

**National Education Assembly**  
HKS Bhavan, New Delhi: 30 April, 2023

**Charter of Demands**

(based on submissions by all supporting Organizations)

**ECCE**

1. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) should not to be part of the formal education system. Backdoor integration of ECCE with formal education as being attempted under NEP is against the interest of children. ECCE for children of ages 3-5 is best done in upgraded Anganwadis, where holistic development including physical and mental development is already being done despite all the handicaps. Balvatikas/ nurseries/LKG/UKG should not be opened in schools as being done in many states, which will encourage private, commercialized pre-school/nurseries. ECCE requires a strengthened neighbourhood-based Anganwadi system with crèche facilities and other proper infrastructure, curriculum and additional human resource with adequate training, professional qualification, regularization and proper wages of existing Anganwadi personnel.
2. Existing ECCE Policy 2013 should be strengthened and a new Right to ECCE Act enacted with proper rules and with Anganwadi centres as nodal agencies.
3. Various new suggestions being made for nutrition of children, with a hidden agenda of privatization and so-called “philanthropic” participation in nursery schools as being experimented in some states, should be withdrawn. Instead, ICDS and mid-day meal Schemes should be strengthened. There should be no privatization of any component of ICDS
4. Pre-school/ or nursery classes should not be set up in government schools

**School**

5. Closure/merger of government Schools under NEP should be stopped immediately and completely.
6. Privatization and handing over of government schools to private or philanthropic management, should be stopped. Instead, all government schools should be upgraded with good infra-structure, adequate teaching and non-teaching staff, and good teacher-student ratio. All ad hoc teaching and non-teaching staff should be regularized, and all vacancies be filled. Budget for public education in schools be expanded.
7. The system of Ashram schools in remote tribal areas, and in areas with large minority populations, should be strengthened, along with appointment of adequate

number of teachers. All scholarships and fellowships for Scheduled Castes, for minority students such as the Maulana Azad Scholarships, as well as the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships, should also be restored. Scholarships and fellowships should not be curtailed in the supposed expectation of philanthropic or private funding. It needs emphasis that curtailment of all such funding support particularly impacts girls.

8. Centralization of curricula, syllabus, and examinations should be stopped. Imposition of centralized National Curriculum Framework (NCF) should be stopped and, instead, NCF should be provided as a guideline for States to form their own curricula. Primacy of State Boards should be restored.
9. The system of centralized examinations, especially national exams after Classes 3, 5, 8, 10 should be withdrawn.
10. Breakfast and Mid-day Meals should be provided to all students from pre-primary to 10+2 and allowances for the same should be enhanced. Provision should be made for adequate human resources for management of Mid-Day Meals so that teachers are not burdened. Mid-Day Meal workers and other non-teaching staff employed in the education system should be treated as regular employees, provided with statutory wages, social security and pension.
11. The idea of teacher-training universities in NEP worsens the isolation of teachers from designing contextualized curricula as stated by the Justice Verma Commission. NEP also ignores the virtual take-over of teacher training by private players. The restructured BA/BSc teacher training degree under NEP is retrograde as it imposes early specialization instead of allowing for rounded training for teaching several subjects, leaving further specialization for a Master's degree.
12. The so-called "rationalization" of NCERT Text Books be withdrawn and the earlier Text Books restored. Exclusionary portrayals of Indian culture as being only "Vedic-Sanskritic," excluding all other Indian cultures, and ignoring contributions of non-Hindu religions, traditions and ethnicities, should be withdrawn. While recognizing the real, significant and many pioneering achievements of ancient and medieval Indian science, technology and other knowledge, due recognition be also given to contributions of non-Indian civilizations through cultural and economic exchanges over the centuries. All exclusionary "Hindu-ized" courses, chapters and syllabi should be withdrawn and secular, inclusive content should be restored.
13. RtE should be implemented in its true spirit and its scope expanded up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard. All children must receive full 12 years of education before branching off into different higher education or vocational streams.

14. School safety framework, including protections against sexual harassment and exploitation, along with all norms of infrastructure and norms, with parent-teachers associations as the nodal body, should be properly implemented as prescribed in the manual of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The SARTHAQ guidelines of NEP go against these provisions.
15. Optional Vocational courses in Classes 11-12 or earlier should be treated as foundational and for students to explore their talents and aptitudes, not as preparation for employment so as not to encourage drop-out.
16. Vocational education should be provided as part of higher education, as is the practice in most developed countries and comparable developing and middle-income countries in East/South East Asia. VocEd should be imparted in appropriate institutional settings, including some on-job training, apprenticeship and/or internship, through suitably designed modular Courses combining theoretical knowledge and skills as required, allowing for continuous upgrading of both at all stages of a person's career

