

## Transformative Education: A Strategical Tool for Empowering Social Change and Sustainable Future in the Indian Context

Jibin Jose P<sup>1</sup>, Amutha Dhanaraj<sup>2</sup>, Surbhi Girdhar<sup>3</sup> and Pranav Prakash<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore, India, [jibinjp2815@gmail.com](mailto:jibinjp2815@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2682-8709>

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore, India, [livelittle2815@gmail.com](mailto:livelittle2815@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Forensic Sciences, Shri Vaishnav Vishwavidhyalaya, Indore, : [surbhigirdhar@svvv.edu.in](mailto:surbhigirdhar@svvv.edu.in)

<sup>4</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Criminology, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore, India, [pranavprakash750@gmail.com](mailto:pranavprakash750@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5217-683X>

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### ABSTRACT

The world faces many issues with a growing population and the continued exploitation of natural resources. People all over the world are more concerned with achieving economic growth than they are with protecting the environment and moral ideals from deterioration. Indian society is not different from this global trend. The intensity of the environmental crisis is heightened by the threat of global warming and its links to many social, political, and economic aspects. Given how necessary it is for humanity to continue existing, addressing these problems poses a significant challenge. People's convictions and actions can be changed through education, which has been proven to be a step towards producing long-lasting effects. The ability to live sustainably is a responsibility that education confers onto society, serving as a precursor to change. Transformative education has a pivotal role to play in building the appropriate attitude and character in children and young people, empowering them to resolve issues both individually and collectively to foster a sustainable future. The National Education Policy 2020 in India envisages distinct ideas to promote sustainable education. Initiating social change through education is a goal-oriented endeavour to address concerns about the unpredictability of sustainable development, the failure of which will force future generations to live in an insecure condition of existential peril. This article investigates the role of transformative education in reframing learners' perspectives to impact social change and create a society of sustainable future in India.

### KEYWORDS

NEP 2020, Social change, Sustainable future, Transformative education, India

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The expanding population and ongoing exploitation of natural resources have jeopardised life on Earth, and if not addressed, they might have disastrous consequences. Globally, people are more focused on attaining economic prosperity than preventing the decline of moral principles and the environment. Human activities cause irrevocable and life-threatening alterations in many ecological systems on Earth, which might be fatal for all life (Rockström et al., 2009). The threat posed by global warming and its implications for several social, political, and economic facets intensify the global environmental problem. Poverty, pandemics, famine, political upheaval, internal and international conflicts, and civil wars are all possible repercussions of this state, which occurs regularly in many parts of the world. India, the largest democratic and populated country in the world also experiences a significantly crucial situation concerning the protection of nature and natural resources. Given the importance of humanity's continued existence, tackling these issues is an enormous challenge.

Educating people about the gravity of their reckless actions and the responsibility of global citizenship is one of the effective ways to address this issue. Education has a huge role to play in changing people's attitudes and perspectives so that they fit the well-being of the entire world. It has the power to alter people's beliefs and behaviours, and this is a step towards creating long-lasting benefits. Modern society demands transformative education because it can empower the young generations with the skills and values, they need to not only succeed in the present but also to bring about the kind of social change that will ultimately result in sustainable actions.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research regarding the significant role of education in bringing forth social change towards a sustainable future is considered of greater academic value given the serious threats humanity confronts about existence and survival. Education has been recognised as an effective strategy by the world to influence the minds of generations to initiate changes. Researchers and academicians have shown interest in discussions leading to the potential role of education in bringing about transformation at the global level.

The study “Transformative Learning and Sustainability Education for Global Co-habitation” investigates how design and design education might act as triggers to tackle a number of the world’s pressing problems. It also takes into account the utilisation of transformative learning as a precedent since it makes it easier to change preexisting frames of reference by promoting serious deliberation on presumptions, utilising discourse to validate challenged principles, acting on reflective perceptions, and critically evaluating context and execution. It also considers strategies and techniques that might support transformational learning in an interdisciplinary context, drawing on an educational initiative in designing at Technical University Dublin (Tully, 2023).

