of women. This results in the development of social attitudes among even many educated persons, men and women, who accept women's dependent and unequal status as a natural order of society. Such a system of values is contradictory to the goals set before this nation by the Constitution. The concomitant of equality is responsibility and unless this is admitted by men and women equally, the desired transformation of our society will receive a severe setback. This is one area where a major change is needed in the context and organization of education. Educators must admit their responsibility about this much needed change in the values of the younger generation.[201]

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inspectors; who did not inspect the facilities and achievement of students, or lack thereof, but only the physical registers (literally, handwritten tables in exercise notebooks) that detailed gross enrollment totals.
[201] Government of India 1971-74

It is refreshing to see a policy report that identifies the systematization of gender roles in education and calls for a paradigmatic realignment and training/educating for, rather than a justification of, binary hierarchies. The terms "sissy," "tomboy," "Sita," Savitri," are identified as colloquial and definitional controls to enforce gender norms; and these terms are separate – though superficially – from western gendered slang. Personifying femininity in Hindu mythological, folk, and some may argue, religious figures, is a specifically Indian synecdoche.

Among the more intriguing recommendations was for sex education from middle school onwards and to ensure spread through formal and non-formal mass mediums. Though made in passing, even the Seminar on Population Education (1969) did not recommend sex education; instead relying on rhetoric for family values and planning for economic efficacy; even lectures and coursework on demography. Hindustan Latex (renamed HLL Lifecare in 2009), a government enterprise, was established in 1969 to manufacture condoms for the specific purpose of population control. Just not sex education. This is a recommendation and debate that would not be picked up.

The CSWI report also pans the delivery of functional literacy programs based on perceived gender roles. Arguing that the value of vocational training may be pronounced for women over men, they cite the changing structure of families, and economic roles; arguing against a duplication of a curricula – designed by the Department of Social Welfare it included kitchen gardening, food cultivation, poultry keeping, animal husbandry, home aesthetics and management (knitting, sewing,), nutrition, child care, and civic education – that benefits both genders and not assigning the bulk of non-formal labor on women through education or literacy policy.

Another area of focus of the CSWI addressed the political status and participation of women. It noted the consensus that political parties have failed at mobilizing women and nominating them as candidates; except from notably elite families and princely houses. Financing a campaign is difficult without independent endorsements and resources. Subsequently, women who do compete are forced to do so through political parties and their issues are subsumed to larger party narratives, foci, or leadership. Actively participating women disproportionately endure threats of violence and character assassination, which understandably dissuades them from seeking active candidature.

In 1972, Ela Bhatt was a Gandhian socialite in the Textile Labour Association (TLA), an industry that employed a large number of women in the informal sector. She organized them into the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), to unite their experience of low earnings through the putting-out system,[202] exploitation and harassment from subcontractors, employers, and the police, and lack of recognition. Its diffused, cooperative form meant a struggle for recognition as a trade union. SEWA was among the first of its kind to organize unorganized women's labour. The few trade unions for women were for professional women only, prominently the Federation of University Women's Associations, Trained Nurses' Association, and Women Lawyers Association. The anti-price movement in Bihar, Bombay and Gujarat, the Nav Nirman movement against black-marketeering and corruption, anti-alcohol movement in Himachal Pradesh, the reform movement for the Hindu Code Bill, all saw trade unions banding with populist social movements and significant female participation.[203] CSWI noted these

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[202] The putting-out system is a means of subcontracting work. Work is contracted by a central agent to subcontractors who complete the work in off-site facilities, either in their own homes or in workshops with multiple craftsmen. This is usually a means of supplementary employment for workers. It is particularly common in the textile, handicraft, and other cottage industries to employ women who worked out of their homes or were small scale vendors in rural areas; to supplement agricultural incomes.
[203] R. Kumar 1993, 102-107

developments, lauded their ability to organize, but linked their necessary survival to political

party patronage.

> Though the trade union movement is not a new one, it did not involve women in any substantial numbers till later. Since, more trade unions in India are associated with some political party, they are normally one of the most powerful agencies for political mobilization. In the case of women however, this part of their activity has been rather secondary. While women leaders in the trade union movement have played a major role in bringing about changes in the labour laws to provide protection for women both inside and outside the legislature, most trade unions admit that they have not made much efforts in mobilizing women to assert their legal and constitutional rights. One our studies found that participation in trade union activities had no direct relationship with women's political awareness.[204]

CSWI authors lament that the essentially male-dominated party organum entails a

replication of societal prejudices; with women taking on "soft" portfolios, largely seen as

appendages to supra-structure of the party. In the political conception of womanhood, these

developments, or rather regressions into gender tropes and behaviors, led to a decline of the

status of women. Apart from placing the chapters in a sequence, the report does not link

education to political agency or participation.

As a consequence of the Report's negative findings on the status of Indian women;

investigators, Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma, and Neera Desai became more critically aware

of their role and location in higher education. The conflation of women's education with social

reform had thus far been an uncomplicated legacy. The report's effect on the existential

complexity of Women and Indian identity,[205] mixed with the systemic ambivalence for

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[204] Government of India 1971-74
[205] John 2008, 30
New Beginnings: Vina Mazumdar
Urmila Haksar's pet words used to be, 'We have been given a fact-finding task and fact-finding we are going to do, so that no one has the chance to accuse us of being biased by external influences.' We were all staunch nationalists so that argument appealed. We also refused to reoped the equality debate, despite Naik sahib's suggestion that we look into questions such as: Does equality mean identity or similarity? Does it mean that women do all the things that men do? After all, men cannot do all the things that women do. We refused to open this debate because we adopted a very firm position on the Constitution. We did not critically examine the departure from the inherited social, economic, and political systems. Today you can say that the committee made its ideological position fairly

modernizing courses while nurturing the conservative upper caste construct of domesticity and virtue, increased frustration with the constitutive basis of education and socialization of access In essays remembering the experience of the CSWI, they criticized their own myopic nationalism and unwillingness to look at other countries and models for terms of reference and comparison to unpack the findings of the report.

> …massive contradictions in the evidence that came to us – between women's roles that were socially perceived, accepted and recognized and the real, actual, varied and multiple roles that women in different classes played. We had the perceptions but we did not have the concepts, the language, or the theory to fully articulate these perceptions and what thousands of women across the country were trying to tell us. So we used common-sense explanations. We talked about the invisibility syndrome and explained it by referring to colonialism, the eternal enemy. We referred to the urban, middle class bias of planner and social scientists and analysts, in particular for their blindness and indifference to the declining conditions of the majority of women. We did use the declining sex ratio as a composite indicator of this broad process of increasing women's subordination or marginalization. But we failed to see that our rejection of the modernization process as an unmixed blessing was also a critique of the dominant development paradigm. This failure to put the blame and responsibility squarely on the development paradigm, I find unpardonable today.[206]

The most incriminating reflection was the reformist attitude of upliftment and social reform that middle and upper caste women had perpetuated in their critical ignorance of issues effecting rural, and marginalized women. Social reform, especially through the education of underprivileged women, was a glib alibi for political activity that consistently performed to the contrary.

The Congress government under Indira Gandhi – touted as India's first woman prime minister; the second to hold this office in the world, and among the most powerful individuals of the decade – declared a state of Emergency and rule by decree in 1975. The period of 21 months through June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977; were responding to Judicial pushback on Executive

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clear, but (and this is a confession from a person who taught political science for sixteen years), our understanding of political dynamics was appallingly weak.

[206] John 2008, 31

overreach for greater Parliamentary control over Constitutional amendments. The people's

revolts (Nav Nirman, anti-corruption, price-rise agitations) led to the suspension of the

government and imposition of President's Rule in Gujarat. Cumulating with increasing political

defections, party realignments, and corruption scandals, Ms. Gandhi recommended that President

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed – once Union Minister for Education – declare a State of Emergency

caused by internal disorder, based on the provisions of Article 352(1) of the Constitution.

Democratic rights were suspended, civil liberties curbed; scores of dissenters, women included,

were detained, imprisoned, and tortured without trial; public and private media blasted Congress-

led propaganda; and violent social pogroms of sterilization and slum demolitions

overwhelmingly targeting the poor, mobile, and displaced; marking the darkest period of Indian

Democracy.[207] *Towards Equality* (CSWI report), meanwhile, was heading to the United

Nations' first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City, to become one of the reports

that would launch the International Women's Decade from 1976 to 1985. The irony was lost on

no one. Vina Mazumdar recalls the aftermath,

> The ICSSR's research programme in Women's Studies was conceived as a counterpoint
> to the declaration of National Emergency in June 1975. The late Prof. J.P. Naik, then
> Member-Secretary of the ICSSR, called me back from leave within a few days after the
> Emergency had been declared… "Let us concentrate on women. I do not think the
> political implications of such research will be immediately understood by the powers that
> be. I am doubtful we shall be permitted to do anything else."[208]

Women's Studies was recognized as a sociological discipline at the ICSSR; receiving a

framework and agenda that encouraged multi-disciplinary approaches, political engagement, and

advocacy. It seems to have slid through the ideological cracks as a non-threatening issue for the

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[207] The Hindu. 2015. *"Emergency: The Dark Age of Indian Democracy."* The Hindu Specials: In-depth. June 26.
Accessed March 22, 2016. http://www.thehindu.com/specials/in-depth/the-emergency-imposed-by-indira-gandhi-
government/article7357305.ece.
[208] John 2008, 5

establishment; and contrarily as a way of expanding the legitimacy of the Government's excesses under a woman/female leadership. What about women's issues makes the discipline an alibi for political impunity, is not entirely clear; but it seemed to work as an instrumental catspaw and institutional safeguard.

<div align="center">Rule by Decree</div>

The Emergency Years certainly saw many gross misuses of political power. One that deserves some attention is the compulsory sterilization program run by Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's younger son. During the Emergency years, he acted as an extra-governmental entity, practically running the government despite never holding an elected office. Various contemporary and retrospective reports cover his influence in managing party leadership, choosing cabinet members, and even implementing developmental agendas which he enforced through slum clearance and forced sterilization.[209] Though the rallying cry against Sanjay Gandhi's sterilization program was "Save your Penis;" one million women,[210] particularly those in Muslim, and lower caste communities were targeted for tubal ligations and forced IUD insertion. The legacy of this is so ingrained that even in 2014, women were lured into camps by health workers for laparoscopic tubectomies.[211] It was when there were twelve fatalities that the malpractice made the news.

Indira Gandhi – by some accounts, inexplicably – called for general elections in March 1977, ending the State of Emergency. An electorate of 321 million with a voter turnout 60.49 per

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[209] Kapil Komireddi,. 2012. *"David's Bookclub: The Sanjay Story*." The Daily Beast. November 29. http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/11/29/hold-onto-your-penis.html

[210] Anne Morse, and Steven Mosher. 2014. "*A Once and Future Tragedy: India's sterilization campaign 39 years later.*" Population Research Institute, June 24.

[211] Burke, Jason. 2014. *The Guardian: India.* November 12. Accessed July 18, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/12/india-sterilisation-deaths-women-forced-camps-relatives.

cent[212] turned against Ms. Gandhi and the Congress. The Janata Alliance was a coalition of opposition parties that gained prominence during the Emergency years; united solely by their collective hatred for Ms. Gandhi. Morarji Desai – long premier hopeful and Gandhi-contender – became Prime Minister from March 24, 1977 to July 15, 1979. Pratap Chandra Chunder was appointed Minister of Education.

Among the many initiatives launched as a result of adopting the principles in the NPE 1968 were a swathe of programs to promote Universal Elementary Education. These values were expanded in 1977 to launch a National Adult Education Program to cover the entire population between 15-35 by 1983-84. Considering the state of adult literacy and the fact that this dissertation is being written, its needless to say, things did not work out. But the program document did provide for "special programmes for special groups based on their special needs" among those special, included "housewives to inculcate a better understanding of family life problems and women's status in society."[213] It's almost as if CSWI had not happened.

Morarji Desai's administration was plagued with political infighting. Retaining a cohesive agenda became virtually impossible once the administration had undone Gandhi's constitutional amendments by decree. Desai's premiership ended abruptly with his resignation when his Deputy Prime Minister Charan Singh and Minister of Health Raj Narain pulled out of the Janata Dal Alliance. Charan Singh became Prime Minister from July 28, 1979 to January 14, 1980. Karan Singh was Minister of Education for this short period but he received the Report of the Backward Classes Commission, chaired by B.P. Mandal on December 31, 1980. Though not directly an education document it would come to frame educational access almost a decade later.

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[212] Election Commission of India 2014
[213] Aggarwal 2010, 297-298
Retrieved from Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, 1978.

It was among the first formal recommendations for affirmative action schemes, or quotas, to balance access to public employment and educational institutions; for members of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes (OBCs).[214] The controversy came in the definitions of the underprivileged, the recommended criterion to evaluate "backwardness," and the scale of access granted. In the 1980 elections, Indira Gandhi, after further splits and restructuring in the Congress party leadership, returned to the Prime Minister's Office. This time around, the electorate was 356 million and the voter turnout was underwhelming at 56.92 per cent. By 1981, India's population climbed to 705,395,576 with its growth rate peaking at 2.34 per cent.

Meanwhile, as a result of the Towards Equality report, key members Phulrenu Guha, Vina Mazumdar and J.P. Naik, established the Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) in 1980, in the middle of the U.N. International Women's Decade. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979, and ratified in Indian programmatic resolutions. In projects across developing economies especially India, the Women in Development (WID) Approach emerged as a radical extension of the neo-Marxist feminist approach, Women and Development (WAD).[215] WAD focused on the relationship of gender to developmental studies, arguing that women had always been economic actors in their societal contexts, and did not need to be "brought in or integrated into the formal economy." Poverty eradication schemes spear headed by international financial institutions had only sustained international structures of inequality. WID however, is a critical analytical perspective "dealing

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[214] Government of India. 1980. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission.* Commission Report, New Delhi: Ministry of Social Justice.
[215] Nataliia̅ Sergeevna Mirovit̅s̅kaia̅, and William L. Ascher, 2001. *Guide to sustainable development and environmental policy.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

with the differential impact of development and modernization strategies by gender": a model

that focuses on the relationship of patriarchy and capitalism in critical policy analysis.[216] WID

strategizes on instrumental economic models that separate women from the formal capitalist

economy and developmental processes, reinforcing patriarchal inequalities of income

generation.[217] Unsurprisingly, studies that followed the burgeoning women's studies programs

and research around the nation mirrored this approach as part of program designs, management,

and evaluations. However, in the wake of national tragedies, this journey would take a back seat.

Central agendas took populist turns as Ms. Gandhi appealed to the Muslim electorate to

secure her win. Sanjay Gandhi was soon choosing loyalists to head States after he secured his

first electoral win in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, and appointed secretary general of the Congress

Party. He died in June 1980 in an air crash, months after his election. Rajiv Gandhi, Ms.

Gandhi's elder son, a pilot with Indian Airlines with no political ambitions, was ushered to take

Sanjay Gandhi's place as heir to the Congress throne.

Ms. Gandhi's third term was mired with a Sikh-majoritarian movement, led by a faction

of the Akali Dal that demanded greater autonomy for the Punjab State. It gradually turned

militant under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his armed followers. On June 6,

1984, Indira Gandhi launched Operation Bluestar based on reports that Akali Dal militants were

hiding arms and ammunition in the Golden Temple in Amritsar – the Sikh's holiest site. The

casualties were immense and estimates vary depending on the reporting agency. As a result, on

October 31, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, shot point black as

she exited her residence in New Delhi. Four days of violent anti-Sikhs riots broke out across the

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[216] Ibid.

[217] Fabiola Campillo, and María Angélica Fauné, 1993, Gender, women and development: A framework for IICA's action in Latin America and the Caribbean. San Jose: Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

country. Some human rights groups estimate that the total casualties range from 10,000 to 17000; reports and estimates vary based on the agency.[218] Barely a month after the violent rioting, on December 3, 1984, the world's worst industrial disaster rocks India's core. Over 2,259 people die, and 200,000 injured after an explosion and gas leak from a Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, exposes over 500,000 people to 40 tons of a toxic chemical cocktail of methyl isocyanate (MIC), hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide, and 20 other chemicals. The number of casualties escalated in the aftermath because of disabling injuries and gas-related diseases.[219]

General elections were rushed to fill the vacuum caused by the assassination and the successive tragedies. On December 29, 1984, Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister of India in a landslide majority.

Indira Gandhi and the Five Year Plans

The failure of the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) due to the Indo-Sino and Indo-Pakistan Conflicts, and two years of drought, led to a hiatus for planned economic growth. The planning exercise was revisited shortly after Indira Gandhi took office for the first time in 1966. The nationalization of banks and dissolution of the princely privy purses, tied in neatly with the Fourth Five Year Plan's theme; the "Socialistic Pattern of Society." Economic development was allied with social values to bridge the large (and widening to this day) income gaps so, "… there should be progressive reduction of the concentration of incomes, wealth, and economic

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[218] Mark Tully, 2014. *Operation Blue Star: How an Indian army raid on the Golden Temple ended in disaster.* June 6. Accessed 2016. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/10881115/Operation-Blue-Star-How-an-Indian-army-raid-on-the-Golden-Temple-ended-in-disaster.html.

[219] Alan Taylor, 2014. "*Bhopal: The World's Worst Industrial Disaster, 30 Years Later."* The Atlantic. December 2. Accessed 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/12/bhopal-the-worlds-worst-industrial-disaster-30-years-later/100864/; Edward Broughton, 2005. "The Bhopal disaster and its aftermath: A Review." *Environmental Health.* doi: 10.1186/1476-069X-4-6.

power."[220] A special section addresses the Nationalization of Banks as a means to the end of greater income parity and access to credit streams. The Plan document covers Education and Manpower, recommitting to free and compulsory education for ages six to fourteen and an expansion of elementary education. States are entrusted with increasing the *enrollment* of girls, and construct and maintain sanitary facilities to expedite this. The chapter covering family planning, focuses almost chillingly on the sterilization of women, and by the chapter on social welfare, the plan document returns to familiar terrain: to train women in home craft, mother craft, health education, nutrition, and child care, in collaboration with panchayats (rural governance body), women's welfare organizations and *balwadis*.[221] The target growth rate for the plan period was 5.6%, but the actual growth rate was 3.3% due to funds for industrialization being diverted toward the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, and the underground nuclear test of Pokran-1 on May 18.1974.

The Fifth Plan (1974-1979) coincided with Ms. Gandhi's rule by decree in a State of Emergency. Curbing consumer-goods inflation, infrastructure development, and self-reliance (i.e. curb imports) in agriculture and energy, formed part of Indira Gandhi's twenty-point development agenda underlined by her iconic election slogan that looked-like social-justice, "*Garibi Hatao*," (Remove Poverty). Educational programs were to continue as previous years with increased center to state outlays over the plan period. Enrollment still remains a focus. The target growth rate was 4.4 percent, and India outperformed expectations in an authoritatian regime by growing at 5 percent, while the twenty-point development program and the Plan was in implementation. Morarji Desai became Prime Minister with the 1977 call for elections, and

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[220] Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79); Planning Commission 2013
[221] *Balwadi*: Indian pre-school for economically weaker sections of the society, operated either by a government agency or NGOs

abandoned the Fifth Five Year Plan, instead releasing Rolling Plans which were neither cohesive

or followed, and subject to a gross amount of revisions.

The Sixth Plan (1980-1985) saw Indira Gandhi's return to power and her personal

severance from the ideals of Nehruvian Socialism. Agriculural and Energy self-sufficiency

remain a priority; however, education gains greater consideration within the Plan document.

There is a discernable shift from quantitative expansion to qualitative questioning. Chapter 21

outlines this.

> The emphasis in our planning efforts would thus shift from provision of inputs and
> expansion of facilities in general terms to results to be achieved and tasks to be
> performed with specific reference to target groups of population, particularly the socially
> disadvantaged.
> Programmes of human resource development have a four-fold perspective; (i) to prepare
> individuals for assuming their role as responsible citizens; (ii) to develop in them
> scientific outlook, awareness of their rights and responsibilities as well as a
> consciousness of the processes of development, (iii) to sensitise them to ethical, social
> and cultural values which go to make an enlightened nation; and (iv) to impart to them
> knowledge, skills and attitudes which would enable them to ^contribute to the productive
> programmes in the national development.[222]
> Women are plugged-in to education as among the "socially handicapped and

economically weaker section of society," along with "scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, landless

laborers, etc." Wide access and achievement gaps between the rich-urban and poor-rural are

reiterated, and a call for humanism, sense of brotherhood, and commitment to cultural values is

emphasized. In fact, Culture is recognized as a basic concept for development and education. It is

duly linked to India's heritage, pluralism and diversity. But culture is largely defined in terms of

contextual relevance, so that educated individuals are not alienated from their socio-economic

positions in life by virtue of their education; so that they can still fit in where they're from.

The 1974 *Towards Equality* report, CEDAW, and the U.N. Decade for Women may have

had some impact on Ms. Gandhi and her Planning commission since Chapter 27 exclusively

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[222]Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85); Planning Commission 2013

dealt with Women and Development. The need for population control was dire with the growth

rate remaining steady at 2.3 per cent. The Plan focuses on alleviating the "backwardness" of

women's status by focusing on the family as a unit of development.

> …for some time in future, women will continue to be one of the most vulnerable members of 'the family. Hence, the economic emancipation of the family with specific attention to women, education of children and family planning will constitute the three major operational aspects of the family centered poverty alleviation strategy.[223]

The "drudgery of household work" is condemned and the unequal power dynamics

within the family structure are to be solved with men and women receiving education in "home

science so that the concept of *symmetrical families* can take root."[224] Where education is

concerned it is a repetition of "bringing-in" women to share educational facilities with men;

scholarships, training women's teachers, mid-day meals, and expanded sanitation facilities; with

an over-reliance on States, social-welfare organization, extra-governmental organizations like

NGOs and international Volunteer and Welfare programs, and civil society to step up. There is

little to no accountability measure established except where and if the above organizations

wished to report. The ambivalence about women's education, and its function prevails; though it

shifts from making them able mothers to discerning wombs.

