UNIT 7 : EDUCATION IN INDIA-I

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7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to—

- discuss the historical background of education in India.
- analyse the features of education in India
- describe the system of educational administration in India
- describe the primary education system in India
- explain the secondary system of education in India
- discuss the higher education system in India.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Education is the nation's most important capital. You can comprehend the status of a nation by looking at its education system. You know that for making a comparison of education system of our country with other countries, it is important for us to know our system thoroughly. In this unit, we will briefly discuss the historical development of education in India, describe the distinctive features of Indian education system, how is it administered and stages of education. However, it is good to keep in mind that looking at the huge diversity characterized by the Indian society (linguistic, regional, social, geographical, cultural, religious, etc.) it is difficult to understand the education system as a whole. Here, we will try to understand the system in general.

7.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historically, India is the country where civilization flourished as far back as 5000 BC. We can trace the well-marked educational system as far back as early Vedic civilization. So, let us start it from Vedic education and we will go through the historical background very briefly.

7.3.1 Vedic Education

During Vedic period, education was mainly based on the ancient Indian philosophy or *Darshan*. Education was imparted in Gurukulas or the 'home of the Guru'. The aim of education was to build character of the students. It emphasized on spiritual development. Teachers were men of the highest calibre from the point of view of knowledge and spiritual progress. There was an intimate relationship between the teacher and the students. Though it was characterized by equal educational opportunity for everyone, in the post-Vedic period, the system got distorted and was affected by the caste system.

7.3.2 Buddhist Education

Due to the limitations of the Vedic education system, Buddhist education system evolved in India. Like Vedic education system, the Buddhist system also aimed at attainment of Nirvana through the study of the teachings of Budhha and Dharma Shastras. It preached theology and imparted other knowledge in the monasteries and maths. It was more secular in nature that the post-Vedic period education. During this period, well-known universities like Takshashila and Nalanda were established which attracted many international students.

7.3.3 Islamic Education

The aim of education during the Muslim period was the extension of knowledge and propagation of Islamic principles, laws and social conventions. Education was based on religion. More stress was laid on practical utility of education. The relation between teacher and students was strict and discipline was maintained using physical punishment. Primary education was organized in Maktabs and higher education in Madrassas.

7.3.4 Education under British Rule

- The Western education started influencing Indian education system when the East India Company came to India for exploring business opportunities and later established its own empire here. The Charter Act of 1813 made education of Indian people a responsibility of the Company. However, as it did not clearly mention what kind of education is to be propagated, lots of controversies occurred regarding this. Lord Macaulay in 1833 said that English education was to be instilled in India by the Company. The Missionaries were encouraged to establish educational institutions based on their philosophy.

However, the Wood's Despatch 1854 recognized the necessity of giving importance to Indian languages in education. Based on its suggestion, universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in the year 1857. The first Indian Education Commission was constituted in 1882 under the chairmanship of William Hunter. Recommendations were made for various aspects of education including primary, secondary and higher education. In 1901, Curzon's Educational Policy made way for constitution of Indian University Commission 1902 and later Indian University Act 1904. After this, a major milestone was the Sadler Commission 1917-19 which suggested reforms particularly for Calcutta University which were applicable to other universities as well. During this time, Gandhiji's Basic Education evolved as a response to the dislike of the English education system. Basic education was based on crafts which aimed at uplift of all sections of the society. In 1944, after the Second World War, Sargent Report on Education was submitted. It was the first comprehensive report which addressed the problems and future organization of pre-primary to university levels of education in India. Thus we can say, under British rule, Indian education was re-shaped and many attempts were made to formulate an appropriate kind of education for Indians.

7.3.5 Post-independence

Now you might have understood that by the time India got its independence, the educational situation was much different than what it was before British rule. Immediately after independence, it was realized that there is a need for expansion of education at all levels. The first step taken was to constitute the Radhakrishnan Commission to re-organize the university education. In 1950, the Constitution of India was adopted which made primary education free and compulsory under the Article 45 (Directive Principle of State

Policy). Apart from this, the constitution put education in the State List which was later transferred to Concurrent List. This meant that education was made a responsibility of both the Union as well as State government. The Secondary Education Commission (Mudaliar Commission), 1953 was constituted to assess the problems of secondary education and suggest measures for its improvement. The first National Education Policy came into being in the year 1968. It was based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission 1964-66 which provided suggestions on all the stages of education. As the general formulations incorporated in the policy were not translated into a detailed study of implementation, in 1986, a New National Policy on Education was formulated. It made recommendations on pre-primary to higher education. A major recommendation was on the common educational structure which was 10+2+3. The Indian education system is being directed by this policy till recently when the National Education Policy 2020 was formulated. This policy has brought many radical changes in the educational system including the educational structure. It has recommended 5+3+3+4 structure of education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What was the main aim of Indian education during Vedic period?

