

Proletarian Era



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LONG LIVE COMRADE MAO ZEDONG

“Class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment are the three great revolutionary movements for building a mighty socialist country. These movements are a sure guarantee that Communists will be free from bureaucracy and immune against revisionism and dogmatism and will forever remain invincible. They are a reliable guarantee that the proletariat will be able to unite with the broad working masses and realize a democratic dictatorship. If, in the absence of these movements, the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and monsters were all allowed to crawl out, while our cadres were to shut their eyes to all this and in many cases fail even to differentiate between the enemy and ourselves but were to collaborate with the enemy and were corrupted, divided and demoralized by them, if our cadres were thus pulled out or the enemies were able to sneak in, and if many of our workers, peasants, and intellectuals were left defenceless against both the soft and the hard tactics of the enemy, then it would not take long, perhaps only several years or a decade, or several decades at most, before a counter-revolutionary restoration on a national scale inevitably occurred, the Marxist-Leninist party would undoubtedly become a revisionist party or a fascist party, and the whole of China would change its colour.”

(Note on “The Seven Well-Written Documents of Chekiang Province Concerning Cadres’ Participation in Physical Labour” (9 May 1963), quoted in ‘On Khrushchev’s Phony Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World’, pp. 71-72.)



26 December 1893 – 9 September 1976

National Education Policy 2020

A fatal blow for present and future generations

[National Education Policy 2020 is designed to strip education of its essence and wipe out whatever little of democratic education is still existing in the country. It might, therefore, require in-depth discussion on each of the pernicious aspects of this disastrous policy. However, right now, an article touching upon the cardinal points of the policy with brief elaboration is given here.]

After a meaningful silence for over a year, the present BJP-led Union government has made public a National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020), an abridged reshuffled version of the Draft NEP 2019 (DNEP 2019) released in June last year. In both content of the Policy documents and the intent of the policymakers as well as in verbosity and flamboyance, the two match each

other, though with some differences. So much so that, a section of intelligentsia and general people are mesmerized at the verbose presentation and flamboyant pledges to miss between-the-lines implications. In fact, verbosity and flamboyance of the content rather served for the government as a cover to conceal the intent, which in ultimate analysis comes down to blunt and vicious agglomeration of the entire attacks on education that had been continuing since independence, including in them the agenda of curtailment of education for the masses and doing away with all the nobilities and essence of a genuine education. However, the attempt proved abortive, as the NEP 2020 instantly gave rise to strong resentment from an overwhelmingly large section of academic and education fraternity from all corners of the country. Surprisingly for any democratic-minded person, the Union government made the announcement amidst the lockdown clamped on this huge country by none other than itself, that too under a meagre 4-hour notice. During this lockdown people particularly the toiling masses were forced to remain engaged in fighting for their life and livelihood due to the tragic Covid 19 pandemic. Schools-colleges-offices were closed for indefinite time. There was no scope for discussions-exchanges-interactions in public. The situation continues still today. And apparently the government has taken it as rather another cover, to push through its agenda. Not

SUCI(C) calls for developing united resistance movement against move to silence voice of free expression

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), issued the following statement on 31 August 2020 :

It is shocking that ignoring strong protests from thousands and thousands of citizens including former Chief Justices of Supreme Court as well as other High Courts, former judges, renowned advocates, eminent intellectuals and educationists of the country, utter injustice has been done to senior advocate Prasant Bhushan, a fearless fighter upholding democratic rights of the citizens. There can be no language to protest against this mockery of justice.

This episode proves once again how the lofty ideal of ‘independence of judiciary’, once proclaimed by bourgeois parliamentary democracy, has been turned into a complete dependence of judiciary on the ruling class and the ruling party since, parliamentary democracy now has been reduced to fascist autocracy in all imperialist- capitalist countries.

In India, during the Congress rule, judiciary had been made ‘committed’. Now, in the BJP regime, it is found to be ‘dictated’.

Here lies the real face of bourgeois parliamentary democracy in its present reactionary phase. All the promises it made during the days of its advent are now being now trampled underfoot. “You should not cross Lakshman Rekha”— this very comment is a threat to silence all voices of free expression. This is a very alarming situation. The situation demands release of a well-organized, sustained, countrywide resistance movement by all sections of democratic minded people. We appeal to all to respond to the call of the hour recalling the glorious struggles and sacrifices of the great pioneers of Indian renaissance and freedom movement.

Contd on page 2

National Education Policy 2020

Overriding criticisms NEP 2020 announced under cover of lockdown to avoid opposition

Contd. from page 1

only that, such an important policy, a vital issue for the country and its people, was announced without any discussion in the Parliament. Nor there was involvement of representatives of any of the state governments in the process, though education is constitutionally in the Concurrent List and though in the measure of budget allocation on education in terms of GDP the Union government's share is only 10% of the state government's share. No educationist of national stature and name had any inkling of the oncoming announcement. To sum up, there was no meaningful debates- discussions-polemics in a way that were expected and essential to frame a national policy on an issue like education. Incidentally, the date of announcement, 29 July 2020, coincided with the 129th death anniversary of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, that too falling in the birth- bicentennial year of this great man of our immediate past, who had fought life-long for the cause of establishing genuine education system, including equipped teachers, proper institutions in the country.

In both the Draft 2019 and final 2020 documents, in interviews or in speeches of ministers or ruling party leaders, as in the case of the Prime Minister's speech, the government claims to have received accolades from lakhs of people. But the government never cared to mention equal, if not more number of scathing criticisms which it must have received and is still receiving, or it never clearly spelt out how it had addressed these criticisms in the NEP 2020. On certain issues, the NEP 2020 appears to have taken care of criticisms and has tried to circumvent them by subtly changing its stand from DNEP2019, obviously without admitting it. The outcome was such that, the RSS, an inalienable component, rather mentor-monitor of the ruling RSS-BJP combine and the principal proponent and executor of their agenda, was expressly elated to declare that nearly 60% of their agenda has been attained. To add in the end, the sneaky announcement was shamelessly unilateral, high-handed and grossly undemocratic.

Total annihilation of secular scientific education

As said, the NEP 2020 says a lot. For instance, it holds, education is 'fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development', 'key to economic growth', for 'India's continued ascent, progress, and leadership on the global stage'. 'The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. But on analysis all these savoury words and sweet jargons turn out to be means to camouflage the intention which boils down to befooling people and from behind that creating a blueprint of total annihilation of genuine education for people.

After Indian democracy had crossed more than seven decades, the BJP-led Union government framed the DNEP 2019. The Policy document held glorious Indian culture and tradition to have existed till the arrival of the British. It meant the Policy, the policymakers and the government did not recognize the entire period of the freedom struggle and the Indian Renaissance as part of the heritage. It also meant that they were set to write off from the Indian education system, the modern concept of democratic, secular, scientific education which developed during and accompanied that period. Rather they considered the dark medieval ages fraught with religious bigotry, superstitions, obscurantism, religious and caste intolerance as the only period of the Indian heritage. Clearly it upholds the thoughts and ideas of the RSS-BJP combine, now in power. Despite vehement criticism of this skewed view of Indian heritage, the NEP 2020 maintains the same stand. It does not discard the idea embodied in the earlier DNEP2019, nor does it mention even for once the term 'secular' in any context. The NEP 2020 vouches for imparting scientific temper, mentions of Indian traditional knowledge, names a few scientists of ancient time, but ignores the galaxy of Indian scientists who had put the country in the realm of modern science in the world.

