

India's Education Policy's Structure, Statistics And Challenges -A Comparative Analysis With Finland Education System

Dr. Sandhya Sharma ¹

¹ Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi, India
Email: ¹ Sandhya.sharma@vips.edu

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Sandhya Sharma
Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi, India
DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.S10.807

Abstract

The education system of a country substantially affects its socioeconomic status and global standing. Keeping this in mind, Indian education system has undergone numerous changes time to time thus contributing to immense economic growth and world reputation for generating employable competent workforce. A latest educational reform i.e. India's New Educational Policy 2020 has suggested incorporation of multidisciplinary universities and autonomous colleges so as to promote quality higher education. According to the 2022 report, the literacy rate in Finland is 100% while the literacy rate in India is 77.7%.

The present paper aims to acutely comprehend the Education Policy of India, its structure, statistics and challenges it faced for decades. Paper will majorly highlight the India's New Education policies with changes pertaining to structure, pedagogy, methodology, and proposed outcome. There will be details pertaining to which extend it replicates education system of Finland. Paper will also highlight the limitations that India or any developing nation may have at present and how long or what measures it would require to attain complete literacy.

The study will further be utilized to map the key differences and similarities between the education systems of Finland and India analyzing their societal, political, historical, lingual, and economic factors.

Index Terms— India, Finland, Education, New Education Policy, Literacy .

INTRODUCTION

Every country around the globe has a different education system responsible for shaping the country's literacy. In international rankings of nations with successful educational systems, Finland is at the top, while India lacks. A country's literacy directly affects its socioeconomic condition. The current population of India in 2022 is 139.34 crores and the literacy rate is 77.7 %, implying that around 31 crores people in India are illiterate. Finland with a population of 55.6 lakh has a literacy rate of 100 %, implying that no one is illiterate in Finland. Finland's education system is widely appreciated worldwide for being one of the best-developed education systems in the world, unlike the Indian education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Finland

Until the 1850s, the church was responsible for education in Finland. At the end of the 19th century, just 8% of children aged 7 to 12 in the countryside received a basic education, whereas, in towns, almost every 7-12-year-old child did. Finland's independence in 1917 provided the chance to establish its own administration without foreign constraints. Education was considered to play a vital part in the advancement of social justice. By 1921, 68% of Finnish children were enrolled in school, and the law regarding compulsory education surfaced into effect. By 1944, almost all local authorities had completed the development of the school districts and basic education institutions stipulated by law. The Second World War impeded education policy procedures which helped to attain social equality. The education system was restructured in the 1950s. By the end of the 1970s, the state had been able to reform the education system in such a way that it could achieve the social equality it aspired for. In 1983, the pre-inspection of textbooks by the National Board of Education was eliminated and the school

inspection system was repealed in 1985 and 1988. During the 1990s, the state began to take the lead in promoting education with five-year development plans. Finland did not perform well in international education surveys prior to the 1994 reform. The 1994 Basic Education Curriculum and General Upper Secondary Education Curriculum reforms provided substantial autonomy to towns and schools in place of the previous comprehensive curricula. The 1999 Basic Education Curriculum reform centered on substituting the relative assessment system with one based on criteria. The 2004 Basic Education Curriculum reform attempted to enhance both the 1994 and 1999 curriculum reforms by standardizing class hour distribution and the criteria-based assessment system. Since the 2000s, Finland's performance in the PISA tests has been a clear indicator of the high caliber of their education, when it rose to the position of the best-performing nation in Europe overall.

