

Ref: EPSI/MC/HT/POL/ES/19

Date: March 14, 2019

To:

**President/General Secretary
All Major Political Parties**

**A Request to Political Parties for Including “Agenda for Indian Education”
in their Manifestos for General Election -2019**

Sub:

Sir,

You may be aware that the Education Promotion Society for India (EPSI), since its establishment in 2005, has been working steadfastly as an advocacy group representing the entire education sector (from primary education up to university education).

At national as well as state level, it has always been in constant touch with policy makers at MHRD, UGC, AICTE, MCI, NCTC and state councils of higher education where it has tried to appraise them about problems of schools, colleges and universities. We have a membership base of 300+ universities and 5000+ colleges spread over the entire country.

Since 2005, the EPSI, as the only national body representing the Indian education, has been striving for making the education as a ‘game changer’ for the country which can serve the aspirations of teeming millions to get employment and receive regular income for their livelihood. We strongly believe that since our nation has embarked upon the market led economy, there has been consistently high economic growth but without creating jobs in sufficient numbers. Capacity of the Indian Economy in creating additional jobs has been getting decelerated continuously in recent years.

We think that the General Election-2019 is a great opportunity for all educationists, intellectuals and the of civil society to join hands with political parties for developing an **“AGENDA FOR INDIAN EDUCATION”** capable of transforming our education system at all levels viz. primary, secondary and higher education. EPSI has decided to meet leaders of all national and regional political parties with a memorandum highlighting all pressing issues and problems relating to the education sector and also, suggesting their pragmatic solutions. During the next 45 days, we are going to meet leaders of all parties in person and will be requesting them to include **“AGENDA FOR INDIAN EDUCATION”** in the manifesto of their parties.

EPSI has been observing the technological and educational developments during the last couple of decades at global as well as national level. We are of the opinion that many disruptive technologies are on the horizon and has taken a shape of the **4th Industrial Revolution** or the **Industry 4.0**. Future of our children will be safe only when we are able to provide them **“Quality Education”** at all levels. There is a dire need to **“REVAMP, REJUVENATE & TRANSFORM”** our schools, colleges and universities so that our future generation can be groomed and trained to face a **“NEW WORLD IN THE 21 CENTURY”**.

EDUCATION – AS A GAME CHANGER!

We are of the view that during 71 years of independence, there has been exponential growth in education with sizable improvements in enrolments at schools, colleges and universities. Still vast majority of children and youth

from poor families, SC,ST, OBC, EWS communities are lagging behind the prosperous section of the society in accessing quality education. In the coming decade (2020-30), youth of these down-trodden sections will have to face severe joblessness, if they are not properly trained to deal with “NEW TECHNOLOGIES”.

AGENDA FOR EDUCATION [for inclusion in election manifestos]

1. Public Spending on Education:

So far, our total spending on education has not been commensurate with its role as a ‘**GAME CHANGER**’. During the last few years, it has been less than 3.5% of the GDP. Allocation for the higher education has been less than 1.3% of the GDP. Compared to the recommendation of **Kothari Commission (1966)**, it should have been **6% of GDP**.

➤ Our Demand

National spending on education should be raised to 6% of GDP by the year 2022. Every year it can be raised by 1% of GDP.

2. Free Secondary Education To All:

As per the Right to Education Act (RTE Act), 2009, the Government of India has been committed to provide FREE SCHOOL EDUCATION up to class VIII for children of 6-14 years age group.

➤ Our Demand

All children from the age group to 6-18 years, should get FREE SCHOOL EDUCATION from CLASS I to XII. Since the large numbers of students are studying in private schools, they should also be supported financially by the Government.

3. Free Higher Education to All by 2030

Education in general and the higher education has been a big equalizer in Indian society. So far our gross enrolment ratio is 25.4% which means that only 25.4 per cent youths are getting higher education in the age-group of 18-23. As per the targets of the NITI Aayog, we are supposed to reach a GER of 30% by 2022. It means that within the next 3 years, 10 million more students are likely to join colleges and universities for receiving higher education.

(Providing free higher education to all by 2030 cannot be a Utopian Idea. Already 40 nations in the world have been providing free higher education to their students. Some of these prominent nations are Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Iran, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines etc.)

➤ Our Demand

Higher Education should be made totally free for all girls and for students from SC, ST, OBC & EWS communities by 2022. By 2030, it should be free for all students. It will require raising public spending on Higher Education from 1.3% to 2.5% of GDP.

4. Cheap Educational Loans & Scholarships:

In higher education, there is a big issue of more than 80% students not getting access to quality education which could ensure a decent job opportunity and a quality life for them. All IITs, NITs, IIMs and central universities, put together, admit only almost 2 lakh students every year. Millions of deserving students from poor sections and middle classes depend on educational loans from public sector banks. The interest rate charged by these banks is 11% -12% which is too high.

To initiate a scheme of universal provision of scholarships for students of higher education admitted to any recognised university to cover the expenditure on tuition fees. Countries like United Kingdom their local Education Boards at the country level undertake to fund higher education of most students securing admission in any of their universities. Such a measure will have universal appeal among the people throughout the country and will go a long way in ensuring access to higher education to all deserving students irrespective of the economic status of their parents.

➤ Our Demand

Interest rate on education loans should be reduced from the current rates of 11%-12% to 5% p.a. with longer repayment (instead of 6-7 years at present to 15 years).

We are delighted that the EPSI is also going to organise a few Roundtables across the country on “**The General Election -2019: Agenda for Education**”. Proposed places for organising these Roundtables are Lucknow, Delhi, Pune, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Chennai which will facilitate discussions between representatives of political parties and eminent educationists on the key educational issues for inclusion in the manifestos of political parties.

We sincerely appeal to you to kindly give a consideration to the issues and demands related to the Indian Education raised by us in this memorandum. We shall be highly obliged if your party deems it worth highlighting in the manifesto for the forthcoming parliamentary election.

A line in confirmation about a kind attention to our proposal will be appreciated.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



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Founder & Chancellor
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