National Education Policy 2020

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Government of India

National Education Policy 2020

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Introduction

0.1. Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration and cultural preservation; and for India's continued ascent, progress, and leadership on the global stage. India will have the highest youth population in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will shape the future of our country.

0.2. The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines, while the need for skilled labour, particularly involving mathematics, computer science and data science, in conjunction with multi-disciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, will be in rapidly increasing demand. With climate change and rapid depletion of natural resources, there will be a sizable shift in how we meet the world's energy, water, and sanitation needs, again resulting in the need for new skilled labour, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics, and climate science. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art, as India moves towards becoming a developed country and among the three largest economies in the world.

0.3. Indeed, with the quickly changing employment and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly important that children not only learn but learn how to learn. Education must thus, move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multi-disciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. While learning by rote can be beneficial in specific contexts, pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects of learners' brains and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment.

0.4. The aim must be for India to have an education system that ensures equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social and economic background. To achieve this, actions must be taken now and with urgency.

0.5. The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is desirable must be bridged through undertaking major reforms to bring the highest quality and integrity into the system, from early childhood education through higher education.

0.6. This National Education Policy is the first education policy of the 21st century, and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of this country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, while remaining consistent with India's traditions and value systems. The National Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual, in all its richness and complexity. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive skills - both 'foundational skills' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive skills such as critical thinking and

problem solving – but also social and emotional skills - also referred to as 'soft skills' - including cultural awareness and empathy, perseverance and grit, teamwork, leadership, communication, among others.

0.7. The rich heritage of ancient Indian Knowledge has been a guiding light for this Policy. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge, as preparation for life in this world or life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India, such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and Vallabhi set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries. The Indian education system produced scholars like Charaka and Susruta, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Chanakya, Madhava, Patanjali, Panini and Thiruvalluvar, among numerous others. They made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields, such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering and architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy has had a strong influence on the world. These rich legacies to world heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also researched, enhanced and put to new uses through our education system. For instance, they can be integrated into a holistic education to help develop the creativity and originality of students and to encourage them to innovate.

0.8. The teacher and the teacher's condition must and will be at the centre of these changes. The new education policy must help reinstate teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers, and help them to do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring teachers their livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy, while also installing in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability.

0.9. The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalised, disadvantaged, and under-represented groups. Education is a great leveller and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are presented with (and are made aware of) various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system.

0.10. These elements must, of course, be incorporated in an Indian manner and style, taking into account the local and global needs of the country, and with a respect for and deference to its rich diversity and culture. An instilling of knowledge of all of India and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, its inimitable artistic, language, and knowledge traditions, and its strong ethics in India's young people is considered critical for purposes of national pride, self-confidence, self-knowledge, cooperation, and integration – and thus, consequently, its continued progress and ascent.

Previous policies

0.11. The implementation of previous policies on education has focused mainly on issues of access and equity, with a lesser emphasis on quality of education. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, Modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down the legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

Principles of this Policy

0.12. The foundational pillars of this Policy are access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability. It believes that the purpose of education 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. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution.

0.13. The principles on which this Policy is based are: **flexibility**, for learners to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their paths in life according to their own talents interests; **no hard separations** between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic, etc., to ensure the integrity and unity of knowledge and eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between, different areas of learning; **multi-disciplinary** and a holistic education (across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports) for a multidisciplinary world; emphasis on **conceptual understanding** (rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams), on **creativity and critical thinking** (to encourage logical decision-making and innovation), on **ethics and human & Constitutional values** (e.g., empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, etiquette, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice), and on **life skills** (e.g., cooperation, teamwork, communication, resilience); **regular formative assessment for learning** rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture'; a **respect for diversity** and **respect for the local context** in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject; full **equity and inclusion** as the cornerstone of all educational decisions, to ensure all students are able to thrive in the education system; **resource efficiency** without any compromise on equity and quality; **teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process** – their rigorous recruitment and preparation, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions must be assured; a **'light but tight' oversight and regulatory system** to ensure **integrity** and **transparency** of the educational system (through audit and public disclosure) while simultaneously encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through **autonomy, good governance** and **empowerment**; **outstanding research** as a prerequisite for outstanding education and development; **continuous policy-making** based on regular assessment of realities on the ground by educational experts; a rootedness and pride in India and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions, and its forward-looking aspirations, to be incorporated where relevant in an accurate manner, and form an anchor and source of inspiration for all education; finally, **education is a public service** and not a commercial activity or a source of profit; access to quality education must be considered a fundamental right of every citizen; **substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system -** as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private participation.

The vision of this Policy

0.14. This National Education Policy aims at building a global best education system rooted in Indian ethos, and aligned with the principles enunciated above, thereby transforming India into a global knowledge superpower.

I. SCHOOL EDUCATION

1.   Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning

1.1. Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in a child's early years for healthy brain development and growth. It is, therefore of the utmost importance that every child has access to quality early childhood care and education (ECCE). Presently, quality ECCE is not available to most young children, particularly children from economically disadvantaged families. Investment in ECCE has the potential to give all young children such access, enabling all children to participate and flourish in the educational system throughout their lives. ECCE would be the greatest and most powerful equaliser. Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care and education must be thus be achieved by 2030, to ensure that all children entering Grade 1 are school ready.

1.2.   ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and discovery-based learning about, e.g., alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork and cooperation. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy.

1.3.   An excellent curricular and pedagogical framework for early childhood education for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT, in two parts, namely, a sub-framework for 0-3 year olds, and a sub-framework for 3-8 year olds, in accordance with the above guidelines, the latest research on ECCE, and national and international best practices. In particular, the numerous rich local traditions of India developed over millennia in early childhood care and education, involving art, stories, poetry, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated. The framework will serve as a guide both for parents as well as for early childhood education institutions.

1.4.   The overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality early childhood care and education across the country in a phased manner. Special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood educational institutions consisting of (a) stand-alone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) stand-alone pre-schools - all of which would employ workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

1.5.   For universal access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), the Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high quality infrastructure, play equipment and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Every Anganwadi must have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment. Funds for this programme will be provided by the Central and State governments.

1.6. To prepare an initial cadre of high-quality ECE teachers, current Anganwadi workers/teachers will be trained through a systematic effort and as per the curricular/pedagogical framework developed by NCERT. Those Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy and other relevant aspects of ECE. These programmes may be run through digital/distance mode using DTH channels as well as smart phones, allowing teachers to acquire ECE qualifications with minimal disruption to their current work. The ECE training of the Anganwadi workers/teachers will be mentored by the Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department who shall have at least one monthly contact class with the Anganwadi teachers for continuous assessment.

1.7. On completion of education up to the age of 5 in Anganwadi, every child shall move to a "Preparatory Class" (that is, before Class 1) in the primary school which has an ECE qualified teacher, deployed by rationalising existing human resources, or specially appointed for this purpose. The learning in the Preparatory Class shall again be based primarily on play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. The mid-day meal programme shall be extended to the Preparatory Class along with other primary school children. The health check-ups and growth monitoring that are available in the Anganwadi system shall also be made available to Preparatory Class students.

1.8. ECE will also be introduced in Ashramshalas in tribal-dominated areas in a phased manner. The process for integration and implementation of ECE in Ashramshalas will be similar to that detailed above.

1.9. The responsibility for ECCE curriculum and pedagogy will lie with the MHRD to ensure continuity of curriculum and pedagogy from pre-primary school to primary school, and to ensure due attention to the foundational aspects of education. The implementation of early childhood education will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW) and Tribal Affairs. A special joint task force will be constituted for continuous guidance of the integration.

1.10. In the longer term, State Governments shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping. Necessary facilities will also be created for the initial professional preparation of these educators and their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). In order to generate demand for ECCE among all stakeholders-, including policymakers, parents, teachers, and community members-, large-scale advocacy shall be undertaken.

2. **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning**

2.1. The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future school and lifelong learning. However, various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys, indicate that we are currently in a severe learning crisis: a large proportion of students currently in elementary school estimated to be over 5 crores - have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy, i.e., the ability to read and comprehend basic text and the ability to carry out basic addition

and subtraction with Indian numerals. If action is not taken soon, over the next few years, then we could lose 10 crores or more students from the learning system to illiteracy.

2.2 Attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children must receive an urgent national attention, with immediate measures to be taken on many fronts and with clear goals that will be attained in the short term (including that every student must attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3). The very highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school and beyond by 2025. The rest of this Policy will be largely irrelevant for such a large portion of our students if this most basic learning requirement (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic at the foundational level) is not first achieved. To this end, all State/UT governments will immediately prepare an implementation plan for attaining universal foundational literacy and numeracy in all primary and middle schools, identifying stage-wise targets and goals to be achieved by 2025, and closely tracking and monitoring progress of the same.

2.3. Teacher vacancies will be filled as soon as possible, in a time -bound manner - especially in disadvantaged areas and areas with large pupil-to-teacher ratios, or high rates of illiteracy - with special attention given to employing local teachers and female teachers. At least one teacher per class/grade and a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of under 30:1, will be ensured at the level of each school; socio-economically disadvantaged areas will aim for a PTR of under 25:1. Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported - with continuous professional development for the purpose - to impart foundational literacy and numeracy to students who have fallen behind.

2.4. On the curricular side, it will be extremely vital to introduce an increased focus on foundational literacy and numeracy - and generally, on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking - throughout the primary school curriculum. The dedication of specific hours daily and regular events over the year, to activities involving these subjects, will be implemented to encourage and excite students to pursue these areas. Teacher education and the early grade school curriculum will be redesigned to have a renewed emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy. A national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy will be made available on the National Teacher's Portal. Technological interventions to serve as aids to teachers will be piloted and implemented, and public and school libraries expanded to build a culture of reading and communication. Digital libraries will also be encouraged to be set up in all public and school libraries.

2.5 Due to the scale of the current learning crisis, all viable methods will be explored to support teachers in this all-important mission. Studies around the world show one-on-one peer tutoring to be extremely effective for learning - not just for the learner, but also for the tutor. Thus, peer tutoring can be taken up as a voluntary and joyful activity for fellow students under the supervision of trained teachers and by taking due care of safety aspects. Third, it will be made far easier for trained volunteers - from both the local community and beyond - to participate in this large-scale mission of the schooling system. Trained and qualified social workers from civil society organizations/departments of Social Justices and Empowerment could be connected to the schools through various innovative mechanisms to be adopted by State/UT Governments. If every literate member of the community could commit to teaching one student/person how to read, it would change the country's landscape very quickly; this mission will be highly encouraged and supported. States may consider establishing innovative models to foster such peer-tutoring and volunteer activities, as well as launch other programmes to support teachers, in this urgent mission to promote foundational literacy and numeracy during this learning crisis.

2.6. As, at the current time, with lack of universal access to ECCE, a large proportion of children fall behind already within the first few weeks of Grade 1, an interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' for all Grade 1 students, consisting of activities and workbooks around the learning of alphabets, sounds, words, colours, shapes, and numbers, and involving collaboration with peers and parents, will be developed by NCERT and SCERTs in order to ensure that all children are school-ready.

2.7. Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors and community involvement into the schooling system, as well as through various continuing measures for addressing poverty that may lie beyond the education system. All school children shall undergo regular health check-ups organised by the schools and for this health cards will be issued to them. Research shows that the hours of the morning after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of subjects that are cognitively more demanding; these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energising breakfast in addition to midday meals. Expenditure on meals will be linked to food costs and inflation in order to ensure the quality of food served and its nutritional content.

3. Curtailing Dropout Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels

3.1. One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.7%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 51.3%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students begin to drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) an estimated 6.2 crores children of school age (between 6 and 18 years) were out of school in 2013. It must be a top priority of the country to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in pre-school through secondary school by 2035. A concerted national effort by both the Centre and States/UTs will be made to ensure access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality education from pre-school to Grade 12, including vocational education.

3.2. There are two overall initiatives that will be undertaken in order to bring children who have dropped out back to school and to prevent further children from dropping out. The first is to provide effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school through Grade 12. This will be attained by upgrading and enlarging the schools that already exist, building additional quality schools in areas where they do not exist, and providing safe and practical conveyances, especially for the girl children, and/or hostels so that all children have the opportunity to attend a quality school of the appropriate level. Alternative and innovative education mechanisms and systems would be put in place to ensure that children who are dropping out of school will be brought back into mainstream education.

3.3. The second is to achieve universal participation in school by carefully tracking students, as well as their learning levels, in order to continually work towards ensuring that they a) are

enrolled in and attending school, and b) have suitable opportunities for remediation and re-entry in case they have fallen behind or dropped out. For providing equitable and quality education until Grade 12 to all children up to the age of 18, suitable facilitating systems shall be put in place. Counsellors recruited to schools/school complexes or well-trained social workers and teachers will continuously work with students and their parents, and will travel through and connect with communities to ensure that all school-age children are attending and learning in school.

3.4. Once infrastructure and participation are in place, ensuring quality across the board will indeed be key in retaining students, so that students (particularly girls and under-represented groups) and their parents do not lose interest in attending school. This will require a strong channel and system of incentives for the best teachers to be deployed to areas where dropout rates are particularly high, as well as an overhaul of the curriculum to make it more engaging and useful for all students.

3.5. To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on SEDGs, the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving formal and non-formal education modes. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school. NIOS will offer the following programmes in addition to the present programmes: education at A, B and C levels that are equivalent to Grades 3, 5, and 8 of the formal school system; secondary education programmes that are equivalent to Grades 10 and 12; vocational education courses/programmes; and adult literacy and life-enrichment programmes. States will be encouraged to develop State analogues of these offerings in regional languages by establishing State Institutes of Open Schooling (SIOS).

3.6. To make it easier for both governments as well as non-governmental philanthropic organisations to build schools, to encourage local variations on account of culture, geography, and demographics, and to allow alternative models of education, such as gurukulas, pathshaalas, madarasas, and home schooling, the requirements for schools will be made less restrictive. The focus will be to have less emphasis on input and greater emphasis on output potential concerning desired learning outcomes. Regulations on inputs will be limited to ensuring safety of children (both physical and psychological), access and inclusion, the non-profit nature of schools, and minimum standards for learning outcomes. Other models for schools will also be piloted, such as philanthropic-public partnerships, public –private partnerships (PPP) etc.

4. **Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning Should be Holistic, Integrated, Inclusive, Enjoyable, and Engaging**

Restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new design   5+3+3+4

4.1. The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make them responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively. The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will therefore be guided by a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 design, consisting of the Foundational (3 years of preschool + Grades 1-2), Preparatory (Grades 3-5), Middle (Grades 6-8), and High school (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e. 9 and 10 in the

first and 11 and 12 in the second) stages respectively, with an option of exiting at Class 10 and re-entering in the next phase .

4.2. The Foundational Stage will consist of play/activity-based learning and the aforementioned curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE. It will also include a focus on good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public hygiene/cleanliness, teamwork and cooperation, etc. The Preparatory Stage will transition gradually from play-based learning to more formal but interactive classroom learning, with the introduction of some (light) textbooks, in order to lay a solid groundwork across subjects, including reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics. The Middle Stage will see the introduction of subject teachers for learning/discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage, across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. The High School (or Secondary) Stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the Middle Stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice. The High School Stage may also allow exposure to more subjects and enable greater flexibility, and more frequent assessment of modules.

4.3. The above-described stages are purely curricular and pedagogical, designed to optimize learning for students based on cognitive development of children; they will inform the development of national and state curricula and teaching-learning strategies at each stage, but it will not be necessary to make parallel changes to physical infrastructure.

4.4. All four stages, in accordance with what may be possible in different regions, may also consider moving towards a semester system, or a system that allows the inclusion of shorter modules - or courses (such as arts or sports) that are taught on alternate days - in order to allow an exposure to more subjects and enable greater flexibility with more frequent formative assessment for learning. States may look into innovative methods to achieve these aims of greater flexibility and exposure to and enjoyment of a wider range of subjects, including across the arts, sciences, humanities, languages, sports, and vocational subjects.

4.5. To close the gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is truly needed, classroom transactions may shift in certain subjects, as appropriate towards competency-based learning and education. The assessment tools (including assessment "as", "of" and "for" learning) must also be aligned with the learning outcomes, capabilities and dispositions as specified for each subject of a given class. To achieve this, in all stages, experiential learning must be adopted, including arts integrated and sports integrated education, story-telling based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, with explorations of relations among different subjects.

Holistic development of learners

4.6. The key overall thrust of curriculum and pedagogy reform across all stages will be to move the education system towards real understanding and ***learning how to learn*** - and away from the culture of rote learning as is present today. The goal will be to create holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st-century skills. All aspects of curriculum and pedagogy will be reoriented and revamped to attain these critical goals.