India

In ancient and medieval India, education was delivered verbally by gurus and scholars, and knowledge was transmitted from generation to generation. 'Gurukuls' were historic Hindu residential institutions of study that were often housed at the teacher's home or a monastery. In the 19th century, India had a restricted formal education system comprised of a few higher education institutions and a significant number of elementary schools. The East Indian Company was mandated by the Charter Act of 1813 to design a system for Indian education. Between 1800 and 1900, a significant transformation in education occurred when the colonial system superseded the traditional Indian system. Lord William Bentinck established English as the language of courts and governance in 1835 and stated that the primary goal of education was to propagate Western knowledge via the means of English. In 1844, Lord Hardinge pledged positions within the government to individuals who were educated in the new system, ensuring the system's legitimacy. As a result, the system flourished fast and, guided by policies spelled forth in the Despatch of 1854 and the Indian Education Commission (1882), had fully established itself throughout the nation by 1900. By the start of 20th century, Indians realized that the colonial educational system could no longer be called an unmixed blessing, having outlived its usefulness but there have been too few and far too sluggish radical improvements in Indian education. Then came University Education Commission, around 1948–1949 so as to meet the demands of an independent India, which altered the educational system. In order to promote national unification and increased cultural and economic growth, the National Educational Policy of 1968 called for "radical reform" and equality of educational possibilities. The 1985 National Educational Policy aimed to eradicate inequalities and equalize opportunities for education, particularly for women, SC, and ST. The National Education Policy 2020 aspires to implement revolutionary changes in primary and secondary education, transforming India into a worldwide intellectual giant.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this research is to study the educational systems of Finland and India. Its purpose is to thoroughly understand the education systems of Finland and India, as well as to evaluate their history, structure, current pedagogy, holistic technique, and outcomes. It also tries to outline the major challenges, differences and similarities between Finland's and India's education systems by studying numerous associated elements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Research was conducted to clearly define the subject and helped to determine the best research design, data collection method, and selection of subjects. It helped to extract definitive conclusions only with extreme caution. The exploratory research relies on secondary research such as reviewing available literature and/or data, or qualitative approaches and more formal approaches through in-depth study and projective methods.

Descriptive Research has also been used to describe the characteristics of various aspects, such as the Education System of Finland and India and it intends to comprehensively study their present pedagogy, overall methodology, and outcome.

Data Collection - The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posed.

Primary Data- It was collected from 50 Indian students and their opinion and information for the specific purposes of the study helped to run the analysis through a survey. In essence, the questions asked were tailored to elicit the data that will help the study. The data was collected through the questionnaire to understand their experience and preference for the current Indian Education system.

Secondary Data- To make primary data collection more specific, secondary data will help to make it more useful. It helps to improve the understanding of the subject. Secondary data was collected from various sources such as different websites and published articles.

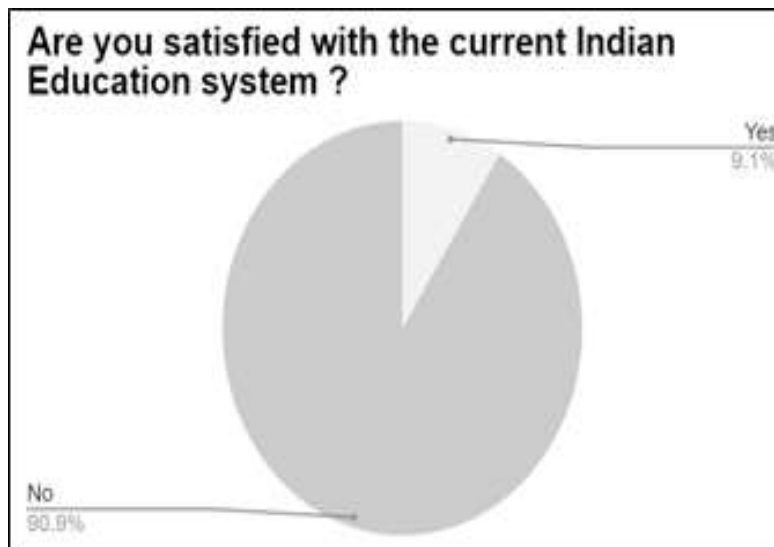
Research Design: Both primary and secondary data (that has been collected from various articles, websites, etc.) has been

used to study the evaluation, conceptual framework, comparison, definition, present trends, and future prospectus of the Indian Education System and the Finnish Education System.

