

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION POLICY 2026

An Alternative to NEP 2020

All India Save Education Committee (AISEC)

88B, Bepin Behari Ganguly Street,

Kolkata - 700012

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Foreword

The Central Government came up with the Draft National Education Policy (DNEP) in the year 2019. When the nation was reeling under the COVID-19 Pandemic, the government announced the National Education Policy, NEP 2020. All of us are aware that the NEP 2020 was never placed in the parliament for a meaningful discussion and was imposed from above through a mere cabinet decision. The All-India Committee of the AISEC, a broad-based platform of academicians, teachers, students and education loving people in general studied and examined the policy meticulously and felt that if the policy was implemented it would wreak havoc on the entire education fabric of the country. The AISEC views the NEP 2020 to be a blueprint for all-out privatization, commercialization, centralization, communalization and vocationalization of education. Many other leading educationists, teacher and student bodies and the other stakeholders across the country have also opposed the NEP 2020. However, paying no heed to the voices of dissent and protest the government implemented the policy in an uncanny haste. The AISEC and its state chapters conducted seminars, symposiums, protests and dharnas throughout the country opposing the unilateral and the forced implementation of the policy.

While organising these programs a strong opinion emerged from different cross-sections of people that the AISEC should evolve a People's Education Policy (PEP) as an alternative to the NEP 2020. Working on the idea for over five years, the AISEC came up with the Draft PEP 2025. The Draft was released simultaneously in 19 cities of the country on May 22, 2025, the birth anniversary of Raja Rammohan Roy. Thousands of copies of the Draft were printed and circulated for further discussion and its improvement. Subsequently, the Draft was translated into almost all major state languages of the country and a few lakh copies were circulated among the people. It was also uploaded to the AISEC website. The AISEC gave sufficient time and invited opinions, feedback, amendments on the Draft PEP 2025 from different stakeholders. Several seminars and workshops were organized in different parts of the country to discuss the draft proposals. The AISEC received thousands of amendments and suggestions. A Scrutiny Committee of the AISEC compiled the amendments and the same were placed in the People's Parliament that met in Bengaluru on 24 January 2026. Nearly 1000 delegates attended the People's Parliament to discuss and approve the amendments. Several distinguished luminaries in the field of education, dignitaries and senior academicians participated in the day-long deliberations - through an inaugural session, ten thematic sessions and a plenary session - and finally adopted the People's Education Policy 2026. This was a historic occasion - a Red-Letter Day for the people of India - as on this day, for the first time in the history of our country, a People's Parliament was held to finalize a people's educational policy. In addition to approving the amendments, the People's Parliament adopted the Bengaluru Declaration enunciating the principles and objectives

of the PEP and decided on the program of action that the AISEC would take up in pursuit of the goal enshrined in Peoples' Education Policy. It was decided that the AISEC would submit the adopted version of the PEP 2026 to the central and the state governments and demand for its implementation within a stipulated time-frame.

We earnestly appeal to all the well-meaning and education loving people of the country to go through this policy document and join the AISEC for developing a powerful, nation-wide people's movement which alone can compel the governments both at the centre and in the states to replace the anti-people NEP 2020 with the pro-people PEP 2026 which reflects the principles of SECULAR, SCIENTIFIC, DEMOCRATIC and UNIVERSAL education.

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General Secretary,
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ABBREVIATIONS USED

AICTE	- All India Council of Technical Education
CABE	- Central Advisory Board of Education
CSIR	- Council for Scientific & Industrial Research
CUET	- Common University Entrance Test
DAE	- Department of Atomic Energy
DST	- Department of Science & Technology
DTE	- Directorate of Technical Education
DPEP	- District Primary Education Programme
FYUP	- Four Year Under Graduate Programme
FYITEP	- Four Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
HECI	- Higher Education Commission of India
ICAR	- Indian Council of Agricultural Research
ICHR	- Indian Council of Historical Research
ICMR	- Indian Council of Medical Research
ICSSR	- Indian Council of Social Science Research
IIM	- Indian Institute of Management
IISc	- Indian Institute of Science
IIT	- Indian Institute of Technology
ISI	- Indian Statistical Institute
LLB	- Bachelor of Legislative Law
MCI	- Medical Council of India
MSVE	- Minimum Standards of Veterinary Education

- NAAC - National Assessment and Accreditation Council
- NBA - National Board of Accreditation
- NCERT - National Council of Educational Research & Training
- NDRI - National Dairy Research Institute
- NEET - National Eligibility cum Entrance Test
- NCFSE - National Curriculum Framework for School Education
- NIEPA - National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration
- NHERC - National Higher Education Resource Centre
- NKC - National Knowledge Commission
- NPE - National Policy on Education
- NIRF - National Institute Ranking Framework
- NRF - National Research Foundation
- PG - Postgraduate
- RMSA - Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
- RTE - Right to Education Act
- RUSA - Rashtriya Uchcharitar Shiksha Abhiyan
- SSA - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- SSDE - Scientific, Secular and Democratic Education
- U-DISE+ - Unified District Information System for Education Plus
- UG - Undergraduate
- UGC - University Grants Commission

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Declaration of the People's Parliament

(Bengaluru Declaration)

Today, 24 January 2026, we have reached the final phase of the historic People's Parliament organised under the auspices of the All India Save Education Committee in the city of Bengaluru. We were compelled to undertake this initiative in order to confront the disastrous situation recently brought about in the country's education sector. In the name of educational reform, the Central Government, without allowing any discussion with the general public or in the Parliament, and in complete disregard to democratic norms, unilaterally adopted the National Education Policy 2020 during the COVID-19 induced pandemic, solely on the basis of a Cabinet decision, and has begun implementing it in great haste.

This education policy has launched an all-out attack on education, from the pre-primary to the highest levels of learning. We are witnessing its devastating consequences today. Unchecked commercialisation and privatisation of Education have become rampant. The number of vacant teacher's positions in government schools is increasing, while the student enrolment is declining due to extremely poor infrastructure. The closure and merger of government schools have become a common phenomenon across the country.

Communalisation of education has become a core objective of the NEP 2020. By destroying scientific temper and distorting history, the NEP has created an environment that threatens the very existence of education itself.

To counter this, the All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) drafted the People's Education Policy (PEP) 2025 that was published on 22 May 2025, the birthday of Raja Rammohan Roy, and was placed before the people for discussion.

From the very first day after the release of the Draft PEP 2025 we started receiving a large number of opinions, suggestions, and amendments from students, teachers, researchers, educationists, and concerned citizens across the country.

Today, 24 January 2026, the country has witnessed an unprecedented event in the education movement in the history of independent India. After careful compilation, discussion, and review of the views and proposals received, the People's Parliament —with the active participation of more than a thousand representatives from different parts of the country along with several distinguished personalities- has adopted the People's Education Policy 2026.

The People's Parliament proudly declares that this policy has emerged as a genuine People's Education Policy, reflecting the aspirations of the people.

While demanding the repeal of the thoroughly destructive National Education Policy 2020, the People's Education Policy 2026 adopts the following core principles, grounded in secular, democratic, scientific, and universal education:

- 1 The primary responsibility for providing education, as well as the financial responsibility for education, must be borne by the government. Accordingly, both the Central and State Governments must allocate adequate funds for education in their budgets.

- 2 Commercialisation, communalisation, and all forms of discrimination in education are to be completely stopped.
- 3 A two-language policy — mother tongue and English — shall be implemented across the entire country.
- 4 Irrespective of social status or economic background, the right to universal education and equity in education must be guaranteed.

The adoption of this policy marks the beginning of a new phase of the education movement.

Therefore, this People’s Parliament hereby resolves that:

1. All representatives present here shall, upon returning to their respective states, widely share and popularise the achievement of the People’s Parliament, i.e., the adoption of the People’s Education Policy 2026, especially among students, teachers, researchers, educationists, and the general public in schools, colleges, universities, research institutions, and local communities.
2. The People’s Parliament collectively and unequivocally demands the immediate withdrawal of the National Education Policy 2020, which undermines the fundamental values of education, promotes communalism, distorts history and science, destroys educational autonomy, and imposes authoritarian decisions through extreme centralisation.
3. Simultaneously, the People’s Parliament strongly and resolutely demands the implementation of the People’s Education Policy 2026 at all levels.
4. The next phase of the movement shall involve intensified campaigns at the village, block, and district levels, along with the formation of committees in new areas to broaden and strengthen the movement.

5. Representatives of the People's Parliament shall consistently raise the demand for the implementation of the People's Education Policy before all educational administrative offices at the block, subdivision, district, and state headquarters.
6. On behalf of the National Committee of the All India Save Education Committee, a signature campaign will be organised throughout the country on the basis of the above demands and signed memoranda shall be submitted to the Central Government as well as the State Governments.
7. The education movement shall be elevated to such a level of unity, strength, and mass participation that the government is compelled to introduce and enforce the People's Education Policy 2026 in its entirety.

This People's Parliament calls upon all participants in this historic Assembly to make all necessary preparations and to work tirelessly to realise these objectives.

WHY DO WE NEED THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION POLICY?

Since the dawn of human civilization, education has been a guiding force for mankind. Education is the means to learn and to inherit the treasure of knowledge accumulated through the arduous struggle of the entire humanity over the ages. It inculcates human values and helps in building character and developing livelihood opportunities. Education is indispensable for the overall development of the individual and also for the social, economic, political and cultural development of the nation.

In ancient and medieval societies, education was monopolised by a small section of the elites and it was not accessible to the masses. As it was under the influence of religion, education then was not wholly scientific and rational. In the West, historical developments like the Renaissance, the new scientific and technological inventions and discoveries, the Industrial Revolution, and the Enlightenment paved the way for the democratic revolutions and the emergence of secular states. It was as a by-product of the people's movement against feudalism and religious bigotry that the idea of universal, democratic, secular and scientific education took shape in the West.

The educational situation in ancient and medieval India was no different from that in the West. It was the prerogative of a tiny section of the elites. Education was denied to the women, the intermediate and oppressed castes, and the tribal people.

Modern education in India started during the colonial period. The British introduced English education primarily to create small batches of educated natives who would serve the colonial administration. However, the introduction of English education, western science and philosophy exposed the Indians to the ideas of humanism, secularism, democracy, rights, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Inspired by these ideas, visionaries like Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, and several others in different parts of India launched social reform movements to empower the masses. The reformers understood the significance of secular, rational and scientific education to extricate our country and our people from the abyss of obscurantist thoughts, superstitions, religious dogma and bigotry. Some of them established schools, colleges and universities. These developments later facilitated the growth of the Indian nationalist movement and the freedom struggle.

The leaders of our freedom struggle fought not only for political freedom from the British rule but also for economic and cultural freedom of the Indian people. They advocated for free and compulsory education for all the citizens, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender. They aspired that no child would be barred from access to education due to poverty or social discrimination. The national leaders promised universal, democratic, secular and scientific education once India became politically independent.

After independence, the government of India set up different committees and commissions on education such as the Radhakrishnan Commission for Higher Education in 1948, Mudaliar Commission on Secondary Education in 1953, Kothari Commission in 1964, etc. Based on their reports, India came out with the first National Policy

on Education in 1968. Later, the government announced the National Policy on Education 1986. It was followed by many programmes or schemes like DPEP, SSA, RMSA, RUSA, Birla-Ambani Report, NCFSE 2005, NKC, Yashpal Committee Report, Right to Education Act, 2009, etc. DPEP, NEP 2020 and many other schemes view education as a system whose principal objective is to equip the students with mastered skills that would help them in the job-market. In contrast, in the vision of the People's Education Policy (PEP) education does not mean merely assimilating knowledge, or acquiring skills; it promotes cultivation of a scientific and democratic outlook, creates the ability to analyse social and economic issues, and nurtures empathy for fellow humans, sensitivity and a secular vision.

Whatever the Government claims about the achievements in the field of education we are still a long way from fulfilling the aspirations of the freedom fighters. The governments have fallen significantly short on allocation of sufficient funds to colleges and universities. The commitment to provide Primary Education to all children of our country belonging to 6 to 14 years age group within 10 years of promulgation of the constitution is still unfulfilled. Government schools, colleges and universities including Government-aided institutions continue to suffer due to lack of infrastructure and human resources. Student drop-out rates continue to plague transition from primary to upper primary classes, and significantly more when it comes to their transition from the secondary stage to higher classes. According to the latest estimates based on U-DISE+, over 15 per cent children between the 6-10 years of age remained out of schools in 2023-24 and an alarming amount 1.2 crore children have dropped out of school education during the five-year period of 2018-19 to 2023-24. After the introduction of FYUP the students' admission into colleges have drastically fallen. The deterioration of standards in government schools and colleges, rampant growth of private schools and colleges, and declining government expenditure on education have further

exacerbated access, and quality of education. The growing privatisation and commercialisation of education, following globalisation have made it difficult for the poor and the middle classes to access quality education.