4.7 Curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. The mandated contents will focus on key concepts, ideas, applications, and problem

-solving. Teaching and learning will strive to be conducted more interactively; questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will regularly contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for students for deeper and more experiential learning.

4.8. Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school - including subjects in physical education, the arts, and vocational crafts – so that they may be free to design their own paths of study and life plans. Holistic development and a wide choice of subjects and courses year to year will be the new distinguishing feature of secondary school education. There will be no hard separation among 'curricular', 'extra-curricular', or 'co-curricular' areas, among 'arts', 'humanities', and 'sciences', or between 'vocational' or 'academic' streams. Subjects such as physical education, the arts, and vocational crafts, in addition to science, humanities, and mathematics, will be seriously incorporated throughout the school curriculum, with a consideration for what is interesting and safe at each age.

Multilingualism and the power of language

4.9.   It is well-understood that young children learn and grasp non-trivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. This will be followed by both public and private schools. High-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made available in home languages. In cases where home-language textbook material is not available, the language of the transaction between teachers and students will still remain the home language wherever possible. Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction. All languages will be taught with high quality; a language does not need to be the medium of instruction for it to be learned well.

4.10. As research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. All languages will be taught in an enjoyable and interactive style, with plenty of interactive conversation, and with plenty of early reading and subsequently writing in the mother tongue in the early years – with skills developed for reading and writing in the other two languages in Grade 3 and beyond. All language learning will aim to be experiential and enhanced through art, such as music, poetry, and theatre. There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and in particular all Schedule 8 languages. States, especially states from different regions of India, may enter bilateral agreements to hire teachers in large numbers from each other, to satisfy the three-language formula in their respective states, and also to encourage the study of Indian languages across the country.

4.11. The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, the need to promote multilingualism and national unity while providing for greater flexibility.

4.12. Students whose medium of instruction is the local/home language will begin to learn science and mathematics, bilingually in Grade 6 so that by the end of Grade 9 they can speak

about science and other subjects both in their home language and English. In this regard, all efforts will be made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials.

4.13. The home/local language and/or the second Indian language will be enhanced with the reading of and analysis of uplifting literature from the Indian subcontinent, ancient to modern, and by authors from all walks of life, as well as through other arts, such as by playing and discussing music or film excerpts, or engaging in theatre in these languages.

4.14. As so many developed countries around the world have amply demonstrated, being well educated in one's language, culture, and traditions is indeed a huge benefit to educational, social, and technological advancement. India's languages are among the richest, most scientific, most beautiful, and most expressive in the world, with a huge body of ancient as well as modern literature (both prose and poetry), film, and music written in these languages that help form India's national identity and wealth. For purposes of cultural enrichment as well as national integration, all young Indians should be aware of the rich and vast array of languages of their country, and the treasures that they and their literature contain.

4.15. Thus, every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India' sometime in Grades 6-8. In this project/activity, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences. They will also learn what geographical areas speak which languages, get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages, and they would learn to say a few lines in every major language of India and a bit about the rich and uplifting literature of each. Such an activity would give them both a sense of the unity and the beautiful cultural heritage and diversity of India and would be a wonderful icebreaker their whole lives as they meet people from other parts of India. This project/activity would be a joyful activity and would not involve any form of assessment.

4.16. The importance, relevance, and beauty of the classical languages and literature of India also cannot be overlooked. Sanskrit, while also an important modern (Schedule 8) language, possesses a classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasures of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more, written by people of various religions as well as non-religious people, and by people from all walks of life and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds over thousands of years. Sanskrit will thus be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students. It will be taught in ways that are interesting and experiential as well as contemporarily relevant. Sanskrit textbooks at the foundational and middle school level may be rewritten in Simple Standard Sanskrit (SSS) to teach Sanskrit through Sanskrit (STS) and make its study truly enjoyable.

4.17. India also has an extremely rich literature in other classical languages, including classical Tamil, as well as classical Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia, in addition to Pali, Persian, and Prakrit; these classical languages and their works of literature too must be preserved for their richness and for the pleasure and enrichment of posterity. When India becomes a fully developed country, the next generation will want to be able to partake in and be enriched as humans by India's extensive and beautiful classical literature which contains great intellectual and cultural treasures.

4.18. In addition to Sanskrit, the teaching of all other classical languages and literature of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options (possibly as online modules), through experiential and innovative approaches, including by integration of technology, to ensure that these languages and literature stay alive and vibrant, especially in those states where they may be best taught and nurtured.

4.19. For the enrichment of our children, and for the preservation of these rich languages and their artistic treasures, all students in all schools, public or private, may have the option of learning at least two years of a classical language of India and its associated literature, through experiential and innovative approaches including by integration of technology, in Grades 6-12, with the option to continue from middle level through secondary education and university.

4.20. In addition to high quality offerings in Indian languages and English, foreign languages, such as Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, or Russian will also be widely offered at the secondary level, for students to learn about the cultures of the world and to increase their global knowledge and mobility according to their own interests and aspirations.

4.21. The teaching of all languages will be enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, such as gamification and apps, and by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages, with the teaching-learning of various subjects and with real-life experiences through films, theatre and storytelling, art and music, local literature, etc. Thus, the teaching of languages will also be based on experiential learning pedagogy.

4.22. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardised across the country and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment. Local sign languages will be respected and taught as well, where possible and relevant.

Curricular integration of essential subjects and skills

4.23. While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects and skills should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly-changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include: scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, wellness, fitness and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; including knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values (such as patriotism, sacrifice, non-violence, truth, honesty, peace, righteous conduct, forgiveness, tolerance, mercy, sympathy, helpfulness, cleanliness, courtesy, integrity, pluralism, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity); gender sensitisation; fundamental duties, citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India (including Indian knowledge systems); environmental awareness, water and resource conservation; current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, states, the country, and the world. It is recognised that mathematics and mathematical thinking will be very important for India's future and India's leadership role in the numerous upcoming fields and professions that will involve artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science.

4.24 Concerted curricular and pedagogical initiatives, including the introduction of contemporary subjects, such as Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, etc. at relevant stages will be undertaken to develop these various important skills in students at all levels.

4.25. Every student will take a fun year-long course, during Grades 6-8, that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc., as decided by States and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs.

4.26. Basic training in health, including preventive health, mental health, nutrition, personal and public hygiene, and first-aid will also be included in the curriculum, as will be scientific explanations of the detrimental and damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

National Curriculum Framework

4.27. The NCF 2005 outlines many excellent strategies that are still relevant for accomplishing a more constructivist type of learning. This document will be revisited and updated by the end of 2020, taking into account the changing context of education today and, in particular, all the above Policy points, and will be made available in all regional languages. This document shall henceforth be revisited and updated once in every five years.

National textbooks with local content and flavour

4.28. The reduction in, and increased flexibility of, school curriculum content - and the renewed emphasis on constructivist rather than rote learning - must be accompanied by parallel changes in school textbooks. All textbooks shall aim to contain the essential core material (together with discussion, analysis, examples, and applications) deemed important on a national level, but at the same time contain any desired nuances and supplementary material as per local contexts and needs. Where possible, teachers will also have choices in the textbooks they employ - from among a set of textbooks that contain the requisite national and local material - so that they may teach in a manner that is best suited to the achievement of learning outcomes, and their students' and communities' needs.

4.29. The aim will be to provide such quality textbooks at the lowest possible cost - namely, the cost of production/printing - in order to mitigate the burden of textbook prices on the students and on the educational system. This may be accomplished by using high-quality textbook materials developed by NCERT in conjunction with the SCERTs; additional textbook materials would be funded by public-private partnerships and crowd sourcing that incentivise experts to write such high-quality textbooks at-cost-price. States will prepare their own curricula (which may be based on the NCERT National Curriculum Framework to the extent possible) and prepare textbooks (which may be based on the NCERT textbook materials to the extent possible), incorporating State flavour and material as needed. The availability of such textbooks in all regional languages will be a top priority so that all students have access to high-quality learning. All efforts will be made to ensure timely availability of textbooks in schools. Access to downloadable PDF printable version of all textbooks will be provided by all States/UTs and NCERT to help for it conserve the environment and reduce the logistical burden.

4.30. Concerted efforts, through suitable changes in curriculum and pedagogy, will be made by NCERT, SCERTs, schools and educators, to significantly reduce the weight of school bags and textbooks that students are asked to carry to and from school on a daily basis.

Transforming assessment for student development

4.31. The aim of assessment in the culture of our schooling system will shift from one that primarily tests rote memorisation skills to one that is more formative, is more competency-based, promotes learning and development for our students, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. The primary purpose of assessment will indeed be for learning - it will help the teacher and student - and the entire schooling system continuously revise teaching-learning processes to optimise learning and development for all students. This will be the underlying principle for assessment at all levels of education.

4.32. The current nature of secondary school exams, including Board exams and entrance exams - and the resulting coaching culture of today - are doing much harm, especially at the secondary school level, replacing valuable time for true learning with excessive exam coaching and preparation. These exams also force students to learn a very narrow band of material in a single stream, rather than allowing the flexibility and choice that will be so important in the individualized education system of the future.

4.33. The existing system of entrance examinations shall be reformed to eliminate the need for undertaking coaching for 'cracking' the examination. To reverse these harmful effects of the current assessment system, Board exams will encourage holistic development; students will be able to choose many of the subjects in which they take Board exams, depending on their individualised interests. Board exams will also be made 'easier', in the sense that they will test primarily core capacities rather than months of coaching and memorisation; any student who has been regularly attending and making a basic effort in a school class will be able to pass the corresponding subject Board Exam without much additional effort. To further eliminate the 'high stakes' aspect of Board Exams, all students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement.

4.34. In addition to introducing greater flexibility, student choice, and best-of-multiple-attempts assessments that primarily test core capacities, Boards may over time develop further viable models and qualities of Board Exams that reduce pressure and the coaching culture, such as: annual/semester/modular Board Exams could be developed that each test far less material, so that the pressure from exams is better distributed, less intense, and less high-stakes across the High School stage; as suggested by NCF 2005, all subjects, beginning with mathematics, could be offered at two levels, with students doing some of their subjects at the standard level and the remaining at a higher level; each Board exam could have two parts – one part of an objective type with multiple-choice questions and the other of a descriptive type.

4.35. With regard to all of the above, guidelines will be prepared by NCERT, in consultation with major stakeholders, such as Boards of Assessment (BoAs), National Assessment Centre for School Education (NACSE) etc., and teachers prepared, for a transformation in the assessment system by 2022-23 academic session, to align with the NCF 2020.

4.36. To track students' progress throughout their school experience, and not just at the end of Grades 10 and 12 - for the benefit of students, parents, teachers, principals, and the entire schooling system in planning improvements to schools and teaching-learning processes - all students will take State School examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 in addition to Board Examinations in Grades 10 and 12. Again, these examinations would test achievement of learning outcomes through assessment of core concepts and knowledge from the national and local curricula, along with relevant higher-order skills and application of knowledge in real-

life situations, rather than rote memorisation. The Grade 3 examination, in particular, would test basic literacy, numeracy, and other foundational skills. The results of the State School examinations will be used only for developmental purposes of the school education system - including for public disclosure by schools of their overall (and anonymized) student outcomes, and for continuous monitoring and improvement of the schooling system.

4.37. The National Assessment Centre for School Education (NACSE) shall be a standard-setting Body under the Ministry of Education (MoE), to fulfil the basic objectives of setting norms, standards and guidelines for assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes in the country, and encouraging and guiding school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century and in consonance with the stated objectives of this Policy. This Centre will also advise the school boards regarding new assessment patterns and latest researches, promote collaborations between the school boards, and become an instrument for sharing of best practices between school boards, etc.

4.38. The principles for university entrance exams will be similar; the National Testing Agency (NTA) will work to offer high-quality common aptitude test, as well as specialised common subject exams in the sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects, at least twice every year. The exams shall test conceptual understanding and abilities to apply knowledge, and shall aim to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams. Students will be able to choose the subjects that they are interested in having tested, and each university will be able to see each student's individual subject portfolio and admit students into their programmes based on individual interests and talents. The NTA will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organisation to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in higher educational institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than each university conducting their own entrance exam- thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system.

Support for gifted students / students with special talents

4.39. Every student has innate talents, which must be discovered, nurtured, fostered, and developed. These talents may express themselves in the form of varying interests, dispositions, and capacities. Those students that show particularly high performing strong interests and capacities in a given realm must be encouraged to pursue that realm beyond the general school curriculum. Teacher education will include methods for the recognition and fostering of such student talents and interests. The NCERT and NCFTE will develop guidelines for the education of gifted children. B.Ed. programmes may also allow a specialisation in the education of gifted children.

4.40. Topic-centered and Project-based Clubs and Circles will be highly encouraged and supported at the levels of schools, school complexes, districts, and beyond. Examples include Science Circles, Math Circles, Music Performance Circles, Chess Circles, Poetry Circles, Language Circles, Drama Circles, Debate Circles, Sports Circles, and so on. Funds will be made available for transportation of teachers to take their students to these circles or clubs when these are not meeting at their own schools. Along these lines, high quality national residential summer programmes for secondary school students in various subjects will also be funded, with a rigorous merit-based but equitable admissions process to attract the very best

students and teachers to these programmes from across the country including from socio-economically disadvantaged group.

4.41. Teachers will aim to encourage students with singular interests and/or talents in the classroom by giving them supplementary enrichment material and guidance and encouragement and will help them to organise such Topic-centered Clubs and Circles through specific funding allocated for this purpose , and will recommend them to appropriate summer programmes.

4.42. Olympiads and competitions in various subjects will be strengthened across the country, with clear coordination and progression from school to local to state to national levels, with the necessary funding to ensure that all students may participate at all levels for which they qualify. Efforts will be made to make available Olympiads in rural areas and in regional languages to ensure widespread participation. Public and private universities, including premier institutions like the IITs and NITs, would be encouraged to use results from Regional, National, and International Olympiads, as well as results from and work in regional and national topic-based programmes, as part of the criteria for admissions into their undergraduate programmes.

4.43. Once internet-connected smart phones or tablets are available in all homes and/or schools, online apps with quizzes, competitions, assessments, enrichment materials, and online communities for shared interests will be developed, and will work to enhance all the aforementioned initiatives (as group activities for students, with appropriate supervision of parents and teachers).Every classroom will be developed into a smart classroom in a phased manner, for using digital pedagogy and thereby enriching the teaching-learning process, with online resources and collaborations.

5. Teachers

5. 1. Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. Only the very best and most learned became teachers. Society gave teachers, or gurus, what they needed in order to pass on their knowledge, skills, and ethics optimally to students. Today, however, the status of the teacher has undoubtedly and unfortunately dropped. The quality of training, recruitment, deployment, service conditions and empowerment of teachers is not where it should be, and consequently, the quality and motivation of teachers does not reach the standards where it could be. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be revived and restored for the very best to be inspired to enter the profession, for teachers to be well-motivated and empowered to innovate, and for education to therefore reach the heights and levels that are truly required to ensure the best possible future for our children and our nation.

Recruitment and deployment

5.2. To ensure that truly excellent students enter the teaching profession - especially from rural areas - a large number of merit-based scholarships shall be instituted across the country for study at outstanding 4-year integrated B.Ed. programmes. In rural areas, special merit-based scholarships will be established that also include preferential employment in their local areas upon successful completion of their B.Ed. programmes. Such scholarships will provide local job opportunities to outstanding local students (especially female students), so that these students may serve as local-area role models and as highly-qualified teachers who speak the local language. Incentives will be provided for outstanding teachers to take

teaching jobs in rural areas, especially in areas that are currently facing the greatest teacher shortages and the greatest needs for outstanding teachers. A key incentive for teaching in rural schools will be the provision of local housing near or on the school premises or increased housing allowances to help in procuring local housing in rural areas.

5.3. The harmful practice of excessive teacher transfers will be halted, to ensure that teachers can build relationships with and become invested in their communities so that students have continuity in their role models and educational environments. Transfers will occur in very special circumstances, e.g., for promotions of outstanding teachers and administrators to leadership positions, as suitably laid down in a structured manner by State/UT governments.

5.4. Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) will be strengthened to better test material correlated to being outstanding teachers, both in terms of content and pedagogy. The TETs will also be extended to cover teachers across all stages (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary) of school education. For subject teachers, suitable TET or NTA test scores in the corresponding subjects will also be taken into account for recruitment. To gauge passion and motivation for teaching, a classroom demonstration or interview will become an integral part of teacher hiring at schools and school complexes; these interviews would also be used to assess comfort and proficiency in teaching in the local language, so that every school/school complex has at least some teachers who can converse with students in the local language.