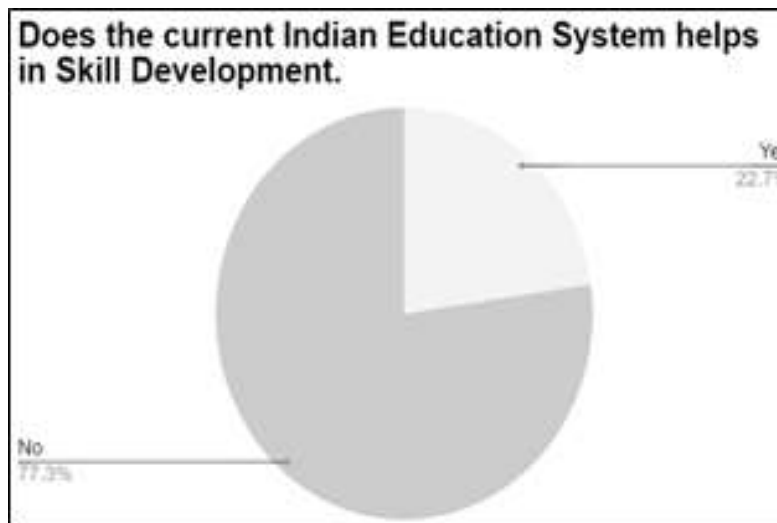
Limitation of Research: Survey was restricted mainly to the Indian Education System.

DATA ANALYSIS

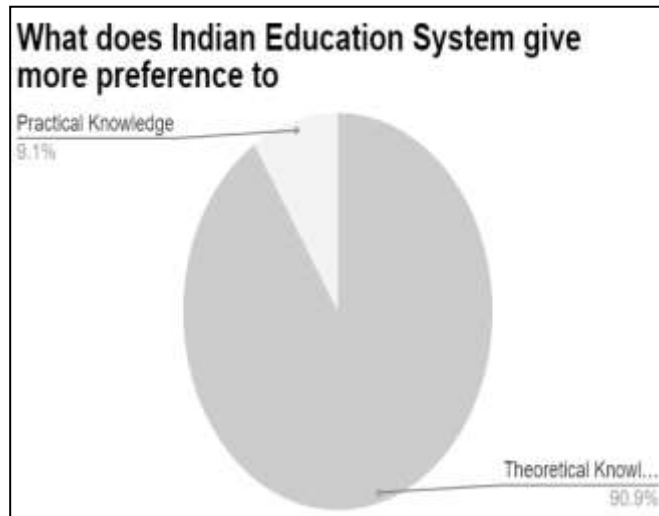
50 Indian students were selected to collect the primary data, and their opinions and insights were utilized to aid the analysis through a survey. See the fig. below on the satisfaction level with the current education system with majority being dissatisfied. This chart implies that 90.9% of students are not satisfied with the current Indian Education System whereas 9.1% of Indian students are satisfied



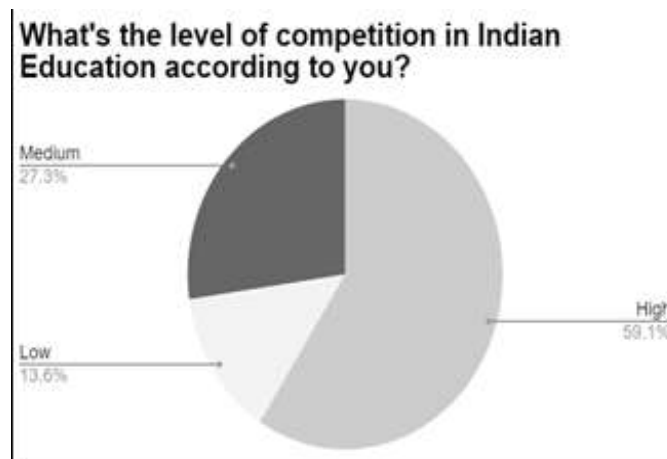
This chart below implies that 22.7 % of Indian students agree that the current Indian Education System helps in skill development whereas 77.3% disagree.



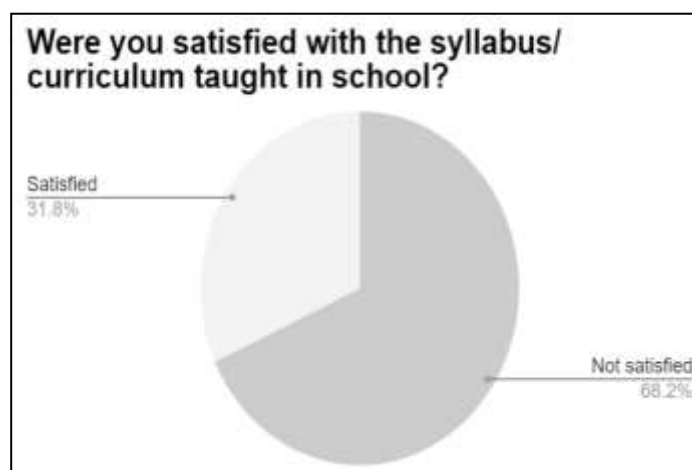
This chart below shockingly reveals that 90.9% Indian students agree that Indian Education System gives more preference to theoretical knowledge over practical knowledge while 9.1% disagree.



