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Early Childhood Education in India and Traces of Colonial Regimes: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Early Childhood Education in India and Traces of Colonial Regimes: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Master of Science
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Snigdha Rampal
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Abstract

Globalization and postcolonialism, as fields of inquiry, are vast, interdisciplinary, and marked by a diversity of concepts. Colonialism catalyzes globalization, disseminating and influencing human existence through Eurocentric knowledge (Bhatia, 2020; Hanson et al., 2018). Within the expansive scopes of globalization and postcolonialism, this research examines their relevance to early childhood education (ECE) in India. To do this, a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of selected global ECE texts, government documents, and national standards was conducted. The overall research question asked: How do colonial discourses influence ECE texts and documents in India? A qualitative research paradigm along with a CDA was used to deconstruct the discourse of global agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and local National Education Policy (NEP 2020). Findings indicate the rhetorical use of deficit discourse by WB to introduce neoliberal policies of privatization in education and educational aid while narrowing the purpose of education to attain skills to gain profits. While NEP 2020 offers a counterbalance of ECE rooted in local values and ethics, the influence of global standards, particularly through standardized testing, remains significant. The findings underscore the need for postcolonial nations to assert autonomy in shaping their educational agendas, prioritizing inclusivity, and cultural responsiveness. Further research should examine how these policies not only affect national and local policy documents but also the implications on daily local practices. This would provide a clearer understanding of the real-world impact on teachers, children, and families.

**Keywords**: Early childhood education, India, postcolonialism, globalization, critical discourse analysis
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Literature Review ..................................................................................1  
  Historical Background of ECE in India .................................................................1  
  Education: An Instrument for Colonialism ............................................................4  
  Globalization: The Myth of a Global Childhood .................................................5  
  Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Euro-Western Dominant Discourses ....7  

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework .......................................................................12  
  Globalization and Postcolonialism .......................................................................12  

Chapter 3: Methodology .......................................................................................15  
  Overview of CDA ...................................................................................................15  
  Document Selection and Rationale ......................................................................20  
  Data Analysis ........................................................................................................22  
  Trustworthiness .....................................................................................................22  
  Positionality Statement .........................................................................................23  

Chapter 4: Findings ...............................................................................................24  
  Theme One: Neoliberal Shift in Education .........................................................24  
    Beyond Schooling: Privatization vs Local Value System ................................25  
    Streamlining Education: A Neoliberal Push for More with Less ...................29  
  Theme 2: Negotiations Between the Global and the Local ...............................30  
    The Local Response to the Learning Crisis ......................................................32  
    Negotiation and the Third-Space ......................................................................36  

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks ..........................................................................38  

References ..............................................................................................................40  

Vita ............................................................................................................................50
Chapter 1: Literature Review

This section presents a chronological overview of ECE in India, moving through traditional, colonial, and post-colonial phases. Following this historical progression, the discussion shifts to a critical evaluation of the universalization of childhood and the role of global agencies, particularly from the Global North, in influencing ECE practices in the Global South.

Historical Background of ECE in India

India, as a nation, has been shaped by numerous socio-cultural transformations, spanning from the Indus Valley civilization to its current post-colonial status. These transitions have played a pivotal role in reshaping the concept of infancy and childhood, evolving from pre-colonial to colonial eras and continuing into the post-colonial era. In this section, an overview of these pivotal historical shifts in India’s cultural landscape will briefly be explained. Pre-colonial India saw the rich tapestry of the Indus Valley civilization, successive foreign invasions, and the emergence of major religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Amidst the vibrant cultural mosaic of India, ECE has had its roots deeply embedded in religious practices and rituals. These rituals, their features, and their cultural underpinnings have had a profound influence on shaping students’ educational lives (Altekar, 1993).

The origins of ECE in India can be traced back to religious texts such as the Veda, Upanishad, Vedanta, Brahmana, and the Bhagavad Gita (Gupta, 2013). In contrast to contemporary developmental stages; the birth of a child in ancient India was marked by elaborate ceremonies, rituals, and significant events. These events included the first feeding, the naming of the child, and the first hair-shaving ceremony. Another dissimilarity to Western practices was that no toilet training or any other form of training was imposed; the child learns naturally by
imitating the adults (Scharfe, 2003). During infancy, children were closer to their mothers as the father was occupied with vocational responsibilities outdoors (Bhattacharji, 2012). In the first few years, the mother was supported by her mother, grandmother, and other female caregivers (Scharfe, 2003). The Indian mothers would nurse their kids for at least two years and never leave them alone; they were either carried by a mother or a relative on an arm or waist. The child sleeps by the mother’s side at least for the first five years. This active involvement of mothers did not make the infant helpless as the child was actively performing developmental activities to maintain connection and communication with the mother (Kakar, 2012).

In pre-colonial India, the norm was to commence formal education at the age of five, with children being sent to Gurukul, i.e., residential schools or the homes of gurus (teachers). The Guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship held profound significance, with the Gurus playing a pivotal role in shaping their students' character (Selvamani, 2019). This education aimed not only at economic betterment but also at exploring profound questions about life's purpose, human nature, the causes of suffering, the path to a content and peaceful life, and the relationship between human energy and the universe. It was within this educational framework that life’s goal; dharma (morality), artha (economics), kama (fulfillment of bodily desires), and moksha (salvation) found their place, guiding individuals toward a deeper understanding of life and the quest for moksha.

The methods of instruction primarily involved oral communication and Chintan (reflective thinking). The transmission of knowledge occurred orally from the guru to the students. Simultaneously, the Chintan method engaged the mental faculties of children in memorizing hymns and the pursuit of moksha, or liberation from suffering, was intricately
connected to the above goals. While acknowledging the importance of financial well-being and the fulfillment of bodily desires in human life, these practices were viewed within the context of morality and salvation. Moksha, the ultimate goal, could be attained through the realization of the self, achieved by looking beyond one's ego and shedding the impurities of the material world, including energy and inertia. This self-clarity led to liberation from suffering and ultimately to the achievement of moksha. In contrast to the Western concept of self, the self was defined through an individual's social relationships, encompassing the principles of dharma, karma, artha, and moksha. Similarly, the ideas of knowledge contrast with the Western idea of knowledge; as Western knowledge emphasizes outward knowledge, ancient education emphasizes inward knowledge or knowledge of self. Hence ancient education focused on concentration, self-reflection, and focus (Gupta, 2013).

To achieve the realization of self, the designed curriculum offered students a simple life in the house of their guru. The instructional methodology primarily involved oral communication and Chintan. The transmission Vedas, a cognitive capacity known as Manan Shakti (mental power), is deemed essential for knowledge acquisition. A wide array of subjects, including religion, medicine, philosophy, literature, warfare, astrology, and Ayurveda, were encompassed within the Gurukul system (Yadav, 2018). Emphasis was given to hygiene and morality, and education was made accessible to all without charge (Kashalkar, 2013; Yadav, 2018).

