

**SAVE PUBLIC  
EDUCATION**



**NATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
POLICY-2020**

**- A CRITICAL APPRAISAL**

**National  
Education Policy-2020**  
*- A Critical Appraisal*

**AIDSO**  
All India Democratic Students' Organisation

# **National Education Policy - 2020**

## **- A Critical Appraisal**

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## PREFACE

Amidst the Corona pandemic, the BJP-led central government passed the National Educational Policy-2020 on 29, July 2020. This policy has been adopted undemocratically, rejecting all serious concerns from common students, teachers, educationists and avoiding established democratic processes. In fact, the well meaning people of this country had raised serious questions right from the materialisation of its draft, understanding correctly that this pro-corporate policy is an attack on universal, scientific, secular and democratic education and is a blueprint of privatisation, commercialisation, centralisation, communalisation and vocationalisation of education. Considering it as an anti-civilisation, anti-human and a fascist onslaught, nationwide protests were organised against NEP. As a revolutionary students' organisation of this country, time and again, AIDS0 has submitted memorandum to the government, organised discussions, seminars, workshops at school level, college level, in universities, different villages and districts and has been organising numerous protests against it.

To expose the real design behind bringing this policy, AIDS0 had published a detailed analysis of the Draft National Education Policy when the DNEP came in 2019. The present booklet is a long awaited document by us, since the final policy was passed in 2020. We sincerely apologise for the delay. This booklet is an effort by us to put forth before the common students and the education-loving people, the consequences of the various provisions of NEP-2020. We understand that despite our serious efforts, some limitations might still exist in the document. We would be happy to invite any kind of suggestion, which would help in bettering this write up. Kindly send in your suggestions on the email ID provided on the publisher's page. You can also contact us over the phone provided on the same page.

We hope that this booklet will certainly provide a guidance to the ongoing struggle against NEP and that the nationwide movement against NEP will reach a new height

Sourav Ghosh  
General Secretary  
AIDS0

V.N.Rajashekhar  
President  
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**W**hen the whole country was shaken by the first wave of corona pandemic and the entire country had transformed into a huge charnel house, the BJP-led central govt. brought forth the New Education Policy - 2020. When the people of the country expected the central govt to announce a National Health Policy, especially after the worn-out condition of the health system was laid bare before all, by the appalling covid-19 pandemic, thus, harboring some hope for relief to those in dismal situation, the countrymen received the whiplash of the draconian NEP-2020. Was it really indispensable to produce the NEP-2020 at that moment of medical catastrophe? At a time, when the schools, colleges and universities were shut down for an indefinite period throughout the country and there appeared no far-fetched possibility of re-opening the educational institutions, why did the central govt stealthily approve the NEP '2020 in the cabinet?

The day was 29th of July, 2020- the 130th death anniversary of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, one of the greatest pioneers of Renaissance in India. By deliberately choosing this date for approving the NEP-2020, the central government has, in reality, trampled underfoot the dreams of Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai, Rabindranath, Gopabandhu Das, Jyotiprasad Aggarawal, Lala Lajpat Rai and other such great renaissance personalities and freedom fighters like C.R. Das, Netaji Subhasg and Bhagat Singh who had conducted lifelong arduous struggles to establish a secular, scientific, democratic and universal education in our country. During the announcement of the policy, the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mr. Prakash Javadekar had proclaimed -

"Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given approval to the New Education Policy for the 21st century. It is important as for 34 years there were no changes in the education policy. I am confident that this will be welcomed by the entire society and nation as well as the world's educators."(Business Standard; July 29, 2020). We are yet to determine how this new education policy would satiate the 'world's educators'- however, based on the reports of several media houses, we can state in no less than definite and certain terms, that the NEP-2020 did garner loads of high appreciation and plaudits from the corporate sector of our country and the Sangh Parivar

Ever since its accession to power in the Centre in 2014, the BJP had not only implanted persons, holding ideological affiliation with RSS, in the key positions in premier institutions like BHU, JNU, Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies at Shimla, FTII and others, but had also started working on the agenda of formulating a New Education Policy, being constantly working under the guidance of the Sangh Parivar, to overhaul the Indian Education system. A Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy was constituted under the leadership of T.S.R. Subramaniam, who was an Indian bureaucrat and had formerly served as Cabinet Secretary of India. This committee submitted a 230-page report to the government on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016. It was expected that this report would be put into public domain for comments and suggestions but this never happened- instead a 43-page document namely 'Some inputs for Draft National Education Policy 2016' was published for public opinion. While everyone was still wondering about the report by TSR, in June 2017, it was brought to light that a new committee, to formulate New Education Policy, was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan. Now the question arises, what was the need for this sudden switch over in chairmanship?

**Dr. K. Kasturirangan**, *the chairperson of the drafting committee* in an interview to *The Hindu* 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 said, “In this context I was called by the minister – at that time it was Prakash Javadekar. There were some issues with the Subramaniam report which we were asked to revisit. We also had the MHRD report and the earlier homework. We were asked to use all this and come up with a report which does not have issues of this kind (whatever things are there in the Subramaniam report), and which can also withstand the next twenty years of India's development. And with fine tuning it can even go up to thirty years.” This statement indicates that the recommendations made by the Subramaniam committee is something which was not appreciated by the BJP-led Central government. Actually, as per a report published in *The Hindustan Times* on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the TSR Report rejected most of the proposals submitted by RSS outfits like Bharatiya Sikshan Mandal and others and this was one of the strong reasons behind reframing of the committee. This fact was further substantiated by the hour- long meetings that the HRD minister Prakash Javadekar with RSS outfits Vidya Bharati, Akhil Vidyarthi Parishad, Rashtriya Shaikshik Mahasangh, Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, Sanskrit Bharati, Shiksha Bachao Andolan, Vigyan Bharati and Itihas Sankalan Yojana.

After a five-year long exercise since 2015, the Draft New Education Policy was finally put in the public domain on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. A voluminous document (484 pages in English and 650 pages in Hindi) that it was, the DNEP was supposed to be read, discussed and opined on, by crores of common people of India, within a short span of two and a half months. (Initially, it was just for a month but later, the last date was rescheduled and extended twice) DNEP boastfully proclaims, “... The grassroots consultations, covering 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), 676 districts and 36 States/Union Territories were carried out between the period

from May to October 2015.” Had this been true, is it not expected that a greater population of people would have known about it? But, when we look around ourselves, we can easily understand that most of the common people have not even heard of this policy, let alone having any form of participation in its preparation. It is ridiculous that the Education Policy which is greeted as 'revolutionary', 'historical decision' and the 'desire of 21<sup>st</sup> century' was approved in the cabinet while keeping the countrymen in darkness, and this process is completely undemocratic. Our organization AIDS0 and many others have submitted their memorandums to the government and placed their serious concerns over several provisions of the DNEP. But these opinions were completely ignored. The government, which claims to set an example of democratic exercise in preparing the NEP-2020, could not find even a few minutes to talk with AIDS0 representatives, despite all our consistent efforts to get an appointment with the MHRD. And this is just an instance that we mention. All education-loving people, educationists and other left and democratic organisations have experienced similarly.

Prima facie, we may form an impression that the policy will enforce a revolutionary change in the society, through reformation of the education system. However, upon meticulous study, simultaneous juxtaposition with the broader explanations of the abridged sections of the policy in its previous draft and carefully observation of its implementation in different parts of the country, we will understand that it is actually a sugar-coated poison, which will pose a disastrous impact on education, culture, society and future of this country.

Let us try to ponder over its different provisions.

### **Financing**

Talking about financing, the NEP recommends spending 6% of GDP (Gross domestic product) on education. This is the



demand raised by the Kothari Commission in 1968, reiterated in the Policy of 1986, and which was further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the Policy. In the NEP-2020, Modi Government has claimed that 4.8% of GDP is being currently spent on education. But the picture of ground reality is far removed from what is being painted before us. In fact, we do not need to venture too far to prove the aforementioned statement- the DNEP-2019 itself says that "Public expenditure on education in India was 2.7% of GDP in 2017-2018". Furthermore, as per the reports of Economic Survey 2021-22, the expenditure on education in India as a percentage of GDP was 2.8% in 2019-20, and it remained static since 2014-15. Then why is the PM weaving false claims!

Another important point to understand is that GDP does not only include services produced by the governments but also those produced by the private sector. So, recommending a budget in terms of GDP does not specify the financial responsibility which would be shouldered by central and state governments. That's why a demand was raised long back that 10% of the central budget and 30% of the state budget should be spent on education. But, where do we stand now?

A table showing the financial responsibility taken by the Union government ever since BJP came to power in 2014 has been given in the next page. It clearly indicates that the education budget has been consistently curtailed in terms of its share in total union budget. Then on what concrete ground, shall we believe the tall talks and big claims regarding improved financing, that has been unabashedly mentioned by the government in the National Education Policy 2020.

The DNEP, further, states: "While this Policy reaffirms the national commitment of 6% of GDP as public investment in education, it recognises that this would only be possible as India's tax-to-GDP ratio improves". What does it mean?

Actually, if we analyse observantly, then we may understand that it is not the economic growth of common people but the profit of the billionaires of our country, that contributes significantly in GDP. These billionaires savour the tax holidays granted to them by the government while common people bleed white because of the pro-capitalist policies of the government. In such a situation, who will ultimately suffer if 'tax-to-GDP ratio improves'? In implicit yet certain

terms, the government is stating its policy of extorting huge tax from the common people in order to improve budgetary allocations on education.

Also, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) unveils another diabolical face of the government, that in a way, reflects its utter lack of willingness to spend on

FY	Budget Estimate (In Crores)	Education Budget (In Crores)	%	Total Actual Expenditure (In Crores)	Actual expense on Education (In Crores)	%
2014-15	17,94,892	82,771	4.60	16,63,673		
2015-16	17,77,477	69,074	3.88	17,90,783	67,239	3.75
2016-17	19,78,060	72,394	3.65	19,75,194	72,016	3.64
2017-18	21,46,735	79,686	3.71	21,41,973	80,215	3.74
2018-19	24,42,213	85,010	3.48	23,15,113	80,345	3.47
2019-20	27,86,349	94,854	3.40	26,86,330	89,437	3.32
2020-21	30,42,230	99,312	3.26	35,09,836	84,219	2.39
2021-22	34,83,236	93,224	2.67			
2022-23	39,44,909	1,04,278	2.64			

**All the data have been taken from [www.indiabudget.gov.in](http://www.indiabudget.gov.in), and <https://prsindia.org>.**

education. The CAG reveals, through its press release, dated 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 that, “94,036 crore collected under Secondary and Higher Education Cess was retained in the Consolidated Fund of India, contrary to procedure, instead of to the Fund that had been created for this purpose.” Why has this fund not been spent on education? Is it not a deliberate attempt to dismantle the public education system to provide a ready opportunity for the unhindered growth of private investors and corporate giants?