Rather, immediately before announcing the NEP 2020, the CBSE, at the behest of Union HRD Ministry eliminated a bunch of subjects from the Class IX to XII curriculum on the flimsy pretext of reducing students' course load. Though committing to retain 'the core concepts', the MHRD-CBSE nexus actually chopped off such unequivocally important topics like secularism, federalism, citizenship, nationalism, theory of organic evolution including origin of man and a host of others, as to clearly expose their design and intent. The entire episode speaks of certain dangerous trends. One, in flagrant violation of the constitutional- conventional framework of the curriculum that has evolved in the country through the sustained lifelong struggle of the stalwarts of modern education in India, elimination of those topics will convert the entire curriculum into a disjointed array of subjects eliminating whatever remnants of genuine democratic, secular, scientific education still exist. Two, it is a time-tested method that before entering the higher courses of specialization in advanced stages of college-universities, every student should be acquainted with a broad general knowledge, as far comprehensive as possible at the secondary stage in schools. The MHRD-CBSE move totally contradicts that. Three, again, it is accepted in the academic world that at any stage of schools-colleges-universities, the course content should be decided by academicians acquainted with the requirements and ramifications of problems of teaching-learning. Here this practice is bluntly and nakedly violated with the government directly poking its long nose into what should be the syllabus.

Hence right from the word 'go' or even before that, the NEP 2020 and its creator the

government, hatch the design of destroying genuine education, that is, the vestiges of democratic, secular, scientific education still existing in the country.

Total corporatization attempted

Exorbitant rise in cost of education tending to take it beyond the reach of students of poor and middle class families is the evil accompanying privatization-commercialization. It took a sharp shoot-up particularly when immediately following the NPE'86 promulgated by the Congress government, under the Vajpayee-led BJP rule the Birla - Ambani Committee, two top-notch monopolists dashing into education arena, declared: one, education is a market commodity, two, investment in education unique in its kind is sure to fetch return and three, the government must take its hands off the responsibility of educating people. The DNEP 2019, critical of the NPE'86, not only followed suit. It went steps ahead: one, it declared public and private investments on par, meaning it does not matter who invested and what for, but really implying that government was not keen on allocating money for education; two, it allowed private investors total freedom to increase the fees, that is the price for education at their sweet will. The NEP 2020 proceeds further, with cautious cunning moves. It does not negate the DNEP 2019 dictums, scathingly criticised by one and all. Rather the 2020 version says: one, it 'unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central and all State governments' to reach the 6% of GDP mark. The fact is otherwise; since 2014, during the BJP rule education expenses as the ratio of GDP has constantly slid down reaching a meagre 0.44% of GDP in the Union budgetary allocation (2020-2021). Besides the government vouches for increase, but forgets, or does not care, to indicate which way it would increase. But people can sense it. GDP covers the entire gamut of public-private partnership; and the CEO Google has already come into a deal with the PM to invest 75,000 crore of rupees in the Digital India Campaign. So that would be the source of money which will help the government to calculate the GDP on its basis and approach the magic figure of 6%. But its outcome will be that the education system will be shoved into the grip of corporate money.

A special note must be added for the much-hyped Digital India Campaign or the online education as part of it. At the outset it must be stated that use of technology, including online education in part, may become useful at higher stages of education, that too only as a supplement to the prevailing classroom teaching that serves for a comprehensive knowledge based on teacher-student live humanly interaction. But it is never welcome in lower stages, particularly at the primary or early secondary stages. Nor it can replace classroom teaching at any stage of formal studies. But the present hype on online education as envisaged in the DNEP 2019 or now in the NEP 2020 does not follow any time-tested

Contd. on page 7

HOAX OF 'SELF-RELIANT' INDIA

At midnight on 15 August 1947, India attained political independence through transfer of power from the British imperialists to the Indian national bourgeoisie through compromise. Though the class aspiration of the Indian bourgeoisie for ascending to the state power and grabbing the Indian market for exploitation was fulfilled, the dream of the Indians at large who joined the freedom movement and made immense sacrifice to see an oppression-free independent India remained unfulfilled. The rulers changed, but not the rules of governance. Exploitation of man by man remained intact. Lest the jubilant Indians then celebrating freedom from the tentacles of alien rule should have an inkling to what was ordained in the capitalist rule of independent India, the political mouthpieces and statesmen of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie needed some catchy slogans to deceive them and shield the reality. At that time, Indian capitalist state needed to consolidate itself by donning a radical cloak. So, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India chosen by the Congress, then the most trusted political representative of the Indian national bourgeoisie, named his first address to the nation as 'Trust with Destiny'. But as the days rolled by, people of India slowly began to understand what destiny they were asked to have a trust with. All the fads, aberrations, discriminations, deprivations and malaises of British imperialist rule were found to be existing, albeit with a tricolour in place of British flag. An acute food crisis inevitable in an exploitative capitalist society protecting the hoarders, black-marketers, profit-mongers and price manipulators had surfaced. So, discontent began to mount.

Unravelling of 'destiny' that was in store

To douse the fire of accumulated wrath, Indian rulers had to stimulate the ebbing patriotic fervour among the people by fanning national jingoism. Hence, as an immediate ploy, they found that triggering a border clash with socialist China in 1962 would be most befitting. But a defeat at the hands of China was a kind of setback for them. Yet they went on sustaining that jingoistic mood, raising the bogey of 'external forces out to threaten India's freedom'. Within three years, the Pakistani military rulers launched a military attack on the Western border with

the same ulterior motive of befooling Pakistani people with a war phobia. That gave the Indian ruling bourgeoisie a fresh opportunity to revive that jingoistic outcry. So, Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Congress Prime Minister coined a new slogan, 'Jai Jawaan, Jai Kishan' ('hail the peasants, hail the soldiers') as if the ruling Indian capitalism were determined to improve the condition of the distressed peasants and honour the mercenary army under its command as patriots. Also it was a clever ploy to rally public support in favour of increased defence expenditure, a part of 'militarization of economy' which the imperialists-capitalists are resorting to on a large scale to stave off the growing economic crisis and maintain the boom of the capitalist market, at least temporarily, by artificial stimulation of increased military consumption. But, that slogan did not weigh that much on the suffering Indians who were getting disillusioned about the ruling Congress then ridden in factional feuds after demise of both Nehru and Shastri. At that time Indira Gandhi came to fore with her catchy slogan of 'Garibi Hotao' ('remove poverty') and cornered the veteran and septuagenarian leaders within the party. She received full backing of the ruling class who was then a bit afraid that the rising anti-Congress sentiment, because of all-out deterioration in the life and livelihood of the toiling Indians, might crystallize into a mass movement conducive to anti-capitalism. After consolidating her position in the party and saddled in the coveted seat of prime minister, Indira Gandhi in the aggregate interest of ruling capitalism embarked on a radical posture as if the Congress were being rejuvenated with a younger forward-thinking leadership taking the reins. Soon, the Bangladesh liberation struggle broke out and a massive uprising of people in East Pakistan, former eastern segment of Pakistan, saw in its wake the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 as a national sovereign state. The Indian army played a decisive role in defeating the Pakistani army against whom the then citizens of East Pakistan were fighting for independence of their motherland which, they found, had been virtually reduced into a colony by the ruling elite bourgeoisie of Pakistan. Following liberation of Bangladesh, the image of Indira Gandhi was sought to be brightened by the ruling Indian monopolists by conferring on her the title of "rising sun of liberation of Asia". Yet, that

eology also proved abortive as the downturn of people's life condition went unabated because of escalating capitalist oppression. So within three years of establishment of Bangladesh, a historic mass movement surged forth in entire Northern India against the misrule of Indira Gandhi. To contain that movement, Indira Gandhi had to clamp emergency and curtailed many civil and democratic rights including right to free expression. This autocratic measure backfired so much so that Indira Congress was routed in the 1977 election and the Janata Party, a hurriedly formed conglomerate of right-wing forces including Jan Sangh (predecessor of the BJP) at the behest of the ruling Indian ruling class to play the role of a bourgeois alternative to the Congress in the sphere of bourgeois parliamentary, captured power. So all accolades hitherto showered on Indira Gandhi became of no use. But later on, in less than 34 months, Indira Gandhi, was back in power and the Janata Party had disintegrated. It was evident that the ruling Indian monopolists failed in its attempt to prop up its second trusted political outfit through a hotchpotch combination. Hence, they had to resurrect Indira Gandhi.