In Euro-Western ECE, the meaning of play is constructed as a tool for learning. In India, the significance of play can be traced back to ancient Indian mythological, religious, and philosophical texts, where it was an integral part of learning and development. Play served a multifaceted purpose, fostering values like sharing, cooperation, and rule-following while
imparting survival skills such as dealing with harassment, deception, teasing, and trickery. These skills were not formally taught but were inherited across generations. The play did not confine itself to designated playrooms or areas; instead, children freely ventured into one another’s houses, engaging in play with whatever resources were at hand (Roger & Gupta, 2011).

**Education: An Instrument for Colonialism**

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the construction of child development and what is regarded as appropriate for children, it is imperative to delve into the historical context of imperialism. Imperialism’s emergence occurred simultaneously during the Enlightenment era in European history, where perspectives such as progress, scientific inquiry, rationality, and logical thinking were encouraged (Clarysse, 2023). This period marked a shift away from irrational and superstitious beliefs where the promotion of scientific knowledge was referred to as project modernity (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). Bhabha (2012) discussed project modernity as a tool to exercise colonial power by creating ‘subject people’. This construction of knowledge of the subject people as inferior helped the colonies to legitimize their rule. The indigenous knowledge existing before colonization was never acknowledged. The idea of knowledge became unquestioned and universalist. The meaning of human life, literacy, beliefs, and reality was constructed in the West and imposed on the world (Cannella & Viruru, 2004).

The colonial discourse of dismantling Western knowledge as a project of modernity was evident from the educational policies of India during colonial times (Mondal, 2022). After the Charter Act of 1813, the power to implement a modern education system in India was given to the East India Company. However, this was not simply parting Western knowledge to the indigenous people. The policies were shaped to fulfill the needs of the East India Company
requiring low-ranking professionals on minimum wage. The most significant move to build a modern education system was taken in 1835 when the debate around the medium of instruction in India resulted in Macaulay’s Minute making English the medium of instruction (Gupta, 2006; Gupta, 2022). The aim of the education was drawn from the famous Macauley’s Minute where he wrote, “We must at present do our best to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, morals and in intellect” (Government record cited in Mondal, 2022). However, the implementation of Western knowledge and language on Indigenous resulted in cramming and rote memorization (Seth, 2007). English among indigenous became a material good that they could use to get a government job. The importance of English medium school was transactional and became popular among middle-class families. Post-independence, Indian leaders envisioned India as a progressive and prosperous nation. The idea of nationalism was to create a modern India that could challenge the caste system and uplift the marginalized groups within the country. However, the universal meaning of modernity in middle-class India was rooted in colonial culture and intellectual makeup (Panikkar, 2011). Hence, educational changes were tailored to meet the expectations and preferences of the middle class, leading to the perpetuation of the colonial-era mindset and values in the education system and society at large.

Globalization: The Myth of a Global Childhood

The enduring desire of the middle class to embrace Euro-Western practices remained unaltered even after the process of physical decolonization. This unshifting commitment to Western ideals can be attributed to the universalization of the Western concept of modernity, a notion deeply embedded within the colonial education system. Even in the aftermath of gaining independence from British colonial rule, the far-reaching influence of Western cultural
hegemony on knowledge and worldviews persisted, leaving an indelible mark on school curricula and pedagogical methods (Enslin, 2017).

The expansion of colonial empires during the colonial era laid the foundation for subsequent global economic and cultural integration (de Castro, 2019; Hanson et al., 2018; Hulboj, 2020). In the 21st century, globalization has played a pivotal role in intensifying interactions between former colonizers and colonized nations, resulting in a more intricate and interconnected relationship between these countries. Neoliberal policies have further expanded geopolitical boundaries for trade and modes of production, facilitating the outsourcing of markets and labor, monetization of services, products, and the market for daily living. This dynamic transformation has profoundly shaped the contemporary global landscape, fostering a complex web of economic, cultural, and political connections. The social phenomena of globalization also impacted child development and the meaning of childhood. The concept of a global child, often criticized for its Western-centric perspective, has been examined for its failure to include scholars from the Global South in shaping our understanding of child development. Some scholars argue that globalization has inadvertently perpetuated imperial domination (Escobar, 2008), while others, like Samir Amin (2011), have criticized capitalism for exacerbating social inequalities and injustices between the Global North and South.

An editorial on childhood in 1996 proposed that globalization had a profound impact on human existence in both the Global North and Global South, converging the world into a shared economy, ecology, and technoscientific culture (Hanson et al., 2018). Consequently, globalization plays a pivotal role in shaping the global perspective on childhood, which is integral to the structural changes of the modern era. However, Imoh (2016) contends that the
notion of a global child, primarily originating in the Global North, contrasts with the local childhood experiences of the Global South. This North-South childhood dichotomy, while attempting to offer a comprehensive view of childhood, falls short in addressing the continued marginalization of childhood in the Global South and the legitimization of pedagogies rooted in the Global North.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Euro-Western Dominant Discourses**

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is a significant guideline in ECE, presented as a position statement by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a nonprofit organization in the United States (US). This statement provides crucial principles and standards for ECE. The roots of NAEYC can be traced back to the early 1920s when the need for high-quality education for young children was recognized, especially as nursery schools for young children were expanding. Patty Smith, the inaugural president of NAEYC, assembled a group of 25 members from diverse disciplines to focus on enhancing the quality of nursery education. In 1929, the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) was founded, and it published its first book, *Minimum Essentials for Nursery Education*. Over the years, NANE evolved, expanded its membership, and became a standard-setter in the field of ECE. It was involved in various aspects, such as teacher professional development, the evaluation of teaching methods, curriculum development, assessment, and teacher education. Between the 1930s and 1940s, NANE was actively involved in the development of nursery school and childhood programs, especially during World War II and the Great Depression, as part of the Works Progress Administration. By the 1950s, state, local, and regional nursery schools had the opportunity to affiliate with NANE, but it was a requirement for all their members to join the national association. This strategy led to a substantial increase in
membership, making NANE highly regarded among nursery schools in the US. In 1964, NANE underwent a reorganization and was renamed NAEYC to reflect its broader role in ECE beyond just nursery education. This pivotal year also marked the beginning of the Head Start program, which brought public attention to preschool education (NAEYC, 2014).

It wasn't until 2003 that NAEYC received approval to establish a global alliance. The global engagement projects by NAEYC aim to expand and promote the concept of DAPs on a global scale (NAEYC, 2014). Research has indicated that DAP can serve as a fundamental measure of the quality of early learning programs in any country (Hedge & Cassidy, 2009). In 2014, recognizing its increasing global relevance, NAEYC established a Global Engagement Department with a mission to make its materials accessible in multiple languages, provide translations, and facilitate the global sharing of early childhood perspectives (Olmore, 2020). The department's key strategy involves collaborative partnerships, where it adapts resources, content, and expertise to suit the specific needs and cultural contexts of its global allies, aiming to provide culturally appropriate professional learning packages. This initiative is a dedicated effort to enhance ECE worldwide, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in diverse cultural and regional settings.