5.5. To ensure an adequate number of teachers across subjects - particularly in subjects, such as art, physical education, vocational education, and languages - teachers could be hired to a school/school complex and sharing of teachers across schools can be considered in accordance with the grouping of schools format adopted by State/UT governments.

5.6. To promote local knowledge and expertise, schools/school complexes will be encouraged and indeed will be supported with suitable resources to hire local eminent persons or experts as 'specialised instructors' in various subjects, such as in traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, or any other subject where local expertise exists and would benefit students and help preserve and promote local knowledge.

5.7. A comprehensive teacher-requirement planning exercise will be conducted across India and in each State to assess expected teacher and subject vacancies over the next two decades. All the above-described initiatives in recruitment and deployment will be scaled as needed over time, with the aim to fill all vacancies with outstanding teachers, including outstanding local teachers. The practice of hiring new `para-teachers' (teachers on short-term contracts) will eventually be phased out.

Service environment and culture

5.8. The primary goal of overhauling the service environments and cultures of schools will be to maximise the abilities of teachers to do their jobs effectively, and to ensure that they are part of vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of teachers, students, parents, principals, and other supporting staff, all of whom share a common goal: to ensure that our children are learning.

5.9. A very first requirement in this direction will be to ensure decent and pleasant service conditions at schools. Adequate and safe infrastructure, including working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces conducive to learning, electricity, computing devices, and internet, library and sports and recreational resources will be important to provide to all schools in order to ensure that teachers and students including children of all

genders and children with disabilities, receive a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment and are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools.

5.10. The State/UT Government may adopt innovative formats, such as school complexes, rationalization of schools, (without in any way reducing accessibility for children) etc. for effective school governance, resource sharing and community building. The creation of school complexes, for example, could go a long way towards building vibrant teacher communities. The hiring of teachers to school complexes could automatically create relationships between schools across the school complex; it would also help ensure optimal subject-wise distribution of teachers, creating a more vibrant teacher knowledge base. Teachers at very small schools may not remain isolated any longer and may become part of and work with larger school complex communities, sharing community best practices with each other and working collectively and collaboratively to ensure that all children in the system are learning. School complexes could also share counsellors, technical and maintenance staff etc. to further support teachers and help create an effective community environment for learning.

5.11. In collaboration with parents and other key local stakeholders, teachers will also be more involved in the governance of schools/ school complexes, including as members of the School Management Committees/School Complex Management Committees.

5.12. To prevent the large amounts of time spent currently by teachers on non-teaching activities, teachers will not be engaged any longer in work that is not directly related to teaching in particular, teachers will not be involved in electioneering, cooking of midday meals, and other strenuous administrative tasks, so that they may fully concentrate on their teaching-learning duties.

5.13. To help ensure that schools have positive learning environments, the role expectations of principals and teachers will explicitly include developing a caring and inclusive culture at their schools, for more effective learning for all, and for the benefit of all in their communities.

5.14. Teachers will be given more autonomy in choosing finer aspects of pedagogy, so that they may teach in the manner that they find most effective for the students in their classrooms and communities. Teachers will focus on socio-emotional learning, which is a critical factor in any student's holistic development. Teachers will be recognised for novel approaches to teaching that improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

5.15. Teachers will be given constant opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their profession. To ensure that every teacher has the flexibility to optimise their own development as teachers, a modular approach to continuous teacher development will be adopted. Developmental opportunities, in the form of local, state, national, and international teaching, and subject workshops, as well as online teacher development modules, will be available to all teachers so that each teacher may choose what is most useful for their own development. Platforms (especially online platforms) will be developed so that teachers may share ideas and best practices. Each teacher will be expected to participate in, say, 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own needs and choice. CPD opportunities will, in particular, systematically cover the latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy and numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment of learning outcomes, individualised and competency-

based learning and related pedagogies, such as experiential learning, arts-integrated, sports-integrated, and storytelling-based approaches, etc.

5.16. Leaders such as school principals and school complex leaders will have similar modular leadership/management workshops and online development opportunities and platforms to continuously improve their own leadership and management skills, and so that they too may share best practices with each other. Such leaders will also be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD modules per year, covering leadership and management, as well as content and pedagogy for the teaching and pedagogy-leadership aspects of their jobs with a focus on preparing and implementing pedagogical plans based on competency and outcome-based education.

Career management and progression

5.17. Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognised, promoted, and given salary raises, to incentivise all teachers to do their best work. Therefore, a robust merit-based tenure (i.e., confirmed employment following probation), promotion and salary structure will be developed, with multiple levels within each teacher rank that incentivises and recognises excellent and committed teachers through tenure, promotions, and salary increases. A system of multiple parameters for proper assessment of performance will be developed for the same by the State/UT Government based on peer reviews, attendance, commitment, hours of CPD, and other forms of service to the school and the community, etc. Such merit-based assessments would be used to determine tenure decisions and the rate of promotions and salary increases for each teacher.

5.18. There will be parity in-service conditions across all stages of school education. The approach will be to ensure that growth in one's career (in terms of tenure, promotions, salary increases, etc.) is available to teachers within a single school stage (i.e., Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, or Secondary), and that there is no career progression-related incentive to move from being teachers in early stages to later stages or vice versa (though such career moves across stages will be allowed, provided the teacher has the desire and qualifications for such a move). This is to support the fact that all stages of school education will require the highest-quality teachers, and no stage will be considered more important than any other.

5.19. Vertical mobility of teachers based on merit will also be paramount; outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be trained over time to take on academic leadership positions in schools, school complexes, and BRCs, CRCs, BITEs, DIETs as well as relevant government departments and ministries.

Professional standards for teachers:

5.20 A common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teacher Education in consultation with NCERT and coordinated by the NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organisations in teacher preparation and development, and higher educational institutions. The standards would cover expectations of the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/ rank, and the competencies required for that rank. It will also comprise standards for performance appraisal, for each rank, that would be carried out on a periodic basis. The NPST will also inform the design of pre-service teacher education programmes. This could be then adopted by the States and determine all teacher career management, including tenure (after the probationary/ tenure track period), professional development efforts, salary increases, promotions, and other recognitions. Promotions and salary increases

will not occur based on the length of tenure or seniority, but only on the basis of such appraisal. The professional standards will be reviewed and revised nationally in 2030, and thereafter every ten years, on the basis of rigorous empirical analysis of the efficacy of the system.

Special educators

5.21. There is an urgent need for additional special educators for certain areas of school education. Some examples of such specialist requirements include subject teaching for children with disabilities / divyang children at the Middle and Secondary school level, including teaching for specific learning disabilities. Such teachers would require not only subject-teaching knowledge and understanding of subject-related aims of education, but also the relevant skills for and understanding of such special requirements of children. Therefore, such areas could be developed as secondary specialisations for subject teachers or generalist teachers, during or after pre-service teacher preparation. They will be offered as certificate courses, in the pre-service as well as in-service mode, either full time or as part-time/blended courses - again, necessarily, at multidisciplinary colleges or universities.

Approach to teacher education

5.22. Recognising that the best teachers will require training in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, teacher education will gradually be moved by 2030 into multidisciplinary colleges and universities. As colleges and universities all move towards becoming multidisciplinary, they will also aim to house outstanding education departments that offer B.Ed. M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees in education.

5.23. By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4 -year integrated B.Ed. degree that teaches a range of knowledge content and pedagogy, and includes strong practicum training in the form of student-teaching at local schools. The 2-year B.Ed. programmes will also be offered, by the same multidisciplinary institutions offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed., and will be intended only for those who have already obtained Bachelor's Degrees in other specialised subjects. These B.Ed. programmes may also be replaced by suitably adapted 1-year B.Ed. programmes, and will be offered only to those who have completed the equivalent of 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's Degrees or who have obtained a Master's degree in a speciality and wish to become a subject teacher in that speciality. All such B.Ed. degrees would be offered only by accredited multidisciplinary higher educational institutions offering 4-year integrated B.Ed. programmes.

5.24. All B.Ed. programmes will include training in time-tested as well as the most recent techniques in pedagogy, including pedagogy with respect to foundational literacy and numeracy, multilevel teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, teaching children with special interests or talents, use of educational technology, and learner-centred and collaborative learning. All B.Ed. programmes will also include strong practicum training in the form of in-classroom teaching at local schools. All B.Ed. programmes will emphasise the inclusion of Fundamental Duties (Article 51 A) of the Indian Constitution while teaching any subject or performing any activity.

5.25. Special shorter local teacher education programmes will also be available at BITEs, DIETs, or at school complexes themselves, so that eminent local persons can be hired to teach at schools or school complexes as 'specialised instructors', for the purpose of promoting local knowledge and skills, e.g., local art, music, agriculture, business, sports,

carpentry and other vocational crafts. This programme will be suitably supported by Central and State governments.

5.26. Shorter post-B.Ed. certification courses will also be made widely available, at multidisciplinary colleges and universities, to teachers who may wish to move into more specialised areas of teaching, such as the teaching of students with disabilities, or into leadership and management positions in the schooling system, or to move to one stage to another between foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary stages.

5.27. Finally, in order to fully restore the integrity of the teacher education system, the thousands of substandard standalone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) across the country will be shut down as soon as possible.

5.28. The NCF for Teacher Education, 2009 (NCFTE 2009) outlines many excellent approaches that are still relevant for accomplishing effective teacher education. This document will be revisited and updated by NCTE by the end of 2021, taking into account the new NCF 2020, the changing context of teacher education today and, in particular, all the above Policy points, and will be made available in all regional languages. NCFTE will thereafter be revised and adapted once in every five years by reflecting the changes in revised NCFs and emerging needs in Teacher Education.

6. Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All

6.1. Education is the single greatest tool for achieving social justice and equality. Inclusive and equitable education - while indeed an essential goal in its own right - is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society in which every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive, and contribute to the nation. Unfortunately, prejudice and bias, based on gender, social and economic status, and disabilities, among other factors, often affect people's capacity to benefit from the education system, compounding social cleavages that hold the nation back from growth, innovation, and progress. The education system must aim to benefit all of India's children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background.

6.2. While the Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education, large disparities still remain - especially at the secondary level - particularly for groups that have been historically underrepresented in education. The Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorised based on gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, disabilities, and socio-economic conditions (such as children of migrants, children from low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas and the urban poor). While overall enrolments in schools decline steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 12 - a problem which must be addressed across the country among all groups as discussed in Chapter 3 - this decline in enrolments is considerably more pronounced for many of these SEDGs. According to U-DISE 2016–17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes (SC) at the primary school level, but this proportion falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are even more severe for ST students (10.6% to 6.8%), Muslim students (15% to 7.9%), and children with disabilities (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these SEDGs. The decline in SEDGs' enrolment in higher education is even steeper.

6.3. The critical problems and recommendations regarding early childhood education, foundational literacy/numeracy, and access/enrolment/attendance discussed in Chapters 1–3, respectively, are particularly relevant and important for under-represented and disadvantaged groups; therefore, the measures from Chapters 1–3 will be targeted in a concerted way for SEDGs especially.

6.4. In addition, there have been various successful policies and schemes implemented over the past several years (such as targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to incentivise parents to send their children to school, providing bicycles for transport, etc.) that have significantly increased participation of SEDGs in the schooling system in certain areas. These successful policies and schemes of past years must be renewed and significantly strengthened across the country.

6.5 In particular, this Policy is in consonance with and fully endorses the recommendations of the Rights of People with Disabilities Act, 2016.

6.6. It will also be essential to take into account research that ascertains which measures are particularly effective for certain under-represented groups. For example, providing bicycles and organising cycling and walking groups to provide access to school have been shown to be particularly powerful methods in increasing participation of female students - even at lesser distances - because of the safety benefits and comfort to parents that they provide. Peer tutoring, open schooling and appropriate infrastructure to ensure access can be particularly effective for certain children with disabilities. Schools having quality early childhood care and education reap the greatest dividends for children who come from families that are socially or economically disadvantaged. Meanwhile, the hiring of counsellors and teachers that work with and connect students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes have been found to be especially effective for children in urban poor areas.

6.7. Data shows that certain geographical areas contain significantly larger proportions of SEDGs. Also, there are geographical locations which have been identified as aspirational districts, which require special interventions for promoting their educational development. Hence, it is recommended that certain regions of the country with large populations from SEDGs should be declared Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all the above schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts and funding from the Centre and States in order to truly change the educational landscape of these Zones.

6.8. It must be noted that women cut across all under-represented groups, making up about one half of all other SEDGs - unfortunately, the exclusion and inequity that SEDGs face is only amplified for the women in those SEDGs. The policy additionally recognises the special and critical role that women play in society and in shaping social mores - not only in their own generation but in the next one; therefore, providing a quality education to girls is the best way to increase the education levels for these SEDGs not just in the present but also in future generations. The policy thus recommends that the policies and schemes designed to uplift students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls in these SEDGs.

6.9. In addition, the Government of India will constitute a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to build the nation's capacity to provide a quality and equitable education for all girls as well as transgender students. The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the central government critical for assisting women and girls and transgender students in gaining access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles,

conditional cash transfers etc.); funds will also enable states to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to girls and transgender students' access to and participation in a quality education. Similar 'Inclusion Fund' schemes will also be developed to address analogous access issues for other SEDGs. In essence, this policy aims to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education and vocational training for children from any gender or any under-represented group.

6.10. Free boarding facilities in the form of hostels will be built – matching the standard of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas – in school locations where students may have to come from particularly far, and/or for students who come from disadvantaged economic backgrounds, with suitable arrangements for the safety of all children, especially girls (e.g., girls' hostels would be separate and secure and have female wardens, security guards, and boundary walls). Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas will be strengthened and expanded to increase the participation in quality schools (up to Grade 12) of girls from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Additional Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas will be built around the country, especially in aspirational districts, Special Education Zones and disadvantaged areas, to increase high -quality educational opportunities in every area of India. Pre-school sections will be added to Kendriya Vidyalayas and other primary schools around the nation, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

6.11. All the above policies and measures are absolutely critical to attaining full inclusion and equity for all SEDGs - but they are not sufficient. What is also required is a change in school culture. All participants in the school education system, including teachers, principals, administrators, counsellors, and students, will be sensitised to the requirements of all students, the notions of inclusion and equity, and the respect and dignity of all persons. Such an educational culture will be the best tool to help students become empowered individuals who, in turn, will enable society to transform into one that is responsible for its most vulnerable citizens. Inclusion and equity will become a key aspect of teacher education (and training for all leadership, administrative, and other positions in schools); efforts will be made to recruit more high-quality teachers and leaders from SEDGs in order to bring in excellent role models for all students.

6.12. Students will also be sensitised through this new school culture brought in by teachers and counsellors, and also through corresponding changes in the school curriculum. The school curriculum will include, early on, the material on human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, contribution of culture in sustainable development and sustainable lifestyle, inclusion, and equity. It would also include more detailed knowledge of various cultures, religions, languages, gender identities etc to sensitise and develop respect for diversity. Any biases in school curriculum will be removed, and more material will be included that is relevant and relatable to all communities, and which develops these human values.

6.13. Children shall learn the basic philosophy of ancient Indian civilisation and the inherent acceptance of diversity. In this direction, new education initiatives will be taken so that children are made aware of the basics of all religions of the people of India and thereby know the commonalities while learning to respect differences. No sectarian rituals, dogmas or practices shall be taken up in schools. This shall strengthen the age-old practice of 'equal respect for all religions' that has sustained the social cohesion and amity in the multi-religious Indian society for over two millennia.

7.   Efficient   Resourcing   and   Effective   Governance   through   School Complexes/Clusters

7.1.   While the establishment of primary schools in every habitation across the country - driven by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other important efforts across the states - has helped to ensure near-universal access to primary schools, it has also led to the development of numerous very small schools. According to U-DISE 2016–17 data, nearly 28% of India's public primary schools and 14.8% of India's upper primary schools have less than 30 students. The average number of students per grade in the elementary schooling system (primary and upper primary, i.e., Grades 1–8) is about 14, with a notable proportion having below 6; during the year 2016–17, there were 1,19,303 single-teacher schools, the majority of them (94,028) being primary schools serving Grades 1–5.

7.2. These small school sizes have made it economically suboptimal and operationally complex to run good schools, in terms of deployment of teachers as well as the provision of critical physical resources. Teachers often must teach multiple grades at a time, and teach multiple subjects, including subjects in which they may have no prior background; key areas such as music, arts, and sports are too often simply not taught; and physical resources, such as lab and sports equipment and library books, are simply not available across schools.

7.3. The isolation of small schools also has a negative effect on education and the teaching-learning process. Teachers function best in communities and teams, and so do students. Small schools also present a systemic challenge for governance and management. The geographical dispersion, challenging access conditions, and the very large numbers of schools make it difficult to reach all schools equally. Administrative structures have not been expanded in accordance with the increases in the number of schools.