It needs to be emphasised here, that in contradiction to the constitutional provisions guaranteeing equality of opportunities the educational development in India has become increasingly iniquitous and hierarchical akin to the traditional caste/class structure of the Indian society. Instead of developing universal public education system the governments have encouraged not only privatisation and commercialisation of the education, but also have accentuated inequality by setting up a wide range of educational institutions that cater principally to the interest of the middle and upper strata of society. In a general way, at the bottom of the ladder we have schools run by the local bodies, then those governed by the education departments of the state, a little higher we have state run model schools, tribal ministry regulated Ashram schools, and then on the higher echelon Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, PM SHRI Schools and CM RISE schools. Apart from these public funded schools there are a variety of aided and unaided private schools and those run by Madrasa Boards. They differ significantly from one another in curriculum, infrastructure, number, qualifications and training of teachers thus creating a segmented educational system in India.

The Peoples's Education Policy strongly demands of the state to set up adequate number of educational institutions to cater to the needs of the learners. During the British rule there were very few state-run schools. Several philanthropers, nationalist leaders and organizations like the Ramakrishna Mission, the Christian Missionaries came forward to set up institutions for the common people. This served a great social need in those days. After the nineties of the last century, one can see rapid growth of corporate-sponsored educational institutions established with profit as the main motive. The PEP stoutly

opposes the establishment of profit-oriented educational institutes and demands of the government to see to it that the fees in such institutes are kept within reasonable and affordable limits.

Citing failures and limitations of the education policies of the earlier governments, the NDA government introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 at a critical time when the country was under a complete shutdown owing to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The policy which the central government projects as a national policy was merely the result of a decision of the Union Cabinet. The government did not place it on the floor of the parliament for discussion. Although education is in the Concurrent List, the state governments were never consulted while framing the policy. For name's sake, the central government sought feedback from the citizens, but it did not discuss with the stakeholders directly, as it should have.

The government claimed that the NEP 2020 is introduced to decolonize the Indian education system and strengthen it to meet the educational requirements of the twenty-first century. Instead of addressing the basic or current problems of education, the policy attacks the foundational principles of universal, democratic, secular and scientific education. The NEP 2020 exhibits alarming tendencies towards greater centralisation, privatisation, commercialisation, vocationalisation and communalisation of education. It aggressively promotes online education and undermines the time-tested and universally accepted practice of formal classroom teaching. In the name of the NEP 2020, the central government introduced the 5+3+3+4 system, four-year undergraduate program (FYUP), entry and exit options, and the cafeteria system with regard to choosing subjects and disciplines for degree programmes. It proposes linking education with the industry, and the admission of students through centralised national level entrance tests such as CUET and NEET etc.

The NEP encourages privatisation and commercialisation of education from pre-school to university level, making it difficult for the poor to have access to quality education. Further, in the name of decolonisation and Indianisation, the NEP 2020 seeks to communalise the education system. Irrational and unscientific religious ideas, thoughts, and practices are included in the curricula and syllabi at different levels. The central government has been using the NEP 2020 to control and restrict the rights of the state governments to plan and execute education. The central government that seeks to plan and control education at all levels, does not allocate adequate funds for education. There has been a drastic reduction in the central annual budget allocation for education in the recent years, thus crippling public educational institutions. The cut in the government allocation for higher education and research has adversely affected them. The government has slashed the funds allocated for the development of institutions and expects them to mobilise resources on their own. In recent years, virtually no new faculty positions have been created in the universities. Worse still, there has been no timely recruitment against the vacant posts resulting in thousands of teaching positions lying vacant. The government enjoins that educational institutions mitigate financial constraints and faculty shortages through upward adjustment of tuition fees, introduction of self-financing programs, and expansion of consultancy services. Furthermore, institutions are encouraged to prioritise vocational, market-aligned curricula and strengthen industrial partnerships. The NEP 2020 encourages profitability and promotes narrow ideology that divides the people along class and communal lines. This shift is an ideological challenge to the established democratic and pluralistic framework of the country, potentially undermining the federal and secular principles upon which the educational system was built.

From the above discussion, it is clear that if the NEP 2020 is implemented in full, the entire education fabric of our country will be

dismembered. Realising the grave dangers ahead, all progressive educationists, teachers, students, research scholars, parents and social activists have been protesting against this government policy and demanding for the withdrawal of the anti-people NEP 2020. All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) has been at the forefront of the struggle against the NEP 2020. The AISEC came into existence in 1989 to protest against the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 initiated by the then Union Government led by Rajiv Gandhi - which opened the floodgates of privatisation and commercialisation of education. The Committee was then led by luminaries like Justice V R Krishna Iyer, Prof. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy, Prof. Samuel Mathai, Prof. Hiren Gohain, Dr P C Ramachandra Sharma and many others. Apart from opposing the privatisation and commercialisation of education, the Committee came up with the document: *Towards a People's Education Policy - An Alternative to NPE-86*. Taking inputs from this experience, the AISEC has been organizing movements against the anti-people education policies of the central and state governments. Ever since the central government came up with the NEP 2020, the AISEC has been making efforts to educate the people in different parts of the country about the dangers that the NEP 2020 poses before education. Through seminars, workshops, dharnas and rallies, the AISEC has been organising the education loving people in different parts of the country to fight against the NEP 2020.

While demanding the withdrawal of the anti-people NEP 2020, it is also necessary to frame an alternative People's Education Policy that would clearly show what kind of education the people aspire for. The alternative document should guide the direction of the change essential to realise the dreams of the great personalities of the Indian Renaissance and freedom movement who aspired for universal, democratic, secular, scientific and inclusive education in the country. In pursuit of this objective, the AISEC initiated such discussions on

the alternative people's education policy in different forums. After receiving a wealth of valuable suggestions from across the country, from various sections of education-loving people, the AISEC compiled those suggestions and came up with a Draft *People's Education Policy, 2025, An Alternative to NEP 2020, in short, the PEP 2025*.

The AISEC released the draft PEP on 22nd May, 2025, the birth anniversary of Raja Rammohan Roy, a social reformer and visionary, who pioneered the Renaissance Movement and paved the way for modern education in India. The AISEC placed the Draft People's Education Policy for nation-wide discussions and deliberations, compiled all the suggestions and amendments put forward by individuals, and its State Chapters. The same was placed for final approval in the historic People's Parliament held in Bengaluru on 24th January, 2026. Unlike the NEP 2020 which was imposed from above, the PEP is drafted and adopted after taking inputs and insights from different sections of people who believe in universal, democratic, secular and scientific education.

PART I

GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The People's Education Policy is guided by the following values and principles:

1. This People's Education policy shall be guided by scientific approach and the principles of equal rights which were dreamt of by the pioneers of Indian Renaissance and the freedom fighters of our country.
2. The PEP 2026 emphasises the responsibility of the state in securing equality enshrined in the Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution by ensuring an unrestricted right of all citizens to education up to the highest level.
3. It upholds the goal of realising universal, democratic, secular and scientific education for an all-round development of human beings.
4. It emphasizes the federal character of the Indian State and believes in preserving India's pluralism and cultural diversity.
5. It opposes centralization of education including professional education, and demands inclusion of Education in the State List.

6. It aims at ensuring and preserving the secular character of the nation and opposes all attempts at communalising the education system.
7. It treats education as an essential tool to inculcate secular, scientific and democratic values and mould the character of the individuals and society as a whole.
8. It recognises education as a tool for empowerment of all, particularly of the underprivileged classes and communities.
9. It upholds the need for strengthening public education and denounces the attempts to privatise and commercialise education and to commodify knowledge.
10. It stands for an education system that instils a sense of values based on scientific knowledge, that inculcates the values of mutual tolerance, respect, and fraternity among people professing different faiths, which equips them to discharge their responsibilities as catalysts of social progress.
11. It holds teaching as fundamental to the process of learning and emphasises the importance of classroom instruction and the role of the teacher who is to be well versed in the science of pedagogy. It allows the teacher the liberty to adopt scientific teaching strategies. In the learning process the student plays an active and significant role, and his/her independent thinking and innovative approach are to be encouraged.
12. It views education as an instrument to promote a rational, critical and scientific bent of mind.
13. It expects the educated people to be politically and socially aware and address the burning problems that people face.
14. It demands of the Indian state to finance education and leave the responsibility of running the educational institutions to the democratic bodies comprising educationists, teachers, students, parent bodies and other stake-holders.

PART II

REMOVAL OF DISPARITIES

2.1 Given the large disparities in the distribution of the limited educational facilities in different geographical areas and among different segments of the population, it is essential to establish clear priorities regarding emphasis, pace, and methods of implementation. While the core principles, objectives, and strategies of the policy remain unchanged, care must be taken to address these inequalities effectively.

2.2 Area of disparities may be identified as follows

1. Between the rich and the poor;
2. Between urban and rural areas;
3. Between male and female children;
4. Between the socially privileged and the socially disadvantaged communities;
5. Among the physically challenged;
6. Children in inaccessible regions and among vulnerable communities.

And all other categories listed in RPWD Act 2016.

2.3 Educational Development in Rural Areas

Education in rural areas faces several serious challenges. The key issues include identifying requirements and enhancing infrastructure of existing educational institutions and establishing new ones as per the need.

2.3.1 Identifying the Need:

Understanding the specific educational needs and demands within rural communities is crucial.

2.3.2 Improving Infrastructure:

There is a pressing need to improve the quality of existing educational institutions in rural areas both in respect of their quality of education and that of their infrastructure ensuring that they fulfil the requisite standards. All rural schools should have basic infrastructure like building, adequate number of classrooms along with the required furniture, teaching aids, toilets and playground, etc. The improvement of rural schools must ensure that the infrastructure available in the rural schools are of the same quality as that are in urban schools.

2.3.3 Establishing New Institutions providing quality education:

1. As the demand for quality education continues to grow, it is essential to create new educational institutions to accommodate the increasing number of students and to provide more opportunities.
2. Appointing regular, qualified teachers in all educational institutions in the rural areas.

Most schools in the rural areas lack adequate number of qualified teachers. Absence of teachers for longer periods affects the normal functioning of the schools. The

government should ensure the appointment of required number of qualified teachers (as outlined in Part V) in the rural schools. Education department should supervise the functioning of the schools.

3. The teachers working in the rural schools should be provided with incentives to stay in the villages for at least a minimum number of years.
4. The schools should have the adequate support staff to ensure that the teachers focus primarily on teaching, and are not overburdened with other tasks.

2.4 Women's Education

Although the number of girls studying in the schools and colleges has increased over the years, education of the girl child still faces considerable challenges. There is a gap between male and female literacy. Because of the deep-rooted social prejudices, the parents do not consider educating the girls as important as educating the boys. The problems of poverty, fear of insecurity, patriarchal beliefs, feudal values, practice of dowry, child marriages, etc. come in the way of the education of the girl child. The poor parents go to work, leaving the younger children in the care of their older daughters. Even educated parents feel it is difficult to get the daughters married off if they go for higher studies. Such deep-rooted prejudices and practices will disappear only when a powerful socio-cultural movement based on democratic values is organized across the country. Education certainly can play a positive role in it, thus ending the gender discrimination.

2.4.1 Educational Reform for Women's Empowerment

2.4.1.1 Curriculum and Textbook Reform:

The education system must introduce courses, curricula, and textbooks that promote gender equality. Ancient and medieval stories

that justify/glorify women's subordination and subjugation shall be removed from the syllabi. Instead, the focus shall shift to stories of women who have contributed to knowledge and social progress by presenting them with the same dignity and capability as their male counterparts.

2.4.1.2 Countering Cultural Stereotypes:

There should be no gender-specific curriculum. Both boys and girls should be educated equally about the importance of gender equality, with no division in the subjects or lessons taught based on gender.

There is a need to educate the boys about how and why they should treat women as equals in all respects and move with them with dignity and respect, both at home and outside.

The lessons stereotyping men as bread earners, and women as homemakers should be dropped. The students should be taught to respect the women's work at home and outside.

2.4.1.3 Creating Safe Environment:

The educational institutions should create safe and secure environment for the girl students and women staff.

All educational institutions should have separate and clean toilets for girl students and female staff.

Sanitary pads should be made available in all educational institutions. The students should be given the knowledge about menses and they should be made to accept the biological changes as normal.

All educational institutions should constitute anti-sexual harassment committees to deal with all cases of sexual harassment

of girls and lady teachers and employees. The enquiry into the cases of sexual harassment should be completed within the stipulated time and those found guilty are to be punished as per the rules.

And finally, while implementing all these measures suggested above, there must be an overriding concern on the part of all concerned to change the mindset that engenders the idea of looking at women as inferior to their counterparts.