While DAP has gained widespread recognition and acceptance globally, it has faced criticism when applied in non-Western contexts. For instance, in Asian countries like China, there is a strong emphasis on academic instruction and classroom discipline in preschools (Woodhead et al., 1998). Similarly, in Japan, the focus is on fostering social skills, empathy, and kindness among preschoolers (Holloway, 2000). A study examining the effectiveness of DAP in Korean preschool settings revealed that American teachers were more likely to adhere to DAP guidelines than their Korean counterparts, as Korean teachers tend to adhere to more traditional
practices aligning with their cultural norms (Clarke-Stewart et al., 2006). It is important to note that the challenges faced by DAP in other countries extend beyond cultural differences, e.g., student-teacher ratios in Japan and Korea also play a significant role in the implementation of DAP.

In South Asia, the DAP approach has faced criticism for its failure to account for the postcolonial perspective when shaping early childhood experiences, particularly in countries like India. It has been recognized that culture and history are intricately intertwined, and consequently, ECE should be thoughtfully constructed by acknowledging the complex interplay between colonial legacies, cultural context, and childhood development (Viruru, 2003). A study conducted at Mumbai in India, delved into the perspectives of Indian teachers regarding DAP (Hegde & Cassidy, 2009). The findings illuminated a disconnect between the teachers' beliefs and their practical implementation of DAP. While they professed DAP as their teaching philosophy, they encountered challenges in translating theoretical knowledge to the Indian classroom setting. Furthermore, the study revealed that Indian teachers aspired to align with and meet Western standards of ECE, reflecting the influence of global educational paradigms on local practices.

The above examples underscore the limitations of a universal definition of childhood or the global child, which is rooted in a Euro-American context, leading to a significant deficiency in comprehending what constitutes appropriate practices worldwide. The impact of a universal definition of childhood and developmentally appropriate practices not only proves challenging to apply in diverse cultures but also contributes to a negative interpretation of childhood practices in the Global South. Study has shown that prospective teachers from the US tend to assess the quality of education in Kenya and Nepal through a lens that is more reflective of the minority
world. Consequently, the study recommends the development of a global conceptual model that embraces diverse settings and encourages culturally relevant and appropriate educational practices (Akpovo, et al., 2018).

Vengopal (2014) highlights the necessity of applying local culture to fully achieve DAP. It describes how the aspiration to learn the English language has become legitimate even in rural India, driven by the desires of Indian parents, resulting in rote learning, poor communication skills, and alienating children from their cultural context. The study provides an example of an initiative taken by silk mill workers in a rural village in south India. "Poo-kal," a rural preschool, rejects the idea of a universal preschool and instead focuses on activities, relationships, and skills derived from culturally specific competencies and identities. This approach encompasses speaking the mother tongue, eating on a coconut leaf, and drinking water from a coconut shell while also following the US classroom setting including quiet time, snack time, productive time, self-time, and small group activities, thereby utilizing DAP within the social and cultural context of the child. Despite recognizing the significance of a child's social and cultural context in ECE, it remains challenging to resist the pervasive influence of Western ideals within the context of neoliberal globalization.

The dominance of the neoliberal economic policy is not only reframing the purpose of education but also reconstructing the meaning of creativity. The study on "Edu-capitalism and the governing of ECE and care in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States" reveals how neoliberalism has impacted the concept of creativity in these countries. In the neoliberal world, creativity has become increasingly instrumentalized, valued primarily for its economic contributions rather than as an inherent aspect of human expression and development. ECE and care programs have shifted towards structured and standardized approaches, prioritizing specific
skills seen as beneficial for economic competitiveness. This narrowing of creativity raises concerns about limited opportunities for play, imagination, and child-centered pedagogical approaches. The study highlights the influence of neoliberal ideologies on ECE and care, shaping the understanding and practice of creativity within this context (Garrett, 2020).

It is important to note that the education system in India is not solely based on its national interest but the interest of former colonies to maintain their power and dominance and to create human resources that can serve their interests. Global agencies such as the WB, United Nations, and more recently the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) aid and influence the economic and educational development in the majority-world countries (Gupta, 2022). Furthermore, DAP have been adopted in India because of their global influence (Jambunathan & Caulfield, 2008). DAP is not a mandatory policy but is considered appropriate for learners throughout the world.

**Research Question**

Given the continued dominance of DAP in majority-world countries, the CDA research proposed here, will be used to examine the colonial discourses within ECE texts and documents from India (i.e., a postcolonial country). The overall research question is, “How do colonial discourses influence ECE texts and documents in India?”
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Globalization and Postcolonialism

Globalization and postcolonialism, as fields of inquiry, are vast, interdisciplinary, and marked by a diversity of concepts. These domains, while distinct, exhibit significant overlap and complementarity (Gupta, 2020). It can be argued that colonialism serves as the catalyst for globalization, disseminating and influencing human existence through Eurocentric knowledge (Bhatia, 2020; Hanson et al., 2018). Within the expansive scopes of globalization and postcolonialism, this research centers on specific conceptual ideas with a particular emphasis on their relevance to ECE.

In contemporary discourse, globalization is often referred to as the 'Global village', where global culture and practices seamlessly integrate into local contexts. Although globalization traces back to ancient trade routes, technological advancements in recent times have accelerated its pace and scale. This phenomenon, known as time-space compression or the world is shrinking (Harvey, 2020), is characterized by the swift and extensive interconnectedness of societies. According to Apparadurai (2010), “A central problem in today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and heterogenization” (p.32). In the era of neoliberal globalization, marked by borderless trade, cultural and social practices undergo significant transformation (de Castro, 2019). This process gives rise to hybrid cultures, shaped by dynamics of power, asymmetry, and colonial legacies.

Neoliberal globalization has defined childhood predominantly from a Global North perspective, "Dominantly constructed from global north perspectives, producing a normalized White, male, middle-class, heterosexual version of childhood, where minoritized children are viewed as deficit" (Perez & Saavedra, 2017, p.1). Global agencies such as the WB, UNICEF, and
DAP, grounded in Euro-American ideologies, aim to fix these perceived deficits in the Global South through policies and programs, often marked by the implementation of Western-centric approaches leading to the transformation of culture in the Global South (Gupta, 2022).

Postcolonialism encompasses both the time after physical decolonization and the current interactions between Minority World nations and their former colonies. This paper explores this relationship, delving into the paradoxical dynamic between the colonizer and colonized, described by Nandy (2013) as intimate enmity. Gandhi succinctly captures the postcolonial challenge: 'That we want English rule without Englishman. You want the tiger’s nature, but not the tiger (Gandhi & Parel, 2016, p.26)This reflects the desire for the benefits of English rule without its oppressive elements. Gandhi believed complete liberation required making the 'tiger' undesirable.

