

**Circular Releasing the Programme of Action of AIFRTE for June 2018-May 2019 and
Listing Some Crucial Tasks**

9 June 2018

To:

The Member Organizations, Associate Organisations and Individual Members of the National Executive of the All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE), Campaign Associates, and other like-minded organizations and individuals of our Collective Struggle.

Dear all,

In response to the joint assault of the Neoliberal capital and Brahminical forces on our education pushing for its commercialization, centralization, communalization and social exclusion as well as in continuation of our long-term struggle for egalitarian education system, the 5th National Executive of AIFRTE (held at Sewagram, Wardha, Maharashtra on Feb 16-18) appointed a committee to develop a Programme of Action (POA) for one year. On the basis of the report of the POA committee and after intense deliberations, the Presidium and Secretariat of AIFRTE has adopted a comprehensive programme of action for the period from June 2018 to May 2019. We are herewith issuing this POA for your kind perusal and necessary action for making it a big success by raising strong public opinion compelling the political forces to adopt a radical and pro-people education policy. This undoubtedly becomes additionally important in context of impending Lok Sabha elections scheduled for 2019. At the same time, the attached PoA seeks to institutionalize a lot of new features in AIFRTE with the view to provide sustainable long-term basis of our movement in every corner of the country.

Ten core demands of AIFRTE have been listed in Section 3 of the attached POA. Besides this, a detailed (tentative) list of additional demands is provided in annexure I of the attached POA to which each state/district/town/village/university/college/school level movements could add their own pressing concerns. The core objective of our POA is to strive for the establishment of a fully state-funded and entirely free Common Education System from 'KG to PG' inclusive of compulsory Common School System (CSS) up to Class XII based on Neighborhood Schools from 'Pre-primary stage to Class XII'. It should be founded on mother tongue in a multi-lingual context as medium of education. It must exclude disparities and include diversities; it should promote equality and social justice; and it should be governed in democratic, federal and participative mode as per the Constitutional vision. Similarly, the core oppositional target of the POA are various documents of the new education policy of the Union MHRD and the Neeti Aayog which seek to make education commercialized, communalized, obscurantist and more exclusionary and reduce its meaning to some slavish skills.

Accordingly, the comprehensive POA enjoins upon us following major tasks:

(A.) Struggles against the prevalent model of education are continuously taking place in every part of the nation. However, the need of the hour is to bring them on a common page to make an effective impression on public perception of our collective presence and strength. Therefore, AIFRTE have decided to build co-ordination committees or platforms of struggles in all states wherever such networks are not there in place and to strengthen the networks in such states wherever they already exist. (Please see 'Roadmap and Organisational Chart for State/UT Consultations' for details (in Annexure II of the attached POA). In the months of June–mid August of this year, state/UT level consultations shall be organized in the entire country. In states, wherever there is no state/UT level regular platform of struggle or even a preliminary co-

ordination committee, steps shall be taken to form a network by achieving cohesion among the struggling forces in a given state/UT on the basis of the identification of common programme of struggle. In the states where already some form of organization exists, it shall be attempted to strengthen it further. While simultaneously focusing on the implementation of this POA, AIFRTE realizes and commits to explore possible arrangements for evolving teams for strengthening the movement in the longer term through proper follow-up of the campaign.

