

## *Original Paper*

# The Text Analysis of National Education Policy 2020

Xi Gong<sup>1\*</sup> & Jiahui Wen<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Glasgow, UK

\* These authors contributed equally to this work and should be considered co-first author.

Received: February 9, 2023      Accepted: February 20, 2023      Online Published: February 24, 2023

doi:10.22158/jetss.v5n1p95

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v5n1p95>

### **Abstract**

*This paper first briefly introduces the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) document formulated by the Indian government and the five education theories (traditional academic theory, learner-centred theory, human capital theory, social efficiency theory and social reconstruction theory) in the field of education. Through relevant literature review, five educational theories or ideologies are proven that they cannot be fully applied in pedagogy. As such, this paper proposes a refutation perspective for each educational theory, showing my adequate understanding and critical awareness of education research. After that, these five significant educational theories are used to analyse the NEP contents from pages 1 to 32. Combining my direct observation and thematic coding of NEP text with the focus ideas of five education theories, the final result of this paper illustrates that social efficiency theory is most dominant in NEP; thereby, the Indian government needs to consider how to balance their education ideology. At the end of this work, I show personal consideration regarding the NEP measures that target India's current focus social issues: Indian educators still must test and justify the rationality and effectiveness of these education policies formulated in NEP by future practices.*

### **Keywords**

*NEP, education theories, India, social efficiency, policy*

### **1. Introduction**

The primary purpose of this essay is to discuss five significant education theories learned in this course of Contemporary Themes in Education Policy and to provide an analysis of the “National Education Policy 2020” text. The term “National Education Policy 2020” is labelled on NEP below. NEP is a policy document issued by the Republic of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development. This document aims to formulate new education policies to make India a global knowledge superpower. The second section of this paper describes and refutes the five educational theories, and the third section clearly illustrates any educational theory's presence in the reference text (NEP). Thereafter, the most

frequent educational theory in the NEP document is discussed. Finally, I demonstrate my insights on NEP policy formulation related to the impact of India's current social concern.

## **2. Five Theories of Education**

In this section, two primary aims are required to be achieved. Firstly, it is necessary to present the five significant theories of education that have been learned in this course. These five theories' core principles or assumptions will also be further explained. Secondly, the end of this section raises one rebuttal point of view for each educational theory. Therefore, this section shows my adequate understanding of the five educational theories. Furthermore, this also indicates that I can appreciate these theories from various perspectives.

After reviewing my learning experience within this course, five essential theories in education exist, namely traditional academic theory, learner-centred theory, human capital theory, social efficiency theory and social reconstruction theory. Firstly, the traditional academic theory, also known as liberal education or classical humanist, involves the development of the mind and the search for knowledge and can be traced back to ancient Greece (Hirst, 2010). The early curriculum of liberal education includes historic subjects such as grammar, logic, rhetoric, and mathematics (Adamson and Morris, 2007), which paved the way for the ultimate theology. Løvlie and Standish (2002) define liberal education as focusing on learners' spiritual development rather than particular purposes and achievement of benefits. Therefore, citizens who accept liberal education are liberated, which is conducive to their exploration and realisation of their highest talents (Cronon, 1998). Additionally, the essentialism of classical humanist is the common curriculum (transmission of culture) (Miller, 2007). Secondly, the learner (child) centred theory has developed over the past 100 years (Norman & Spohrer, 1996). Referring to the Dewey's philosophy of education, the term 'child-centred' also can be considered as 'progressive' (Pei, Chien, & Susan, 2011). Contrary to the traditional pedagogy, the child-centred teaching approach highlights children's autonomy and knowledge construction capacities instead of only acquiring knowledge from their teachers (Burman, 2017; Morrison, 2021). In addition, Plowden (1967) defines the learner-centred theory as "the heart of the educational process lies the child." Alternatively, the progressive theory focuses on learners' needs, skills and interests and classes should be enjoyable (Norman & Spohrer, 1996). Equally importantly, the learner-centred teaching model requires teachers to cooperate and interact with each student so that they can explore children's unique needs (Burman, 2016). Thirdly, the human capital theory is derived from the field of economics, which signifies that individuals and society gain economic benefits from their investment in people (Sweetland, 1996). It is noteworthy that education is a vital consideration in human capital since it not only contributes to improving people's health and nutrition (Schultz, 1972) but can also be measured by quantitative dollar costs and tenure (Johnes, 1993). Hence, the government deliberately invests in education industry and citizens' productivity grows with their skills, gaining returns in the labour market (Little, 2003). Similarly, as Peterson, Baker, and McGaw (2010) state, people also invest in educating themselves, and although