## **Literacy & Continuing Education**

17. Through NEP and allied measures, the present Government has dismantled all infrastructure and capabilities for imparting Literacy, Adult and Continuing Education such as State Resource Centres, Department of Adult Education etc which had developed substantial experience, pedagogic skills and materials over several decades. Ignoring the vast experience of the volunteer- and campaign-based Literacy movement, the government initially suggested a student-based system and now, under NEP, has chosen to go with an on-line system with all the attendant problems and inequities noted above in school education.
18. For skill-based and other lifelong education, NEP proposes to seek partnership with other Departments, essentially passing the buck and evading responsibility. The earlier-established specialized and dedicated structures and methodologies for literacy, adult and continuing education should be restored within the educational system and the tasks remaining for the achievement of hundred percent literacy should be taken up and completed in earnest.

## **Higher Education**

19. Forced creation of only campus-based universities by clubbing together colleges in a cluster or by upgrading autonomous colleges into universities should be withdrawn. The forced conversion of stand-alone or single-stream higher education institutions (HEI) into multi-disciplinary Universities should also be stopped, instead encouraging them to gradually introduce other disciplines rather than compelling them to do so.
20. Dismantling of the system of affiliated HEI institutions, whether public or private, should be stopped.
21. The proposed National Research Foundation (NRF) should be used to strengthen the programmes of teaching and research within State Universities and affiliated colleges. Pluralism and diversity in research should be protected, and no attempt should be made to impose topics for research from above.
22. Funds available under the centrally-sponsored Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA or national higher education campaign) should be given to state governments so as to enable creation of their own programmes for collaborations of all HEIs (including IISERs, Insttns of Eminence etc) in their states for teaching cum research without overwhelming conditions
23. A special Education Cess is recommended levied on large corporate profits and high net-worth individuals (HNI) to enable the country to achieve the targeted

- public expenditure of 6% - 10% of GDP on education within the period of the next five years. States should be allocated their due share of the Cess without any extra conditions. The funds could be used by States for providing scholarships/fellowships and to for faculty appointments as required.
24. The three-tier system of HEIs as research universities, teaching universities and autonomous colleges be abandoned. The programmes and activities related to research and outreach functions in each university should be suitably inter-linked.
  25. The Higher Education Commission of India (HEI), visualized in the NEP as an education regulator, should be scrapped and, instead, the earlier UGC should perform its then mandated function under the UGC Act, viz it should undertake, “in consultation with the Universities or other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and co-ordination of University education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities.”
  26. The CUET and NEET examinations should be scrapped along with the National Testing Agency which unnecessarily centralizes all kinds of examinations. A common framework is required for regulation of admissions through an inter-state system of mutual recognition and equivalence. The share of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) credits should be reduced to 10 percent in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). State governments should be allowed to redesign ABC and CCFUP (Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes). The Union Government may continue with national testing only in specific cases, although these too need to be reviewed after so many decades experience, including the emergence of a large ecosystem of coaching centres and now on-line courses, all exacerbating the inequity between the better-off and others, and putting enormous pressure on students, with undesirable consequences
  27. The system of multiple entry and exit points with Certifications or Diplomas from 4-year Under-graduate courses be abandoned. Exit should be allowed only after the full 3 years are completed. If required, specially-designed Short-term Modular Courses may be designed for different vocationally-oriented subjects.
  28. Widening of the gender gap in higher education should be arrested urgently. All schemes on girls/women’s education, especially with respect to free-ships, scholarships, assistance for educational materials etc. should be restored immediately with a significant enhancement of this funding. Gender Sensitization Committees should be set up in all University Campuses, in accordance with the Vishakha Judgement.

29. Equal treatment of LGBTQIA+ persons at all stages and levels of education should be ensured among students, teachers and non-teaching staff
30. Ph.D. should not be mandatory for University/College teachers at the entry level. MPhil degrees should not be discontinued
31. Elected representation including adequate women, dalit and ST representation should be ensured in all committees for governing higher education. Right to unionize should be ensured in all levels of education. Along with democratization of the governance structures, a new system for the selection of Vice Chancellors through independent search committees be instituted by statutory bodies of concerned universities.
32. Strict and Proper implementation of the Constitutionally mandated reservation policy for SC/ST/OBC/PWD in HEIs across each and every Course should be ensured. Reservation be extended to private HEIs as well. Full access for, and assistance to, all categories of differently abled students, faculty and non-teaching staff should be ensured.
33. While not directly related to NEP, there is unanimity in the demand for restoration of the Old Pension Scheme and withdrawn of the New Pension Scheme.
34. In conclusion, the regressive and non-inclusive NEP should be withdrawn and rolled back.