The study “Creating 21st Century Global Citizens: A Design-led Systems Approach to Transformative Secondary Education for Sustainability” focuses on a new research agenda that examines how, in the setting of an Australian self-sufficient educational institution, transformative education in the direction of influential global citizenship and international sustainability can be supported through the application of entire system thinking and design-led methods of learning within an all-encompassing ecologically focused learning framework (Winter-Simat et al., 2017).

The article “Creating Social Change: The Ultimate Goal of Education for Sustainability” discusses the beneficial role of education in redirecting students’ thinking to participate in and stimulate social transformation in a globalised society. It delves deeper into how a plan for sustainability created for a class at a New Zealand-based technology institute functions (Sharma & Monteiro, 2016). The study titled “The Living School: The Emergence of a Transformative Sustainability Education Paradigm” presents the viewpoint that the repurposing of education has to be guided by a vision that promotes the well-being of everyone on Earth - individually, as a group, and for life that belongs to nonhuman creatures. It also provides a conceptual framework and identifies some theoretical and practical aspects of what the authors are describing as the living school notion, as part of a developing transformational sustainable education paradigm (O’Brien & Howard, 2016).

In the article “Transformative Learning: Innovating Sustainability Education in Built Environment” the researchers evaluate the impact of transformative learning on sustainability education in Asia-Pacific universities. It also reports on a research project to integrate sustainability into engineering and built environment curricula (Iyer-Raniga & Andamon, 2016). The article “Towards Using Transformative Education as a Benchmark for Clarifying Differences and Similarities between Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development” examines transformational educational objectives in the context of environmental education and education for sustainable development. It delves into the conclusion that by using these objectives as a guide, immediate issues with either type of education may be resolved, and policies and practices that are acceptable for a variety of educational situations can be clarified (Pavlova, 2013).

A study on “Education for Sustainable Development: An Empirical Study of the Tensions and Challenges Faced by Geography Student Teachers” identifies and discusses the challenges relating to the subject matter’s intricacy, teaching and learning methods and techniques, and discrepancies among student teachers’ perspectives on education for sustainable development. The study clarifies the characteristics of these challenges to suggest appropriate learning outcomes and classroom activities (Corney, 2006). The article “Global Education and Education for Sustainability” focuses on the link between developmental education and education for ecological sustainability. It delves further into the present issues for practical application, conceptual discussion, and research agenda in global education (Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006).

Reviewed literature of the concerned area reveals that scholars and academicians have explored the significance of education as a precursor of positive change towards sustainable development in a global context. However, the exploration of the same in the Indian context is limited. Given the context, this article aims to investigate the transformative power of education to influence the thoughts and actions of the people to work towards a sustainable future in India.

### **3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 Indian Education System**

Education is a process that leads to the development of an individual through behaviour modification and all-round development. India has a strong and effective educational system from elementary to higher education. Indian constitution declares education a fundamental right of every Indian child. The country ensures its accessibility to all children by enacting the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act passed by the Parliament of India in 2009. It describes that every child between the ages of 6 to 14 years in India is entitled to free and compulsory education and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure it.

India is the world's most populous country and has abundant human resources. People must be aware of the necessity of working toward a sustainable future as the nation and the rest of the globe deal with issues like population expansion, resource depletion, and climate change brought on by global warming. The world will face

an existential and sustainable dilemma soon if the current rate of natural resource consumption and non-renewable energy source use continues. There is a global call for action to address these challenges at the highest priority from various quarters. Under the direction of the United Nations Organization, efforts are being made, although not to the anticipated extent. It is past time for India to play a big part in these initiatives and involve every one of its citizens in the quest for a favourable outcome. In this regard, changing people's beliefs and attitudes is primarily the responsibility of education and educational institutions. Educational institutions and their stakeholders in India have a pivotal role to play in sensitising the young generation to be actively involved in environmental protection measures. The National Education Policy 2020 of the Government of India focuses on innovative and creative pedagogical techniques to effectively employ transformative education to bring in progressive changes in the younger generations.