After Indira's assassination in 1984, Rajiv Gandhi took over as prime minister and he swept the next poll riding on the sympathy wave. It was a relief for the ruling class as it found that possible outbreak of people's ire against misrule of the Congress could be forestalled for the time being. Rajiv Gandhi then coined the slogan of "taking the nation into the 21st century" and fostered the concept of "India emerging independently as a great power". This very slogan once again articulated the class aspiration of the ruling monopolists to assume a formidable position, economically and politically, in the world no matter if toiling millions in the country continued to be dragged into abject destitution because of growing ruthless capitalist exploitation. Thereafter, the BJP rose to the centre stage of bourgeois power politics fanning up Hindutva sentiment. Its slogan was that it was a 'party with a difference'. In 1998, when the first BJP ministry was sworn in, Atal Behari Vajpayee who became prime minister coined a slogan 'Jai Jaiwan, Jai Kishan, Jai Vigyan'. Notably, he expanded the slogan of Lal Bahadur Shastri by adding 'Vigyan' (Science) during his independence day speech in 1998 alluding to India's progress in

manufacturing nuclear weapon and space technology. Once again the class design was evident. While he, as a trusted representative of the ruling class, acknowledged the legacy of the Congress rule that strengthened and consolidated Indian capitalism, he sought to give an impression as if he were promoting science because the general perception at that time was that the BJP was a Hindu communal party promoting religious backwardness and obscurantism.

BJP's bonhomie with growing plight of the people

Now during his uninterrupted tenure as the BJP prime minister for six years, Narendra Modi has indeed having another 'trust'—not with destiny but with slogans—with the sole object of foxing the people and thereby currying more and more favour and support from the ruling monopolists. "Saab ka sath, sabka Vikas" (inclusive growth), "na khaunga, na khane dunga" (neither shall I indulge in corrupt practices nor allow anyone to do so) and so forth. While addressing the 106th Science Congress in 2019, he said: "20 years ago, in a historic address at Pokhran, our great PM Atal ji had recognised the contributions of science and technology for India. "I wish to add 'Jai Anusandhan' (hail inquiry), therefore the slogan now becomes "Jai Jawaan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan." What did he mean by 'anusandhan'? Not scientific inquiry or inquisitiveness to search for truth but mere development of the technological aspects of science that would sophisticate the production process to suit the profit motive of the monopoly houses, bolster the defence capabilities of the capitalist state and give boost to advancement in space technology to startle the world. No one would have objected if these were achieved alongside improvement in the life condition of 95% of Indians. But such brands of 'anusandhan and vigyan' have only been multiplying the misery and penury of the people and fattening the purse of the handful of super-rich. Then, on the eve of 2004 elections, the ruling BJP propagated a pumped 'feel good' plank to power re-election bid. To reinforce it, the then BJP finance minister presented an interim budget in which an impression has been sought to be given as if there was a turnaround of the economy and hence there would no more be an occasion for the common masses to gripe. But

Contd. on page 5

“Scheme Workers Federation of India” affiliated to AIUTUC is formed to strengthening Scheme Workers’ Movement

While privatizing the education and health sectors, the successive central governments have introduced various scheme works involving millions and millions of educated unemployed youth particularly women with a paltry honorarium and thereby skirted their responsibilities in this regard. These scheme workers besides being very ill-paid and appointed on contract have no other facilities. On the contrary, they toil hard day and night to discharge their duties in the best possible ways often risking their life but get nothing in return. Presently more than one crore women workers across India comprising Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, Mid-Day-Meal Workers in schools, Health workers in Municipal areas and huge number of similar types of workers are engaged under these Social Security Schemes while they

themselves have no social security. The governments announce so many charming proposals under these schemes. But most of such announcements remain in paper only. Although they are defined as social workers these dedicated toilers are deprived of their basic rights as workers. Even though they are appointed by governments and performing the government jobs but are not treated as government employees. The abject carelessness to these toiling millions and utter neglect of their just demands only bear testimony to the inhuman anti-working policy of the bourgeois government.

Under the leadership of All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC) the only genuine fighting trade union in India, its affiliated scheme workers’ unions and associations have been organizing prolonged movements throughout the

country for the rights and demands of these scheme workers since long. The main demands inter alia include status of government employee, permanent job and minimum wage of Rs.21000 along with social security like pension, bonus, PF and life insurance.

With a view to bringing all sections of the scheme workers who have been fighting under the banner of various organizations affiliated to AIUTUC in various states under

one umbrella and for building a nationwide mighty united sustained movements to achieve their legitimate demands, the “Scheme Workers Federation of India” affiliated to AIUTUC was established through a Video Conference held on 12-13 August. A 28 member strong All India committee was formed with comrades Ismat Ara Khatoon and T. C. Rama as the secretary and the president, respectively.

National Webinar Announces Solidarity with Prashant Bhushan

Inaugurating the National Webinar organised by Kerala Samsthana Janakeeya Prathirodha Samithi, to extend solidarity to Prashant Bhushan, Medha Patkar, leading social activist said the court action against Prashant Bhushan, a renowned lawyer and human right activist, was an expression of the government’s dissatisfaction with his social stance. “Prashant Bhushan is a man who stood up for the underprivileged in the society including adivasis and dalits. He was constantly at loggerheads with the government on behalf of the victims of social injustice. The Narmada Bachao Andolan was able to see first-hand his sense of justice. The government today vainly hopes to silence him through a baseless court action because he stood up for marginalized people. People should come out against the moves against Prashant Bhushan,” said Ms. Patkar. She also opined that as soon as Covid comes under control, people should take to the streets. Advocate Kaliswaram Raj, BRP Bhaskar, Dr. V. Venugopal and M. Shahjarkhan also spoke on the occasion. Prof. M. Aravindakshan, State President of the Kerala Samsthana Janakeeya Prathirodha Samithi, presided over the webinar.



Municipality workers



Mid-day mill workers



ASHA workers



Demonstration against National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP-2020) in Agartala, Tripura on All India Protest Day

‘Self-Reliant’ India

Surfeit of deceptive slogans to shield the horrific reality

Contld from page 3

soon, like all binges, the so called hype created around ‘feel good’ factor petered out as the rickety skeleton of the economy began tumbling out of the cupboard. So was required a new catchphrase ‘India shining’. It was propagated that under the BJP rule, India had begun to shine brightly and if it were returned to power, further glaze would be added to ‘shining India’.

‘Shining India’ of BJP was indeed a haven for the capitalist-imperialists, whereas almost half of the Indian population did not have access to minimum amount of food, health care, education, water and sanitation. 2500 companies of the corporate India have increased their profit by 39% (Economic Times 01.01.2004). In its bid to secure another term, the BJP tried to project a shining spectacle of the country by indulging in palpable falsehood and arraying deceptive contrived statistics. But the people of the country could understand by experience what lurked beneath this shimmering sequinned apparel of ‘Shining India’.

So, the BJP failed to win 2004 elections and the governmental power was again passed on to the hands of the Congress, albeit with the backing of the CPI (M) and CPI. Manmohan Singh, then elected Prime Minister of the Congress-led CPI (M)-backed UPA government, had said in an NRI (non-resident Indians) meet in New Delhi that during his tenure, ‘Acche din ayenge’ (good days will come). But what was in the offing was clear

from the first budget of the Congress-led UPA government in March 2005, which, under a populist cloak had been glaringly a subtle attempt to sidetrack and divert people’s attention from the burning economic problems tormenting the life of the common people. Instead, under coaxing words and verbiages as well as cunning cover of operation, the mounting problems of unemployment and sky rocketing prices of essential commodities – the main scourges haunting the people of the whole country – remain totally unaddressed. Instead of assuming any direct responsibility for creating more jobs by initiating bold scheme of industrialization under the aegis of the Government and rolling out a realistic plan to check the soaring price line, everything was left to the whims and fancies of the market players – the national and foreign monopolists, capitalists and big business. Later, the Congress-led UPA government, besides failing to mitigate the increasing hardship of the people and instead adopting one after another pro-capitalist policies, was embroiled in quite a number of mega scams. When its credibility began to dent rapidly, the ruling class understood that backing the Congress for another term would be difficult. So, it shifted its support to the BJP. Already, the ruling monopolists were extremely happy with Narendra Modi-led Gujarat government which had showcased a model in which the objective of generating abundant wealth for the industrial houses, corporate bigwigs

and their boot-lickers at the cost of pauperization of the toiling millions was achieved with elan. Hence, there was overflowing adoration for Narendra Modi followed by the strategic move to promote him as the country’s prime minister so that the Gujarat model could be extended to the whole of the country. Corporate giants like the Reliance and Adani group were reported to have already invested several thousand crores of rupees to thrust up Modi. Behind the smokescreen of Hindutva, the motive of RSS-BJP was to buttress the class interest of monopoly capital and in return, enjoy pelf and power. But then such a heinous move needed a cover, a mask. So, Narendra Modi first borrowed the slogan of “achhe din” from Manmohan Singh and started vending spurious dream of “better days” arraying the entire arsenal at the disposal of the RSS-BJP. Then the ruling monopolists pressed the entire media owned by them to propagate that a ‘Modi government was in the offing’ (‘aab ke bar, Modi sarkar’). Common people disgusted with the Congress rule got swayed by this deceptive design and a BJP rule was installed. Now, the people are realizing what ‘achhe din’ was in store for them.