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Q 2: During the British rule, which Commission was set up to reform the university education and in which year?

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Q 3: In which year was the first national education policy formulated after independence?

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7.4 FEATURES OF INDIAN EDUCATION

The education system of any nation is based upon its socio-cultural, political, economical characteristics. India is a democratic country and is rich in human and natural resources. Indian economy is predominantly agricultural and about half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture and allied activities. The basic features of the Indian education system can be pointed out as—

- Education in India is provided by the **public sector as well as the private sector**, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others.
- The Indian educational system is **based on constitutional principles**. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right. The Article 21-A of the Constitution provides for free and compulsory education for children of 6-14 years. Apart from this, there are other constitutional provisions related to education.
- A **common educational structure** is followed in the country. India's education system is divided into different levels such as pre-primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level. In general the educational structure is defined as 10+2+3, which means 10 years of schooling, 2 years of higher secondary and three years of under-graduate course. The 10 years is further divided into 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary, followed by 2 years of high school. The NEP 2020 has restructured the education system into a 5+3+3+4 design, consisting of the Foundational Stage (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14), and Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18).

- A **National Curriculum Framework** is designed by the NCERT to be the basis of formulating curriculum for school education in India. However, there is liberty regarding inclusion of regionally and locally relevant contents in the curriculum.
- Indian has always remained a peace-loving country therefore, the aims, objectives and curriculum of Indian education system reflects education for **universal brotherhood and international understanding**.
- The Indian education system believes in the principle of **equality of educational opportunity.** The Government of India has set its developmental goals which are targeted through programs, projects, and policies under the theme 'Education for all'. Laws about banning the child labour; the Operation Blackboard Operation and free Mid-Day Meal program; scholarships and fee waiver schemes for socio-economically disadvantaged sections of the society (like, Navodaya Vidyalayas); schemes for girls' education (like, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas) and infrastructure development are some of the strategies adopted.
- Another important aspect of Indian education is its **non formal education or provision for Open and distance learning.** At school level, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides opportunities for continuing education to those who missed completing school education. At higher education level, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) co-ordinates distance learning. Apart from this, there are 14 state open universities at present and many institutions of correspondence courses in conventional universities.

7.5 EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

As we have already mentioned in the section 7.3.5, by constitutional provision, education is the subject of the Concurrent list (No.25) of the Seventh Schedule (Article 246). So, education is a responsibility of both the state and central government. In India, education is primarily provided by public schools (controlled and funded by the government at three levels—

central, state and local) and private schools. Under Article 21-A of the Constitution of India, free and compulsory education is provided is a fundamental right of children aged 6 to 14. At the primary and secondary level, India has private school system complementing the government run schools. Similarly, the higher and technical education is also being provided by both government and private sector institutions. Now let us look at the agencies taking care of the administration of education in India.

At the Central level, Ministry of Education (erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development) is the supreme administrative body to control, direct and guide entire educational system in the country. This ministry has two Departments—School Education and Literacy and Higher Education. This ministry formulate and implement National Education Policy and also issues related guidelines on various matters related to education. Other national agencies assisting the Ministry of Education are—National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Dental Council of India, Bar Council of India (BCI), Distance Education Council, etc. Agencies at the state level are State Department of Education (one or more) at Secretariat level, Directorate(s) of Education, District and Block level Education Offices, State Secondary Education Board, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). At the local level, there are two types of local self government—urban local bodies or municipal governance in cities and towns and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in rural areas. These bodies also run schools in some States. The State-controlled schools and colleges are working under concerned Directorate. Private schools and colleges are run parallely and separately, but they have to follow government policies, rules and regulations. All the students have to appear for public examinations at the end of 10th standard and 12th standard.

The Primary and Secondary schools are affiliated with Central or State boards which administer the Secondary School Certificate at the end of 10th Standard. Based upon performance in the first two years of secondary school, and upon the SSC results, students may enter Higher/Upper Secondary School. Higher Secondary School offers the students a chance to select a 'stream', offering science, commerce, and arts/humanities. Education is administered both in schools or two-year Junior Colleges. The Junior Colleges are often affiliated with degree granting universities or colleges.