### 3.2 Transformative Education – Need of the Hour

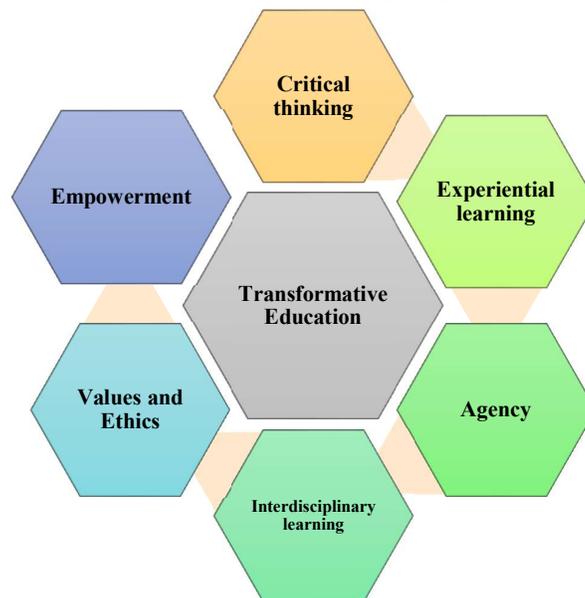
The need for transformational education for sustainability is more important than ever, given the severe environmental, social, and economic problems facing humanity. Through the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum, the development of critical thinking skills, and the empowerment of individuals to take action for the betterment of society, transformative education goes beyond standard educational approaches. It attempts to change students - rather than just imparting knowledge - so they make meaningful contributions to a sustainable future.

Transformative education goes beyond the limitations of traditional teaching. It places a strong emphasis on integrated learning and challenges students to think analytically about topics that affect the real world, such as social justice, economic equality, and sustainability in the environment. Learners are no longer viewed as passive knowledge consumers, but rather as active advocates for change who can comprehend challenging issues and put up environmentally friendly solutions. This strategy fosters a sense of duty and commitment.

In contrast to traditional education, which frequently places a strong emphasis on memorisation and rote retention, transformational education places a strong emphasis on multidisciplinary methods, hands-on experience, and individuals' active participation in their academic achievement. Education systems must be reoriented to better equip students with the skills required to alleviate the present situation of environmental destruction, diminution of resources, and social inequality (Pettig & Ohl, 2023; Singer-Brodowski et al., 2022). In India, where the educational system has traditionally been exam-driven and focused on a small number of courses, transformational education signifies a change towards more accessible, adaptable, and context-relevant learning.

### 3.3 Transformative Education – Core Principles

The foundation of transformational education is built around several principles. These consist of critical thinking, experiential learning, values and ethics, interdisciplinary learning, empowerment, and agency.



**Figure 1.** Core Principles of Transformative Education

Sustainability-related issues are intricate and multidimensional, requiring knowledge from a range of academic fields. Transformative education promotes multidisciplinary methods by combining information from the humanities, social sciences, and sciences to offer a thorough grasp of concerns about sustainability and the solutions they require. With the use of critical thinking abilities, students can assess and challenge accepted beliefs and methods. It facilitates students' comprehension of the dynamic interactions that occur within social and natural systems.

Cultivating values and ethics is a major focus of transformative education, which forces students to reflect carefully on their obligations to society and the environment. Fostering a feeling of stewardship and advancing international citizenship require this ethical component. Active experiential learning, which incorporates project-based learning, community service, and real-world problem-solving, is a crucial component of transformational education (Cottafava et al., 2019). Through direct engagement with social and environmental concerns, these activities help to connect classroom information with real-world applications, therefore enhancing the relevance of what students learn. Enhancing students' ability to take initiative is the goal of transformative education (Frisk & Larson, 2011; Walshe & Sund, 2021). This entails developing leadership abilities, stimulating creativity, and promoting involvement in sustainability-related decision-making processes.