## **School Education**

After the announcement of this education policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, “There has been a massive effort to formulate this policy, keeping in view the thinking, needs, hopes and aspirations of the youth of the 21st century.” (<https://pib.gov.in>, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020). Let's see if this national education policy has opened out new horizons in terms of school education.

### **A) Pre-primary education**

At present the school level structure up to higher secondary level is 10 + 2 (from class I to class V as Primary level, from class VI to class VIII as Middle, Class IX and X is secondary level and next two years is called higher secondary level). In the NEP-2020, the present structure has been changed to 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 pattern. Children will enter the academy from the age of three years. The first 5 years will be called foundational stage (from 3 years to 8 years of age), then 3 years of preparatory stage (from 8 years to 11 years of age), 3 years of middle stage (from 11 years to 14 years of age) and last 4 years of secondary stage (from 14 years to 18 years of age). The foundational stage will include initial 3 years of Early Childhood Care and Education and then classes I and II as well. The Education Policy states: "Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs

prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth." (NEP-2020, Article 1.1) But, who will be assigned this task of 'critical importance'? The policy document has an answer to this- the Anganwadis. It has been mentioned there that the Anganwadis will be endowed with the responsibility to take up the task of "flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement...focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation... physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy" (NEP-2020, Article 1.2)

Now let's see what is the real situation of Anganwadi Centers, the supposed executors of this task? According to a statement issued by Union Minister Smriti Irani in December 2019, out of 13.6 lakh Anganwadi centers across the country, 3.62 lakh centers have no toilets and 1.59 lakh centers have no drinking water facilities. The posts of millions of teachers are vacant. Thousands of Anganwadi centers have no infrastructure. Besides, it has also been questioned that there are about 40 lakh Mohallah in the whole country. If you want to bring a 3-year-old child to the campus, you need Mohallah-based Anganwadi centers. But against the 40 lakhs, there are only 13 lakh Anganwadis. Added to this, is the plight of the Anganwadi workers all across the country as they struggle for their minimum wage which is being denied by the central and all state governments. They are paid in terms of honorarium as against

salaries paid to the formal sector workforce which means they are not considered as permanent workforce. Thus, this policy basically aims to put these Anganwadis, who themselves are on ventilator, responsible for discharging the task of such 'critical importance'! What a stark irony!

Now, how will the Anganwadi workers be trained for this purpose? It is said – “Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy, and other relevant aspects of ECCE.” (NEP-2020, Article 1.7) For the sake of argument, if we accept that government will work seriously on this process, can the said process of providing capsule courses really produce as efficient teachers/workers as required to discharge the most 'critical' responsibility of 'appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth.'! Is the government even remotely sincere about taking care of children at such a tender age?

However, it must be duly noted that the NEP nowhere mentions that all children in the country should be sent to Anganwadi for ECCE. Private Play Schools will remain open for those families who do not wish to put their child's future on the poor Anganwadi Centers. Thus, the middle class, upper-middle class families and even the lower-middle class families will be reduced to a circumstance where they will turn away from public education and lean towards the private education system. The process of commercialisation in education has, thus, been made easy from the entry level, itself.

### **B) Semester System and Multidisciplinary Course in School Education:**

'The National Education Policy 2020' states that after

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completing the *Foundational stage* at the age of 8 years, will come the *Preparatory stage* comprising classes III, IV and V. In this phase of three years, there will be light textbooks, but no subject-wise textbooks and teachers. Subject based learning will start from class VI. Next stage of three years comprising class VI, VII and VIII will be the *Middle stage*. Class IX to class XII combined is called the *Secondary stage*. The secondary stage will be divided into a total of 8 semesters. There will be no hard separation among arts, humanities and sciences and students. In this phase, multidisciplinary study will be introduced. This means that students will be given a flexible choice of subjects across different disciplines. If a student so wants, he/she will get the opportunity to study science, art, commerce, literature, sports, music and vocational subjects, all together. Students can choose subjects based on their personal choices. After passing class 10, it will no longer be said that history cannot be read with mathematics. As wonderful and seemingly exciting as it may sound, where will this structure lead us to? In the name of providing greater flexibility, will it not lead to a directionless course structure? Students will get bits and bits of information of a number of subjects but will fail to form a concrete conception about any particular subject- will it, therefore, not dilute our knowledge and make us Jack of all trades and master of none? How can it help in developing 'greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations', as has been claimed in the NEP? Had this NEP been prepared by upright and rational minded educationists, they would have understood that a learning brain, at such a tender age, needs to be nurtured with utmost care to help them develop in a direction taking care of their growing interest. This process will be seriously jeopardized by the suggested structure. The time-tested structure of 10+2 had serious limitations on many fronts but certainly this unreasonable structural change seems to sink into one single agenda i.e., 'towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century in consonance with the stated

objectives of this Policy'. (NEP-2020, Article 4.41). There is no difficulty in understanding that the public-school education system, which is the only hope for the vast majority of the Indian population, is being aimed to supply a cheap "skill workforce" for the global market, which, today, demands for multi-skilled labourers.

The semester system can never be an alternative to the annual system. In a secular, democratic, scientific system, utmost stress is laid on a comprehensive and holistic approach towards education. Every subject and even every topic of the subject are interconnected. But the semester system divides the entire course into smaller modules and shorter packages. Studying in a six-month pattern is totally against acquisition of holistic knowledge and is detrimental to thoroughness. In the 10+2 system, students have to face two annual examinations, one each in class 11 and 12, but in the 5+3+3+4 system students have to face 8 semesters and 16 internal or formative tests, as classes 9 to 12 have been clubbed under a single "Secondary Stage". More examinations mean more form fill-ups and examination fees. That means students have to face more financial burden as well as year-bound engagements with examinations. They would get no free time to put their minds into any sphere outside their academics- social, cultural or even their own educational problems.

### **C) Three Language Formula:**

In this education policy, a major change has been brought in the field of language education. We know that language education is one of the most important parts of any education policy, because language is the medium of expression and vehicle of thought that helps man penetrate deeply into any subject.

In this education policy it has been said, "Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably

till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language...There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. States, especially states from different regions of India, may enter into bilateral agreements to hire teachers in large numbers from each other, to satisfy the three-language formula in their respective States, and also to encourage the study of Indian languages across the country.” (NEP-2020, Article 4.11, 4.12)

Now, it is completely understandable how important a home language is, as a medium of instruction for grasping concepts and getting deeper knowledge. But if anyone tries to go through the NEP in search of the argument by the government behind proposing the three-language formula, one will get nothing. Then why has the three-language formula been brought? It is a well-known fact that from class I to class XII, and even beyond that, the rules for teaching in the recognized language of states or mother tongue are there in all the states at present. Then, what do the policy makers additionally mean by declaring mother tongue as the medium of instructions? Also, what will happen to the languages which are not mentioned in the eighth schedule of the Constitution of India?

The NEP further states that – “The three languages learned by children will be the choices of states, regions and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.” (NEP-2020, Article 4.13) What kind of choice is this! It talks about 'choices' but in the same line it is putting the condition of 'at least two of the three languages are native to India.' Where are the policy makers trying to lead us to?



Though the policy poses to be very inclusive for all Indian languages and foreign languages as well, the stress on 'Sanskrit Knowledge System' is clearly visible. While repeatedly talking about multilingualism, more emphasis has been given on Sanskrit. The NEP says – “Due to its vast and significant contributions and literature across genres and subjects, its cultural significance, and its scientific nature, rather than being restricted to single-stream Sanskrit Pathshalas and Universities, Sanskrit will be mainstreamed with strong offerings in school - including as one of the language options in the three-language formula - as well as in higher education. It will be taught not in isolation, but in interesting and innovative ways, and connected to other contemporary and relevant subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, linguistics, dramatics, yoga, etc. Thus, in consonance with the rest of this policy, Sanskrit Universities too will move towards becoming large multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning. Departments of Sanskrit that conduct teaching and outstanding interdisciplinary research on Sanskrit and Sanskrit Knowledge Systems will be established/strengthened across the new multidisciplinary higher education system. Sanskrit will become a natural part of a holistic multidisciplinary higher education if a student so chooses. Sanskrit teachers in large numbers will be professionalized across the country in mission mode through the offering of 4-year integrated multidisciplinary B.Ed. dual degrees in education and Sanskrit.”(NEP-2020, Article 22.15).

Why such a special mention and treatment of Sanskrit? There can be no objection to the practice and study of Sanskrit or any other classical language. But the way the Sanskrit language is being offered strongly at all levels of education, is it desirable in the modern education system? The policy makers in its bid to preserve 'beautiful cultural heritage' and 'cultural aspects of the language' which would certainly be a medium to take education system back to the past, did not dare to put forth the idea of

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Swami Vivekananda, who had once said, “In our country, owing to all learning being in Sanskrit from the ancient times, there has arisen an immeasurable gulf between the learned and the common folk. All the great personages, from Buddha down to Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, who came for the well-being of the world, taught the common people in the language of the people themselves. Of course, scholarship is an excellent thing; but cannot scholarship be displayed through any other medium than a language that is stiff and unintelligible, that is unnatural and merely artificial? ... Do you not think about your scholastic research in the language which you are accustomed to speak at home? ... The language in which you think out philosophy and science in your mind, and argue with others in public — is not that the language for writing philosophy and science? If it is not, how then do you reason out those truths within yourselves and in the company of others in that very language? The language in which we naturally express ourselves, in which we communicate our anger, grief, or love, etc.— there cannot be a fitter language than that... No artificial language can ever have that force, and that brevity and expressiveness, or admit of being given any turn you please, as that spoken language. Our language is becoming artificial by imitating the slow and pompous movement — and only that — of Sanskrit.” (*The Bengali Language, Volume 6, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*). Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the pioneer of renaissance in our country said, “We find that the government is establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindu Pandits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This seminary can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or the society... The Sanskrit system of Education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness...” (*A letter on English Education written to Governor General Lord Amherst in 1823, The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy; The Panini Office, Allahabad*). Is it not,

thus, explicitly evident that the BJP-led central government is working against the ideas of these great personalities including Vivekananda and the very concept of the modern democratic education system?

Again, giving disproportionate emphasis on Sanskrit, one can easily notice a lost focus on the English language in the NEP-2020. And it is not an accidental miss. Is it even remotely believable, that citing so many 'enlightening' words about the importance of a language in personal life, society and culture, the policy makers could not figure out the importance of the English language which is an advanced international language and came to our country for historical reasons? The English language is not only serving most effectively among all other languages of India to communicate with the people from different parts of the country including South India but also serves as a language of international communication. English language is a very powerful means of achieving higher knowledge in all the branches of epistemology. So, the 'lost focus' can only be understood as a deliberate attempt to shield common students from coming together and acquire modern scientific world knowledge. It is well thought out ploy to cripple the young minds by depriving them from the rational light of modern, scientific, secular and democratic education.