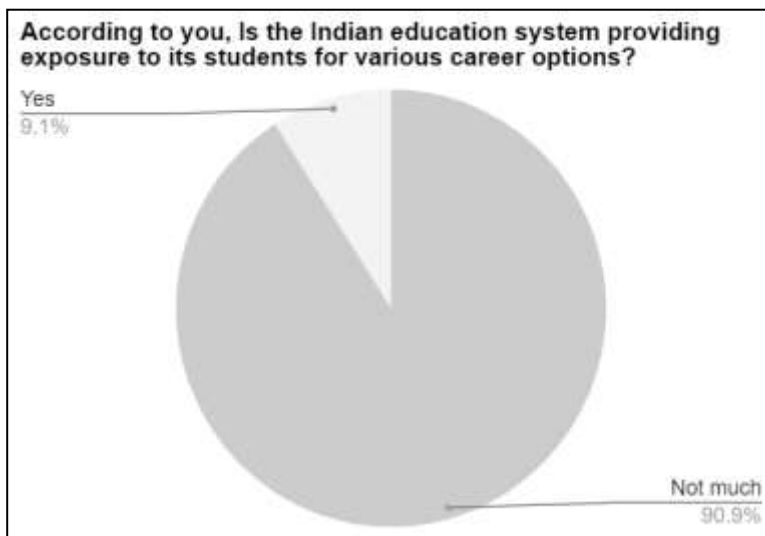
This chart below shows that 59.1 % of Indian students find the level of competition in current Indian Education System to be high and 27.3% and 13.6% of Indian students find the competition to be medium and easy respectively.



This chart implies that 68.2 % of Indian students are not satisfied with the syllabus/curriculum taught in school whereas 31.8% are satisfied.

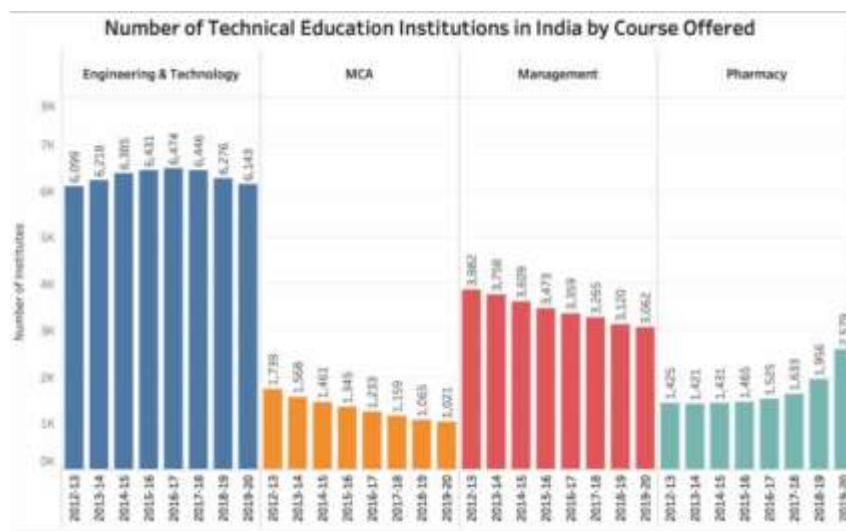


The last chart implies that 90.9% of Indian students disagree that the current Indian Education System provides exposure to its students for various career options whereas 9.1 %.



Other challenges- indian higher Education System

There is no denial that higher education system in India is quite complex with inclusion of universities, polytechnics, and institutes of national importance etc. All these institutes are guided and supported by numerous central and state regulatory committees. As per a study conducted in 2015, there been a drastic decline in the number of higher educational institution as seen in the image below:



It is quite unfortunate that there has been a decline in the number of institutions offering higher education in almost all the fields i.e. Engineering, Information Technology, Management and Pharmacy. Undoubtedly, if these institutes are closing down, they are resulting in **Supply/Demand gap**. India's gross enrollment rate (GER) in the year 2015 stood at 24.5 % which was quite low.

