

A discussion was organised on 16/08/2019 on the topic "New Education Policy" by "Scientific & Polemic Society" at COE Sanjauli College.



The discussion was started by the President of the Society Dr. Sandeep Chauhan with the quote "Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands, and whom it is aimed". Dr. Chauhan classified the NEP into 5 basic moves: Centralization, Segregation, Privatization, Informalization and De-regulation of the Education system.

While discussing the centralization it was discussed how funds have been continuously reduced for education in recent past. Government schools will now be organised into what are called "School Complexes" – with one secondary school, and a bunch of primary and middle schools around it. The secondary school will receive funds for running libraries, laboratories, etc., and for hiring 'key subject' (Math, Science, English, etc) teachers. These teachers will be then shared by the primary schools in the "Complex". None of the primary or middle-level schools will have infrastructure like library or laboratory. Instead of 5 maths teachers for 5 schools, it will now be only 1, for 5 schools. Just like the crisis-ridden American 3-tier school system, this is a roadmap to concentrating all public funding to a few "top-tier schools", and stripping the huge bulk of primary and middle schools across the country of any kind of public spending.

The Policy in fact has an elaborate plan for the complete ruin of whatever is left of the primary and middle schools across the country today*. All "para-teacher" (Shikshakarmi, Shikshamitra, etc.) systems across the country are to be further informalised and converted to "volunteers" and "teaching aides".

On the other hand, for the typical Government schools, presumably mostly in rural areas, education will be reduced to skill education: 'extra-curricular' and 'co-curricular'. Sports, yoga, dance, music, drawing, painting, sculpting, pottery-making, woodworking, gardening, and electric work, etc., will now be subjects especially at the secondary level (from class IX to class XII). These will replace science, humanities and social science subjects.

The Policy thus basically speaks of not one, but two parallel education systems – one for the economic and cultural rich, and another for everyone else. A segregated education system.

The word “reservation” occurs exactly once in the entire document, that too, in the following sentence: “Private HEIs shall not be mandated to adhere to reservation guidelines”. There is no mention of Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes and their education in the entire document. The 500-page long policy has just half a page on the education of Dalits.

The NEP calls for a complete informalization of primary education in rural and “educationally backward” areas. “URGs” – specifically women – will have to participate in various, presumably unpaid, volunteer programs to supplement for teachers in rural schools.

As the Government is backing out of the task of providing Education for everyone, profit-making companies are being asked to take up that role, using the mask of charity. The NEP openly calls for “private philanthropic activity” in education, and takes all necessary steps to ensure the kind of policy infrastructure private players want.

Fellowships have been privatized, textbook designing and publishing has been privatized, even private Boards of Assessments have been announced! Individual Universities will now be free to set-up or choose their own “Assessment Boards”, meaning that the University would be free to apply its own standards to assessing its performance, and presumably claim ‘excellence

Private Higher Educational Institutions have been given the freedom to set their fees

Universities are free to set-up their own Assessment Boards, schools are free to choose their texts and curricula, private agencies are free to develop their own approved texts, private institutions are free to charge whatever amounts of fees they want – all regulations have been essentially removed, giving a complete free hand to everything private.

In last it was concluded with the remark that People need to seek solutions after identifying the correct root cause of the problem. people must be educated that this cannot be fought off in their university corridors or can be negotiated with institutions... symbolic protests shall not do, issuing statements shall not do. We need a more thought out organised network and a huge plan. With a promise to conduct more such discussions, the event was adjourned.