there is an unavoidable expense, they will be repaid with future profits. Fourthly, the social efficiency theory appears in a rapidly changing environment towards modernity and industrial society. Knoll (2009) claims that efficiency was the watchword of a generation concentrating on science, technology, social progress, and social education. Social efficiency asks “educators to use the scientific techniques of production developed by industry” (Bobbitt, 1918). Klikauer (2015) believes that all institutions’ (e.g., schools) performance can be optimised by applying general management skills inspired by social efficiency. Besides this, new vocationalism matches the social efficiency agenda (Miller, 2007), and social engineering belongs to the social control of the social behaviourist (Hickman, 2006). Fifthly, the social reconstruction theory (critical pedagogy) emerges because no pedagogy can completely liberate the oppressed (Freire, 2020). Consequently, Giroux (2010) asserts that critical pedagogy enables educators to develop and maintain their sense of rights and responsibilities under this increasingly oppressive context. In other words, the social reconstruction theory empowers the powerless and improves the conditions of continuous human injustice and inequality (McLaren, 2016).

Nevertheless, there are several non-negligible criticisms of these educational theories. In terms of the traditional academic theory, it has always been regarded as the opposite side of strict utilitarianism (Halstead & Taylor, 2007). However, Stolzenberg (1993) who acted as an opponent of liberal education, argues that liberal education is over idealistic and underestimates the significance of vocational education. In the matter of the learner-centred theory, it excessively emphasises the learner’s authentic problems (Norman & Spohrer, 1996). As such, students learn knowledge over subjectively, but they still need to study through systematic courses, and even the traditional teaching method still has its place (Norman & Spohrer, 1996). Regarding the human capital theory, education improves future labour productivity and market benefits through investment in human capital (Wößmann, 2003). However, the refutation is that the human capital theory ignores the non-marketable outcomes of education, such as student development of correct values and critical thinking (Bowles & Gintis, 1975). As for the social efficiency theory, educators who support human capital declare that efficiency is the primary goal of education (Knoll, 2009). Despite this, Swain (1999) refutes that the education massification provides many unnecessary courses lacking respect for human personality, personal values, and talents. Concerning the social reconstruction theory, it stresses that educators need to play a dominant role in the struggle for social justice (Giroux, 2006). Therefore, the counterargument is that it neglects interpersonal differences and mistakenly believes that all emotional human beings are absolutely rational (Sta, 2021).

### **3. The Analysis of Education Theories in NEP**

This section’s main objective is to explicitly demonstrate the existence of any educational ideology or theory in the reference text document (NEP). Thus, this section requires identifying specific examples relating to the five educational theories which were discussed in section 2 through direct identification or text inference and interpretation. According to my reading and coding of NEP, there are three frequently occurring existences that fit with the educational ideology: learner-centred theory, human

capital theory and social efficiency theory. Additionally, this section also briefly discusses the other two non-negligible educational theories (liberal education and critical pedagogy) in NEP.