7.4. Although consolidation of schools is an option that is often discussed, it must be carried out very judiciously, and only when it is ensured that there is genuinely no impact on access (e.g., through the construction of quality roads and provision of appropriate bus services/ transportation). Such measures are nevertheless likely to result only in limited consolidation, and would not solve the overall structural problem and challenges presented by the large numbers of small schools.

7.5. These challenges will, by 2025, be addressed by State/UT governments by adopting innovative mechanisms to group or rationalise schools. The objective behind this intervention would be to ensure that: every school has adequate number of counsellors and teachers (shared or otherwise) for teaching all subjects including art, music science, sports, languages, vocational subjects, etc; ensuring that every school has adequate resources (shared or otherwise), such as a library, science labs, computer labs, skill labs, playgrounds, sports equipment and facilities, etc.; building a sense of community is built to overcome the isolation of teachers and schools, through joint professional development programmes, sharing of teaching-learning content and joint content development, holding joint activities, such as art and science exhibitions, sports meets, quizzes and debates, fairs; and there is cooperation and support across schools for the education of children with disabilities, etc.

7.6. One possible mechanism for accomplishing the above would be the establishment of school complexes/clusters, consisting of one secondary school together with all other schools offering lower grades in its neighbourhood, in a radius of five to ten miles, as was first enunciated by the Education Commission (1964–66) but was left unimplemented. This Policy strongly endorses the idea of the school complex/cluster, wherever possible.

7.7. The aim of the school complex/cluster will be to a) build vibrant communities of teachers, school leaders, and other supporting staff; b) better integrate education across all school levels, from early childhood education through Grade 12, as well as vocational and adult education; c) share key material resources, such as libraries, science laboratories and equipment, computer labs, sports facilities and equipment, as well as human resources, such as social workers, counsellors, and specialised subject teachers - including teachers for music, art, languages, and physical education - across schools in the complex; and d) develop a critical mass of teachers, students, supporting staff, as well as equipment, infrastructure, etc. - resulting in greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in the schooling system.

7.8 The establishment of school complexes/clusters and the sharing of resources across complexes will have a number of other benefits as a consequence, such as significantly improved support for children with disabilities, more topic-centred clubs and academic / sports / arts / crafts events across school complexes, better incorporation of art, music, language, physical education, and other subjects in the classroom through the sharing of teachers in these subjects, better student support, enrolment, attendance, and performance through the sharing of social workers and counsellors, and School Complex Management Committees (rather than simply School Management Committees) for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders. Building such larger communities of schools, school leaders, teachers, students, supporting staff, parents, and local citizens would energise and enable the schooling system, and in a resource-efficient manner.

8. Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education

8.1. The school education regulatory system must focus on developing and improving parameters which lead to better educational outcomes; it must *not* overly restrict schools, prevent innovation, or demoralise teachers, principals, and students. All in all, regulation must aim to empower schools and teachers with trust in order to aim for excellence, enabling them to perform at their very best, while ensuring the integrity of the system through the enforcement of complete transparency and full public disclosure of all finances, procedures, and educational outcomes.

8.2. At present, all main functions of governance and regulation of the school education system - namely, the provision of public education, the standard-setting for educational institutions, and policymaking - are handled by a single body, i.e., the Department of School Education or its arms (e.g., the offices of the DEO, BEO). This leads to harmful conflicts of interest and excessive centralised concentrations of power; it also leads to ineffective management of the school system, as efforts towards quality educational provision are often diluted by the focus on the other roles, particularly regulation, that the Departments of School Education also perform.

8.3. The current regulatory regime also has not been able to curb the rampant commercialisation and economic exploitation of parents by many for-profit private schools, yet at the same time; it has all too often inadvertently discouraged public-spirited private/philanthropic schools. There has been far too much asymmetry between the regulatory approaches to public and private schools, even though the goals of both types of schools should be the same: to provide quality education.

8.4. The public education system is the foundation of a vibrant democratic society, and the way it is run must be transformed and invigorated in order to achieve the highest levels of

educational outcomes for the nation. At the same time, the private philanthropic school sector must also be encouraged and enabled to play a significant and beneficial role.

8.5. The key principles and recommendations of this Policy regarding the State school education system, the responsibilities within that system, and the approach to its regulation are thus as follows.

8.6. The four distinct roles of governance and regulation, namely (a) policymaking (b) the provision/operation of education, (c) ensuring professional and quality standards in the education system and (d) academic work will be conducted by separate independent bodies, in order to avoid conflicts of interest and concentrations of power, and to ensure due and quality focus on each role. Specifically:

a) The Department of School Education which is the apex state-level body in school education will be responsible for overall monitoring and policymaking for continual improvement of the system; however, it will not be involved with the provision and operation of schools or with the regulation of the system, in order to eliminate conflicts of interest.

b) The educational operations and service provision for the public schooling system of the whole state will be handled by the Directorate of School Education (DSE); it will work to implement policies regarding educational operations and provision, but otherwise will be separated from and work independently of the apex body above.

c) To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, states/UTs will set up an independent, state-wide, body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA) for the State/UT. The SSSA will establish a minimal set of standards based on basic parameters (namely, safety, security, basic infrastructure, number of teachers across subjects and grades, probity, and sound processes of governance), which shall be followed by all schools. This will bring down significantly the heavy load of regulatory mandates currently borne by schools. The framework for these parameters will be created by the SCERT for each state in consultation with various stakeholders, especially teachers and schools. Accreditation and self-audit will be used by the SSSA to implement these frameworks.

Transparent public disclosure of all regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability. The dimensions on which information has to be disclosed, and the format of disclosure, will be decided by the SSSA. It will have to be made available and kept updated by all schools, on the aforementioned public website maintained by the SSSA and on the schools' websites. Any complaints or grievances arising out of the information on the public domain shall be adjudicated by the SSSA.

An effective quality self-regulation or accreditation system will be instituted for all stages of education. This regulatory system will also cover all pre-school education - private, public, and philanthropic - to ensure compliance with essential quality standards.

New private schools will have to obtain a License to Start a School (LSS) from SSSA - this will be on the basis of a transparent self-declaration on the requirements and criteria set up by the SSSA.

d) Academic matters, including academic standards and curricula in the State, will be led by the SCERT (with close consultation and collaboration with the NCERT), which

will be reinvigorated as an institution along with the other academic support structures such as the BRCs, BITEs, and DIETs. The SCERT will develop a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) with wide consultations with all stakeholders. The SCERT will also lead a "change management process" for the reinvigoration of CRCs, BRCs and DIETs which must change the capacity and work culture of these institutions in 3 years, developing them into vibrant institutions of excellence. Meanwhile, certification of competencies of students at the school-leaving stage will be handled by the Boards of Certification/Examination in each State.

Stopping commercialisation of education

8.7. Public and private schools (except the schools that are managed/ aided/ controlled by the central government) will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasising online and offline public disclosure and transparency rather than mandates by the SSSA, so as to ensure that public-spirited private schools are encouraged and not stifled in any way. Private philanthropic efforts for quality education will be encouraged - thereby affirming the public-good nature of education - while protecting parents and communities from usurious commercial practices, including arbitrary increases in tuition fees. Public disclosure on the school website and on the SSSA website - for both public and private schools - would include (at the very least) information on the numbers of classrooms, students, and teachers, subjects taught, any fees, and overall student outcomes on standardised evaluations such as the NAS and SAS. For schools controlled/managed/aided by the central government, the CBSE and NCERT in consultation with the MHRD shall prepare a regulatory framework. Building a robust educational system has to be a national effort, with both public and private sectors participating with no scope for commercialisation or profiteering. Schools must be held to similar disclosure standards as for Section 8 companies. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances, as below, will combat and stop commercialisation of education. This will be a key priority of the regulatory system.

8.8. The standard-setting/regulatory framework and the facilitating systems for school regulation, accreditation and governance shall be reviewed to enable improvements on the basis of the learnings and experiences gained in the last decade. The RTE Act, 2009 will be reviewed to enable this Policy and to ensure that all students, particularly students from underprivileged and disadvantaged sections, shall have free and compulsory access to high quality and equitable schooling from early childhood education (age 3 onwards) through higher secondary education (i.e., until Grade 12). The RTE Act will also be reviewed comprehensively in light of this policy, to enable the policy, and at the same time to improve it on the basis of the experiences and learnings of the past decade. The overemphasis on inputs, and the mechanistic nature of their specifications – physical and infrastructural – will be changed and the requirements be made more responsive to realities on the ground, e.g. regarding land areas and room sizes, practicalities of playgrounds in urban areas, etc. These mandates will be adjusted and loosened, leaving suitable flexibility for each school to make its own decisions based on local needs and constraints, but without in any way compromising on the requirements of safety, security, and a pleasant and productive learning space. Educational outcomes will be given due importance and will be added adequately in the assessment of schools. This will further improve India's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) of ensuring free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all children.

8.10. For a periodic 'health check-up' of the overall system, a sample-based National Achievement Survey (NAS) of student learning levels will continue to be carried out by the National Assessment Centre for School Education (NACSE) with suitable cooperation with

other governmental bodies- such as the NCERT– that may assist in e.g. assessment procedures as well as data analysis. The assessment will cover students across government as well as private schools. States will also be encouraged to conduct their own census-based State Assessment Survey (SAS), the results of which will be used only for developmental purposes, public disclosure by schools of their overall and anonymised student outcomes, and for continuous improvement of the school education system. Until the establishment of NACSE, NCERT may continue to carry out NAS.

8.12. Finally, the children and adolescents enrolled in schools must not be forgotten in this whole process; after all, the school system is designed for them. Careful attention to their safety and rights- particularly girl children -, and the various difficult issues faced by adolescents especially the girl children, issues such as substance or drug abuse and forms of discrimination and harassment, must be provided with the highest importance by the system, with clear, safe, and efficient mechanisms for reporting and for due process on any infractions against children's/adolescents' rights or safety. The development of such mechanisms that are effective, timely, and well-known to all students will be accorded high priority.

II. HIGHER EDUCATION

9. Quality Universities and Colleges: A New and Forward looking Vision for India's Higher Education System

9.1. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge society and economy - and keeping in view the requirements of the fourth industrial revolution, characterised by increasing proportion of employment opportunities for creative, multidisciplinary and highly skilled workforce - the higher education system must, at the earliest, be re-adjusted, re-vamped, and re-energised to meet these requirements.

9.2. Given these requirements of the 21st century, the aim of a quality university or college education must be to develop good, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialised areas of interest at a deeper level, while at the same time build character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational crafts. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles, and enable economic independence. Quality university and college education must, therefore, aim to be both a joy and an opportunity, to which all citizens must have access if they so desire.

9.3.   At the level of society, the aim of higher education must be to enable the development of an enlightened, socially-conscious, knowledgeable, and skilled nation that can uplift its people and construct and implement robust solutions to its own problems. Higher education must thus form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation in the nation and thereby contribute deeply to a growing national economy. The purpose of quality higher education is, therefore, more than simply the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment; it represents the key to more vibrant, socially-engaged, and cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation.

9.4. Some of the major problems currently plaguing the higher education system in India include: i) a severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem, with more than 50,000 higher

education institutions (HEIs), a large proportion of which offer only a single programme and have fewer than 100 students and a large percentage of which are commercial enterprises in which little or no education is taking place; ii) poor learning outcomes and development of cognitive skills of students; iii) rigid separation of disciplines, with too much early specialisation and streaming of students into narrow areas of study; iv) a lack of access to higher education, especially in socio-economically disadvantaged areas; v) a lack of teacher and institutional autonomy to innovate and excel; vi) inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders; vii) a lack of research at most universities and colleges, and transparent and competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines; viii) suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs; ix) a regulatory system that is not empowered to close down fake colleges, while constraining excellent and innovative institutions; x) problems associated with large affiliating universities resulting in poor undergraduate education in colleges.

9.5. This policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion, to all young people who aspire to it. The policy's vision includes the following key changes to the current system: (a) moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district; (b) moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education; (c) moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy; (d) re-vamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences; (e) reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service; (f) establishment of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges; (g) governance of HEIs by highly-qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy; (h) "light but tight" regulation by a single regulator for all of higher education, including professional education; and (i) increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including open schooling, online education and Open Distance Learning (ODL), keeping in view needs of learners with disabilities, and substantial increases in scholarships at private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students.

10. Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation

10.1. The main thrust of this policy in higher education is to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students. This would help build vibrant communities of scholars and peers, break down harmful silos, enable students to become well-rounded across disciplines (including artistic, creative, and analytic subjects as well as sports), develop active research communities across disciplines (including cross-disciplinary research), and increase resource efficiency, both material and human, across higher education.

10.2. Moving to large multidisciplinary universities and HEI clusters is thus the highest recommendation of this policy regarding the structure of higher education. The ancient Indian universities Takshashila and Nalanda, which had thousands of students from India and the world studying in vibrant multidisciplinary environments, and modern universities such as the Ivy League Universities/Stanford/MIT in the United States today, amply demonstrate the type of great success that such large multidisciplinary research universities can bring. It is time that India bring back this great Indian tradition which is needed more

today than ever to create well-rounded and innovative individuals, and which is already transforming other countries educationally and economically.

10.3. The higher education system shall have multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning that offer undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high-quality teaching, research, and community engagement. All HEIs will move towards becoming large multidisciplinary institutions, with programmes across disciplines and fields - offered either in their institutions or through HEI clusters. It is envisioned that over a period of time all existing HEIs and new HEIs will evolve into research-intensive universities (RUs), teaching universities (TUs), and autonomous degree-granting colleges (ACs). This would require mapping existing HEIs in a rationalised manner to achieve the new institutional architecture for higher education. All universities may identify their domain strength and decide to evolve into RUs or TUs. Whereas RUs will largely focus on research, TUs while placing greater emphasis on teaching would also conduct significant research. All colleges shall eventually become ACs, which are large multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning primarily focused on undergraduate teaching. A college should therefore either be an autonomous degree-granting institution, or a constituent college of a university - in the latter case, it would be fully a part of the university.

10.4. These three broad categories of institutions are not in any natural way a sharp, exclusionary categorisation, but are along a continuum. HEIs will have the autonomy and freedom to move from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness. The Accreditation System will develop and use appropriately different and relevant norms for the three categories of HEIs. However, the expectations of high quality of education, and therefore of teaching-learning, across all categories and all HEIs will be the same.

10.5. In addition to teaching and research, HEIs will also have other crucial responsibilities, which they will discharge through appropriate resourcing and structures. These include supporting other HEIs in their development, community engagement and service, contribution to various fields of practice, faculty development for the higher education system, and support to school education.

10.6. By 2040, all higher education institutions (HEIs) shall become multidisciplinary institutions and shall have student enrolments in the thousands, for optimal use of infrastructure and resources. Since this process will take time, all HEIs will firstly plan to become multidisciplinary; and gradually increase student strength to the desired levels. The HEIs with large land areas will be supported to substantially increase the student intake, multidisciplinary capacity and residential facilities.

Increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50 percent by 2030

10.7. More HEIs shall be established and developed in underserved regions to ensure full access, equity, and inclusion. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education (including vocational education) shall increase from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2030. While a number of new institutions may be developed to attain these goals, a large part of the capacity creation will happen by consolidating, expanding, and improving existing HEIs.

10.9. Growth will be in both public and private institutions, with a strong emphasis on developing a large number of outstanding public institutions of each type. There will be a fair and transparent system for determining (increased) levels of public funding support for public HEIs. This system will give an equitable opportunity for all public institutions to grow and develop.

10.10. All types of institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are specifically accredited to do so, to enhance their offerings, improve access, increase GER, and provide increased opportunities for lifelong learning (SDG4). All ODL programmes (and their components) leading to any diploma or degree will be of standards and quality equivalent to the highest quality programmes run by the HEIs on their campuses.

10.11. Single-stream HEIs will move towards becoming vibrant multidisciplinary institutions and HEI clusters. All HEIs will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic and administrative - to enable this vibrant culture. The autonomy of public institutions will be backed by adequate public financial support and stability. Private institutions with a public-spirited commitment to high-quality equitable education will be encouraged and treated on par.

10.12. The new regulatory system envisioned by this Policy will foster this overall culture of empowerment and autonomy to innovate, including by gradually phasing out the system of 'affiliated colleges' over a period of fifteen years. The existing affiliating university will be responsible for mentoring its affiliated colleges so that they can develop their capabilities and achieve minimum benchmarks in academic, curricular, teaching and assessment; governance reforms; financial robustness; and administrative efficiency. By 2025, the maximum number of colleges that can be affiliated by a University shall not exceed 300; this can be achieved by creating new universities. By 2035, all colleges currently affiliated to a university shall secure accreditation and become autonomous degree-granting colleges, through a concerted national effort.