In conclusion, mother tongue should be the communicating language in the teaching-learning process. Along with this one should also learn a language as a second language which will be useful in his later education, social life and integration of society. All languages should be developed scientifically and necessary measures, including financial responsibility, should be taken by the government. A natural process of amalgamation of different languages should be facilitated and a way should be made for the development of a common language. This scientifically perceivable two-language system is being completely eradicated through the trilingual formula which will

tell upon not only the educational standard but also have serious repercussions on the integration of different lingual nationalities in our country.

#### **D) School Complex:**

The NEP-2020 has brought the idea of grouping of schools/rationalization of schools/school complexes. Pointing out the 'problems' of schools, it says – “These small school sizes have rendered it economically suboptimal and operationally complex to run good schools, in terms of deployment of teachers as well as the provision of critical physical resources. Teachers often teach multiple grades at a time, and teach multiple subjects, including subjects in which they may have no prior background; key areas such as music, arts, and sports are too often simply not taught; and physical resources, such as lab and sports equipment and library books, are simply not available across schools.” (NEP-2020, Article 7.2) Each of these school complexes will be 'consisting of one secondary school together with all other schools offering lower grades in its neighbourhood including Anganwadis, in a radius of five to ten kilometers'. The school complex will work like an administrative unit. Apart from government schools, the school complex may also have some private schools. It has been said in the NEP– “To further enhance cooperation and positive synergy among schools, including between public and private schools, the twinning/pairing of one public school with one private school will be adopted across the country”. (NEP-2020, Article 7.10)

Now, the question arises how will the problems that have been identified by the policy makers be resolved by suggesting a school complex structure? Had there been a serious effort to explore deeply and understand the root cause of the problems of poor teaching standard and governance in government schools, it could be seen that poor education budget, insufficient number

of teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio and poor academic environment in government schools are few of the many important issues behind the problems. By not having a concrete plan to work upon these issues, can a mere structural change bring about any effective difference?

Yes, it certainly will. But how and for whom?

One thing is clear that the government has prepared ground to further shirk off its responsibility of providing grants to the public schools. One need not go much deeper into the NEP to notice the emphasis put by the policy makers on the growing role of private/philanthropic organisations. The education policy states: "At the same time the private/philanthropic school sector must also be encouraged and enabled to play a significant and beneficial role". (NEP-2020, Article 8.4) It is not difficult to understand that the infrastructure and resources of government schools, which have been developed from the hard-earned money of the people, will be allowed to be used by private school owners for making profit.

Another worst consequence will be expediting the process of closure and merger of government schools. This has become a phenomenon throughout the country including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala and Delhi. The NEP does not seem to be interested in continuing with those schools where students' strength is not more than 30. Where the effort should have been made to find out the reason behind the phenomenon of low enrollment ratio, and provide a concrete solution and plan to improve it, the government is making it an excuse to close government schools. This school complex structure will also tell upon the volume of appointment of teachers. One teacher will have to teach in several other schools within the school complex. It will automatically reduce the 'required number of teachers' in the school complex. The closure of government schools will definitely help the owners of private schools to

grow. The provision will also bring down the Gross Enrollment Ratio particularly for the socially-economically disadvantaged groups, especially the girls. For several reasons, distant schools will make it difficult for them to attend their classes regularly. And if someone is well apprised of the ground reality of our country then one would know that this is what is happening in different parts of the country, even today.

The education policy states: " School complexes could also share counselors, trained social workers, technical and maintenance staff, etc. to further support teachers and help create an effective learning environment. " (NEP-2020, Article 5.10) Who will be these trained social workers? Looking at the character of the government, there remains no scope for any doubt that this provision has been made to bring members of Sangh Parivar into the education system. If RSS-BJP training volunteers will be included in the school complex, then what will be the fate of education in our country! This can be understood by studying institutions like JNU, DU and others where BJP has succeeded in implanting its ideological affiliates.

### **E) Vocational Education:**

The National Education Policy 2020 talks about introducing vocational education from class VI. Through this the government seemingly wants the education system to be structured in such a way so that the unemployment problem of this country is resolved. There cannot be one good reason for anyone to oppose it. Then why are the academicians and students strongly opposing this policy?

Also, we need to ponder: is the lack of vocational courses in our education system the main barrier for getting us employed? If so, why are millions of ITI degree holders, diploma holders, engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers in the country frantically rushing and looking for jobs? Why are Ph.D. holders

desperately trying to get any job and are willing to work even as a sweeper? Why are teachers who are eligible in all respects to get appointed without a job or working on contractual basis? With every passing day, the unemployment problem in our country is getting worse. Unemployment has never been such a terrible problem since independence. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020, The Indian Express reported that about 20 lakh applications were submitted for 2000 posts in a forest worker recruitment test in West Bengal. On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022, The New Indian Express reported that 45 percent of management and 48 per cent of engineering students in the country are unemployed. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, The Deccan Herald reported that a staggering 1.3 crore people applied for 35,281 vacancies in railways under the Non-Technical Popular Categories. Millions of factories are closed, workers are retrenched. In such a situation, even if one learns some skill, can he/she be assured of any job? Then why is there a hue and cry for skill education or job-oriented education or vocational education?

In fact, the government is trying to fool people by saying that the outdated education system is the main reason behind the problem of unemployment and not the crisis ridden capitalism of today. In fact, the inherent rule of capitalist economy which basically works for maximum profit is the concentration of capital in the hands of a few super rich people. Consequently, purchasing power of common people gets low, market squeezes and factories stop production. This generates unemployment and the chain continues. Hence, by taking any measure, the unemployment problem cannot be resolved in the present moribund capitalist economic system.

Vocational Education - NEP-2020 advocates “Integration of Vocational education Programmes into mainstream education in all educational institutions in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle, secondary school, vocational education will be integrated smoothly into

higher education” (NEP-2020, Article 16.4). By 2025 at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education (NEP-2020, Article 16.5). Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and NGOs (NEP-2020, Article 16.5). Now we are observing the central and almost all state governments are in full mood to implement these from the early stage of schooling and trying to hand them over to the NGOs affiliated to RSS. It's important to mention here that after the completion of the tenure of Sarva Sikhya Abhiyan (SSA) in the year 2018, now the central government has stated the same mission in another name of 'STARS' project under Samagra Sikhya Abhijan. It is being implemented in 6 states Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh, aim is to “encourage the introduction of work benches/multi-skilling centers in schools, which would be closely linked with the SSCs (Sector Skills Council) to ensure that the trades being introduced in schools are tightly connected to the labor market.” 'Vocationalisation' of education from class 6th onwards will destroy “Formal Schooling” and “Formal Education” and the time-tested process of teaching, learning and cultivation of knowledge. Providing some vocational training can never be called education, because it is alien to the very basis of education, that is: “Education is a man-making and character-building process.” Also, emphasis on vocational education from class VI onwards will lead students to focus entirely on 'how to make money?' Is this an education system which a conscious citizen of this country would like to accept for their children? What will be the fate of a well knitted and composed character of the young generation?

Also, it is not difficult to understand that the two kinds of education system will create two different kinds of workforce in the global market – One will be those who cannot pay and will



provide cheap labour. They will be subjected to the worst kind of exploitation. And another will be those who would have paying capacity. They will be exploited financially first by paying huge fees and then will serve as high grade skilled labourers for the global market and will be subjugated as per the rule of exploitative system.

There is another important point that must be borne in mind. In fact, education means development of mental faculty and bringing newer things in the field of epistemology with the help of hitherto available knowledge to carry forward the wheel of civilisation. One should be free to choose to study of their choice and the government should provide all logistics to help them to pursue it. This is what is actually meant by creating 'human resource' as the society needs all kinds of human potential. And it is the employment policy of a government which is expected to utilize this 'human resource' in the best possible way. If this happens, there will be no necessity at all to talk about any exclusive kind of education to provide employment opportunities for the countrymen. But this thing has never been realized by any of the governments since independence.

### **Higher education**

Higher education is a very important phase of education. But we know that due to poor financial conditions, many students in our country drop out of schools and cannot step into higher education. So, in this regard, it was expected that this new Education Policy would ensure to open the gates of higher education to all the students. But the picture was reversed. In NEP-2020, the govt. tries to retract its moral duty in the admission process of undergraduates, graduates, and postgraduate students. In order to enter higher education, students will now have to sit for Common Entrance Tests, conducted by a bureaucratic body (NTA-National Testing

Agency) after passing Class XII. Students will get admissions to various colleges based on their rank in the merit list prepared on the basis of their performances in the common entrance test. It is clear that these unnecessary entrance exams will expand the profit-making process of the coaching centers and massively increase the cost of education, thereby isolating a large section of the students from the learning arena. So, while this new education policy declares that this step will be a help to many students interested in graduation as well as in higher education, it is actually another step to squeeze the path of further opportunities, and aid in the mushrooming of private coaching giants.

Besides, students would get admission in only those colleges/universities as permitted by their rank in the merit list, thus, choice of college/university will no longer be in the hands of the students. Students will end up in utmost chaos, as leaving the local area and being compelled to enroll themselves in a distant educational institution, will increase the cost of education in various ways, including mess and hostel costs, which will drive a large number of students, especially girls, away from higher education.

#### **A) Four-year undergraduate degree course**

This education policy states that the current pattern of three-year undergraduate courses shall be extended to four years. Notably, in this case, students will be given a certificate at the end of each year: student certificate at the end of the first year, diploma certificate after second year, Degree certificate after the third year and another certificate after the four year Multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme. There is also a proposition for multiple entry-exit options for students - if one leaves his/her course after 1 or 2 years of studying, he/she would be able to resume again on the basis of those certificates. Surprisingly, the reason why students are forced to drop out of

school without finishing their studies has nowhere been addressed or talked about. The real issues behind the large number of dropouts every year have never been attempted to be probed into. This education policy has extended no real solution to solve those issues, instead it has come up with a very superficial idea of what could actually be tagged as "certificate trading centres". In a poverty stricken country like ours, it is necessary to provide free scholarships for higher education to the meritorious and poor students. We are all aware of the status of government scholarship schemes, where the scholarship portals stop working time and again and even if they are working, there is a huge rush of thousands and lakhs of needy students as against a very meagre number of available scholarship opportunities. Thus, only a handful of them could manage to get the scholarship, which, too, is often delayed due to government inefficiency. The students, thus, have to shoulder the heavy financial burden on themselves and sometimes, the burden becomes so heavy to carry along, that they have to quit. In a supposedly independent country, students, even today, are compelled to make a choice between feeding their family and getting education, where, most of the time, we see them choosing the former option. Under such a prevailing social background, introduction of the four year degree courses does nothing more than to increase the financial load on the already burdened shoulders of the young students, who now have to strive harder to bear the expenses for yet another year. Thus, the root cause behind the issue of drop-outs remains unresolved, rather, even worsened now, that a system of 'certificate trading' is being introduced. You study as long as you can pay, and get the certificates accordingly. You quit when your pocket is exhausted. However, in this crisis-ridden market, no number of certificates can be of any value- where PhD holders stand unemployed, what do we expect to do with the diploma certificates, which are nothing more than sweet lollipops against a bitter taste of reality.