Quality Research and innovations at par global level still need to take up momentum which is still in a nascent stage. **Curriculum** being followed is still old and not updated. Lack of faculty or **qualified faculty** or poor **student-faculty ratio** is another important factor affecting effectiveness of whole education system. **Inadequate infrastructure and facilities, low expenditure** coupled with no or **less industry collaboration** are other vital factors for acting as impediment in quality education dissemination in the nation.

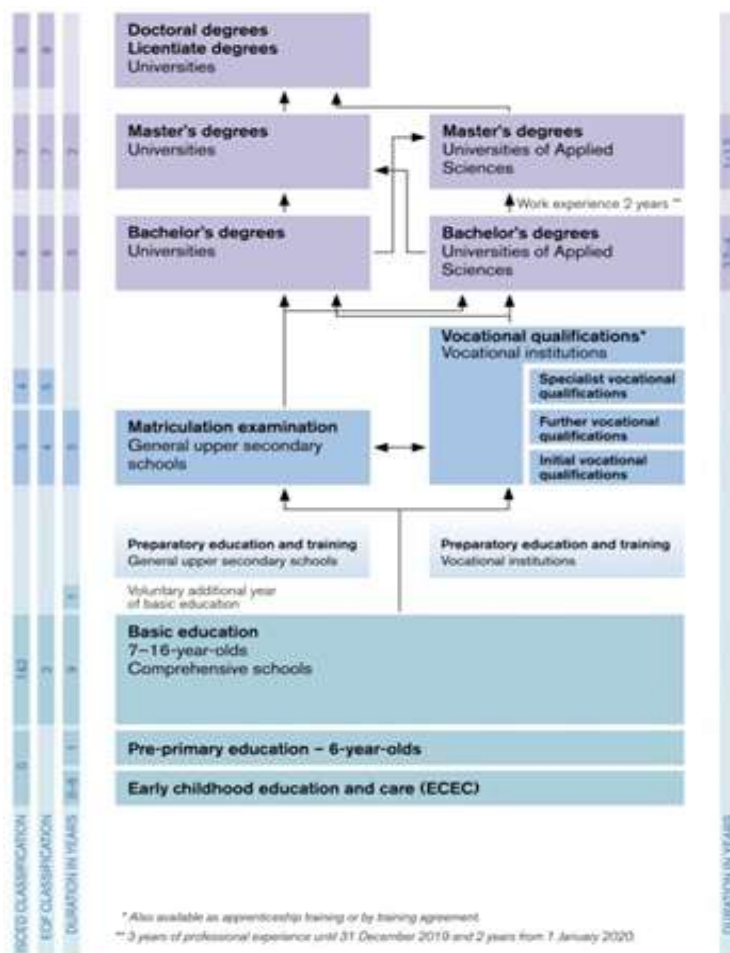
Structure of Finnish Education System

In Finland, the education system involves early childhood education and care, pre-primary education, comprehensive school education, upper secondary education, higher education, and adult education. The format of whole education system is quite comprehensive and easy to follow and understand thus providing ease in implementation.

The Finnish National Education Agency EDUFI is the national development agency responsible for early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general, and vocational upper secondary education, in addition to adult education and training. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for higher education. Some significant aspects of the Finnish education system:-

- There is no standardized testing program since teachers score their pupils using a custom grading scale. The Ministry of Education also analyses general development by selecting sample groups from a variety of schools.
- Establishment of a comprehensive environment for teaching and learning that prioritizes fairness over brilliance.
- Everyone is given the same opportunity to get an education, and students are given the time and space to develop the strongest foundation and fundamentals at their own speed.
- Only the teachers with master's degrees (from specialized teaching institutions) are eligible for teaching positions, and even then, every teacher is given a personal principal to monitor their development.
- All teachers emphasize teaching kids the values of teamwork, collaboration, and team spirit in order to promote cooperation over competitiveness.
- Rather than depending on class examinations and regular tests, Finnish teachers create their own assessment methods for their pupils. The only exam the students of Finland are required to attempt is conducted at the age of 16.
- There isn't any competitiveness among schools of Finland because each institution offers the same advantages as the others. Finnish children attend school for only twenty hours each week.
- The Finnish educational system includes early childhood education and care (ECEC), a crucial phase in the development and learning of a child. ECEC sets the learning. The purpose of ECEC is to enhance children's quality education while also promoting children's healthcare, well-being, and groundwork for lifelong learning and development.