2.5 Education for the Socially Disadvantaged

Despite the system of reservations in educational institutions, the majority of Dalits, oppressed castes and the tribal people have not received the fruits of education. The education of the socially disadvantaged groups is significantly affected by deep-rooted social inequalities in our society, originating from social oppression, economic imbalance and exploitation based on caste and tribal identities. This results in denial of educational opportunities for these groups.

2.5.1 Government's Responsibilities:

The government must recognise the backwardness of such communities and take proactive measures, including:

Identifying areas and communities most affected by poverty, illiteracy and discrimination.

Providing educational facilities in regions where these communities reside.

1. Providing economic and social support to encourage the families to send their children to school.
2. Provision of scholarships and opening of hostels.
3. Encouragement of admission of students of different types of communities and castes in the same school to create a

harmonious and mutually respectful condition between all of them.

2.5.2 Supplementary Education:

Absence of congenial social environment is one of the reasons for increasing dropouts and underperformance of the students from the SC and ST communities and poor strata. It is, therefore, necessary for the governments to provide additional educational support by providing remedial classes and establishing government-funded tutorial classes. These classes can assist students who struggle with specific subjects, enhancing their confidence and academic performance.

2.5.3 Education for Transgenders:

Arrangement should be made to remove the social taboo regarding transgender community so that they can avail themselves of education up to the highest level.

2.5.4 Achieving Equality in Education:

One of the fundamental objectives of education should be to elevate the educational standards of the socially disadvantaged students in order to empower them to be on equal footing with their peers in terms of aptitude, confidence, and merit.

A well thought out and time-bound programme has to be formulated to ensure implementation of these tasks to enable the oppressed castes and tribals to overcome the stigma of 'backwardness or deficiency' wrongly attached to them.

Casteist, communal and similar kinds of discriminatory outlooks can be eradicated from society only through a powerful socio-cultural movement. Education must act as a motivating and catalytic agent in this process. Stories, narratives or forms of presentation of certain historical incidents, which foster caste, ethnic and communal prejudices and hatred should be scrupulously kept out and replaced

by those that enable the students to accept the social diversities and at the same time be vocal against the issues of social injustice.

That these communities were not in the mainstream does not mean that they did not have knowledge and have not contributed anything to society. These socially discriminated communities have been, engaged for centuries in different kinds of socially productive labour. It is essential that the universities undertake research to unearth, record and disseminate their contributions to society. The accumulated body of knowledge, hitherto unrecognised or neglected, of the educationally deprived, socially disadvantaged people shall be scientifically assessed and assimilated into the educational curricula and syllabi.

2.6 Educational Problems of the Physically, Developmentally and Behaviourally Challenged

The Education of the Physically, Developmentally and Behaviourally Challenged individuals presents unique challenges that require a comprehensive and humane approach. Unlike traditional educational disparities, the needs of the physically and mentally challenged encompass a variety of difficulties and necessitate extensive support systems.

2.6.1 Categories of Challenges:

Challenged individuals can be classified into twenty-one types, as per The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act).

1. Blindness
2. Low-vision
3. Leprosy Cured Persons
4. Hearing Impairment
5. Locomotor Disability

6. Dwarfism
7. Intellectual Disability
8. Mental Illness
9. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
10. Cerebral Palsy
11. Muscular Dystrophy
12. Chronic Neurological Conditions
13. Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
14. Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
15. Speech and Language Disability
16. Thalassemia
17. Haemophilia
18. Sickle Cell Disease
19. Multiple Disabilities
20. Acid Attack Victims
21. Parkinson's Disease

Each category presents distinct educational challenges that requires tailored pedagogical, technological, and organizational strategies.

2.6.2 Recognition of their Right to Education:

We need to recognise the education rights of the physically and mentally challenged people, moving away from the prevalent attitudes of charity and sympathy. Education should empower these individuals to recognize their worth and potential.

2.6.3 Government Responsibilities:

1. A crucial responsibility of the government is to identify the physically and mentally challenged individuals through regular surveys, collaborating with hospitals, municipalities, and relevant organisations to gather data.

2. Building appropriate infrastructure is vital. This includes creating adequate number of specialised schools and higher educational institutions, training teachers (both from the physically and mentally challenged community and the general population), and ensuring the availability of suitable learning materials and accommodations.
3. The government shall ensure that all public and private schools, colleges and universities admit the physically challenged students, and provide ramps, special toilets, lifts and appropriate study equipment and aids.
4. The government shall establish dedicated educational institutions for each category of disability and recruit specially trained teachers and provide appropriate teaching materials.
5. An appropriate assessment system shall be designed for the disabled people.

2.6.4 Enrolment, Retention, and Continuous Education:

One of the most challenging aspects is ensuring enrolment and retention of physically and mentally challenged children in educational programs. This necessitates significant motivation and support for both the students and their guardians.

2.6.5 Promoting Inclusivity:

Students with mild to moderate disabilities are to be included preferably in regular educational institutions and those with severe disabilities shall be accommodated in special institutions.

Education for the physically, developmentally and behaviourally challenged individuals is not just a right but a pathway to realising their full potential. This policy aims to provide academic and vocational training to foster the development of their personalities and talents.

The government must play a pro-active role in ensuring that all children, regardless of their physical challenges, receive fair educational opportunities and support, aligning with the vision of an egalitarian society.

Appropriate measures are to be taken to provide them with gainful employment so that they will have the confidence to take ownership of their lives, go out and discharge meaningful roles in society.

2.7 Slow Learners

Special attention and support shall be given to students who are identified as slow learners or learners with specific learning disability, or with intellectual and developmental disability. Pedagogies shall be designed so that the teaching-learning process is made inclusive of slow learners.

2.8 Education for the poor

Child labour is one of the important causes in the decline in admissions and retaining the children in the schools. The government should acknowledge that poverty is one of the formidable obstacles to the spread of education. Even among the castes and communities considered as socially forward, one can see poor families who cannot afford to send their children to schools and colleges. If the parents are poor, it becomes difficult to ensure enrolment, retention and continuation of education. Hence, it is the responsibility of the state to initiate and effectively implement poverty alleviation and employment generation program for the urban and rural poor. The parents will be able to send their children to schools only when their family income increases. Incentives are to be provided to the poor parents and to the children to join schools and ensure that they do not drop out of schools in the middle. Programs such as mid-day meals

should continue and be adequately funded; hostel facilities should be provided for the needy wherever it is required.

2.9 Education in inaccessible areas

Apart from the categories of students discussed above, there are inaccessible areas such as the mountainous regions, forest areas, deserts, remote islands, border areas and other sparsely populated areas, which lack educational institutions, without weighing it on the economic scale. The government should ensure that schools are available even in such remote areas and no aspiring student is deprived of education due to location disadvantage.

2.10 Education for abandoned and stigmatized children

Similarly, even in the midst of the cities and towns, we come across kids who are labelled as street children of those who are compelled to be sex workers and who are subject to exploitation discrimination and humiliation. Left to themselves there is every chance of such children being entrapped in criminal activities. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that the children belonging to such categories are also provided opportunities for appropriate education up to the highest level so that they lead lives with dignity.

2.11. Education for the children of the migrant labourers

Migration of families in search of livelihood is a very common phenomenon in our country. Children belonging to these families face a lot of hurdles in getting educated both if they remain away from their parents and also if they accompany them. The government shall take special initiatives in educating these children through methods suitable to their living conditions without inflicting any additional burden both to the parents and their children created by virtue of their displacement.

PART III

EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AT SCHOOL LEVEL

3.1 Recommended School Educational Structure

There are no valid scientific reasons for dismantling the time tested 10+2 structure and switch over to the 5+3+3+4 structure. NEP 2020 seeks a structural separation between pre-schools (foundational stage) and primary schools (preparatory stage). While pedagogical methods in the development of children in the early stages of education can be different, as is the case for all stages of education, structural separation of pre-schools from primary schools will be counterproductive and is in contradiction to the idea of fostering integrated schooling.

The PEP is of the considered view that pre-primary, primary and middle schools should be seamlessly integrated into one, both physically and operationally. This will facilitate better transition of children from pre-schools to primary and middle classes. It is important to note that a significant number of children tend to drop out of the education system between primary and upper primary classes. A single educational eco-system will require expansion and development of adequate infrastructure, teaching and other staff. This will also

have a positive impact on proper utilization of resources both physical and human.

The 10+2 system with the provision for pre-primary education shall constitute the educational structure at school level. No schooling should start before the age 3.

3.2 Stages at School Level

Pre-Primary: Two years before entering Class 1.

Primary Schooling:

Class 1 to 5 with entry into Class 1 at the age of 5*.

Middle School: Classes 6 to 8

Secondary School: Classes 9-10

Higher Secondary: Class 11-12**

i.e. the Higher Secondary stage, in schools or in Junior/
Degree Colleges.

3.3 Free and Compulsory School Education

The government shall aim at providing free, uniform/universal education up to Plus Two i.e. up to the Higher Secondary stage fully funded by Central and State governments.

* States may decide whether to start formal schooling either from the age of 5 years or 6 years.)

** States may decide whether to teach Classes 11 and 12, in schools or in Junior/ Degree Colleges.

PART IV

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

4.1 Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary and primary stages of education are very important for moulding a child into a harmoniously developed healthy citizen. Pre-primary education aims at the integrated development of the child, taking on educational requirements of children adequately supported by the health, nutrition, and growth-monitoring services. It should focus on physical, mental, social, moral and intellectual abilities of the children. The main objective of pre-school education is to prepare the children for the subsequent phase of primary education. At this stage, taking into consideration of the psychological makeup of children, we should use informal methods to provide foundational knowledge, which includes even training in phonemic development. The pre-schools should be scientifically designed and play-oriented. It should foster the all-round development of children through games, songs, and other enjoyable learning activities.

4.2 Duration of Pre-Schooling.

Pre-primary schooling has to be for two years. It is the stage that precedes Class I.

4.3 Not Compulsory

PEP 2026 encourages pre-schooling for the children but is not in favour of making pre-school a compulsory condition for joining Class I. Pre-primary education shall be entirely the choice of parents and shall not be compulsory but desirable.

4.4 Pre-Schooling and Responsibility of the Government

Government shall start pre-primary schools all over the country, especially in the villages, under school education department, with necessary infrastructure and trained teachers.

Government sponsored day-care centres like the Anganwadis may be used for giving care and attending to the nutritional needs of the child, but the Anganwadi workers are not competent to undertake pre-primary schooling.

Private pre-schools must also be placed under the supervision of school education department. The government should ensure that government and private pre-schools are run by trained teachers.

4.5 Infrastructure and Accessibility

Establish government pre-primary schools with necessary infrastructure and trained teachers everywhere, especially in rural and remote areas.

However, NEP 2020 suggests the following four-fold approaches regarding setting up facilities for pre- schools:

1. Strengthening and expanding the existing Anganwadi system;
2. Co-locating Anganwadis with primary schools;
3. Co-locating pre-schools with primary schools, and
4. Building stand-alone pre-schools.

The above approaches may create more problems particularly in structure and operation. PEP, therefore, suggests that all primary schools be provided with adequate infrastructure for setting up of pre-primary classes. The artificial separation of preparatory and foundational stages is an innovation of urban private schools that presents no valid justification in comparison to schools where pre-school is a part of the primary school system.

The role of the Anganwadi centres is much larger where educational needs of children form one among several other activities. It is therefore, suggested that Anganwadi system may be left to operate freely and should not be substituted for pre-school system.

Pre-primary schools shall preferably be located within the range of 1 KM from the residence of students as has been our policy regarding enhancing access to primary education.

4.6 Teacher Training and Standards

1. Recruit teachers, preferably lady teachers trained in child psychology and behaviour. Ensure that the teachers have qualities like patience, compassion, and the knowledge of effective teaching methodologies.
2. Maintain ratios of one teacher for every 15 students in a class to ensure quality education.

4.7 Fee Structure in Private Schools

Government shall regulate the fee structure of private schools and institutions in such a way that it shall be within the reach of the common man and the same shall be fixed by a committee comprising the guardians. Government shall regulate the fees that may be charged for co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.

PART V

SCHOOL EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

Our constitution (Article 21A) guarantees, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Since school education covers pre-school to Class XII, PEP 2026 proposes that the government ensure free and compulsory school education up to Class XII for all students. There is a need to reconsider many of the government policies on School Education initiated in the name of the NEP 2020. It is necessary to review the ideas like vocationalization of education and constructivist pedagogical methods proposed by the NEP 2020. Similarly, it is necessary to reconsider the changes in the syllabus in the name of Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

5.2 Financial Responsibility and Infrastructure

Both the Central and the State Governments shall take up the responsibility for fully funding school education from Pre-Primary to Higher Secondary levels. This includes:

1. Pre-primary and primary schools should be accessible within one kilometer from the residence of students (neighbourhood schools).