Economically the plan was a success. Despite the tragedies toward the end of the plan

period, India grew well above the target growth rate of 5.2 per cent, at an annual growth of 5.4

per cent. It is the only Five Year Plan to be repeated for another planning cycle.

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[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid

Chapter 4. The National Policy on Education: Approaching the Millennium (1984-2000)

Rajiv Gandhi, India's youngest Prime Minister at 40, was sworn in on December 31, 1984, after a landslide majority at the polls. In a broadcast to the nation on January 5, 1985, he announced education as his primary agenda to bring India into the 21st century both scientifically and economically. Sheila Kaul, Indira Gandhi's maternal aunt with a distinguished career as a parliamentarian and diplomat, held the twin roles of Minister-of-State for Culture, Education and Social Welfare (Independent Charge), and President of the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with the UNESCO, through most of Indira Gandhi's last term. Through 1981 to 1984 she led India's initiatives on Education and women with the United Nations. She led the Indian delegation and presented *Towards Equality* at the International Conference of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Copenhagen in 1980; the First Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries, Pyongyang in 1983 and the International Conference on Education, Geneva in 1984. It is largely leadership, and invariable lobbying, of notable female parliamentarians[225] and scholars like

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[225] Joginder Kumar Chopra, 1993. "*Women and Legislation in the Indian Parliament."* In *Women in the Indian Parliament: A Critical Study of their Role*, by Joginder Kumar Chopra, 34-36. Delhi: South Asia Books.
In the course of say four decades i.e., 1950-89 the women parliamentarians who were either ordinary MPs or happened to hold some ministerial post introduced in all about 150 Bills. Out of these 150 bills about 110 were introduced in the Lok Sabha and only about 40 were introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The covered the period of over eight parliaments. In the first Lok Sabha i.e., 1952-57 only 27 Bills were introduced. But *the maximum number of bills was 35 in the seventh Lok Sabha from 1980-1984*, and minimum number of bills was 2 in the fourth Lok Sabha from 1967-1971. In the first parliament from 1952-57 these Bills related mostly to issues such as Dowry, children and women institutions, suppression of immoral traffic among women, marriage, divorce, food, health, etc. the women emphasized issues which were of immediate concern to them. The economic, national and international issues were missing. It is only from the second Parliament constituted in 1957 onwards that they started bringing forward bills regarding Equal Remuneration, their working conditions, Maternity Benefit, Taxation, Hoarding and Profiteering in essential. Commodities, military and legal matters, constitution, property, financial matters, technical training, industries, employment, etc.
Among women who took the initiative in introducing the Bills either in the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha, those who figured prominently were Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kriplani, Durga Bai (Deshmukh), Uma Nehru, Maniben Vallabhbhai Patel, Renu Chakravarty, Sushma Sen, Dr. Seeta Permanand, Radha Kumud Mookerjee, Indira Gandhi, Kamalendu Mati Shah, B. Khongmen, Indira A. Maydeo, Subhdra Joshi, Violet Alva, Savitry Nigam, Parvathi Krishnan, Rukmani Devi Arundale, Tarkeshwari Sinha, Illa Paul Choudhary, Anasuyabai Kale, Begum Saddiqa Kidwai, maimoona Sultan, K. Bharathi, Renuka Ray, Lakshmi Nehru Menon, Chaplakanta Bhattacharya, Anis Kidwai, Seeta Yudhvir, Chandravati Lakhanpal, Sushila Nayar, Mafida Ahmed, Jayaben Vajubhai Shah, Sarojini

Sheila Kaul that Women's Education gained some headway in plan documents and the forthcoming promise on education policy which would become the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE-1986).

Rajiv Gandhi earned credibility as a politician and administrator when he organized the 1982 Asian Games. In contrast to his late-brother, Sanjay Gandhi's legacy, he was associated with valuing technology and modern business ideals; running on an anti-corruption campaign in party politics. The early years of his premiership were spent settling the Sikh agitation with the Rajiv-Longowal accord, followed quickly with similar accords with separatist movements in Assam and Mizoram. Consolidating his progressive persona was his economic agenda for liberalization and modernization; a concerted effort to separate from Nehruvian socialism and planning. However, Gandhi's image as "Mr. Clean" quickly devolved when provisions of the Rajiv-Longowal accord went unimplemented and President's rule was imposed in Punjab. Cabinet reshuffling followed suit, with Gandhi dismissing V.P. Singh as Minister of Defense. Revelations of corruption in defense purchasing from Bofors a Swedish arms manufacturer quickly followed, where Gandhi was personally implicated for accepting bribes. What erupted as the Bofors Scandal, clouded the second half of his administration, amplified by border

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Mahishi, Yashoda Reddy, Nandani Satpathi, Kamala Choudhury, Pratibha Singh, Mukul Bannerjee, Sushila Rohatgi, Mrinal Gore, Margaret Alva, Geeta Mukherjee, Pramila Dandavate, Sheila Kaula, Najma Heptullah, Mohsina Kidwai, Kusum Krishna Murthy, and a few others.

It may be mentioned that most of these women belonged to the upper strata of the society, and were well educated. They happened to be in the Parliament because of the political affiliations of their families or husbands or their association with the national movement. Most of them were elected to the Indian Parliament again and again and continued to represent the interests of the women folk in India.

Not only that the above women took the initiative in introducing the Bills they also represented on several Joint Committees of both houses of the Parliament or Select Committees of their respective houses. Some of them chaired these committees. During the period 1950 to 1989 the women represented on about 126 such committees. Out of this, 83 were Joint Committees of both houses of the Parliament and the remaining 43 Committees were select Committees of either Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. The above mentioned women participated in the proceedings of these Committees along with their male fellows and at times expressed dissent wherever their views differed from other members of the Committees. Many of them came either from the South of West Bengal where the standard of education is high.

skirmishes almost resulting in war with Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto because of Operation Brass

Tacks in 1986-87. The same year, he got the Indian army embroiled in the Sri Lankan Civil War

with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers)

and accused of receiving funding from the KGB in lieu of "Soviet Ideological Interest." Mired in

charges of corruption and incompetence, he lost the general elections of 1989 to the National

Front Coalition under the premiership of Vishwanath Pratap Singh.[226]

Rajiv Gandhi's record with education policy is more favorable than his other policy

initiatives or his tenure as Prime Minister. In an iconic speech delivered at the 1985 Congress

Centenary Session in Bombay, he evokes the legacy he, and by extension the nation, inherited

through Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the surviving freedom fighters, and Indira

Gandhi. He recommits himself to his mother's 20-point development agenda, and in discussing

the future, he addresses societal systems that have failed to imbibe the values of social justice,

and intellectual transformation.

> In the field of education, the nation has much to be proud of. Access to education has
> been widened immeasurably. Indian scholars are in the front rank of creative endeavour
> in the best institutions across the world. But the schools, the universities and the
> academies of the Republic, which should fill our minds with hope for tomorrow, cause us
> great concern. Teachers seldom teach and students seldom learn. Strikes, mass copying,
> agitations are more attractive alternatives. Where there should be experiment and
> innovation, there is obeisance to dead ritual and custom, smothering creativity and quest
> for knowledge and truth. Where there should be independence and integrity, there is the
> heavy hand of politics, caste and corruption. Where there should be a new integration
> between modern science and our heritage, there is a dull repetition of lifeless formulate.
> Millions are illiterate. Millions of children have never been inside a school.[227]

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[226] Oxford Reference. 2016. *A Dictionary of Political Biography.* 2nd. Edited by Dennis Kavanagh and Christopher Riches. Oxford University Press.
[227] Rajiv Gandhi, 1985. "Full text of Rajiv Gandhi's famous 1985 speech." *India Today.* December 28. http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/full-text-of-rajiv-gandhis-famous-1985-speech/1/243106.html.

K.C. Pant carried Rajiv Gandhi's education agenda forward with a Status Report in 1985 titled, "Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective." It was repetitive in its linking of Education with Society and Development, congratulating the journey so far, and ending with criticisms on mass apathy, poverty and failed ambitions in the years since independence. However, it's importance is not so much what it said but in the feedback it generated. About 1985, an intellectual civil society begins responding to policy rhetoric on education and development; adding a dimension of criticism that departed from socialist idealism and political bombast, lampooning the pomp and show of poverty and literacy programs, and exposing the increasing disparities that education fostered.

In a scathing article reviewing the status report, Satya Deva tries to sift through "the slogans, platitudes and shibboleths… (and) the resulting confusion," to ferret out workable proposals from the document.[228] Deva discusses three distinct disjunctions in the Status Report that pervade education at a viscerally societal level; 1) Equity vs. Elitism, 2) Social Relevance vs. Individual Interest, and 3) Autonomy vs. Control.

The expansion of higher education at the expense of pre-school, elementary, and secondary education is evidence of the elite bias in education policy: the growth of primary schools between 1950-83 was 2.8 per cent per annum, compared to the growth of colleges and universities at 6 per cent per annum in the same time period. Blaming the apathy and cultural values of the poor, while spouting ideals of equality and socialism makes for hollow policy; when historically, institutional development has favored the elite. Deva goes on to draw a correlation between the elitist bias and poor quality of public education in India. Attaining the "Degree," the document of completion from an institution of higher education, symbolically

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[228] Satya Deva, 1985. *"The 'New Education Policy."* Economic and Political Weekly 20 (39): 1647-1649. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4374871, 1647

represents *belonging*: a socialization and membership in to the upper or upwardly mobile strata of society. Educational institutions – public and private – are onerously dependent on rote learning, and examination; to the perverted point that bribing, leakage of question papers, and even, sale of degrees, is accepted practice. It is not skill, merit, or specialized knowledge that education provides, but *group membership*. Advancement was through alignment with leadership i.e. supporting parties through student unions, awarding recognitions, honors, or publicity opportunity to political incumbents, or sometimes performing unethical services to prove loyalty to the ruling class. These social habits modernized the caste system; the emperor's new clothes in effect. Just as the Brahman caste monopolized education, learning, and language to influence activities and attitudes of all other castes underneath it; so does Education Policy monopolize access, income, and social mobility to benefit a very specific form of social and economic elitism. This is evidenced by the "snobbishness" of the private or exclusive school's alumni, who are entitled and assured of their socio-economic advancement; with little to no commitment to social responsibility, and even, an active rejection of it. Language, of course, features as the greatest barrier to access and inclusion. English remains the urban, elite medium of critical thought, discourse, and instruction.

The second contradiction – Social Relevance Vs. Individual Interest – is an extension of the first. Vocationalizing and vernacularizing the curricula for the rural poor, though well meaning, was a further bifurcation between skilled or knowledge labor, and manual labor. Manual labor, especially in the caste system, was associated with the lowest castes and untouchables, making vocational education (and manual labor) culturally synonymous with a reduced or lower social status.

The third contradiction – Autonomy vs. Control – is perhaps the most damning of educational leadership. Deva writes,

> The third issue of autonomy vs control relates to the inter-connections between the educational structure on the one hand and the political and administrative ones on the other. Here the presentation is based almost wholly upon mythology. Thus while everyone knows that our political system is a highly centralised one, the myth of the sovereignty of the people allows us to hold them responsible for the lack of schools or their mismanagement… The document fails to mention, however, that if the people are not apathetic and happen to elect a Panchayat Samiti or Zila Parishad which is not fully subservient to the Chief Minister, it is, in most cases, promptly superseded, and then elections are not held for years extending into decades.
> Another myth is the autonomy of universities. The Vice-Chancellor is generally nominated by a high government functionary, such as the Governor, who cannot but be influenced by the real executive… A majority of the members of the senate, which is the highest body of the university, are also nominated. Many of the members of the syndicate, or the executive council, are also nominated, either directly or belong to that category in the senate.
> Hence university autonomy is subverted not only from outside but also from within. These politicians exercise controls in regard to appointment and promotion of teachers, admission of students who would organise the youth wing of the ruling party, and the giving of rewards and punishments to university officials.[229]

Though not a criticism directly related to the education or political subjectivity of women, this strand of critical engagement with policy marks a definitive departure from the scholarship that was coming from career parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and others of the dominant political class. In this and other succinct critical essays, the immanent structural disorientation and incoherence is a predominant focus – a factor not covered by this dissertation but a crucial node of analysis all the same. Structural criticisms communicate how democratic engagement post-independence has maintained the *status quo* of hierarchical inequality and exploitation; doubly failing at creating civic, educative spaces of inclusivity, equality, and diversity; and willfully negating these as material realities constructing socio-economic value. Maintenance of the "cultural" *status quo en masse* through policy.

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[229] Ibid. 1649

Along with leadership and policy, the Ministry of Education underwent an organizational change. On September 26, 1985, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was formed with two operating wings - the Department of School Education and Literacy and Department of Higher Education – under the leadership of Pamulaparti Venkata Narasimha Rao (popularly known as P.V.). A politician, agriculturist, and lawyer who had remained a Congress loyalist through the freedom struggle into Independence; he oversaw powerful cabinet portfolios in the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi administrations, significantly Home, Defense and Foreign Affairs. A widely accomplished scholar with interests in Indian philosophy, literature, theater, and music, he was known for his political commentary, translations of the vernacular literary canon, and Telugu and Hindi fiction. In addition to ten Indian Languages (Telugu, Marathi, Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Urdu), he also spoke English, French, Arabic, Spanish, German and Persian. He would hold the MHRD portfolio until June 25, 1988; and primarily oversee the National Policy on Education 1986 and the launch of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) is the Indian validation of the Education for All initiative launched by the UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank. By all official accounts it grew out of an area specific, time bound, volunteer strategy tested in a campaign in Kottayam city, and later Ernakulum district in Kerala. Primarily a scheme for adult education, the mission aligned itself with the interventionist tone of the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action (1992) by integrating women into the agenda. The NLM website features both the UNESCO and adoptive definition of literacy by the Government of India. The inclination to "just-add-women" to program management cannot be elided.

Literacy as defined by UNESCO

- A Literate person is a one who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement relevant to his everyday life.
- Literacy is not the simple reading of word or a set of associated symbols and sounds, but an act of critical understanding of men's situation in the world.
- Literacy is not an end in itself but a means of personal liberation and development and extending individuals educational efforts involving overall inter-disciplinary responses to concrete problems
- A literate person is one who has acquired all the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attaining in reading, writing and numeracy make it possible to use these skills towards his own and his community's development.

Literacy as defined by NLM
The National Literacy Mission defines literacy as acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (3 R's) and the ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life. Thus the goal of the National Literacy Mission goes beyond the simple achievement of self-reliance in literacy and numeracy of functional literacy. The achievement of functional literacy implies:
- Self-reliance in 3 R's
- Becoming aware of the causes of deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition by participating in the process of development
- Acquiring skills to improve their economics status and general well-being
- Imbibing values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms, etc.

The acquisition of functional literacy results in empowerment and a definite improvement in the quality of life. It helps to ensure the participation of the masses in sharing the benefits of the information era.[230]

Manoranjan Mohanty[231] takes a critical approach to the empowerment-development

rhetoric that peppers policy discourse. Significantly he draws connections between the

liberalization of the economy, the influence of intergovernmental organizations, and the

undertow of globalization driving contemporary developmental policy. An omnibus of noble

intents, the concept of empowerment does not involve the disaggregation of historically

embedded constraints. Rather, it emphasizes "people's participation" within existing institutions;

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[230] National Literacy Mission. 2012. *NLM, UNESCO & Literacy*. http://www.nlm.nic.in/.
[231] Ibid. 80-85

negating the citizenship or the autonomy of people impaired, outside, or denied access to said

institutions.

> "Empowerment," "civil society," and "democratization" form the new package of
> liberalization discourse which on face value respond to the long standing demands of
> struggling groups. In practice, however, each of them has been given a restrictive
> meaning and has been oriented to serve the present global drive of western capitalism….
> So the objective of the dominant western forces is to promote interest group politics to
> take part in the bargaining process while the state maintains law and order. The state in
> the third world has become inefficient, corrupt, and bureaucratic, therefore civil society
> should take over the task of development – that is how the argument runs …[232]

In some respects, this is an overwhelming reality – civil society and a form of "civil"

economy stepping in where government has lacked – success *in 'spite,'* and *despite* of

government.[233] Women's empowerment is a particularly *"disabling"* concept, because it has

substituted active conceptions of agency and participation with passive institutional expansion,

or in a best case scenario, representation. The concept relies on an external agency, power, or

system *acceding* access, a *received* power from an *empowered* other. Patronizing

"empowerment" in women's development economics reinforces a patriarchy that *can be*

benevolent, and is most definitely systemic and institutional.

The Shah Bano Case (1985) forced the contradictions between policy value and policy

practice to air like dirty linen, as the nation reexamined its commitment to a uniform civil code

and the status of minority women in the union. Shahbano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman

demanded alimony from her husband. The courts ruled in her favor; but Islamic orthodoxy

revolted, and the decision was reversed. This is an extremely condensed sequence of events, to

an extremely convoluted, heavily debated case. But it was a bitter watershed moment in the

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[232] John 2008, 82

[233] Edward Luce, 2008. *In spite of the gods: The rise of modern India.* New York: Anchor Books.

Indian feminist movement which had primarily relied on legislative equality. Historian Radha

Kumar recalls the case ruling and the lessons learned:

> Discovering the ease with which a "community in danger" resorts to fundamentalist assertions of self, among which, invariably, control over women is one of the first such assertions to be made, feminists were confronted with the associated discovery of the ease with which the Indian state chose to accommodate communalism, and balance this by a concession to fundamentalism (allowing personal law to cut into the application of uniform laws…).[234]

Ministerial Musical Chairs

The social context of the 1990s would be defined by communalist, fundamentalist

movements that drove identity-electorates in politics. Prime Minister V.P. Singh resurrected the

Mandal Commission (1980) to enforce quotas for government employment to members of

scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes (OBCs). Upper caste agitations

across urban centers stalled the implementation. But identity politics coupled with student

protests as fertile ground for political grooming, led to the formation of powerful identity-based

parties and coalitions that continue to brew communal agendas. In 1992, Babri Masjid was

demolished by *Hindutva*[235] extremists supported by political parties, based on Hindu

supremascist claims that it was built on mythological king and god, Ram's alleged birthplace.[236]

In 1993, Muslim Mafioso retaliated by exploding thirteen bombs in India's financial capital,

Bombay.

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[234] John 2008, 500

[235] An ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life. It was championed by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923 to champion Hindu nationalism, and later a Hindu State as opposed to a Muslim State that eventually became Pakistan. Contemporarily, it is the official philosophy of the second most powerful party in India the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who form regional coalitions with Hindu supremascist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliate organisations, notably the Vishva Hindu Parishad.

[236] The Babri Masjid demolition and communal claims to the land are still contested in modern-day India. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address the polarized accounts and histories that flood Indians daily. Instead provided below are links that provide a timeline of conflict on the site.

From BBC News - http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11436552

From LiveMint: an HT Media subsidiary - http://www.livemint.com/Politics/dHFiKJNLRDqQDz2CEueRSP/Timeline-Ayodhya-title-dispute.html

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) saw oscillating leadership through the 1990s. P.V. Narasimha Rao – former union minister for education, defense, and foreign affairs – took office from June 21, 1991 to May 16, 1996. He was the first person outside the Nehru-Gandhi family to serve as Prime Minister for five continuous years, the first to hail from southern India. He oversaw the Ministry of Human Resource Development personally for most of his premiership; sharing it briefly with Arjun Singh and Madhavrao Scindia. His leadership focused on commissions investigating financial outlays and educational administration[237] to support the agendas in the National Policy on Education 1986 and Plan of Action 1992. The 1991 census pegged the Indian population at 880 million with a persistent growth of 2.08 per cent. The sex ratio was at a historical low since 1901, with 927 girls for every 1000 boys. Only 39.29 percent of women were literate. On the other hand, the size of the election spectacle had grown considerably: the 1996 general election saw 210 national and state parties contest elections. The Janata Dal party – a merger of various factions by former Prime Minister V.P. Singh – won the 1996 elections through the United Front coalition with the support of the Congress Party. Chief Minister of Karnataka, H.D. Deve Gowda became Prime Minister. In less than a year, Congress withdrew support to garner influence among members of the coalition. Inder Kumar Gujral became Prime Minister as the only remaining consensus candidate. His term lasted for less than a year before the coalition collapsed and midterm elections were called.

In 1998, the population had reached a staggering 1 billion and ticking upwards at the rate of 1.88 per cent. The twelfth general elections resulted with no definite winner and a shaky alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party at the helm, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee as Prime Minister

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[237] Aggarwal 2010;
Notably – UGC Committee on Higher Education (1993), CABE Committee on Decentralized Management of Education (1993), Pay-Review Committee (1994-1997).

took central command. The alliance collapsed within months, resulting in a no-confidence vote, and another round of elections in 1999. This Fall electoral cycle was tainted by the Kargil War with Pakistan over Kashmir through May and July 1999. A result of nuclear threats and muscle flexing from both belligerants; Pakistan instigated conflict when paramilitary forces and insurgents crossed the Line of Control, into Indian territory.[238] This time central coalitions formed with sturdier greater resolve. The incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) went into the election as the head of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a coalition of over 20 parties, while the Indian National Congress (INC) led the opposition. The NDA assumed the legislature with a comfortable, stable majority, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee retained his premiership until May 22, 2004. He is the first Prime Minister outside the Congress Party to complete a full five-year term in office.