(B.) There is an urgent necessity of intensifying the campaign in social as well as print media and amongst the masses of this country against commercialization, centralization, communalisation and discriminatory education and for demanding a common, scientific, democratic and secular education system from KG to PG in consonance with the ideals set forth in the preamble of the Constitution of India. (Please see the 'Preamble' as well as sections 2 and 3 of the attached POA to appreciate the full scope of attacks that are being mounted on education by ruling dispensation). One of the many essential measures for this intensification of struggle is to bring a mass of citizenry within different channels of our dialogue and activism. For instance, there are individuals throughout the country who are interested to join education movement but who are not necessarily connected with any particular organization as such. We should enroll them as AIFRTE Campaign Associates. This may prove a great advantage, as they could easily be contacted through social media and a network can be established for the circulation of our literature as well. Besides an online option on the website of AIFRTE, an offline form of Campaign Associates is available (in English) as Annexure III of the PoA, which may be translated into different languages and printed by member organizations according to their need. These Campaign Associates along with other organizational partners of our collective struggles will have to be brought together on common platforms of discussion (such as facebook, e-groups and WhatsApp etc), as readers of our literature and participants of our activism. We all would also need to identify nodal persons of social media in each state who will serve as crucial links for reciprocal exchange of information and dialogue between their place, the central team of AIFRTE and the rest of the nation. The central team of AIFRTE will coordinate with them to establish a strong network of progressive discourse.

(C.) In each state, from August to October, a massive rally should be organized on the state level educational problems as well as focusing on the all India issues. This should be preceded by wide campaign in localities, districts, universities and schools through leaflets, signature campaigns, seminars and local rallies with a view to reach out to the masses to mobilize them.

(D.) During the last week of August 2018 or first week of September 2018, a one day national Seminar will be organized on 'The Crisis in Indian Education – Strategy for an Alternative'. It will be followed by a Two-Day National Executive (NE) Meeting to review the completed State/UT Consultations and take mid-term stock of the State/UT-level Mobilisations & Movements along with consideration of any modifications, if required, in the remaining part of the POA. A large number of people should participate in the seminar. Members of the National Executive of AIFRTE should also schedule them to participate in the meeting. (The date and the venue for the seminar and the meeting of the National Executive will be notified in due course of time).

(E.) From November 2018 onwards, concerted efforts should be made for mobilizing people to participate in big numbers in the Delhi Hunkaar Rally to be organized in February 2019. Apart from individual participation, people can also undertake to organize mashal yatras (torch rallies) to join the Hunkaar Rally. (Please see sections 5-8 of the attached POA for more details). It should be endeavored to solicit massive participation in the Delhi Hunkaar rally so that entire

nation witnesses the resentment of the masses for denying education to them and for distorting its contents and purpose.

(F.) Birth and Death anniversaries of many great martyrs, social reformers and visionaries known at all India level or regional level should be observed throughout the period of the proposed campaign for burning the documents of New Education Policy. (Please see section 7.C and Annexure IV and V for further details).

(G.) At the time of election campaigns, the people should insist all over the country that an oath (to be drafted by AIFRTE, but translated and adapted locally) is taken by the candidate in public and signed wherein she/he would make a public commitment to pressurize the elected party to fulfill the Demands irrespective of whether she/he wins or loses. People should collate relevant facts and figures pertaining to education and organize public discussions, wherein political leaders should be called to participate. Besides this, in advance of either the state or the Lok Sabha elections, let us resolve to send a Memorandum on our Demands to each and every member of the legislative assemblies and the Parliament as well as the leaders of each major political party and to the media (including internet portals) and let us post the same on our website and social media as well.

(H) The success of the POA immensely depends on its widest possible dissemination. This naturally calls for its translations in different languages of the nation. The central team of AIFRTE is arranging for its translation in Hindi and Urdu. For this purpose, we are requesting two groups of five persons each. For expeditious translation, we are dividing the document in four parts to be translated simultaneously. The fifth person shall compile and standardize the entire translated text. We expect our member and associate organizations and individuals to explore similar possibilities of translations in their respective languages. While translating, we should use simple and easy language nearer to the popular speech avoiding highly Sanskritised language. At the same time, well-accepted terminology, even if derived from Sanskrit should not be mechanically sidelined or ignored.

Please acknowledge the receipt of the PoA and keep us posted of the steps taken by you.

Meher Engineer

Vikas Gupta

Lokesh Malti Prakash

(Chairperson)

(Organizing Secretary)

(Office Secretary)