10.13. The overall higher education sector will be integrated into one higher education system -including professional and vocational education. This Policy and its approach will be equally applicable to all HEIs across all current streams, which would eventually merge into one coherent ecosystem of higher education.

10.14. A university has only one definition worldwide, namely, a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programmes, and engages in high-quality teaching and research. The present complex nomenclature of HEIs in the country as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'affiliating technical university', 'unitary university' shall be replaced by 'university'.

11. Towards a More Holistic Education

11.1. India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning in the 'liberal arts', from universities, such as Takshashila and Nalanda to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. Ancient Indian literary works like Banabhatta's Kadambari described a good education as knowledge of the 64 Kalas or *arts*; and among these 64 'arts' were included subjects such as singing and painting, but also more 'scientific' fields, such as chemistry and mathematics, more 'vocational' fields, such as carpentry and clothes-making, more 'professional' fields, such as medicine and engineering, as well as 'soft skills', such as communication, discussion, and debate. The very idea that all branches of creative human endeavour - including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects, and soft skills - should be considered 'arts' indeed has distinctly Indian origins. This notion of 'knowledge of many arts' - what in modern times is called the 'liberal arts' (i.e., a liberal notion of the arts) - must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century.

11.2. Assessments of educational approaches in undergraduate education that integrate the humanities and arts with STEM have consistently showed positive learning outcomes, including increased creativity and innovation, critical thinking and higher-order thinking capacities, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, communication skills, more in-depth learning and mastery of curricula across fields, increases in social and moral awareness etc, besides general engagement and enjoyment of learning. Research is also improved and enhanced through a holistic education approach.

11.3. A comprehensive holistic arts education will develop all capacities of human beings - intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral - in an integrated manner. A holistic arts education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess: critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialisation in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

11.4. A holistic arts education, as described so beautifully in India's past, is indeed what is needed for the education of India to lead the country into the 21st century and the fourth industrial revolution. Even engineering schools, such as the IITs, will move towards more holistic education with more arts and humanities, while arts and humanities students will aim to learn more science -while all will make an effort to learn more vocational subjects. India's rich legacy in the arts as well as in the sciences and beyond will significantly help in making the move towards a holistic arts education an easy and natural transition.

11.5. Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study and would offer multiple entry and exit points, thus removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for life-long learning. Graduate-level (master's and doctoral) education in large multidisciplinary universities, while providing rigorous research-based specialisation, would also provide opportunities for multidisciplinary work, including in academia, government and industry.

11.6. Large multidisciplinary universities and colleges will facilitate the move towards high-quality arts education. Flexibility in curriculum and novel and engaging course options will be on offer to students, in addition to rigorous specialisation in a subject or subjects. This will be encouraged by increased faculty and institutional autonomy in setting curricula. Pedagogy for courses will strive for significantly less rote learning and an increased emphasis on communication, discussion, debate, research, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking.

11.7. Departments in Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, and other such subjects needed for a multidisciplinary, stimulating Indian education and environment will be established and strengthened at HEIs across the country. The flexible and innovative curriculum shall emphasise on offering credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education and value-based education. Value-based education should include developing humanistic, ethical, oral and universal human values of truth (satya), peace (shanti), non-violence (ahimsa), righteous conduct (dharma) and love (prem), citizenship values and also life-skills, in personality development, teaching, learning and governance. Lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will also be considered an integral part of

holistic arts education. Finally, as part of a holistic education, students will be provided with opportunities for internships with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, villages and local communities, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs or research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability.

11.8. The undergraduate degree will be of either 3-or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications. The 4-year programme may also lead to a degree 'with research'. A student can obtain a diploma after completing 1 year, or an advanced diploma in a discipline or field (including vocational and professional areas) after completing 2 years of study or obtain a Bachelors degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year Bachelor's programme with multi-disciplinary education, however, shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multi-disciplinary education with focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choice of the student. For this purpose, there shall be an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) which could digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognised HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.

11.9. HEIs will have the flexibility to offer different designs of Masters programmes, (a) there may be a two-year programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the three-year Bachelors programme; (b) for students completing a four-year Bachelors programme with Research there could be a one-year Masters programme and (c) there may be an integrated five-year Bachelor's/Masters programme. Undertaking a PhD shall require either a Master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research. The M.Phil. programme shall be discontinued.

11.10. Model public universities for holistic education, at par with IITs, IIMs, etc., called MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) will be set up and will aim to reach the global status of, e.g., the Ivy League Universities in the U.S. They will help set the highest standards for holistic education across India.

11.11. This move towards large multidisciplinary HEIs will be carried out as swiftly as possible and in a systematic and thoughtful manner, by consolidating and restructuring existing institutions and building new ones - including establishing new world-class model institutions of this type (Model Multidisciplinary Colleges) across the country, and also establishing at least one large high quality multidisciplinary HEI in (or close to) every district.

11.12. The HEIs along with the research–teaching and university–college spectrum will be developed in accordance with the needs of the country. States will have the flexibility to decide on the medium of instruction and would be encouraged to conduct more academic programmes in Indian languages or mother-tongue.

11.13 HEIs as part of multidisciplinary education will focus on research & innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres, technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, greater industry-academic linkages, and inter-disciplinary research including humanities/social science research.

12. Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students

12.1. Effective learning requires relevant curriculum, engaging pedagogy, continuous formative assessment and adequate student support. The curriculum must be updated regularly aligning with the latest knowledge requirements and shall meet specified learning

outcomes. High-quality pedagogy is then necessary to successfully impart the curricular material to students; pedagogical practices determine the learning experiences that are provided to students - thus directly influencing learning outcomes. The assessment methods have to be scientific and test the application of knowledge. Further, the development of capacities that promotes student wellness, - such as fitness, good health, psycho-social well being, and sound ethical grounding - are also critical for high-quality learning. Often, higher education represents the first time in students' lives when they are living and working independently, and the resulting stress and pressures of student life can sometimes form a serious threat to their wellness. Robust care and support systems are thus vital for maintaining beneficial conditions for student wellness and form an important precondition for effective learning.

12.2. Whereas curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student support are the fundamental requirements for quality learning, infrastructure, resources, technology are necessary for high-quality education. Special programmes shall be devised for gifted students so that they can complete their programme on a fast-track mode.

12.3. Institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications that ensures consistency across institutions and equivalence across programmes, in the ODL, online and the traditional 'in-class' modes. Each institution will integrate its academic plans - ranging from curricular improvement to quality of classroom transaction - into its larger Institutional Development Plan (IDP). Each institution will be committed to the holistic development of students, and create strong internal systems for supporting diverse student cohorts in academic and social domains - both inside and outside formal academic interactions in the classroom. For example, all HEIs will have mechanisms and opportunities for funding for topic-centred clubs and activities organised by students (with the help of faculty and other experts as needed), such as clubs and events dedicated to science, mathematics, poetry, language, literature, debate, music, table tennis, etc. Over time, such activities could be incorporated into the curriculum once appropriate faculty expertise and campus student demand is developed. Faculty will have the capacity and training to be able to approach students not just as teachers in the classroom, but also as mentors and guides.

12.4. All assessment systems shall be decided by the HEI, including those that lead to final certification. The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) will be revised leaving plenty of room for innovation and flexibility. HEIs should move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme, making the system fairer and outcomes more comparable. HEIs should also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

12.5. Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds require particular encouragement and support to make the transition to higher education successfully. Providing access is only the first step; continuous support must also be provided. Universities and colleges will thus be required to set up high-quality support centres and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to carry this out effectively. There will be professional academic and career counselling available to all students, as well as counsellors to ensure the physical and emotional well being.

12.6. ODL and online education provide a natural path to increase access to high-quality higher education. In order to leverage its potential completely, ODL will be renewed through concerted, evidence-based efforts towards expansion while ensuring adherence to clearly articulated standards of quality. ODL programmes will aim to be equivalent to the highest

quality in-class programmes available. Norms, standards, and guidelines for systemic development, regulation, and accreditation of ODL will be prepared by NHERA, and a framework for quality of ODL that will be recommendatory for all HEIs will be developed by the GEC.

12.7. Finally, all programmes, courses, curricula, pedagogy across subjects, including those in in-class, in online and in ODL modes, as well as student support will aim to achieve global standards of quality. This will also help in having larger numbers of international students studying in India, and provide greater mobility to students in India who may wish to visit, study at, transfer credits to, or carry out research at institutions abroad, and vice versa. Courses and programmes in subjects such as Indology, Indian languages, yoga, arts, history, culture, and modern India, internationally relevant curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond, meaningful opportunities for social engagement, quality residential facilities and on-campus support, etc. will be fostered to attain this goal of global quality standards.

Internationalisation

12.8. India should be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs and restore its role as a Viswa Guru. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, select universities (e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world) will be permitted to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India. Further, research collaboration and student exchanges between the Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts. Further, the credits acquired in foreign universities will also be permitted to be counted for the award of a degree.

Student Participation

12.9. Students are the prime stakeholders in the education system. Vibrant campus life is essential for high-quality teaching-learning process. Towards this end, students would be involved in activity clubs sports, culture/arts clubs, activity clubs, community service etc. In every educational institution, there shall be counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments. Further, a systematised arrangement should be created to provide the requisite support to the students from the rural backgrounds of villages and small towns, including increasing hostel facilities as per requirement. All HEI's will ensure qualitative medical facility for all students in their institutions. Students will be involved in decision-making bodies, committees, and processes of the institution – systems and mechanisms will be set up towards this end. The goal will be to enhance the educational experiences of students as well as provide a method for HEIs to be more responsive to feedback and needs of students.

Financial support for students

12.10. Financial assistance to students who need such financial support shall be made available. No student will be deprived of higher education because of financial inability. The National Scholarship Portal will be expanded to ensure that all students who require financial support to attend a public HEI will receive it, covering stipends, boarding, and lodging, and not just waivers of tuition fees. Private HEIs will offer scholarships ranging from 100% to 25% for at least half of their students.

13. Motivated, Energised, and Capable Faculty

13.1. The most important factor in the success of higher education institutions is the quality and engagement of its faculty. Acknowledging the criticality of faculty in achieving the goals of higher education, various initiatives have been introduced in the past several years to systemise recruitment and career progression, and to ensure equitable representation from various groups in the hiring of faculty. Compensation levels of permanent faculty in public institutions have also been increased substantially. Various initiatives have also been taken to providing faculty with professional development opportunities. The various factors that lie behind low faculty motivation levels must be addressed to ensure that each faculty member is happy, enthusiastic, engaged, and motivated towards advancing her/his students, institution, and profession. To this end, the policy recommends the following initiatives to achieve the very best, motivated, and capable faculty in HEIs.

13.2. Every HEI must have essential infrastructure viz, modern digital-enabled classrooms, clean drinking water, clean working toilets, offices, teaching supplies, labs, and pleasant classroom spaces. Every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experience.

13.3. The teacher-student ratio shall range from 1:10 to 1:20 depending on the programme. The teaching duties shall allow time for interaction with the students, conducting research, and other university activities. Faculty will be appointed to individual institutions and not be transferable across institutions, so that they may feel truly invested in, connected to, and committed to their institution and community.

13.4. Faculty will be trusted and empowered to maximise their motivation; they will be given the freedom to creatively design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework, which includes textbook selections, assignments, and assessments. Empowering the faculty to conduct innovative teaching, research, and service as they see best will be a key motivator and enabler for faculty to do truly outstanding, creative work.

13.5. Excellence will be further incentivised through appropriate rewards, promotions, recognition, and movement into institutional leadership. Meanwhile, faculty who do not deliver on basic norms will be held to account.

13.6.   In keeping with the vision of autonomous institutions empowered to drive excellence, HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment. Whereas the current recruitment process will be continued, a suitable probation period shall be put in place for better productivity among the teachers. There shall be a fast track promotion system for recognising very high impact research and contribution. A system of multiple parameters for proper assessment of performance will be developed for the same, including peer reviews, student reviews, innovations in teaching and pedagogy, quality and impact of research, professional development activities, and other forms of service to the institution and the community.

13.7. High-quality institutional leadership is extremely important for the success of an institution and of its faculty. Various outstanding faculty with high academic and service credentials as well as demonstrated leadership and management skills will be identified early, and trained through a ladder of leadership positions. Leadership positions shall not remain vacant, but rather an overlapping time period during transitions in leadership shall be the norm to ensure the smooth running of institutions. Institutional leaders will aim to create a

culture of excellence that will motivate and incentivise outstanding and innovative teaching, research, institutional service, and community outreach from faculty members.

14. Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

14.1. Access to high quality education shall be the right of every individual. However, currently entry to premier educational institutions remains largely limited to the privileged sections of the society, leaving out those who possibly need it most to come out of their cycles of disadvantage. This Policy envisions an appreciable improvement in the standards across higher educational institutions, thereby ensuring equitable access to quality education, with special emphasis on the SEDGs/under-represented groups.

14.2. The reasons for exclusion of SEDGs/ under-represented groups from the education system are common across school and higher education sectors. Therefore, the approach to equity and inclusion must be common across school and higher education; furthermore, there must be continuity across the stages to ensure a sustainable reform. Thus, the policy initiatives required to meet the goals of equity and inclusion in higher education must be read in conjunction with those for school education.

14.3. There are of course certain facets of exclusion, both causal and in their effect, that are particular to or substantially more intense in higher education. These must be addressed specifically for higher education viz. lack of knowledge of higher education opportunities, the opportunity cost of pursuing higher education, financial constraints, admission processes, language barriers and lack of appropriate student support mechanisms.

14.4. For this purpose, the additional actions that are specific to higher education shall be adopted by all Governments and HEIs:

Steps to be taken by Governments
• Earmark half of the Government budgets for the education of SEDGs
• Set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs;
• Ensure gender balance in admissions to HEIs
• Enhance access by building more high-quality HEIs in aspirational districts and Special Education Zones containing larger numbers of SEDGs;
• Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs;
• Conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs;
• Develop technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes

Steps to be taken by all HEIs
• Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs, including:
• Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education;
• Make admissions processes more inclusive;
• Make curriculum more inclusive;
• Increase employability potential of higher education programmes;
• Develop more degree courses in Indian languages and bilingually;
• Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly;
• Develop bridge courses for those students that may come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds;
• Provide socio-emotional and academic support for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programmes.

15. Teacher Education

15.1. Teacher education is truly vital in creating a team of school teachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, the formation of dispositions and values, and the development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy.

15.2. The Justice J S Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court has stated that a majority of stand-alone teaching institutes - over 10,000 in number - are not even attempting serious teacher education, but are essentially selling degrees for a price. The Regulatory efforts so far have neither been able to curb the corruption rampant in the system, nor enforce basic standards for quality, and in fact have had the negative effect of curbing the growth of excellence and innovation in the sector. The sector and its regulatory system are therefore in urgent need of revitalisation through radical action, in order to raise standards and restore integrity, credibility, efficacy, and high quality to the teacher education system.

15.3. In order to improve and reach the levels of integrity and credibility required to restore the prestige of the teaching profession and thereby attain a successful school system, the Regulatory system shall be empowered to phase out substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions (TEI) that do not meet basic educational criteria. All TEIs will be held accountable to adherence to the basic criteria for approval of their programmes; after giving one year for remedy, if any breaches are found, they will be shut down if the breaches are not remedied. By 2025, only multi-disciplinary and integrated teacher education programmes shall be in force.

15.4. The teacher education must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions having, apart from education, departments of psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, history, and literature, as well as various other specialised subjects such as science and mathematics etc. All stand-alone TEIs will be required to convert to multidisciplinary institutions by 2025 and offer the 4-year integrated teacher preparation programme. All large multidisciplinary universities - including all public universities as well as all Model Multidisciplinary Colleges shall establish, develop, and house outstanding education departments which, aside from carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes to educate future teachers.

15.5. The 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers. The 4-year integrated B.Ed. will be a dual-major holistic Bachelor's degree, in Education as well as a specialised subject (such as a language, or history, music, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, economics, etc). Beyond the teaching of cutting-edge pedagogy, the teacher education will include grounding in sociology, history, science, psychology, early childhood education, foundational literacy and numeracy, knowledge of India and its values/ethos/art/traditions, and more. Each HEI offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed. may also design a 2-year B.Ed. on its campus, for outstanding students who have already received a Bachelor's degree in a specialised subject and wish to pursue teaching. Scholarships for meritorious students will be established for the purpose of attracting outstanding candidates to both the 4-year and 2-year B.Ed. programmes.