National Policy on Education 1986 and Plan of Action 1992

The Challenge of Education Status Report of 1985 was widely translated into regional languages and thrown open to nation-wide debates, culminating in twelve national seminars, and seventeen sponsored seminars. Separately the States and Union Territories organized symposia and seminars. All this was revised as a separate Status Report titled, "National Policy on Education 1986 – A Presentation." After deliberations with CABE and State Ministers of Education, the National Policy on Education of 1986 was on the Parliamentary agenda, and passed by both houses by May 13, 1986. For the first time it was followed up with a Task Force to formulate a Programme of Action. Educationists, bureaucrats, secretaries from Central and State Governments coordinated information gathering, projections, and conferences to consolidate the scale of the enterprise. Following protocol, the consolidated report was debated

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[238] Keay 2010

by CABE before it went to the legislature as the Programme of Action 1986, and passed into law in August 1986. Both the policy and programme of action were reviewed by two committees – Ramamurti Review Committee (1990) and CABE or Janardhana Reddy Committee (1992) – for relevance and resilience of the terms of reference, expectations, implementation, and parameters. The National Policy on Education had with stood the test of time and politics was adopted with some minor revisions as the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action (1992) by both houses of Parliament. It would be another twenty-four years before a national review of education, followed by a policy formulation, would become a Central government's political agenda.

Arjun Singh – Union Minister of Human Resource Development from June 23, 1991, to December 24, 1994 – received the revised policy document and Programme of Action. A senior Congress politician, Gandhi family loyalist, from a *Thakur-Jagirdari*[239] family; he had a checkered political career. Most prominently he was Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh during the Union Carbide Gas Leak in Bhopal; rumored to have fled to his Kerwa Dam mansion to avoid hazards from the gas leak, abandoning crisis operation as a result, and later, involved with the release of Warren Anderson, then CEO of Union Carbide, after he'd been charged with manslaughter by the Government of India. Moreover, allegedly his family members siphoned money from their co-owned nonprofit for Children's Welfare, and accepted bribes from Warren Anderson to build the Kerwa Dam mansion, valued between $ 1.3 to 1.5 million at the time. In his second term as Union Minister of Human Resource Development from May 2004 to May 2009, he granted "Deemed University" status to over forty-four private for-profit universities

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[239] A *jagir* was a feudal land grant during the Mughal era in recognition of administrative or military service. The recipient of the grant was a *jagirdar*; who was entitled to collect revenue NOT own the land. However, jagirdars were typically *zamindars* or land owning families. In several parts of India, the caste of *zamindars* were called *Thakur.*

which did not meet regulations, overriding University Grants Commission (UGC) oversight.

These were later repealed. But to maintain his party clout, he reignited quota debates that were

severely opposed, leading to further rioting.[240] Reviewing Arjun Singh's ministerial record

serves two core purposes. One, his record represents a leadership id that came unleashed with the

Gandhi-led Congress cronyism, and second, the education and human resource portfolio seemed

to become less about leadership, and more about creating a socio-cultural hot-button ministry

operated through bureaucratic delegation.

The core National Policy on Education (1986) policy document cites the 1968 National

Policy on Education as its socio-political blueprint. Relatively more comprehensive than its

predecessor, it covers the role of education, reorganization of educational stages, management,

operative goals, teachers, resources, and scope for review. Education is described variously as an

"investment," to develop "manpower for different levels of the economy," to ultimately

guarantee "national self-reliance;" and as playing an "acculturating role" to refine "national

cohesion." Crucially, women's education, is aligned with the larger mission for equality.

Equality is defined in terms of opportunity in access and "success;" and as a counter to

prejudices and social environments; with curricula being the primary instrument to do so. These

values are elaborated in the section titled, "Education for Equality," where the macro-directive is

the "removal of disparities," for "those who have been denied equality so far."[241] Women,

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Sections and Areas, Minorities,

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[240] Press Trust of India. 2011. *Arjun Singh, a master manipulator of power politics, dies.* March 4.
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Arjun-Singh-a-master-manipulator-of-power-politics-dies/articleshow/7628274.cms.
—. 2014. *Arjun Singh, the missing MP Chief Minister during Bhopal Gas tragedy.* December 03.
http://www.indiatvnews.com/politics/national/arjun-singh-missing-mp-chief-minister-during-bhopal-gas-tragedy-21813.html?page=5.
[241] Government of India: Ministry of Human Resource Development. 1986. *National Policy on Education.* Policy,
New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development: Department of Education, 4-7.

Handicapped, and broadly, Adult Education; have all been denied equality so far. The section on women reads,

> Education for Women's Equality
>
> 4.2 Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision makers, and administrators,a dn the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development.
>
> 4.3 The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies.[242]

Focusing on vocational education, increasing enrollment and reducing dropout rates across education levels, and dynamic curricula[243], the National Policy on Education lays out a plan to reform institutional habits; confident of success, because, "… our tradition… always put a high premium on intellectual and spiritual attainment."[244] Laudably, the commitment to spirituality and socialism – despite the secular principles in the preamble and constitution – is the one consistent thread linking education policy documents pre- and post-independence, used almost synonymously with ethics. There is space for irony, but an alternative hypothesis could be

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[242] Ibid. 8
[243] Recommendations for Work Experience, Volunteer experience, Population Education (education for responsible parenthood), Mathematics, Science, Yoga, and the Role of the Youth.
[244] Ibid. 37

formed. Spirituality – in all its nebulous diverse abstract glory – acts like a foundational

education philosophy, to ground its ethos, and even justify its non-attainment.

Notably, women's studies is recognized as an academic discipline in the primary policy

document. The extension of this principle is outlined in the Programme for Action 1992. The

introduction to the Programme identifies the institutional habits sorely in need for reform, like

measuring performance by budget utilization rather than outcomes, and inefficient or completely

lacking management of examinations, academic calendar or even, textbooks. Education is linked

to *services* like child care, nutrition, and health which segues neatly into a paragraph that

prioritizes Women's Education for equity and social justice. This may be a tacit, unconscious

link in the document. The policy problem pushing the issue is explicitly defined as, "the problem

of the girl child," recommending an absolute reorientation of the education system to promote

women's equality and education.

Access is the pole star of the Programme of Action. Parameters include 1) the state's

interventionist role, 2) active programming for women's development in educational institutions,

3) access to vocational, technical, and professional opportunities, and 4) a dynamic management

to support it all. Women's empowerment is framed entirely, and perhaps necessarily, in terms of

economic development. In fact, access is granted through "development." Gender and poverty

sensitization programs are advised for teachers, and administrators. The recommended

implementation is amorphous; retiring to curricular redesign for gender parity, and hiring more

women as teachers. Universal Elementary Education and Adult Education are lumped together,

and programmatically aligned with the Total Literacy Mission, which need the international

pressure of the SAARC decade of the girl child as incentive.

> It is impossible to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE) unless concerted
> efforts re made to reach out to the girl child. Girls who cannot attend formal schools or

have had to drop out will be provided educational opportunities through Non-Formal Education (NFE)… The rural girls are doubly disadvantaged by non-availability of educational facilities and by the work they have to do related with fuel, fodder, water, sibling care and paid and unpaid work. Coordinated efforts, albeit with other Departments/Ministries, need to be made to provide the necessary support services to enhance their participation and performance. Provision of support services and child care facilities should be seen as necessary and integral adjunct of UEE.[245]

Poverty as the core reality centrifugally defining women, and the centripetal need to sensitize decision makers to this correlation of gender dynamics, is a toxic conceptual eddy informing political interventionism without intersectionality. Designing policies that are formed on the basis of absolute negatives, is a benevolent dismissal of the real work that needs to pervade every level of education. Case in point, the POA 1992 recommends an expansion of centrally-mandated institutions for oversight and accountability at state, district, and provincial levels, but not for program implementation or design. A planning mechanism is broadly recommended between governmental bodies without ever identifying which bodies and what their terms of engagement would be. Damningly, scholarships and reservations or quotas are defined as an active interventionist program for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, and minorities, but never defined in terms of women. The chapter on women, expands on the research and development requirements for women's studies at universities, and a call for collaboration. This essentially puts education, empowerment, and "development" back in the courts of those women who already have access, who already receive educational opportunities, and who have privileged from their historical representation in policy formation. Refraining from explicitly connecting women's education to other minority interventionist programs and initiatives (other than population), while sustaining the upper class bias, deepens the fissures that maintain wide inequalities between the genders and classes.

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[245] Government of India: Ministry of Human Resource Development. 1992. *Programme of Action.* Policy , New Delhi: Department of Education, 3.

Five Year Plans from 1984-2000

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) marked the absolute resurgence of the Congress party under the Gandhis. The Seventh Plan was an encore of the Sixth Plan, because it had outperformed projections. Agriculture, inflation controls, and economic self-reliance resulted in an actual growth rate of 6.01 percent over the projected target of 5.0 percent. Liberalizing and modernizing the economy was linked to extending social justice and employment opportunities for women, and other minorities. This plan period saw the implementation of the National Policy on Education (1986), and the launch of Operation Blackboard in 1987 to provide basic material and infrastructure to State-run schools. The Plan did not prioritize women's education except as a part of the drive for expanding literacy, vocational education, open and distance education, and adult education. During this plan period the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was founded in 1985 by a legislative act. Honoring the late Prime Minister, the University is the largest in the world with a student body of over 4 million students as of 2015. The Ministry of Human Resource Development established the Department for Women and Child Development in 1985 as well, turning it into a ministry in 2006. Institution building, for better or for worse, became the norm through this plan period.

Economic and political instability during the Janata Dal administration (1990-92) led to a suspension of the planning process. The Annual Plans came in to play, where the main thrust remained fiscal outlays to Operation Blackboard. The last act of this administration was securing a loan of $2.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund by pledging all its gold reserves as collateral which were literally airlifted to the Bank of England and the Union Bank of Switzerland; to great public outcry and embarrassment.[246]

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[246] Keay 2010; Guha 2008

The Eighth Five Year Plan came into effect during P.V. Narasimha Rao's tenure as Prime Minister. By 1991, India's national debt topped $70 billion and foreign exchange reserves were sufficient for only two weeks.[247] Rao and his financial minister Dr. Manmohan Singh were forced to embrace the market. The crisis was caused by a variety of factors; not least by currency overvaluation and chronic inefficiency of state-run enterprises precipitated by the oil shortages of the 70s and 80s. The deregulation that began during Rajiv Gandhi's premiership sped up through Rao and Singh's leadership in the 1990s. Significant changes in political and economic behavior ensued.

> The people and their elected representatives had grown accustomed to looking to the state for every imaginable provision and facility. It was time they rediscovered their own potential through the exercise of private initiative, local endeavor, and personal responsibility. In terms of the economy this had meant a first tentative simplification of the license raj with a reduction of tariffs, the freeing of some quotas and a little encouragement for private investment. At the grassroots level it led to the revival of locally elected bodies that could be entrusted with community responsibilities, plus the funds to perform them. And at the constitutional level it led to a reining in of the central government's propensity for interfering in the states…. Instead of pandering to New Delhi, they increasingly competed with one another to attract investment, improve infrastructure and, in the best cases, extend social provision. These trends anticipated a wider decentralization of the political process and encouraged a dramatic maturation of Indian democracy.[248]

The IMF loan left no "soft option" for P.V. Narasimha Rao and the Eighth Five Year Plans reflected that. Outlays for education were redirected to the National Literacy Mission, and Universal Elementary Education (UEE) in keeping with international commitments. State and district initiative were encouraged to drive women's education and awareness through the Mahila Samakhya[249] program, especially in the states with the widest disparity in gender and education indices, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

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[247] Keay 2010; Luce 2008
[248] Keay 2010
[249] Planning Commission 2013: Eighth Five Year Plan; Ramachandran and Ramkumar 2011,154

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) covers the transition from the Congress administration to a coalition government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Ninth Plan marked 50 years of Indian independence and the globalization of the Indian economy had achieved a 6.78 percent annual growth over the targeted 5.6 percent. The Plan has a self-assured tenor, and continues the liberalization and modernization of the economy, encouraging a faster pace; irrespective of the usual political gaming that occurred around every electoral cycle. Priority was accorded to basic services like health care, primary education, housing, and connectivity; while encouraging greater decentralization of governance by empowering local bodies like Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), co-operatives, unions, and self-help groups. This marks an era of greater public-private partnerships and private sector participation at all tiers of government. Greater contributions and advocacy toward developmental programs by the general public matched the work of governmental agencies across progressive regions of the nation. Most significantly, the Ninth Plan supported modernization and, even the increasing privatization, of education to meet the severe gap in qualitative services. Special Action Plans (SAPs) evolved during the Ninth Five Year Plan to ensure accountability and time-bound fulfillment of targets. Educational infrastructure received special onus, though still underfunded.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) took center stage, but with the newly decentralized policy for governance, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), PRIs, ULBs, and most importantly, women's groups were called to manage ECE centers. This plan is a critical departure from the previous Five-Year Plans, because it dedicated a chapter to the "Empowerment of Women and Development of Children." Recognizing official models for

conceptualizing women over through the five decades since independence, the Plan makes

women's economic independence and self-reliance an "ultimate objective."

> In the earlier phase of developmental planning, the concept of women's development was mainly `welfare' oriented. During the Sixties, women's education received priority along with the measures to improve maternal and child health and nutrition services. During the Seventies, there was a definite shift in the approach from `welfare' to `development' which started recognising women as participants of development. The Eighties adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment. Accordingly, priority was given to implementation of programmes for women under different sectors of agriculture and its allied activities of dairying, poultry, small animal husbandry, handlooms, handicrafts, small scale industries etc. Recognising the role and contribution of women in development, the early Nineties made a beginning in concentrating on training-cum-employment cum-income generation programmes for women with the ultimate objective of making them economically independent and self-reliant.[250]

Committing to speed up legislation that reserves no less than one-third of total seats for

women in Central and State Legislaures, the Plan goes into great detail about the various

economic provisions and suggested machinery to empower women as change agents in the

developmental process.

> Objective: Empowering Women As The Agents Of Social Change And Development Strategies:
> 1. To create an enabling environment for women to exercise their rights, both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men through early finalisation and adoption of "National Policy for Empowerment of Women"
> 2. To expedite action to legislate reservation of not less than 1/3 seats for women in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies and thus ensure adequate representation of women in decision making
> 3. To adopt an integrated approach towards empowering women through effective convergence of existing services, resources, infrastructure and manpower in both women specific and women related sectors
> 4. To adopt a special strategy of "Women's Component Plan" to ensure that not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits flow to women from other developmental sectors
> 5. To organise women into Self help group and thus mark the beginning of a major process of empowering women
> 6. To accord high priority to reproductive child health care
> 7. To universalise the on-going supplementary feeding programme- Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) and Mid Day Meals(MDM)

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[250] Planning Commission 2013

8. To ensure easy and equal access to education for women and girls through the commitments of the Special Action Plan of 1998
9. To initiate steps to eliminate gender bias in all educational programmes
10. To institute plans for free education for girls upto college level, including professional courses
11. To equip women with necessary skills in the modern upcoming trades which could keep them gainfully engaged besides making them economically independent and self-reliant
12. To increase access to credit through setting up of a 'Development Bank for Women Entrepreneurs in small and tiny sectors.[251]

The grand economic scale only recognizes violence against women as an evil that requires legislation, and the necessity of gender sensitization across governance and administrative bodies, ensuring is implementation, eventually.

Disregarding the material effect the Plans had, the Ninth Plan period marked a rhetorical symbiosis with global developmental agendas – especially in its calls for grassroots organizing, micro-planning or local autonomy and accountability, and community involvement. Departing from nostalgic invocations of culture, tradition, and the independence movement, the Plan makes operational links to primary-care support for the girl-child, and support services for women; clearly identifying the generational cycle of socio-economic disadvantage with entrenched gendered disadvantages.

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[251] Ibid.

Chapter 5. Right to Education (2000-2010)

My dear countrymen,

I address you today to perform a very pleasant duty - to thank all of you for your positive and clear mandate to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and its friendly parties in this election. The NDA represents the aspirations of every region of our great nation and every section of our vibrant society. The NDA, in fact, reflects the spirit of India in all its diversity. It also mirrors the fundamental unity in this diversity.

We may have been sent to Parliament under the banners of different parties. But we all have a common commitment: to give India a stable and good Government. We are all guided by the lofty principles of secularism, social justice, social harmony and women's empowerment. Ours is a Government wedded to a common ideal – to create a kinder, gentler and more tolerant society, free from all discrimination, fear and insecurity.… Starting today, our Government has set itself the task of implementing our "Agenda for a Proud and Prosperous India." It is my solemn pledge to all of you that nothing shall prevent us from the task of good governance.… In this task, we seek the participation of the private sector. All these tasks can be completed if we work together. Let us proceed, as the Gita counsels us – *Bodhyanta parasparam* – imparting wisdom to each other. The Government of free India had set itself the noble task of wiping every tear from every eye, of ending centuries-old discriminations and social inequities. Somewhere along the journey from freedom to the eve of this century, Government lost track of that task. Illiteracy is a curse and a denial of human dignity as is gender discrimination or, for that matter, lack of something as basic and essential as drinking water and primary health care.… India today needs a Government that cares.[252]

This was the third term that Atal Bihari Vajpayee served, and the only one that to full term. Vajpayee's first ministry lasted thirteen days, his second, thirteen months. A grass roots organizer and compelling orator – articulate, ponderous, with appropriate gravitas and flourish – he first gained political prominence as a young party worker in the Quit India Movement. His political roots were in the Hindutva right's volunteer corps of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).[253] Through his premiership, the Hindutva ideology was prominent and controversial but

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[252] Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 1999. "Agenda for Building a Proud and Prosperous India." *Former Prime Minister of India: Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.* October 16. Accessed July 2016. http://archivepmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9170.

[253] (Refer Footnote 174) An ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life. It was championed by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923 to champion Hindu nationalism, and later a Hindu State as opposed to a Muslim State that eventually became Pakistan. Contemporarily, it is the official philosophy of the second most powerful party in India the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who form regional coalitions with Hindu supremascist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its affiliate organisations, notably the Vishva Hindu Parishad.

not influential on policy, which veered to the center because of the coalition of parties forming the governing alliance. Remembered officially for his shrewd governance, personal ethics, and consensus building, his birthday (December 25) is celebrated in India as Good Governance Day. But that, like all politics, is a matter of opinion.

The Union Minister of Human Resource Development in the Vajpayee administration was Murli Manohar Joshi – a fellow RSS volunteer and Hindutva activist, who would be implicated, along with another rightwing bigwig, L.K. Advani in the 1992 demolition of Babri Masjid. The National Democratic Alliance was plagued with accusations of *saffronizing* Indian history. There were attempts to legitimize, and enforce the Aryan-Hindu myth that gained headway during the Indian intellectual renaissance in the Colonial period. Due to intellectuals like Max Mueller and the work of community organizations and political parties like the Arya Samaj, RSS, BJP, VHP, etc., there is a consistent blurring between historical events, facts and mythology in extreme Hindu nationalism or Hindutva. Based on anecdotal experience, it is fair to say that whenever a Right wing party gained central leverage or mandate, increased reports of communal violence and rhetoric became part of public discourse. There are far too many reports agreeing or condemning this position, but what cannot be denied is the intensity of communal polarization that right wing administrations foster in India.

In the NDA administration under Vajpayee, this polarization come in two spurts. The first was the December 2001 attack on Indian Parliament by nine armed gunmen which led to the passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2002. Between the attack and POTA, Indo-Pakistan relationships suffered further battery, and criticisms of POTA's unaccountability and misuse to wrongfully detain or arrest Indian citizens, clouded the administration's agenda and

political intent. The second was the 2002 Communal Riots in Gujarat[254] where Narendra Modi was Chief Minister. Central reluctance to intervene, condemn, manage, or aid the afflicted communities (read: Muslim) intensified the severe trust deficit minorities (rightfully) harbor in India.

The trouble with reporting these and other conflicts that occupied national media through 2000 to 2010, is that it is very recent history. Theories of the policy process rely on studying policy interactions over time, and policy change frameworks tend to recommend at least ten years as a full policy cycle for study. Historians tend not to be as rigid but the general consensus is a gap of twenty years between event and scholarship. The policy community is in flux: advocacy coalitions, policy communities, and institutional networks are arranging and rearranging their positions, debates are ongoing, cases are still open, effects are still forthcoming, and contemporary scholarship is either reacting to prevalent positions, or picking apart the variables and actors through the discursive quagmire as evidence presents itself. In any case, the narrative in this section is derived less from scholarship and more from media commentary and available public data.

<div align="center">Saffronisation[255] of Textbooks</div>

Murli Manohar Joshi joined the RSS under the mentorship of his Professor Rajendra Singh, who later headed the RSS organization from 1993 to 2000. Joshi went on to get his Ph.D. in Physics, writing his thesis on spectroscopy in Hindi – the first of its kind. Like all other RSS

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[254] The Gujarat riots trace back to the Babri Masjid demolition of 1992. Since this is fairly recent history with trials still underway, below is a timeline from NY Times tracing the conflict.
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/04/06/world/asia/modi-gujarat-riots-timeline.html#/#time287_8514

[255] Saffronisation is an Indian political neologism (named after the saffron robes worn by Hindu sanyasis or holy men) used by critics and others to refer to the policies of right-wing Hindu nationalists (Hindutva) that seek to recall and glorify ancient Hindu cultural history (the term "Hindu" in their view encompassing "dharmic" religions including Hinduism and the Sikh, Jain and Buddhist traditions). On the other hand, Murli Manohar Joshi, a leading member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, said saffronisation means to go back to the holy traditions of India.

members, he was an upper caste Hindu, specifically a Thakur. Gaining political stripes as a student activist on agrarian policies, and cow slaughter, he was deeply influenced by the second *Sarsanghchalak,* "supreme leader," M.S. Golwalker whose leadership of thirty years oriented the RSS's legendary discipline and ideology to the preservation of Hinduism. Another influence was Veer Savarkar, who coined the term *Hindutva* and the idea of Hindu nationalism.