The ECE in India is a complex domain influenced by historical legacies. To unpack and understand the intricate domain, this theoretical framework draws on Bhabha’s concepts of ‘third-space’ and ‘hybridity’. Bhabha, the pioneer of postcoloniality, expands beyond the binary of East-West, Global North- Global South (Bhabha, 2012). He conceptualizes the third-space as a transformative zone that surpasses binary divisions, providing a site for negotiating cultural identities beyond the constraints of colonial binaries. In this new space, new identities and cultures merge which is hybridity. In ECE, the third-space raises the question of what curriculum, practices, and imagination of ECE that is neither Western nor traditional (Gupta, 2020). Hybridity helps to understand how cultural negotiation unfolds within the educational spaces. In the third space power dynamics, cultural imposition and enduring colonial legacies can be explored (Bhabha, 2012). Young (2015) argues that ‘will to power’ is an attempt by the
former colonies to sustain their domination of Minority world countries by homogenizing diverse societies and imposing a narrow economic model.

This theoretical framework will be used to not only understand the homogenizing of culture, shaping ECE in postcolonial India through global agencies (i.e. UN, WB, DAP), but also how the postcolonial country resisting these global influences in safeguarding their culture by exploring the local education policy New Educational Policy (NEP) 2022.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of CDA

Emerging from the roots of critical linguistics, CDA evolved as a response to the need for a deeper understanding of language's intricate connection with power dynamics, social disparities, and ideological constructs (Catalano & Waugh, 2020). While its precursor, critical linguistics, focused on unveiling concealed ideologies and power differentials within language structures using tools like grammar and semantics, CDA predominantly offered descriptive insights, stopping short of comprehending the motivations behind these linguistic nuances or the ideological agendas they served. Notably, a significant criticism aimed at critical linguistics was its perceived deficiency in exploring the dynamic interplay among language, power, and ideology. In contrast, CDA emerged as a methodological and theoretical framework determined not only to dissect language's profound impact on shaping and perpetuating power relations, social inequalities, and ideological narratives but also to unravel the intricate mechanisms through which language both influences and is influenced by these very forces it seeks to uncover and elucidate.

According to Fairclough (2013), three key properties of CDA are: relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. A discourse is a representation of certain parts or aspects of the world (physical, social, psychological) and can be only understood by analyzing a set of relations. It is not an independent entity to be analyzed. Hence CDA is not an analysis of a discourse but a dialectical relation between discourse and elements or moments as well as internal relations of boundaries. Fairclough argues that discourse and society are in a constant dialectical relationship, i.e., a discourse reflects and reproduces social structures, norms, ideologies, and power relations, while simultaneously being influenced by these very elements. Discourse is not merely a passive
reflection of society, but an active force that contributes to its construction and transformation. The dialectical relationship of discourse and its elements cut across rigid boundaries and allow for various ‘points of entry’ for the discourse analyst (sociology, anthropology, political science), and hence that makes CDA transdisciplinary. The ‘critical’ in CDA stands for addressing and contributing to mitigating the social wrongs.

To study social inequities and power relations among groups of people, Fairclough (2013), emphasizes the importance of analyzing strategies within discourses to uncover the complex ways in which language is used to convey meaning, power, and ideology. In CDA, strategies refer to deliberate choices made by discourse producers to achieve specific communicative, persuasive, or ideological goals. These strategies involve linguistic and rhetorical choices that shape how texts are constructed and how meaning is conveyed. Machin & Mayr (2023) defines "text" in a broad sense, encompassing not only written text but also various forms of communication, including spoken interactions, multimedia content, and more. Their definition highlights that texts are not isolated entities but are intertwined with the context in which they exist. Social structure (language) and social events (texts) are part of social reality.

The relationship between abstract social structure or semiotic language and concrete social events or texts is mediated through social practices. Fairclough emphasizes that texts are doubly contextualized: first, about other elements within social events, and second, in connection with broader social practices. These social practices involve the use of specific discourses (ways of representing), genres (ways of acting), and styles (ways of being/identity). However, texts are not simply drawn from established discourses, genres, styles, or social structures. Texts are pivotal intersections where two forces converge: social practices and social structures, mediated by the agency of individuals who create, interpret, and engage with these texts. Discourses,
genres, and styles serve as societal resources that individuals reshape, combine, and reinterpret within texts, potentially leading to innovative blends and transformations. Through 'interdiscursive' analysis of texts, CDA illustrates how texts integrate diverse discourses, genres, and styles, thereby demonstrating the potential for social agents to creatively utilize existing resources in ways that might contribute to reshaping social practices, albeit within specific conditions (Fairclough, 2013)

Discourse analysis can be useful in education as it examines how texts and interactions construct learning. It is also compatible with socio-cultural perspectives in education and recognizes that discourse reflects and constructs the social world (Rogers, 2011). Critical discourse studies can help address issues of power and inequality in education, particularly in a globalized world system. The field continues to grow and change to respond to problems in education and ECE. CDA has been used by many researchers in the field of ECE. For instance, Osgood (2009) examines the language used in policy documents and government reports to identify the discourses and ideologies that shape the construction of this new role and its relationship to the broader policy agenda. The paper argues that the introduction of the early years professional (workforce) represents a shift in the conceptualization of ECE and care as a professionalized sector and that this shift is aligned with wider discourses around the marketization and privatization of public services.

In another educational research study, the application of CDA was employed to gain insights into the unique challenges confronted by bilingual adults who were part of the Teachers for English Language Learners (TELL) program in Georgia, US. The study focused on how linguistic and social inequities among these bilingual adults were reflected in discourses concerning their competency and legitimacy. The findings of the research suggested that
promoting a sense of local identification among the participants would be instrumental in helping them recognize themselves as a valuable and indispensable resource. (Cahnmann et al., 2015).

CDA was employed to examine a report capturing practitioners' viewpoints regarding play in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 2-5 years, conducted by the Office of Standards in Education in England. The analysis focused on deconstructing the text that outlines what constitutes good practice in play. This examination revealed that policy-driven, evidence-based recommendations, derived from research with inherent biases, hold a disproportionate influence, resulting in a power dynamic that impacts children, families, and practitioners in a manner that is both unbalanced and potentially detrimental. (Wood, 2019).

**Procedures and Stages of CDA**

The practical application of CDA does not have a specific “formula” for procedures or methods. The strength of qualitative CDA is that it allows researchers flexibility and methodological freedom to choose the theories and methods based on the unit of analysis of the research questions. While Fairclough offers a general methodology, stages, and rationale for CDA, the process is fluid, dynamic, and constructed during an iterative process of analyzing the texts. However, the steps are not set but rather are interpretative guidelines (i.e., they don’t follow rigid sequential steps) that give structure and support for the analysis (Fairclough, 2013).