2. Proper and adequate facilities such as separate classrooms for different grades, libraries, laboratories, workshops, playgrounds, sports equipment, separate toilets for boys and girls, drinking water arrangements, and gymnasiums.
3. Over 60 per cent of high and higher secondary schools do not have science laboratories and teaching facilities in the rural areas. This gap needs to be addressed urgently.
4. Ensuring all necessary amenities to create a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning.
5. Continuation of the supply of free textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meals, stipends, scholarships, and other necessary supports to maintain enrolment.

5.3 All-round Development

Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Moral, and Social Advancement: Emphasis on all-round development through learning from experience and practice.

Co-curricular Activities: Participation in physical education, arts, music, drama, and handicrafts needs to be encouraged to foster well-rounded development.

Encourage participation in annual cultural functions, sports competitions, and exhibitions to foster voluntary and emotional engagement.

5.4 Promotion and Assessment

1. **Annual Examinations:** Systematic assessments at the end of each academic year to evaluate the progress of students.
2. **Pass-Fail System:** Annual Reports of ASER document show that most students studying in higher classes are unable to read and understand the textbooks of lower classes. It

proves that the students move to higher classes without assimilating the subjects that they were taught. It is therefore necessary to introduce Pass Fail system from Class 1 and at the same time provide academic support in the form of special classes to underperforming students so that they learn and do not fall behind. It is necessary to build up appropriate institutional support systems to ensure that introduction of Pass-Fail system benefits the student community as a whole.

3. Ensure that all children are enrolled and continue in school up to Class 12.

5.5 Safety and Security Measures

1. **Child Protection Compliance:** Strict adherence to POCSO and other child protection laws to ensure the safety and integrity of students.
2. **Awareness Programs:** Implement initiatives to educate parents, teachers, students and stakeholders about safety measures and child protection policies.
3. **Counselling Services:** Mandatory appointment of student counsellors in every institution to address and support students' personal and academic challenges.
4. **Zero Tolerance to Abuse:** No corporal punishment or mental torture shall be permitted, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.
5. **Non-Discrimination:** No discrimination based on caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic background.

5.6 Curriculum and Syllabi in Schools

Languages: Instruction shall be in mother tongue or state language and English.

1. **Core Subjects:** History, Geography, General Sciences, Mathematics, Political Science Economics and optional subjects, including languages.
2. **General Knowledge:** Should cover topics like the Indian Constitution, History, Political Science, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Environmental Science, and World Affairs.
3. Secular, scientific and democratic values to be taught from Class 1-10.

5.6.1 Awareness about the environment:

1. The syllabus must ensure that students acquire environmental and civic consciousness and a sense of hygiene and cleanliness. Apart from theory all children in the schools should be involved in activities such as cleaning, tree-plantation etc. They should learn about dignity of labour.
2. **Moral Education:** Teaching Social Sciences with a scientific and historical perspective to develop responsible individuals.
3. **Logical Reasoning:** Introduce from primary stage to bolster critical thinking.

5.7 Primary Education (Class 1 to 5) Standardisation and Curriculum Development

1. Children should be taught 3Rs – reading, writing, arithmetic from Class 1.
2. Medium of Instruction — either mother tongue or state language.
3. English shall also be taught from Class 1.
4. Core Subjects: Two Languages, History, Geography, General Sciences, Mathematics (focusing on arithmetic and geometry).

5. Curriculum should be such that it does not put undue pressure on the children.
6. Teacher-student ratio: 1:30, Average 1.5 teachers per class/section.

5.8 Middle School Education (Classes 6 to 8)

Curriculum Development and Standardisation

1. Continued instruction in two languages, maintaining focus on mother tongue and English.
2. Enhanced focus on History, Geography, General Sciences, Civics and Mathematics.
3. Teaching social sciences with a scientific and historical perspective to develop students as rational individuals.
4. Number of Teachers required: Average 1.5 teachers per class and Teacher-Pupil ratio shall be 1:30.

5.9 Secondary Education (Classes 9 and 10) Knowledge and Cognitive Development

Focus on developing logical abilities and comprehensive knowledge to facilitate smooth transition to personalized streams of Higher Secondary education.

5.9.1. Standardisation of Schools:

1. Upgrade existing and newly established High Schools with adequate facilities and trained staff within five years.
2. Provide separate teachers for each subject, at least average 1.5 teachers per class and a ratio of 1 teacher per 30 students to ensure proper education and personalized attention.

3. Provide well equipped libraries, laboratories, workshops, gymnasiums, playgrounds, and cultural facilities to support co-curricular activities.
4. High Schools should be accessible within three kilometres from the residence of pupils, with no restrictions on admissions.

5.9.2. Curriculum:

1. Continuation of languages, history, geography, civics, physical science, life science, mathematics and environmental sciences.
2. Students shall not have any option to choose any electives. Up to Class 10 electives are not desirable, as students till the 10th standard should have a general understanding of various branches of knowledge.

5.9.3. Board Examination:

A Board Examination shall be conducted at the end of Class 10.

5.10 Higher Secondary Education (Classes 11 and 12)

1. Reorganise the +2 level as a bridge between general school education and college / university education.
2. Diversified Streams and Curriculum: Offer diversified streams (Arts, Science, Commerce and others) based on student's choice, ability, and aptitude.
3. Mandatory language and literature courses in mother tongue and English for all streams.
4. Provide appropriate facilities for each stream and two teachers for each subject.
5. Number of students shall be 30 and new section shall be opened if student strength exceeds 30.

5.10.1 Access and Standardisation:

Ensure that Higher Secondary education is provided through well-equipped schools or colleges comprising of requisite number of efficient teachers and infrastructures. Core subjects with additional electives to cater to diverse student interests and career aspirations.

5.10.2 Board Examination:

There shall be a Board examination at the end of Class 12.

5.11. Examinations at School Level

There shall be annual examination with sessional tests in between. PEP opposes the introduction of semester system in the schools.

5.12 Changes in the School Curriculum and Syllabi

There may be a periodic review of the curriculum and syllabi, keeping in view the social needs and the changes taking place in the field of knowledge in different disciplines. But the changes are to be carried out by appropriate academic committees which should include educationists and subject experts. The politicians and governments should not dictate what should be taught, or what should be added to and deleted from the school syllabi. Religious prejudices, communal agendas and anti-science ideas should not be allowed to influence curriculum and syllabus making.

5.13. Teacher Training and Quality Improvement

There shall be provision for regular training programmes for teachers to continuously upgrade their subject knowledge and improve their teaching methods. There shall also be the provision to regularly update the teachers' knowledge about the new educational aids and their balanced use to strengthen the teaching - learning process.

PART VI

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

6.1. Introduction

The PEP is against vocationalization of education, but not against imparting vocational education. Vocationalization generates the illusion that the only purpose of education is to earn livelihood and that teaching of vocation helps everyone earn a living. Everyone should have an appropriate means of livelihood. But the purpose of education is much higher than merely getting a job. With this in view, PEP 2026 recommends that education up to class 10 shall be common for all. In the middle stage of school education, the students get prepared for secondary stage by acquiring knowledge up to the appropriate level in subjects like language, literature, history, geography, civics, mathematics and science. The introduction of vocational streams in middle school will invariably replace some subjects that are presently taught. This will dilute the content of basic education which is expected to acquaint the students with basic knowledge in different subjects. Education is much more than learning vocations. Moreover, most schools in the country do not have the necessary expertise to offer

vocational courses to large number of students. Hence, up to Class X, the students should not be burdened with vocational courses.

However, PEP acknowledges that the society also requires the services of mechanics, plumbers, masons, electricians, laboratory technicians, and experts trained in many other vocations. For those students who aspire to go for vocational education, there shall be a vocational stream after class 10.

6.2. Provision for vocational education shall be there for students who pass the Secondary Board Examination in Class 10.

6.3. Government funded ITIs, polytechnics shall be there in sufficient number so that all students desiring to go for vocational education can have the opportunity to get admitted.

6.4. Vocational education shall equip students with skills that enable them to learn a trade. After studying in a vocational institution for 1 year or 2 years a student will get a certificate for a particular trade. After studying for three years would get a Diploma in Engineering/Technology.

6.5. All institutions offering vocational courses shall have well-equipped workshops, trainers and other related accessories. The curriculum and syllabi for the vocational courses should be designed by experts in the field.

6.6. In addition to providing training in particular trades, the vocational courses shall also have adequate number of subjects from sciences, humanities and languages to develop a healthy understanding of society and culture.

6.7. The vocational educational institutions like ITIs, polytechnics should be linked to the related industries so that the students get practical experience. There shall be placement cells in ITIs and

polytechnics for assisting pass-outs to get jobs. It is to be ensured that this provision is not misused for exploiting the labour of the trainees.

- 6.8. Every student should have adequate scope to go for the next level of expertise. For example, bright students completing a one-year or two-year certificate course from a vocational institute should have an opportunity to join in diploma programme. Similarly, students who are completing a Diploma shall have opportunity to join in Degree programmes.
- 6.9. Government should ensure that there is no rampant commercialisation of vocational education. Fees in private-run institutions shall be within the reach of students coming from economically backward families.
- 6.10. There shall be provision for free-studentship and payment of concessional fees for economically weaker students in both government and private funded institutions.
- 6.11. Government shall ensure that the vocational courses are upgraded to meet the needs of the newer, emerging areas of Engineering / Technology.

PART VII

HIGHER EDUCATION – UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

7.1 Introduction

*H*igher education provides a more comprehensive and advanced knowledge in the chosen specific fields of studies viz., all subjects of humanities including, literature, philosophy, political economy etc., similarly all subjects that come under science and commerce; also, in subjects like engineering and technology, medicine, agriculture, law, jurisprudence, etc. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) cultivate intellectual curiosity, foster innovation, and prepare students for professional and civic roles. They impart knowledge, critical thinking skills, and ethical frameworks necessary to navigate and contribute to a complex world. Apart from contributing to individual growth, higher education contributes to social progress by advancing research, promoting cultural understanding, and addressing global challenges. The universities play an important role in the higher education system of any country. In particular, they are expected to nurture the values of humanism, tolerance, reason and progress.

A university is a cornerstone of higher education. It is a dynamic hub where teachers, students, scholars and researchers come together to create, disseminate and preserve knowledge. It promotes research, foster cultural exchange, social mobility and civic responsibility. The Universities ignite human minds, fuel economic and technological changes, and help in addressing complex national and global issues. Ancient India had advanced centres of learning like Nalanda and Takshashilla. But they were not accessible to all sections of the people. In India the idea of a university in the modern sense took shape during the colonial period under the impact of Indian Renaissance.

Of late, the university system is facing several challenges due to financial constraints, attacks on university autonomy, privatisation and commercialisation. The government is encouraging the growth of private universities and doing little to preserve and promote public universities. The shift would adversely affect the prospects of the poor and middle-class students who aspire to pursue higher education.

7.2. Access to Higher Education for All

All eligible candidates shall have access to higher education. It is the responsibility of the central and state governments to provide the required infrastructural facilities and human resources for the smooth functioning of the public universities and colleges. No eligible student is to be deprived of higher education because of poverty. The governments should allocate adequate funds for universities and colleges, and establish more colleges and public universities to enable the poor and middle-class students. Every university and college should have all necessary facilities, such as classrooms, library, laboratory, workshop, seminar hall, sports and recreational facilities, etc.

7.3 Regular Recruitment of Teachers on Permanent Basis

Thousands of teaching positions in the universities are kept vacant. Many universities and colleges in the country are currently functioning with a minimum number of teachers. In some universities, because of corruption and political interference, incompetent persons end up becoming teachers. Hence, one can see the dilution of academic standards in most public universities and government colleges. To ensure adequate standard of teaching and learning, it is necessary to focus on recruiting adequate number of qualified teachers in the colleges and university through fair system of recruitment. The teacher- student ratio shall be on the ratio of 1:15 at the UG level and 1:10 at PG level. Recruitment should take place at regular intervals and the authorities should be held accountable if the vacancies are not filled for years.

7.4 University Education

Universities should offer courses in a variety of subjects – natural sciences, arts, humanities, social sciences, commerce, law, agriculture, technology and management related courses. They should offer facilities for UG, PG and research degrees. The courses should be both theoretical and practical. While some courses are common, the universities and colleges may choose to offer specialized courses as well. The planning of the schools and departments would be done in a methodical manner, keeping in view of the resources available. No academic department shall be allowed to start without a minimum number of teachers and adequate infrastructure.

7.5 Curricula and Syllabi of the Degree Programmes

Over the years, many HEIs have shifted to the Semester system. It is in practice in different professional courses and also in central

universities which have better infrastructure and adequate faculty. But in recent years, some states and HEIs are going for semester / trimester pattern even though there are no adequate teachers and infrastructure. In some disciplines, the semester pattern may be relevant and possible. But in the institutions which have limited infrastructure and teaching faculty, shifting to semester and trimester pattern imposes a heavy burden on teachers who are to conduct several mid-term tests, semester examinations, and evaluation of the scripts. Gradual increase in the number of students admitted makes it very difficult to run the semester pattern efficiently. Moreover, the learning process in the semester system does not take things into the long-term memory, leading to difficulty in mastering comprehensive knowledge.