Whose ‘self-reliance’ is being talked about by BJP?

It is in this backdrop that the hideous underbelly of latest slogan of “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (‘self-reliant India’) is to be recognized in right earnest. This new term has been floated by the prime minister while announcing a so called ‘rescue package’ in May last to salvage the sinking capitalist economy, further worsened due to Covid 19-induced lockdown. Then it was again reiterated in his Independence Day speech on 15 August from the Red Fort in Delhi. The prime minister also said that Covid 19 is no impediment before achieving ‘self-reliance’. Then he gave a big list of steps to be self-reliant none of which addressed the pressing problems the millions of Indians are reeling under. It would not require much of intelligence to understand that like all other previous slogans and tag lines, this too is a hoax par excellence! This newly culled phrase has come in the trail of previous ones like “Make in India” and “Vocal for local”. First of all, which India the prime minister is talking about? The India of Ambanis-Adanis-Tatas-Birlas or the

130 crore odd toiling Indians struggling day in and day out to eke out a bare living? If it is the India of the leading monopoly houses who are sitting on heaps of wealth and continuing to make fortunes even when the pandemic is devastating common people, then that is one thing. But if this ‘self-reliance’ pertains to the oppressed multitudes, then what is one to make of this!

What is the ground reality?

Before outbreak of Covid 19, the Indian economy had been found to be sagging in every respect, marked by more and more concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and rapid destitution of the common toiling masses. As far back as in 2017, 73% of the wealth generated went to the richest 1%, while 67 crore Indians saw only a 1% increase in their wealth. Indian billionaires’ fortunes increased by almost 10 times over a decade and their total wealth is higher than the entire Union budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19, which was at Rs 24,422 billion. 36.07% of the total registered companies were shut down. Many small and middle-level businesses had folded up after demonetisation in 2016 and the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) the following year. Consequent to this, there has been an alarming rise in unemployment and job loss. Out of 97 crore of Indians capable of doing work, only 49 % are reported to be somehow earning a bit just to hold onto their life. But the remaining 51 % are having no means of earning and are driven to begging or depending on charity. Today, in Covid 19-induced lockdown, the scenario has become still more pitiful. Official records show that not less than 14 crores of people have lost their jobs. Hapless people who were hitherto managing to earn two square meals by managing to secure a job on casual basis either at construction sites or mills, factories, mines, retail outlets, kirana shops, delivery chains etc., are now out of work. Likewise, street-vendors, hawkers, porters and such other people who are also categorized as self-employed have ceased to have any means of earning. The central government boastfully claims that it has been doling out food to 80 crores of countrymen. In other words, it is an admission of the fact that over 60% of Indian citizens are not in a position to procure even enough staple food. In what way, these people can

Contd on page 6

Z-TV Authorities forced to apologize for maligning Shaheed Kshudiram in a show telecast on its Premium channel

In communications to the authorities of Z-TV, AIDS0 and West Bengal State AIMSS vehemently opposed the most atrocious act of featuring Martyr Kshudiram, a legendary figure of Indian freedom movement, in a photo compilation of ‘wanted criminal during a programme titled ‘Abhay (Season 2) telecast on the premium channel of the Z-group. Kshudiram Bose, IDS0 and AIMSS reminded, was the first young martyr of our country who happily embraced gallows for freeing his motherland from the tentacles of oppressive British imperialist rule and hence revered throughout the country as an idol of the students and youths besides having a standing position in the hearts of the people of India. Any act of maligning such a venerated freedom fighter, smacks of a deep conspiracy. Even if it was not done deliberately, it is unpardonable. The Z-TV authorities, AIDS0 and AIMSS demanded, must remove the shot from the next episodes and apologize to the people of the country for such a heinous act.

Bowing to the demand, the Z-TV authorities officially tendered apology and confirmed having removed the highly objectionable scene from the show. They also regretted, what they called, a completely unintentional act on their part.

‘Self-Reliant’ India

People should not be fooled by such spurious slogans but unmask fangs hidden underneath

Contd from page 5

become self-reliant? Immediately, the government spokespersons would say that a new window for availing easy and cheap bank loans has been opened. Anyone conversant with the reality knows how absurd this proposition is. So the less said, is better. With such a vast section of the populace losing whatever little buying power they had and the government showing no intention to rescue them by providing cash stimulus and increase government spending (the worried experts are saying that pumping at least Rs 10 lakh crore or 5% of GDP into the hands of the people is the only way out), capitalist economy which is driven by market (meaning purchasing power of the consumers) would be sunk in further crisis. Already all circles of the establishment as well as international capitalist-imperialist bodies like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Credit Rating Agencies are predicting that a further nosedive of Indian economy is in the offing. So when Indian economy is poised to face such a disastrous future, whose self-reliance the prime minister is talking about?

Hollowness of the prescription of ‘vocal for local’

Coming to the prime minister’s prescription of “vocal for local”, when the very capacity to purchase is becoming practically nil, how does the stress on buying indigenous products make any sense? Next is : which industrial house or so called entrepreneurs or much-touted start-ups would come forward for productive investment when the market is so squeezed in as to be virtually non-existent? The government is in no mood to volunteer such productive investment which is demanded by every right-thinking quarter, even some of the renowned economists belonging to the capitalist camp. Rather, the government is on a spree to sell out existing public sector units, once built with public money, to the private operators. Would this announcement by itself open the closed industries, set up new industries to boost production in an uninterrupted way, generating enough job opportunities? Unable to answer all these questions, the Union finance minister has said that this economic catastrophe is attributed to Covid 19 which is ‘an

act of god’. We do not know whether to laugh or weep. Covid 19 has only aggravated the already severe capitalist economic crisis, the brunt of which is made to be borne by the 95% countrymen already plagued by wretched living condition. In contrast, the big monopolist sharks are thriving even in the pandemic situation. Is that too divinely ordained, honourable finance minister?

When people are not even in a state of living hand to mouth, the prime minister and his colleagues are talking of a ‘digital India’. Now, in tandem with the slogan of “Self-reliant India”, the prime minister in his Independence Day speech has floated a new term, ‘multi modal connectivity infrastructure’ which cannot but make common people swoon. “There is a need to give a new direction to the overall infrastructure development of the country to move India towards modernity at a fast pace”, he said. But when even potable water is not available in all villages and lack of fund makes it difficult for the peasants to be able to travel or transport agricultural products, how would “an ambitious infrastructure push of more than Rs 110 trillion infrastructure over the next five years” improve their lot? How would digital connection of the national markets through optical fibres shower avalanche of benefits on the continuously pauperized peasants? How would such digitization enable the children of poor peasant or workers’ family to access ‘on-line education’? Then who would be ‘self-reliant’? Obviously the domestic and foreign monopoly houses who would dominate this so called digital market and the business of building roads, flyovers and skyscrapers, pocket money from public exchequer and then systematically raise cell phone tariffs communication and road toll taxes to squeeze people more. Former BJP prime minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee had once named a road project to connect four metros and named it ‘Golden Quadrilateral’. Who have been benefitted by this other than the business houses and super-rich? Has faster movement of goods, including food articles, brought down the price to the affordable limit? Again this was a nothing but a catchy phrase to hoodwink common people and benefit the monopoly houses. Just the other day, the prime minister spoke of ‘self-reliance’ in defence. But his own government has cleared

74% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in defence. How can increased FDI make India ‘self-reliant’? Reliance group chief, now the fifth richest person in the world, has been selling ownership stake in his telecom business to foreign investors like Facebook, General Atlantic Singapore and others. Is it an example of “self-reliance” even of the industrial houses of the country?