In case of higher education, the central agency for funding the universities is University Grants Commission (UGC). It is a statutory body of the Central Government for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India. The mandate of the UGC is—promoting and coordinating university education; determining and maintaining standards of teaching, examination and research in universities; framing regulations on minimum standards of education; monitoring developments in the field of collegiate and university education; disbursing grants to the universities and colleges; serving as a vital link between the Union and state governments and institutions of higher learning; advising the Central and State governments on the measures necessary for improvement of university education. The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is the national level Apex Advisory Body for technical education. It is their responsibility to promote their development in a coordinated and integrated manner. The AICTE is vested with statutory authority for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms and standards, quality assurance through accreditation, funding in priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining parity of certification and awards and ensuring coordinated and integrated development and management of technical education in the country. For the accreditation of academic institutions and programs, there are two primary accreditation bodies—National Accreditation Board (NAB) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). NAB was set up to periodically conduct evaluation of Technical Institutions or Programs on the basis of guidelines, norms and standards specified by

it and to make recommendations regarding recognition or de-recognition of the institution or program. The NAAC is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. There are five major apex bodies that are responsible for research and development in India—Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What is the common educational structure followed in India?

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Q 5: Mention two schemes of govt. of India for equalizing educational opportunities.

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Q 6: State the name of the highest authority at the Central level controlling the education system of India.

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Q 7: Write True or False: UGC is responsible for maintenance of standard of higher education in India.

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Q 8: State the functions of National Board of Accreditation.

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7.6 PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

In India, elementary education comprises of lower primary (Classes 1 to 4/5) and upper primary (Classes 4/6 to 8). According to the Article 21-

A of the Constitution of India, primary or elementary education is free and compulsory for every child aged between 6-14 years. By this, you can understand that equality of educational opportunity is a fundamental right of Indian citizens without any discrimination. So, proper care has been taken by the government to ensure accessibility of elementary education to all its citizens. Various initiatives have been undertaken to universalize elementary education. Let us look into the objectives and the curriculum of primary or elementary education in India.

7.6.1 Objectives of Primary Education

The objectives of the primary education in India are—

- To bring about a harmonious development of the child's personality by providing for its physical, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and spiritual needs.
- To prepare the children for good citizenship, to develop in them a love for their country, its tradition and its culture.
- To develop the spirit of international understanding and universal brotherhood in the children.
- To inculcate scientific attitude among the children
- To develop the sense of dignity of labour
- To develop adequate mastery over the tools of learning To prepare children for life through the provision of practical activities and experiences, including work experiences.

7.6.2 Curriculum of Primary Education

The curriculum or the learning experiences provided to the children of primary schools are based on the objectives of primary education. The curriculum of lower primary stage includes mother-tongue, mathematics, environmental studies, creative activities, work experiences, social service and health education. The upper primary stage includes two languages (mother tongue or regional language and English), mathematics, science, social studies, art, work

experience and social service, physical education and education of moral and spiritual values. The students can also opt for a third language at this stage.

7.7 SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The secondary education comprise of Class 9 to 12. Classes 9 and 10 are known as secondary or lower secondary stage and 11 and 12 are known as higher secondary stage. After independence, the secondary stage of education received exclusive attention as the Secondary Education Commission (Mudaliar Commission), 1952 was constituted. It formulated the objectives and curriculum of secondary stage and also recommended on other issues of secondary issues. First, look at the objectives of secondary education.

7.7.1 Objectives of Secondary Education

The objectives of secondary education in India are in general formulated as—

- All round development of the student—physical, mental, moral, intellectual and academic development.
- Looking at the leadership crisis in a democratic country, it was felt necessary to provide training in leadership is at the secondary level of education.
- At secondary stage, students are at their adolescence. Students need to be ethically trained, particularly at this stage. So formation of character is an objective of secondary education.
- As the secondary stage serves as the gateway to either higher education or employment, secondary education aims at promotion of vocational efficiency of the students. This objective is based upon the principle of dignity of labour.
- As a developing country, we need each of our citizen to be trained in democratic citizenship and be productive to the

society and the nation at large. So, secondary education aims at developing a scientific, positive and problem solving outlook among the students.