The cramped time for teaching and frequent examinations leave little space for leisure and an enjoyable process of teaching and learning. Having too many exams in too short a time becomes a burden for the students as well. In fact, it acts as a severe hindrance to the process of developing comprehensive knowledge in the subjects. It is therefore necessary that wherever the semester pattern is found counterproductive, there is a need for reverting to annual pattern, without compromising on the quality of education, teaching and learning.

In all the degree programmes, the curricula for all the courses should be prepared and periodically updated in conformity with the continuous advances in knowledge. The content of the curricula and syllabi shall be evolved through sufficient deliberations in the academic bodies with no external interference. The committees which were given the responsibility should not be under any external influence, and they should be rational, scientific and professional in their approach while preparing or modifying the syllabus and curricula. They should

emphasise on comprehensive knowledge of the discipline through theory, laboratory based experimental studies and field studies. All universities shall keep themselves abreast of emerging or advancing frontiers of knowledge in all disciplines and accordingly introduce new programmes of interdisciplinary character at the postgraduate level.

7.6 Examination and Evaluation Process

Examinations will be conducted by the universities for all the undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. Semester system may continue where it is absolutely necessary. But wherever it is possible, we need to revert to the annual system of exams. In the annual mode, there will be mid-term tests followed by the terminal examinations at the end of the academic year. Whether it is semester pattern, or annual exams, they should be preceded by a minimum number of teaching days.

Methods of examination and evaluation will be made standardised and comprehensive to cover theory, practical and field studies. The exams should test not only the information required but also their ability to interpret and critically evaluate the data.

Examination related works shall not be outsourced.

An internal Academic Audit Committee may be constituted with student representatives, also as its members, to review the proper functioning of the academic and examination process in the University/HEI.

7.7 Interdisciplinary Approach in Higher Education

Knowledge is interdisciplinary in nature and with faster growth in science and technology, there is a strong need for an interdisciplinary

approach to higher education. However, every programme has got its own specialisation and peculiarities. Therefore, the curricula and syllabi need to be designed with the main weightage to the core courses of the respective programmes. The elective courses may be offered which are relevant to the respective degree programmes. This inter-disciplinary approach should be distinguished from the NEP's idea of multidisciplinary courses, which advocates the cafeteria approach of opting any subject without a purpose.

7.8 Credit Transfer Mechanism

Credit transfer mechanism may be adopted under specific learning agreements between two universities under students' exchange programme. Extending this aspect across different universities without meticulously carrying out the learning agreements would cause serious damage to the curricular structure and therefore, will create programme and course equivalence issues. Credit transfer mechanism without course equivalence will create a chaotic situation in higher education and the degree earned also will lose its relevance and quality.

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), as proposed by NEP 2020, is to be thoroughly scrapped as it will entail centralisation of credits and therefore will be detrimental to the unique concept regarding the principle of autonomy of the educational institutions. Introduction of irrelevant combinations of topics culminates in the devastation of the disciplines of study. A centralised credit transfer mechanism will create a chaotic situation in higher education and the degree earned will lose its relevance.

7.9 All Universities to be Equipped for Teaching and Research

The primary task of Colleges and Universities is teaching and research. However, teaching in the institutions will flourish, only if research is also undertaken with due importance. Particularly, the universities which are of affiliating type will be able to nurture the affiliated institutions if it engages both in teaching and research of high quality. Sufficient funding will be allotted to equip the universities to recruit eminent teachers with research interests and to equip the laboratories with state-of-the-art facilities to undertake advanced research. Thus, all universities shall be equally equipped for research activities besides teaching and there will be no grade separation between them in the name of teaching and research universities. Well nurtured and nourished universities will help the affiliated institutions to acquire higher academic standards. Therefore, all universities shall be developed to make higher education truly universal.

7.10 Accreditation and Ranking

Universities and colleges are established in different demographical, geographical and social settings. Using common metrics for all such institutions' accreditation and ranking, as is done by the NAAC, NBA and NIRF will be illogical and unscientific. The growth trajectory of the public-funded institutions on several metrics, covering teaching and research, will depend on the funding of these institutions. With dwindling of funding and non-filling up of vacancies of teaching and non-teaching positions in public institutions, the accreditation and ranking on common metrics will only help to show these institutions in poor light. Therefore, for all objective and scientific reasons the process of accreditation and ranking of institutions shall be stopped.

Instead, the growth of every institution shall be assessed by evolving separate metrics for each institution based on its own objectives for which it is established. The university shall democratically form an internal body to assess the performance of different departments. If it is found to be underperforming with respect to its own objectives, then the reasons for the underperformance shall be studied objectively and scientifically and all remedial measures shall be undertaken immediately including sanction of sufficient funds.

7.11 Inclusiveness and Equality in Higher Education

The Government shall own complete responsibility for providing total financial support to all public universities and colleges to ensure equality in higher education. Self-financing programmes in public HEIs shall not be permitted, as it goes against the concept of inclusiveness in education and denies equal opportunity to all. If there is any private participation in higher education, then the government should see to it that the fee is within the reach of the poor students. Fee structure should not be such that it denies opportunity to poor and meritorious students to pursue higher education.

7.12 Duration of UG/PG Degree Programmes

The duration of degree programs differs from discipline to discipline. Undergraduate degree programmes in arts, science, commerce faculties shall have a duration of three years; Undergraduate degree in Engineering and Technology shall be of four years; Undergraduate degree in Law and Architecture shall be for a duration of five years; Medicine shall have a duration of four years and six months with additional one year of practical internship. For Veterinary programme it is four years and six months of practical internship. For other professional courses such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, etc., the views of the concerned regulating

academic bodies will be taken into consideration. In addition to degree, the universities and colleges may provide diploma and certificate courses separately.

Students pursuing the undergraduate degree programme shall complete it within the given minimum and maximum period allotted to it. The NEP 2020's Exit and Entry system proposing differential degrees – certificate, diploma, degree and honours, etc. - is anarchic and detrimental to holistic pursuit of knowledge. It also leads to dropouts and leaves the dropouts without jobs.

Similarly, all the post-graduate degree programmes shall be for two years across the different disciplines of studies, except medicine, which is of three years duration.

For pursuing M.Phil or Ph.D in arts and science faculties, it is mandatory to have a postgraduate degree in the concerned or allied subject.

7.13 Admission Policy for UG and PG Degree Programmes

The Universities/ HEIs shall decide their own admission policy for admitting students into UG and PG programmes. Admission shall not be based on centralised tests like NEET, JEE, CUET, etc. for admission into UG and PG degree programmes, as students of our country come from diverse social, cultural, national and sub-national identities. They study different syllabi with academic standards and therefore it is in appropriate to evaluate them based on a single uniform criterion. The state universities or the colleges within the states may give preference to the local students. But they should reserve 20 percent of the seats spread over all the disciplines/departments for the students from other states. This arrangement will balance the local aspirations with the need for integration and healthy competition.

7.14 International Student Exchange Programme in Higher Education

Universities may sign a Memorandum of Understanding for student exchange programmes. This can be for a semester abroad programme with proper learning agreements. Under such agreements, the possibilities of transfer of credits can be explored on a case-to-case basis with the approval of the academic bodies of the respective institutions. However, such student exchange programmes shall be approved only on the basis of scholarships / funded programmes taking into consideration of concrete need and social necessity.

Foreign institutions which intend to set up their overseas campuses only for commercial purposes should not be allowed. Similarly, PEP opposes joint degree programmes between Indian and foreign HEIs, mooted only for commercial gains.

7.15 Functionaries and Decision-Making Bodies of University

Central Universities and State Universities shall be formed by the Acts of Parliament and those of the State legislative bodies, respectively. The Acts, Statutes and Ordinances of the universities would define the structure and functions of different bodies, committees and official functionaries of the University. It is essential that everyone associated with the university respect and follow the Acts, Statutes and Ordinances of the University. The highest academic, administrative and quasi-judicial bodies are named differently in different states and universities. Considering the diversity of the country, it is not necessary to propose only one kind of structure for all the universities. What is needed is the effective functioning of the bodies and functionaries. All bodies mentioned above shall be elected and autonomous.

It is observed that different bodies and functionaries of the university become dysfunctional because of authoritarian tendencies, corruption, inefficiency, or external interference. It is necessary to protect the autonomy of the universities and HEIs.

The Chancellors should be eminent persons with sound academic background and high integrity and character. The Vice- Chancellor should be eminent academics with a minimum of ten years of experience as Professor and have administrative experience in the university system. The appointment of the VCs should be done purely on merit, not on one's affiliation to a political party or an ideology.

There is a need to democratise the decision-making bodies in the universities. The policy-making and administrative bodies in the universities such as Academic Council, Executive Council, Senate, Court, Syndicate, School Board, Admission Committee, Exam Committees, etc. should have representatives of teachers, students and non-teaching staff of the university.

PART VIII

RESEARCH PROGRAMS

8.1 Introduction

At the UG level, introduction to interesting open-ended questions suitably adapted to the level of the degree programme will be inspiring. There should be a window for research-oriented works for the interested and advanced students (without adding it to the curriculum or grades, but providing library, laboratory and manpower to a level advanced compared to the course level). This will also help the college teachers to continue to involve themselves and motivate the students for research.

At the PG level, research-oriented project or coursework is conducive for aptitude building, provided curriculum and infrastructural support are there. Those students who have completed the PG course and have research aptitude may go for research in the subject or in the allied disciplines. The universities and research institutions should provide opportunities for doing M.Phil, or Ph.D, or both.

8.2 M.Phil

M.Phil degree programme in as many disciplines as possible shall be offered by all the universities. This would instill research aptitude in the students and this helps the candidates to pursue Ph.D programme in a better way.

M. Phil students who want to continue Ph.D programme shall be exempted from repeating course work that is already covered. The number of research scholars will be determined and increased on the basis of the eligible students and desiring guides. M.Phil shall not be a pre-requisite for Ph.D degree programme.

8.3 Doctoral Research

Those who have completed M.Phil degree and qualified in the tests designed by universities or research institutes may pursue doctoral research in the subject or in the allied areas.

8.4 Areas of Research

In all branches of arts, humanities, natural sciences, engineering, medical and social sciences, basic and applied research shall be encouraged and facilities for them shall be enhanced.

Applied researches may also be undertaken by interested departments, teachers and students, and sufficient funds shall be provided.

8.5 Policy for Research

The required qualifications for admission, number of seats, the areas of research, and the mode of supervising the research at M.Phil and PhD levels will be decided and executed as per the university ordinance and regulations. The Government agencies viz., Ministry of Education, UGC, CSIR, ICAR, ICMR, DAE, DST, DTE, ICSSR, ICHR, etc., shall remain and continue to fund research in the

universities and colleges. The public sector industrial enterprises may also fund research through the university. The rights to the research outcomes shall remain with the University. Specific foundation for specified research may be additionally set up by any concerned authority.

8.6 Finance and Control

Every scholar admitted for doing research programs should get a fellowship or stipend for the designated duration of the research. The topic of research will be decided in consultation with the research guide and the department. Once the proposal is approved, the scholars should be allowed to pursue research in a free environment. Research areas and research topics shall not be dictated by the government or by any funding agency. Extension of research period, if required in special circumstances, shall be provided with full fellowship by receiving the approval of the concerned departments and the university academic bodies.

8.7 Ethical Standards

All the scholars and the research supervisors abide by the ethical standards fixed by the universities. Those who indulge in unfair means will be duly punished. University, colleges and research institutions shall set up a mechanism for prevention of harassments and abuses. No research which is deemed to be harmful to the progress of society and mankind in general shall be encouraged or be permitted.

8.8 Teaching Assignments for Scholars

The scholars drawing fellowships may assist in teaching certain portions of the UG and PG courses.

PART IX

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Higher education in professional degree programmes involves the areas of Medicine, Engineering, Law, Agriculture and Management etc.
- 9.1.2 Different systems of medicines shall be studied on a scientific basis. While courses and curricula in each system will be prepared by and taught in separate institutions, appropriate forums for information exchange, research collaboration, common illustrative case studies, at the general as well as specific levels, will be created for mutual benefit. Various indigenous therapeutic systems shall be studied scientifically in order to raise them from mere empirical level to the objective theoretical plane.
- 9.1.3 Medium of instruction in all professional programmes shall preferably be the mother tongue provided it is adequately developed and there are sufficient number of textbooks and teachers in the respective courses/programmes; till then

English shall be the medium of instruction for professional courses/programmes.