As Union Minister of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Joshi spearheaded a Hindu revivalist movement targeting standard Indian history. In the light of new archeological evidence, eminent scholars like Romila Thapar see some merit in revisiting received history, but is quick to point out that the motive behind the RSS revivalism is far from constructive or pedagogic.

Hinduism is modus vivendi as much as it is modus operandi – adapted and adaptable across regions and practices – with a syncretic core canon that is pluralistic, pragmatic, and functional. When compared with the Judeo-Christian tradition (including Islam), it is heterogeneous; appearing to lack internal cohesion, and clear ethical directives that translate into nationalist narratives, as in Britain, the United States, or even during the Mughal reign. Hiren Gohain observes that the British colonial experience – especially the missionary and philanthropic cavalry denigrating and maligning Hindu traditions – affected Indian self-confidence. The modernizing Indian imaginary reacted with a movement toward heteronomy, ironically adapting a western model to gain western acceptance. The movement to restore Hindu or Indian pride came with a chauvinistic interpretation of Hinduism and by extension, Indian nationalism. Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism were considered Indian, whereas Christianity, Islam, and other religions were seen as colonial imports; an extreme formulation of the *outsider* and the *other*. Edward Luce was economic editor at the Delhi bureau of the

Financial Times in 2000, and covered the tenets that drove the contemporary manifestation of the

sentiment in education policy.

> …the new textbooks, whose authors' names have so far been withheld, have yet to see the light of day. "The revised curriculum deletes anything that is considered offensive to Hindu or other religious sensibility," says Sumit Sarkar, a leading historian. "In the process, any sense of teaching objective is history is abandoned." … Principal among the excisions is anything that might cast doubt on the factual authenticity of the stories behind traditional Hinduism and its sister religions. Thus, Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, the prominent Hindu gods, can no longer be described as "mythological" figures. Similarly, archeological evidence that dates the foundation of the holy city of Ayodhya to about 2000 B.C. has been deleted….
>
> Perhaps more significantly, all references to historical divisions within Hinduism have also been removed prompting allegations that students will not be taught history but propaganda under the new guidelines…. Dinanath Batra, head of the Vidya Bharti, a wing of the RSS, which runs more than 20,000 private Hindu schools in India, concedes that the goal of the movement's history campaign extends further than "updating" textbooks. In common with many others, Batra says India's history departments have been dominated by Marxists since the country's independence from Britain in 1947. Their goal has been to spread atheism and undermine the cultural self-confidence of Hindus, he says. In this, the Marxists have been aided by the two other "M"s – Mullahs or Islamic teachers, and Macauley, the Victorian historian who advocated who advocated the creation of "brown-skinned Englishmen" through reforms to the imperial education system in India. Their legacy has left Hinduism weak and self-doubting, says Batra…
> Does any of this really matter? In a country where a third of the people are illiterate and where most still leave school at 14, such controversies appear elitist and irrelevant to most people's everyday concerns. In contrast to India's relatively well-funded higher institutions of learning, governments of left and right, secular and Hindu nationalist, have rarely attached a high priority to the improvement of primary and secondary education in India… Ironically, the ultimate and explicitly stated aim of the Hindu revivalist movement is to transform Hinduism into something more like Islam or Christianity by providing it with an orthodoxy and unity it has hitherto lacked.[256]

Dr. J. S. Rajput was chairman of the NCERT and oversaw The National Curriculum

Framework released in 2000. Among the issues the National Curriculum Framework sought to

address was value education, rooted in the India's "composite culture," to "strengthen and justify

the young learners' self-esteem as Indians."[257] Globalization is explicitly stated as *the* challenge

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[256] Edward Luce. 2002. "The Saffron Revolution." *Financial Times.* May 2. https://next.ft.com/.
[257] National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2000. *National Curriculum Framework for School Education.* Policy Document, New Delhi: National Council of Educational Reseaarch and Training.

of the hour, to be met by an indigenous curriculum. The National Curriculum Framework has

five major sections – context and concerns, elementary and secondary education, Higher-

Secondary education, evaluation, and management – each repeating the necessity for a

qualitative improvement of content. But in light of the discussion on saffronisation, it is

necessary to note the utopic discussion of Indian society's "religio-philosophic ethos." The

publication grossly glosses over the deep seated inequalities and marginalities created by the

caste system, and it's strictly enforced socio-economic hierarchy.

> The economic structure of the country designed on the basic principle of the distribution of resources, not the distribution of income. The social matrix was congruent with the economic design based on the principle of distributive authority given to each village unit. Such a social design recognized the continuity of psycho-social relatedness, such as nesting of financial roles as occupation and education in the social structure.[258]
> As it laments the distancing of modern society from this religio-philosophic ethos, social

design, and heritage, the National Curriculum Framework attributes the "impact of

westernization," "the alien technological ethos," and the societal value placed on "techno-

informative knowledge" with the growing inequity between the urban and the rural. it

consistently compares Indian society with an amorphous "west," especially regarding the

education of girls. Committing to remove gender discrimination from content, it concurrently

also recommends that, "the most appropriate thing to recognize and nurture (are) the best

features of each gender in the best Indian tradition."[259] Indian tradition regarding the genders is

not explicitly defined, but is followed quickly with a congratulatory statement proclaiming that

Indian women were given the right to vote without a prolonged struggle, unlike the women of

the west. The terms "national spirit," and "national identity," are peppered through each section

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[258] Ibid. 3
[259] Ibid. 9

and sub-section. Hiren Gohain calls the entire document a slavish caricature of the same western

hegemony that the National Curriculum Framework's committee professes to counter.

> J. S. Rajput, director of the NCERT, in an affidavit of the before the Supreme Court as well as in a circular letter introducing a new curricular framework for schools, affirms that the old and superseded framework had erred by overstressing a secular outlook and neglecting the spiritual heritage of the country. That balance was to be restored by introducing value education, and since values according to him are sanctioned by religion, ultimately religious education. Such views are not exceptional. Sometimes Mahatma Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, and other leaders of both the political and the cultural awakening of India before independence appear to speak in the same vein. But the disturbing new trend is a narrow, bigoted version of 'Spiritual Value,' leaning explicitly on the Hindu heritage.[260]

Allegations of saffronisation were brutally debated in popular media,[261] with one or the

other side claiming victimhood or martyrdom for the cause of India's national soul. The

Vajpayee administration tried to balance these allegations by consolidating the entire range of

programs for Universal Elementary Education (UEE) and the National Literacy Mission (NLM),

under the banner of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), meaning Education for All Movement.

Uniting the funds and programs of the World Bank, Department for International Development

(DFID), UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Government of India, a USD1500 million commitment

was meant to cover mid-day meals, uniforms, textbooks, and other school supplies,

infrastructural expansion, early childhood care and education, curb dropout rates, encourage

enrollment, among other things. The first phase of the plan reports to have reached 50 million

children between 6 to 14 years.[262] However, girls' enrollment and completion rates remained

low, with sex ratios continuing to show immense disparity.

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[260] Hiren Gohain, 2002. "On Saffronisation of Education." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (46): 4597-4599. 4597)

[261] Entertaining outtakes if one is so inclined to read https://web.archive.org/web/20140323033516/http://www.hindu.com/businessline/2001/09/12/stories/041255of.htm http://www.hindunet.org/hvk/articles/0604/57.html

[262] Government of India: Ministry of Human Resource Development 2016. *New Education Policy.* Accessed July 13, 2016. http://mhrd.gov.in/nep-new.

When the 2004 general elections rolled around, the NDA alliance struck out confident of a second term. The "India Shining" campaign was ubiquitous since Vajpayee had pursued an aggressive economic reform policy despite vitriolic criticism from the NDA's ideological mentors, the RSS. Despite a lull through its tenure the Vajpayee administration was book-ended with high gross growth rates: 8.8% in 1999 when Vajpayee took office, with lows ranging from 3.8% to 4.8% in the interim, but jumping back up as the country went to polls.[263]

Apart from leading the Opposition of the 13th Lok Sabha, the Congress party had reorganized itself around the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, widow of Rajiv Gandhi. In 1989, senior Congress leadership had wanted to maintain the sheen of the Nehru-Gandhi legacy by inviting her to become Prime Minister. When she refused, P.V. Narasimha Rao took the mantle, and she remained away from active politics until the Calcutta Plenary Session in 1997 which she attended as a primary member. She became the President of the Congress party in 1998, though the legitimacy of her leadership was frequently attacked. An Italian born Indian citizen by marriage, Sonia Gandhi's foreign origins divided loyalties, causing further divisions in the Congress and break-away party formations. She leveraged these outbursts by offering to resign from the party – but not without garnering considerable sympathetic support, uniting the political and civic left against the idea of a saffronised central Government of India.

Dr. Manmohan Singh and UPA-I: A Congress Resurgence

In 2004, the population was 1,117,394,449 (approximately 1.12 billion) and the electorate was 671,487,930 – a turnout of 58.07 percent – with women at 321,997,066; i.e. crudely only 28.81 percent of women in India exercised their franchise in 2004. National literacy was 64.83

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[263] World Bank. 2016. *GDP Growth.*
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=IN&name_desc=true.

percent with male attainment at 75.26 percent and female at 53.67 percent, with a relatively high

gender gap of 21.59 percent, according to 2001 census records. The national sex ratio was 933

girls for every 1000 boys, but regional disparities mirrored reports of violence against women

with the worst offenders spread across the north-east regions of the country, namely Jammu and

Kashmir at 892:1000, Punjab at 876:1000, Uttar Pradesh at 898:1000, Bihar 919:1000, Rajasthan

at 921:1000, Sikkim at 875:1000, Arunachal Pradesh at 893:1000, and Nagaland at 900:1000. In

west India, right-wing strongholds also had skewed sex ratios, with Gujarat at 920:1000,

Maharashtra at 922:1000, and Madhya Pradesh at 919:1000.[264] The south Indian states were

buffeting the national average. Female foeticide and infanticide became *the* Congress policy

issue of the election campaign with expanded education sans saffronisation, the policy solution.

Sonia Gandhi led the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) to victory, but declined the

premiership. Instead, she recommended Dr. Manmohan Singh – who previously served as P.V.

Narasimha Rao's Finance Minister through the economic liberalization of the early 1990s – as

Prime Minister in her stead, while she continued to lead the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha,

and groom her son, Rahul Gandhi, for party leadership, and potential premiership.

Dr. Manmohan Singh would bring other members of the P.V. Narasimha Rao

premiership, notably the infamous Arjun Singh, who reprised his role as Union Minister for the

Ministry of Human Resource Development. He would continue this role through the entire first

ministry of Dr. Manmohan Singh from May 22, 2004 to May 22, 2009.

In his first major address to the nation, Prime Minister Singh addresses education as a

policy imperative.

> People are a nation's greatest resource. Our greatest asset will be an educated and capable
> work force. Our government will work along with State governments to step up public
> spending on education, to universalize access to elementary education and to improve the

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[264] National Commission on Population 2014

quality of our education. We shall make effective use of mid-day meals programme for school children to achieve this objective. I am particularly concerned about the access to schooling and higher education of children belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, weaker sections and minorities.

The education of the girl child and female literacy will be priority areas for us. We will do our utmost to provide scholarships to help them acquire the training and skills that can make them self-reliant and proud citizens. Our children need modern and relevant education aimed at making them concerned, capable and caring citizens of the Republic.[265]

Dr. Singh's focus on education is not entirely surprising or out of character. He served as Chairman of the University Grants Commission in 1991 before transitioning to the role of Union Finance Minister. His inauguration as Prime Minister was followed up by commissions investigating Issues in Elementary Education (2005), Universalization of Secondary Education (2005), Girls Education, Common School System, and Inclusive Education for Disabled Children (2005), Prescribed and Parallel Textbooks in Schools outside the Government System (2005), Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions (2005), and Financing of Higher and Technical Education (2005). But most significantly, the Government of India commissioned a High Level Commission (HLC) to prepare the first comprehensive review of the social, economic, and educational status of the Muslim population in India. What came to be known as the Sachar Committee report (2005-2006),[266] did not expand too much into Muslim women's education. The Shah Bano Case in the 1980s turned the discourse on women's civil liberties and rights. And yet, there was no female representation in the core committee, as it glossed over the education of Muslim women, repeating almost a time-honored tradition of cursory commitment to women's education and its communal complexities. This is a crucial exemplar of the fundamental flaw in India's political habits.

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[265] Manmohan Singh, 2004. *Former Prime Minister of India: Dr. Manmohan Singh.* June 24. http://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=1.
[266] Aggarwal 2010, 627-635

Dr. Singh's ministry coupled a strong education agenda with an aggressive economic policy. He encouraged further liberalization of the Indian market and reformed the tax code, while working toward an improvement of foreign relations with China and the United States. He continued Vajpayee's project of completing the Golden Quadrilateral – a highway modernization project, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhyan with its broad banner of education campaigns and projects. By 2007, India's growth rate peaked at 9 percent. However, these successes were punctured by several controversies, most significant of which were the Anti-Reservation protests of 2006, which were haunted by the same arguments from both sides as the 1990 Anti-Mandal Commission protests. The need to ensure equal access against the ground reality of class and caste-based social injustice, was met with two degrees of opposition. Students argued that quotas disregarded merit and success rates; students who entered through quota categories were not equipped to manage the competitive atmosphere of higher education and private sector institutions and organizations. Political opponents of affirmative action measures - especially the far Hindu right – accused the ruling coalition of creating artificial divisions between Hindus, to create communal electorates.

On December 9, 2005, both Houses of Parliament unanimously passed the Ninety-third Amendment to the Constitution[267] sponsored by Union Minister MHRD, Arjun Singh. The Amendment allowed the government to expand the purview, and oversight, of its affirmative action plans or reservations to include unaided academic institutions and private sector institutions and companies as well. Before this, reservations were implemented in institutions, and organizations that were directly operated by the state or received grants-in-aid. While this expansion would gradually expand to the private commercial sector, private academic

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[267] Government of India. 2005. "Amendment 93." *India Code.* December 9. http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend93.htm.

institutions were the first in the line of fire. Medical students in Delhi and Mumbai took to the streets when Arjun Singh announced that a further 27 percent reservation would be granted to individuals from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled, Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, on April 26, 2006. The text of the amendment reads:

> Greater access to higher education including professional education to a larger number of students belonging to the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been a matter of major concern. At present, the number of seats available in aided or State maintained institutions, particularly in respect of professional education, is limited in comparison to those in private unaided institutions.

> It is laid down in article 46, as a directive principle of State policy, that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and protect them from social injustice. To promote the educational advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in matters of admission of students belonging to these categories in unaided educational institutions, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30 of the Constitution, it is proposed to amplify article 15.[268]

Intense national competitive examinations, screening tests, and interviews are the only way to gain admission in the extremely selective, prestigious state-run educational institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT), National Institutes of Technology (NIT), Central and State Universities like the University of Delhi, University of Punjab etc., All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), to name a few. They have a very low admission rate ranging from 10,000 to 600,00 depending on the institution. On average there are 53 candidates for each available seat.[269] For example, the IIT-JEEs are the most competitive exams for engineers in India. By combining the new 27% quota

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[268] Goverment of India 2005
[269] The Times of India. 2012. *Education.* April 7. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/entrance-exams/5-lakh-aspirants-to-sit-for-IIT-JEE-in-2012/articleshow/12564776.cms?referral=PM.

for Other Backward Classes[270] with the 1990 Mandal commission enforced, 22.5% for the Dalits

and Adivasis from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST); the General Category

student, or those that do not fit into the above description, were only left with 50% of the seats in

any given admission year. Additionally, a general category candidate has to score a higher

minimum aggregate percentile (35%) than a candidate from the OBC (31.5%), or an SC (5%),

and ST (17.5%) candidate.

Despite civil disobedience movements and walk-outs by student groups, the Government

of India upheld the amendment and the proposed quota expansion. Secular humanistic values of

diversity, social justice, and inclusivity in institutions of higher education were upheld against

dominant group hegemonies. Though this is an admirable stand, it is important to note that

affirmative action plans for women's education saw no similar social movement or initiative – on

the streets or legislature. Additionally, no socially conscious curricula or campaigns were

proposed to educate students on privilege, diversity, and intellectual differentiation; nor were

counselors and support services established to meet any psycho-social issues that emerged out of

toxic group dynamics, like hazing or bullying, isolation, or other divisive group dynamics that

compromise academic engagement and success.

On the other end of the spectrum, private educational initiatives and international

institutional collaborations saw greater sanction in this administration. The Global Education and

Leadership Foundation launched in April 2008 was a collaboration between the Khemka family

(private donor), Sun Group (private enterprise), and Columbia University. Dr. Singh addressed

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[270] Other Backward Classes were defined as castes and classes that fell between the upper castes and the Dalits (untouchable classes) and Adivasis (tribal groups). Though hierarchically more advantages than the lowest castes they still lacked social, educational and economic advantages that were a privilege of the upper castes.

the trend at its inauguration, paying close attention to the growing interest of private investors in

education.

> It is a sad reality that both in our public sector and the private sector far too much attention is paid to the hardware of education and not enough to the software, namely, the quality of teachers and of facilities offered, including libraries. I hope your initiative will redress this important imbalance.
>
> I do recognize that the recent growth in the educational sector in our country has outpaced the government's ability to monitor, to regulate and to guide this growth. As a result, many of you consider the Government as a roadblock rather than as a facilitator. Many of you have come to view regulatory institutions as your adversaries rather than your partners.
>
> I am sure you will agree that regulation is a necessary feature of liberalization and essential to the fair functioning of free markets. But I do believe such regulation should be transparent and efficient. I share your concern about the problem of corruption in the field of regulation and supervision of educational institutions. Our Government is committed to fighting such corruption and to ensuring free, efficient and transparent regulation of the educational system… Most studies of Government-funded school programmes show that one of the weaknesses of public education is the quality of teachers.… Along with better remuneration we need greater commitment and, moral values and public opinion that can spur improvement in education. Civil society must play a greater role in demanding better quality education. Bringing schools under the supervision of local communities can help in this regard. I hope your initiative can guide us in this area and show Governments and educational institutions the way forward in improving quality of teaching and the software of education.[271]

Privatizing education is promoted as necessary in the leadership context of corruption,

and an acute failure of public institutions to deliver quality at all administrative or curricular

levels. Dr. Singh almost seems to negotiate with these mega-collaborations on how best the

government can get out of their way with minimum oversight. This is corroborated by an Ernst

and Young study in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

(FICCI) which reported that the number of K-12 private schools had grown from 1.2 million in

2005 to 1.4 million in 2011; and private schools were preferred for primary and secondary

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[271] Manmohan Singh 2008. *Former Prime Minister of India: Dr. Manmohan Singh.* 28 April. http://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=656.

education, over government-run schools. Even in rural India, enrollment in private schools had risen from 18.7% in 2006 to 25.6% in 2011.[272]

<center>Gender in Curriculum</center>

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) had not convened since 1990 despite being the apex body on policy making in Indian education, and principal mechanism for inter-state and center-state collaboration ensuring adherence to the concurrent list in the Constitution. In July 2004, Union Minister Arjun Singh, set about rectifying this by reconstituting CABE with Union Minister and Minister-of-State serving as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, and a membership tenure of three years from the date of its notification in the Gazette of India.[273] The 51st meeting convened in August, with an eclectic committee comprised of Chief Ministers and/or Education Ministers, educators, economists, scholars, and artists.[274] CABE organized subcommittees on identifying seven urgent issues that needed investigation, discussion, and time-bound work plans; four covered the common school system, and three higher education reform. The reports were received in July 2005, and by dint of CABE's prolonged absence, were emphatic, advocative, and idealistic. Among them was a report investigating the education of girls in the common school system, conceptualizing inclusive education, and the budgetary constraints on purported values.

Chaired by Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam, the Report on Girls Education and the Common School System, also included Dr. Kumud Sharma, one of the primary investigators in the Towards Equality (1974) report and former Director of the Center for Women's

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[272] FICCI-Ernst and Young. 2014. *Private Sector's Contribution to K-12 Education in India: Current impact, challenges and way forward.* Sector Report, New Delhi: Ernst & Young LLP.
[273] Central Advisory Board of Education. 2009. *Reports of the Central Advisory Board of Education.* Vol. I. New Delhi: National Book Trust.
[274] Playwright, writer, and scholar, Mahasweta Devi - whose excerpt features as the epigraph of this dissertation – is among the members of the reconstituted CABE, along with Ms. Ela Bhatt, founder of SEWA

Development Studies. The report defined issues in girl's education, made crucial distinctions

between gender parity and equity in education, and approached gender sensitization in curricula

from an epistemic standpoint. The CABE report cites domestic reports like *Towards Equality*,

the National Policies on Education (1968, 1986) and *Programme of Action* (1992), and

international commitments like the Beijing Plan of Action (1995) from the International

Conference on Women, the Dakar Framework (2000) from the World Education Forum, and the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from the UN Millennium Declaration (2000). The

increased policy interest in girl's education nationally and internationally adds new perspectives

and language to the assessment of the Indian situation. Publicly available data from All India

Education Surveys show that of the 40 million children out of school, two-thirds are girls; which

leads to question what precisely are the ends for girls' education. Gendered valuations and

disadvantages are surreptitiously codified through inheritance and personal laws, lax

enforcement of laws against dowry, female foeticide and infanticide, and extreme violence

against women and girls; not to mention the sheer socio-cultural and physical environment which

restricts movement and creates barriers. Instead of rushing to meet instrumental targets the

committee recommends a clarity in terms.