### **3.4 Transformative Education and NEP 2020**

The educational landscape of India, a nation with a long history of excellence, has changed significantly over time. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a paradigm shift in the nation's approach to education. With an emphasis on inclusiveness, flexibility, and holistic development, NEP 2020 seeks to transform India's educational system while simultaneously advancing global environmental objectives. NEP 2020 creates a catalyst for transformational education in India with its multiple proposals for progressive changes to the country's educational system.

The key focus of NEP 2020 lies in making education more accessible, equitable, and relevant to meet the expectations and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The policy's main components - whole and transdisciplinary learning, flexibility and choice, emphasis on skill development, early childhood care and education, empowerment of teachers, and the promotion of Indian languages and culture - are well-directed towards achieving its goal. These characteristics, which emphasise inclusion, flexibility, and adaptation, are in perfect harmony with the tenets of transformational education. NEP 2020 holds great potential for transformation since it aims to alter India's educational system to produce perpetual learners, responsible citizens, and discerning thinkers.

The National Education Policy 2020 seeks to guarantee that all children have access to high-quality education while lowering dropout rates. The strategy aims to increase equity in education by concentrating on under-represented groups, such as girls, rural residents, and kids with impairments. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - which aims to provide inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education for all - and NEP 2020 are complementary. The policy fosters ideals necessary for sustainable development by advancing responsible citizenship and environmental awareness (Collazo Expósito & Granados Sánchez, 2020; Gadotti, 2008). NEP 2020 promotes the use of digital tools and online platforms for learning, with an emphasis on integrating technology into education. In a nation like India, where it has been difficult to have access to high-quality education in rural and isolated places, this is revolutionary. NEP 2020 introduces a flexible curriculum and ongoing skill development to support lifetime learning. Being adaptable is essential to provide pupils with the information and abilities they need to function in a world that is always changing. Therefore NEP 2020 provides a radical transition in India's educational environment, providing a framework that is in line with the global needs of the twenty-first century while keeping grounded in India's cultural and socioeconomic realities (*National Education Policy 2020, 2020*).

### **3.5 A Tool for Sustainability**

Transformative education is essential in India, where environmental protection issues including deforestation, air pollution, and scarcity of water are major problems. It has the potential to raise awareness of these problems and provide people the confidence to act locally, regionally, and nationally. In India, transformative education can promote a profound awareness of environmental concerns ranging from biodiversity loss to climate change. Students can discover the need for sustainable behaviours and the effects of human activity on the environment by including sustainability in the curriculum at all levels. For example, practical learning activities, like neighbourhood clean-up campaigns or conservation projects, might be included in courses like environmental science.

Beyond theory, education for sustainability needs to promote real-world behavioural changes (Gorman, 2015). Students can study waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, and sustainable agriculture through transformational education. Indian educational institutions could have an impact on the larger society and help lessen the ecological imprint of the nation by encouraging sustainable living practices. The problems of sustainability are intricate and call for creative solutions. Students who get transformative education can comprehend the connections between environmental, social, and economic challenges since it fosters critical thinking as well as systems thinking (Blake et al., 2013). Transformative education imparts to students the importance of resource conservation, biodiversity preservation, and reducing their ecological footprint by bringing environmental consciousness into the curriculum. Schools and colleges may become centres of environmental action by introducing sustainable practices including garbage management, water conservation, and renewable energy programs. Transformative education therefore advances the overarching goal of creating a resilient and sustainable society.

Giving children problem-solving skills can help them create context-specific solutions that address sustainability in their local communities, especially in India, where difficulties are different in rural and urban areas. The

emphasis that transformational education places on diversity is one of its main features (E. A. Lange, 2018). Since India is a varied nation with wide socioeconomic divides, marginalised populations must be included in sustainability initiatives. These groups can be empowered through transformative education if it gives them the information and abilities needed to take part in sustainable development projects. This is especially crucial in rural communities where natural resources are sometimes the primary source of income.