Of late, it is revealed that GDP has collapsed 23.9% in April-June quarter, worst among big economies. Core sectors have shrunk for 5th month in a row in July last. Manufacturing, construction, hospitality and communication including transport and mining have contracted by 23.3%, 50 %, 47% and 23.3 % respectively. New investment has dipped by 47% in last three months. Covid 19 has unravelled huge healthcare void in the country. Besides total mismanagement, if not complete negligence, in providing timely medical assistance to the infected people in a health infrastructure dominated by private sector operating on commercial basis., official data have revealed the enormous price incurred in healthcare deficits by non-Covid 19 patients between April and June. Immunisation dropped 27%, institutional deliveries 28%, major surgeries fell 60%, outpatient treatment for heart ailments and cancer by over 70%, and 51% fewer acute cardiac emergencies were logged. Treatment for ailments like tuberculosis, diabetes and asthma, screening of newborns for birth defects etc were also badly affected. Have all these happened because India lacked ‘self-reliance’? As per National Crime Bureau of 2019, 10, 281 peasants and 32, 563 agricultural workers committed suicide last year i.e. before strike of Covid 19. Is it that these severely distressed rural poor ended their lives prematurely because India had not attained ‘self-reliance’?

Catchphrases are coined by servitors of oppressive bourgeoisie to fox people

In fact, a competition has been going on for long among the BJP, and other parliamentarian parties, irrespective of hues, as to who could prove itself to be a better

draftsman of newer deceptive slogans and catchphrases to confuse the suffering people and thereby earn more confidence of the ruling bourgeoisie for being chosen as its most trusted political manager. The BJP is doing the same thing with extreme cunningness. With the help of the monopoly-controlled media, the BJP leaders are trying to show how in their rule, the ‘image of India’ is brightened throughout the world and how ‘development’ is sweeping across the world. The ruling party leaders, analysts-columnists-commentators subservient to the power that be are working overtime to highlight certain economic indicators, suitably modified as per convenience, showcase a number of bogus and irrelevant themes or schemes as spectacular achievements of their government. Alongside, they are coining one after catchphrases to divert attention of the misery-stricken countrymen from the real issues. With the help of a strong propaganda machinery which is adept in turning night into day, showing black as white and embellishing trash and phony staff as a matter of substance, the BJP is trying to make people forget the pangs of their misery and penury and instead take ‘pride’ in the cavalcade of catchphrases and watchwords defined, designed and fostered to serve the vested interest. So, watering down the once championed doctrine of globalization, the BJP is now aggressively advocating *Swadeshiana* (Indianization) which once again is nothing but an Indian variant of the latest trickery adopted by imperialism-capitalism world over to foment jingoism and false sense of nationalism. So like all previous slogans, catchphrases and taglines of the bourgeois governments irrespective of hues, the so called exhortation of ‘self-reliance’ is a trick of highest order purported to shield the crisis of Indian capitalism, an inalienable part of decadent moribund global imperialism-capitalism, put a cover on the blatant anti-people pro-capitalist policies of the BJP government, hide its abject failure in handling the Covid 19 pandemic and bankruptcy of the ruling BJP in every sphere. Let not the people be fooled by such spurious slogans but unmask the fangs hidden underneath.

National Education Policy 2020

Writing off secular scientific democratic education NEP 2020 ridicules unforgettable luminaries of India's glorious past, copies schemes from USA

Contd. from page 2

scientific method- concept or ethics. Even it is not based on ordinary technology. It hinges upon Disruptive Technology, a term and concept generated in the Harvard University of USA in 1997 to provide methods to help the gasping world capitalism come out of its acute market crisis and economic recession. With that aim, Disruptive Technology is defined as an innovation that significantly alters the way in which consumers, industries and businesses operate. It sweeps away the old systems or habits, and replaces them with recognizably superior attributes. Artificial Intelligence is a disruptive technological means. This is the root of the new normal the government is harping so loud for, an environment disrupted from the older one and to that extent a new normal, which stands for 'consumers, industrialists and businesses' to operate smoothly, with no concern for the masses. The initial cost of laptop/desktop/smartphone involved in online education, the recurring cost of maintaining those, total uncertainty with electricity and internet connectivity, lack of preparedness in using these specialized devices very justifiably present in common students, their guardians or even teachers or authorities, all these may only create insurmountable difficulties in accepting this online mode by students, particularly those hailing from poor and lower middle class sections of the society, more so in rural settings. It is thus a heinous design to throw such students out of orbit of education. In fact, it has occurred that way as at least five students from different states, as also a parent from elsewhere ended their life out of frustration from not being able to fulfil the conditions required. The design of curtailment of education will only be hastened.

The government, in the document NEP 2020 has carefully coined terms or measures like encouragement of 'public-spirited private schools' or of 'private philanthropic efforts for quality education', or assurance that both public and private sectors will be made to participate 'with no scope for commercialisation or profiteering'. In the same breath, it empowers private HEIs to set fees for their programmes independently. But it did not mention that in the present crisis-ridden moribund stage of world capitalism, the monopolists and their corporate houses of one and all capitalist countries (including former socialist ones now turned worst capitalists) are not only after profit, they are scampering for maximum profit with no concern for public-good or public-spirit. So given the scope to set fees independently, they will simply run havoc with it. Can we forget that it is India where an educational institute (Jio University) owned by a leading monopoly house of the country was given the status of the highest honour by the last BJP-led Union government to claim huge public fund as well as international recognition even before a drop of ink was put on the paper for its formation? Is it then difficult to assume what for and how will Google or such other corporate or monopoly houses work with their huge investments and

how will the government act as their cohort? The net effect would be total corporatization of education while chanting words of public 'investment' and concomitant rise in the cost of education prohibitive for students from even middle class rung. Over and above these, the government will allow top 100 foreign institutions to set-up campuses in India. Remember the present government is a signatory to the GATS as well as to agreement with the World Bank for projects like the STARS. All these and similar other financing organizations, are aggressive advocates of developing a global market for education. The foreign universities will join that bandwagon. They would not come for philanthropy. Rather those will only add fuel to the fire of exorbitantly rising expenses, simultaneously acting as spread centres of rotten imperialist culture. And thus taking education system in their grip, they would not allow common people to draw close to it because of the exorbitant cost. It will only mean curtailment of education for the masses. Along with total wipe-off of secular, democratic, scientific education, this, an attempt to total corporatization, is what the NEP 2020 is rushing at!

Reducing drop-out or curtailment of education: multi-disciplinary or destruction of comprehensive education

Next comes the repeated calls in NEP 2020 for quality, holistic, multidisciplinary education, with great concern for high-rising drop-out rates. The calls are crafty enough to hoodwink some to fall on their knees and need scrutiny.

But before that we may digress to look through some other issues. But for the trumpeting of Indian tradition and traditional knowledge which is really nothing other than saffronization of education advocated by the ruling RSS-BJP combine and packaged under the cover of such trumpeting, both the DNEP 2019 and the NEP 2020 prescribe measures-schemes-ideas which are found in ultimate analysis to be nothing but shameless copies of systems of other countries, particularly the US model. It should also be pointed out that the US model of education system is creating such a havoc in that country, that it is facing a tremendous downfall in educational-cultural-ethical standards, more so among the younger generation. The situation in American education has come to such a pass, that the USA is being compelled to allow talents from other countries to get into the USA, stay there and help it with their brilliance, sound background and perseverance. And now Indian rulers are hankering after such US models without paying any attention to the stark realities prevailing in this country.