Since 2015, all children in Finland are required to attend pre-primary school, which is free of charge. After finishing primary school, all children must continue their studies until they complete secondary school or arrive at the age of 18.



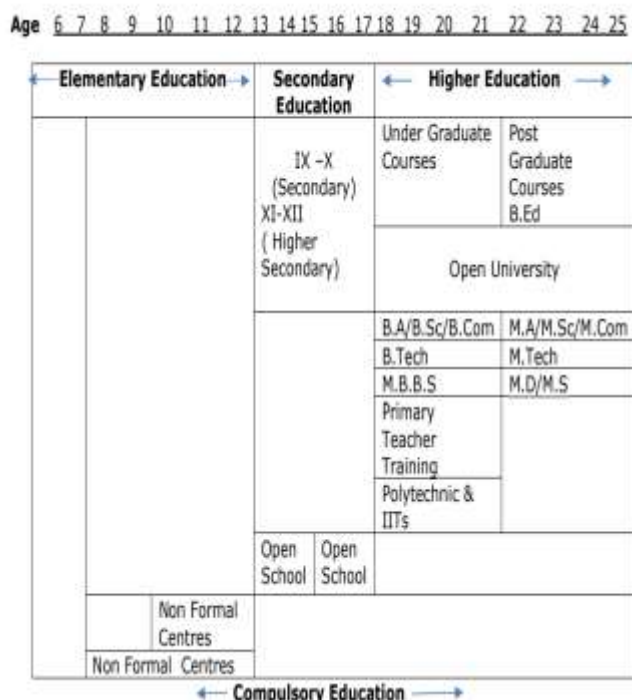
Both of the two primary upper secondary pathways—general and vocational—take roughly three years.

All children between the ages of 7 and 17 are eligible for comprehensive school education for free. Less than 2% of comprehensive school students attend a private or state school.

THE STRUCTURE OF INDIAN EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE

The "10+2+3" educational pattern is consistently used by the central and majority state boards. In this structure, ten years of elementary and secondary education are followed by two years of higher secondary education and subsequently three years of undergraduate education. The ten years are further split into 5 years of primary education, 3 years of upper primary education, and two years of high school: -

- India has over 1.5 million schools educating around 250 million children, making it the biggest individual system of its sort worldwide. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is India's leading authority for curriculum-related concerns. Some significant aspects of the Indian education system.
- The administrations of Central, State, and Union territories have offered free education to children aged 6 to 14. On the other side, the Indian education system has a startling statistic: 12% of pupils aged 4 to 12 suffer from some form of psychological condition.
- The current Indian education system is more theoretical than practical, focusing on theory and tests. The emphasis is on memorizing information rather than comprehending and interpreting them. Furthermore, education is generally judged in terms of exam results rather than real understanding.
- India has the third-largest higher education system in the world. According to NAAC data, not quite 25% of the nation's institutions of higher education were certified as of June 2010. Only 30 percent of the authorized universities and 45 percent of the colleges were determined to be of reasonable quality to be recognized at the 'A' level. The Education Quality Up gradation and Inclusion Program (EQUIP) has unveiled a 5-year vision plan to enhance higher education standards and availability over the next five years (2019-2024).
- The selection and recruitment of teachers in most schools is not based on merit. They are typically chosen at the discretion of selectors or on the advice of local political figures. Another difficulty is a lack of appropriate academic degrees and pedagogical skills.
- With 29% of kids in the age range of 6 to 14 attending private schools, India has a sizable private school system that supports its government-run schools at the primary and secondary levels.
- In India, 85 % of schools are situated in rural parts of the country. According to a recent study, about 95.2 % of these institutions have not yet met the full set of RTE (Right to Education) infrastructural standards.). We can refer to the image appended below.



Some of the biggest issues facing the country include the rapidly expanding population, a lack of educators, books, and basic infrastructure, as well as a lack of public funding to pay for education expenditures.