Several pieces of apparent evidence in the NEP document manifest the existence of the learner-centred theory. Referring to the text, the Indian government indeed recognises that education must be constantly developed, improved, and learner-centred (NEP:3). Firstly, this document highlights that students should choose their life path according to their talents and interests; they have the right to decide their preferred courses and learning directions (NEP:5). Corresponding to the learner-centred theory, NEP focuses on the learners and children's core needs. Next, there are numerous curriculums recommended in the NEP, for example:

Activity-based courses include letters, languages, numbers, indoor and outdoor games, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, painting and other visual arts, handicrafts, dramas and puppets. (NEP:7)

Therefore, Indian educators recommend that the curriculum should be based predominantly on games, which suits the child-centred theory's requirement that classes are stimulating as well as enjoyable. Then, the Indian government requires that the curriculum should emphasise students' understanding of concepts rather than rote memorisation (NEP:5). In the same way, the child-centred theory requires students' natural development according to their inborn processes, which is illustrated in the NEP text. And then, Indian educational workers plan to discover, cultivate, and develop students' innate talents and personalities (NEP:19), indicating that children's growth and development is the crucial consideration, fitting with the progressive theory. After that, NEP also manifests some learner-centred classroom designs, such as cooperation activities and workbooks with peers and parents (NEP:9); interactive classroom learning (NEP:11); and a more interactive teaching method that encourages students to ask questions (NEP:12). Similarly, the learner-centred theory also encourage learners produce knowledge through their communication or interaction with peers, teachers and things. Lastly, an example below presents the purpose of childhood care education's (ECCE) ideal lessons implementation:

ECCE will achieve the best results in the following areas: children's body and movement, cognition, social-emotional ethics, culture, communication and early language, literacy and arithmetic development. (NEP:7)

As a result, such aims stated in NEP explicitly shows the distinct orientation that child construct meaning through their studying experience, which is a clear manifestation of the progressive theory.

Substantial content in the NEP text is relevant to the human capital theory. Firstly, according to the description of human capital in the second section, NEP also emphasises the form of investment for students. For instance, the Indian educational department expects to cultivate children's good characteristics such as morality, rationality, and empathy through education, which is advantageous to them to obtain a career with higher salaries and satisfaction in the future (NEP:3). All students need to learn professional skills during the educational process and become productive individuals in a rapidly changing world (NEP:15). Obviously, such policies formulation suggests that people should invest

themselves in education for future better vocation, which corresponds with the concept of human capital. In addition, the Indian government also yearns to invest heavily in education. Here is an example from NEP with regards to encouraging students to engage in the education industry:

Scholarships for outstanding students are set up nationwide, which are used to promote high-quality comprehensive four-year bachelor's degrees. In rural areas, establish performance-based scholarships and reward graduates with priority employment. These scholarship establishments aim to make these students become local role models (high-quality teachers who speak local languages). (NEP:20)

Another following policy is about the Indian government's investment in educational resources:

Provide a sufficient and safe infrastructure for all schools, including working toilets, drinking water, sufficient space, electricity, computer equipment, Internet, library and sports and entertainment resources, to ensure that all teachers and students have a comfortable learning environment. (NEP:21)

There are numerous other measures of government investment in the educational industry, excluding the aforementioned two examples shown in the NEP document, such as teacher bonuses and school construction. Consequently, India is preparing to invest significantly in education, aligning with the human capital theory. Moreover, there is a statement in NEP which mentions that advanced education with superior quality creates more employment opportunities for individuals, and ultimately promotes the increase of India's economy (NEP:33). In other words, the level of human capital is improved through education, resulting in the national economic growth, which is an evident presence of the human capital theory of education in NEP text.

Instances of social efficiency theory account for a significant percentage of this document. Firstly, Indian educational policymakers advise that:

The top priority is to improve teachers' work efficiency. Further, tutors will gain more autonomy in choosing teaching methods, which will help them to take the most effective way to teach; they do not need to engage in work which is not related to teaching so that concentrate on performing their teaching duties. (NEP:21)