> Gender *parity* refers to equality in terms of schooling participation and completion rates at given levels. The main target of Gender *equity* however is a much broader concept referring to the absence of inequality in all forms including entitlements, opportunities, achievements, experiences, and acceptance. While the law ensures equality in entitlements, access to provisions ensures justice in the distribution of opportunities, and the classroom processes including relationships determine the equality of experiences.[275] The report then proceeds to detail the degrees of inequalities in the education systems.

Firstly, the "approach" or mental model for girls' education is rooted in instrumentalist or

functionalist ideas of women's roles as passive, invisible, secondary, supplementary, or

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[275] Ibid. 21

complementary, but in service to child and family. Hence, education was designed for fertility control, population control, mortality, etc. Second, lack of security, or meaningful educational experiences further enforce the status -quo that is stacked against girls. Third, curricular offerings are encouraged in practice based on accepted perceptions of gender abilities. In certain single-sex girls' schools elementary mathematics and home science were offered based on the availability of teachers; and usually it was only home science, or suitably "womanly" subjects.

> The rationale for having the choice of Elementary Mathematics and Home Science, and other 'womanly' optional subjects stems from the need to respond to 'demand.' The very presence of this option of Home Science in place of Mathematics for girls reflects the existing notions of masculinity and femininity and stems from mainly the societal expectations from women of playing the conventional feminine role…. The 'practical' problem of not finding enough teachers for Mathematics and other such subjects to teach in girls' schools is often cited as a reason for not offering the course…. Thus the choice of opting for 'non-womanly' subjects remains only notional in most of the single sex girls' schools. What is not often realized is that unless more students including girls are not encouraged to opt for these subjects the shortage of teachers is going to continue.[276]

In trying to make education 'relevant,' curricula for care-giving (pre- and post-natal care, basics of parenting, etc.) are gender segregated as are vocational courses (beautician, food sciences, etc.). Moreover, classroom practices mirror and enforce stereotypes. And finally, they point out how the aims of education have not been defined, never clearly articulated for monitoring, "although it is understood," that equity, social justice, and societal transformation are a result.

The recommendations that follow, unfortunately remain sub-par without any appropriate identification of agencies for accountability and implementation. In terms of curricular improvement, gender sensitization is recommended for boys on the problems of girls in society. The report urges the epistemic foundations of gender should be addressed in curricula and textbooks such that boys and girls critically question the relations of power that underlie gender.

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[276] Ibid. 24

The center is urged to increase outlays to the states and encourage ministries that benefit from skilled manpower to contribute to education. Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) or Gender Budgeting (GB) is advised across sectors to examine budgetary allocations and their effects on men and women. In summary, Girls education remains an exercise of ideas, conceptions, and frameworks with little to no grassroots bearing.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) released its fourth National Curriculum Framework in 2005 almost simultaneously with the CABE Reports. CABE's reconstitution was fortuitous in hindsight, because the reports and curricular framework fed into each other, and in the final version, reference each other. However, the first draft of the National Curricular Framework came under fire from CABE. Accused of playing to politics and conflict avoidance, rather than reform obscurantist, or sectarian educative platforms, CABE practically demanded a do-over.[277] The result was an overhaul of the term "value." There is a conscious movement away from terms like tradition, heritage, and religion. "Values" are enshrined within constitutional commitments, and democratic communities, through "equality, justice, freedom, concern for others' well-being, secularism, respect for human dignity and rights."[278] This reflects directly in commitments within the curricular framework toward girls' and women's education. It seeks to redefine program paradigms form marginalized learners.

> The formal approach, of *equality of treatment*, in terms of equal access or equal representation for girls, is inadequate. Today, there is a need to adopt a substantive approach, towards *equality of outcome*, where diversity, difference and disadvantage are taken into account. A critical function of education for equality is to enable all learners to claim their rights as well as to contribute to society and the polity. We need to recognise that *rights and choices in themselves cannot be exercised until central human capabilities are fulfilled*. Thus, in order to make it possible for marginalised learners, and especially girls, to claim their rights as well as play an active role in shaping collective life,

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[277] The Hindu 2005. *NCERT draft curriculum framework criticised.* August 7. http://www.thehindu.com/2005/08/07/stories/2005080705361000.htm.
[278] National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2005. *National Curriculum Framework.* Policy , New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 10

education must empower them to overcome the disadvantages of unequal socialization and *enable them to develop their capabilities of becoming autonomous and equal citizens*.[279]

The framework calls out negative stereotypes about girls and women – physical weakness, low or no aptitude for science and mathematics, etc. – in textbooks and classroom activities, and encourages a diversity in representation (more examples from diverse classes, castes, physical and intellectual abilities) and narrative to counter this. The societal "value" placed on different forms of work – intellectual labor versus productive labor – is criticized as inherently gendered. The framework encourages an "enabling environment" through consciousness and discussion over rote-learning to encourage discussions on gendered experiences of labor, societal perceptions, and their modeling in the classroom.

> Teachers and children are part of the larger society where identities based on membership of caste, gender, religious and linguistic group, as well as economic status inform social interaction, though this varies in different social, cultural and regional contexts. SC and ST communities, members of minority groups, and women are usually placed in situations of disadvantage because of their identities, and are denied equal access to valued resources in society and participation in different institutions. Research on school processes suggests that identities of children continue to influence their treatment within schools, thereby denying them meaningful and equal opportunities to learn. As part of the experience of schooling, children also receive implicit messages through interpersonal relations, teacher attitudes, and norms and values that are part of the culture of the school. These often reinforce notions of purity and pollution in relation to social hierarchies, desirable qualities of 'masculinity' and 'feminity', and privilege in certain ways of living, mainly that of the urban middle class, while rendering all others invisible. Children belonging to SC and ST groups, and other socially discriminated against groups such as sex workers and parents with HIV, are often subjected to demeaning treatment in the classroom, not only by teachers but also by their peers. Girls are often subject to stereotypical expectations based on notions of their future roles as wives and mothers rather than enabling them to develop their capabilities and claim their rights. Children with disability often confront insensitive environments where their needs are completely ignored.… It is the quality and nature of the interrelationships among individuals that determines the socio-political fabric of our nation. However, children are often socialised in to discriminatory practices.[280]

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[279] Ibid. 6
[280] Ibid. 82-83

This initiative is frankly, part of the larger goal to eliminate conscious and unconscious marginalization, invisibility, and discrimination in formal pedagogy; women, and girls are included – in sum and parts – as a disadvantaged group that disproportionately suffers discrimination, punishment or violence, unjust labor practices, and lower social standing. This is the closest that a major Indian policy framework in education had come in seeing hierarchies and power-relationships as gendered.

The following year, NCERT released a position paper on Gender Issues in Education (2006). The investigation – broken in two parts: Context and concerns, and Possibilities and Recommendations – delves deeper into the intentions laid out in the National Curricular Framework (2005). The key investigators are all women, and point this fact out as such. With due diligence the paper credits a select history of policy in education for girls' and women including the Kothari Commission (1964-66), *Towards Equality* (1974-75) and the recent National Curricular Frameworks (2000, 2005). The paper emphasizes gender as a "people's issue" not just a "women problem;" though women are unduly affected by gendered discrimination. It is the first report linking domestic and public violence against women affecting access to education for women, and mental health.

> Mental Health Consequences of Violence in the School and Domestic and Public Spheres: Increase in public and domestic violence, as well as sexual harassment and abuse within educational institutions negatively impacts girls' performance within schools and their ability to access education. It impacts female teachers as well as students. Though widespread, there is no data available on this. Besides sexual harassment, corporal punishment is common. Additionally, other discriminatory classroom practices based on prejudices related to identity are not uncommon. It is imperative to address all these forms of violence in the classroom and the school.[281]

Language features as another level of discrimination against girls and women toward employment with low socio-economic value placed on vernaculars or "mother-tongues."

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[281] Ibid. 8

Making a case for "sexuality education," the paper derides how the parameters have been

confined in utilitarian or moral terms. Shame, misinformation, accusations of promiscuity and

the burden of sexual responsibility, are directed toward women which effects identity, self-

esteem, confidence, and unhealthy attitudes and perspectives into perpetuity. The effect of the

Vajpayee administration and National Curricular Framework (2000)'s focus on value education,

was implemented in educational communications as the 'highly valued ideals' of '*Samyam'* or

self-control. The paper urges reformation of the collective understanding of sexuality and its

place in human development.

> Sexuality is a central aspect of being human and encompasses sex, gender identities and
> roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Though it
> comprises an inevitable part of the experience of growing up, and a critical form of self-
> expression, sexuality has been perceived as unhealthy, been equated with promiscuity,
> and, until recently, been shrouded in silence and denial, even in the field of education.…
> Sexuality has to be understood as: (1) Extending beyond physical bodily sensations and
> as critical to the constitution of self and identity of both boys and girls, in terms of
> beliefs, attitudes, values and self-esteem; (2) An important form of self-expression; (3)
> An integral aspect of the ways in which the power relations of gender, caste, class and
> religion are played out in society.[282]

Organizational arrangements, differentiation of task assignment, division of labor,

systems of rewards and punishment, disciplinary measures, and gendered labeling of behavior

are all identified as a dynamic hidden curriculum effecting teacher-student, student-student

interactions. Intriguingly, administrators, supervisors, and other executive leaders in education

are not expressly stated as effected or effecting the student experience. Frankly, the educational

culture of teaching-to-test results in classroom experiences that are disjunctive from students

lived experiences, reducing engagement and deepening divides. The portrait of an ideal learner

suffers from a "middle-class male" bias. The paper explains,

> Ever since the Kothari Commission report of 1966 emphasised the processes of nation-
> building and modernisation, the assumption of the male child as the prime mover of

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[282] Ibid. 12

national development has tended to dominate both thinking in relation to the school curriculum, as well as its translation into the language and ideology of textbooks…. Textbooks have presumed a sensibility and logic that meshes most easily with the knowledge-world of the urban middle class male child. The image of the child who can be disciplined to become the ideal citizen and a national asset dominates curriculum planning. It is the male middle class child again who comes closest to conforming to the hegemonic notions of ideal childhood, one in which the child is in school and not at work, is carefree, at play and sheltered from the sordid facts of adult life. Curriculum documents have therefore, addressed the upper caste urban middle class child (invariably male) and in turn are shaped by the norms of the world inhabited by this child.[283]

This urban upper caste masculinity is either conditioned to be bereft of compassion or empathy, or curricula is presented as a perfect mirror to society. The paper exemplifies through an extract, that in the rare occasion that a lower class child is described it is without empathy or an affirmation of identity. They are, "half-fed and half clad," 'dwelling place stink with filth and odour." Juvenile delinquency is a "misbehavior," "hamper(-ed) mental growth," "antisocial;" making the child a liability, "a burden to his family."[284]

The paper exhorts feminist theory, describing and defining gender, masculinity, equality, and empowerment. Women have *de jure* or *formal* citizenship but lack *de facto* or *substantive* citizenship, with autonomy and freedom to "perform their duties as citizens."

They have gained entry onto active citizenship chiefly as mothers of the future nation, but mothers who are subordinate to their husbands.[285]

A feminist critique of disciplines is encouraged to facilitate a gendered inquiry into the construction of knowledge, and to realign it around the concept of experiential learning, i.e. the validation, examination, and standpoint of the learner. In developing "alternative gendered framework of knowledge," the paper urges that diversity and intersectionality in the Indian context is an acknowledgement, a deliberate consciousness of inequalities, privilege, and

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[283] Ibid. 21
[284] Ibid. 21-22
[285] Ibid. 26

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received knowledge. An exploration of the *processes* that sustain gendered norms is encouraged across disciplines especially the social sciences – History, Economics, Political Science – where narrative transmission of knowledge provides opportunities for critical inquiry and discussion.

There is never a discussion of masculinity, or toxic masculinity, in India and its significance in education. Masculinity in this document is a theoretical, even abstract observation, because it shies away from applying the definition of middle class male masculinity to important discussions such as sexuality education. At best it is a theoretical reference point as in the position paper, or scarcely implied as in the National Curricular Framework (2005), or completely ignored.

<div align="center">Right to Education (2009) and the Five Year Plans</div>

The Tenth Five Year Plan came into effect from 2002 to 2007 during the Vajpayee administration and continued into the first Singh administration. Dominated by a call to action for conscientious, strategic governance, the Plan is the first to use gender as term and variable to describe India's education and inequalities. However, gender is used as an extension of the male-female binary and not seen as relations of power. "Women and children" are clubbed together throughout the plan documents. Acting in a continuum of subtext; the two are always tied together in their chronic vulnerability, underdevelopment, and being systemically under-served. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was plugged as the primary vehicle to spread elementary education and streamline literacy programs. The Plan gives State governments autonomy in the distribution of central outlays to achieve Universal Elementary Education (UEE). Private contributions and partnerships are encouraged to ensure that secondary education is not compromised because of the central impetus on elementary education, while curricular relevance and vocational training are linked to private economic growth and participation.

The Plan also implies that the family structure is purely the feminine domain, i.e. the *private* world is purely maternal, feminine, caregiving, and the domain of the woman. This continues as the dominant narrative about women's labor in no uncertain terms. The underdevelopment of "social/welfare" sectors is because they are perceived as feminine, secondary, and influencing the status of women in their communities. The ambivalence in commitment and lack of directive, is a *modern policy affirmation of the woman's responsibility in maintaining the social ethos, her own empowerment, and gaining economic self-reliance*. Men are exempt or absent from initiatives to empower women; except as benevolent patrons and overseers.

> In pursuance of the avowed objective of empowering the women as agents of socio-economic change, the National Policy on Empowerment of Women was adopted in April, 2001. On this basis, the National Plan of Action, is being implemented which includes the following strategies, (a) create an enabling environment for women to exercise their rights both within and outside their homes; (b) to reserve one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies (c) to adopt a special strategy for the Women Component Plan to ensure that at least 30% of funds and benefits flow to women from all development sectors (d) to organize women into self-help groups as a mark of the beginning of empowering them (e) to accord high priority and ensure easy access to maternal and child health services (f) to initiate steps for eliminating gender bias in all educational programmes; and to institute plans for free education of girls upto college levels including professional levels (g) to equip women with necessary skills in modern upcoming trades which would make them economically independent and self-reliant (h) to increase women's access to credit through setting up of Development Bank for women entrepreneurs in the small and tiny sectors.[286]

The bulk of these strategies are yet to see the light of the day. There is some recognition of women's labor in agriculture, especially in the informal sector. Otherwise women's labor is referred to in broad strokes as the plan strives for employment parity. In keeping with policy tradition, women, are clubbed into a wide spectrum of "socially disadvantaged groups," in need of empowerment.

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[286] Planning Commission 2013: Tenth Five Year Plan

The Eleventh Five Year Plan came in to effect from 2007 to 2012 and saw a reprisal of the Singh administration in the 2009 general elections with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). In 2008, women's labor force participation was pegged at 26.8 percent of a 470,000,000 active labor force, continuing to fall lower until 2012 where it was 24.1 percent of a 478,000,000 labor force. Indian population climbed to 1.2 billion and with 378.3 million living on less than $1.90 a day.[287] Despite the flurry of activity on education and investigations on systemic inequalities, an endemic *poverty* characterized India's national reality, agency, and most disturbingly, political processes.[288]

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009) was preceded by protests against the expansion of affirmative action plans in India to include private and unaided educational institutions and private-sector organizations. The Supreme Court held up the constitutionality of recommended quotas against Public Interest Litigations (PILs) like Ashoka Kumar Thakur v. Union of India (2007). Based on precedents set by Miss Mohini Jain v State of Karnataka & Others (1992), and by ongoing arguments for Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust & Others v. Union of India & Others (2012), the Supreme Court urged legislation to constitutionally ratify Universal Elementary Education (UEE) and thereby fulfil one of the primary Directives Principles of State Policy outlined in the Constitution at Independence.[289] Despite the increasing outlays to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) suite of programs, literacy remained poor and a matter of perspective because of the Government of India's preference to ineffectually measure success by enrollment data instead of learning outcomes.

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[287] The World Bank Group. 2016. *Labor Force.*
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=IN.
—. 2016. *Poverty and Equity.* http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/IND.
[288] Dario Berrebi, 2016. "Poverty in India: Causes, Effects, Injustice & Exclusion." *Poverties.* February 5. Accessed August 1, 2016. http://www.poverties.org/blog/poverty-in-india.
[289] Aggarwal 2010, 660-678

Abbreviated as the Right to Education (RTE) 2009, the legislation was hailed as pivotal, a landmark in the national efforts toward educative reforms. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children up to six years of age substituted Article 45 in the constitution which recommended provisions for free and compulsory education of children. The Act focused on educational delivery for ages six through fourteen, placing the onus of accountability at all levels of governance including Centre, State, Local Bodies, Teachers, Parents, and Non-State Actors. The Act affirms the authority of the State to oblige all schools, state-run or aided, and unaided private schools to fulfil affirmative action initiatives or quotas by accepting 25 percent intake from socially disadvantaged groups as identified in the Mandal Commission. In defining the norms and standards of schools catering first to fifth grade, and separately from sixth to eighth grade, the Act tries to rectify and define measures to counter the lax quality of educational infrastructure (building, teaching materials, and classroom libraries), sports, and the problem teacher absenteeism. Dr. Manmohan Singh spoke on the occasion of the Act's commencement on April 1, 2010.

> About a hundred years ago a great son of India, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, urged the Imperial Legislative Assembly to confer on the Indian people the Right to Education. About ninety years later the Constitution of India was amended to enshrine the Right to Education as a fundamental right. Today, our Government comes before you to redeem the pledge of giving all our children the right to elementary education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, enacted by Parliament in August 2009, has come into force today. The Fundamental Right to Education, as incorporated in our Constitution under Article 21 A, has also become operative from today. This demonstrates our national commitment to the education of our children and to the future of India. We are a Nation of young people.
> The health, education and creative abilities of our children and young people will determine the wellbeing and strength of our Nation. Education is the key to progress. It empowers the individual. It enables a nation.
> It is the belief of our government that if we nurture our children and young people with the right education, India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure. We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender and social category, have

access to education. An education that enables them to acquire the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to become responsible and active citizens of India.[290]

A Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan commission on the Right to Education included gender parity as one of its interpretations on equity and access of education but the material gains made by the Right to Education are up in the air. By the 2011 census, the population had reached at 1,239,215,258 with 64.32 percent of the population literate; of which 71.22 percent were male and 56.99 percent were female, i.e. approximately 45 million women were *literate* of 1.2 billion Indians.[291] The sex ratios cut a sorry figure as well. Though the national average crept up at 940 females for every 1000 males; regional disparities got worse. There are repeat offenders: Jammu and Kashmir fell to 883:100, Punjab at 893:1000, Haryana at 877:1000, NCT of Delhi[292] at 866:1000, Bihar fell to 916:1000, Uttar Pradesh at 908:1000, Sikkim at 889:1000, and Gujarat fell to 918:1000. This doesn't discount the gains that have been made but it does make the gains seem relatively small. By 2013, females had outpaced males in secondary education enrollment at 69.23 per cent, with 23.06 percent going on to enroll for higher education. But women's labor force participation continued its downward march to 27 per cent in 2013; the lowest historically. To what do we account these gross discrepancies in education attainment and labor participation? As noted in the literature review, scholarship and policy critique of education saw an uptick only in the first decade of this century. The explosion of the privatization of education at all levels has run parallel to government policy agendas and is rearing its head as the legitimate educative choice against the gross failures of central infrastructural provisions.

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[290] Singh, Manmohan. 2004. *Former Prime Minister of India: Dr. Manmohan Singh.* 2010.
http://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=1
[291] National Commission on Population 2014
[292] Delhi is officially known as the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. With a population around 25 million, and a density of 11,297 per sq. km of land area, it is the third most populous city in India. Mumbai and Kolkata top the list of most populous cities in the world occupying the first and second spots.

Reviews of the education "market" by global consulting groups like Ernst and Young, the WINGS report by Tata Consultancy Services, etc., have laid out widely competing reports of monetization, efficacy, and outcomes in the private sector, encouraging more private investments with accreditation from central bodies. It should go without saying that this deepens economic inequalities and access to quality education. Enforcement of the 25-27 percent quota for disadvantaged groups in the Right to Education (2009) in unaided institutions has not been studied in depth, so the policy's effects remain an ongoing investigation.

Chapter 5. Velleity and its Discontents

In a postmodernist exploration of freedom in the genesis of American democracy, celebrated historian Eric Foner quotes political scientist Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation as a state of mind, an imagined political community, with borders that are as much intellectual as geographic. The exercise of devising substantive unities to create a singular national imaginary, and from there a common national identity, is not without negotiating Foucault's regimes of truth – a substratum "archaeology" creating discursive binaries of exclusions and inclusions: an essentially historical endeavor.[293]

Modern democracy and the idea of a nation is largely considered an American experiment, a birth – a supreme, deliberate act of creation that recognized no regime before itself, founded on the will of its people: a political *individualism* grounding freedom and enterprise. The cornerstone of American democracy therefore is not the past, but the future. The fall of Empire in the 21st century was inspired by the movement and displacement of people and ideas caused by the very same project of Empire. India's national imaginary is partly a legacy of this displacement, and partly a legacy of movements: but it is *legacy* first. India is not one civilization or tradition or language or community, it is the proclamation of a nation; the tacit consent of a babel that embraced multitudes, paradoxes and conflicts in one fell swoop. Communal heterogeneity was embraced but not resolved; fundamentally shaping the Indian attitude toward the past. The future was shaped as a critique, a departure, a deep contradiction, a desperate renaissance, and reformation of received histories. India's idea of history is doubly

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[293] Eric Foner, 1998. *The Story of American Freedom.* New York: W.W.Norton & Company.

confronted by a magnitude of people, a vastness of diversity that never assimilated or integrated, but co-existed; an enduring quality of its democracy.