The 2019 English Proficiency Index ranks India 34th out of 100 nations, allowing for the simple distribution of teaching materials that satisfies International standards. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is India's leading authority for curriculum-related concerns. Table comparing the Finnish and Indian Education systems on various basis:

	Finnish Education System	Indian Education System
Education Policy	High-quality education and training must be accessible to all citizens on an equitable basis. No matter their region, age, wealth, language, or ethnicity, all residents have access to the same educational possibilities.	Aims to deepen national integration, facilitate national advancement, and foster a feeling of collective identity.
Fees	All stages of education are free of cost.	Education is basically free at public institutions, however, fee is charged in private schools.
Literacy rate	100%	77.70%
Structure of Education	(9+3+3) pattern that includes 6 years of primary school (Class 1–6), 3 years of secondary school (Class 7–9), 3 years of upper secondary school, and 3 years of university education.	(10+2+3) pattern that includes 5 years of primary school (Class 1–5), 3 years of upper primary (Class 6–8), 2 years of secondary school, 2 years of higher secondary, and 3 years of university education.
Use of Electronic Media till Secondary Education	Electronic tools including smart boards, projectors, laptops, iPads, internet connection, and television are generally used in all classrooms.	Although many private schools have started using electronic media, many public schools still use paper and pencil; nonetheless, the trend of using digital technology is constantly expanding.
Exams	The national matriculation examination, which students take at the age of 16, is the only standardized test in Finland's education system.	Monthly assessments and tests are taken and aggregated half-yearly and yearly. The yearly exams and evaluations are used to determine entry to the following class.
Grading scale	There is no standardized testing program since teachers score their pupils using custom assessment criteria.	Teachers assign grades to pupils depending on their performance in examinations.
Age of starting school	The minimum age for beginning elementary school is seven years.	Early education starts with preschool, where the average age of enrollment is 2.5 to 3 years.
Teachers qualification	A master's degree in pedagogical studies and teaching practice is obligatory for all teachers.	A Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) or an equivalent degree is generally sufficient to become a teacher
No. of private schools	There are no private schools	The total number of private schools is 34,753.
Homework	Students are given the least amount of homework possible.	Homework is a regular fixture in the lives of Indian students.

India- new education POLICY (nep), 2020

There have been numerous educational reforms in India over the years with different educational policy. The latest education policy of India, **NEP 2020** is supposedly going to be a milestone in making India a global knowledge superpower. Policy targets the access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability approach through the following-

- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** This reform focuses upon promoting and achieving appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in a child's early years for healthy brain development and growth. For effective implementation of this reform, National Council of Educational Research and Training ("NCERT") has been assigned the task of designing a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education.

- Change in Curricular and Pedagogical Structure: The existing academic structure of 10+2 structure (ages 6-16 and ages 16-18) has been replaced with the structure of 5+3+3+4 with the structure being as follows:
- Foundational Stage (ages 3-8): This stage involves multilevel, play/activity-based learning classified into 2 sub-stages, viz. (a) angawadi/pre-school/balvatika for ages 3-6; and (b) classes 1 and 2 for ages 6-8.
- Preparatory Stage (ages 8-11): This stage involves play, discovery, and activity based and interactive classroom learning and includes classes 3 to 5.
- Middle Stage (ages 11-14): This stage involves experiential learning in the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities and includes classes 6 to 8.
- High School (ages 14-18): This stage involves multidisciplinary study, greater critical thinking, flexibility, and student choice of subjects and includes classes 9 to 12. The High school stage is proposed to build on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of middle stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations and greater flexibility and student choice. Here, students are free to design their own paths of study and life plans. There will not be any hard separation amongst 'curricular', 'extra-curricular' and 'co-curricular' activities among arts, humanities, and science or between vocational or academic streams.
- Curricular Integration of Essential Subjects and Skills: NEP 2020 further mandates that certain subjects and skills should be learned by all students to help them become successful, innovative, adaptive, and productive human beings in the rapidly changing and constantly evolving world. These skills inter alia include scientific temper and evidence based thinking, creativity and innovativeness, sense of aesthetics and art, oral and written communication, health and nutrition, physical education, wellness, fitness and sports, collaboration and teamwork, problem solving and logical reasoning, coding and computational thinking, environmental awareness, water and resources conservation, etc. It is thus targeted that curricular and pedagogical initiatives including the introduction of contemporary subjects such as artificial intelligence, design thinking, holistic health, organic living, etc, will be undertaken to develop the identified important skills in students, as part of school education.
- Transformation in Assessment for Student Development: The assessment mechanism, is also proposed to be shifted to a system which is more formative and competency based. The Board exams are proposed to be reformed to encourage holistic development and students will be able to choose the subjects in which they want to take the Board exams, depending on their individual interests.
- Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education: NEP 2020 has demarcated the roles of governance and regulation into four bodies:
- Department of School Education: The department will be responsible for overall monitoring and policymaking for continual improvement of the system but will not be involved with the provision and operation of schools or with the regulation of the system.
- Directorate of School Education: The Directorate will be responsible for implementation of policies regarding educational operations and provision.
- State School Standards Authority: An independent, state-wide body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA) will be set up in each State/Union Territory which will establish a minimal set of standards based on basic parameters to be followed by all schools. The SSSA will also be responsible for transparent public disclosure of all regulatory information.
- SCERT: The State Council of Educational Research and Training ("SCERT"), in consultation and collaboration with the NCERT, will be responsible for academic matters including academic standards and curricula in the State.
- Professional Development for Teachers: NEP 2020 mandates that teachers will be given constant opportunities for self-improvement and to learn latest innovations and advances in their profession in the form of local, state, national and international teaching and subject workshops, as well as online teacher development modules will be made available to all teachers.