## **B) Multidisciplinary Education**

The term 'multi-' has been widely used for higher education in this education policy, such as 'multi- exit'; 'Multi entry' points; 'Multidisciplinary Bachelor's Degree'; 'Multidisciplinary Course' etc. In this way, even in higher education, there will be no hard division among science, arts and commerce as well as among curriculum, co-curriculum and additional curriculum. According to the new education policy, through a multidisciplinary learning process, a student can reject the rules and requirements of interdisciplinary courses and choose whatever he likes from multiple subjects of different streams. He can change his subject again in the next semester, that is technically after 6 months. What kind of a holistic and comprehensive learning system are we expecting to grow through this new method of multidisciplinary learning? We know that all subjects have some form of inter-relationship with certain subjects, which need to be read together in order to develop a concrete, comprehensive knowledge in that field. For example, if you want to know physics well, you would also need to have a good knowledge of Mathematics and Chemistry. A social science student must know History and Political Science as well. And this should be the basis of interdisciplinary courses, which will scientifically integrate knowledge of a subject and this is very important in higher education. But the National Education Policy says that this multidisciplinary education is only to make technocrats, an educated worker in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, Management Technology. Because it needs technically skilled workers to survive in the modern competitive market. And for this reason, a little knowledge or application of science will be enough. There is no need for in-depth knowledge i.e., education will be industry oriented, market oriented. Students will have no knowledge of consciousness, civilization and culture. The real purpose of education, and its living entities will be destroyed.

You will be given the provision to learn only as much as will be of use to the industry and market, the young minds would be harnessed not to think beyond a certain limit. It is as if a mammoth stratagem to bound the free flow of a river or contain the waves of the ocean.

In this education policy, it has been said that there will be three types of higher educational institutions.

- (1) Research Intensive Universities (RU)
- (2) Teaching Intensive Universities (TU), and
- (3) Autonomous degree-granting Colleges (AC)

Emphasis will be given on both research and teaching in Research Intensive Universities while in Teaching Intensive Universities will place greater emphasis on teaching. And autonomous degree- granting colleges will primarily focus on granting undergraduate degrees. With appropriate accreditations, they could evolve into Research -intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire.

The education policy also states that higher education institutes, offering courses in a particular stream only, will be gradually "phased out" over time and in their place will be formed multidisciplinary Higher Education Institution Clusters which are like academic counterparts of special economic zones. In special economic zones (SEZs), no labor law works and state laws do not apply. Similarly, in these multidisciplinary HEI clusters, the rights of teachers and students, the rules of traditional education, will all be ad libitum (discretion) of the corporate houses and private players. It has been said: "By 2040, all higher education institutions shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions and shall aim to have larger student enrollments preferable in the thousands, for optimal use of infrastructure and resources, and for the creation of vibrant multidisciplinary communities".

In this way, the multidisciplinary higher education clusters, on the one hand, will destroy the very essence of education, and on the other hand, many students will be deprived of the light of education for being unable to bear the burden of huge fee hikes in these institutions. Therefore, privatization of education is the ultimate goal of this education policy. It has also been said in this education policy that the present concept of affiliated colleges will be phased out over a period of fifteen years. The affiliating university authorities need to take initiatives to make the colleges affiliated to the university as autonomous colleges that can "achieve minimum benchmarks in academics and curricular matters" . Colleges will now become autonomous, which means that the college will have to take all the responsibility including financial management, unlike that of the aids provided by the university earlier. The Board of Governors (BOG), for obvious reasons, comprising private players and corporate involvement, will have full control over these autonomous educational institutions and its affairs like the financial affairs and staff recruiting processes including that of head of institutions, and take all decisions regarding governance. " It will be responsible for meeting all regulatory guidelines mandated by HECI through the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)".

This time while speaking of multidisciplinary education in this education policy, they have mentioned the universities of ancient India like Nalanda, Vikramshila, Takshshila etc. just to remind us that two and a half thousand years ago how these universities used to teach the students with various scopes of knowledge (multidisciplinary education). Banabhatta's 'Kadambari', written in the seventeenth century, mentioned 64 kalas (in ancient India any kind of subject and creative works were referred to as Kala). Among these 64 kalas were taught Music, Drawing, Chemistry, Mathematics, woodwork, textile making and engineering and so on. That is why this kind of teaching has been called 'liberal art'.

There is no denying the fact that Nalanda, Takshashila, had played an important role in the development of knowledge in that era. But the social and academic scenario that existed two and a half thousand years ago was undeniably different from what exists presently. Today, it has advanced enormously and knowledge has been enriched and developed by dividing it into many branches. If we take the example of physics, then we will see that this one subject itself has so many sub-branches that require specialized attention and learning for comprehensive knowledge. At present, it is very time consuming to study or research on any particular branch or subject of higher education. Advancements that we have made in every field, it is practically impossible to study everything in every field, all together in a single course! So, we may be proud of Nalanda, Takshashila but, after two and a half thousand years, will the needs of today's age be met by following the teaching methods of Nalanda and Takshashila? To quote Rabindranath from a very relevant essay written by him, on 'Education' - "Our society is not providing us education suitable for our times. It is providing us 2-4 thousand years' old education. Therefore, school, which should be the most essential entity to make us a good human being, that of ours is shut."

### **C) Centralisation of Education and Autonomy**

As the prime basis of implementing democratic education in any country, it is very important to save the autonomy of education. Based on our experience till date, there are four dimensions to save the freedom of educational institutions. Among those, Organizational Autonomy comes first in this list. This refers to having an organisational structure, including Departmental heads, Deans, Executive Council, Code, senate and Chancellors, which plays a crucial role in decision making at different levels. Organisational autonomy refers to the right to take every decision without having an outside pressure and to have the complete right to recruit the capable faculties in every

level of the structure.

Second is Financial Autonomy. Every University gets funds from the Government and do earn from different sectors including Fees from the students, donations from the ex - students, financial contribution from different organisations and the interest from the Bank savings. Having Financial Autonomy allows a university to opt for development and to allow expenses in different sectors from the grant aided by the government, i.e, the university will be free to decide freely on its financial affairs.

Staffing Autonomy comes third. The standard of study in any university depends upon the capability of the professors and the staff in that university. It's an important part of the University Autonomy to have the rights of recruitment of the professors and the non-teaching staff, according to their capacity, without facing any pressure from the outside.

Academic Autonomy, the fourth point, deals with what and how should be studied. How the exams will be held, how many students will be admitted, what will be the criteria of admission, in which subject degree will be provided, the rights to take all these decisions without any external beckoning is called Academic Autonomy.

With these four pillars, the Autonomy of colleges and universities can be saved and the democratization of education is possible. But, if this Autonomy is robbed, then the centralisation of education happens. These two factors stand against each other. Present BJP led central government is determined to prepare the soil of fascism by imposing centralisation and robbing the Autonomy of education.

This very concept of educational autonomy was formed in a special level of the development of the society, especially, with



the extinction of the Feudal economy by the establishment of the Bourgeois democratic revolution. Universities were thought of as religious institutions in the medieval era. Gradually, the tussle between the professors and the religious authority increased. After this, especially with the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the Renaissance movement was born. The concept of people's freedom and people's emancipation came into account. A preconception of absolutism dominated the thought - philosophy - culture of the Feudal society, that is, the concept of everything in this world is the expression of absolute power. Ideas - culture - education, everything was tied with the iron chain of this concept in the Feudal society. The light of Renaissance uprooted this concept and paved the way for analysing truth based upon thorough judgement, logical analysis, observation and conversation. The main theme of educational autonomy, institutional autonomy, where discussion, debate, search for truth can be possible, was at the superstructure of the then Capitalist society that was progressing unhindered. Thus, gradually, it opened the closed door of the society's progression by enriching and flourishing scientific - knowledge.

The national leaders of our freedom struggle had put up a loud protest against British imperialism, when they tried to snatch the autonomy of the universities. Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, ex-chancellor of the Calcutta University had said, " University must not be the factory of slave production, we want to think truth, to give the learning of freedom, to inspire the rising generation by great, developed views. We must not be the instrument of the government..." He had further said, " Liberty first, Liberty second, Liberty always, I must not be satisfied with another."

But, no system remains the same in the direction of the progression of society. Today, when Capitalism has turned into monopoly capital, after crossing the boundary of footloose

progression, it has started to increase the trend of a centralized economy. So, robbing of the democratic autonomy started as the superstructure of the centralised economy. And today, in this era of capitalism, imperialist economy, political centralisation has started massively due to the centralised capital. The contraction of education and denying institutional autonomy had been started a long time back, with the aim to bring all the controls under one umbrella organisation by dismantling all other autonomous organisations. The capitalist- imperialist forces have started meddling with rational thinking processes and they are trying to mingle spiritualism with the technical part of science, welcoming fascistic thinking as their safeguard to be alive.

### **D) Centralisation in Higher Studies**

By bulldozing the autonomy of education, a massive change has been implemented through NEP20 to centralise the entire higher education. To establish a supreme centralised control of the government in all aspects of education, Higher Education Council of India (HECI) has been formed. Members of this council have been 'recommended', with the education minister at the top seat. Gradually, the number of government administrators and officers has been increased in UGC. Although Government interference already existed, a separate bureaucratic administrative body (HECI) has now been formed through National Education Policy 2020. However, this body has not been allowed to grant money in any institution. Earlier, the Prime Minister was also announced to be the head of this body but after a loud protest from every quarter of the country, the decision has been changed and the education minister has now been recommended at the highest seat of the body. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which was a consultative body, has now been given the responsibility of controlling the board, to control everything from the primary level to higher studies. At first, Rastriya Shikshya Aayog, which

was partially in the hands of the central and state government, was proposed for similar function but now it has been completely brought under the control of the central government. CABE was initially formed as the organisation to discuss education-related matters. But later, the Modi Government has taken a step ahead towards finalising the process of centralisation by making the education minister as the chairman, thereby enhancing its power. These sorts of steps give distinct indications of the latent intentions of the government to wipe out the autonomy and centralise the administrative and political power.

Moreover, Higher Education Council of India (HECI) has been formed after destroying all the former autonomous councils, such as All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Bar Council of India (BCI). It is said to have only four independent verticals.

Introduction of National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) confirms all the undone measures from the Union Government to frame out a foremost centralization.