Indigenous groups in India have long engaged in sustainable living, founded on a long history of resource management and conservation. This indigenous wisdom may be acknowledged and included in transformative education, which will assist students in appreciating the significance of long-established sustainable practices. This supports contemporary environmental initiatives while simultaneously protecting cultural heritage. Therefore, these facts underline the potential of transformative education to bring changes in students to work towards a sustainable future.

### **3.6 Implementation**

Sustainability education is both an educational experience and a call to action to partake in sustainability change (Frisk & Larson, 2011). Given India's varied ecosystems, intricate social structures, and quickly expanding population, education for sustainability must enable people and communities to make morally sound decisions that benefit both the environment and society as a whole. Certain measures will be vital in implementing transformative education in the Indian context including curriculum reform, experiential learning, professional empowerment of teachers, incorporating indigenous knowledge, use of digital modes in the educational practices and combined efforts of government and all the stakeholders.

Curriculum reform, or the integration of sustainability ideas into all educational levels, from primary to higher education, is a crucial first step in putting transformational education for sustainability into practice. An interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach must be taken by educational institutions, including sustainability in disciplines such as science, social studies, economics, and even the arts. It is the mode of educational application for future problems and provides qualitative differences over disciplinarity (Gibbons, 1998; Sonawane, 2022). A comprehensive grasp of environmental and social concerns can be developed in pupils by making sustainability a central component of the curriculum. Students can investigate how climate change affects human health, agriculture, and urban planning via hands-on learning, connecting these topics to topics in geography, economics, and biology. Students can apply their knowledge to real-world concerns through hands-on initiatives like community garden creation or environmental audits conducted in schools.

In experiential learning, students actively engage with real-world issues and come up with feasible responses. Engaging in community service, fieldwork, and project-based learning can help achieve this. Students can get a deeper understanding of how their activities affect society and the environment by making connections between classroom instruction and real-world applications (Goralnik & Marcus, 2020). In rural India, where students get involved in renewable energy projects, water conservation efforts, or sustainable agricultural methods, experiential learning can have a particularly positive effect. Students in urban areas can take part in energy audits, trash management initiatives, or public awareness campaigns on climate action. Students get information via practical experiences, but they also get a sense of accountability and empowerment to effect change (Wamsler, 2020).

Educators play a crucial role in guaranteeing the effective execution of transformational learning. To foster sustainability in the classroom, teachers themselves must have a thorough grasp of sustainability concepts and be well-versed in modern pedagogical techniques that promote engaged, student-centred learning (Corres et al., 2020; Weinberg et al., 2020). This can only be accomplished by making large investments in ongoing professional development initiatives as well as teacher preparation. Teachers need specific training modules, certification programs, and workshops that emphasise sustainability if they are to successfully incorporate social and environmental problems into their teaching methods (García-González et al., 2022). Educators also need to be taught in cutting-edge pedagogies, such as inquiry-based learning, in which students use research and questioning to tackle difficult sustainability concerns. Instead of only imparting knowledge, this type of professional development will equip educators to assist students in their educational journeys by acting as facilitators in the learning process.

India has a long history of implementing sustainable practices, especially in its rural and indigenous areas. For many generations, a large number of these communities have practised resource management, sustainable agriculture, and ecological conservation. By incorporating this indigenous knowledge into the educational system, cultural legacy may be preserved and students' understanding of sustainability can be greatly improved. Modern scientific methodology may be included in the curriculum with traditional water management systems, organic farming practices, and sustainable forest management practices. Through the integration of regional expertise with international sustainability frameworks, students may appreciate the value of both innovation and custom in tackling environmental issues.

Transformative education for sustainability cannot be implemented by educational institutions alone. Collaboration between governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors is necessary for effective implementation. With programs like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Indian government has

already created a framework for incorporating sustainability and environmental education into the curriculum. Nonetheless, collaboration between social organisations, environmental agencies, and educational authorities will be necessary for successful implementation. NGOs that prioritise social justice, climate change, and environmental conservation can collaborate with academic institutions to provide resources, knowledge, and opportunities for hands-on learning. These collaborations can also help students get more involved in social action and community service, which will increase their interest in and dedication to sustainability.