Thus, the aforementioned example illustrates that Indian's educational policy revolution anticipate to improves teachers' teaching efficiency. In other words, Indian government is trying to develop a functioning society, which is in accordance with the social efficiency theory. Secondly, NEP mentioned a goal of making India become a global knowledge superpower (NEP:6). One of the specific steps presented in NEP is that the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) is to establish a national mission which asks to improve all children's fundamental literacy and mathematics capacity (NEP:8). Hence, the Indian government shapes and influences learners' behaviours and attitudes within the society by formulating educational policies. This conforms to the idea of social engineering belonging to the ideology of social efficiency. Thirdly, Indian educators stressed to ensure that all students have access to targeted opportunities to enter the education system and achieve outstanding

results (NEP:4). Additionally, their final aim is to enable all students from different social or economic backgrounds to receive the highest quality education fairly by 2040 (NEP:3). Such cases above fit with social efficiency ideology since Indian government require every child to receive compulsory education (mass education). Fourthly, there is an instance which is related to the allocation of teacher resources: in order to ensure that there are enough teachers in all disciplines, teachers can be shared among different universities (NEP:20). Thus, the Indian education units are ready to optimise the schools' performance by applying generic management skills, which also coincides with today's concept of Managerialism of the technological theory. Finally, vocational education must be included in the discipline, contributing to students preparing for their preferred occupation and achieving economic independence (NEP:33). Similarly, new vocationalism also asks that the rise of the public's education level should align with their increase of incomes. Consequently, new vocationalism is performed in the NEP document, which obviously reveal the existence of the social efficiency theory or ideology.

As for the relevant evidence of liberal education presence in NEP, India envisages the establishment of an education system rooted in the Indian national spirit or instilling in learners a deep-rooted sense of pride as an Indian (NEP:6). Such an idea demonstrates the expectation of the Indian government for the spread of Indian culture through education, corresponding to the traditional academic theory's transmission of culture. Moreover, NEP also mentioned that it is necessary to train students to develop knowledge, skills, values and personality in terms of thought, spirit, intelligence and behaviour (NEP: 6). Similarly, the academic rationalism also emphasises enabling learners to achieve the harmonious development of wisdom, morality and body rather than the utilitarian purposes. Regarding the social reconstructionist theory of education, it is not recommended in NEP document. The prerequisite of critical pedagogy is that citizens must resist their current society's capitalism and oppression. However, the NEP document does not involve the opinion that today's Indian society must reconstruct, nor describe the defects of capitalism and the extreme situation of social oppression.

#### **4. The Dominant Theory**

Reviewing the analysis of the NEP document in the preceding part, four educational theories are mentioned in this text: traditional academic, learner-centred, human capital and social efficiency. Notably, the liberal education theory constitutes a minor proportion of the text and is only shown in the spiritual development of students and the spread of Indian culture. In addition, NEP overlooked the critical pedagogy, possibly because the Indian government lacks the motivation to rebuild society. Thus, India's education sector needs to consider the educational ideologies balance further. Nevertheless, the social efficiency theory obviously occupies the highest proportion in this entire text. For example, Indian educators showed their deep desire to popularise compulsory education nationwide and recommended that schools and teachers fully use management skills to improve teaching effectiveness. Ultimately, this section argues that the social efficiency theory plays a leading role in the whole policy document (NEP).

## 5. Social Concern

This section mainly discusses the related policies in the NEP from the two perspectives of social factors, which are globalisation and social justice. Globalisation refers to the increasing scale or intensity of global financial flows, and society is increasingly trapped in worldwide interactions and networks (Held & McGrew, 2000). Equally, the Indian government also expects to follow the trend of the times and occupy a place in the stage of globalisation. For instance, due to the pace of globalisation rapidly spreading, Indian educators emphasise the popularisation of education and develop student' effective learning methods (NEP:3). In addition, it is also necessary to implement a curriculum including global citizenship cultivation (NEP:15). In terms of social justice, it is generally understood as the principle of "fairness" and "equality" for citizens and respect for their fundamental human rights (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Aligning with social justice, the Indian educational department plans to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all Indian people by 2030 (NEP:3). In other words, every Indian citizen has the right to receive education through mass education. Furthermore, Rawls (2013) points out the definition of distributive justice: social institutions should be 'fair' to all citizens no matter the factor of gender, class, or ethnicity. Looking back on India's recent history, social injustice is still present, such as higher castes' more social capital and educational resources (Tiwari, Paltasingh, & Jena, 2020), and gender inequality (Batra & Reio Jr., 2016). Nevertheless, referring to the NEP document, the Indian government attempts to formulate policies to overcome social inequality. For example, there is an establishment of an inclusive fund scheme, aiming to eliminate any unfairness (e.g., gender, disadvantaged groups, the poor) in accepting education (NEP:26). Despite the text offered such policy designs, it still requires authority and policymakers to check for the effectiveness by future practice. In conclusion, as NEP shows, India demonstrates their sharp insight into the current national conditions and the significance of education, which benefits them in fulfilling the ambition of becoming a knowledge superpower in the whole world.