- To accredit the standard of colleges and Universities, formation of National Accreditation Council (NAC) has been proposed.
- Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) to be formed to deal with the matters of funds granting.
- The General Education Council (GEC) will be formed to frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes and also to identify specific skills that students must acquire during their academic programmes.

This Higher Education Council of India proposed to categorise educational institutions in three following types: Research university (RU), Teaching university (TU) and Academic College (AC). Through this citation, the scope for a university to conduct research will be dragged down. Very few universities

can do research and only a few would be able to perform research along with study and all the rest of the universities will just become sub- standard institutes. The interrelation between university and the underlying colleges will be ended, opening a wide open chance for the government to throw its weight about. This vigorous centralisation will bring all the colleges under the control of the state, thereby giving the State a direct control of the young minds.

### **E) Centralisation of Entrance Exam**

As per the claims of the policy makers, NEP-20 is unique in many ways. And this is true, as we cannot deny that it is indeed unique, the way the current government is all set to bring down the enrollments to higher studies, through the devious propositions of National Education Policy 2020. Earlier the admission process to higher studies was through the allotted marks or by the entrance exams conducted by the universities. According to the proposal of NEP20, the BJP led union government has started 'National Testing Agency (NTA) - a pan India entrance exam conducting agency'. In an artistically fabricating way, they have launched a logic that students suffer due to different entrance tests. So, the universities need not take different entrance examinations. In fact, the NTA has already issued a notice to conduct Common University Entrance Test for undergraduate courses (CUET for UG) in all central universities for 2022-23 session. Students would now have to pass through the barrier of a pan India common entrance test to be conducted by the NTA. CUET is being done in order to make the education system of our country a global commodity for maximization of profit both for the national and international market players. This CUET will also put extra burden and stress on the students already overburdened by the semester systems. While lakhs of teaching posts are lying vacant and universities are not getting adequate financial support over the years this decision to hold common entrance test will further decrease the

quality teaching as the entire final year will engage both the teachers and students for the preparation of the exams and in the process ultimately the coaching centres will reap profit out of this.

The NTA will gradually infiltrate and come to control every related section such as criteria, occurrence, fee structure, merit list and admission opportunity, as per the order of the ruling capitalist class. The opportunity to take admission in nearest colleges and universities, for regional students, will be curtailed. And there will be a massive effect on some distinguished features that some regional state universities share. Extra fees will be added in the name of the exam. Can every student, even after promotion, afford to take admission in the farthest famous institution? The underlying problem is deep and clear. Financial issue is what should be addressed. To add to this hoodwink it has been further said that the universities may not consider NTA results as the admission criteria. Then why have they launched this entrance exam? Just like NAAC has become compulsory this NTA will also follow the same foot mark. In a country like India, where universities are being functioned in a sphere of diverse languages, religions, and cultures, the government is trying to centralise all the universities academically and administratively in order to impose all out fascism in the slogan of 'One state - One Syllabus' and in continuation 'One examination'.

## **F) Centralisation in Research**

Till now UGC, CSIR, ICSR, ICHR grant money in the research sector. In NEP, the proposal for the establishment of NRF has been mentioned. The primary concept of autonomy clarifies that the choice of topic lies entirely on the scholars' perspective. Research can be on education, society, politics, economy, nature, science or in any subject. Research must be on the basis of national needs, NEP exclaims. Who is going to decide the national need? In this case, the education system will be

controlled by the CAGE and the education minister is over them. So, the government will directly interfere in research sectors. Subjects, which can create ideas antagonistic to the ideology of the BJP led central government, would be excluded. This is a severe attack on fundamental research and on the secular, democratic minds of our country.

### **G) Grants**

At the very time of granting money, the NEP proposes 'Autonomy', which, if stated, in our prime minister's words, is to be 'Atmanirbhar'. The nitty- gritty boils down to the fact that the government will gradually retract its funding to the universities and consequently, all these institutions have to depend on trade organisations or on any corporate organisation for financial help, to run their courses properly. As a result, the fees will be inevitably hiked.

" The autonomy of public institutions will be backed by adequate public financial support and stable private institutions with a public-spirited commitment to high quality equitable education will be encouraged." That there has not been even a single mention about the functioning of government institutions, narrates the entire story. The policy talks about public financial aid- who are these public? They are the private owners, who wish to invest in the "education sector" and garner maximum profit from this business. From the current situation, where thousands of private players have sprung into the "business" of education and as a result, countless private institutions have mushroomed up across the country, can anyone safely vouch that the private owners are going to benevolently contribute their money for the cause of education, without any underlying trade interest in mind?

According to the concept of autonomy, the government will be responsible for providing fundings to the academic institutions

and all other administrative works and syllabus formation will be directed by the educationists - teachers - students. The makers of NEP are deviating from this concept of autonomy and are frantically trying to curb all other forms of institutional autonomy, except financial autonomy, thereby shrugging off any financial responsibility from their shoulders. So, through this National Education Policy, in the name of autonomy, they are neglecting the rights and freedom of the colleges to get financial help from the government thereby, entailing privatisation.

### **Saffronisation of Education**

During the Renaissance and the freedom struggle movement of India, the slogan for Secular, Scientific, Democratic and Universal education was raised by the veteran personalities. But the essence and dream behind these words have been, repeatedly, assassinated in the document of NEP20. Not even a single trace of the word "Secular" could be found anywhere in the policy. Besides mentioning a few institutions and a few figures of the specific favorable field from the ancient India, in a crafty manner, the names of the pioneers of Indian renaissance, such as Ram Mohan, Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, who hold a strong place in history, for their struggle to initiate modern education against deep-rooted religious bigotry and superstitions, was skilfully discarded with fundamentalist intentions.

The hidden motive of the BJP led union government can be illustrated from a recent speech of the home minister Amit Shah: "The real color of India's history is saffron and in order to bring a change in the culture we have to rewrite history". This clearly highlights the role of the education ministry of the government. Why don't we look back in history and identify how some people have been making their best effort to write a new history? The political ideology of the BJP as a whole,

including that of the prime minister and the education minister, is the ideology of the RSS. In the tumultuous days of the independence movement, when the students of the country sacrificed their lives, smiling dauntlessly at the face of death, RSS was involved in spying for the British. The fundamental idea of the RSS camp, however, justifies their anti-independence stand, as they consider "The struggle for independence started in this country fifteen hundred years ago and it will continue till Hindu Raj is established not only in India but in the whole subcontinent."

RSS had deliberately kept itself aloof from the fervour of Indian Nationalism movement that had been waged against the ruthless British imperialism, and had united people from all walks of life, irrespective of their race, religion and caste. Moreover, then M.S. Golwalkar, the second chief of RSS was a proponent and propagator of the concept of 'Cultural Nationalism' and believed that the Indian freedom struggle movement was based on "perverted concept of nationalism". He could be quoted, saying, "Being anti-British has been combined with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary attitude has had a detrimental effect on the entire flow of the freedom struggle, its leaders and the common mass." So when the BJP-led union government, guided by this RSS ideology, thinks of rewriting history, it is not a rocket science for the common mass to understand that bit by bit they wish to erase the glorious history of the independence movement, along with their abominable role. They want to eliminate Netaji, Bhagat Singh, Gandhi Ji, Rabindranath from the conscience of the people. Instead, they are eager to uphold Savarkar as 'Veer', a hero. In 1939 this Savarkar, on the sly, told the British Viceroy that, "British and Hindus should be friends". To implement this agenda, 21 prominent historians, including Romila Thapar and Ramsharan Sharma, have been removed from the ICHR (Indian Council of Historical Research) and replaced by bootlickers, loyal to the RSS ideology, who would proclaim blindly that the



main religion of the country, since its creation, has been Hinduism. And in this education policy, the primary objective of emphasizing the Indianization of education in various aspects, including rewriting history, is to establish 'Hindutva' by encouraging hindutva sentiments.

### **Distortion of History**

The urgency to execute NEP20 across the country is one of the points to direct our focus on. In recent times, UGC has come up with a newly oriented History curriculum, Learning Outcome based curriculum Framework (LoFC), to be introduced in all the universities across the country. The very preface of the curriculum is enough to seal a connection between the curriculum and the NEP20. If a reader goes through an article titled 'The Idea Bharat' from the said course, he would easily interpret that the article is aimed at serving a single purpose of propagating a biased description of ancient India. Vedas, Upanishads, Vedanta, Puran etc. have been mentioned to convey the heritage of the India literature. Although the names of Jain and Buddhist literature have been mentioned, still it couldn't hide the attempt to glorify literature based only on Hindu religion.

In this course, the Indus Valley Civilization of ancient India has been repeatedly referred to as the Indus-Saraswati Civilization. It has been unequivocally established today, that the Indus Valley Civilization and the Aryan Civilization differ in their rudimentary characteristics and that there is a considerable time gap between the two aforementioned civilizations- this establishment is not an arbitrary claim but an archaeologically proved fact. But today the flag bearers of Hindutva are trying to draw a veil over this historically and scientifically true fact and are striving hard to combine Aryan civilization with Indus Valley civilization, with the sole purpose of proving that the Aryans were the natives of the land. History has been distorted

by associating the name Saraswati with the Indus civilization in the UGC curriculum, despite the fact that there is no evidence of Indus civilization developing along the river Saraswati.

In the Afghan - Mughal section, Babur was portrayed as an invader, however, the British were not called invaders at all. On the other hand, the 'Sipahi Vidroh' against the British in 1857 was referred to as the First War of Independence. No name of any Mughal character was present in the discussion of the Mughal Empire. Rana Pratap, Rani Durga Devi, Himu, Vikramaditya were named in the consequent discussion but the most successful Mughal king Akbar was discarded. Aurangzeb's name has only been associated with the conflict with Shivaji. So, by reading this history, will the students get a better idea about the history or will they just get acquainted with the saffronisation of history. In six semesters of this course, out of 36 subjects, 26 papers have to be studied. In fact, no comprehensive, holistic and practical knowledge of history will be developed, and moreover, the true history, devoid of the biased colours of race, religion and caste, could never be sensed in the minds. To fabricate irrationality in thinking and to produce an unscientific, superstitious bent of mind among people, the History Curriculum has been framed accordingly. In the name of history, the students will be inflated with Hindu history, which would be nothing more than fiction- a cocktail of myth and reality - a serious distortion of true history.

### **Indian Knowledge System**

This education policy states: "The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this policy... An engaging course of the Indian knowledge system will also be available to students in secondary schools as an elective".

Beneath the shades of this big talk, the underlying truth is that

the knowledge that the people of ancient India had will be taught as an Indian knowledge system of a modern curriculum and it will be introduced not only at higher education level but also at school level. Now, a few examples will surely illustrate what they actually mean by the Indian knowledge system.