Blended learning is an effective method to impart transformative education in India. The emergence of digital technology offers substantial prospects for expanding the reach of sustainability education (Makrakis, 2014). Digital tools, webinars, and online courses can improve the accessibility of sustainability education for students throughout India, especially in rural and distant areas. Digital tools also facilitate global cooperation between experts, educators, and students, which helps to build a global learning community around sustainability (Odell et al., 2019). Engaging students with virtual field excursions, interactive simulations, and online sustainability challenges may be creative and significant. Digital platforms, for example, might make it easier for students to get involved in global projects like biodiversity mapping or climate action simulations, fostering a feeling of universal citizenship while tackling regional environmental issues.

### 3.7 Challenges

Despite the potential of transformative education to bring attitudinal and progressive changes in individuals, its implementation in educational institutions in India faces several challenges. A fundamental barrier to implementing transformational education is a lack of suitable infrastructure, particularly in rural and economically deprived areas. Many schools in India lack basic amenities such as power, clean water to drink, and adequate sanitation. Furthermore, the digital gap remains a significant barrier, with lots of learners unable to take advantage of online education owing to a lack of equipment or internet connection. Without solving these infrastructural gaps, the advantages of transformational education may not be distributed evenly throughout society. Addressing these infrastructural gaps would need substantial investment from both the public and private sectors. To support sustainability projects, schools must have access to resources such as science laboratories, computer labs, and renewable energy.

India's education system has encountered a significant shortage of skilled instructors, particularly in rural areas where many educators lack appropriate training and are overwhelmed with obligations. This condition substantially impedes the implementation of innovative teaching methods and the pursuit of continuous professional growth. The move to transformational education demands instructors who are knowledgeable in their subject areas and skilled at applying innovative pedagogical practices that promote critical thinking and active learning. Addressing this dilemma necessitates the creation and execution of large-scale teacher training programs that provide educators with the abilities required for transformational instruction. Such programs would need extensive professional development, including exposure to student-centred learning strategies, inquiry-based approaches, and sustainability education. However, the implementation of these initiatives is complicated since they are resource-intensive and demand significant investments in both infrastructure and human resources. Furthermore, ongoing efforts will be required to develop support mechanisms that allow instructors to incorporate innovative pedagogical techniques into their daily teaching situations, especially in underserved rural communities.

Exam-oriented teaching and memorisation have always been the main features of the Indian educational system. This method frequently places more emphasis on factual memorisation than on teaching pupils how to think critically, be creative, or solve problems in order to perform on standardised tests. Due to the deeply ingrained character of this culture, educational reform faces a great deal of difficulty as it calls for adjustments to both teaching methods and social and parental expectations around academic performance. A thorough reorientation of both instructional techniques and assessment methodologies is necessary to transition from an exam-centric paradigm to a more holistic, skills-based educational framework. Curriculum that emphasises inquiry-based learning, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary approaches that motivate students to interact with real-world problems can be implemented as part of this shift (Tabucanon, 2010). But for this transition to be successful, persistent efforts to educate teachers, rethink success criteria, and cultivate a culture shift that prioritises lifelong learning and critical thinking development over academic performance are required. This will probably be a slow process that calls for constant cooperation from parents, legislators, educational institutions, and the larger society. Resistance to educational changes is common, especially from different stakeholders when the reforms are as extensive as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Adopting new methods or curricula can cause hesitation among parents, students, teachers, and administrators, particularly if these changes are seen as unpredictable or dangerous. A fundamental transformation in the thinking of society is required for transformative education, and this transition must occur not just within educators but also among the larger community. In environments where traditional education paradigms, which emphasise rote learning and standardised testing, are thoroughly embedded, resistance to such changes is especially strong. In places where exam scores and academic accomplishment are valued more highly than critical thinking, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility, the implementation of transformational education for sustainability may aggravate resistance to it.