A gendered lens of legacy examines these very contradictions. As a method of establishing order, authority, legitimacy, and hierarchy; theories of gender in politics establish the continuum between masculinities and femininities, in combination with other identities. The concept of gender steps away from biological sex and the binary treatment of men and women as opposites. Analytical focus can then be reoriented to social constructions, foreclosed identities, socially learned behaviors, and proscribed norms. Education is embedded in society and therefore, a bedrock institution in modern democracy and its formal processes and institutions. It is at once a noun, verb, adverb, conjunction, and even an abstraction in policy. Regarded as a public good, a service provided to achieve national goals and individual betterment, education is closely linked to practically eternal questions of aims and purposes, the role of state-actors, standards, equality and social justice, and ideas of natural interests and abilities.

Converging these large intersecting systems – nation-building, gender, and education – to deconstruct legislative outcomes brings nuance to the work on or for women, expanding the concept of "gender," and the reach of politics. This section reflects on the narrative of education laid out in the previous chapters. Though gender is the entire spectrum of masculinity, femininity, and normativity, education as an aspiring democratic grand leveler, aims at social justice and parity for women relative to men. In defining the boundaries of gender, and the accompanying historical shifts in narrative, gender is activated as context, identity, agency, and process: each acting in ebbs and flows, influencing emic and etic ontologies of women's embodied episteme.

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Gender as Context

The female subject in India's education systems cannot be separated from the deliberate, conscious construction of a coherent Indian history. Colonial and post-colonial subjectivity(-ies) weigh heavily, playing an instrumental role in creating a masculine Indian nationalism, replicating the obsessive cultural taxonomies as a systemic hegemony. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the appeals to motherhood as a mobilizing metonym for the nation, and as the only legitimate, or rather permissible, pathway to women's participation in the infant republic.

Nationalism was infused with moral fervor through potent gendered metaphors of a woman's body and its functions, in the creation of filial devotion and therefrom, an Indian race. Bharat Mata or Mother India, conjoined the concept of the earth goddess, *Bhudevi,* and "Shakti" of the Indian divine feminine (Kali, Durga, Parvati, Lakshmi) with a bourgeois nationalism that longed for a cartographic possession: a concrete sovereignty over set boundaries and a geopolitical body.[294] The idiom and deity of maternal nationalism rendered divisible, fermenting identities in a submersible, even manageable, crucible. The "children of the nation" were foreclosed and duty-bound as a political citizenry born of this cosmic-geographic womb. The idolatry and spiritual conflation was pervasive and symbolically powerful enough to create a cultural artefact, a distinct personality, easily invoked in various situations and malleable to cultural and regional aesthetic peculiarities; a sensual devotion to the maternal body, and corporeality of an Indian nation

> … the map created the 'true,' 'complete,' and 'pure' picture of India and the men who
> built it were thanked for it. The map was to aid not only in the study of the womb of the
> earth, geography and geology, but also help in understanding the mystery of Indian

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[294] Charu Gupta, 2001. "The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India: 'Bharat Mata,' 'Matri Bhasha,' and 'Gau Mata.'." *Economic and Political Weekly* 36 (45): 4291-4299.

culture, its development and special essence. It was a symbol of a patriotic act, but could also equally lay claims to a fixed geographical space, a nation carved.[295]

One can hypothesize that this alloy of Hindu piety and idolatry with a national narrative, further alienated the Muslims in India, who were also seeing themselves constructed as outsiders, invaders, and punitive barbarians with an effeminate language.[296] The escalation of demands for a separate nation – a body of one's own, that eventually led to the partition of the sub-continent – may have seen this same perverse embodied logic as a contributing factor.

The feminization of politics by Gandhi ennobled motherhood and effectively curbed the fierce, erotic, and tactile domains embodied in *Shakti*. The fiery speeches of Sarojini Naidu, and Madame Bjikaji Cama summoned the darkling powers of maternity (the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world), but Gandhi's evocation of innate feminine qualities lauded a spirit of endurance and suffering. This essentialized the political category of "woman" as mother; subsuming the caste, class, religious, linguistic, regional, and socio-economic differences under the banner of a single totemic function. For what it was worth, this rallied a larger base since women's sphere of rights and influence were wholly familial in act and metaphor, and legitimized their political activity and participation through the independence movement. Motherhood was permission to act and tamed anti-colonial anxieties about women.

Discussing the pre-independence literary tradition of domestic memoirs by women, Partha Chatterjee confronts the inherent masculinity of anti-colonial movements and the construction of women as "contributive" at home, as a national duty, and thereby possessing and appropriating women's subjectivity. In reviewing the autoiography of wealthy, landed

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[295] Ibid. 4292
[296] Gupta 2001; Wendy Doniger, and Martha C. Nussbaum, . 2015. *Pluralism and Democracy in India: Debating the Hindu Right.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rassundari Devi and her struggle to learn how to read and write in secrecy and fear of

ostracization, Chatterjee noting the bifurcation of woman and nation wrote,

> (Rassundari Devi is inspired by) ... the devotional literature of an earlier era. All
> subjectivity is attributed here to a divine agency, and Rassundari recounts her toil and
> sorrow – "the burden of three lives thrust into one" – only as the story of a fate assigned
> to her…Nationalists of the twentieth century saw in Rassundari's story only a
> confirmation of their construction of the true essence of Indian womanhood; self-
> sacrificing, compassionate, spiritual, and possessing great resources of emotional strength
> drawn from personal faith and devotion. This essence they thought, needed to be
> recovered from the morass of bigotry and superstition into which tradition had fallen, and
> reform and education could accomplish this. What they did not recognize was that
> Rassundari's struggle emanated from a consciousness that was yet uncolonized by
> Enlightenment. She submitted to as well as resisted a patriarchy that was pre-modern; her
> strategies of resistance also sprang out of traditions that far predated the advent of
> 'women's education' as an agenda of nationalist reform. Above all the intervention of
> nationalist male reformers was not required to set Rassundari's consciousness into
> motion. Indeed, in her time, the nationalist project had not even begun. Only later did
> nationalism appropriate her story into its own pre-history.[297]

Post-independence the national preoccupation with language also gained a gendered

rhetoric. Upper caste Hindus and the Muslim elite elders animated language to assert a distinct

community identity; and for the Hindus a means of cementing a cultural hegemony in the new

republic. Entreaties to secular tolerance and the preoccupation with linguistic instruction and

preservation in national systems of education represent the din and populist fervor that created a

further taxonomic category in India's democratic identities. Languages were personified as

women, and loyalties marshalled under symbolism of "mother-tongue."

> Christopher King has pointed out how the two languages of Hindi and Urdu were
> represented as women: Hindi was a patient and respectable Hindu wife or a brahmin
> nurturing matron; while Urdu was nothing less than a heartless aristocratic strumpet or a
> wanton Muslim prostitute. Further in some plays, queen Devnagari (the Hindi script
> personified) was as much the image of the new middle class Hindu housewife as of any
> queen; Begum Urdu was the unreformed, the uncontrolled woman.[298]

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[297] John 2008, 315-316, Essay: Women and the Nation: The Trouble with their Voices by Partha Chatterjee
[298] Gupta 2001, 4293

The post-colonial nation reifies the context for gender constructions. The nation maybe female but nationalism is inevitably male; the body and land are sanctified, divine, and maternal, but its cartography, frontiers, and boundaries are a martial masculinity. The nation is analogous with production and reproduction, such that hegemony is not an external relation between sui generis sociohistorical agents, but a process of discursive construction.[299] Policy documents represent the stratified normativity of this historical process, including the political significance of constructing and disseminating a historical memory that privileges masculine power and feminine virtue.

The prime minister's leadership came to be associated with egalitarian charisma, but the task of a sectarian nation with secessionist tendencies resulted in a heterogeneous makeshift Indian State that gradually lost legitimacy during the Gandhi years. A political habit of crony federalism financed by crony capitalism laid governance in the hands of an amorphous bureaucracy.

> Bureaucracy is the form of government in which everybody is deprived of political freedom, of the power to act; for the rule of Nobody is not no-rule, and where all are equally powerless we have a tyranny without a tyrant…. The transformation of government into administration, or of republics into bureaucracies, and the disastrous shrinkage of the public realm that went with it have a long and complicated history throughout the modern age; and this process has been considerably accelerated during the last hundred years through the rise of party bureaucracies.[300]

Hannah Arendt goes on to describe a "curious brand of nationalism" that is an outcry against this bigness of centralization; or the nation-state federalism, which relied on the successful assimilation of ethnic identities. Secularism, in this case, was a counterproductive rhetoric flattening experience under the rule of law, taming difference and its dissents instead of

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[299] Judith Butler, and Joan W Scott, . 1992. *Feminists Theorize the Political.* New York: Routledge.
[300] Hannah Arendt, 1970. *On Violence.* Orlando: Harcourt Books, 81.

cognizing the layers and intersectionality of identity. State reconfigurations are influenced more by global macro processes; especially the nature, role, and influence of globalization and the gradual shifts of welfare and social policies to multilevel, multilateral, often befuddling governance and bureaucracy, and non-state actors. Ethnic nationalism is a reactive outcry against the extraordinary "bigness" of government, and bureaucratization – in all its amorphous, headless, amoral authority – is government's exit hatch.

The binary presentation of power-relations and the ideological nationalist project post-independence put greater onus on middle and higher education and pressure to align with international neoliberal activity. Undeniably context influences identity; and in the articulation of policy profiles in education, a gendered context influences gendered identities.

Gender as Identity

> An essentialist is one who holds that men and women have essential natures, natures that are essentially different. Contemporary followers of Carl Jung are essentialists. They posit essential masculine and feminine traits, strengths, and weaknesses. However, they also urge a balance – men must accept guidance from their "anima" or feminine aspect, and women must listen to their "animus" or masculine spirit. Many current feminists abhor the essentialist position because they believe it has long been used to exclude women from the public and professional world. Further, some believe that it is simply wrong, that biological evidence does not support it, but the scientific argument rages on. There is no question about the about the political use of essentialism; the doctrine has not worked for the betterment of women.[301]

Essentialisms fueled the nationalist narrative forwarded by an English educated intelligentsia who were predominantly male, urban, upper-caste Hindu. But the reformist intelligentsia, Gandhi included, gleaned their insights and policy agendas from a bifurcated reality. On the one hand they belonged to a modernity spurred by the reach and mobility of English education, and on the other, their separation from colonialism was marked not by

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[301] Nel Noddings, 2012. *Philosophy of Education.* Boulder: Westview Press, 224

political alliances but by a vivified "tradition" located in the home, the unreformed family, and communal spheres led by mothers; an "other" process of education which was and is indigenous, imprecise, marginalized, passive, apolitical, ahistorical, and domestic: hallmarks of the feminine. To ignore this crucial aspect of the history of Indian education is to succumb to a myopia that renders invisibility to the class and caste spectrum of Indian racism and discrimination. It leaves out the histories and educational experiences of all those who did not attend colonial, government, or private schools; who trained instead in the functions and traditions of their caste, in domesticity, professional apprenticeship, or even ethics.

If education reproduces the socio-cultural ethos in its formal institutions, then the obverse is true as well: the plurality of the socio-cultural landscape affects the non-formal or plurality of sites where education occurs. Usually these processes are simultaneous, overlapping and contradicting one another in the creation of active and passive structures, and dominant and subordinate identities; but taken in terms of outcomes, they are cumulative. Historically women are relegated as a special case in Indian education policies: a self-evident monolith without problematisation rectified by ad hoc recommendations and commissions for "girls' education," "women teachers," gender segregated or "separate institutions for girls and women. It is theoretically and methodologically easier to reduce women to a matrix of signs, or symbols of a larger process, but the educative challenge is to cognize women as active beings, resonating within their contexts. The fact that national policy discourse has ignored these overtly private, domestic, communal sites of education is to entrench the gendered public-private, modern-

traditional, metropolitan-provincial dichotomies that a socialist or welfare policy agenda proposes to deconstruct.[302]

Mother and Non-Mother. The previous section explored the conflation of "Mother" with an idealized land, nationalism, and the nation itself. Motherhood came to define the mother; a singular activity overtook the being. This two-dimensional construction by Indian intelligentsia discursively collapsed the diversity and pluralism of Indian women as active agents into a passive metonymic category: mother into the motherland, which needed confinement, protection and reformation. The bourgeois romanticism of the mother figure reduced motherhood and women into a passive site for masculine affirmation.

> This (male, public, political, historical agent) intelligentsia then bears the mantle of History itself. The intelligentsia of colonial countries like India bears a wider mantle: to develop the will and the desire to *have* a History. Women are accepted well-enough commonsensically as having a *place* in history; they do not *imagine* or *make* this new 'History.'… one of the obstacles (of constructing a History) is by implication the female dead weight in society, somewhere equivalent to the feudalism, superstition, hierarchy of pre-modernism. Yet, for all the suffering, even in their aborted efforts towards a realization of a destined History, the intelligentsia retains an effect of unity. Surely this is achieved chiefly through exclusions and repressions of important parts of the story? Certain 'men' find themselves confirmed in history, and other, such as 'women' get positioned 'so as to confirm the truth of that operation.' *The 'essence' of the intelligentsia – troubled, questing struggling, building – gets predicated on the larger non-intellectual activity of their societies and, specifically for us, on the non-intellectual activity of the women of their class. The history of the intelligentsia is confirmed by the non-essential and non-historical* (emphasis own).[303]

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[302] Nita Kumar, 2005. "Mothers and Non-Mothers: Gendering the Discourse of Education in South Asia." *Gender and History* 17 (1): 154-182; Nita Kumar. 2006. "Provincialism in Modern India: The Multiple Narratives of Education and their Pain." *Modern Asian Studies* 40 (2): 397-423; Nita, Kumar, ed. 1994. *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
This section relies heavily on the work of South Asian Historian Dr. Nita Kumar. She is among the very few historians that specifically study women's subjectivity, identity, agency, and justice *in Indian education* through a multidisciplinary approach which includes Women's and Gender Studies, Literary Criticism, Education and Performance Studies; along with her disciplinary training in Anthropology and History. Her blog documents her field research and observations of schooling in India.
[303] N. Kumar, Mothers and Non-Mothers: Gendering the Discourse of Education in South Asia 2005, 157

But what kind of subjectivity did the non-historical subject produce? In certain pre-independence education commission reports, one gets the sense of a "backstage," in the complex interiority of the *zenana* and the *andarmahal* thrived a dynamic ecosystem of balladeers, performers, storytellers, masseurs, ritualists, salespeople, extended feminine relationships bound by a care economy. The extra-scholastic influences on the education of women can be culled through the breadth of women's writing in the twentieth century[304] exhibiting a range of experience far bigger that the over determined category of 'mother;' and these never see credence or legitimacy in policy documents or reports.[305]

> The corpus of myths and scriptures in Hinduism … shows mothers to be alternatively powerful or helpless, auspicious or malign. Nor is a woman most centrally a mother. The glorification of the powers of motherhood is offset by description of the actual powerlessness of the role. All studies of Devi, or the Mother Goddess(es), in contrast, and all myths with women characters, startle with the unexpected location of power in the mother. All in all, South Asia exhibits fecund complexity of characterization at the ideological, functional and cultural levels.

> Equally troublesome are the very male-female divisions in South Asia. Even if the primary parents are acknowledged to be mothers, with clear work and space segregation, their traits such as sacrifice, gentleness, non-violence and nurture, can be comfortably shared by both men and women, whether this is marginalized or celebrated. The binary opposition expressed in western Judeo-Christian civilization by figures like Eve or Mary is replaced in Indian civilization by a more reciprocal male-female structure, exemplified by Shiva, Durga, and Kali.[306]

> The bottom-line argument in favor of girls' education was throughout that they were the future mothers of the country. If we think of the different ways that gender hierarchies

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[304] Susie Tharu, and K. Lalita, 1991. Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Early Twntieth Century. Vol. I. New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York.
Susie Tharu, and K. Lalita, 1993. Women Writing in India: The 20th Century. Vol. II. New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York.
[305] N. Kumar, Mothers and Non-Mothers: Gendering the Discourse of Education in South Asia 2005, 169
In commenting on the mother-child relational dynamic in women's literature and memoirs:
There is nothing archetypal about the nurturing of these mothers. They nurture their children towards questioning and independence. They themselves make 'sacrifices' with confidence, but do not glorify these virtues. Their children love them, but condemn their lives and will not be like them. That is, the mothers' nurturing is not cyclical and repetitive; it produces change, but through tactics beyond those we directly grasp, such as encouraging other influences towards change on their children. The mother's contribution to change is certain, but while her labor, nurturing, and guidance are accessible to us, the exact nature of her disclosure of possibilities in the future is difficult for us to grasp. In both the history and the fiction, the mother is mistakenly understood to be a victim.
[306] Ibid. 163

were constructed, legitimized and maintained in Hindu India, it is the *varnashram* (the class and stage of life) and *jati* (genus, literally, caste) discourses that presumed a woman to be constituted by birth as a separate kind of being…. Nationalist discourse often referred to Vedic times as a time when women were educated and competent that after centuries of degradation one could recover the ancient glory by returning them to their place. There was sufficient variation in the vast corpus of texts and their interpretations to historicise the essentialist category 'woman,' even after discounting the strictures against women laid down by the most misogynist of the sahstras, Manu's Dharmashasta. That is the very discourse of the woman as housewife and mother contained within it the possibilities of reversal.[307]

The non-mother is the inverse of the mother. The most eminent occupants of this category are men, but it also includes the spectrum of women who, for various reasons and volitions, do not perform as parents. This doesn't mean they do not perform nurturing roles, or the act of mothering. Another role may determine their active identity, like poverty, or skilled and unskilled labourer, making their maternal activities invisible or deficient. Nita Kumar, points out a third form of non-mother (apart from men, and economically marginalized women): the 'unsexed woman,' the ascetic, the nun, or the widow who defined their active life with no reference to the men of their families. The discourse of *sewa,* or service went hand in hand with the self-possession they gained through austerities first, and then later through disciplined *action* to achieve self-determined goals. They were either privileged or astute capacity builders; but dominated their communal and public lives through fundraising, institution building, administration, recruitment, community organizing, and education. However, Non-mother educationists were not regarded as professional women, but in negations – through a categorical reminder of their barrenness or abandoned motherhood. Again, their work was cloaked in terms like "sacrifice," "self-denial," "saint-like;" instrumentally and historically dulling the truly radical nature of their lives and work that shifted the boundaries of women's spaces and activity.

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[307] Ibid. 173

Power and Empowerment. Post-independence the economic reconstruction of the new nation took center stage in policy. Motherhood was now folded into the matrix of productive roles women play as economic citizens; a deeper subordination as class politics in the socialist, industrial economy stratified and specialized labor to speed targeted growth sectors. The liminal quality of the private sphere, saw new terminology under liberal political discourse and globalization. Development was preoccupied with growth, an "economics in command" approach that prioritized the growth of production, modernization of technology, and program management in the era of "structural adjustment plans." The stress on production was balanced with a need to empower disadvantaged populations. This is a key semantic reconstruction: growth was seen in terms of production and consumption capacities; depressed populations became disadvantaged groups; and social justice was reframed as empowerment.

Empowerment implied a lack of economic power and participation; which effectively compromised political agency and citizenship. The discursive range of empowerment was foreclosed in the recognition of immanent *disabilities* of target populations, especially women, creating a rhetoric of negative capabilities. The consequent political taxonomy communicated a masculine rhetoric of accomplishment: self-actualization, possession, and leadership; and a feminine rhetoric of development: negative freedoms, dispossession, and dependency or contingency. Chapter 4 explored in detail how empowerment acted as an omnibus term that subsumed the autonomies of specific struggles, and the specificity of exploitations, overly relying on formal institutional arrangements to intervene and define the Indian woman as subject and object of knowledge, and as historical agent. The failure of liberal-capitalist institutions to channel and facilitate the politics of the oppressed toward a socio-political self-determination is

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symptomatic of inherited dualisms that reify dichotomies through a derived constitution of otherness, the indigenous, or alterity.

The inequality of relations compels a researcher to locate the power of women's subjectivity in their alterity, in active confrontations between domination and subordination, and in unresolved discursive sites between the historical and the allegorical. A recognition of this does not entail a replacement or substitution of phallogocentrism,[308] a masculine paradigm with a feminine paradigm – an exercise akin to a philosophical house of mirrors – but a radical departure from the static, *structural*, stable subject. To repurpose Jacques Derrida's treatises on deconstruction; "the effect of the Law is to build the structure of the subject… then you are caught in the logic of phallogocentrism and you have rebuilt the empire of the Law." Structures are possessed and designed around masculinism, and therefore a feminist exercise would necessarily reconceptualize the gendered subject as "… subjects *in process*, ceaselessly losing our identity, destabilized by fluctuations in our relations with the other, to whom we nevertheless remain bound in a kind of homeostasis."[309]

Gender as Agency

As an instrument of public learning, the federal government… rests largely on a theory of the stable state…. It treats government as center, the rest of society as periphery. In spite of the language of experimentation, government initiated learning tends to be confined to efforts to induce localities to behave in conformity with central policy. Localities tend to beat the system. Government tends to bury failure or learn from it only in the sense of veering away from it. Evaluation, then, tends to be limited to the role of establishing and monitoring the extent of peripheral conformity to central policy.

The social systems of the agencies mirror the theory underlying the implementation of policies. Agencies are the social embodiment of policies, and in their efforts to sustain and protect themselves they also sustain and protect established policy…. For government to become a learning system, both the social system of agencies and the

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[308] Phallogocentrism is a neologism coined by critical theorist Jacques Derrida to refer to the privileging of the "masculine"
[309] Kristeva 1987, 9, quoted in N. Kumar 1994, 6

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theory of policy implementation must change. Government cannot play the role of 'experimenter for the nation,' seeking first to identify the correct solution, then to train society at large in its adaptation. The opportunity for learning is primarily in discovered systems at the periphery, not in the nexus of official policies at the center. Central's role is to detect significant shifts at the periphery, to pay explicit attention to the emergence of ideas in good currency, and to derive themes of policy by induction. The movement of learning is as much from periphery to periphery, or from periphery to center, as from center to periphery.[310]

Schon talks structurally. The previous sections have already established the elemental phallogocentrism, or the privileged masculine experience, embedded in governance structures, and institutions. The fluidity of gendered identity and subjectivity in the preceding post-structural analysis raise pragmatic concerns of how or if policies have created space for peripheral agency and institutional transformation; and they succumb to nominal rhetoric; and if public policymaking is a site for substantive transformation.