Referring to a book, 'Vaimanika Shastra' (Aeronautics) at the Indian Science Congress in 2015, it was claimed that there were aircrafts in the Vedic age of ancient India, that is thousands of years ago. Further, it was claimed that those planes were huge and could make inter-planet travels and that they could fly all the way back and forth, left and right. And by citing more such characteristics he tried to authenticate the superiority of that aircraft of ancient India, and that too on a prestigious platform like the Science Congress. After studying that book thoroughly, the scientists said that the designs of the aircraft mentioned in the book could not fly, as their designs violated the basic principles of aerodynamics. Yet, it was claimed that the aircraft was invented in the Vedic age. This is the Indian knowledge system which will be taught to the school students from now on.

The Chief Minister Biplob Dev of Tripura said, "In the age of Mahabharata, if there was no internet and television, how could Sanjay telecast Dhritarashtra about the Kurukshetra war?" In general, he claimed that the Internet and television were invented in ancient India. A few years ago, Union Minister of State for Education, Satyapal Singh had claimed that Darwin's theory of evolution is "scientifically wrong". "Nobody including our ancestors have written or have orally communicated that when they went to a jungle or a town, there they saw an ape turning into a man," was the comment made by former IPS turned politician, Mr. Satyapal Singh. He even went on to say that Darwin's theory should be dropped from school and college curriculum.

Our former minister of education, Mr. Pokhriyal had said in his

Parliamentary speech that Astrology was in our country millions of years ago and that in comparison to Astrology, modern science is mere inconsequential. To quote him, "All streams of science are dwarfed in stature when compared with the science of astrology. Astrology is the number one science for the entire world." He added that astrology needs to be practiced.

Even the Prime Minister, the head of the largest democracy in the world, went so far as to claim that genetic science and plastic surgery existed in India since ancient times. And in evidence, he mentioned: "We all read about Karna in the Mahabharata. If we think a little more, we realise that the Mahabharata says Karna was not born from his mother's womb. This means that genetic science was present at that time. That is why Karna could be born outside his mother's womb." He also cited the example of elephant headed Hindu god Ganesh, as a case of plastic surgery in ancient India. And these are the Indian knowledge systems.

In the meantime, the Minister of Education has sent intimations to various IITs, IISERs and reputed Central Institutes, instructing them to expedite research and seminars on how to introduce new education policy, with the help of Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, an offshoot of RSS. Central institutions including IIT, IISER have been instructed to conduct research on the development of science in ancient India, teaching of quantum mechanics in Sanskrit, advancements in medical science and stem cell technology back then, and many other such fictitious stuff. The government has also assured full support in terms of funding such "research works".

It is not like there have been no real achievements in ancient India. In fact, science had indeed made some real developments in ancient India, and hence, requires no further embellishments to glorify itself. But the way the Hindutva leaders have been trying to highlight and portray that all the modern discoveries were already invented in ancient India a long time back, is doing

nothing to glorify our country, rather it has actually turned our country into a clown in front of the whole world and has successfully tarnished the true glory of the progress of science in ancient India. In particular, the medical sciences of ancient India were greatly improved through Charak and Sushruta. Aryabhata, Brahmihir, Brahmagupta, and Bhaskaracharya played crucial roles in the field of mathematics. Arithmetic, algebra and trigonometry were developed with a big leap forward. They also made significant contributions to astronomy.

But neither the policy makers nor the BJP government at the center are discussing these aspects of development in ancient India. What they have instead described regarding the practice of science in ancient India, is totally fictional and a blatant mockery of modern science. And what more! These utopian phenomena are being introduced into the mainstream of the education system as the Indian knowledge system, which will completely destroy the very foundation of science-based rational thinking.

### **Online Education**

An issue that calls for urgent attention in the National Education Policy of 2020 is the introduction of an online education system through MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) across the country. Soon after the publication of the draft National Education Policy 2020, the subject matter which has caused a serious debate among conscious people since May 20, 2019 is the introduction of an online education system across the country through: Blended Mode of Education. This education system will consist of 40% online education and 60% offline education management. In general, it seems that 40% of online learning will be done with the help of some online medium (Google Meet, Zoom App, etc.) in the presence of the teacher-professor and in the direct question-and-answer conversation of

the student-teacher. And the remaining 60% will be classroom education.

But that is not the actual issue. In this case, two terms have been used in the education policy: Synchronous mode and Asynchronous mode. Speaking of Synchronous mode, there lies a subtle connection between time and being synchronous; that is, in a given/ particular time-frame, if I am doing something, others are doing that too. And by 'online' the approach mentioned in the Education policy is Asynchronous. Here 40% of the type of online education will be completely different. Teachers or professors will not be able to focus on any particular topic, nor will they be able to go into detailed discussion. All they can do is record a video of the lecture and post it online. They have to post all kinds of materials, notes required by the students. Students can view it at any time. But the teachers will have no way of understanding if and when students are looking into the materials provided. These 40% include more topics — webinars, key-conferences, various activities, and more.

Now let's look at the remaining 60%. According to the education policy makers, this is the “Face to Face Mode” which is called “attending instructor's short duration lectures for introducing or summarizing topics and understanding complex concepts”. The work of teachers and professors here is not a lengthy detailed explanation of a subject- rather, they are compelled to deliver a short lecture of about 10-15 minutes. In the case of higher education, is this stipulated time sufficient enough for teaching and learning? In the given time-frame, only a brief summary of a topic can be given. If there is a question about the material sent online, students can ask the teachers and professors about it, and that too, is included in this 60%: “participating in-group activities in the classroom”. 60% of this offline medium includes not only classroom education, but also library visits, field visits, sports, physical training,

apprenticeships, physical labs, etc., which students must read on their own. Teachers will be instructors or directors only. Naturally, the standard of education will go down very quickly. The exams will be held through an open book system or through group exams where everyone will answer the questions in a group so that the students will not be able to get themselves evaluated scientifically.

Now, if teachers want to address the queries of the students or explain something which the students did not understand during the “face to face program”, that provision too has been limited. Here it is said that a “minimum 30% face to face”. Moreover, it is said that, in particular, the online system can be extended up to a maximum of 70%.

“At least 30% of the total face to face classroom time should be utilized for learner centered activities rather than lecture methods. The lecture method was thus almost completely abolished where teachers do not have to give lectures, they will only become instructors or directors. In other words, the first thing that is happening is that there is no 'teaching'. Students have to read by themselves. What we mean by education is the development of personality and the formation of character, but unfortunately there is nothing as such in the NEP20. Small projects have to be done here; the way it is done in corporate sectors, and the whole education system will be turned into a product. The very essence of education will be destroyed. In the case of higher education, students are asked to collect materials from the internet. In fact, it cannot be properly researched. Many sites have been offered and students are provided with open access. Materials are being requested from a website called “Global Common”. In order to get high quality material for college-university in higher education, one has to go to the website and subscribe to them. As a result, students will have to spend an amount to get it. This means that there is no question of government funding for higher education, or funding for better

research. The government will say, you will study with what you get from open access. Thus, the government completely removed itself from the issue of strategic financing through “Global Common” and “Open Access”.

And this brings us to the question: Will the open book exam, group discussion, multiple entry and multiple exits be approved during the job tests/ interview?

Again, everything that the teachers have to post will be integrated into a centralized surveillance system. Hence, one can see what kind of material he is giving, what he is saying in the video lecture and everything will be under the radar. One more thing to note is that these posted videos will be stored online, meaning that what is posted today will be there even a year later. As a result, gradually, there will be no need for teachers. The possibility of new recruitment will also be shrunk down. The state is completely abandoning the social responsibility of education by imposing this draconian policy on the students. So, it's not just a matter of online or offline education, the whole of the education system will change drastically. It will be completely destroyed.

Thus, review of the issue of online education in the National Education Policy 2020 is not in the best interest of education or students. Apart from this, the government has also launched an attack on education by erasing the pass-fail system, the root cause of the drop-out problem, thus exhibiting its lack of will to solve the economic crisis and, above all, the underdeveloped education system. The country's education system is in a dire state today. According to the announcement made by the Kothari Commission in 1964-66, in the education sector, where the government subsidy is supposed to be fixed at 6% of GDP, 52 years after the announcement, it has come down to 0.44% in the academic year 2019-20.



After the unplanned lockdown at the beginning of the Corona pandemic, when people of the country were plunged into a deep, all-engulfing crisis, in that situation, the honourable Prime Minister of our country, paying no heed to the crisis at hand, boasted about online education. On April 13, 2020, with the initiative of UGC, a special committee was formed to discuss and decide on how to make online education widely available in the country. At a time of crisis, when students-parents were naturally very anxious about education, they had sincerely hoped that this online education would help the students at least by some means. The head of our country has taken advantage of such a desperate situation to stealthily implement parts and bits of the NEP2020. Online education is nothing but yet another opportunity for private players to earn profits. This has been further illustrated by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement on e-learning on May 31, 2020. She announced that more than 100 reputed educational institutions in the country can launch their own online education system and foreign companies can invest in it. The present government is simply walking on the path previously carved out by the former Rajiv Gandhi government, that had legally recognized the education system as an investment opportunity ("Education is the unique investment") through the National Education Policy of 1986. The present government wants to hand over the 14-lakh crore market of education in our country to the private management mafia. While "online education" may sound cool, how reasonable is it in a country like ours? Putting aside the above plans of the government, if we look at the real picture of the country, what do we see? Our country ranks 103rd in the Hunger Index. Ours is a country where 23 crore people go to bed hungry every night. About 7,000 people die every day from starvation and lack of food. Every hour 5 workers are committing suicide due to scarcity. According to government estimates, about 4 lakh farmers have committed suicide in the last decade and half.

When there is such a miserable situation in the whole country, the students cannot stay out of the ambit of this crisis in any way. The basic requirements for online education is a smartphone (according to experts, this education is not possible through smartphone properly, for that you need a laptop or tab), adequate data balance, good internet connection and above all, electricity. According to a 2019 survey by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI), only 36% of the people across the country are covered under various internet services. Now, if that proportion can be calculated, it is possible to estimate the percentage of students who fall under this category. According to government estimates, only 7.67% of the country's villages have been fully electrified. The country's 31 million families are still in complete darkness due to non-availability of electricity. In such a situation, the government has not made any announcement regarding the access of online education for students in these areas. By every passing day, the mobile phone companies are increasing the data recharge tariff packs. Now, is this situation unknown to the government? No, it is not. Then why such duplicity? The answer is simple. As long as the people of the country still have some financial means, they should just buy online education, as a product. A clever plan is to gradually hand over the education system, without government infrastructure, to the private sector for profit. It is important to remember that online education can never be an alternative to formal education. The students have already realized this truth. Poor network connectivity, lack of family finances, lack of adequate classrooms has prevented millions of students from accessing online education.