Parents and students may see sustainability education as ancillary to more traditional academic aims, while teachers and administrators may be reluctant to adopt novel pedagogical techniques.

Addressing this opposition will need a planned, multidimensional strategy. Strong advocacy and focused awareness campaigns are critical for demonstrating the long-term worth of sustainability education in educating students to face future concerns such as climate change, resource depletion, and socioeconomic inequities. A phased, progressive implementation plan will also be required, allowing stakeholders to adjust to new practices while also acknowledging the larger benefits of a more holistic, future-oriented educational paradigm.

Allocating resources effectively is a major obstacle to implementing transformational education in a large country like India. Transformative education at the national level requires significant funding to update facilities, include digital resources, and offer thorough training for teachers. Although the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has lofty goals, obtaining the required funds and guaranteeing the effective and fair allocation of resources are crucial, especially considering the size and diversity of India's population. NEP 2020's goal of a sustainable education system will need to be realised via consistent policy commitment and a prioritisation of funding. Investments need to go towards important areas like curriculum reform, modernising school buildings, and professional development for teachers. It is particularly difficult to provide fair access to sustainability education in India because of differences in socioeconomic status and between urban and rural areas.

To ensure that sustainability education reaches every segment of society, cooperation between state governments, private educational institutions, and civil society organisations is crucial. This covers underprivileged areas and marginalised groups, where there are frequently more severe resource limitations. Financial, technological, and human resources must be mobilised at all educational system levels in order to accomplish these goals.

### **3.8 Social Change in India**

The concept of a sustainable society refers to “a society that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (E. Lange & O’Neil, 2018, p. 275). Transformative education primarily focuses on developing such societies across the globe. As a social process that rebuilds society, education is essential to nourishing hope for a brighter future and enabling the next generation to live happy, meaningful lives. This conviction in the transforming power of education has led to a slow but continuous shift in educational aims in India and worldwide (Subitha G.V., 2015). India is afflicted by several societal issues such as gender inequality, poverty, and restricted access to high-quality education. Addressing these intricate problems necessitates a radical approach to education that reinterprets society's values and empowers people to act as change agents, rather than merely little, gradual changes. Significant potential exists for fostering social transformation in India through transformative education, which prioritises critical thinking, social consciousness, and action-based learning.

Transformative education can play a significant role in breaking down deeply ingrained obstacles related to social stratification, gender prejudice, and cultural differences in a culture that has historically been influenced by these factors. Raising awareness and motivating students to interact critically with their surroundings can address structural injustices, empower marginalised populations, and advance the creation of a more inclusive and equitable society. Transformative education may encourage students to become agents of constructive social change and help create a just and equitable future for all through its emphasis on reflection and active involvement. Caste-based discrimination is a persistent societal issue in India that has disadvantaged millions of individuals, especially those from the Dalit and Adivasi tribes. Transformative education may be a vital tool in questioning and destroying caste-based systems of power by advancing human dignity, equality, and inclusiveness. Transformative education may promote empathy and understanding among students from diverse socioeconomic origins by developing an inclusive curriculum that emphasises the challenges and contributions of marginalised populations. In addition, schools and other educational facilities can serve as places where kids learn to communicate with classmates from different groups and castes, removing social obstacles that have long supported segregation. A curriculum that prioritises social justice together with this exposure to diversity has the power to progressively change public perceptions and advance an inclusive society.

In India, gender inequality is still a major problem as women and girls frequently encounter obstacles in their pursuit of higher education, jobs, and decision-making chances. By dispelling outdated gender preconceptions and conventions that restrict the roles that women can play in society, transformative education can advance gender equality. The value of equal rights, opportunities, and respect for both genders may be instilled in pupils through a curriculum that considers gender equality. Furthermore, by giving girls and women the information, abilities, and self-assurance to question social norms, transformational education may empower them. To overcome the cycle of poverty and discrimination that many women experience, education can provide possibilities for leadership positions, entrepreneurship, and financial independence.