CONCLUSION

In India, the educational system employs a doctrinaire methodology. Curricula are created by government organizations, there is limited room for innovation in schools and classrooms, and pupils are judged on memorization rather than comprehension. The Finnish approach to creating an educational system where all kids learn effectively has been one that has prioritized fairness and cooperation over competitiveness. It also rejects compensating instructors based on student academic achievement and turning public schools into private institutions. While the school system in India focuses on grades and achievement in tests, the system in Finland does not have any exams until the age of 16. Children can then study without being constrained by a curriculum, yet course criteria are established. In Finland, there is no reliance on private schools. Unfortunately, this is not the situation in India. But now, there is a major reform in India i.e. New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which has tried to evolve and incorporate many features of advance educational policies from across the globe like overhauling of the curriculum, examination structure, regulatory regime, teacher education, etc. There is no doubt that that NEP will be successful in imparting holistic education with adequate focus on development of different life skills for the students. NEP will make both school and college education more comprehensive, versatile, multi-sector, suitable for the needs of the 21st century and focused on bringing

out the discerning eye of every student. With the National Education Policy taking measures to enhance education throughout the country, India may follow Finland's steps to lay a solid foundation for a prosperous future and a higher chance of becoming an educated, observant, and inquisitive individual.

REFERENCES

1. Sharma, S. R. N. & R. K. (2023). *History of Education in India*. Atlantic.
2. Altekar, A. (2018). *Education in Ancient India*. Amsterdam University Press.
3. Yadav, K. K. H. K. (2023). *INNOVATION IN INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM*.
4. Kumar, K. (2016). *Politics of Education in Colonial India (3d Photorealistic Rendering)* (1st ed.). Routledge India.
5. Basu, B. D. (2012). *History Of Education In India Under The Rule Of The East India Company*. . Ulan Press.
6. Thrupp, M., Seppänen, P., Kauko, J., & Kosunen, S. (2023). *Finland's Famous Education System: Unvarnished Insights into Finnish Schooling* (1st ed. 2023). Springer.
7. Tenhunen, M. (2019). *Reform of the Finnish Education System*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
8. Sharma, S., (2015), "Globalization's influence on our teaching English", in *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)* A UGC Peer Reviewed (Refereed) International Journal, with ISSN 2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (Online)
9. Sahlberg, P., Robinson, K., & Gardner, H. (2021). *Finnish Lessons 3.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
10. Sharma, S., (2016), "Communication Barriers In Emerging Economies – Case Study India", in *International Research Journal of Humanities and Environmental Issues*, with ISSN 2277-9329.
11. Kumpulainen, K., & Sefton-Green, J. (2019). *Multiliteracies and Early Years Innovation: Perspectives from Finland and Beyond (Routledge Research in Early Childhood Education)* (1st ed.). Routledge.