Is it possible for the students in the online class to establish a close relationship with the teachers that they would share in the direct connection of the teachers in the institutional education framework? The importance of campus education is irreplaceable. A student gets a sense of life, a sense of social responsibility outside of the syllabus when he is inside the

campus. Mutual exchange of thought and ideas, socialization leads the conscious mind towards social progress. Education can never be complete without a social mind developing among the student community. Through online education, the government will not only reject responsibility for developing infrastructure, but will also open up a lucrative market for online education. Google is already investing 75 lakh billion dollars in digital education in India. Sometimes online education can be used only as an aid to formal education but it can never be an alternative.

In fact, through this, a stark divide will be created among students in the field of education and this gulf will further widen the social divide as well. The shadow of inequality in education will increase. Millions of students will be lost from the front yard of education.

### **Research Sector**

On the aspect of research, the NEP-20 document mentions that, “National research foundation (is) to fund outstanding peer reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges”, that is, an NRF (National Research Foundation) will be set up in the ambit of the new education policy. If some research is not approved by the NRF, that research will not be funded and therefore it will die down. Here the researchers will not have the freedom of doing research; one has to work on the topic(s) approved by the NRF. The education policy also mentions that NRF will work so that “research scholars are constantly made aware of the most urgent national research issues”, in other words, it will largely approve the research which is based on issues of national importance. But who will decide what urgent 'national importance' is? It will be decided by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) headed by the Union Education Minister. The Minister is a political person whose chief agenda is the agenda of his political party. Therefore, it is clear that the research areas will be decided

based on the directives of RSS headquarters in the present regime. The members of the ruling dispensation openly advocate pseudo-science pseudo-history, claiming that all knowledge was there in the Vedas and all advanced research had already been done in ancient India, many thousands of years ago. If such people dictate the research policies, then it is obvious that efforts will be directed to give credence to the myths propagated in the name of the so -called “Indian Knowledge System” in the guise of research. We see that research is already oriented in this manner; pseudo-science is given open stage in Indian Science Congress. Eminent institutions like IEST Shibpur conducted Gita reading for induction session of the new-comers, IIT Mandi appointed such a person as Director who boasts himself to be a ghost-hunter, IIT Kharagpur published a calendar making a completely baseless and evidence-less claim that Aryans were original inhabitants of Indian subcontinent, and the list runs long. So, it is evident that what kind of research will be approved and funded by NRF under the new policy. The basic research activities that are conducted in the universities and institutes across India are so far approved and funded by independent research bodies like UGC, CSIR, DST, ICSSR, ICHR, ICMR etc. Although the policy mentions that these agencies will function as it is, the latest budget provisions clearly shows that these bodies are being systematically defunded and will eventually dry out. Consequently, the NRF, having a stated goal of outcome-oriented “competitive” and “urgent national issue” based research that will work closely with government as well as industry and private/philanthropic organizations, will come up as the only overarching body that will control the entire research sector by controlling funding. Therefore, fundamental research in all areas of knowledge will die down and all the funds will be directed to market-oriented research for corporate-profit on one hand and pseudo-science pseudo-history oriented pseudo-research for fulfilling the RSS-Hindutva agenda on the other. The policy announced that the M.Phil programme, which is a

very important intermediate research degree in several disciplines, will be discontinued. Regarding PhD entrance, the examinations of different universities and institutions based on their vast and diverse needs and thrust areas are being discontinued and the NET exam now centrally conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), is being mandated in accordance with the NEP-2020. All this will only impose a regimented bureaucratic politico-ideological centralisation of a rabid state system that will materialise the policy of retrenchment of public funded research, demolish the freedom, space and diversity left in the research sector which is essential for holistic all-round material and spiritual enrichment of the society. The new National Education Policy if implemented will therefore spell disaster to the country's research sector, and consequently the society will fall back to ancient times.

### **Commodification of Education**

One of the foremost freedom fighters, Lala Lajpat Rai had once mentioned – “The government must make all the arrangements for education for all, and education must be the first and foremost responsibility of the government treasury. The duty of the state doesn't end with primary education alone... The government must not undermine the importance of higher education.” This outlook towards education had been developed during the great freedom struggle and Renaissance movement in India. On the other side a paradigm shift in the world order had taken place in 1917 through the first Socialist Revolution in Russian soil overthrowing the realm of capitalist exploitation and establishing the true republic of the workers-peasants and toiling people, which guaranteed free and universal education, health, and employment for each and every people of the country. The bourgeois class who captured the throne of the newly freed India, for their own survival in Indian society, could not ignore the overarching global influence of these phenomena. As a result, the first two education

commissions recommended that 10% of the public exchequer should be utilized for education and that education should be made completely free in phases. In the first five-year plan 7.8% of the union budget was allocated for education. However, as years passed under the bourgeois rule, the influence of the thoughts of great Indian humanists and ideals of the freedom struggle waned away, and regretfully, the socialist block of the world became reactionary and weak. Subsequently the ruling capitalist class through their trusted aid in Congress diverted and distorted the Renaissance ideals of education and gradually converted it as a field of exploitation and money-making. This process gained momentum from the National Policy on Education 1986 implemented by the Rajiv Gandhi government, which openly declared that, “Education is a unique investment”. This fundamental shift in the view towards education opened the floodgates of privatisation of education. In the 90's the State of India under the leadership of the then PM Narasimha Rao of Congress signed the GATS agreement, which opened education, health and all the service sectors of our country as a ground for profit not only to the national but to the world corporates through the dictums of World Bank and World Trade Organisation. Education had now started to be viewed as another commodity. The National-International capitalist class started direct “investment” in the education sector. Over the years numerous private schools-colleges-universities-engineering and medical institutions mushroomed with the aim of selling education and making profit.

In the year 2000, during the Prime Ministership of BJP leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the ruling NDA government for the first time in Indian history formed an education commission headed by billionaire corporate tycoons Kumar Mangalam Birla and Mukesh Ambani for further corporatization of education. This Birla-Ambani committee formed the blueprint to suitably restructure the education system for the unabated loot and plunder in the global market.

In 2005, through the “National Knowledge Commission” the UPA government led by Manmohan Singh started management quota, NRI quota in the government and private medical-engineering colleges, which started awarding (selling) Degrees not through merit but money. It paved the way for commercialization of education. This commission further recommended initiating the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) schemes in higher education.

One may wonder what is the point of dragging in history when we are discussing NEP-2020? It is important to understand the background as new policy is a continuation of the implementation of the blue-print of privatisation and commercialisation of education, a process that had started from 1986 and in a step by step manner the stage is created where the new policy will render education and the future of our society to the hands of corporates in its entirety. In NEP-20, for the first time a public education policy announces that public funded education and private education both will be treated at par – in fact the already dying public education system will now be officially pushed to oblivion. In retrospect, if we look at the 2015 round of WTO agreements signed by India, a condition of the agreement was to make a level playing field for the multinationals to invest freely in the education sector. The National Education Policy 2020 merely implements it to its fullest extent.

NEP-2020 further states that “The autonomy of public institutions will be backed by adequate public financial support and stability. Private institutions with a public-spirited commitment to high-quality equitable education will be encouraged.” We have seen that in the present market-driven system the meaning of autonomy that comes from robust funding and minimum state interference has been inverted. Autonomy in today's distorted sense is used to mean the so-called financial autonomy, which says that the “autonomous”

institutions, notwithstanding will not be funded by the government as it will be left “free” to fund itself. Now where will the funds come from? According to the policy, it will come from fees and from the corporates. The NEP-2020 has given the higher education institutions a free hand to determine fees. It also directly encourages education funding by individuals and “philanthropic organizations” – which actually means that the Broadway of profit-making by the capital owners in different names is laid open. The schools, colleges and universities will now become houses of business to fill up the never-ending greed of the capitalist class.

Further, the policy envisions implementation of the “binary accreditation system” in higher education within 15 years. In this system an institution will be accredited as either Yes or No, and “No” means no accreditation at all, essentially closure of the institution. This means the institutions will be compelled to follow every dictum of the ruling power, from curriculum design, four-year courses, online education, evaluation system, recruitment, fees, and self-financing courses to everything detrimental to education. And even to implement the policy requirements like the enforcement of the digital system, 4-year undergraduate program and undergraduate research etc., the HEIs have to build and maintain a minimum infrastructure. This will mean peril for most of the colleges except a privileged few especially after the pandemic, and whichever college wants to survive the new accreditation regime will have to sell themselves to the corporates since public funding is not available. You come, invest, and loot – this will become the policy-backed legalized norm of the day.

## **Medical Education**

The central government has passed the undemocratic and unscientific National Education Policy 2020 (NEP'20) Act, which, according to them, will revive all branches of education



including medical education. The real purpose is to completely hand over the education sector to profit-mongering corporate houses through the commercialization of education. Therefore, NEP '20 has decided to disband all professional course councils on various pretexts like corruption and has already disbanded multiple councils. So, by removing any scope restriction from the councils, the corporate houses can exploit freely in the field of education. In Medical Education, the outright bureaucratic NMC (National Medical Commission) Act has already been passed as per the proposal of Draft NEP '2019, thus, dissolving MCI (Medical Council of India). As a result of this policy, medical education is facing a terrible crisis.

Firstly, the establishment of total bureaucratic control over medical education, the introduction of unscientific and unnecessary exit exams, the introduction of half-baked CHPs (community health providers) to deprive the poor of the access to health care, and above all NEP'20 has authorized the conspiracy hatched by NMC to destroy the scientific basis of MBBS curriculum through the forceful introduction of various alternative medical disciplines in the curriculum. In this regard, the statement of NEP'20 is, "...our healthcare education system must be integrative meaning thereby that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa ...” NMC recently announced compulsory AYUSH training during internship after passing the final year MBBS. Clearly, as a result of such crosspathy, the specialty of each of these disciplines of medicine will be lost, and the practices going on in these disciplines, many of which are not even proved in the anvil of scientific experimentations, will be used as a part of modern medical science. If the government really wished to improve these medical disciplines, it would have built proper infrastructure for research and practice in each of these

disciplines and would have allocated the necessary funds for it. To avoid that responsibility, they are pitting doctors and students from different disciplines in a fight against each other and trying to propagate extremely unscientific ideas using the terms like 'Holistic Approach', 'Multidisciplinary', 'Knowledge of India', 'One India, Best India', etc. which are present in every line of NEP.

Secondly, the draft education policy had suggested that there is no need for DCI (Dental Council of India) and INC (Indian Nursing Council). Similar to NMC, NMC 2020 bill is going to be passed by dissolving INC. Already in the branch of AYUSH, they have passed 'The National Commission Indian System of Medicine' 2019 and 'The National Commission Homeopathy Bill' 2019 on the first day of the Monsoon session of Parliament in the lockdown period to establish complete bureaucratic control like NMC. In this way, the central BJP government has pushed medical science towards total destruction.