What are the stark realities that education in India face today? In briefest term those are as follows. Government-run or government-aided educational institutions are in jitters; either they miserably lack in infrastructures including required, even sanctioned, teachers, funds etc., or are closed down in thousands on this or that pretext. Private institutions reap the harvest.

Turning a deaf ear to government's seemingly pious wishes, they take to rampant commercialization, mint money on any and every ground from the students and their guardians, at the same time press hard upon teachers and employees with tough service conditions. No Detention Policy continues to wreak havoc to school education with students merrily passing through the classes till class /grade 8 and then tumbling down to drop out and teachers losing all initiative and impetus for teaching unwilling students. Poverty coupled intimately with unemployment, debars students from coping up with ever-increasing cost of education and so they drop out in larger and larger numbers. All these above-mentioned traits lead to fast slide-down in quality and comprehension in education, with equally strong spurt in drop-out. Education tends to recede beyond the means and even dreams of overwhelming majority of the masses. The scenario is further overcast with darker omens with incessant efforts at manipulating curriculum, course content, textbooks, even day-to-day activities to orient these in tune with the particular brand of agenda of saffronization and pseudo-nationalism being propagated by the ruling combine. Obviously, these do not go well with the masses, leave aside education-loving section. To prevent them from raising protests, there are continuous attacks on dissenting voice and resentful students-teachers-employees. Autonomy of education and educational institutions are relegated to backstage.

Over and above these persisting problems, the educational scenario presently turned towards worse. With educational institutions at all levels closed for months, academic activities halted, students-teachers getting restive in the prevailing circumstances, the Union government has blown the bugle of digital technology-based online education as the only solution, as the 'new normal', as said above. A section of people sighed relief. But the majority asked: Would the technology-based education be best suited for our country plagued with poverty and unemployment which were sure to mount to inconceivable limit in the post-pandemic days? Can such an education substitute the time-tested formal class-room teaching, if it is sincerely desired that people of the country earn a decent effective education, man-making character-building and purposeful for living? Obviously it was expected that a national policy being dramatically unveiled before the country during the pandemic, should lead people to answers of these questions. But it went in vain!

Start from the early childhood. The Committee which drafted the DNEP2019 and the government which now approves NEP 2020, have reconfigured school education from the existing 10+2 system (for students from 6 to 16 and 16 to 18 years respectively) consisting of Primary (Class/ Grade 1 to 4/5), Secondary (Class 5/6 to 10) and Higher Secondary (Class /Grade 11-12). The new form proposes a 5(3+2)+3+3+4 system

Contd. on page 8

National Education Policy 2020

Online education brings debacle to common students, favours few privileged, boosts up sagging technology-industry

Contd. from page 7

(from infants of 3 years to teenagers of 18 years) termed respectively Foundational (3 years Pre-primary + 2 years Primary), Preparatory (Class/ Grade 3 to 5), Middle (Class/Grade 6 to 8) and Secondary (Class/ Grade 9 to 12). So, in effect, the duration of school studies is further increased. More years mean more time, more expenses, which would become a deterrent for poor and lower middle class students, forcing them to drop out. Of this span of 15 years, the first 5 years is said to follow ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education), a system dished out in the name of having earned acclaim internationally, which means in number of imperialist countries as a sure-shot for developing foundation of learning in growing child. It is a fun-, play-, activity- and discovery-based method requiring well-planned and well-designed gadgets and technically equipped, trained teachers. It is thus costly too for the masses. The first 3 years belong to pre-school for which, the government assigns the job to the Anganwadi workers, believe it or not! Itself faulty, Anganwadi workers were planned to look after nutrition and health issues of students and their workers are now fighting for life. They are already over-burdened, relatively less qualified, ill-paid, looked down at, insecure in job condition. And the government now dumps their blue-eyed, 'borrowed' project of ECCE on them. It also expresses that trained teachers 'would be' recruited. But it seems to be in a hurry! And then how will it ensure foundational literacy and numeracy to develop now by the Anganwadi workers. Who will be the trained teachers? The existing ones or new recruits? If it is the latter, then what will be the fate of the existing teachers? Will they have to find the job of porters in railway stations? The document pleads for voluntary service from local social workers. In the present milieu of aggressive partisanship, such social workers are in all likelihood to be derived from the ruling party, whichever it be, whatever be their testimonials, credentials or training. The government simply sets itself free from any responsibility of appointing teachers or monitoring the learning outcome. To sum up, neither will the foundation be firm-based nor the Anganwadi workers get their dues or the teachers be guaranteed of secure job, nor drop-out will lessen in the costly ECCE scheme. Have people given the government the right to throw the future of these children of the most tender age to a totally anarchic disorder and sheer uncertainty by shunting them into such a system which is copied from foreign countries, misfit for the country, ill-conceived and ill-planned or planned with hidden ill-motives? One should not miss that side by side with these ECCE centres, there will run the present 'stand-alone pre-school' which are nothing but private-owned nurseries, kindergartens etc. meant for moneyed people. Plus there will be *Balvatikas* or *Ashrams* which are institution built and run by the RSS. Taken together, these facts tell the whole story.

The brief summary of existing situation provided above speaks of the wretched condition of education at all stages of school. Particularly

the Primary education has gone to shambles, thanks to the NPE'86 and later DPEP and SSA, which only stepped up privatization-commercialization causing curtailment of education for the masses. The NEP 2020 does not contain any indication of how to come out of such a devastated condition of primary education. Rather the proposals will only add fillip to that trend of rising cost at the hand of private players, the government taking less responsibilities, government-run or government-sponsored schools will be more and more deprived and finally shut down, and ultimately education will be curtailed increasingly more for general students.

Proposal of school complexes is another means for the government to shun its responsibility to school education, at the same time incorporation of voluntary social workers in teaching and administration, thus effectively increasing the pernicious influence of now prevailing aggressive political workers like the RSS to establish full control on the system.

Next, with a tottering foundation the children will enter Grades (/ Classes) 1 and 2 of the first 5 years to end at 8 years of age. The government, so concerned at the mental development of children, decides to continue the next Preparatory stage (Grades 3-5; years 8 to 11) similarly play-etc. based with light textbooks and 'some more formal but interactive classroom learning'. So till the end of 11 years children would not have to see any subject teaching. Think of the multidisciplinary quality that can develop in such a system! Subject teaching will be introduced only at Grade 6, the beginning of the next Middle stage to run for three years (Grades 6 to 8; years 11 to 14). A completely ridiculous proposition, the only alternative to which is to prescribe textbooks, judiciously selected for each Class/Grade right from the beginning, that is Class/ Grade 1. In any case, the school system ends with a Secondary stage including Grades 9 to 12 for students of years 14 to 18 years. In this, the present secondary and higher secondary stages will be clubbed together. It will be Semester based though Semester system has been widely criticized. Naturally, semesters will have their frequent examinations. When will the students study or the teachers teach with a bunch of examinations during the 4 years of semesters? How will the schools manage the schedules of classes and examinations? As students tend to forget the subjects covered in previous semesters they will end with a scrappy, fragmented, incomprehensive knowledge. Where will the quality be found from that? Again, as suggested in the NEP 2020, to keep up with the doctrine of multidisciplinary holistic education, Art, Humanities, Science etc., will not have any hard separation among themselves; a physics student may have a combination with fashion design if he or she pleases at that. Will such a combination do any good for learning of physics or fashion design? Will the learning be comprehensive, even as far as expected at that stage? Is a boy or girl of 14-15 years expected to have enough maturity to see through his or her coming future, what is good or bad to take up? Now look back! Education begins with fun-making, light textbooks in Grade3, subject

teaching begins in Grade 6, Semester system introduced in Grade 9; no hard separation of streams in the 'integrated' Secondary stage.