Education has always been thought of as a vehicle for social mobility; however, transformational education has the potential to greatly increase this ability by giving marginalised populations the information and skills they need to become self-sufficient. Access to high-quality education is still restricted in many impoverished rural parts of India, which feeds the cycle of poverty and disenfranchisement. Transformative education is essential in providing marginalised students with the chance to overcome socioeconomic hurdles because of its emphasis on

inclusiveness and equal access.

People who get transformative education are more equipped to analyse the social environment in which they live and recognise the systemic injustices that affect them. For marginalised communities, this critical consciousness approach is essential to identifying and confronting the structures which sustain their marginalisation. Developing a critical consciousness is essential for enabling historically marginalised groups in India, such as Dalits, tribal communities, and religious minorities, to fight for social justice and their rights in the face of institutional injustice.

Critical consciousness is greatly aided by community-based educational programs, especially those run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in rural regions. Along with offering formal education, these initiatives also promote legal rights, social entitlements, and ways to get government services. Through the provision of tools to critically engage with local social realities, these projects enable marginalised groups to demand more equality and justice in society and to confront long-standing inequities.

Individuals can develop engaged citizenship and social responsibility through transformative education. It seeks to develop not just knowledgeable people but also engaged citizens who take ownership of bettering their neighbourhoods and society as a whole (Bell, 2016). Education has the potential to motivate students to participate in social and political processes in India, where civic engagement is frequently restricted owing to disenchantment with political institutions or ignorance. Through imparting knowledge on citizens' rights and obligations, as well as the value of democracy, responsible government, and public engagement, transformational education may contribute to the development of a more involved and active society. Since many of India's most serious social issues - such as poverty, resource scarcity, and food insecurity - are closely related to environmental degradation, tackling environmental sustainability is essential to achieving social transformation in the country. Transformative education is essential in this sense because it makes students more conscious of the environment and gives them a thorough grasp of how social well-being and ecological health are interdependent (Essomba et al., 2022).

Schools can instil a feeling of environmental responsibility in their pupils by including environmental education in the curriculum (Tilbury, 2004). With the help of this method, students are encouraged to use sustainable behaviours in their daily lives in addition to developing a theoretical grasp of them. Students can participate in larger community-based conservation initiatives thanks to transformative education's emphasis on experiential learning, which encourages active participation with sustainability concerns. By empowering people to understand their part in reducing environmental problems and to promote sustainable development strategies that uphold social justice and ecological preservation, such an educational approach can help protect the environment. In this sense, transformational education turns into a crucial instrument for tackling India's dual concerns of environmental sustainability and social advancement.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Addressing India's intricate environmental and social issues can potentially be aided by transformative education for sustainability. India can produce a new generation of students who are prepared to make valuable contributions to a fair, equitable, and sustainable society by incorporating sustainability into the curriculum, promoting experiential learning, empowering educators, and encouraging collaboration among varied stakeholders. But in order to make this vision a reality, significant challenges including inadequate infrastructure, opposition to pedagogical reform, and budgetary limitations must be overcome.

With an emphasis on diversity, adaptability, and lifelong learning, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a strategic roadmap for putting transformational education into practice. With its distinct problems and enormous promise, India makes transformational education more than just a choice - it is essential to creating a more just and sustainable future. With its structure that is both globally compliant and deeply anchored in India's cultural and socioeconomic realities, the NEP 2020 marks a turning point in the country's educational environment.

Transformative education for sustainability could grow into a pillar of India's development plan with persistent creativity, effort, and cooperation from all societal sectors. With the help of this strategy, the country's educational system might be redesigned to better suit the needs of the twenty-first century and promote critical thinking, social responsibility, and holistic learning. It equips individuals to deal with the ongoing socioeconomic difficulties in the nation as well as the quickly changing global environment.

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