15.6. For converting public stand-alone TEIs into multidisciplinary higher educational institutions there shall be government funding support. Such HEIs will ensure the availability

of a range of experts in education and related disciplines as well as specialised subjects. Each higher educational institution will have a network of government and private schools and school complexes to work with in close proximity, where potential teachers will student-teach (among other synergistic activities between HEIs and school complexes, such as community service, adult and vocational education, etc).

15.7. In order to maintain uniform acceptable standards of education, the admission to pre-service teacher preparation programmes shall be through a single nation-wide entrance examination to be conducted by the National Testing Agency. The test may contain both subject and aptitude tests and shall be standardised keeping in view the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country.

15.8. The faculty in Departments of Education shall have not only PhDs in education but also those without PhD but having outstanding teaching experience/field experience; and those with training in areas of social sciences that are directly relevant to school education (e.g., psychology, child development, linguistics, sociology, philosophy/political science) as well as from science education, mathematics education, social science education, and language education.

15.9. All fresh PhD entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy related to their chosen PhD subject during their doctoral training period. Exposure to pedagogic practices, designing curriculum, credible evaluation systems, and so on will be ensured since many research scholars will go on to become faculty. PhD students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means. PhD programmes at universities around the country must be re-oriented for this purpose. Opportunities for PhD students to assist faculty as teaching assistants must be created as part of all PhD programmes.

15.10. In-service continuous professional development for college and university teachers will continue through the existing institutional arrangements and ongoing initiatives and these will be strengthened and substantially expanded to meet the needs to enriched teaching-learning processes for quality education. Using technology platforms such as SWAYAM /DIKSHA for online training of the teachers shall be encouraged so that standardised training programmes can be administered to large number of teachers within a short span of time.

15.11 A National Mission for Mentoring shall be funded and established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty – particularly those with the ability to teach in Indian languages – who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.

16.   Reimagining Vocational Education

16.1. The 12th Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) estimated that only a very small percentage of the Indian workforce in the age group of 19–24 (less than 5%) received formal vocational education; this may be compared to other countries such as the USA where the number is 52%, Germany 75%, and South Korea as high as 96%. These numbers only underline the urgency of the need to hasten the spread of vocational education in India. Some of the reasons for this include the fact that vocational education has in the past focused largely on dropouts (Grade 8 and upwards) and on Grades 11–12. However, students passing out from Grades 11–12 with vocational subjects did not have well-defined pathways to continue with their chosen vocations in higher education. The admission criteria for general higher education

were also not designed to provide openings to students who had vocational education qualifications, leaving them at a disadvantage relative to their compatriots from mainstream education. This led to a complete lack of vertical mobility for students from the vocational education stream, an issue that has only been addressed recently through the announcement of the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in 2013.

16.2. The lack of planning and the poor delivery of vocational education in the past has contributed to the creation of a social status hierarchy in which vocational education is perceived to be inferior to mainstream education, meant largely for students who are unable to cope with the latter. This is a perception that persists even today, and affects the choices students make. It is a serious concern that can only be dealt with by a complete re-imagination of how vocational education is offered to students in the future.

16.3. This policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education through requiring that ALL educational institutions - schools, colleges and universities - integrate vocational education programmes into mainstream education in a phased manner, beginning with vocational exposure at early ages, quality vocational education through middle and secondary school and smoothly into higher education. Integrating vocational education in this way will ensure that every child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several more, emphasising the dignity and importance of labour and exciting students about various vocations including those involving local arts and artisanship.

16.4. By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education. This is in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal 4.4, and will help to realise the full potential of India's demographic dividend. The number of students in vocational education will be considered while arriving at the GER target. The possibility of offering vocational courses through ODL mode will also be explored in programmes, wherever possible. The development of vocational capacities will go hand-in-hand with development of 'academic' or other capacities. Vocational education will be integrated in the educational offerings of all secondary schools in a phased manner over the next decade. Towards this, secondary schools will collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry etc. Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry. The B.Voc. degrees introduced in 2013 will continue to exist, but vocational courses will also be available to students enrolled in all other Bachelor's degree programmes, including the 4-year holistic Bachelor's programmes. HEIs will also be allowed to conduct short-term certificate courses in various skills including soft skills. 'Lok Vidya,' knowledge developed in India, will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses.

16.5. Vocational education will be integrated into all educational institutions in a phased manner over the next decade. Focus areas will be chosen based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities, and technical and vocational education will become part of the larger vision of holistic education. The MoE will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), along with industry participation, to oversee this effort and should also earmark budget for promoting this integration.

16.6. Individual institutions that are early adopters must innovate to find models and practices that work and then share these with other institutions through mechanisms set up by NCIVE, so as to help extend the reach of vocational education. Models of offering vocational education, and apprenticeships, will also be experimented with by higher education

institutions. Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutes in partnership with industries.

16.7. The National Skills Qualifications Framework will be detailed further for each discipline vocation / profession. Further, Indian standards will be aligned with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organisation. This Framework will provide the basis for Recognition of Prior Learning. Through this, dropouts from the formal system will be reintegrated by aligning their practical experience with the relevant level on the Framework. The Framework will also facilitate mobility across general and vocational education.

17. Professional Education

17.1. The Policy envisions that the professional education will become an integral part of the overall higher education system. Like all higher education, it must significantly involve critical and interdisciplinary thinking and research. The practice of setting up stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, shall be discouraged. No new stand-alone institutions will be permitted except in specific fields as per national needs. All existing stand-alone professional educational institutions will have to become multi-disciplinary institutions by 2030, either by opening new departments or by operating in clusters.

17.2. Agricultural education with allied disciplines will be revived. Although Agricultural Universities comprise approximately 9% of all universities in the country, enrolment in agriculture and allied sciences is less than 1% of all enrolment in higher education. Both capacity and quality of agriculture and allied disciplines must be improved in order to increase agricultural productivity through better skilled graduates and technicians, innovative research and market-based extension linked to technologies and practices. The agriculture/veterinary professionals shall have the ability to understand and use local knowledge, traditional knowledge and emerging technologies while being cognizant of critical issues such as declining land productivity, climate change, food sufficiency for our growing population, etc. Institutions offering agricultural education must benefit the local community directly; one approach could be to set up Agricultural Technology Parks to promote technology incubation and dissemination.

17.3. Legal education will be restructured to become globally competitive, adopting best practices and embracing new technologies for wider access to justice and timely delivery of justice. At the same time, it must be informed and illuminated with Constitutional values of Justice - Social, Economic, and Political - and directed towards national reconstruction through instrumentation of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. The curricula for legal studies must reflect socio-cultural contexts along with, in an evidence-based manner, the history of legal thinking, principles of justice, the practice of jurisprudence, and other related content appropriately and adequately. State institutions offering law education must consider offering bilingual education for future lawyers and judges - in English and in the language of the State in which the law programme is situated. This is to alleviate delay in legal outcomes consequent to need for translation.

17.4. Healthcare education shall be re-envisioned such that the duration, structure, and design of the educational programmes are as required for the roles that graduates will play. For example, every healthcare process/intervention (e.g., taking/reading an ECG) does not necessarily need a fully qualified doctor. All MBBS graduates must possess (a) Medical skills, (b) Diagnostic skills, (c) Surgical skills, and (d) Emergency skills. Students will be

assessed at regular intervals on well-defined parameters primarily for the skills required for working in primary care and in secondary hospitals. Quality of nursing education will be improved; a national accreditation body for nursing and other sub-streams will be created. Given that our people exercise pluralistic choices in healthcare, our healthcare education system must be integrative: this would mean, illustratively, that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa. There shall also be a much greater emphasis on preventive healthcare and community medicine in all of healthcare education.

17.5. Technical education includes degree and diploma programmes in engineering, technology, management, architecture, town planning, pharmacy, hotel management and catering technology. Many of these sectors are critical to India's overall development. These sectors will continue to demand well-qualified individuals for several decades, and hence closer collaboration between industry and institutions to drive innovation and research will be actively encouraged. Since these domains will become part of the multi-disciplinary education, curricula must be renewed with a focus on opportunities to engage deeply with the field and be more inclusive of other disciplines. India must take the lead in preparing professionals in cutting-edge areas that are fast gaining prominence, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis and machine learning among others in technical education, genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neuroscience and so on in the sciences. These topics, and many others like them, must be woven into undergraduate education at the earliest.

18. Promoting high-quality research: National Research Foundation

18.1. Knowledge creation and research are critical to growing and sustaining a large and vibrant economy, uplifting society, and continuously inspiring a nation to achieve even greater heights. Indeed, some of the most prosperous civilisations throughout history, from ancient times (such as India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and Greece) to the modern era (such as the United States, Germany, Israel, South Korea, and Japan), were/are strong knowledge societies that attained their intellectual and material wealth in large part through celebrated and fundamental contributions to new knowledge - in the realm of science as well as art, language, and culture - that enhanced and uplifted not only their own civilisations but those around the globe.

18.2. A robust ecosystem of research is perhaps more important than ever with the rapid changes occurring in the world today, e.g., in the realm of climate change, population dynamics and management, biotechnology, and expanding the digital marketplace, and the rise of machine learning and artificial intelligence. If India is to become a leader in these varied areas, and truly achieve the potential of its vast talent pool to again become a leading knowledge society in the coming years and decades, the nation will require a significant expansion of its research capabilities and output across disciplines. The societal challenges that India needs to address today, such as access for all its citizens to clean drinking water and sanitation, quality education and healthcare, improved transportation, air quality, energy, and infrastructure, will require the implementation of approaches and solutions that are informed by top-notch science and technology and are also rooted in a deep understanding of the social sciences and humanities and the various socio-cultural dimensions of the nation. Facing and addressing these challenges will require high-quality interdisciplinary research across fields that must be done in India and cannot simply be imported; the ability to conduct one's own research also enables a country to much more easily import and adapt relevant research from abroad. Research in the arts and humanities, along with innovations in the sciences and social

sciences, are therefore extremely important for the progress and enlightened nature of a nation. Research has never been more essential for the economic, intellectual, societal, environmental, and technological health and progress of a nation.

18.3. Research and innovation at institutions in India, particularly those that are engaged in higher education, is critical. Evidence from the world's best universities throughout history shows that the best teaching and learning processes at the higher education level occur in environments where there is also a strong culture of research and knowledge creation; conversely, much of the very best research in the world has occurred in multidisciplinary university settings.

18.4. Despite this importance, the Research and Innovation (R&I) investment in India has been only 0.69% of GDP. For the sake of comparison, the levels of R&I investment as a proportion of GDP in some other countries are: United States (2.8%), China (2.1%), Israel (4.3%), and South Korea (4.2%); i.e., all invest at least three times as much as a proportion of GDP. This Policy proposes to bring in to focus the need for greater investments in research and coordinated effort from all institutions to place India higher in global knowledge production.

18.5. Towards the above, there must be a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research in India. This work must begin in the schools through definitive shifts to a more play and discovery-based style of learning with a key emphasis on the scientific method and critical thinking. This must be supported by a systematic effort towards identifying student interests and talents, and a system of mentoring young innovators.

18.6. The higher education system must be restructured to promote: holistic education, research in universities , include research and internships in the undergraduate curriculum, create faculty career management systems with due weightage to research, and bring in governance and regulatory changes that encourage faculty and institutional autonomy and innovation. In order to focus on research and promote research culture in all HEIs in an interrelated and coordinated fashion, there shall be a National Research Foundation (NRF) which would bring a quantum jump in funding and support for research.

18.7. The overarching goal of the NRF will be to enable a culture of research to permeate through our universities. In particular, the NRF will provide a reliable base of merit-based peer-reviewed research funding, helping to develop a culture of research in the country through suitable incentives for and recognition of outstanding research, and by undertaking major initiatives to seed and grow research at State Universities and other public institutions where research capability is currently limited. The NRF will competitively fund research in all disciplines across the academic landscape: Science, Technology, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. Successful research will be recognised, and where relevant, implemented through close linkages with governmental agencies as well as with industry and private/philanthropic organisations.

18.8. The primary activities of the NRF will be to (a) fund competitive peer-reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines; (b) seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions, particularly at universities and colleges where research is currently in a nascent stage, through mentoring of such institutions (e.g., by hiring eminent and active research scholars that are retired or near retirement from high-quality research institutions), hiring excellent young research students and faculty, and strengthening and recognising existing high-quality programmes at such institutions; (c) act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry, so that research scholars are

constantly made aware of the most urgent national research issues of the day, and so that policymakers are constantly made aware of the latest research breakthroughs; this would allow breakthroughs to be brought into policy and/or implementation in an optimal fashion; and (d) recognise outstanding research and progress achieved via NRF funding/mentoring across subjects, through prizes and special seminars recognising the work of the researchers.

18.9. Academics associated with the national science and engineering academies and learned societies in the humanities and social sciences can add considerable value to the efforts of the NRF. The NRF can commission the academies and learned societies to produce expert reports and provide valuable advice on various topics that will help direct government efforts on research and education. Academies can also contribute greatly to capacity building for teachers and for researchers: their members can be mentors to university departments and colleges as these institutions seek to improve the quality of their teaching and research. NRF will aim to facilitate such linkages, especially to State Universities.

19. Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions

19.1. It is effective governance and leadership that enables the creation of a culture of excellence and innovation in higher education institutions. The common feature of all world-class institutions globally has indeed been the existence of strong self-governance and outstanding merit-based appointments of institutional leaders, which has truly enabled and nurtured such a culture. However, despite some exceptions like IITs and IIMs, many HEIs are yet to reach a stage of self-governance and merit-based appointment of leadership. Decisions related to many fundamental institutional issues have been centralised at the levels outside the institution, creating delays, inefficiencies, and suboptimal decisions. Colleges are unable to chart their own courses, controlled as they are by rigid bureaucratic norms of the affiliating University. All this deeply undermines the principle of local governance and the local pursuit of innovation and excellence. This must be addressed with urgency.

19.2. All higher education institutions in India must aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence, through suitable measures that ensure the leadership of the highest quality and promotes a culture of excellence. For this purpose, for each HEI there shall be a Board of Governors (BoG) consisting of a group of highly qualified, competent, and dedicated individuals having proven capabilities and a strong sense of commitment to the institution. New members of the Board shall be identified by a committee appointed by the Board; and selection of new members shall be done by the BoG itself. The BoG of each institution will be empowered to govern the institution free of any political or external interference, make all appointments including that of head of the institution and take all decisions regarding governance. There shall be overarching legislation that will supersede any contravening provisions of other earlier legislation and would provide for constitution, appointment, modalities of functioning, rules & regulations, and the roles and responsibilities of the BoG.

19.3. The BoG shall be responsible and accountable for the outcomes of the HEI to the stakeholders through transparent disclosures of relevant records. It will be responsible for meeting all regulatory guidelines mandated by the National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA).

19.4. All leadership positions (not only the Head) in institutions must be offered to persons with high academic qualifications and demonstrated administrative and leadership capabilities along with abilities to manage complex situations. Leaders of an HEI must demonstrate strong alignment to Constitutional values and the overall vision of the institution, along with

attributes such as a strong social commitment, belief in teamwork, pluralism, ability to work with diverse people, and a positive outlook. The selection shall be done by the BoG through a rigorous, impartial, merit-based, and competency-based process led by an Eminent Expert Committee (EEC) constituted by the BoG. While stability of tenure is important to ensure the development of a suitable culture, at the same time leadership succession will be planned with care to ensure that good practices that define an institution's processes do not end due to a change in leadership; leadership changes will come with sufficient overlaps, and not remain vacant, in order to ensure smooth transitions. Outstanding leaders will be identified and developed early, working their way through a ladder of leadership positions.

19.5. While being provided with adequate funding, autonomy, and legislative enablement, HEIs, in turn, will display commitment to institutional excellence, engagement with their local communities, and the highest standards of financial probity and accountability. The BoG of each HEI will anchor preparation and implementation of a strategic plan of action namely: Institutional Development Plan (IDP). The IDP shall be the basis on which institutions will develop initiatives, assess their own progress, and reach the goals set therein, which could become basis for further public funding. The IDP shall be prepared with the joint participation of Board members, institutional leaders, faculty, students, and staff.

20. Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education

20.1. Regulation of higher education has been too heavy-handed for decades; too much has been attempted to be regulated with too little effect. The mechanistic and disempowering nature of the regulatory system has been rife with very basic problems, such as heavy concentrations of power within a few bodies, conflicts of interest among these bodies, and a resulting lack of accountability.