7.7.2 Curriculum of Secondary Education

The curriculum of the secondary education is divided into lower and higher stages. The lower secondary curriculum includes three languages (regional, Hindi, English), Mathematics, Science, Social science (History, Geography, Civics, Economics & Commerce), Art & Craft, Work-experience & Social Service, Physical education and education of moral and spiritual values. At the higher secondary stage, the students have to choose a stream—Arts, Science or Commerce. Based on their stream, they are allowed to choose subjects. Apart from this, vocational stream is also available, where the students learn vocational subjects.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: State two objectives of primary education in India.

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Q 10: Mention one specific characteristics of higher secondary curriculum.

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7.8 HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

You have seen in the Section 7.3 of this Unit that after independence, first priority was given to university system. Higher education in India refers to education after secondary education. So, formally, higher education starts after 12 years of school education. Depending on the stream, under-graduation in India can take three to five years. Postgraduate courses are

generally of two to three years of duration. After completing post-graduation, scope for doing research in various educational institutes also remains open. The institutional framework of higher education in India is complex. There are several types of institutions—universities, colleges, institutions of national importance, post-graduate institutions and polytechnics. Generally, only the universities are authorized to grant degrees. But by special acts of Parliament, the institutions of national importance have also been authorized to grant degrees. Post-graduate institutions and polytechnics can grant diplomas and are to be recognized by the All India Council of Technical Education. There are different types of universities in India—Unitary, Federal, Residential, Affiliating, Affiliating-cum-teaching, Central, State, Private and Deemed University. The universities, deemed universities and institutions of national importance are largely autonomous institutions entitled by law to design, develop and offer programs which they consider relevant and appropriate for the national needs. The colleges and institutes are regulated by the universities to which they are affiliated. Undergraduate or Bachelor's degrees, as it is called in the fields of arts, humanities, social sciences, science and commerce are mostly three-year programs. Diploma programs exist and range from 2-3 years in length and are provided at polytechnics, colleges or universities, culminating in an Advanced or Post-Graduate Diploma. Professional Bachelor's degrees, in the fields of Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Law, etc. vary from 4–5$^{1}/_{2}$ years depending upon the discipline. As there are variety of institutions and programs of higher education, a number of professional, coordinating and regulatory bodies and councils have been established to ensure balanced and healthy growth of higher education in the country. In India, the higher education system is primarily the responsibility of the state governments. Although the central government has established and funded the central universities and some institutions of national repute like IITs, IIMs, etc.

7.8.1 Objectives of Higher Education

The chief aim of higher education is search for truth and achievement of excellence. It was emphasized that the higher

education system needs to keep itself dynamic with the changes that are brought in the world. The higher education in India aims to develop proper understanding of self and the world among students. Their all round development should lead to development of the individual as well as the society. A university is considered as the centre of ideas and ideals. The university also aims at preparing students for research activities as well as providing them appropriate environment for carrying out research. So, knowledge generation is another aim of higher education.

7.8.2 Curriculum of Higher Education

The curriculum of higher education is characterized by specialized education. Both at the undergraduate and post-graduate level, the curriculum is organized into semester system. At the Undergraduate level, the students study the subject of their choice as core course along with some elective courses. The post graduate students must be trained in hard intellectual endeavour which must form an essential feature of any good higher education institution. So, the post graduate curriculum is very specialized on one specific subject area. Along with teaching, another important dimension of university is research. The Universities offer Ph.D degrees as an outcome of research work. The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) was introduced by the UGC in an attempt to encourage a more interdisciplinary approach to education and offer more flexibility to students. Under this system, a standardized assessment and grading plan based upon a 10 point scale is also introduced.

The National Education Policy 2020 has suggested for radical reformation of the higher education system so as to deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. It has suggested for a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages; providing more autonomy

to faculty and institutions; revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences; reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service; establishment of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges; governance of HEIs by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy; "light but tight" regulation by a single regulator for higher education; increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education; scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities.



7.9 LET US SUM UP

- During Vedic period, education was mainly based on the ancient Indian philosophy. The aim of education was to build character of the students and their spiritual development.
- Due to the limitations of the Vedic education system, Buddhist education system evolved in India. The Buddhist system also aimed at attainment of Nirvana. It was more secular in nature that the post-Vedic period education.
- The aim of education during the Muslim period was the extension of knowledge and propagation of Islamic principles, laws and social conventions. Education was based on religion. More stress was laid on practical utility of education.
- Under British rule, Indian education was re-shaped and many attempts

were made to formulate an appropriate kind of education for Indians.