- 9.1.4 Courses in Medicine, Technology, Law, Agriculture, Education Management etc. have to be periodically updated and methods of teaching shall be modernised regularly. New branches of medical sciences and technology shall be opened up on the basis of periodic assessment of their developments. New specialisations in Law, Education, etc., will be introduced keeping in view the newer developments in each of the cases/fields of study. Courses in Education will include those of teacher training for the secondary and higher secondary levels. The courses of teacher training in all subjects will be periodically reviewed in the light of the fast-developing pedagogic methods, with the object of introducing changes whenever necessary. All professional educational institutes must be supported by the government to reach an optimum standard in the quality of education. Every professional institution should have adequate infrastructure and facilities to run the courses.
- 9.1.5 Professional education must include courses on Humanities in their degree programs.
- 9.1.6 Degree level colleges offering professional programmes will be mandatorily affiliated to universities and be bound by the rules and regulations of the universities in common with other general colleges.
- 9.1.7 Central and State Governments shall enact necessary legislations to ensure that admission to all Professional colleges shall be strictly according to the merit without any management and NRI quota. However, the quotas

guaranteed by the constitution/legislation shall exist. Practices like collection of capitation fee and donation shall be abolished.

9.2 Engineering Education

There is a rapid growth in every field of science and technology and also knowledge is becoming more and more interdisciplinary in nature. The growth in the areas like artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, bio-engineering, cyber physical systems and all other fundamental branches of science demands the inclusion of this knowledge in all fields of Engineering Education.

Curricula and syllabi shall be designed to provide critical thinking in the respective disciplines of study and also to inculcate the ability in students to practice independent application of mind to provide innovative solutions to various engineering problems. For developing this capability, the students are to be provided with design skills from real world problems and accordingly the pedagogy of engineering education has to be designed. The pedagogy and teaching and learning process is to be remodeled to expose the students to real-world problems, and enable them to get hands on knowledge and independent approach to seek solutions to different engineering problems.

9.3 Medical Education

Health shall continue to be in list II (State list) of the seventh schedule of Indian Constitution. Medical education shall be brought back to list II of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian constitution. Adequate number of medical colleges with adequate infrastructure are to be opened across the country with hospitals attached to it serving to all medical needs. The ratio of doctors serving the people of the country have to be progressively increased till a condition is developed in the country where no citizen is denied quality medical

treatment by qualified doctor on any pretext. Casualisation and contractualisation of the staff, including doctors, which is the trend in the public health system shall also be stopped and permanent staff shall be posted in adequate numbers.

Medical students need to understand the prevailing conditions of the people in the country. In consonance with the Hippocratic Oath, Medical ethics shall be taught and practised in medical education with due diligence. One-year rotational training under direct supervision of experienced doctors in all major disciplines shall be a prerequisite to get license to practise. After completion of undergraduate programme, all students will get adequate chance for higher education and research.

A university offering different disciplines of medical programmes must be attached to hospitals with adequate infrastructure and medical services to meet the various medical needs of the society. Sufficient funds are to be allotted to meet the needs of upgradation of the curriculum and syllabi and also for the upgradation of hospitals with all modern facilities.

Alternative medicine is emerging as an important discipline of study like Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH). However, the practice of these professions shall be based on scientific approach. Sufficient funds are to be allotted to study the scientific basis of these various disciplines. Curriculum and syllabi shall be prepared with a strong theoretical foundation based on the scientific approach. Any attempts to indiscriminately integrate the AYUSH branch of medicine with modern medicine shall not be permitted.

A national level standard setting body with adequate representation from all states shall be there to maintain uniformity in medical education across the country. State level academic bodies shall follow these standards as guidelines. Considering socio-economic,

cultural and linguistic diversity, single examination across the country during entry to or exit from the medical programme is incompatible in our country. Universities must have the autonomy to decide on the syllabi, curricula and examination system.

9.4 Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (VS & AH) Education

Veterinary Science is concerned with the study, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases in non-human animals, both domestic and wild. Animal husbandry deals with the scientific management of breeding, feeding and healthcare of livestock and poultry for production and consumption of animal products as food. So it may be said that combinedly, Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry education focuses on animal health, production and welfare.

Though India is the country with one of the largest numbers of livestock in the world today it struggles with the ability to properly address the needs of the livestock by offering proper veterinary services.

Veterinary education is not merely the process of learning how to cure the sick animals but it is related to various other professional aspects ranging from the aspects of public health to that of food safety, animal welfare and diseases control. In a country like ours where agriculture and livestock are so important to the economy the role of a veterinarian goes beyond the clinic.

But unfortunately, in this domain too, we find a big gap between the animal care available in the urban areas and the availability of the same in their rural counterparts. It is because of the non-availability of the required number of veterinary hospitals in the rural areas though the presence of such hospitals in the urban areas too, is not up to the mark.

In a situation like this, the PEP recommends the following:

1. The number of government Veterinary and Animal Husbandry colleges in India which is around 70 now shall be increased to such a number as shall be sufficient to cater to the need of livestock both in the cities and villages.
2. The existing Veterinary and Animal Husbandry colleges shall be upgraded and well equipped.
3. The curricula of veterinary science shall be updated as prescribed by Minimum Standards of Veterinary Education (MSVE) 2016.
4. Adequate funding shall be provided for availability and maintenance of good quality infrastructure in veterinary colleges.
5. Sufficient number of veterinary hospitals shall be established both in rural and urban areas with qualified doctors.
6. In addition to the hospitals, arrangements shall be made for mobile veterinary units to increase accessibility.

9.4.1 Dairy Science Education:

Dairy science deals with milk products derived from animal milk. It is a multi-disciplinary field combining Biology, Chemistry, Nutrition and Engineering to manage the production, processing and preservation of milk and other dairy products. It focuses on dairy animal health, genetic potential, efficient farming and technological advancements to create safe, high - quality and nutritious dairy production for human consumption.

Dairy Science education in India led by institutions like NDRI and various State Agricultural Universities focus on milk production, processing and technology to support the world's largest dairy industry. This area of education faces challenges like faculty shortage and inadequate infrastructure for modern research.

The PEP strongly believes and recommends that robust funding by the government to this sector that's so important to our economy is the need of the hour.

9.5 Fisheries Science Education:

Fisheries science is the academic discipline focused on managing and understanding fisheries, which includes the study of fish populations, ecosystems, and the impact of fishing practices. It combines various fields such as biology, ecology, economics, and statistics to promote sustainable fishing and conservation of aquatic resources. Herein lies the great importance of Fisheries Science education for India.

9.5.1 Institutes for Fisheries Science Education:

There are around sixty government colleges and universities and almost an equal number of privately owned institutes for the study of and research in this branch of education in India. They offer a host of degrees both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels with provisions for research too.

But like all other domains of education, this field of learning too, is plagued by issues like poor infrastructure and shortage of sufficient number of trained faculties. Outdated curricula, lack of practical training and insufficient research- focus on sustainable aquaculture are some of the other important hurdles faced by Fisheries Science education in India.

The PEP is convinced that in spite of having immense potentialities this sector of education suffers badly both for want of proper planning and adequate funding. The PEP recommends the following in this regard:

1. There shall be a comprehensive planning for utilising the immense potentialities for further development of Fisheries

Science education which shall include proper sharing of knowledge and experience with countries that make use of the latest technology in this area of education.

2. Adequate funds shall be allocated for developing the existing institutes and establishing new, modernised centres for both study and research in Fisheries Science education.

9.6 Law Education

As the study of Law as a discipline in obtaining social context has wide ranging relevance, legal education shall need special attention. The need for providing legal support to people is growing in society due to social, economic, ethical, cultural and technological factors. Hence, legal education is to be redesigned so that it takes care of newer issues emerging in society. People's Education Policy therefore recommends:

1. A Law degree shall be LLB of three-year duration after acquiring a Bachelor's degree in Arts, Science or Commerce or an integrated five-year degree in Law after passing Higher Secondary (Plus Two).
2. The curricula and syllabi of the present legal education system should also include courses encompassing Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Philosophy, Mathematics, forensic study and application of technology relevant to the legal system.
3. Further, the pedagogy should accordingly be changed suitably. For the changes that need to be adopted in the pedagogy, the curricula and the syllabi, the teachers of legal education also need to be trained accordingly.
4. Besides the social and cultural factors, owing to the misuse of technology, the crimes in society are growing and this

phenomenon needs to be dealt with within the curriculum and syllabi of legal education.

5. The post graduate programmes and research are to be strengthened in the legal education system by providing adequate facilities and proper remuneration for pursuing a teaching career in Law education.
6. Adequate funds are to be allocated for the total revamping of the legal education system and appointment of trained teachers.

9.7 Agriculture Education

Agriculture being still the prime profession in our country, its study doesn't get the attention as it deserves. With the growth of science and technology the scope for agriculture is widening with enormous possibilities. Besides the economic and social factors, the environmental pollution, usage of pesticides, lack of adequate rainfall and natural calamities pose huge challenges to agriculture. Though farmers practise agriculture as a profession they lack sufficient knowledge to cope with all these challenges. Therefore, emphasis on agricultural education has been of paramount importance to society.

With the advent of growth in science and technology agriculture has been modernised across the globe.

1. Agricultural institutions are to be established with adequate farmlands and facilities of modern agricultural practices attached to them for hands on experience and practice of the students.
2. Such modern agricultural practices along with the practices in the local conditions shall be incorporated in the curriculum and syllabi.
3. Adequate funds shall be allotted for the development and teaching and learning of agricultural education.

4. The programme curriculum shall incorporate courses with both traditional and modern agricultural practices along with necessary courses that address the different challenges in agricultural education.

9.8 Fine Arts Education

Fine arts include visual and performing arts. Adequate number of institutions teaching fine arts with structured courses shall be introduced.

PART X

ADULT EDUCATION

10.1 Introduction

A Programme for Adult Education must acknowledge the significant challenge posed by the country's high levels of adult illiteracy. It must emphasise a multi-faceted approach to addressing illiteracy and ensuring educational access for all adults, particularly those left behind due to incomplete implementation of universal elementary education.

10.2 Challenges of Adult Illiteracy

10.2.1 Growing Illiteracy:

A major challenge in reducing illiteracy is the constant rise in the number of adult illiterates each year. The rise in the number of adult illiterates is due to the failure to fully implement universal elementary education, particularly among the children aged 6-14. The policy thus aims to achieve universal enrolment and retention of children in this age group to curb the rise in the number of illiterates among the adult population.

10.2.2 Adult Education Centres

Government shall establish sufficient number of Adult Education Centres, including night schools, throughout the country for providing education to the adults, who have been deprived of being educated in their early years. Government shall provide incentives to them to be educated in these centres, which will be equipped with necessary infrastructure for giving education.

10.3 Implementing Adult Education

10.3.1. In-Service Technical Literacy for Adult Employees:

For adult employees in the organised sector, a programme of technical literacy will be provided. This programme will combine basic elementary education with technical knowledge relevant to their specific trades or vocations, ensuring that they gain essential skills while improving literacy levels.

10.3.2. Access for the Unorganised Sector:

Adults working in unorganised sectors, such as agriculture, will also be targeted for basic education. Adult education centres in their localities will provide access to learning opportunities. In addition, mass media outlets such as radio, television, and print media will serve as important tools to deliver educational content to this category of population. Open night shifts in rural and urban schools.

10.4 Role of Mass Media

10.4.1 Mass Media Involvement:

Radio, television, press and different social media platforms will be required to allocate space and time to promote adult education. Educational content will be distributed in different languages across

the country, helping to extend reach and accessibility to a diverse audience.

10.5 Planned Educational Content

10.5.1 Customised Curriculum:

The content of adult education will be designed to address the varying needs of the adult population, taking into account factors such as age, occupation, and psychology. This approach ensures that the learning material is relevant and engaging for adults, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful literacy outcomes.

PART XI

NON-FORMAL AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

11.1 Introduction

Students shall be encouraged to undergo higher education through the formal education process. However, non-formal and distance education constitutes a part of the educational framework designed to address the diverse learning needs of the individuals outside the traditional formal education. As the nation progresses towards improving literacy and formal education, these alternative educational channels will have to be developed to serve those unable to access formal education and to provide opportunities for continued learning for those already educated. However, the authorities concerned must ensure that provisions of non-formal and distance education are not abused.

11.2 Purpose and Target Audience

Non-formal and distance education aim at reaching individuals who, for various reasons, cannot engage with formal education systems. This includes providing opportunities for lifelong learning for those who wish to expand their knowledge in different fields while managing other occupational responsibilities.

11.3 Institutional Framework

To ensure the effective planning, design, and coordination of non-formal and distance education initiatives, a statutory body will be established in each state. This body will oversee the implementation of these educational processes and ensure that they align with the broader educational goals of the country.

11.4 Flexibility in Learning

Educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities, will be encouraged to allow learners of all ages to participate in classes, fostering an inclusive and flexible learning environment that accommodates diverse learning paths.

11.5 Correspondence Courses

It is important to note that correspondence courses offered by universities and institutions will be classified as part of the formal education system rather than non-formal or distance learning programs.