20.2. India also has some of the toughest requirements in the world for setting up higher education institutions; these requirements are largely input-centric, focusing on land and space norms, endowment funds and their sources, etc. Such excessive input mandates, together with centralised, outdated, and rigid requirements with respect to faculty qualifications and curriculum implementation, have resulted in an inspectorial regime instead of an effective regulatory system that promotes innovation and the pursuit of excellence. Ironically, this rigid inspectorial regime has also had a consistently poor record of weeding out poor practises and institutions. The regulatory system is thus in need of a complete overhaul in order to re-energise the higher education sector and enable it to thrive.

20.3. To address the above-mentioned issues, the most basic principle in the regulatory system of higher education will be that the distinct functions of regulation, provision of education, funding, accreditation, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies. This is considered essential to create checks-and-balances in the system, minimise conflicts of interest, and eliminate concentrations of power.

20.4. There will be one common regulatory regime for the entire higher education sector, eliminating duplication and disjunction of regulatory efforts. A single regulator, the National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA), will be set up to regulate in a 'light but tight' and facilitative manner, meaning that a few important matters - particularly financial probity, good governance, and full online and offline public disclosure of all finances, procedures, faculty/staff, courses, and educational outcomes - will be very effectively regulated, while leaving the rest to the judgment of the HEIs, which is essential to institutional autonomy, innovation, and pursuit of excellence.

20.5. The primary mechanism to enable such regulation will be accreditation, focused primarily on basic norms, disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by a 'meta-accrediting' body, named National Accreditation Authority (NAA). The license to function as an accreditor shall be awarded to an appropriate number of public institutions by the NAA. In the long run, accreditation will become a binary process, as per the extant global practice.

20.6. A new General Education Council (GEC) shall be set up to frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes, also referred to as 'graduate attributes.' A National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will be formulated by the GEC and it shall be in sync with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Higher education qualifications leading to a degree/diploma/certificate shall be described by the NHEQF in terms of such learning outcomes. In addition, the GEC shall set up facilitative norms for issues, such as credit transfer, equivalence, etc., through the NHEQF.

20.7. The professional councils, such as ICAR, VCI and NCTE etc, referred to as Professional Standard Setting Bodies (PSSBs) will be invited to be members of the GEC. As members of the GEC, they would specify the curriculum framework, against which educational institutions will prepare their own curricula. They would also set the standards or expectations in particular fields of learning and practice while having no regulatory role. All HEIs will decide how their educational programmes respond to these standards, among other considerations, and would also be able to reach out for support from these standard-setting bodies or PSSBs if needed.

20.8. Higher Education Grants Commission (HEGC) will be created which will take care of funding and financing of higher education based on transparent criteria including the IDPs prepared by the institutions and the progress made in the implementation of the IDPs. HEGC will be entrusted with disbursement of scholarships and on developmental funds for starting new focus areas and expanding quality programme offerings in HEIs across disciplines and fields.

20.9. Such a system architecture will bring to life the principle of functional separation to ensure due focus and eliminate conflicts of interests between different roles; it will also empower HEIs - with full autonomy - academic, administrative, and eventually financial - while ensuring that the few truly key essential matters are given due attention. This would, therefore, mean no external interference in HEIs, including from funding agencies. The autonomy of HEIs shall be backed with adequate public funding. Responsibility and accountability shall devolve to the HEIs (and its Board) concomitantly. No distinction in such expectations shall be made between public and private HEIs.

20.10. Such a transformation will require existing structures and institutions to reinvent themselves and undergo an evolution of sorts. The separation of functions would mean that each body would take on a new, single role which is relevant, meaningful, and important in the new regulatory scheme.

20.11. Setting up new quality HEIs will also be made far easier, while ensuring with great effectiveness that these are set up with the spirit of public service and due financial backing for long-term stability. HEIs performing exceptionally well will be helped by Central and State governments to expand their institutions, and thereby attain larger numbers of students and faculty as well as disciplines and programmes; in particular, governments will help in

securing more contiguous or nearby land for outstanding institutions to expand. Public Private Partnership (PPP) models will be promoted in higher education.

20.12. The fundamental design principles of an effective regulatory system will thus be: i) a clear separation of functions to enable adequate focus on each essential role while eliminating conflicts of interest; ii) a single, empowered, responsive, but minimalistic regulatory authority to ensure basic regulatory requirements, such as financial probity and full public disclosure of finances, procedures, course and programme offerings, and educational outcomes, while otherwise empowering institutions to make their own decisions for the pursuit of excellence; iii) accreditation through the establishment of independent high-quality accrediting bodies, overseen by a meta-accreditor, as the basis of regulation; and iv) each body in the regulatory system run by Independent Boards consisting of persons having high expertise in the relevant areas along with integrity, commitment, and a demonstrated track record of public service.

Curbing commercialization of education

20.13. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education. This will be a key priority of the regulatory system. All educational institutions will be audited as per standards of audit for a Section 8 (not for profit) company. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India may refine the norms for educational institutions – including ensuring that related party transactions, services, or charges by any other names are not used to profit from the institution by the promoters/sponsors/management while leaving the institution nominally 'not-for-profit'. Surpluses if any will be reinvested in the institution. There will be transparent public disclosure of all these financial matters with recourse to grievance handling mechanisms to the general public. The BoG of the HEI will be held be accountable for the HEI not being a commercial entity – with consequences for members of the Board in the event of failure to do so. The accreditation system will provide a complementary check on this system, and NHERA will consider this as one of the key dimensions of its regulatory objective.

20.14. All HEIs - public and private - shall be treated on par within this regulatory regime. The regulatory regime shall encourage private philanthropic efforts in education; at the same time, it shall closely monitor and eliminate commercialisation of education. There will be common national guidelines for all legislative Acts that will form private HEIs. These common minimal guidelines will enable all such Acts to establish private HEIs, thus enabling a common regulatory regime for private and public HEIs. These common guidelines will cover Good Governance, Financial Stability & Security, Educational Outcomes, and Transparency of Disclosures.

20.15. Private HEIs having a philanthropic and public-spirited intent will be encouraged through a progressive regime of fees determination. This regime will empower the private HEIs to set the fees for their programmes independently, though within the broad applicable regulatory regime, while ensuring that at least 20% of the students are able to attend through freeships and an additional 30% through scholarships. This fee regime will ensure reasonable recovery of cost while ensuring that the HEIs discharge their social obligations.

III. OTHER KEY AREAS OF FOCUS
21. Adult Education

21.1. The abilities to attain foundational literacy, obtain an education, and pursue a livelihood must be viewed as fundamental rights of every citizen. Literacy and basic education open up whole new worlds of personal, civic, economic, and lifelong-learning opportunities for

individuals that enable them to progress personally and professionally. At the level of society and the nation, literacy and basic education are powerful force multipliers which greatly enhance the success of all other developmental efforts. Worldwide data on nations indicate extremely high correlations between literacy rates and per capita GDP.

21.2. Meanwhile, being a non-literate member of a community has innumerable disadvantages, including the inability to: carry out basic financial transactions; compare the quality / quantity of goods purchased against the price charged; fill out forms to apply for jobs, loans, services, etc.; comprehend public circulars and articles in the news media; use conventional and electronic mail to communicate and conduct business; make use of the internet and other technology to improve one's life and profession; comprehend directions and safety directives on the street, on medicines, etc; help children with their education; be aware of one's basic rights and responsibilities as a citizen of India; appreciate works of literature; and pursue employment in medium or high-productivity sectors that require literacy. States/UT governments should treat the abilities listed here as an illustrative list of outcomes to be achieved through adoption of innovative measures for implementing Adult Education.

21.3. Extensive field studies and analyses, both in India and across the world, clearly demonstrate that volunteerism and community involvement and mobilisation are key success factors of adult literacy programmes, in conjunction with political will, organisational structure, proper planning, adequate financial support, and high-quality capacity building of educators and volunteers. Successful volunteer-based literacy programmes result not only in the growth of literacy among adults in the community, but also result in increased demand for education for all children in the community, as well as greater community contributions to positive social change. The National Literacy Mission, when it launched in 1988, was indeed largely based on the voluntary involvement and support of the people, and resulted in significant increases in national literacy during the period of 1991–2011, including among women, and also initiated dialogue and discussions on pertinent social issues of the day such as alcoholism.

21.4. Strong government initiatives for adult education - in particular, to facilitate and encourage community involvement and the smooth and beneficial integration of technology - will be effected as soon as possible to truly expedite this all-important aim of achieving 100% literacy, including the various measures outlined below.

21.5. First, an outstanding adult education curriculum framework will be developed by a new and well-supported constituent body of the NCERT that is dedicated to adult education, so as to develop synergy with and build upon NCERT's existing expertise in establishing outstanding curricula for literacy, numeracy, basic education, vocational skills, and beyond. The curriculum framework for adult education will include at least five types of programmes: (a) foundational literacy and numeracy; (b) critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare); (c) vocational skills development (with a view towards obtaining local employment); (d) basic education (including preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency); and (e) continuing education (including engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills). The framework would keep in mind that adults in many cases will require rather different teaching-learning methods and materials than those designed for children.

21.6. Second, a suitable infrastructure will be ensured so that all interested adults will have access to adult education. A key initiative in this direction will be to use schools (after school hours and on weekends) and public library spaces for adult education courses, which will be ICT-equipped when possible. The sharing of infrastructure for school, adult, and vocational education will be critical for ensuring efficient use of both physical and human resources as well as for creating synergy among these three types of education. For these reasons, adult education centres could also be included as an integral part of school complexes, or in other public institutions such as public libraries, vocational training centres, etc.

21.7. Third, a cadre of dedicated instructors/educators/preraks will be required to deliver the curriculum framework to mature learners. Instructors for all five types of adult education as described in the adult education curriculum framework will be trained by the national, state, and district-level resource support institutions to organise and lead learning activities at adult education centres, as well as coordinate with volunteer instructors and tutors. Qualified community members will be encouraged and welcomed to take a short training course and volunteer, on a large scale, like adult literacy instructors, or to serve as one-on-one volunteer tutors, and will be recognised for their critical service to the nation.

21.8. Fourth, all efforts will be undertaken to ensure the participation of community members in adult education. Social workers travelling through their communities to track and ensure participation of non-enrolled students and dropouts will also be requested, during their travels, to gather data of parents, adolescents, and others interested in adult education opportunities (both as learners and as teachers/tutors); the social workers will then connect them and provide their information to local Adult Education Centres (AECs). Opportunities for adult education will also be widely publicised, through advertisements and announcements and through events and initiatives of NGOs and other local organisations.

21.9. Finally, any national literacy mission must mobilise community organisations and volunteers in order to achieve large-scale adult literacy and education outcomes. Qualified community members who wish to volunteer as adult education instructors or as one-on-one tutors - as a service to their communities and to the nation - will be welcomed to teach foundational literacy and numeracy, and other adult education course material, under the guidance and coordination of Adult Education Centres. Governments will work closely with NGOs and other community organisations, and support them as necessary, in order to enhance efforts towards literacy and adult education. If every literate member of the community could commit to helping/teach one person how to read, it would change the country's landscape very quickly; this mission will be highly encouraged, supported, and funded.

22.   Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture

22.1. India is a treasure trove of culture-developed over millennia and manifested in the form of arts, works of literature, customs, traditions, linguistic expressions, artefacts, heritage sites, and more. Crores of people from around the world partake in, enjoy, and benefit from this cultural wealth, in the form of visiting India for tourism, experiencing Indian hospitality, purchasing India's beautiful handicrafts and handmade textiles, reading the classical literature of India, practicing yoga and meditation, being inspired by Indian philosophy, participating in India's unique festivals, appreciating India's diverse music and art, and watching Indian films, amongst many other aspects. It is this cultural and natural wealth that truly makes India, **"Incredible !ndia"**, as per India's tourism slogan. The preservation and promotion of India's cultural wealth must be considered a high priority for the country, as it is truly important for the nation's identity as well as for its economy.

22.2. The promotion of Indian arts and culture is important not only for the nation but also for the individual. Cultural awareness and expression are among the major competencies considered important to develop in children, in order to provide them with a sense of identity, belonging, as well as an appreciation of other cultures and identities. It is through the development of a strong sense and knowledge of their own cultural history, arts, languages, and traditions that children can build a positive cultural identity and self-esteem. Thus cultural awareness and expression are important contributors both to the individual as well as societal well-being.

22.3. The arts form a major medium for imparting culture. The arts - besides strengthening cultural identity and awareness, and uplifting societies - are well known to enhance cognitive and creative abilities in individuals and increase individual happiness from early childhood and through adulthood. The happiness/well-being, cognitive development, and cultural identity of individuals are important reasons for promoting Indian arts and offered to students at all levels of education, starting with early childhood education.

22.4. Language, of course, is inextricably linked to art and culture. Different languages 'see' the world differently, and the structure of a language, therefore, determines a native speaker's perception of experience. In particular, languages influence the way people of a given culture speak with others, including with family members, authority figures, peers, and strangers, and influence the tone of conversation. The tone, perception-of-experience, and familiarity/'apnapan' inherent in conversations among speakers of a common language are a reflection and record of a culture. Culture is thus encased in our languages. Art, in the form of literature, plays, music, film, etc. cannot be fully appreciated without language. In order to preserve and promote culture, one must preserve and promote a culture's languages. The promotion of Indian languages is possible, if they are used regularly and if they are used for teaching-learning. It is due to the above reasons that Indian languages must get due attention and care.

22.5. Despite this critical importance, the country has witnessed the loss of many languages while many others have become critically endangered in the last 50 years. UNESCO has declared 197 Indian languages as 'endangered'. Moreover, even those languages of India that are not officially on such endangered lists -such as the 22 Schedule 8 languages - are facing serious difficulties on many fronts. Various unscripted languages are particularly in danger of becoming extinct. When a senior member(s) of a tribe or community that speak such languages pass away, these languages often perish with them; too often, no concerted actions or measures are taken to preserve or record these rich languages/expressions of culture.

22.6 Additionally, there has been a scarcity of skilled language teachers who can teach Indian languages, despite various measures being taken. At present, language teachers usually focus on canonical literature of the language, which does not help in promoting the language use beyond the literary domain and creates a gap in the overall academic growth of the students/speakers of the language. To bridge this gap, specialized language education programmes in Indian languages must be initiated.

22.7. For languages to remain relevant and vibrant, there must be a steady stream of high-quality learning and print materials in these languages - including textbooks, workbooks, videos, plays, poems, novels, magazines etc. Languages must also have consistent official updates to their vocabularies and dictionaries, widely disseminated so that the most current issues and concepts can be effectively discussed in these languages. Enabling such learning

materials, print materials, and translations of important materials from world languages, and constantly updating vocabularies has to become a national priority.

22.8. Initiatives must begin at the pre-primary and continue through higher education for exposing the students to Indian music, arts, crafts and languages. Schools and HEIs will hire outstanding local artists, writers, crafts persons, and other experts as specialised instructors in various subjects of local expertise. An accurate account of traditional Indian knowledge (including tribal and other local knowledge), across the humanities, sciences, arts, crafts, and sports, will be included in the curriculum.

22.9. To enable the above, HEIs shall have strong departments with adequate expertise and design programmes in Indian languages, comparative literature, creative writing, arts, philosophy, archaeology etc. High-quality programmes and degrees in Translation and Interpretation, Art and Museum Administration, Artefact Conservation, Graphic Design, and Web Design within the higher education system will also be created. Academic programmes will be launched in these disciplines (including 4-year B.Ed. dual degrees). These programmes are needed to preserve and promote India's art and culture, conserve artefacts, develop highly qualified individuals to curate and run museums and heritage/tourist sites thereby also vastly strengthening the tourism industry. Scholarships for people of all ages to study and promote Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture with local masters and/or within the higher education system, will be established. Every higher education institution and even every school or school complex will aim to have Artist(s)-in-Residence to expose students to art, creativity, and the rich treasures of the country.

22.10. Creating such programmes in higher education, across the arts, languages, and humanities, will also come with expanded high-quality opportunities for employment that can make effective use of these qualifications. There are already hundreds of Academies, museums, art galleries, and heritage sites in dire need of qualified individuals for their effective functioning. As positions are filled with suitably qualified candidates, and further artefacts are procured and conserved, additional museums, galleries, and heritage sites may open to expanding this important component of India's tourism industry and its heritage conservation efforts.

22.11. India will also urgently expand its translation and interpretation efforts in order to make high-quality learning materials and other important written and spoken material available to the public in various Indian and foreign languages. For this, a proposed Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. Such an institute would provide a truly important service for the country, as well as employ numerous multilingual language experts, and experts in translation and interpretation, which will help to promote all Indian languages. The IITI could naturally grow with time, and be housed in multiple locations across the country as demand and the number of qualified candidates grows.