## References

- Adamson, B., & Morris, P. (2007). Comparing curricula. In *Comparative Education Research* (pp. 263-282). Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6189-9\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6189-9_11)
- Batra, R., & Reio Jr., T. G. (2016). Gender inequality issues in India. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 18*(1), 88-101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316630651>
- Bobbitt, F. (1918). *The curriculum*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1975). The problem with human capital theory--a Marxian critique. *The American Economic Review, 65*(2), 74-82.
- Burman, E. (2016). *Deconstructing developmental psychology*. Routledge.
- Cronon, W. (1998). Only Connect... The Goals of a Liberal Education. *The American Scholar, 67*(4), 73-80.
- Freire, P. (2020). Pedagogy of the oppressed. In *Toward a Sociology of Education* (pp. 374-386).

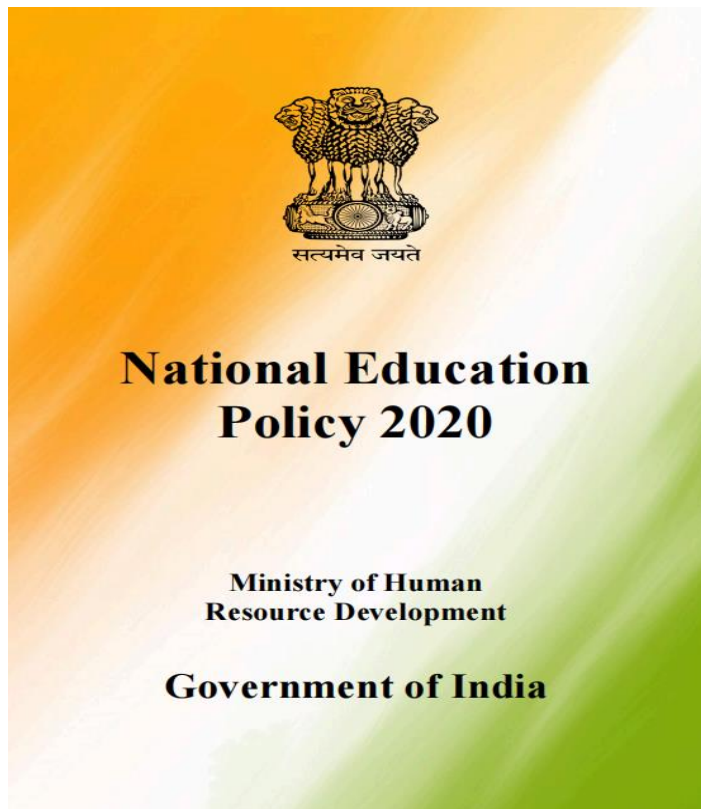
- Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003060635-5>
- Giroux, H. A. (2006). Academic freedom under fire: The case for critical pedagogy. *College Literature*, 1-42. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2006.0051>
- Giroux, H. A. (2010). Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(6), 715-721. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2010.8.6.715>
- Halstead, J. M. (2007). Islamic values: a distinctive framework for moral education? *Journal of Moral Education*, 36(3), 283-296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240701643056>
- Held, D., & McGrew, A. (2000). *The global transformations reader* (Vol. 13). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hickman, L. A. (2006). Socialisation, social efficiency, and social control. *John Dewey and our educational prospect: A critical engagement with Dewey's Democracy and Education* (pp. 67-79).
- Hirst, P. H. (2010). *Knowledge and the curriculum: A collection of philosophical papers*. Routledge.
- Johnes, G. (1993). *The economics of education*. New York: St. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23008-2>
- Klikauer, T. (2015). What is managerialism? *Critical Sociology*, 41(7-8), 1103-1119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513501351>
- Knoll, M. (2009). From Kidd to Dewey: The origin and meaning of “social efficiency”. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(3), 361-391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270801927362>
- Little, A. W. (2003). Motivating learning and the development of human capital. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 33(4), 437-452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792032000127748>
- Løvlie, L., & Standish, P. (2002). Introduction: Bildung and the idea of a liberal education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(3), 317-340. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.00279>
- McLaren, P. (2016). Critical pedagogy. *This fist called my heart: the Peter McLaren reader*, 1, 27.
- Miller, A. (2007). Rhetoric, paideia and the old idea of a liberal education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 41(2), 183-206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2007.00558.x>
- Morrison G. S. (2021). *Early childhood education today* (Revised ed.). Merrill/Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Norman, D. A., & Spohrer, J. C. (1996). Learner-centered education. *Communications of the ACM*, 39(4), 24-27. <https://doi.org/10.1145/227210.227215>
- Pei, W., Chien, H., & Susan, K. (2011). Child-centered education: Incorporating reconceptualism and poststructuralism. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(8), 554-559.
- Peterson, P. L., Baker, E., & McGaw, B. (2010). *International encyclopedia of education*. Elsevier Ltd..
- Plowden, B. B. H. P. (1967). *Children and their primary schools: A report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)* (Vol. 1). HM Stationery Office.
- Policy, N. E. (2020). Ministry of human resource development, government of India. Retrieved August, 30, 2020.