11.6 Community Involvement

Community resources such as clubs, libraries, and cultural organisations will be instrumental in facilitating non-formal education. These entities will be encouraged and supported to offer educational programs based on the interests and needs of their members and the surrounding community.

PART XII

TEACHER EDUCATION

12.1 Introduction

Teacher education is a vital component of a country's educational framework. Teachers play a fundamental role in imparting knowledge and guiding future generations, making their education, training, and status crucial to a country's development. An effective teacher education is therefore necessary to create knowledgeable and responsible teachers capable of discharging multiple roles assigned to them.

12.2 Significance of Teacher Education

Teacher education is meant to prepare, train, and develop individuals to become effective educators. It provides the professional training and practical experiences necessary to equip the teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach students effectively. Teacher education familiarises the educators about pedagogies, enhances their subject knowledge, and teaches them how to manage classrooms, assess the students' performance and address the diverse needs of the students. Teacher education is a continuous process. Even after one becomes teacher it is necessary to continuously elevate one's knowledge and teaching skills.

12.3 Challenges before Teacher Education

In India those who aspire to become teachers are expected to have the mandatory diplomas or degrees like B.Ed and M.Ed. offered by different institutions. Due to the faulty policy of the governments, many teacher training institutions suffer from outdated curriculum and syllabus, inadequate training facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, and limited knowledge of emerging technologies. Many teacher education institutions are commercial ventures and are found incompetent to deal with the diversity of students. Although one should have the necessary diploma or degree in teacher education, many who are recruited in schools, especially in the private schools, don't have the required training. The NEP 2020 talks of employing even anganwadi workers with mere Class 10 Pass qualification as pre-school teachers after giving them just one year training. The NEP 2020 also talks of abolition of 'stand-alone' B.Ed. colleges and all courses like Four Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (FY-ITEP). It further proposes that one year B.Ed. and two-year B.Ed. etc. will be provided by multi-disciplinary institutions.

Not all teachers get in-service training necessary to update their knowledge of the subject and teaching methods. In the name of revamping the deficiencies in teacher education, the NEP 2020 introduced an FY-ITEP. Viewing all traditional teaching methods as ineffective, the NEP 2020 seeks introduction of constructivist pedagogy, with a focus on child-centric experiential learning where the teacher acts only as a facilitator. In a vast country like India, where each classroom will have over 50 students of different caliber, there is every likelihood of the failure of the new pedagogy that the government is advocating.

12.4 Recruit Only the Trained Teachers

PEP insists that all those who aspire to become teachers should possess relevant educational qualifications and appropriate degree or diploma in teacher education. For this, the PEP also proposes that the governments in all states and union territories must open adequate number of Teacher Training Institutes for imparting training to the aspiring candidates to teach at all levels of school education. Teachers at all levels shall be appointed on permanent basis with government recommended pay scales.

12.5 In-House Training

There should be in-house training for all the teachers who are already in service at regular intervals to update their knowledge of the subject and teaching methodologies and skills.

12.6 Importance of Understanding Scientific Pedagogy and Cognition

In a vast and complex country like India, where the children come from diverse socio- economic backgrounds, the teachers should be more than mere facilitators. To ensure equity and effectiveness the teacher must be grounded in the science of pedagogy. Teacher training is to provide a deep understanding on how the brain learns. Only then the teachers will have the ability to correctly analyse the diverse cognitive abilities in their classrooms and design instructions that ensure a fundamental transformation in every student.

12.6.1 PEP recommendations on Teacher Education:

1. While formulating the methodology of teaching the cognitive architecture of the human brain must be taken into account.

2. In order to make learning effective and meaningful, the teachers must understand and correctly evaluate the learners both in their situational and cultural contexts.
3. Mother tongue be used for teaching to the extent which is possible.
4. The methods of teaching must have the space and scope for clearly articulating and translating the complex ideas into a set of simple instructions that are easily understood by the learners.
5. Through the judicious application of the scientific pedagogy the students should be enabled to effortlessly connect their working memory with their long-term cognitive memory.
6. The method of teaching shall be such that the students are motivated to learn and understand various aspects and applications of what is being imparted by the teacher.
7. The methods of teaching should kindle both the inductive, deductive and critical reasoning capacity of the learners.

12.7 Familiarity with socio-cultural diversity

Teacher Education should familiarise the educators about the socio-cultural diversity of the country and make them recognise and respect all communities and not discriminate one from the others.

12.8 Secular and Scientific Outlook

We can ensure secular and scientific education if only the teachers are truly secular and rational in their beliefs. Teacher education should enable them to overcome superstitions and social prejudices, and cultivate scientific temper. They should be trained to promote a secular and scientific bent of mind among the students. This outlook is crucial in helping students develop critical thinking and a broad understanding of the world.

12.9 Empathy for the students in general and for those who are from marginalised sections in particular

Besides updating their subject knowledge Teacher Education also fosters the essential human values like love and affection for students and the necessity of being patient with the students to understand their problems. Vast sections of the students come from poor and marginalised communities who have little exposure to education. Teachers should empathise with these sections of students and pay extra attention to empower the girl students and the students coming from marginalised communities.

12.10 Duration of Teacher Education

For pre-school and primary school – One year diploma after XII Standard.

For secondary and high school – Two years of B.Ed. after graduation.

For higher secondary – Two years of B.Ed. and post-graduation in concerned discipline.

PART XIII

DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONING, AUTONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

13.1 Introduction

Academic autonomy entails that the government owns complete financial responsibility of education and allows autonomous functioning and governance by the democratically elected bodies of the University/HEIs.

13.2 Autonomy and Academic Freedom

1. Universities have evolved as Centres of Learning where knowledge acquired by society over the ages through arduous human labour, both in theory and practice, is transmitted to society in different chosen fields of disciplines. Universities

produce scholars, who are specialists in their own chosen fields of disciplines. The colleges affiliated to such Universities benefit by the academic process where the curricula and syllabi, examination and evaluation and the teaching learning process are all developed in continuum and enriched through meticulous deliberations and interactions in the respective Board of Studies, Academic Council meetings by the eminent academicians, scholars, teachers and students in their respective disciplines of studies. Each University is established to serve its own aims and objectives in a given social environment and therefore has to function in a decentralised system with full autonomy and it needs to be strengthened with sufficient financial support by the Central and State Governments. This is to ensure an all-round development of the universities and affiliated colleges, thereby the knowledge could be disseminated to successive generations for the onward development of society. Providing autonomy to the universities helps the affiliating University system to flourish.

2. Historically, the concept of educational autonomy has been rooted in the fact that academic institutions should be governed by elected bodies comprising educators, students, and other stakeholders. These bodies would be responsible for deciding core educational matters such as curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation methods and admission policies without any external interference. This approach fosters academic freedom, ensures a secular and scientific education system, and protects against undue influence by political or corporate entities and Governmental interference.

13.3 Financial Autonomy

Autonomy of academic institutions includes financial autonomy. This means that the universities would have the full authority, without any governmental interference, of disbursing the funds sanctioned to it by the government.

13.4 Democratic Governance

1. The decision-making authority at every level of education, from primary to higher, shall rest on democratically constituted academic and governing bodies of the respective levels.
2. This means that each of the Primary Syllabus Committee, Boards of Secondary Education, Councils of Higher Secondary Education, University Bodies, the Governing Bodies of university like institutes, such as IITs, IISc, ISI, IIMs, and of central medical and research institutes, etc., shall be constituted of members elected from amongst the academics specialised in the concerned disciplines of knowledge.
3. There shall be no State Higher Education Councils to oversee the function of Universities/HEIs.
4. The democratic rights inclusive of their right to form democratically elected associations/unions of the teachers, employees, research scholars and students of all Central and State institutions shall be protected.

PART XIV

FUNDING OF EDUCATION

14.1 The Necessity of Public Funding for Education

*E*ducation is a fundamental human right and a critical driver of social and economic development. It is central to the civilisational process that helps create a social order based on the principles of mutual respect, dignity, equity and tolerance. Public funding for education ensures that this right is accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic background. Viewing education as a commodity, to be purchased for private consumption, undermines its role in fostering social equity and economic progress. Treating education as a commodity will be detrimental to social progress.

14.2 Social Justice and Equity

Public funding of education is vital in promoting social justice. Access to quality education should not be contingent on an individual's ability to pay. When education is treated as a commodity, it creates a system where the wealthy can secure quality education while marginalised and disadvantaged groups are left behind. This exacerbates social inequality and perpetuates cycles of poverty.

A publicly funded education system ensures that every child, regardless of socio-economic status, has the opportunity to learn and grow.

14.3 Economic Development

Education plays a pivotal role in all round development of human beings, which in turn drives economic growth. When education is publicly funded, it allows for broad-based access, creating a knowledgeable workforce. Countries that invest significantly in public education see long-term economic benefits, including higher productivity and innovation. On the other hand, privatization of education enables only a privileged few acquire advanced knowledge, hindering inclusive economic development.

14.4 Democracy and Civic Engagement

Public education is also essential for sustaining democratic values and civic engagement. A well-educated populace is more likely to participate in democratic processes and hold governments accountable. When education is commodified, it risks becoming inaccessible to those who need it most, leading to a disenfranchised and uninformed citizenry. Public funded education fosters a shared sense of social responsibility and democratic participation.

14.5 Risks of Privatisation

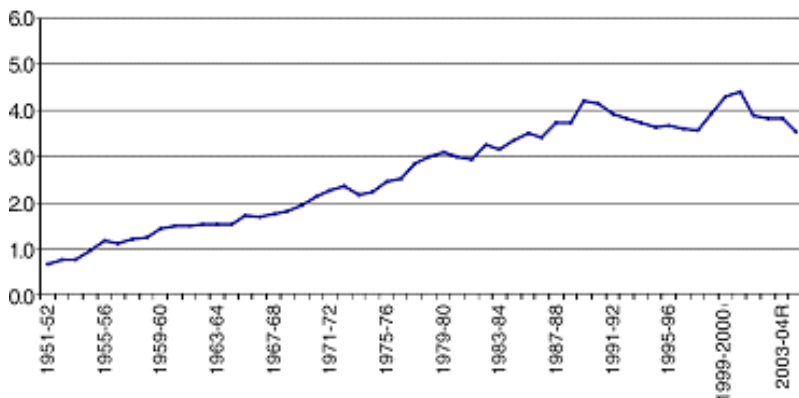
The commodification of education introduces profit motives that can compromise quality. Private institutions may focus on marketable skills rather than holistic education, limiting students' critical thinking and civic awareness. Additionally, the profit-driven nature of private education often leads to cost-cutting, reducing teaching quality and educational resources.

Public funded education is not merely an investment in individual futures but a foundation for collective progress. It is essential for ensuring social justice, fostering economic development, and upholding democratic principles. Treating education as a commodity diminishes its broader social purpose and perpetuates inequality. As such, it is imperative for governments to prioritise continuous funding of education to build a more just and prosperous society.

Funding of education has become a vexed question nowadays in all countries guided by market economy. Questions are raised on how a government can bear the entire responsibility of financing education. Orchestrated campaigns are on to drive home the point, in the line of 1994 World Bank dictum, that government should not bear much financial responsibility for education. Rather, it should be left to the hands of private agencies, national and foreign corporate houses.

In this backdrop, national level education commissions constituted in our country since Independence recommended allotment of at least 10% of the central budget and 6% of the GDP for education. It has been a general demand that a minimum 20 to 25% of the state budget should be allotted for education.

Figure 1: Share of Public Expenditure on Education in GNP
(Per Cent)



India's liberalisation in the early 1990s came with the arresting of what had till then been a slow trend of rise in the ratio of public expenditure on education to GNP/GDP, well before the target of 6 percent had been reached - instead maintaining it at even a 4 percent level became a challenge in this new context. Figure 1 shows the trend from independence till the early years of this century.

The public expenditure on education has generally stagnated even thereafter as is shown in Table 1. This picture has required incorporation of education related expenditure done by Departments and Ministries of Central and State governments other than those dealing directly with education. As far as expenditures by Education Departments are concerned, there is a marked trend of decline since then from the slightly higher levels attained in the 2009-10 to 2012-13 period.

The full significance of the stagnation in public expenditure in education in the 21st century can only be understood when it is set against the significant expansion in enrolment - Gross Enrollment Ratios (GERs), specially at higher levels of education, that have taken place over the same period - indicating the policy failure to respond to the rising aspirations for education across different social groups in India, thereby creating the conditions for increased privatisation of education. The break-up of the total expenditure between different sectors is shown in Table 2 for 2019-20, the last year for which actual figures are available.