- After independence, various Committees and commissions were constituted to bring about educational development in the country, Radhakrishnan Commission, Mudaliar Commission, Kothari Commission.
- The first National Education Policy in independent India was formulated in 1968, later reframed in 1986.
- The common educational structure suggested by the National Education Policy 1986 was 10+2+3. The National Education Policy 2020 has recommended for the 5+3+3+4 structure of education.
- The main features of Indian educational system may be pointed out as—it is managed by private as well as public sector, it is based on constitutional principles, it follows a common educational structure and a national curriculum framework, it follows the principle of equality of educational opportunity and it gives equal weightage to open and distance learning system.
- The supreme administrative body at the Central level is the Ministry of Education which formulate and implement National Education Policy and also issues related guidelines on various matters related to education. Various national and state level agencies assist the ministry to administer education system of the country.
- Elementary education comprises of lower primary (Classes 1 to 4/5) and upper primary (Classes 4/6 to 8). It is a fundamental right of every Indian citizen.
- The aim of elementary/primary education is all round development of the child.
- The curriculum of lower primary stage includes mother-tongue, mathematics, environmental studies, creative activities, work experiences, social service and health education.
- The upper primary stage includes two languages (mother tongue or regional language and English), mathematics, science, social studies, art, work experience and social service, physical education and education of moral and spiritual values.

- The secondary education comprise of Class 9 to 12. Classes 9 and 10 are known as secondary or lower secondary stage and 11 and 12 are known as higher secondary stage.
- The main aims of secondary education are developing leadership qualities, character formation, vocational efficiency, democratic citizenship.
- The lower secondary curriculum includes three languages (regional, Hindi, English), Mathematics, Science, Social science (History, Geography, Civics, Economics & Commerce), Art & Craft, Work-experience & Social Service, Physical education and education of moral and spiritual values.
- At the higher secondary stage, the students have to choose a stream—Arts, Science or Commerce.
- In India, higher education starts after 12 years of school education.
- Depending on the stream, under-graduation in India can take three to five years. Postgraduate courses are generally of two to three years of duration.
- There are several types of institutions—universities, colleges, institutions of national importance, post-graduate institutions and polytechnics.
- There are different types of universities in India—Unitary, Federal, Residential, Affiliating, Affiliating-cum-teaching, Central, State, Private and Deemed University.
- The chief aim of higher education is search for truth and achievement of excellence.
- The curriculum of higher education is characterized by specialized education.
- At the Undergraduate level, the students study the subject of their choice as core course along with some elective courses. The post graduate curriculum is very specialized on one specific subject area.
- The National Education Policy 2020 suggested for a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges.



7.10 FURTHER READING

1) Dem, K. (2019). A Comparative Study of Primary Education System in India and Bhutan (Focus on Indian Rural Primary Schools). Proceeding of the 2nd International Conference on Future of Education, Vol. 2, Issue 1,2019, pp. 12-21. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17501/26307413.2019.2102

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7.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The main aim of education was to build character of the students and bring spiritual development.

Ans to Q No 2: Sadler Commission was constituted to reform university education in the year 1917.

Ans to Q No 3: The first National Education Policy was formulated in 1968.

Ans to Q No 4: The common educational structure followed in India is

10+2+3 which means 10 years of schooling, 2 years of higher secondary and three years of under-graduate course.

Ans to Q No 5: Two schemes are Mid- Day Meal Scheme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyaloya.

Ans to Q No 6: The highest authority at the Central level controlling the education system of India is the Ministry of Education.

Ans to Q No 7: True

Ans to Q No 8: The functions of NAB are to periodically conduct evaluation of Technical Institutions or Programs and to give recommendations regarding recognition or de-recognition of the institution or program.

Ans to Q No 9: Two objectives of primary education are— To bring about a harmonious development of the child's personality and to prepare the children for good citizenship.

Ans to Q No 10: At the higher secondary stage, the students have to choose a stream—Arts, Science or Commerce.



7.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1: Mention one difference between Vedic and Buddhist education system.

Q 2: State one objective of secondary education in India.

Q 3: Which body assesses the university education system?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write a short note on the education system of India before British rule.

Q 2: Give a brief account of the curriculum of secondary education in India.

C. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Describe the educational administration system of India.

Q 2: Give a detail account of the features of Indian education system.

Q 3: Discuss the changes suggested by NEP 2020 in higher education and analyze the differences with the previous policy.

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