22.12. India will similarly expand its institutes and universities studying all classical languages and literature, with strong efforts to collect, preserve, translate, and study the tens of thousands of manuscripts that have not yet received their due attention. Sanskrit and all classical language institutes and departments across the country will be significantly strengthened, with adequate training given to large new batches of students to study, in particular, the large numbers of manuscripts and their interrelations with other subjects. Classical language institutes will aim to be affiliated or merged with universities, while maintaining their autonomy, so that faculty may work and students too may be trained as part of robust and rigorous multidisciplinary programmes. A National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will also be set up within a university campus (or campuses). Similar

initiatives will be carried out for institutes and universities studying Indian arts, art history, and Indology. Research for outstanding work in all these areas will be supported by the NRF.

22.13, Academies will be established for each of the Schedule 8 languages - consisting of some of the greatest scholars and native speakers of each language - to determine simple yet accurate vocabulary for the latest concepts, and to release the latest dictionaries on a regular basis (analogous to the successful efforts for many other languages around the world). The Academies would also consult with each other, and in some cases take the best suggestions from the public, in order to construct these dictionaries - attempting to adopt common words whenever possible (e.g., if an excellent word for an emerging concept exists in Tamil, multiple languages could adopt it to optimise communication in and across Indian languages). These dictionaries would be widely disseminated, for use in education, journalism, writing, speech-making, and beyond, and would be available on the web as well as in book form. The Academies for Hindi and Sanskrit, as well as for other languages that do not belong primarily to any one state, such as Urdu and Sindhi, would be established by the Central Government. The Academies for other Schedule 8 as well as other highly spoken Indian languages would be established by State Governments in collaboration with and with suitable support from the Centre.

22.15. All languages in India, and their associated arts and culture will be documented via a web-based platform/portal/wiki, in order to preserve endangered and all Indian languages and their associated rich local arts and culture. The platform will contain videos, dictionaries, recordings, and more, of people (especially elders) speaking the language, telling stories, reciting poetry, and performing plays, folk songs and dances, and more. People from across the country will be invited to and able to contribute to these efforts by adding relevant material onto these platforms/portals/wikis. Universities and their research teams will work with each other and with communities across the country towards attaining rich such platforms. These preservation efforts, and their associated research projects, e.g., in history, archaeology, linguistics, etc., will be funded by the NRF.

23.   Technology Use and Integration

23.1. India is a global technology leader in information and communication and in other cutting-edge domains such as space. The Digital India Campaign is helping to transform the entire nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. While education will play a critical role in this transformation, technology itself will play an important role in the improvement of educational processes and outcomes; thus, the relationship between technology and education (at all levels) is bi-directional.

23.2. Given the explosive pace of technological development allied with the sheer creativity of tech-savvy teachers and entrepreneurs (including student entrepreneurs), it is certain that technology will impact education in multiple ways, only some of which can be foreseen at the present time. New technologies involving artificial intelligence, machine learning, block chains, smart boards, handheld computing devices, adaptive computer testing for student development, and other forms of educational software and hardware will not just change what students learn in the classroom but how they learn, and thus these areas and beyond will require extensive research both on the technological as well as educational fronts.

23.3. All use and integration of technology to improve multiple aspects of education will be supported and adopted, provided these interventions are rigorously and transparently evaluated in relevant contexts before they are scaled up. An autonomous body, the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), will be created to provide a platform for use of

technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, both for school and higher education. The aim of NEAT will be to provide on a single portal various educational technology solutions that are tested for their robustness for improving the learning experience, with a special focus on the needs of the students with disabilities. An expert body within NEAT would facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment, and use of technology, by providing to the leadership of educational institutions, state and central governments, and other stakeholders, the latest knowledge and research as well as the opportunity to consult and share best practices with each other. NEAT will have the following roles: (a) provide best educational technology to the students using a portal (b) build intellectual and institutional capacities in educational technology; (c) provide independent evidence-based advice to Central and State governmental agencies on technology-based interventions, through its expert body; (d) envision strategic thrust areas in this domain; and (e) articulate new directions for research and innovation.

23.4. To remain relevant in the fast-changing field of educational technology, NEAT, through its expert body, will maintain a regular inflow of authentic data from multiple sources including educational technology innovators and practitioners, particularly at the grass-root level, and will engage with a diverse set of researchers to analyse this data. It will act as a forum for harnessing the distributed energy that democratising technology can unleash, particularly among the youth of the country who continually prove their capacity to innovate and lead, while also bringing a scholarly emphasis to ensure that the overall impact of these efforts is positive. To support the development of a vibrant body of knowledge and practice, NEAT will organise multiple regional and national conferences, workshops, etc. to solicit inputs from national and international educational technology researchers, entrepreneurs, and practitioners.

23.5. A rich variety of educational software will be developed and made available for students and teachers at all levels. All such software will be available in all major Indian languages and will be accessible to a wide range of users including students in remote areas and with disabilities. Teaching-learning e-content will continue to be developed by all States in all regional languages, as well as by the NCERT (including CIET), CBSE, NIOS, and other bodies/institutions, and will be uploaded onto the National Teacher's Portal. This platform may also be utilised for e-content related to Teacher's Professional Development, etc. Video-viewing equipment will be made available to teachers at all schools so that teachers can suitably integrate open educational videos into teaching-learning practices.

23.6. The thrust of technological interventions will be for the purposes of improving teaching-learning and evaluation processes, supporting teacher preparation and professional development, enhancing educational access, and streamlining educational planning and management including processes related to admissions, attendance, assessments, etc.

23.7. Particular attention will need to be paid to emerging disruptive technologies that will necessarily transform the education system and what it teaches to students. If the education system does not adapt to these rapid and disruptive changes, it would place us (individually and nationally) at a perilous disadvantage in an increasingly competitive world. While computers have largely surpassed humans in leveraging factual and procedural knowledge, our education at all levels excessively burdens students with such knowledge at the expense of developing their higher-order competencies.

23.8. This policy has been formulated at a time when an unquestionably disruptive technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged. As the cost of AI-based prediction falls, AI will be able to match or outperform - and therefore be a valuable aid to - even skilled

professionals such as doctors in certain predictive tasks. The National Research Foundation will initiate or expand research efforts in the technology, including fundamental research in the domain, development of the technology (including possible mega-projects), and assessment of its socio-economic impact. In the context of AI, NRF may consider a three-pronged approach: (a) advancing core AI research, (b) developing and deploying application-based research, and (c) establishing international research efforts to address global challenges in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, and climate change using AI.

23.9. Universities will play an active role not only in conducting research on disruptive technologies but also in creating initial versions of instructional materials and courses (including online courses) in cutting-edge domains and assessing their impact on specific areas such as professional education. Once the technology has attained a level of maturity, autonomous colleges can scale these teaching and skilling efforts. Disruptive technologies will make certain jobs redundant and hence approaches to skilling and de-skilling that are both efficient and ensure quality will be of increasing importance to create and sustain employment. Institutions will have autonomy to approve institutional and non-institutional partners to deliver such training, which will be integrated with skills and higher education frameworks.

23.10. All universities will offer PhD and Masters programmes in core areas (such as Machine Learning) as well as multidisciplinary fields ("AI + X") and professional areas (healthcare, agriculture and law). They may also develop and disseminate courses in these areas via platforms, such as SWAYAM. For rapid adoption, HEIs may blend these online courses with traditional teaching in undergraduate and vocational programmes. The Colleges may also offer targeted training in low-expertise tasks for supporting the AI value chain such as data annotation, image classification, and speech transcription. Efforts to teach languages to school students will be dovetailed with efforts to enhance Natural Language Processing for India's diverse languages.

23.11. As disruptive technologies emerge, schooling and continuing education will assist in raising the general populace's awareness of their potential disruptive effects and will also address related issues. This awareness is necessary to have informed public consent on matters related to these technologies. In school, the study of current affairs and ethical issues will include a discussion on disruptive technologies. Appropriate instructional and discussion materials will also be prepared for continuing education.

23.13. Data is a key fuel for AI-based technologies, and it is critical to raise awareness on issues of privacy, laws and standards associated with data handling and data protection, etc. It is also necessary to highlight ethical issues surrounding the development and deployment of AI-based technologies. Education will play a key role in these awareness-raising efforts. Other disruptive technologies that are expected to change the way we live, and therefore change the way we educate students, including those relating to clean and renewable energy, water conservation, sustainable farming, environmental preservation, and other green initiatives; these will also receive prioritised attention in education.

IV. MAKING IT HAPPEN

24. Establishing an Apex Advisory Body for Indian Education and an Indian Education Service (IES)

24.1. Achieving successful implementation of this policy demands a long-term vision, availability of expertise on a sustained basis, and concerted action from all concerned actors

encompassing national, state, institutional, and individual levels. In this context, the policy recommends the creation of a Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA), an apex advisory body for elementary to university education in India duly replacing the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). CABE has provided a forum for widespread consultation and examination of issues relating to educational and cultural development. But, in view of the manifold changes taking place in the country along with the futuristic trends of education in the global context, it is imperative that Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA), be formed to lead the much needed wide-ranging reforms required for a great leap forward. The RSA shall be responsible for developing, articulating, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis, in close collaboration with the corresponding apex bodies of States. It shall also create and continuously review the institutional frameworks that shall help attain this vision.

24.2. The RSA will be chaired by the Minister of Education and shall consist of 30 members, 2/3rd of whom shall be eminent educationists, researchers, and leading professionals from various fields such as the arts, science, business, health, agriculture, and social work, from India or eminent people of Indian origin; these members shall be of high expertise, unimpeachable integrity, and independence. Membership of the RSA shall also include some of the Union Ministers, in rotation, whose ministries impact education directly (e.g. Health, Woman and Child Development, Finance), as well as a representative of each State Governments/UT administration, NITI Aayog, the Secretaries in the Ministry of Education, and other such senior bureaucrats/administrators as deemed appropriate.

24.3. The RSA will have a Permanent Secretariat of the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (PSRSA) that will be headed by an Executive Director who shall be a person of eminence in education, with a deep understanding of India's education system, a record of stellar public contribution, and broad experience of administration and leadership. The ED will have a five-year term of appointment, which will be renewable one time. The ED shall be empowered to engage adequate staff including experts in education and related fields either on loan from educational institutions or recruited on a tenure basis. The PSRSA will be charged with translating the vision of the RSA into action, assessing progress through continually analysing data and making recommendations for corrective actions as needed. The PSRSA will form a reliable base of capable educationists across a range of specialties (such as early childhood education, school education, higher education, educational management, equity and inclusion, formative assessment, education technology, multidisciplinary teaching and research, undergraduate research, Indian languages and knowledge systems, etc.) that will help provide constant expertise to the Ministry of Education.

24.4. Similar to the RSA, a Rajya Shiksha Aayog (RjSA) may be constituted in each State, chaired by the Education Minister, and can have the following members: Ministers of other stakeholder departments, eminent educationists and professionals a senior representative from the RSA, the secretaries in the Department of Education, and other such senior bureaucrats/administrators as the government may deem appropriate. The RjSA will have a Permanent Secretariat for continuous expert analysis and recommendations for corrective actions. The creation of the RjSPs in the States will also facilitate better coordination with the RSA.

24.5. To bring the focus back on education and learning, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) shall be re-designated as the Ministry of Education (MoE). The existing functions and roles within the Ministry of Education (and related ministries) shall be reviewed, mapped, and harmonised with the RSA for complementarity.

24.6. To ensure the effective implementation of many of the recommendations contained herein, the concomitant expansion of the administrative structures and the creation of professionally-qualified and competent educational planners and administrators are needed. A permanent Indian Education Service (IES) cadre comprising a specialist cadre of the bureaucracy will be created. The IES will institutionalise a core professional capacity within the State and Central Governments in curriculum planning and development, pedagogy, educational policy, planning, administration and financing under the sub-sectors within the education sector, in order to ensure effective planning, delivery, governance and management, and monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes. The positions of Registrars of all universities shall be reserved to be filled by the members of this service, thereby bringing in professionalism in managing the universities.

25. Financing: Affordable and Quality Education for All

25.1. The Policy commits to significantly raising educational investment, as there is no better investment towards a society's future than the high-quality education of our young people. Public spending on education has not yet even come close to the recommended level of 6% of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 Policy, reiterated in the Policy of 1986, and which was further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the Policy. The current public (Government - Centre and States) expenditure on education in India has hovered around 4.43% of GDP (Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure 2017-18); and only around 10% of the total Government spending goes towards education (Economic Survey 2017-18). These numbers are far smaller than most developed and developing countries.

25.2. In order to attain the goal of world-class education in India, and the corresponding multitude of benefits to this Nation and its economy, this Policy unequivocally endorses and envisions an increase in public investment in education - by both the Central government and all State Governments - to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest, and reach 20% of all public expenditure over a 10-year period.

25.3. In particular, financial support will not be compromised on the various critical elements and components of education, such as learning resources, nutritional support, matters of student safety and well-being, adequate staffing, teacher development, and support for all initiatives to ensure an equitable high-quality education for underprivileged and underrepresented groups. Of the total budget in higher education, at least 2% will be earmarked for research and innovation.

25.4. In addition to one-time expenditures, primarily related to infrastructure and resources, this Policy identifies the following key longer-term thrust areas for financing to cultivate a world-class education system: (i) expanding and continually improving early childhood education; (ii) ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy; (iii) providing adequate and appropriate resourcing of school complexes; (iv) providing food and nutrition (breakfast and midday meals); (v) investing in teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers; (vi) revamping colleges and universities to foster excellence; and (vii) cultivating research.

25.5. Financial governance and management will focus on the smooth, timely and appropriate flow of funds, and their usage with probity. This will be enabled by the new suggested regulatory regime, with clear separations of roles, empowerment and autonomy to institutions, the appointment of outstanding qualified educationists to leadership positions, and enlightened oversight.

25.6. The Policy also calls for the rejuvenation, active promotion, and support for private philanthropic activity in the education sector. In particular, to incentivise such philanthropic participation, any public institution taking initiatives towards raising private philanthropic funds to enhance educational experiences (such as through Development Offices and Alumni Associations, etc.) will never have any public funds cut as a result.

25.7. Education is a public good and must not be a commercial activity or a source of profit. The matter of commercialisation of education has been dealt with by the Policy through multiple relevant fronts, including: the 'light but tight' regulatory approach that mandates full public disclosure of finances, procedures, course and programme offerings, and educational outcomes; the substantial investment in public education; and mechanisms for good governance of all institutions, public and private.

26. Implementation

26.1. Any policy is only as good as its implementation. Such implementation will require multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies in a synchronised and systematic manner. Therefore, the implementation of this Policy will be led by various bodies (including MoE, RSA, Union and State Governments, education-related Ministries, State Departments of Education, Boards, NTA, the regulatory bodies of school and higher education, NCERT, SCERTs, schools, and HEIs) along with timelines and a plan for review, in order to ensure that the policy is implemented in its spirit and intent, through coherence in planning and synergy across all these bodies involved in education.

26.2. Implementation will be guided by the following principles. First, implementation of the spirit and intent of the Policy will be the most critical matter. While the Policy provides much detail, the intent and the spirit of the Policy must serve as the most important consideration. Second, it is important to implement the policy initiatives in a phased manner, as each policy point has several steps, each of which requires the previous step to be implemented successfully. Third, prioritisation will be important in ensuring optimal sequencing of policy points, and that the most critical and urgent actions are taken up first, thereby enabling a strong base. Fourth, comprehensiveness in implementation will be the key; as this Policy is interconnected and holistic, only a full-fledged implementation, and not a piecemeal one, will ensure that the desired objectives are achieved. Fifth, since education is a concurrent subject, it will need careful planning, joint monitoring, and collaborative implementation between the Centre and States. Sixth, timely infusion of requisite resources - human, infrastructural, and financial - at the Central and State levels will be key for the satisfactory execution of the Policy. Finally, careful analysis and review of the linkages between multiple parallel implementation steps will be necessary in order to ensure effective dovetailing of all initiatives. This will also include early investment in some of the specific actions (such as the setting up of early childhood education infrastructure) that will be imperative to ensuring a strong base and a smooth progression for all subsequent programmes and actions.

26.3. Subject-wise implementation committees of experts in cooperation and consultation with other relevant Ministries will be set up at both the Central and State levels to develop detailed implementation plans for each aspect of this Policy in accordance with the above principles to achieve the goals of the Policy in a clear and phased manner. Yearly joint reviews of the progress of implementation of the policy, in accordance with the targets set for each action, will be conducted by a designated team constituted by RSA and the corresponding State body. By 2030, it is expected that the past decade would have provided ample opportunities for evaluation, fine-tuning as well as major changes, if called for, to be effected. Thereafter, a comprehensive review of the status of the implementation of the policy

in its entirety will be undertaken. In the decade of 2030-40, the entire policy will be in an operational mode, following which another comprehensive review will be undertaken.

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