Thirdly, another important decision of the NEP '20 is, “Healthcare education needs to be re-envisioned so that the duration, structure, and design of the educational programs need to match the role requirements that graduates will play... Required for working in primary care & secondary hospitals”. This education policy is shaping the MBBS course and curriculum in a new way, so that the course and curriculum are compatible with the work of MBBS doctors in primary and secondary hospitals (rural, block, sub divisional, district). This means, NMC is actually trying to educate and train the medical students in an inferior way which is suitable for working in the dilapidated infrastructure of the rural hospitals. The undergraduate doctor that will be created in this process will be called 'physician of first contact'. Therefore, for the treatment of common people in rural and suburban areas, only that kind of doctor is needed who can only treat diseases like fever, cold and cough? So, the question arises, do ordinary poor people not

have complex diseases of heart, lung, and liver? If they have, where and to which doctor will they go? As a result, on one hand, the common people will be deprived of treatment, and on the other hand, the quality of the doctors will be compromised.

Fourthly, they are introducing the new MBBS curriculum under the guise of promoting attitude, ethics, communication (AETCOM) etc. Unnecessary and unscientific 'foundation course' has already been started in the first year without teaching anatomy, physiology, biochemistry for the whole first month. Where it was necessary to study the lives of the pioneers of medical science like Vesalius, Louis Pasteur, Dr. Norman Bethune, Madame Curie, instead they are planning to introduce the life history of the proponents of BJP-RSS, Hindu Mahasabha (like Savarkar, Dindayal Upadhyay) in the name of AETCOM. Recently, we have seen the replacement of the internationally approved Hippocratic Oath by the Charak Shapath, which is a concoction of age old believes, with no root in science. It is a conspiracy to destroy the scientific outlook of medical students by injecting the poison of communalism.

Fifthly, the NMC act recommends the removal of unnecessary parts from the MBBS syllabus. According to them, the medical students should not be burdened with these. But, will it increase the intelligence and skills of medical students? How did they come to the conclusion that those parts of the old syllabus were unnecessary? Why was this decision not taken on the basis of discussions with doctors, scientists and various medical organisations? They didn't just stop there; they reduced the four-and-a-half-year course to four years and two months on the pretext of reducing the burden on students. In reality, they want to separate the practical and clinical practice from the theory. This is totally unscientific and conspiratorial. This will create some robot doctors with degrees and will cause irreparable damage to medical science.

Lastly, it is very clear that the anti-student and anti-people clauses of the NMC Act (Exit Exam, Compulsory AYUSH Training, CHP, etc.) cannot be rolled back if NEP'20 is not resisted. Already, well-meaning people and personalities across the country have been vocal in their protest against NEP'2020. In this situation, on behalf of AIDSO, we appeal to all medical students, doctors, nurses and health workers to come forward and to strengthen this movement.

### **Why has this horrible attack been launched on education?**

If you look at the history, you will see that the rulers had never desired the common people to be properly educated, because educated minds are dangerous for the anti-people rulers of any country. In this context we should remember the words of Raja Rammohan Roy who said, “The argument the despotic governments constantly resort to is that the spread of knowledge is dangerous to existence of all legitimate authority, since as the people become enlightened, they will discover that by unity of effort the many may easily shake off the yoke of the few, and thus become emancipated from the restraints of power altogether.” Reviewing the National Education Policy 2020, it becomes clear that after reading the artfully crafted words, one would sincerely think that the government intends to spread mass education in the country! But, in fact, the purpose of this education policy is to keep the people immersed in the darkness of ignorance. Great Lenin, the architect behind the First Socialist Revolution in the world, had said, “The minister regards the workers as gunpowder, and knowledge and education as a spark; the minister is convinced that if the spark falls into the gunpowder, the explosion will be directed first and foremost against the government.” That means, education will ignite the wisdom and consciousness of the masses and that will shake the very foundations of this state based on exploitation. Through ages, the ruling class has attacked the education system so that consciousness does not develop among the

masses. They only need that amount of education and technology which is needed to control the production system according to their will. Just like extra production, this extra bit of wisdom or talent is undesirable to them. This bourgeois democratic system therefore tries to impose control over the human brain. The creative development of the human brain is such a power, that if organised, it can shake the very foundations of this capitalist system. They fear the revolution. The revolution that overturns the concept of 'profit' and puts an end to the exploitation of man by man. To thwart this revolution, crippling the consciousness of the masses and stopping the spread of knowledge through proper education are much more powerful weapons in the hands of the reactionary forces than the guns, cannons and atom bombs. No ruler, in any historical epoch, wants to provide the people with the education that builds the consciousness of the masses; that which prepares them in favour of social revolution, infuses humanity and morality in them. So, this attack is according to the law of history. Since independence, the leaders of the capitalist system in this country have launched one attack after another on education with the help of the central and the state governments irrespective of the political party they belong to. This recent National Education Policy 2020 is the last nail in the coffin in the field of education. Resisting this heinous policy is the only way to save education, culture, civilization and humanity.

**Call of the hour  
Resist NEP - 2020  
Save Public Education**

The historic peasant movement, which called for the repeal of the agrarian laws catering to the interests of the corporate giants, has enriched the history of mass movement in our country. The BJP government was forced to bow down in front of the united peasants' movement and its inflexible obstinacy. The Prime Minister was compelled to repeal the agrarian laws. The

Electricity Act 2021 will be repealed as well. The MSP will be determined after consulting it with the agricultural scientists, peasant leaders and other relevant individuals. All the litigations that have been filed for being involved in the peasants' movement will also be withdrawn. Proper compensation will be provided to all the families to which the martyrs of the movement belonged.

The triumph of the peasant movement is historic. The farmers saw party like BJP standing against them as the state power, who did not care about democracy and introduced the farm laws and the electricity act against the farmers' interest, and National Education Policy-2020 against the students' interest, in the darkness of the night while the countrymen were dealing with the shock of COVID-19, the unstoppable death march and the loss of their family members and were perplexed with the unplanned lockdown imposed by the government, forcing them to lose their employment. While the government made every possible attempt to set up an example of fear, by suppressing and throttling any kind of democratic voice that posed danger to the ruling class, the united struggle by millions of peasants and common masses made the government bow down in front of them which had cost more than seven hundred lives. In the history of mass movements in India, this farmers' movement has shown a new direction. That is why, when the government announced to repeal the farm laws and electricity act, the whole country rejoiced along with the struggling farmers. Under the huge pressure created by the farmers' protest, almost all the demands of the peasants have been accepted by the BJP government of the Center. This victory has given birth to a deep self-confidence among the struggling masses- the masses who want to fight against any kind of injustice, who want to fight to establish their rights; if those masses can rise and unite above race, religion, caste, become politically conscious and commit to a long-lasting movement even at the cost of their lives on the

basis of correct political line- ruling government can be forced to bow down. This exemplary victory is undoubtedly inspiring people from all strata who are fighting against the exploitation and oppression of the owner class.

Therefore, we must learn from the triumph in the farmers' movement and commit ourselves to build a successful students' movement across the country demanding the repeal of the 'National Education Policy-2020' which goes against the interests of the students, teachers and the entire education community. Without a united students' movement, the catastrophic National Education Policy-2020, the blueprint for privatization, communalization, commercialisation, vocationalization and centralization of education cannot be stopped. The dream of the great thinkers and revolutionaries of Indian renaissance and Indian movement of independence- "Education should be democratic, secular, scientific, free and universal" will be suppressed and destroyed completely. If this education policy is implemented, ninety percent of the working-class poor and middle-class families of the country will be forced to move away from the arena of quality education due to economic reasons. Even those who will enter the traditional education system will receive an education, which seeks to create irrational and blindly fascist minds instead of an education which serves the idea of 'Man making character building' as dreamt by Indian Renaissance personalities. This kind of education is what the ruling class has always wanted; this can prove to be an inviolable obstacle in the path of progress of civilization. Throughout the country, the central and state governments have been proving this for a long time when it comes to policy making regarding education. That is why on the question of abolishing pass-fail system in schools, on the question of leaving out English from the primary syllabi, on the questions of massive fee-hike and introduction of privatization policy in education, on the question of using COVID pandemic


as an excuse to keep the doors of the educational institutions shut while everything else remains operational or on the question of introducing the National Education Policy- 2020- their role are basically the same irrespective of the words their oral statements. Therefore, in this hour of grave crisis for the people of India, in order to save the society and civilization, not only the student community but all the well-informed people must unite to build up a movement to protect education, culture and humanity. One of the most prominent Marxist philosophers and thinker of this era, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had said, “Remember, a nation can stand up on its own even if it cannot have a meal, they can fight even without eating. But if fascism grows, there will be no true human left in the country. Because it hinders the process of humans' development.”

The BJP government of the center wants to consolidate the ideological foundation of fascism by introducing the National Education Policy-2020 which can lead to total annihilation of humanity.

At this moment of crisis of civilization, who will move forward with the dreams and teachings of the great personalities of the world, Indian renaissance and independence movement in their hearts? In this scenario, only an organized student community, whose ideals are founded upon an advanced consciousness, ideology, culture and values, can stand firmly against the conspiracy of the state machinery. Today, in front of the whole country, that power is AIDS0, a revolutionary student organization whose ideals are based upon uncompromising revolutionary freedom fighters of the country inspired by thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. AIDS0 believes that without engaging themselves in the movements for social progress, no student can develop proper knowledge and their education cannot be complete. To further develop the knowledge base that has been formed by the struggle of many, to transmit knowledge to the next generations by resisting the



conspiracy of the ruling class to destroy the education system-are the actual goals of education and are the ways of preserving the ideals of humanity. With this very thought in mind, AIDSO has been directing movements on the streets since 1954 against anti-people education policies and acts by exposing the true character of the ruler using empirical analyses. In the states of India, AIDSO is the only power unit which fights for the interests of students and education. It is the only site of hope for the student community. AIDSO has already adopted a plan to build up an overwhelming nationwide movement demanding the repeal of National Education Policy-2020. In various institutions, localities, districts and states, numerous student committees as a weapon of struggle are being formed for the movement; seminars, conventions, processions and demonstrations are being held. AIDSO strongly reckons that the movement should move forward at a tremendous pace with lively participation of the student community of the country. Today, with a straight spine and with a direct stare back at the fiery eyes of the state, AIDSO stands at the very forefront to lead the movements for the protection of education, culture and humanity. Remember, it was education that had once saved humanity during the dark ages, now it is the bounden duty of entire humanity to plunge into the struggle “To Save Education!”.



“Education system being the superstructure of a given economic base, its role, therefore, is not neutral or supra class in a class divided society. As superstructure of the economic base it cannot but serve the class in power which actually controls the material production and hence the spiritual production of the society.”

**Shibdas Ghosh**

*A Scientific Approach  
to Our Educational Cultural  
Problems*

**AIDSO**

All India Democratic Students' Organisation