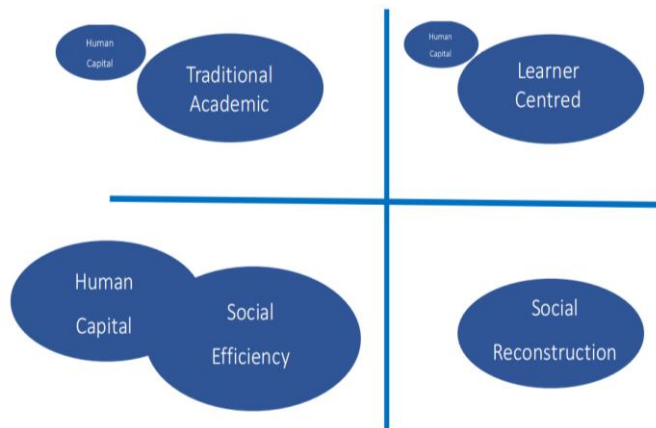
- Rawls, J. (2013). A theory of justice. In *Ethics* (pp. 229-234). Routledge.
- Schultz, T. W. (1972). The increasing economic value of human time. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 54(5), 843-850. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1239227>
- Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press.
- Sta, P. (2021). The Critique of the Critical Critique of Critical Pedagogy: Freire, Suchodolski and the materialist pedagogy of emancipation. *Critical Education*, 12(4).
- Swain, H. (1999). Intellectuals Fight “Dumbing Down”. *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12, 3.
- Sweetland, S. R. (1996). Human capital theory: Foundations of a field of inquiry. *Review of educational research*, 66(3), 341-359. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543066003341>
- Tiwari, S. K., Paltasingh, K. R., & Jena, P. K. (2020). Caste-class association and school participation in Uttar Pradesh, India: evidence from NSSO data. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 79, 102292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102292>
- Wößmann, L. (2003). Specifying human capital. *Journal of economic surveys*, 17(3), 239-270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6419.00195>

## Appendix

### National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) Document:



Source: Policy, N.E., 2020. Ministry of human resource development, government of India. Retrieved August, 30, p.2020.

**Five Educational Theories:**

Source: Schiro, M.S., 2008. Schiro, Michael Stephen, Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008.

**Today's Indian Education System Problems Interpretation:**

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVvAkPbJwnw>

**Globalisation:**

Link: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/future-globalization>

## Indian's Social Concerns:

### 1. Caste System in India:



Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNjA8HIFiOk>

### 2. Gender inequality in India



Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8idvu5zJ8c>

### 3. Poverty Gap in India



Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWQdZoq3iN4>