**Stage 1.** Focus upon social wrong, in its semiotic aspect: The initial stage of the research process involves a two-fold approach. Firstly, the selection of a research topic revolves around highlighting social injustice. However, their seemingly straightforward nature in social research can mask intricacies. This stage proceeds with two sequential steps. First, the identification of a research topic that highlights a social wrong, is amenable to transdisciplinary investigation, accentuating the interplay between semiotic components and other crucial factors. The
subsequent step entails the transformation of these overarching social wrongs or research topics into defined research objects. This transformation is achieved through the process of theorization, utilizing a transdisciplinary framework, that enables a comprehensive deconstruction and understanding of the intricate dimensions inherent to the chosen topics.

**Stage II. Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong:** Instead of directly addressing the social wrong itself, this stage involves analyzing the underlying factors that sustain and perpetuate social wrong. This stage has three steps. The first step, analyzing dialectical relations, is about examining how communication (semiosis) interacts with other social elements. This could involve understanding how different "orders of discourse" (ways of talking about or representing things) influence and are influenced by other elements of social practices. For instance, in my study, I attempt to show how certain ways of defining the goals of early childhood care reinforce and redirect education goals to benefit the minority world countries and to sustain colonial hegemony or norms on majority world countries. After analyzing the dialectical relations, the next step is to select text. The selection of the ‘text’ and categorizing it should be guided by the research object. The last step of this stage is to conduct analyses of the text, both interdiscursive to uncover patterns of meaning, connections, and contradictions in the ways ECE is being addressed in different texts and discourses and semiotic analysis to understand how meaning is constructed through language and other signs.

**Stage III. Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong**: This stage explores how society benefits from the social wrong. In other words, this stage helps to understand whether the social wrong is deeply embedded in social order or can be fixed without changing the social structure. If the social order is leading to social wrong, then there is a need to think of ways to change the order. For instance, the enforcement of neoliberalism that
emphasizes minimal government intervention and free markets needs a social order to suppress the political disagreements to smoothly implement neoliberal economic approaches.

**Stage IV.** Identify possible ways past the obstacle: This stage involves identifying strategies to navigate the obstacles discovered in the second stage. As these obstacles are largely related to semiosis, the emphasis here is on understanding how individuals actively oppose, challenge, and resist the dominant ideology.

**Document Selection and Rationale**

Language has a profound impact on shaping and perpetuating power relations, social inequalities, and ideological narratives. CDA, a methodological framework, provides descriptive insights of the hidden ideological narratives that the language/text serves (Fairclough, 2013). Documents can act as agents of oppression, constructing and reinforcing hegemonic texts that maintain disparities in authority and control among social groups (Bowen, 2009). In the globalization era, the World Bank’s influence in shaping educational policies in minority world countries has increased significantly; making education a parcel of US structural power (Elfert, 2020). Meanwhile, the Indian federal government enacted the NEP 2020, a national education policy after thirty-four years from the latest. To explore the power relation between the former colonizers and the colonized, this study employed CDA that analyzed the World Bank ECE vision and the NEP 2020 document’s texts on three levels; text, discursive, and social practices (see Fairclough, 2013).
### Table 1

**Documents for analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Selected</th>
<th>Text Analyzed</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| WB Statement       | The WB Group is the largest financier of education in the developing world, working in 90 countries and committed to helping them reach SDG4: access to inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.  
1. WB and ECE  
2. WB in India (ECE)  
3. System Approach for Better Education Result (SABER)  
| NEP 2020           | The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020) outlines the vision of a new education system in India and replacing the 1986 model.  
1. Introduction  
2. New Policy vs Previous Policy  
3. ECCE in India school education system | https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf |

*Note.* Adapted from Document analysis as a qualitative research method, by G. A. Bowen, 2009, *Qualitative Research Journal.*
The above-mentioned two documents together make a comprehensive understanding of India's education system. CDA was used to answer the following question: *How do colonial discourses influence ECE texts and documents in India?*

**Data Analysis**

The NEP 2020 policy document and WB Education text were accessed online. NEP 2020 was downloaded in PDF format from the government website, while the WB website was explored to identify relevant sections. The focus was narrowed down to ECE in both documents. A Word file was created to organize the selected text from both sources. In the WB, sections including the mission statement for India, System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) in ECE, and Learning For All were selected. In NEP 2020, sections such as the introduction, comparison with previous policies, vision, and specifics on ECE within school education were chosen.

The initial step involved open coding of the selected text, guided by the principles of CDA, focusing on Immediate language, discursive practices, and social practices (Mullet, 2009). This was followed by several thorough reading of the text, with highlighters used to assign labels to each text passage. Similar codes were grouped together to create themes. Analysis was conducted separately for each document initially. A new Word file was created to compile a comparative table of WB and NEP 2020. The selected codes/labels were organized under each category. Overarching themes emerged from the two different documents, aiding in the creation of a conceptual map that facilitated the development of a cohesive narrative tying together all themes.

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative rigor of the CDA involves mainly two key strategies; the completeness and accessibility of the data (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). For completeness, the triangulation of data was achieved through data source triangulation and theoretical triangulation. The analytical framework
considered various aspects, including language, interdiscursive elements, and social context, to deepen the understanding of the data. Purposeful and strategic selection of texts from the documents played a crucial role in ensuring the adequacy of the data. Additionally, immersion in the data was facilitated through repeated readings of the selected texts, contributing to a comprehensive interpretation. In addition, Dr. Akpovo, my major advisor, read drafts and provided feedback on the CDA analysis. We held weekly meetings to discuss and analyze the texts as well as to ensure an analytical process was being followed. She also confirmed or challenged claims made in the analysis. These measures collectively contributed to the trustworthiness of the CDA conducted in this study. The thick descriptions of the findings, and reflexivity statement make the research comprehensible and accessible to the audience.

**Positionality Statement**

As a Brown, heterosexual, cisgender female raised in a Hindu Brahmin family in Northern India, my background has deeply influenced my perspective. With a bachelor’s degree in education and political science, and experience teaching children in postcolonial India, I've developed a keen interest in understanding the Euro-Western influence on the Indian education system. My personal and professional journey within India has fueled my commitment to investigating how existing power structures perpetuate oppression and serve the interests of the privileged few. As an educational researcher who employs critical and radical theories, I'm driven by a desire to expose these dynamics and advocate for transformative change. As a post-colonial qualitative researcher, I value authentic representation of participants, recognizing the importance of capturing diverse voices and experiences within socio-cultural context.
Chapter 4: Findings

In my analysis, both documents showed urgency and the need for structural reform in education. While the WB used standardized tests as an evidence to reform the educational sector, the NEP 2020, finds the need to reform the education structure in order to align with the goals and objectives drawn by the international/global agencies. The WB educational reform calls for a neoliberal approach while the NEP 2020 consistently reflected the global goals with local Indian values as an educational reform. The two themes that emerged from the analysis are listed below with additional subthemes The larger overall themes were replete in the data and found in all aspects of the texts when coding:

1) Narrowing education for gain

2) Global learning crisis and global best practices

Theme One: Neoliberal Shift in Education

The WB emphasized “to put children on a solid path” (Country Partnership Framework for India, n.d., para. 1) to maximize children’s potential. The solid path is described as a linear progression toward economic development in a country like India. The goal of education, as per the WB, is to increase “productivity and income” (WB: early childhood development, 2023, para. 1). The need for investments in ECE has been shown as a key factor in meeting the needs of the global economy. The WB also used the term “increase adult wages” (para. 8) to highlight the increase in productivity and income in the relationship between the employee and the employer. The term adult wage is remuneration paid for labor and service. Putting children on a solid path shows the predetermined educational outcome, and the final goal, which is to increase adult wages, shows neo-colonial policies where the demand for certain skills in Euro-Western countries impacts the educational goals of postcolonial countries to fulfill the demand for their
former colony to increase the employability of the local by the former colonies, hence maintaining and perpetuating colonialism.