Table 1 : Public Expenditure on Education as Percentage of GDP from 2000-01 to 2021-22

Year	State allocation as % of GDP	Centre allocation as % of GDP	States and Centre allocation as % of GDP
2001-02	2.99	0.37	3.68
2002-03	2.93	0.39	3.66
2003-04	2.79	0.39	3.40
2004-05	2.73	0.44	3.26
2005-06	2.79	0.53	3.34
2006-07	2.79	0.60	3.48
2007-08	2.74	0.58	3.40
2008-09	2.88	0.65	3.56
2009-10	3.11	0.65	3.95
2010-11	3.22	0.72	4.05
2011-12	3.09	0.69	3.82
2012-13	3.01	0.66	3.70
2013-14	2.97	0.64	3.84
2014-15	2.90	0.55	4.07
2015-16	2.81	0.49	4.20
2016-17	2.78	0.47	4.24
2017-18	2.68	0.47	3.87
2018-19	2.61	0.41	3.90
2019-20	2.73	0.43	4.04
2020-21 (RE)	2.95	0.43	4.36
2021-22 (BE)	2.75	0.40	4.12

Source: GOI, Ministry of Education, Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Published in December 2024)

Table 2 : Public Expenditure on Education as Percentage of GDP, Sector-Wise (Estimated), 2019-20 (Actuals)

Sector	States/UTs	Centre	Total
Elementary Education	1.36	0.39	1.75
Secondary Education	0.90	0.10	1.00
University & Higher Education	0.37	0.18	0.55
Adult Education	0.00	0.00	0.00
Technical Education	0.40	0.35	0.75
Total (Education)	3.03	1.01	4.04

Source: Same as Table 1

As is clear from the data, the bulk of the public expenditure on education is undertaken by state governments. However, in India's federal structure, availability of fiscal resources at both state and central levels are primarily determined by the fiscal approach and effort of the Central Government. Here it is pertinent to note that India's tax-GDP ratio, which is among the lowest in the world, has struggled to attain again the level reached in 2007-08. It is central taxes that have largely been responsible for this failure, with own revenue mobilisation by state governments exhibiting a better picture. Moreover, two-thirds of Indian tax revenues (Centre and States combined) come from indirect taxes, the burden of which falls on every section of the population. In other words, the fundamental constraint on fiscal resources comes from the failure to adequately use direct taxes on higher income groups in India, which are under the control of the Central Government. It is also important to underline that the gap between budgeted and actual expenditure has been widening since 2017. Conversely, state budgets are expected to exceed their planned education spending.

This is despite rising inequality which has created a situation where the top 10 percent of the Indian population now corners 57 percent of the national income. There is thus absolutely no basis for making any claim that expanding public expenditure on education is resource constrained – the constraint is self-imposed and not an inherent outcome of underlying economic realities. Instead, the stepping up of public expenditure on education – which is in the nature of an investment which can fuel economic transformation based on unleashing the full capacities of India's large population – is what those underlying economic realities demand.

14.6 Slash in Budget Allocation for Education and Research

The UGC budget was slashed by 60.99% in 2024-25 financial year. Only 39% of the fund of National Research Foundation (NRF), that is formed for supporting research, would come from the Government and the rest is to be borne by private agencies. Education proposed to be catered to by philanthropic organisations or through PPP model, academia-industry collaboration and self-financing mode would promote privatisation and commercialisation. Privatisation, commercialisation and corporatization of education would stand in its way of universalisation.

14.7 Recommendations of PEP

It is emphasised that the Government shall take the complete financial responsibility of education from pre-primary to higher education and research. This only can guarantee universal education. Therefore, PEP demands to implement the following measures for the true universalisation of education.

1. At least 10% of the central budget and 6% of the GDP and a minimum of 20 to 25 percent of the state budget shall be allocated for education.

2. Education shall be free from pre-primary level to class 12 and no fee shall be charged from the learners at this level under any pretext.
3. Fees for college and university education shall be such that they are affordable by even the poorest section of the people including SC, ST and OBC. No aspiring student shall be deprived of education due to their inability to pay fees. Provisions for free-studentship duly supported by scholarships so that students don't have to depend on family, particularly for the underprivileged communities, poor and women.
4. Adequate funds shall be made available for fundamental research.
5. Practice of self-financing and PPP model courses shall be stopped.
6. Government shall set up committees consisting of academicians and guardians to oversee that private educational institutions do not charge exorbitant fees. There shall remain a parity with government institutions in this regard. A provision for 30% free-studentship for economically weaker students shall be there in these private run institutions.

PART XV

VALUE EDUCATION

15.1 Introduction

Value Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral, ethical, and intellectual outlook. In the name of imparting values, one should not propagate communal ideas and obscurantist practices that propagates blind obedience, enmity and hatred among the people. In contrast, PEP seeks to instil the values that promote values of reason, tolerance, empathy, unity and fraternity. To impart the values, it is necessary to familiarise our students with the life struggles and contributions of social reformers, thinkers and great personalities of the world including Indian renaissance and the freedom movement.

15.2 Key Aspects of Value Education

15.2.1 Democratic, Scientific and Secular Values:

1. The focus of value education should be to impart democratic, scientific and secular values.
2. Value education should guide students to appreciate the importance of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as outlined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. It should encourage the development of a scientific temper, humanism,

and a spirit of inquiry, which are enshrined in Article 51A(h) of the Constitution.

3. To be able to impart these values to the students, it is important that teachers themselves imbibe these principles.

15.2.2 Biographies of Eminent Indians and World Personalities :

1. Value education shall highlight the lives and contributions of great personalities from around the world and from India, who have upheld secular values, democratisation of education and made it accessible to all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion.
2. Value education shall also include the lives and biographies of those who made significant contributions to science and philosophy.
3. Stories to imbibe tender feelings, love, kindness and empathy shall be taught.

15.2.3 Countering Unscientific Ideas:

All lessons that purport fundamentalist, undemocratic and unscientific ideas will be removed from the syllabi. PEP promotes a historical and scientific perspective, ensuring that ancient India's contributions are appropriately recognised by emphasising genuine contributions to the fields like medicine, mathematics, and science without undue glorification or distortion. Growing trend of religious fundamentalism shall be combated.

15.2.4 Emphasis on truth and ethics:

1. Value education shall impart values of truthfulness, dignity of labor, mutual respect and equality, and reject consumerism and vulgar display of wealth.
2. PEP rejects all concepts that justifies casteism, communalism, racism and patriarchy.

PART XVI

LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION

16.1 Introduction

*I*ndia, being a multilingual and multi-ethnic country, faces significant challenges in formulating an effective language policy for education. The approach to language in education is crucial for national integration and cultural cohesion, and any policy must account for the complexities of diverse linguistic communities.

16.2 Importance of Mother Tongue

The consensus is that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction up to the highest level as far as possible. Learning in one's mother tongue allows students to grasp concepts more easily, express their thoughts clearly, and think critically. However, for students whose mother tongue differs from the local language, additional support should be given to help them learn the language of instruction and mother tongue if the child opts for it.

16.3 Role of English

In the Indian context, English plays a vital role as a link language, both nationally and internationally. Historically, English has been widely accepted and has become integral to India's educational and professional landscape. It provides access to global knowledge, serves as a medium for intellectual exchange, and facilitates international communication. Therefore, English shall continue to be taught from the early stages of education to enable students to engage with global developments in science, technology, and other fields.

16.4 English and Development of Indian Languages

While English remains essential for higher education and global engagement, the development of Modern Indian Languages (MIL) is also crucial. Interaction with English will further develop all Indian languages. The government shall prioritise the creation of resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, and translations to advance all Indian languages. Special efforts must be made to support the languages of marginalised communities by providing necessary linguistic tools like vocabulary, grammar and scripts.

16.5 Language Formula

A student shall learn both the mother tongue and English. This approach is viewed as both practical and inclusive. In addition to the mother tongue and English, students shall have the option to learn any additional language. However, learning of the additional language shall be optional.

16.5.1 Special problem in a multilingual country like India:

1. For a multilingual country like India there is a special problem. Migration has become a common phenomenon in India and often people from one state are settled in another state.

2. For the child of such a migrant family born and brought up in another state, the local/regional language becomes almost like a mother tongue through interaction with playmates and neighbours, though the language spoken at home is the mother tongue. Such a child of migrant parents shall be given the scope to study his/her mother tongue as an optional third language. The child generally has to study in a school where the local/regional/state language is the medium of instruction. In the interest of integration, we should encourage the migrants to learn the language of the state.
3. In the states or parts of the states where different linguistic communities live in a large number or are concentrated, the concerned state government shall take up the responsibility of setting up schools where the respective mother tongue is the medium of instruction. The English and respective mother tongue shall be the compulsory languages, and the state/local/regional language shall be taught as an optional language.
4. In the states where the linguistic and cultural minorities are substantial in number, the governments may encourage school education in the language of the minorities. But where the cultural and linguistic minorities are very small in number, the government allows and acknowledges the initiatives of the cultural and linguistic minorities to start schools in their mother tongue. But such schools shall abide by the secular values and teach the approved syllabus in their mother tongue.
5. Apart from mother tongue, the child should have the option to study even foreign language as an optional third language.

PART XVII

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS / GAMES

- 17.1. Physical education, games, and sports are essential components of a well-rounded educational curriculum. They not only promote physical health but also enhance academic performance, build essential life skills, team spirit, sportsmanship, and foster emotional and social development. Including physical education from an early age helps create a balanced approach to education, where mental, emotional, and physical aspects of student development are equally valued.
- 17.2. Physical education shall be introduced from primary education onward, continuing through higher education.
- 17.3. Adequate and necessary infrastructure shall be ensured for sports and games and different cultural activities at all levels of education from schools to universities.
- 17.4. Special attention and encouragement should be given to students who show exceptional talents in the field of sports and games. The state has to bear all the expenses for training, travel and accommodation of such students. General rules such as compulsory attendance should be relaxed. If needed, special classes should be arranged so that they do not lag behind others in studies.

PART XVIII

ONLINE EDUCATION

The NEP 2020 has given too much emphasis on online mode of teaching and asking the students to opt for papers offered in online portals. Several online courses require additional fee. Most of them do not fit into the educational calendar of the colleges and universities. The experience of online teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic shows that online education is not accessible to the students in the peripheral regions and most students find it difficult to focus and learn from online teaching. In a developing country like India, direct physical mode of teaching is more reliable mode of teaching as it enables direct communication with the teacher, and facilitates better exchange of several ideas. Physical mode of teaching provides opportunity to the slow learners and facilitate one-to-one personal interactions between students and teachers. Sitting in the classrooms, the students learn not only from teachers, but also from the peer interactions. All these much-needed activities are denied to students in online/blended mode of education. One of the motives of the government to promote online education is to evade the responsibility of recruiting the teachers against the vacant positions.

For these reasons, the online education can never be an alternative to the physical mode of teaching. However, online teaching

may supplement the formal teaching. Efforts should be made to strengthen online education as supplementary to direct physical mode of teaching.

1. The government shall ensure internet access to nook and corners of the country, provide affordable internet connections and devices, and ensure that all students, especially those in rural areas, are given digital literacy.
2. Online study of courses can be utilised optionally by students where the courses are very unique and are to be learnt in addition to the existing curricular requirements of degree programmes. Offer of selective online courses / recorded video courses by eminent academicians can be utilised by teachers and students as additional courses. However, offer of degree programmes in online/blended mode by educational institutions shall be discouraged.

PROCLAMATION

The People's Education Policy (PEP) 2026 proclaims as follows:

1. The NEP 2020 be scrapped and in its place the PEP 2026 that is based on the principles of secular, scientific, democratic and universal education be introduced.
2. The public funded education system be saved and strengthened.
3. At least 10% of the Central budget and 6% of the GDP be allotted for education. Similarly, at least 20-25 % of the state budget be allotted for education. Adequate funding be allocated for the research sector.
4. Not mere literacy and numeracy, universalisation of school education be made with all seriousness and sincerity.
5. Free education for all from primary to higher secondary level be ensured.
6. Education shall be completely financed by the state through the plan outlays of both the Union and the respective provincial governments.
7. Education shall be a subject of the State List and the Indian Constitution shall be re-amended accordingly.

8. Adequate number of schools be set up for pre-primary education under the school education department.
9. The time tested 10+2 structure in school education, three-year graduate program and two-year post graduate program be reinstated.
10. Permanent teachers at all levels be appointed and formal class-room teaching be continued. Online mode may be deployed only as a complimentary mechanism.
11. No-detention policy shall be done away with and pass-fail system with special support for underperforming students shall be introduced.
12. There shall be no vocationalization of education.
13. The academic freedom and autonomy of the universities and other higher education institutions shall be ensured and safeguarded.
14. Semester system would continue only where it is absolutely necessary, but wherever possible, the semester pattern shall be reverted to annual pattern for all UG and PG degree programmes.
15. There shall be no privatisation and commercialisation of education at any level.
16. Mother tongues and English shall be promoted. Language policy shall be developed scientifically.