It would simply mean that whatever little scope is there for students to acquire a general comprehensive commensurate with the respective stages, that will be lost. If somebody had been honest in intent and sincere in trying for a better system, he /she would have tried to remove the pitfalls in the system and improve it, so that students are equipped with a more comprehensive knowledge than they get now, to move out to colleges for specialization. Instead the makers of the NEP 2020 (DNEP 2019 as well) and the government are running after copying systems from other countries, more so the USA. What benefit will a US-derived system bring to India with a widely different socio-cultural set-up?

Remember the government has not yet scrapped off the infamous No Detention Policy which has already robbed students of any urge for serious studies and teachers of their initiative to teach students without urge to learn! So there will be no examinations at the end of Classes or Grades 1,2,4,6 and 7. Yet the government must have felt the heat of countrywide pressure from teachers-guardians and even students to reintroduce examinations right from Class/Grade 1 till the Board examinations at the end of Grades 10 and 12. So keeping the No Detention Policy intact, the NEP 2020 introduces examinations at the end of Grades/Classes 3,5 and 8. What result can one expect from this measure? Hapless children happy with no pass-fail system will face a hurdle at each of the three stages at the end of Grades 3,5 and 8. Will they in general be able to get through? No. Then what? They will drop-out. Those still remaining, will also face another hurdle. The 4-year Secondary stage. Once more during school studies, it means those who would have sought for job with a Secondary Examination certificate after Class/Grade 10 will have to wait for two more years with more expenses. In the present socio-economic situation many of them would tend to drop out, adding to the figure already increased. The government which pledges for curtailing drop-out rates, will instead curtail education for increasing larger sections of students. Those who will manage to get through will end with an incomprehensive, fragmented knowledge. The government offer a palliative. The NEP 2020 makes vocational education part and parcel of curriculum, integrated with academic mainstream, arguing those unable to continue with the latter will go for vocational training. This is another hoax. The economy is struck by acute recession and horrid market crisis; to cover up the rickety skeleton, the government has stopped publishing data on unemployment which is already at record mark. So where is the job or the vocation for the students? Are not people finding lots of vocationally trained students running helter-skelter for a job or for the market for their products of self-employment schemes? The fact is, however dismal the picture may be, it is this

Contd. on page 9

National Education Policy 2020

Not 3, but only 2-language formula with mother tongue and English is the solution

Contd. from page 8

that the government wants to arrive at. With independence, the newly independent Indian capitalism inherited a system already plagued with market crisis, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and such other malice generated from exploitation by both the foreign rulers and Indian monopoly developed strongly by that time. In the socio-economic condition there were also hangovers of feudalism reigning among the masses. So shortly after independence the Indian rulers defined their educational reforms on the premise that "We want to restrict higher education in order to minimize educated unemployed". Thus, curtailment of education for the masses and provision of the better quality for a privileged few, became the general trend. With the economic system nose-diving into further crisis, from which it could never overcome, the premise changed, as said earlier. The government is no longer interested in educating its people. Those who have resources will go for the high quality digital technology-based new normal. For the entire remaining masses, the government cares the fig. It asks them to fend for themselves to become some mechanic or carpenter or petty shopkeepers. It brings us back to the worries and agonies that were expressed in the words of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the founder General Secretary of our Party where, decades back towards the middle of the last century he had repeatedly let out his apprehension that the education system is trending towards this end.

The picture does not change with the higher education issues. In the NEP 2020, proposals have been made for 4-year Honours graduate course in colleges or for 4 Year B Ed course for teachers' training. In the first case, extension of the course will have nothing to do with genuine education, but to mean merely more time and more expenses for students, disadvantages that will lead to drop-outs, curtailing education for them. The second case will similarly extend duration, thus hampering teacher recruitment, an urgent need in the present situation. Three kinds of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) namely research-intensive universities (RUs), teaching universities (TUs) and autonomous degree-granting colleges (ACs), will only disaggregate HEIs into a discriminatory system of privileged to left-to-fending-for-themselves types. Separation of teaching and research and making AC-s only degree-awarding colleges, will reduce teaching-learning into degree-conferring process, thus robbing it of any essence. Since these ACs will outnumber the RUs and TUs, the overwhelming majority of students coming from poorer families will thus be debarred from genuine education. The government has lamented a lot on rote-learning and degree-mongering. But itself reduces colleges, made viable with a huge student strength, into money-making degree-conferring education 'factories'. Students coming out of these will not find any decent jobs for them and will have to opt for acting as daily wage-earners that too floating hither and thither as migrant labours. The multiple entry-exit system in colleges to provide

certificate, diploma, degree, honours will also discriminate students with fractured knowledge and different utility value in their career; who among the employers will prefer a certificate holder above a degree-holder? As a result it will rather curtail higher education for many students. These measures will also create anarchy and confusion in administration on infrastructure and day-to-day running, in face of which the idea of students exiting and entering as per their choice is sure to turn into a myth only. The ill-conceived CBCS is another example of shoving students into a system which can cater only a fragmented incomprehensive knowledge, in the same way as in case of proposed secondary courses with no separation between science, humanities etc. Projects or schemes framed with high-sounding words will fall flat; the private investors will go their own way; only the poorer sections of the students, incidentally overwhelming majority will fall sad victims of the system. In nutshell, higher education will be reduced to useless farce for majority of students. It stands totally against the acclaimed truth that higher education should be of uniform in standard and access throughout the country, universal and genuine in character.

So the NEP 2020, through all its measures, will target the poorer section of students to gradually throw them out of the orbit of education system, keeping the latter reserved for students from rich families. In other words it is characterized by the measures for curtailment of education and destruction of comprehensive knowledge for the overwhelming majority of students. All the lamentation for quality, access, equity come down to crocodile's tears.

Language and the NEP 2020

On questions of sensitive yet very important issue of language teaching-learning, jugglery with terms like home/local language/mother tongue within the framework of 3 language formula or with terms like multilingualism, development of regional languages, learning of classical languages with Sanskrit introduced all through the school span, are fraught with several dangers. First, three compulsory languages unnecessarily increase the pressure on students. This in turn will result in reality in devaluation of the English language closing the window to the modern knowledge, modern world and access to higher education. Besides, constitutionally, English is also one of the Indian languages used by a permanent community of people. At the same time, under the prevailing circumstances, this will lead to surreptitious push towards imposing Hindi in a roundabout way, which is just one of the Indian languages of the 8th Schedule, though spoken by a majority of people. On Sanskrit, one should refer to invaluable words of Rammohan Roy pronounced about two centuries back: "The Sanskrit system of education would be best calculated to keep the country in darkness... The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with addition of vain and empty subtleties since produced..." Is the twenty-first century national education policy meant to drag the country to

medieval spiritualism which the makers of modern India fought tooth and nail against? To conclude the issue, for a country like India, only the 2-language formula with mother tongue as medium of instruction and English as the link language can be the solution.

Academic Autonomy and the NEP 2020

The concept of autonomy of educational institutions inseparably accompanied the concept of democracy since the latter evolved in the human society. It is also an integral and essential component of any modern education system without which the process of imparting education cannot be complete. It also implies freeing course, curriculum, method of teaching, examination, evaluation, degree from external control namely the clutches of religious and royal establishments and funding education by people's, that is elected, government to ensure that freedom. It was held that education is best imparted when it is left with academicians, teachers, professors and educationists to decide on its content, span, teaching-learning methods and all the rest. That was why the courageous authority of university could roar out to the British imperialist government "You give me slavery with one hand and money with the other. I despise the offer... Freedom first, freedom second, freedom always" (Ashutosh Mukherjee, the then VC, Calcutta University in a Senate Meeting).