The local policy, in contrast, prioritizes the social values of education, positioning employability as an integral component of the educational process. In outlining the goal of education, the Local Policy asserts, “Education must build character, enabling learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while simultaneously preparing them for gainful, fulfilling employment” (NEP, 2020, p. 3). The policy highlights the hybridity of the neoliberal aim of education and local values within a collective society that places human character building above the sole pursuit of increasing profits or gains.

**Beyond Schooling: Privatization vs Local Value System**

The WB statement and the Local Policy both emphasize the significance of education beyond schooling; but in different and contrasting contexts. The WB, in its new policy, highlights a changing role—shifting away from primarily providing aid to the public sector and instead expanding partnerships with private education.

**WB:** WB have focused very much on formal schools that are funded and/or operated by governments. The new strategy **explicitly** recognizes that learning opportunities go beyond those offered by the public sector, as well as **beyond traditional formal programs**. (Learning for all, 2011, p. 34).

The WB statements use the term explicit to signal their boldness and openness to privatizing education without explicitly naming it. The rhetorical style characterizes traditional and formal schooling as outdated models, presenting beyond as offering superior learning opportunities compared to the public sector or conventional schooling. Yet, the statements do not explicitly identify the space beyond these descriptors. In contrast, NEP 2020 implicitly critiques
the limited objectives of the global policy by stating, “The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self” (NEP, 2020, p. 4). The local policy positions itself as superior, emphasizing a broader scope aligned with the profound meaning and purpose of education in ancient India. The term just underscores that ancient Indian education encompasses a more profound and elevated purpose than indicated by global policy. The formulation of local policy manifests as a power struggle between local and global cultures. When crafting a national policy that acknowledges and values local cultures, it inherently invites a dynamic interplay of competition and negotiation among the cultural forces (Crane et al., 2002).

The WB employed terms such as “outside of formal schooling” (Learning for all, 2011, p. 34), “supplementary learning activities” (p. 34), and “non-state sector” (pp. 34, 42) to delineate the scope of what it meant by beyond the public sector, without explicitly mentioning the privatization of education. Notably, the WB opted for “not-for-profit” (p. 34) instead of non-profit, implicitly suggesting a stance where the sector may not be driven solely by profit motives, yet it is not explicitly characterized as a non-profit organization, as the inclusion of 'for' implies a different focus beyond profit-making.

The WB underscores the broad range of learning opportunities beyond traditional schooling, spanning various stages of human life, including ECE, after the completion of school, and instances where children and youth are still in school but engaged in supplementary learning activities beyond government oversight. This portrayal positions education as a private service sector, framing knowledge exchange as a market process catering to diverse age groups.
Emphasizing individual investment in education as an ongoing venture contributes to framing education as a lucrative sector (Savage, 2011).

While the WB stated how in the past it has focused on supporting the public sector and the new policy demands something beyond the public sector. The fear of public autonomy in private-public partnership was reflected in NEP 2020.

**NEP 2020:** substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of *true philanthropic private* and community participation. (NEP, 2020, p. 6).

The Local Policy employs the term- true philanthropic, in association with private entities to emphasize their role as aids for public welfare, benevolent contributions, and donations. The use of this term underscores the policy's preference for aid or private partnerships with organizations genuinely focused on the welfare of the public, seeking nothing in return. This reflects a concern among locals about private entities being profit-oriented and potentially exploitative.

In the above, the fear of philanthropic like the WB turning into private profit-oriented organizations is observed in the local policy. In contrast, the WB statement emphasizes building the repo of the private sector as a benevolent body, which has the potential to reach out to the most disadvantaged group.

**WB:** Although it is often assumed that the private sector serves mainly students who can most easily afford to pay, private entities are providing education to even the poorest communities, especially in areas that governments do not reach. (Learning for all, 2011, p. 35).
**WB:** Recognizing the value of private sector involvement does not mean abdicating government responsibility (p. 35).

The language strategically portrays the private sector as a benevolent entity by presenting the reality of expensive private education as an assumption, indicating the negative image of the private sector as a created phenomenon. The subsequent statement suggests that even the most disadvantaged communities rely on private entities. The phrase “Government do not reach” (p. 35) implies a deliberate choice by the government not to assist the poor, while neglecting the alternative possibility of ‘can not reach’, which would indicate financial constraints or limitations. The above statement shows both; the WB emphasizing the power of the private sector over the public sector as well as ensuring local government to not fear losing autonomy if the private sector is valued. In contrast, the local policy underscores the need for “Credibility of Government schools shall be re-established” (NEP, 2020, p. 10). The re-establishment indicates that government schools in India were once a credible source of education, but over time, this credibility has waned. The local policy emphasizes the importance of restoring people's trust in public schools.

A significant and contradictory vision of the WB and Local policy was found in visioning private tuition/coaching centers:

**WB:** Services outside of traditional formal programs—such as tutorial services, which are often provided by private tutors—are prevalent in many countries. (Learning for all, 2011, p. 34).

**NEP 2020:** The current nature of secondary school exams, including Board exams and entrance exams - and the resulting coaching culture of today - are doing much harm, existing system of Board and entrance examinations shall be reformed to eliminate the
need for **undertaking coaching classes**. To reverse these harmful effects of the current assessment system. (NEP, 2020, p. 18).

While the WB statement highlights private tutoring, especially in South Asia, as the primary contributor to the private sector, the local policy not only acknowledges the negative impact of the coaching culture but also proposes reforms to eliminate the necessity for coaching classes.

**Streamlining Education: A Neoliberal Push for More with Less**

The analysis presented above provides evidence of the Global Policy underscoring the importance of private partners and investors in education. This shift is noteworthy considering the original mandate of the WB, which aimed to provide financial assistance to low-income countries for the expansion and establishment of quality education for all. Both the global and the local policies now emphasize education's purpose evolving from a social welfare perspective to a more neoliberal approach, focusing on achieving high output with low input.

**WB**: Investments in these inputs expand an education system’s physical capacity to deliver services, but do not guarantee that it functions effectively or efficiently. Nor do they guarantee that it delivers the competencies and skills needed by students to thrive in a global economy. (Learning for all, 2011, p. 32).

**NEP 2020**: To make it easier for both governments as well as non-governmental philanthropic organizations to build schools, to encourage local variations on account of culture, geography, and demographics, and to allow alternative models of education, the requirements for schools will be made less restrictive. The focus will be to have less emphasis on input and greater emphasis on output potential concerning desired learning outcomes. (NEP, 2020, p. 11).
The Bank, in its education objective, emphasizes that investing in ECE is a “critical down payment” (Country Partnership Framework for India, n.d., para. 1). The term down payment is used in the initial investment while owning/buying a commodity. Similarly, the above-provided evidence suggests that the WB perceives investing in schools as lacking a promising return. Instead, it seeks a guarantee in terms of a skilled workforce required by the global economy, predominantly led by Euro-Western countries. This approach narrows the educational focus to skill sets necessary for the global economy. Similarly, the reduced investments or inputs by the WB, aligning with neoliberal policies, have impacted local education standards and schools. The NEP 2020 further diminished requirements for schools, reflecting a move towards less restrictive policies, facilitating outsider investments with fewer constraints in the education sector.

**Theme 2: Negotiations Between the Global and the Local**

The WB statement began by using the common consent that education provides a skill set that can lead to employability. However, the differences of opinion in making a one-fit-all policy to create a learning quality environment is seen as a gap that needs to be fixed. The WB launched a statistical tool to measure the quality of education: SABER. Saber, which means a sword, was created by the Euro-Western countries to understand how quality learning can be done. The WB, using the statistical survey, created evidence, published under WB by the title: ‘What matters most for student assessment system: A Frame Work’, to standardize education and make it streamlined and comprehensive. The one scale, created by Euro-Western countries, segmented the global education system into two parts: Global Learning Crisis and Global Best Practices. The WB emphasizes the local policy to align with global best practices, making it a benchmark.

Standardized tests not only reveal educational disparities but also act as tools for the WB to exert influence, extending from local policies to direct oversight of ground-level practices.
This monitoring encompasses schools, teachers, students, and governance, reflecting a nuanced power dynamic within the educational sphere.

**WB:** by drawing attention to the **global learning crisis**, raised the **ambition** for the measurement agenda on learning and its drivers, and increased the demand for comprehensive, streamlined, and cost-effective instruments that build on the existing SABER tools to measure the drivers of learning, and that can be scaled up to all countries to better identify binding constraints to improving learning, guide policy decisions, and monitor progress on policy efforts to address them. (SABER, n.d., para. 8).

**WB:** SABER initially focused on assessing how well a country’s education policies and institutions aligned with its education goals. (para. 7).

**WB:** Later SABER began developing a framework for measuring and analyzing service delivery at the school level, providing a much-needed feedback loop to help countries hone their policies (para. 7).

Elevating the use of standardized tools for not just assessing alignment but also scrutinizing local-level services was not a necessity but rather an ambition of the WB. This statement exposes the aspirations of Euro-Western countries to leverage learning crises for direct intervention and monitoring of local policies. The emphasis on a “much-needed feedback loop” (para. 7) underscores that the engagement of interfering and influencing local education is not a conclusion but an ongoing cycle.

However, the actors, creating the global standards and influencing the policies are masked/back-staged by making SABER the agency of power. The use of verbs such as ‘recognizes,’ ‘helps,’ and ‘allows’ with SABER suggests a narrative where the tool is presented as the active agent, capable of performing various functions, while, the actors or entities wielding
power, such as the Euro-Western countries or the WB, are somewhat relegated to the background. The active role/functionality of the tool downplays the active role of entities creating or controlling the tool.

**The Local Response to the Learning Crisis**

The learning crisis isn't an experience felt organically by locals but is revealed to them through surveys. The policy states, “Various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys, indicate that we are currently in a learning crisis” (NEP, 2020, p. 51). The statement indicates that the crisis is identified through external assessments rather than being a firsthand experience for the community. This distinction underscores that the perception of being in a crisis is a construct shaped by external observations, prompting a strategic need to address and resolve the perceived crisis.

Similarly, the WB statement employs a rhetorical strategy to craft a narrative that accentuates a problem or challenge (global learning crisis), thus laying the foundation for presenting a solution or initiative (SABER). By labeling the current state of education as a global learning crisis, the WB positions itself as a pivotal authority capable of instigating reforms. This crisis narrative, rather than merely identifying issues, becomes a tool through which the WB asserts its power, solidifying its role as a catalyst for change in global education.

**NEP 2020:** The gap between the **current state of learning outcomes** and what is **required**, must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the **highest quality**. (NEP, 2020, p. 3).

The local policy acknowledges the crisis indicated by the global agency and endeavors to address the current learning outcomes by incorporating global best practices. The term 'required'
raises the question of who sets these requirements. While the local policy is making reforms to meet educational needs, the origin or creation of these requirements is not explicitly mentioned.

**NEP 2020**: Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. (NEP, 2020, p. 3).

The NEP 2020 characterizes the global goals as lofty, indicating elevated expectations that prompt a comprehensive reconfiguration of the entire education system. However, this reconfiguration is not primarily geared towards achieving quality education but rather fulfilling the goals set by global actors. The NEP 2020, in defining the current education system, employs phrases such as “Urgent national mission with immediate measures to be taken” (p. 8), and “Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030” (p. 7). These phrases underscore the global pressure to align with international policies, highlighting a sense of urgency and a timeframe that reflects the influence of global agendas on local strategies for education reform.

**Global Best Practices: A Contestation for Superpower**

As noted above, the WB has crafted a narrative surrounding the learning crisis, offering solutions like SABER to align with global best practices. Further, the WB statement emphasizes that investing in education in the changing global economy is a smart move a country can make to compete globally; making education a global contest. The global competition to become the best global practices has been reflected in the NEP 2020.

The NEP 2020, as evident in its aspirations, positions education as a global contest, seeking recognition by constructing a model based on global best practices. The articulated aim to establish an education system "second to none" (NEP, 2020, p. 3) underscores the ambition to
transcend local boundaries and create a model that stands out on the global stage. This signals a shift in perspective, suggesting that the education sector is not merely about imparting knowledge, wisdom, and skills within a local context. Instead, there is a strategic drive to formulate an educational model that can be benchmarked and ranked on a global scale, reflecting a desire for international recognition and competitiveness.

As the WB highlights the deficit/gap or learning crisis in postcolonial countries like India, the Local policy used rhetorical language to create a positive image of the nation. The use of terms like “world-class” (p. 4) and 'highest standards' (p. 4) in describing ancient Indian education challenges and questioning the adequacy of contemporary global benchmarks, implies that the historical standards were superior. Similarly, stating Indian education as “eternal” (p. 4) and “had a strong influence on the world highlights the powerful influence of India on the world” (p. 4). The local policy also indicates Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) as; “Local traditions of India developed over millennia in ECCE involving art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporate” (p. 7). The statement seeks to position India's local traditions as the original and authentic foundation of ECE; suggests a conscious effort to connect historical practices with current educational concepts, signaling that ECCE is not a recent or imported idea.

The language employed in showcasing India's global contributions takes on a competitive tone, employing cultural comparisons to assert superiority. In the context of the local policy's description of the classical language Sanskrit, the statement declares it has a "Classical literature greater in volume than Latin and Greek put together" (p. 14). By characterizing Indian literature as “extremely rich” (p. 14) and emphasizing its “strong influence on global literature” (p. 14); the policy aims not only to construct a positive image of Indian culture but also to engage in a
cultural discourse. This discourse, seemingly prompted by the influence of global agencies, becomes a form of cultural assertion and competition, shaping an educational narrative that positions India's cultural heritage as influential and significant.

The educational goal, as articulated in the NEP 2020, extends beyond the provision of knowledge to all. It signifies a larger ambition for India, aiming to contest and emerge as a global power through the adoption of high-quality education. The pursuit of becoming a “global knowledge superpower” (p. 6) suggests that India, along with other post-colonial nations, sees the attainment of high-quality education as a pathway to emulate the global best practices observed in current global superpowers. This indicates not only an educational ambition but also a strategic endeavor to position India among the influential nations on the global stage, leveraging the power dynamics associated with superior education systems.

**Military Language in Administering Education**

To keep the countries accountable to match the Western standards of teaching, the SABER assessment tool which is an acronym for System Approach for Better Education Results has been developed by the WB. The literal meaning of Saber is a heavy cavalry sword with a curved blade and a single cutting edge. In the post-colonial context, the single-edged sword symbolizes the limited options available to colonized nations and their lack of agency in the face of colonial power. The sword only has one sharp edge, representing the narrow range of choices and opportunities available to colonized nations, while the flat side represents their inability to defend themselves effectively against the colonizers.

**WB:** The Bank’s SABER tools are being deployed in 104 countries and are informing investments in education at all levels. To date, 55 SABER country reports have been published. (The World Bank, 2013, para. 6).
**NEP 2020:** The planning and implementation of early childhood care and education curriculum will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs. A special **joint task force** will be constituted for continuous guidance of the smooth integration of early childhood care and education into school education. (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2020, p. 8).

The idea of deployment of SABER in countries and providing insights and information about the country has a connotation of American military power and influence on postcolonial countries. Similarly, the use of US military terms was found in local policy as well. The Local policy first enlisted all the local government agencies in a single sentence and separated them with a comma. The new sentence begins to create a joint task force for guidance. Joint Task Force (JTF) is a part of US military, which has had its operations outside the US, i.e Somalia, Haiti, Panama, Northern Iraq, and Hawaii (Walker, 1996). JTF was approved by NATO leaders to adopt the command-and-control concept (Barry, 1996).

The application of the metaphorical sword in the form of SABER by the WB, aimed at holding low-income countries accountable and guiding their education systems, resonates with the operational principles of JTF: emphasizing command and control. The use of military language in both local and global policies suggests a prevailing influence of Euro-western countries, directly asserting power dynamics in shaping postcolonial nations' educational policies.

**Negotiation and the Third-Space**

The local policy mirrors the global agenda, acknowledging a prevalent learning crisis and the need for urgent reforms. While emphasizing best practices, the local policy refrains from
merely endorsing global standards; instead, it explicitly calls for adherence to “National and international best practices” (NEP, 2020, p. 7), thereby underscoring the contribution of local perspectives to the global educational landscape. Similarly, in matters of curriculum, teacher training, and educational objectives, the local policy draws inspiration from global initiatives but incorporates a distinct local perspective. For instance, in addressing socio-emotional development, the local policy expands upon Western-origin psychology, which focuses on an individual's ability to build meaningful relationships. Here, it introduces a new dimension, “Socio-emotional-ethical development” (p. 7), adding an ethical dimension to childhood development. Likewise, when discussing children's developmental areas, the local policy commences with cognitive high-order thinking, numeracy, and literacy, using the conjunction “but also” (p. 4) to underscore the equal importance of social, ethical, and emotional capacities in addition to cognitive development.

Despite attempts to integrate local culture, values, and norms, the influence of global power dynamics is evident, pushing a third space to meet economic demands from former colonies. Acknowledging the decreased demand for unskilled labor jobs, the local policy emphasizes the potential for skilled labor in mathematics, computer science, and data science. It asserts the significance of mathematical thinking and knowledge in shaping India's role and future. To underscore the importance of mathematical knowledge, the local policy introduces puzzles in preschool and coding skills in middle school, challenging traditional educational timelines for acquiring skills like coding.
Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

The implications of the findings underscore the need for postcolonial nations to assert greater autonomy and agency in shaping their educational agendas. Recognizing the influence of Euro-Western institutions in defining educational narratives and practices, policymakers must strive to prioritize local values, cultures, and needs within their educational frameworks. This entails resisting neoliberal agendas that prioritize economic gains over holistic educational development and promoting policies that foster a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to education. Moreover, there is a pressing need to challenge the dominance of standardized tests and measurements imposed by global institutions like the WB, advocating instead for assessment methods that account for the diversity of local contexts and acknowledge the multifaceted purposes of education beyond economic outcomes. Ultimately, the implementation of these findings requires efforts to reclaim educational sovereignty and redefine educational paradigms in postcolonial contexts.

The exploration of texts and documents highlights the contrasting narratives surrounding ECE as defined by global institutions like the WB and national policies such as NEP 2020 in postcolonial contexts. The WB policy employs deficit discourse, framing education as a crisis and strategically paving the way for radical reforms, particularly the privatization of education. Imposition of deficit discourse - a colonial legacy, and neoliberal agendas perpetuate a cycle of dependency, narrowing the scope of education to serve economic interests rather than holistic development. While NEP 2020 offers a counterbalance rooted in local values and ethics, the influence of global standards, particularly through standardized testing, remains significant. The scales have been criticized, emphasizing numerical benchmarks over contextual understanding, perpetuating colonialist ideologies. The findings underscore the need for postcolonial nations to assert autonomy in shaping their educational agendas, prioritizing inclusivity, and cultural
responsiveness. However, this study’s macro-level analysis presents limitations in capturing the nuanced impacts of policies at the grassroots level. Future research should delve into micro-level dynamics, incorporating stakeholder perspectives to inform policy reform and transformative change. While this critical document analysis offers valuable insights into colonial discourse in education, its focus on text analysis limits the depth of understanding to a macro level. Future research should explore micro-level dynamics to incorporate stakeholder voices and grassroots practices, shedding light on the practical impacts of these policies. Such investigations can provide nuanced pathways for policy reform and transformative change in educational systems.
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