Central Agency. Schon establishes the structural mimicry of social norms in central agency and policymaking. Central initiatives on education, and the political ontology of women are constructed as *Dependents*. In theories of Democratic Policy Design using the Social Construction Framework,[311] Dependents are positively constructed target populations with substantially low power and political resources. A positive construction in this case, is determined by the para-social sympathetic evocation of disadvantage. Women, children, poverty, and the spectrum of welfare policy issues usually fall under this purview. Because of the target populations' material lack of power or political resource, the allocation of benefits and entitlements is undercut by systemic burdens that either render the policy initiative inadequate or limited in access by barriers like means testing, funding shortfalls, budget tightening, or loans instead of scholarships and grants. Since this population is not politically perceived as playing a

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[310] Donald A. Schon, 1971. *Beyond the Stable State.* New York: The Norton Library, 76-77.
[311] Paul A. Sabatier, and Christopher M Weible, 2014. Theories of The Policy Process. 3rd. Boulder: Westview Press.

strong role in the creation of national wealth, or powerful enough to effectively hold the Center accountable and demand more; the allocation of benefits in policymaking is heavy on rhetoric, and low on funding and initiative.

Though most political scientists recognize that policy creates a feedback loop for evaluation and innovation, Democratic Policy Design uses the term "feed forward" to recognize policy as a conceptual starting point for socially learned behaviors and the reification of socio-cultural stereotypes. Policy creates powerful symbolic capital that embeds social constructions, through the interpretive mechanisms of agencies (the social embodiment of policy) that distribute entitlements based on it. Policy designs may use political authority, resources allocation, or simply rhetoric or hortatory tools without instrumental weight, but they all effect people's attitudes, political orientations, and participation patterns. Framing issues in universalistic terms, instead of specifics concerning the target population, gain more public support. But a degree of nuance needs to be added.

> Lawrence, Stoker, and Wolman (2013) in a controlled experiment found that public support depends on the target population, nor simply on the universalistic or particularistic rules. In their study they found that universalistic policy gained more public support when the primary target population was a disadvantaged group (but advantaged people were also included), but hat particularistic policy gained more public support when the primary target population could be conceptualized as an advantaged group. In other words, particularistic policy that cuts out the disadvantaged and distributes benefits to the advantaged is met with more approval than universalistic policy that include everyone.[312]

In the Indian context this manifested as the essentialism of Indian women's subjectivity, identity and context within Hindu motherhood, and the delegation of action to community, and non-governmental organizations. The reduced national outlays to the education sector have been blamed on budgetary constraints, popular conviction that government subsidization of education

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[312]Ibid. Chapter 4

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is inherently inefficient, and calls for complete withdrawal of the government from education in favor of privatization.[313] As a proportion of the GNP, education received 4 per cent in the late 1980s, falling to 3.6 per cent in the late 1990s. Public expenditure per student fell by nearly 25 per cent in real prices in the same period; as did specific subsidies like scholarships and absolute allocations. Public subsidies were diverted instead to private educational institutions through the 2000s under the leadership of Arjun Singh; though the effect on educational and social outcomes from the private sector is not established.[314] It is also this period – the late 1980s to the 2000s – that saw the most central policy rhetoric on education; specifically, the National Policy of Education 1986 and Programme of Action 1992, the National Literacy Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mahila Samakhya, National Curricular Frameworks (2000, 2005), and the Right to Education (2009).

Universalistic policies in India's education agendas clearly benefit those with privileged access and agency; and political action has seceded from expanding the boundaries of those entitlements, despite rhetoric. As detailed in the previous chapters, reservation of seats, or admission quotas for disadvantaged groups in unaided institutions saw violent populist backlash; and quotas for women do not even feature in education policies. If anything, policies in the early 2000s aimed at establishing a "value system," one that further regressed the position of women as secondary, care-giving, private agents, politically, socially, and economically.

The feed forward behaviors learned from hypocritical policy agendas has been the systemic and material devaluation of women's engagement in the political economy. The terribly

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[313] Jandhyala B. G. Tilak, 2004. "Public Subsidies in Education in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 343-359.
[314] Ibid. 355-356

skewed sex ratios in chapter after chapter are testament enough to India's missing women,[315] and toxic masculinity. The historically low labor participation rates of women in India (27 per cent in 2014) suggests women are opting out, internalizing the symbolism of their private roles as secondary beings, and existentially disengaging. Ritu Menon is the cofounder of Kali for Women, the oldest women's press in India. She documents the *Structured Silences* of women writers, detailing the harassment, prejudice, intolerance, and quotidian violence that are accepted as "market practices," not to mention the devastating personal censorship of familial constraints and cultural pressures.[316] The literary market offers the most personal flexibility, and literary labor is usually intrinsically motivated, solitary, and disembodied: an enterprise that seemingly molds to women's state-sanctioned productive roles as mothers, nurturers, and care-givers. To see evidence – even anecdotally – of the gendered censorship of women's voices; and the documentation of violence and harassment (sexual and otherwise) in the publishing industry, begs to question the censorship and harassment in other public, corporate and market spheres. The policy rhetoric condones a hegemonic masculinity, even a toxic masculinity that derives its legitimacy from absolute devaluation of femininity. The ambivalent sexism in education policy forecloses women's education as secondary; their labor as private, informal, and inconsequential, and political agency as wanton, selfish, and frivolous.[317]

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[315] Amartya Sen, 2013. *India's women: The mixed truth.* October 10. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/oct/10/indias-women-mixed-truth/.

[316] Ritu Menon, 2004. "The Structured Silences of Women: Culture, Censorship, and Voice in a Globalised Market." In *Word. On Being a [Woman] Writer*, edited by Jocelyn Burrell, 3-15. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

[317]Various media outlets covered the sexist commentary from Indian politicians when women took to the streets to protest misogyny, and state-sponsored and state-condoned sexism.

Peripheral Agency. Nita Kumar details how women did not publish their educative experiences, and public work as much as their male counterparts. They simply *did*.[318] Historian Radha Kumar charts Indian feminism as a *History of Doing*, detailing the anti-patriarchal elements in social movements like the Chipko movement, and the anti-alcohol, and anti-price-rise movements of the 1970s and the martial separatist Telangana movement. The former were considered "women's concerns" with their preoccupation for reform in the care and household economy; while the latter saw women confronting capital and government in organized resistance. Though these challenged male control these movements did not fundamentally challenge gender hierarchy. In fact, strategies of women's resistance reinforced masculine dominance and feminine subservience.

Shaming and public humiliation were the principal tactics against opponents. IN the working class revolts and the anti-price-rise movements, women would offer bangles to politicians or law officers to symbolize their emasculation, or would camp out in front their offices, or their homes to embarrass them, or would forcefully blacken their faces to signify a popular idiom of "losing face."[319] Contemporary versions of this tactic were the Pink Chaddi Campaign or the pink panty campaign, were right wing fundamentalist organizations who attacked women on dates on Valentine's day were anonymously mailed women's panties.[320] The Gulabi Gang or the Pink Saree Gang took a more coercive, approach against male oppression, rape, dowry abuse, domestic violence and human rights of the lowest castes, sometimes resorting to violence when authorities did not file or register their complaints.[321] It is significant that

[318] N. Kumar, Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories 1994; N. Kumar, Mothers and Non-Mothers: Gendering the Discourse of Education in South Asia 2005
[319] R. Kumar 1993
[320] Nisha Susan, 2009. "Valentine's Warriors - The Pink Chaddi Campaign: why it began and how." *Tehelka Magazine*, February 28. http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main41.asp?filename=Op280209valentine_warrior.asp.
[321] 2010. *Pink Saris* . Directed by Kim Longinotto. Performed by Sampat Pal and the Gulabi Gang.

shame and humiliation were used in anti-patriarchy and not feminist campaigns; since they reinforced gender normativity and power relations.

Feminist campaigns and organizers are typically accused of elitism, since most of these initiatives originate in universities or centers of higher education. As discussed in earlier chapters, feminist activities have advocated legislative reforms, participated in international collaborations through NGOs, IGOs, and extra-governmental organizations, engaged in institution building and capacity development, and managed (not led) welfare programs, including education. The gradual change in the Five Year Plans' priorities to include language for gender parity may be credited to feminist advocates and social workers.

The state is not neutral to women. In a globalized, post-CEDAW world it is challenging for legitimate governments to deny women human rights. Women may get recognition as agents of care but less as autonomous citizens. Education policies do not modify gender normativity or the masculine-feminine hierarchy; they *accommodate* women selectively and as an essentialised group. For education to be a truly radical at a policy level it would have to recognize intersecting trends, that is policy would have to be constructed intersectionally.

> … fact is that education, paradoxically, derives its greatest power from its scarcity. Were everyone to attain high levels of education, the financial returns to those with PhDs would decrease because many more would be competing for the same jobs, even though society as a whole—a better educated society—would presumably benefit. A third fact is that because education does grant certain benefits, it is a heavily contested area. Today, the competition is framed less in terms of access but is decidedly characterized by struggles for quality and prestige. Over time, we have seen reductions in husband–wife disparities in schooling and in age at marriage. This suggests an improvement in the balance of power within the household. But, because of inheritance laws and differences in wages and accumulated wealth, asset ownership by men at marriage continues to be greater than that of women.[322]

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[322] Nelly P. Stromquist, 2006. "*Women's rights to adult education as a means to citizenship*." International Journal of Educational Development 26: 140–152, 146.

Nelly P. Stromquist's scholarship studies the work of Women-led NGOs or WNGOs in the creation and dissemination of gender transformative knowledge through non formal education; and asserts that epistemic paradigms must be created "by the very groups that seek to alter the disadvantageous conditions that confront them."[323] However the role of government should not be discounted in creating and actively promoting legitimate, autonomous, safe, and accessible public spaces that encourage the discursive simultaneities in women's experiences and episteme. This is the enduring challenge for public policies on education.

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[323] Nelly P. Stromquist, 2015. "*Gender Structure and Women's Agency: Toward Greater Theoretical Understanding of Education for Transformaton*." International Journal of Lifelong Education 34 (1): 59-75
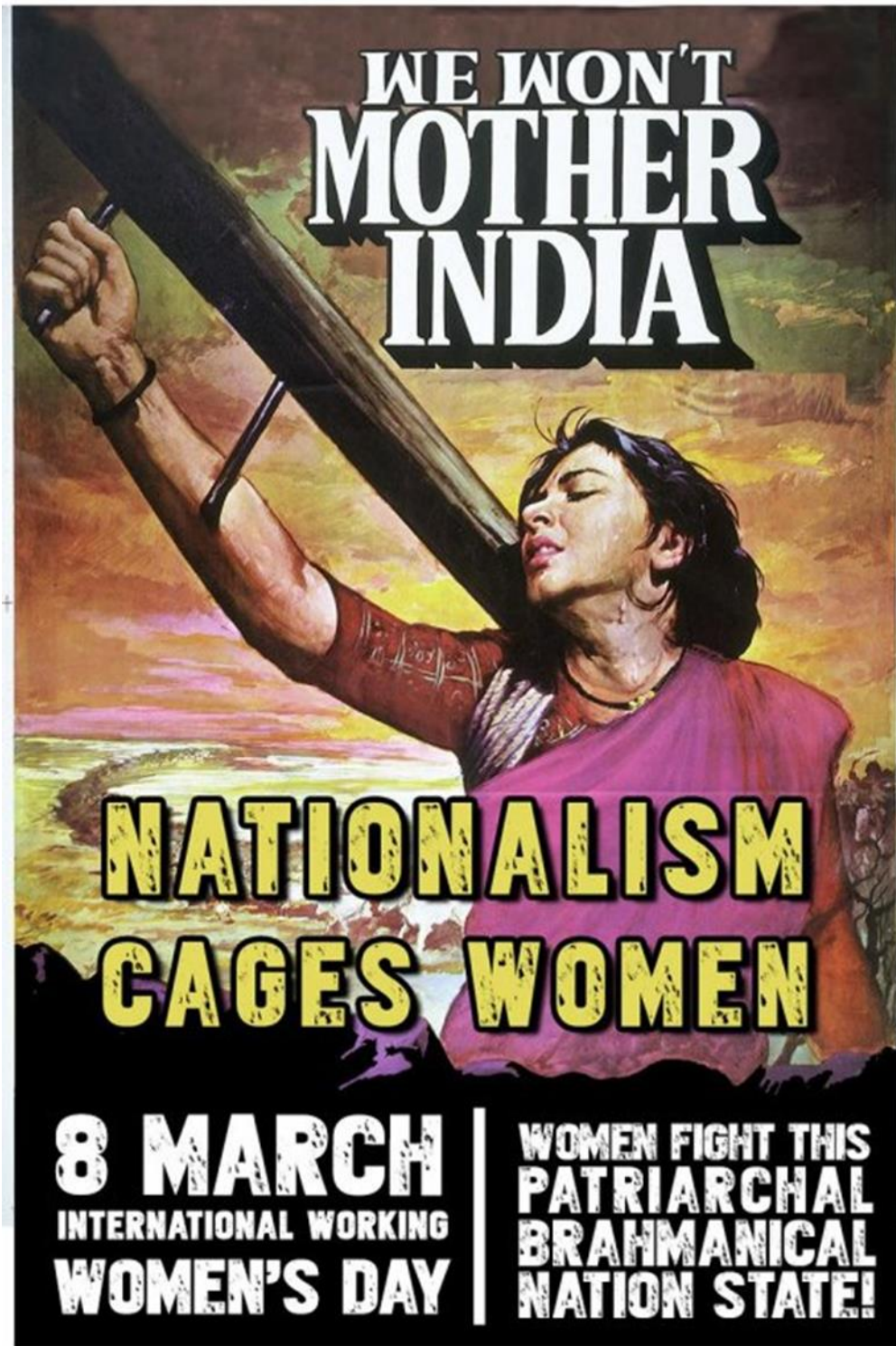
Figure 1: Pinjra Tod [Break The Cage] feminist collective from Delhi for International Women's Day on 8th March 2016

This dissertation endeavored to articulate women's educational opportunities as they foreclosed Woman as a static, stable entity, rather than qualifying the distinctly Indian intersectionality of women's class and caste in ontological politics. Through rich narrative, the catachrestic tensions that distort and alienate policy constructions from sociopolitical realities were critically analyzed through feminist theory's gendered analysis and public policy frameworks. Since the goal was to identify the socio-political construction of women's positions in educational policy, the historical narrative of Indian policymaking was followed by a deconstructive analysis of the structures, symbols, and mechanisms for systemic gendered heteronormativity.

The early 2000s saw new global vocabulary expanding women's role in informal economies to include their nurturing and care labor; while exploring policy initiatives to raise awareness, innovation, and valuation in political, economic, and cultural spheres.[324] It remains an exercise in program management at present but it begs a philosophical anchoring in a care-driven theory of education, and even, justice. From the care perspective education has four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. The conundrum for education policy making is that care is feminized and justice masculinized. A gendered dichotomy problematizes a pragmatic approach but there is scope for a greater acceptance of subjectivity and its rich extension of critical thinking and receptivity.[325]

At the time of writing this dissertation the government is undertaking a time bound bottom-up consultative process along pre-defined thirty-three themes, to formulate the New

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[324] UN Women. 2013. *The Care Economy and Women's Unpaid Work.* http://www.genderandaids.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=72:the-care-economy-and-womens-unpaid-work&Itemid=106#table-0-1-desc.
[325] Noddings 2012

Education Policy 2016.[326] Under the charismatic leadership of Narendra Damodardas Modi, a BJP (right wing political party) led, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came into office on May 26, 2014. Smriti Irani controversially held the Cabinet appointment. for the Ministry of Human Resource Development until July 2016 amidst violent student revolts, accusations of saffronisation, and the resignation or dismissal of educational administrators in premier national institutions of higher education. Gender does not feature as a priority in national educational debates thus far. However, the privatization of education encouraged by Manmohan Singh's administration has spread like wild fire with inadequate resources to monitor, accredit, or research outcomes. Education remains contested in all spheres except in women's outcomes; and women's participation and agency is framed within patriarchy, misogyny, or at best, an ambivalent sexism.

The epigraph quotes writer and activist Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016), whose literary contributions were complemented by her vast empirical research in to Indian oral histories. *Choli ke Pichhe* (Behind the Bodice) is from a collection of stories that explore the Breast, not as a symbol, but as the subjective site of resistant rage. The stories are as much about politics and ethics, as they are about archivization and accountability. *Choli ke Pichhe* (Behind the Bodice) twists the sexual innuendo of a popular Indian song to bitterly decry the normality of sexuality as male violence: especially of marginalized female population. The voice of cultural invasion that Mahasweta Devi mocks in language, dialect, and memory, obsessively looks over its shoulder at a history that excludes the female body and its inherited contradictions while the same voice creates a cultural revolution through violent excursions on and of the female body. Feminization

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[326] Government of India: Ministry of Human Resource Development 2016. *New Education Policy.* Accessed July 13, 2016. http://mhrd.gov.in/nep-new.

is an invitation to violence and privation in mind and body. If there is anything that was confirmed through this study, it is this.

Our vocabulary restricts our thought which restricts our dialogue, which restricts our vocabulary – and so goes the vicious circle. The test of legitimacy for any given practice should be embedded in the capacity to respond to the needs for whom the practice exists. Unless policy design mimics the diversity within its target populations and is punctured by the inclusion of more data points – narratives, oral histories, interviews, surveys, case studies, cross-cultural and action research and various mixed methodology designs that are inclusive of women's productive activity – policy making for education will remain an exercise in abstraction, a solipsism bound by socio-political singularities.

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Appendix: Research Method

The goal of the methodology design and theoretical frameworks informing it were to establish a dialogue between policy documents as they established and advanced the national philosophical foundations and institutions for education. The research questions seek to identify a subjective field as much as a political identity of women in education policy. Education policy was not practiced as a separate field of inquiry until very recently and usually came under the umbrella of social and welfare services. Public policy as a discipline for study is also relatively nascent, borrowing heavily from the practice of program evaluation and public administration. This section explores the research paradigms – feminism and public policy analysis – and methodology that guide this study. It then details the analytical procedure and the documents used for analysis and concludes with the gaps in the methodology and consequent study and scope for further research.

Research Paradigms

Feminist Methods

Feminism is the belief that men and women have the same human capacities separate from the biological or physiological differences of sex. This seemingly simple idea has inspired political movements and critical insights across codified beliefs within public and private power structures. Feminist scholarship questions fixed and stable constructions of subjectivity, difference and identity, especially the category of woman. Though the movement was pioneered in Europe and America, it's subversive potential was explored through literature, art, poetry, cultural and film studies, and performativity.

The radical extension of feminism came as the critical deconstruction of the very nature of knowledge; how given epistemic foundations privileged a masculine or patriarchal agent and

authority. This line of questioning moved to study other areas of oppression across disciplines through an expanding articulation of masculine and feminine socially learned behaviors and expectations. Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1978) was a theoretical pivot that established gender and sexuality as invented normative categories, reified by the medical establishment.

A gendered feminism questions the very notion of centrality, universal or generalizable subjectivities and examines a deliberate fluidity of identity and expression. A gendered analysis also identifies internal power and force relations that privilege certain expressions of masculinity or femininity over others. That is, while all femininities are subordinate to masculinities; an idealized or typified "hegemonic masculinity" (usually white, western, upper-class, heterosexual men) occupy more positions of power than "subordinated masculinities," who lack some or all privileges and are therefore feminized. Similarly, some femininities (women of color, working class, global south, religious or ethnic minority, transsexual, to name a few) are subordinated more or differently than others. The study of politics and globalization examines the potential of gender as

> …an ordering system that valorizes or privileges what is deemed masculine and devalorizes or subordinates what is deemed feminine in order to naturalize inequalities and power relations not only between women and men, but also between and among states, cultures, institutions, organizations, policies, practices, and even ideas and perspectives in the global system…. the processes of masculinization as valorization and thus prioritized and what is not values and thus denigrated in world politics…. When we use "gender" as a noun or adjective, we almost often foregrounding the masculine-feminine dynamic conventionally emphasized in feminist and gender sensitive accounts. When we use "gendered" as an adjective, we intend something more complex and intersection, referring not only to masculinity-femininity, but also how gender is crosscut by other axes of difference. We sometimes list these dimensions – race, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, age, ability, and so on. – but at other times prefer "gendered" as a less cumbersome shorthand signaling intersectionality without listing specific differences. [327]

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[327] Runyan, Anne Sisson, and V. Spike Peterson. 2014. *Global Gender Issues in the New Millenium.* 4th. Boulder: Westview Press.

Intersectionality through sociopolitical theorizing in global relations explains social stratifications and martial inequalities fostered by a masculinism that justifies and naturalizes gender hierarchies through fundamentalisms. Heteronormativity, and heterosexism privilege rigid essentialized gender dichotomy, separation, and expression; and are a form of fundamentalism in personal or private power relations. On a global scale, "neoliberal governmentality" or the marketization of life is also posited as a form of neoimperialism; combining the market fundamentalism of neoliberalism, and "governmentality," a governance that creates and duplicates a normative order through non-coercive disciplinary mechanisms like a system of entitlements, welfare policies, affirmative action plans, etc. to influence conformity of human subjectivity. All this produces institutionalized hierarchies, which reproduce structures and habits of inequality.

> Hence, the perpetuation of many oppressions is less a matter of intentionally promoting harms that unintentionally (unconsciously) reproducing (going along to get along) the institutions we inherit – what (unreflectively) appears to be "the way things are. Second, once in place, structural privilege confers power on those with privilege, whether desired or not. Hence, privileges individuals are not to blame for (inherited) institutional hierarchies, but the privileged in every hierarchy have greater power and therefore greater responsibility for transforming those and related hierarchies.[328]

Feminism and feminist methodology don't entail a list of tenets but a *critical perspective* on existing theories, disciplines, and methodologies. Feminist research is transdisciplinary, striving toward inclusiveness, diversity, and social change, while situating the researcher in a reflexive, interactive relation with the research questions. Feminism tends to be a misunderstood, polarizing concept in popular media and culture due to its subversive critique of formal power relationships. It continues to be a site of immense cultural struggle for legitimacy and definition.

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[328] Ibid.

Public Policy

Public policy is government action or inaction; an output of politics and governmental activity, and can "include both means and goals and can range from procedural to substantive and from symbolic to instrumental."[329] A policy approach can be traced back to Howard Lasswell (1951) who argued for the recognition of "policy sciences" as an applied, multidisciplinary, value oriented study of the problems faced by government, motivated by promoting public interest. There is diversity of frameworks exploring the nature of public policy, but the literature breaks it down into practical subfields: (1) policy evaluation, (2) policy analysis, (3) policy implementation, and (4) policy process. In other words, the study of public policy examines how issues, problems, and decisions affecting the public come to be defined, constructed and positioned in political and policy agendas.[330]

Paul Sabatier traces public policy as an offshoot of the political science disciplines; utilizing much of the same terminology and research paradigms. However, political scientists and public policy scholars cite epistemic tensions that separate disciplinary practitioners. What cannot be denied that public policy is intrinsic to the understanding of government and politics. An understanding of the policy environment and a political agent's interaction and construction of that environment, manifests the analogous mechanisms of feedback loops and codified belief systems within decision making structures. Policy evocations are embedded in specific contexts of privilege, disadvantage, frustration, aspiration, hope, and fear. There is an element of post structural uncertainty and the instability of a political subject in public policy analysis.

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[329] Sabatier and Weible 2014
[330] Stella Z. Theodoulou, and Matthew A. Cahn, . 2013. *Public Policy: The Essential Readings.* 2nd. New Jersey: Pearson; Mona Lena Krook, and Sarah Childs, . 2010. *Women, Gender, and Politics: A Reader.* New York: Oxford University Press.

The subject cannot be regarded as the origin of coherent action, writing, or other forms of expression. … actions and interpretations hinge upon the social situation in which they begin, including the language that depicts a social situation. The language that interprets objects and actions also constitutes the subject. Political leaders, like all other subjects, act and speak as reflections of the situations they serially confront; their diversities and inconsistencies are statements of those situations, not of a persistent "self," for the kind of stability in action that transcends situations with varying political inducements has never existed…. Constructed very largely by the term "leader," that identifiable officials are originators of coherent courses of action… explores the distortions in analysis implicit in the conventional assumptions about political leaders….

The denotations of key political terms become suspect because leaders are no originators of courses of action, problems are not necessarily undesirable conditions to be solved, and enemies need not do or threaten harm. Instead the uses of all such terms in specific situations are strategies, deliberate or unrecognized, for strengthening or undermining, support for specific courses of action and for particular ideologies.

The political entities that are most influential upon public consciousness and action then are fetishes: creations of observers that then dominate and mystify their creators.[331]

The self-reflexivity of the discipline – an awareness of its own tendency to fetishize – is by no means a hindrance in the construction of rigorous multidisciplinary frameworks. Policy analysis treads thin ice between descriptive social sciences and normative economics; a choice of ends and means which demand trade-offs among competing values of efficiency, equity, security, liberty, and democracy. Strategies of policy analysis can be (1) prospective (*ex ante*) and retrospective (*ex post*), (2) descriptive and normative, or (3) problem finding and problem solving; but application of policy paradigms depend completely on the method of problem structuring.[332]

Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations

Policies are designed in an institutional hegemony's superstructure, where assumptions, stereotypes, and powerful signifiers for target groups influence benefits and burdens within policy agendas. The social construction and policy design framework conceptualizes the spectrum of emotional, value laden attributes used in political rhetoric that impact the material

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[331] Ibid. 110-111
[332] Ibid. 316-324

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welfare, social reputations, political attitudes, and participation patterns of target populations.

Policy designs inadvertently reproduce institutional culture, power relationships, and socio-economic identities; effecting the very authenticity of democracy by precluding the societal context of citizenship, legitimizing privileged knowledge systems, inequitably distributing political power resources, and skewing the problem-solving capacities of civil society and the understanding of justice. The interaction of social construction of target populations and political power resources create typologies along four propositions:

> Proposition 1. Allocation: The allocation of benefits and burdens to target groups by public policy depends on the extent of their political power as well as their positive or negative social construction. Within a public policy field these constructions are the Advantaged, Contenders, Dependents, Deviants decreasing from high power resources and a positive social construction, to low or no power resources and a negative construction.
>
> Proposition 2. Feedback or Feed Forward: Policy designs have both material and symbolic (reputational or interpretive) effects on target populations that impact their attitudes and political participation. These effects occur through structuring of opportunities that shape life experiences and subtle messages about how government works and how they are likely to be treated.
>
> Proposition 3. Origins: Social constructions emerge from emotional and intuitive reactions and then are justified with selective attention to evidence. Policymakers, especially elected politicians, respond to (and exploit) these emotional and intuitive judgments in their rationales and selection of policy elements.
>
> Proposition 4. Changing Social Constructions: Social construction of target groups can change, and public policy design is an important, though certainly not singular force of change. The seeds for altering social constructions can often be found in the unanticipated or unintended consequences of previous policy designs.
>
> Proposition 5. Policy Change: Types and patterns of policy change vary depending on the social construction and power of target groups. The framework challenges path dependency in policy design to answer who benefits from change and whether change impacts the conditions of democracy.[333]

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[333] Sabatier and Weible 2014, Chapter 4

Feminism and Public Policy share an intersectional, interdisciplinary paradigmatic zeitgeist with a propensity for critical inquiry and reflexivity. These unique overlaps act as necessary critical alignment for methodology design.

Research Design – Historical method and Document analysis

Simply put, historical research is a purposeful study of the past and best practiced as an argument[334]. Historiographic essays compare the arguments of previous generations of historians; examining paradigms, hypotheses, methods, inferences, and conclusions, to illumine and reinterpret the past. It would not be farfetched to say, that the practice of contemporary history relies on the work of past historians; through a process of reflection and reexamination[335]. It is genetically a self-reflective, dialectic tradition.

> History is above all else an *argument*. It is an argument between different historians; and perhaps, an argument between the past and the present, an argument between what actually happened, and is going to happen next. Arguments are important; they create the possibility of changing things…. Historians tell stories, in the sense that they are out to persuade you (and themselves) of something. Their methods of persuasion depend in part upon the 'truth' – not making things up, not presenting matters as other than they are – but also in creating an interesting, coherent and useful narrative about the past. The past itself is not a narrative. In its entirety, it is as chaotic, uncoordinated, and complex as life. History is about making sense of that mess, finding or creating patterns and meanings and stories from the maelstrom[336].

Historical data is collected from primary and secondary sources that require determining the authenticity, reliability or validity, trustworthiness of the source, and accuracy of information

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[334] Jenny L. Presnell, 2007. *The information-literate historian: A guide to research for history students*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.; John H. Arnold, 2000, History: A very short introduction. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

[335] Homer C. Hockett ,1955. *The critical method in historical research and writing*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

[336] Arnold 2000, 18

contained; a process of external and internal criticism that aids the interpretation of information[337]. This is then broken down into two strands of further critique of sources:

Positive criticism – A strategy for internal criticism to ensure the historian understands the meaning conveyed in the source. Historical interpretation is challenged by,

1. vagueness or uncertainty of the meaning of words and phrases, and

2. the tendency of *presentism,* which refers to the assumption that present-day connotations of terms, idioms, and phrases also existed in the past. These problems make positive criticism (understanding the meaning conveyed in the source) difficult.

Negative criticism – is the establishment of reliability or authenticity, and accuracy of the content of documents and other sources of information; achieved using three heuristics:

1. Corroboration – comparing documents to each other to see if they provide the same information and lead to the same conclusions;

2. Sourcing – identifying the author, date of creation, place of creation, or other information that identifies the source; and

3. Contextualization – identifying when and where the event(s) took place and the context in which it took place[338].

For this study, my primary sources of data are public archives of policy documents, commission reports, policy conferences, and national surveys while my secondary sources of data are from historical monographs and compendiums, conference proceedings, and scholarly peer-reviewed publications on educational governance. Examples of these would include the *Report on the Commission on Women's Education* (1959), *Report on the Differentiation of*

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[337] Jules R. Benjamin, 2013. *A student's guide to history*. 12th. Boston: Bedford/St.Martin's; John Tosh, 2010. *The pursuit of history: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*. London: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
[338] Presnell 2007; Tosh 2010

Curricula for Boys and Girls (1964), the *Education Commission Report* (1966), *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (1974), the *National Policy on Education* (1968; 1986; 1992), and *Right to Education* (2005); as well as other key primary accounts by policy actors like Dr. J.P. Naik, Dr. D.S. Kothari, and Durgabai Deshmukh, to mention a few.

To determine the authenticity, validity, trustworthiness, and accuracy of the data sources, I propose to corroborate all data against each other to check for informational consistency. For a further level of internal criticism, I compare commission reports, and secondary data sources, to a chronological list of central acts and amendments provided by the Supreme Court records through the services of a public litigation specialist to ensure the accuracy of my sourcing. I chose to work with public archives and information, to address issues of data accessibility, generalizability, and methodological duplication of my research, while establishing that the data sources were actively engaged in public policy formulation and implementation. An attendant ambition was to ensure that the data sources encompassed the vacillating mix of capitalist and socialist principles that have co-existed in India and underlined policymaking.

The theoretical continuum shaped from this historiographical research design could be best understood through a transformative paradigm which,

> … holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever level it occurs…. research focuses on iniquities based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class that result in asymmetric power relationships. The research in the transformative worldview links political and social action to these inequities. Transformative research uses a program theory of beliefs about how a program works and why the problems of oppression, domination, and power relationships exist[339].

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[339] John W. Creswell, 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 9-10

Parallels can be drawn with grounded theory methods, where abductive reasoning, and interpretive theory "assume emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual[340]".

This prompts a natural affiliation with a narrative presentation of history – an affinity with asking the "big why questions"[341] – and debating effect and influence. Theoretical development along with historical design is ultimately concerned with the enterprise of human activity, its structures, norms, and development. Even with the *pointilliste* techniques of singular case studies and generalizations through multiple overlays, the legitimate concern of the historical researcher remains the establishment of systematic connections; achieving a synthesis of minds, ideas, and events.

> (Historians)… may prefer to start with the study of a 'situation', which embodies and exemplifies the stratified structure of a society but concentrates the mind on the complexities and interconnections of real history, rather than with the study of structure itself[342].

There does not need to be an "incompatibility between the scientific and the literary function"[343] of history. It is therefore imperative to draw out the correlations of political leadership as it evolved in India, the agentive actors in educational policymaking, and the chronological developments of key issues, themes, and concerns. To shape the narrative of educational policy development in India, I frame chapters and data based on the occupants of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the coalitions at the Center (See Appendix A).

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[340] Kathy Charmaz, 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 126
[341] Eric Hobsbawm, 1997. On history. New York: The New Press.
[342] Ibid. 190
[343] Ibid. 191

History is not a coherent set of causalities. It is the (political/social) historian's project to present a sequential narrative of relationships that provide the space for argument, and therefrom, change[344].

<p style="text-align:center">Data Analysis – Rationale and Procedure</p>

Rationale. Creating a coherent sequence of mind, ideas, and events cannot be done in a vacuum of guiding questions. Using primary and secondary historical data and determining authenticity are only pertinent when analyzed deliberately.

> Feminist historians use cultural artifacts to study individual women or groups of women, the relation between women and men, the intersection of race, gender, class, and age identities, and the institutions, persons, and ideas that have shaped women's lives[345]
> The feminist paradigm is not just about the voicelessness or powerlessness of women,

their victimhood or invisibility. It is the qualitative, inductive, reclamation of past lives and interpretations of women to understand the contextuality of the past, and how to know and act upon our present. Gerda Lerner calls it "feminist intellectual archeology"[346] that encourages interwoven interpretation of literate or powerful women and those whose voices have been silenced. Hannah Cullwick takes it a step further, and breaks down the schism between the personal and political engaging all of human experience, while Deborah Bernstein looks at how the representation of women in history modifies national experience; oscillating between a no-history and a mythified pseudo-history[347].

Among the analytical strategies discussed in Reinharz (1992) "feminist intertextual analysis" or "feminist multi-text analysis," involves the multi layered reading of and between texts to illustrate the researcher's guiding questions. The layered readings could be sequenced

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[344] Arnold 2000
[345] Shulamit Reinharz, 1992. *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 155
[346] Ibid., 158
[347] Ibid.

<p style="text-align:center">210</p>

as, identifying the dominant reading/understanding, deconstructing the dominant reading with an oppositional reading, and ending with subversive ways of meaning creation by imagining alternatives. Derived from the Derrida's theory of deconstruction, and Goffman's technique of frame analysis, feminist content analysis confront cultural phenomena with basic epistemological questions, including the norms of acting feminine, problem of false consciousness, meaning of individual experience within collective spaces, and the relation between theory (espoused\enacted) and experience.

A cross-cultural analysis is guided by four tenets:

… 1) the importance of cultural specificity, 2) the necessity of intensive study, 3) the possibility of commonalities among women of different cultures, and 4) the need for a critical evaluation of study materials[348].

This allows a departure from any essentialist definitions of women or femininity. From Vandana Shiva and her concept of maldevelopment, to Segal and Berheide's subversion of homosocial theory toward an exchange theory from a woman's perspective, to political scientist Vicky Randall's work on the exclusion of women from political power circles and other male groupings[349]; each contextually develops an intensive study of a culturally/contextually specific phenomenon but with generalizable tenets that can provide frameworks to be tested and refined, in and for, other contexts. The goal is a cross-cultural solidarity that moves away from any universality of womanhood, but encompasses and accepts a kaleidoscope of perspectives due to a shared history of exclusion, silence, and more. This knowledge of a shared history – despite differences across contextual, demographic, and economic categories – leads to a more comprehensive approach to analysis through qualitative historical discourse analysis. Discourse,

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[348] Ibid., 111
[349] Ibid., 113-116

discursive themes, legitimating principles, historical conjectures, and normalization are as important as power, silence, and social strategies in this form of analysis[350]. In Figure 00.00

A ternary framework develops based on, 1) the Bordieuean notion of social strategies; 2) discourse is a process, and 3) inclusion of social practices and institutions[351]. Historical narrative becomes the representation of the tensions, contradictions, and strategies that become apparent through the discourse analysis. To this effect, it is not a neutral exercise. But it does require accurate citation, to support the arguments that are unveiled through the analysis of legitimating principles in the historical conjecture.

As a caveat it is important to note that the analytical method does not always search for the authors of the ideas or practices, instead aims to identify the involvement of stakeholders, how they become normalized in the discourse, and how certain assumptions are taken for granted. Further,

> An important aspect of historical discourse analysis is that it allows researchers and professionals to investigate their own involvement in the discourse, how we normalize ourselves to take as self-evident certain beliefs and assumptions and adopt them as our social strategies. Such professional-political study of one's own involvement ca indeed be the chief aim of historical discourse analysis, because we as professionals are important in how the discourse evolves. It is important, however, that this is not handled by the researcher as merely a personal responsibility, but as a collective search for unearthing the 'epistemological unconscious' of his or her discipline…. In brief, the research story becomes part of the discourse, and we need to delve into its modes of existence[352].

Analytical Procedure. Historical discourse and cross-cultural analysis has its foundations in Semiotics or the science of signs.[353] Since my research relies on public documents as primary

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[350] Ingolfur A. Johannesson, 2010. "*The politics of historical discourse analysis: A qualitative research method?*" Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education (Taylor & Francis) 31 (2): 251-264. doi:10.1080/01586301003679768.

[351] Ibid., 253

[352] Ibid., 261

[353] Norman K. Denzin, and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 1998. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.; M. A. R. Habib, 2008. *Modern literary criticism and theory: A history.* Wiley India Edition. New Delhi: Blackwell Publishing.

data and narrative discourses like, biography, letters, media narratives, I will conduct a

semiotic(semiosis) discourse analysis to trace the change in the meaning of signs, the interaction

of the self and group, the history of the individual and group experience and changes in the sign

systems themselves. The framework would involve:

1) Defining an embodied entity. Since I am studying women as a political category, they are the primary "sign" or "symbol" that I would interpret and observe through semiosis.

2) Creating a sampling frame. Choosing seminal policy documents or "cases" to analyze that are representative and unbiased. Since meaning is derivative, I have triangulated my sampling field by supplementing policy documents (primary data) with cultural and social forms of knowledge production (secondary data).

3) Code all the cases and analyze the resulting data. To do this I define the political and social FIELD – the set of objective and subjective pressures that give meaning to public policy structures and codes – of women's education. What principles organize it? How does convey constraint, choice, agency, etc.? What is the historical and cultural context of representation? What are the metaphors, narratives and relationships that construct political reality and experience?

4) Present intersectionality in terms of associative contexts or metonymic panels to draw out relationships and contrasts between part/whole, expressions/paradigms. Identify

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Semiotics takes as its fundamental unit the sign and studies the types of coherence among signs and sign systems. Pragmatically it is concerned with how signs/symbols are used and what they mean in context. Denzin and Lincoln detail the interactionist, structuralist, and post structuralist document analysis methods. To summarize, semioisis extends the semiotic unit of analysis to include the tenets of Speech Act Theory (which studies language perfoormance, social oranization of speech and the social context of production), Textual Analysis (which studies the interaction of textual forms and genres and audience reactions or responses produces), and Discourse Analysis (which studies segments of rhetoric and text, and oscillates between the structure of the argument to the impact or meaning of it).

institutional themes and draw our links between signs and active symbolizations, as well as identify ritualization or myth-creation in political narrative.

Table 1 illustrates the levels of analysis and their definitions.

Dimensions	Variables	Themes
Linguistic / Semantic	Phraseology, Information levels, Meaning formation Primary Sources	A **theme** will be identified based on the analysis of the variables in the process of discourse articulation. Themes will be explored **interactively** to analyze how actors and organizations employ these variables to construct discourse (in this case, policy)
Social / Interactive	Structures, Organizations, Stakeholders, and Dispersion of Information Secondary Sources	
Cognitive / Narrative	Knowledge Categories, Ideologies, Mythologies and Rituals Popular and Media Sources	

The trifecta of analytical techniques have an interdisciplinary theoretical orientation but remain rooted in the sphere of political engagement, agency, and action. In keeping with the commitment to allow the research questions guide the methodology and analysis, the strategy outlined allows me to retain the flexibility required to include further data into my analysis should the questions remain unanswered, or perspectives excluded.

Data Collection. This study uses a purposeful sampling strategy. That is; only (1) public documents articulated by (2) policy actors in central leadership positions which have (3) materially contributed to debates in India's education policy stream were analyzed. All policy documents are accessible in the public domain through the Government of India's websites. I draw in particular from the *Report on the Commission on Women's Education* (1959), the *Education Commission Report* (1966), *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (1974), the *National Policy on Education* (1968; 1986), and *Right to Education* (2005), and India's *Five Year Plans* as well as key primary accounts by policy actors,

and educators. No quantitative data or primary data was collected for the purposes of this study other than those available through the government's portals and public domain.

The lack of quantitative data is an admission of the sheer immensity of the India's political machinery and the need for a larger team to triangulate quantitative or mixed method evidence. Another pitfall of this strategy is that individual state initiatives and outlays toward education were not analyzed for gendered narratives and normativity. The regional and state disparities peppering the narrative, only provide a passing nod to this overall deficiency.

Verification. The field of public policy research and analysis is an ad hoc journalistic enterprise in India. It lacks the infrastructural establishment, support, and recognition as an academic discipline in India's intellectual civil society until as recently as the 1990s. The creation and preservation of institutional memory is habitually an afterthought. Internal validity relied on editorials and debates available through the national archives, the socio-historical corpus of Indian feminists, sociologists, and historians, and ad hoc consultations with senior academics, journalists, and editors. External validity was established through a rich narration of the historical environment's concurrent tensions, and evoking the voices and texts of policy entrepreneurs, and leadership.

<div align="center">Scope for Further Research</div>

> What can feminist philosophy of social science contribute to educational research? Perhaps the most important contribution is the warning not to substitute "one right way" for another. Qualitative research is not more right than quantitative; narrative no more right than paradigmatic. Rather the rightness of a research method must be judged by both the purposes of the participants (researchers *and* subjects) and its effects. Instead of asking merely how a study holds up against pre-established criteria of adequacy, we ask

now whether purposes are shared and whether the results are both useful and acceptable.[354]

The study of public policy in a post-colonial nation with India's diversity cannot be understated. This approach created a meta-narrative of sorts; a grand educational narrative codified in government documents and rhetorical commitments that foreclosed agency for women in India. Education is as fluid in purpose and outcome as the concept of gender is in context and performance. Their continued imbricate intersections will push definitional boundaries and policy agendas on the streets and in government, as governance seems to take on grassroots, bottom-up approach with the spread and reach of communicative mediums, ease of information, and a culture of outrage. The scope for future research is only limited by an intellectual imagination and material resources; for the scale is terra incognito.

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[354] Noddings 2012, 231