In contrast to this the present Union government's adverse attitude towards autonomy of educational institutions or the vindictive handling of any protest by students-teachers-employees were amply demonstrated during the recent past in cases of IIM Mumbai, JNU, Delhi, JU Kolkata or say, instance of Rohith Vemula and others. In the NEP 2020 too, the autonomy is referred only in connection with the debated scheme of graded autonomy already introduced by the present government and which is described by teachers and students as a step towards "privatisation and commercialisation of public-funded institutions and government's slow withdrawal from funding higher education". This attitude culminates in the NEP 2020 with the phrase 'light but tight' regulatory control, the example of which is found in the attempt to bring Higher Education under one umbrella organization, HECI abolishing UGC, AICTE or such other institutions, without any serious efforts to do away with their limitations or lapses. This is a clear indication of attempts towards bringing a highly centralized education system so that it remains tight under the grip of a central power that be. An obvious expression of this centralization of power, it is reflected more fully in the calls for one nation, one entrance examination, one curriculum etc., for a multi-nationality, multi-lingual, multi-culture country, thus steamrolling diversities into a mechanized whole under one power. And finally, the idea of RSA headed by the Prime Minister as envisaged in the DNEP 2019 facing severe criticism from all quarters, in place of it CAGE has been strengthened and empowered with much greater

Contd. on page 10

National Education Policy 2020

Under vehement criticism NEP 2020 drops RSA, takes roundabout route to strong CABE for strong centralization of power over education

Contd. from page 9

mandate. All these clearly point to the sinister design of exercising total bureaucratic governmental control over education, that the NEP 2020 stands for, repeating the attacks more virulently that have been going on since independence.

Treachurous deceptive dangerous NEP 2020 must be thwarted

There are thousand and one dangerous trends strewn throughout the NEP 2020. To sum up this initial look at the Policy, it can be said that the NEP 2020 reflects the ruling power-that-be hurriedly trying to get their agenda through. The existing education system is fraught with defects-lapses-corruptions- and thousand and one other malice. Naturally these give birth to resentment in people. Without any concrete programme to remove the problems, the NEP 2020 uses people's resentment and make treacherous move to carry through their design. It tries to give shape to their ill-conceived design for implementing a skewed view of education which is fraught with obscurantism,

bigotry, unscientific bent of mind which naturally reduces itself to blind submission from want of rationality and courage for searching the truth. It is the agenda of Hindutwvadi approach for total destruction of the kernel of education by effecting annihilation of secular, scientific, democratic education. It is the agenda of the government totally surrendering its responsibility towards educating its people with a view to giving effect to all-out corporatization of education meant for the privileged few. It is the agenda of curtailing education and robbing education of its comprehensive character which could otherwise help youth develop into rational, courageous, truth-seeking personalities equipped to find out the cause and way out from the present wretched condition to which the prevailing system has pushed common people into. And to carry through their agenda smoothly the power-that-be want a total bureaucratic governmental control on education. They use two covers. One, the verbosity in every line of the NEP 2020 which conceals the real venomous intent of the policymakers and allure uncritical minds to take it on the face-value. The

second is the cover of the present unfortunate situation, which the rulers thought would help them to keep people cowed down. But democratic-minded, education loving people of this country with glorious tradition of scholasticism and knowledge cannot accept these lying low. They need to realize that the NEP 2020 does not touch upon the very root of the existing problems in the education system of the country or remove people's resentment that has cropped up against the problems. Rather the government-policymakers-the ruling class took to the more treacherous, still more dangerous, deceptive blueprint for annihilation of modern secular scientific democratic education for the country only with a view to filling the coffer of corporate houses of the ruling monopolist class. Confronting this danger, people must rise in one voice against this heinous design of the ruling monopolists and their subservient governments and must build up greater, more and more powerful struggle on the edifice of loftier ethics-morality and culture with a common goal for making a road for genuine education universally for people.

All India Jan Adhikar Suraksha Committee (AIJASC) observes "International Indigenous Peoples' Day" befittingly

All India Jan Adhikar Suraksha Committee (AIJASC) observed "The International Indigenous Peoples' Day" on 9 August 2020 befittingly throughout the country and then continued a weeklong programme to uphold the legitimate rights of the distressed and deprived *adivasi* people and take oath to build up a powerful movement in avid pursuit of the legitimate cause. It was decided that after undertaking massive campaign including an online signature campaign involving eminent right-thinking citizens, a memorandum would be submitted to the President of India.

"The International Indigenous Peoples' Day" announced in the year 1994 by UNO was conceived to recognize the glorious anti-feudal, anti-colonial struggles of the indigenous and oppressed populace of our country for last three centuries like Chuar Rebellion (1769-99), the Santal revolt (1855-56), the Munda revolt (1895-1900) and many more in our country as well as anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

But in almost all governments of the imperialist-capitalist countries though providing lip service to the cause of the said section of oppressed people, are working just to the contrary. For example, in our country, the central and state governments are adopting atrocious policies to evict lakhs and lakhs of poor tribal and forest-dwelling from their

hearth and home. The verdict of the Supreme Court on FRA-2006 (Forest Right Act-2006) dated 13 February 2019 has open the floodgate of such most inhuman eviction of a huge number of such impoverished people pushing them to the brink of total ruination. These hapless Indian citizens faced immense tyranny, torture, humiliation and persecution during the British rule. Their escalating wretchedness remained unabated in independent India. Whatsoever little constitutional protection these hapless people had in the form of Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act, Santal Parganas Tenancy Act and other similar Acts under the jurisdiction of different states, is now being taken away by gradual amendments to these acts just for serving the profit motive and greed of the domestic and foreign monopolists by destroying forest lands. Such spree of deforestation would also create severe ecological disbalance and environmental problems posing threat to all the countrymen.

AIJASC appealed to all saner section of the citizens of the country to join and strengthen the movement to protect and ensure lives and livelihoods of *adivasi* and other poorer section of the people. AIJASC also demanded proper healthcare and other hygienic protections to these people during the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic.



Tribute to the Martyrs of democratic movement in independent India



Comrade Manab Bera, Central Committee member, SUCI(C), offering revolutionary tribute to the martyrs of historic food movement in West Bengal in 1959, at the Martyrs' Column at Subodh Mullick Square, Kolkata, near central office of the Party. When thousands of people in demand for food had marched to the then Esplanade East, Kolkata, on 31 August 1959 under the leadership of the 'Price Increase and Famine Resistance Committee' formed at the initiative of the left parties including the SUCI(C), the police of the Congress-run state government opened fire and resorted to indiscriminate baton charge taking a toll of 39 precious lives. Since then, this day is observed as Martyrs' day.



Comrade Subrata Gouri, Kolkata District Secretary, paying tribute to Comrade Madhai Halder, a young vibrant activist, who fell to the bullets of the CPI (M) government on 31 August 1990 when the SUCI(C) and its twelve associate parties organized a massive demonstration at Rani Rashmoni Road, Kolkata, in protest against anti-people price rise, hike in transport fare, taxation policy etc. A memorial statue has been erected at the place where Comrade Madhai Halder embraced martyrdom for upholding people's cause. Also present were Comrade Manab Bera and other state and district level leaders and workers.



SUCI(C) along with other left parties observed anti-imperialist day in Kolkata on 1 September by demonstrating in front of US Consulate office

AIUTUC strongly denounced draconian order of the central government to prematurely retire any government employee arbitrarily and unilaterally

Comrade Shankar Dasgupta, General Secretary, AIUTUC, in a statement issued on 1 September 2020, strongly denounced the Office Memorandum of the Government of India to undertake periodic review of performance of the government employees and vesting the appropriate government with the absolute power to arbitrarily retire a government employee from service prematurely on the plea of public interest and strengthening the hands of the administration for implementing this draconian measure by invoking provisions of 'Fundamental Rule' (FR) and Rule 48 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. Obviously, this order will be used politically to muzzle the voice of protest of the government employees against any injustice perpetrated on them. No doubt this is a blatant onslaught on the hard earned democratic rights of the government employees and this fascist move shall be resisted with all might.

While demanding immediate and total withdrawal of this anti-employee order, AIUTUC called upon the working people at large and the government employees in particular to develop powerful united movement to compel the government to nullify this anti employee Office Memorandum.

AIMSS West Bengal demands "Safe Homes" for Covid-19 patients



AIMSS West Bengal organised statewide deputations to concerned authorities demanding number of adequately equipped hygienic 'Safe Homes' for asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic Covid-19 patients who can neither be accommodated in the hospitals nor in their homes. On 15 August, a letter was given to the state chief minister and upto 18 August, deputations were held in 50 places of different districts maintaining safety protocol

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH