

# **Programme & Constitution**

**Working Document  
from the 1<sup>st</sup> Delhi  
State Conference**

# **COLLECTIVE**

**March 6-7, 2021**

# Programme

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## 1. Context

The present situation of our country is marked by the political, ideological and social ascendancy of the far-right, authoritarian and fascist forces. This political situation is combined with the crisis of neo-liberal capitalism worldwide, and in our country. The emergence and ascendancy of these far-Right forces goes hand in hand with 'revival' of global capitalist order by further crushing the rights of toiling people and intensifying the destruction of nature, to favour elite corporate capital. Amidst these intensified attacks, we see a reactionary articulation of wrong 'enemies' being popularised. Anti-immigrant and anti-minority agendas are part of such fascist articulations. Their popular appeal is also based on a supposed revival of a 'golden past'. This is combined with a push towards an anti-scientific, anti-democratic, anti-secular and increasingly divided society. In the specific context of our country, forces like the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* have developed through deep-rooted, organized activity in society, selectively drawing from the long political and socio-cultural history of the subcontinent.

From attempts to gradually capture the higher echelons of power in all organs of the state to a rising fascist movement gaining momentum and asserting itself in the streets, the situation in our country is taking a rapid turn. At the same time mass movements and resistance to these are emerging across the country in multiple forms braving state-repression, further strengthening the need for a radical re-imagination of the society. **This calls for the student-youth of India to join hands with toiling people and other progressive sections of our country in resisting the ascendancy of the fascist movement and strive for a revolutionary transformation of society.**

## 2. The Situation of Education and Our Perspective

**We come to schools, colleges and universities with hopes and dreams—to study, learn, imagine, know the world around us and seek dignified employment. Yet, most of our aspirations remain unfulfilled, due to the limited scope of the present education system.**

Historically, access to education in our country had been monopolised in the hands of the upper castes. Women too were rarely allowed to seek education. The Brahmanical-Patriarchal order structured the very notion of 'mental labour' in a way that marginalised several diverse knowledge practices that also emerged within our society. Under colonial rule, the seed of our present formal education system was planted to create a class of 'loyal' subjects who would fill up the ranks of employees for running the colonial administrative machinery. Yet, the possibility of a wider section of society being able to access formal education also brought with it an imagination of education as a ground for struggle and social re-construction at a wider scale. **The attempts made by Savitribai, Jyotiba Phule, and Fatima Sheikh mark a revolutionary initiative in this regard.**

**After 1947 too, the government never cared to seriously implement any forward-looking educational reform. For instance, recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1966) which had argued for a 'common school system' and universal free public education, were never taken up. Not only is access to quality education limited among a few but also our curriculum and the teaching-learning methods are often designed according to the concerns of the dominant sections of society. Struggles for lowering fees, providing hostel-library facilities at low cost, implementation of caste-based and OBC reservation and establishment of minority institutions played an important role in opening up the education for the majority of toiling people, including Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims and women of this country. However, by and large, the socio-economic model followed by successive governments has always directed the creative energy of educated people towards serving the economic and political elite, rather than applying their knowledge for the benefit of the oppressed and exploited majority.**

**Around the 1980s, policies of 'Liberalization-Privatization-Globalization' started getting implemented and the education sector came to be seen as a huge source of profiteering for domestic and international capital. A political consensus emerged that this was the only route for 'development'. From the National Policy of Education (1986) put forth by Rajiv Gandhi to the recent directives of the Modi Government such as the National Education Policy (2020), the agenda of privatization-commercialization has been implemented by both the Congress and the BJP. Similarly, parties emerging from nationality movements, vote-centric 'Left parties' and parties claiming to represent marginalized sections in the name of 'social justice' too have betrayed the majority of toiling people, including oppressed castes and backward regions. This led to establishment of private schools, colleges and universities with high fees and, consequently, the concentration of the class-caste elite in top-tier schools, colleges and universities. The neoliberal model has also been qualitatively changing the character of educational institutions. Pervasive control and surveillance in the name of 'discipline' and 'safety' that seeks to curtail even the basics of freedoms and democratic space within academic institutions, greater centralization of decision-making within institutes and the educational system as a whole. **Our deeply stratified and segmented education system actively reproduces the stratified and segmented labour market in our country reinforcing the caste system,****

**gendered social roles as well as other axes of social oppression in newer forms.**

**A high consumption culture has become synonymous with 'better quality of living' and consumerism has become deeply entrenched in the sphere of reproduction and recreation of a large section of students-youth.** Older feudal forms of control over individual's (particularly women's) bodies and sexuality are happily mixing with a new kind of control over bodies through certain standardized notions of beauty and commodity consumption. In many of the cases, the depiction of individuals in advertisements, TV serials, films, fashion shows and magazines are objectifying, commodifying and violent. There are also processes of homogenization of cultural variations across regions and communities and the student population is probably the easiest prey to these processes. The hegemony of the global consumerist culture is so powerful that all this is happening in the name of an individual's 'freedom of choice'.

**The present scenario of unemployment and underemployment in India, are compounded effects of agricultural crisis and jobless capitalist growth.** Historically in India, the negligibly done land-reform, least investment in building agrarian infrastructure and imposition of capital-intensive, ecologically devastating 'Green Revolution' from above has contributed towards intensifying distress in agriculture. The shift in policy towards favoring big Capital, both in agriculture, and industry and services, has generated too little and too poor employment even after substantial public investment. Though the corporatization of agriculture and other sectors is deepening, feudal land relations are still prevalent in many parts of the country. The capitalist model of growth is intrinsically based on the exploitation of cheap labour and displacement of people from land and livelihood. In the case of our country, capitalist development is also dependent on imperialist powers and uneven distribution of economic and political power across the globe. Hence, terms of development are skewed in the favour of imperialists. **Thus, the present crisis in the education system and its linkage with employment is not due to the lack of 'economic growth' of our country, rather it is due to the 'nature of the growth' itself.**

**In India, an apparently 'aggressive' foreign policy is going hand-in-hand with further surrendering the national interest to US-foreign policy framework and country's economic interest to the diktats of global finance capital. This is combined with an extractive and repressive regime domestically.** The neo-liberal regime in our country has accentuated the exploitation of cheap labour by crushing the collective power of workers through contractualization, scuttling legal rights and non-entitlement of social security provisions for the toiling people. Rapid disinvestment and process of selling public assets including Bank, Rail, LIC, Airports, Ports, Telecom and other services are going on. The loot of *jal-jangal-zameen* and other resources is causing massive ecological damage and is displacing people from their livelihoods, forcing them to join the swelling pool of cheap labour. From Labour Codes, Farm Laws, EIA amendment, Personal Data Protection law the journey is clearly a restoration of the 'Company Raj', from which the nation departed through anti-imperialist struggle. The administrative-judicial apparatus of the State and the corporate media houses have taken the side of capitalists without even the veil of neutrality and are active in criminalizing every voice of dissent. **These tendencies have become ever more aggressive with the coming to power of the BJP and the parallel assertion of RSS and are being done in the name of 'nationalism'.**

**The rise of fascist forces in our country is marked by their active collusion with capitalists.** Through efforts towards changing school textbooks (started by the HRD ministry under Murli Manohar Joshi and continued by the present Modi government), introducing various new courses

in the name of 'Indian Culture', creating a more elaborate international network of far-right think-tanks, NGOs, policy conclaves and media outlets, the RSS is trying to strengthen the ideological basis for the communalization of our society. This ideological propaganda is going hand-in-hand with the violent process of targeting Muslims and Dalits through lynchings and planned riots and providing arms training to cadre with complete impunity from the State.

**The Third World had been and is still rich. That is why wars are fought to control its natural and demographic resources. But our people are poor. The world's poorest people, today, subsidise the global super-elites.** The wave of decolonization that swept the globe in the 1940's and 50's created a new bipolar world order, which changed after the demise of the USSR and a unipolar capitalist world order have been created. US-led imperialism emerged triumphant, introducing a range of 'structural adjustments programmes' in formerly colonized nations. A range of agreements brokered by agencies like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Economic Forum wrestled countries in the Global South into submission within the hegemonic framework of the global finance capital. Rights-based claims over education, healthcare, food security, ecology, social justice and scientific and cultural progress - previously sought to be implemented by nationally-owned or socialised undertakings, despite various limitations - were now vacated for profit-making by multinational corporations.

**Globally there has been an emergence of far-Right forces in many countries, exploiting the crisis and insecurities of people as the capitalist system is failing to deliver basic equity and necessities of life for large numbers.** The rise of Far Right regimes across the world, from Trump in US, Netanyahu in Israel and Boris Johnson in UK to their poorer cousins like Victor Orban, Duterte, Bolsonaro and Erdogan, has emerged powerful on this structural crisis of capitalism. Historically high levels of mass deprivation, wealth inequality and Environmental devastation have sought to be placated, in a way, through their divisive anti-immigrant/anti-minority rhetoric. This bleak landscape has not been accepted lying down. The Wall Street financial crisis of 2008 has been followed by a revival of people's struggles against the neoliberal regime. The Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter among others provide inspiration and lessons for us. A series of student-workers-peasants movements in Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela and Ecuador, popular movements for regime change in Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon and much of the western Mediterranean region and stirrings of working class mobilization in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar and India form this rising tide. The anti-imperialist struggles within Latin American countries in the form of alternative governments, peoples' movements on various dimensions in different parts of the globe challenging the system are inspiring us to believe that 'another world is possible'. **All of these, in one form or another, are identifying neoliberal capitalism and neo-fascism as enemies of human peace, prosperity and our very survival.**

### **3. History of the Student Movement: Our legacy and present tasks**

**The education system as an apparatus of the dominant section's hegemony has been repeatedly subverted by vast numbers of students turning to politics and participating in various movements throughout its history.** Organized student activism emerged in colonial times mainly as part of anti-colonial struggles. The legacy of Bhagat Singh and his comrades within the anti-colonial struggle still enlightens our path along with many such others. The first All India Students

Federation was formed in 1936 and the anti-colonial struggle mostly informed the student politics in the colonial era. In the post-independence era, the left movement played an important role in exposing the anti-student and anti-people role of the government as the newly formed republic failed to deliver its basic promises of socio-economic transformation to the people and kept alive the egalitarian aspirations embedded within the freedom struggle. The hegemony of landed class and big capitalist remained significant and simultaneously a large section of masses remained impoverished. The left student organisations significantly took part in peoples' struggles for their rights and dignity. Students were actively involved with the peasant struggles of Telangana, Tebhaga and Srikakulam among others and joined other mass movements being carried on by the toiling sections of society in the 50s and 60s. The decolonisation movement in various parts of the world, the struggles against imperialism inspired the student-youth worldwide till 1970s. The Naxalbari peasant uprising saw thousands of students joining the struggle of toiling people braving heavy state repression, which despite its many limitations, demarcated the line of difference between struggling tendencies and vote-centric politics.

Student activism was key to the opposition against imposition of Hindi, and an integral part of the nationality movements be it Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Jharkhand, Kashmir etc. The Mandal Commission Report led to a sharp polarization between students in different phases and upper caste reactionary movements emerged in the name of 'equality' and 'merit'. Student union elections, meanwhile, were increasingly being won by student wings of the mainstream political parties, and increasingly being fought on partisan lines with greater emphasis on money and muscle power, NSUI and ABVP being two major examples among many others. The rise of ABVP from the 1970s polarised and organised students in casteist communal ideology with masculine assertion. On the other hand, with the coming in of substantial numbers of students from marginalized sections the struggle on the question of inclusiveness has become stronger within public universities. With the continuous neo-liberal attacks on education, in the present phase of the student movement, there are sporadic resistances in different places and new forms of movements are also emerging. The present BJP regime's attack on every democratic space, the intolerance towards freedom to debate and dissent have made student-youth politics an important battlefield against far-right and neo-liberal forces.

**Despite the all-round attack of ruling forces on toiling and oppressed people, the legitimacy of capitalism is being questioned every day** in the face of abysmally low standards of living of a substantial section of the population, the rising inequality at the global scale between and within nations, decline of social security benefits and more precariousness of life, continuous warmongering and rise of regressive social values, the massive ecological damage threatening the very existence of humanity.

Internationally, the first endeavours towards building an alternative to capitalism, be it in the USSR, China or in other decolonized nations, might have been defeated but they created the imagination of a world free of exploitation, and forced capitalism to come to terms with a right based order to an extent. There have been yet many other efforts and social experiments on various scales worldwide, which have also left us with lessons. We feel that we are going through a time in history when a lot of the assumptions that have been taken for granted within the progressive movement need to be questioned and debated. Hence a democratic churning both within the organization and the movement is important and it needs to be deeply embedded within sincere practice, learning from history and theory as well as from its own mistakes, while remaining firm on ideological grounds.

**Even within the progressive movement the global hegemony of capitalism is ideologically reflected in the rejection of the revolutionary task of complete social transformation. Instead we see efforts through funded NGOs emerging to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the state. They are advocating for the 'empowerment' and 'inclusion' of the underprivileged rather than questioning the structural inequality, exploitation and dispossession. The tendencies of certain kinds of 'identity politics', be it in the axis of caste, gender or minority, claiming to fight for 'social justice', are in many cases determined by the very neo-liberal logic of individual representation and politics of individual upward mobility, over any structural transformation. Even the vote centric left parties, have redirected all efforts in formation of state governments, deserting the revolutionary task. Taking electoral gains as the only desirable outcome from any social movement or activism, efforts to form and secure the seat of power have been dominant within these tendencies. A number of political tendencies also identify the far right merely as a rise of regressive elements, thereby missing its relation to the systemic crisis latent within the capitalist order.**

**COLLECTIVE seeks a revolutionary transformation towards ending capitalism, patriarchy, caste and other structures of oppression and discrimination (based on ability, language, religion, race, ethnicity, region, nationality etc.), towards the establishment of a society where all forms of exploitation will be abolished. We will try to develop the struggles of the students as integral to the struggles of the toiling and oppressed sections in our society. We, the members of COLLECTIVE, are taking up these tasks, seeking to transform the society while constantly transforming ourselves. This Program and Constitution is limited by the present state of the left-revolutionary movement. In the coming days, it will get enriched with the advancement of the left-revolutionary movement, and by the ideas coming from the new members, well-wishers and critiques.**

# Constitution

<b>01</b>	Name	<b>1. Name</b>
<b>02</b>	Flag	'COLLECTIVE', written in English, and 'कलेक्टिव', in Hindi.
<b>03</b>	Membership	<b>2. Flag</b>
<b>04</b>	Rights and Duties of Members	Red flag with length and breadth in 3:2 proportion, with 'COLLECTIVE' written horizontally in the center, with hammer and sickle.
<b>05</b>	Organizational Structure and Conference	<b>3. Membership</b>
<b>06</b>	Prevention of and Action against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment	Any student or youth above 14 years can be a member of COLLECTIVE, if the person accepts and implements the Program and Constitution of COLLECTIVE towards contributing to the left revolutionary student-youth movement of India. In exceptional cases, the age bar can be relaxed. The members will have to contribute Re. 2 for annual renewal of membership.
<b>07</b>	Disciplinary Action	<b>4. Rights and Duties of Members</b>
<b>08</b>	Change of Constitution	a. Members will abide by the Program and Constitution of the organization and implement the decisions taken by the Units/Committees. Members will actively uphold the revolutionary legacy of the student youth movement of our country and internationally. b. Members will attend meetings, participate actively and creatively to further the cause of the movement and organization. Members will campaign, contribute and raise funds in support of the movement. Members will attend the sensitization workshops organized by the organization.



c. Members have the right to elect and get elected. Members have the right to resign with stated reasons.

d. Members have the right to express their opinion in political and organizational matters to their same committee and all higher committees in a written and organized manner, even if that differs with the decisions taken in the committee meetings and conferences.

Under exceptional political circumstances, an opinion, which is not in contravention with the Program of the organization, but is different from the decisions of the Unit/State Committee, can be allowed to be practiced, under the supervision of the State Committee.

e. Members can exchange within themselves and express their views publicly in political matters, which are not contradictory to the aims and objectives of the organization or the revolutionary movement. The state committee can intervene in such matters if it feels that the discussion is disrupting the integrity of the organization.

## **5. Organizational Structure and Conference**

### **5.1. Conference**

a. Conference will be the highest body of organization for taking political and organizational decisions. In between the conferences, the State Committee will act as the leading body for taking political and organizational decisions, followed by the Unit and Committee of the areas and institutions. In between two meetings for a committee, the executives will be taking decisions and will report in the next committee meetings.

b. The Conference will be happening once in two years. With the declaration of the Conference, the State Committee will start renewing the whole membership. After the renewal and new membership, the State Committee will settle the proportion of delegates for the State Conference with respect to total membership, the dates and venue of the conferences and other draft documents and draft proposals for the conference. In the interim years, the whole membership will be renewed under the supervision of the State Committee and any Committee can organize its organizational conference, for settling organizational matters and discussing political matters in the interim years.

c. Quorum for any unit conference will be half of the total and in case quorum is not fulfilled twice the number of persons present will be considered as valid membership for representation into higher conferences.

d. The Agenda of the Conference, its Steering Committee, Presidium will be proposed by the state committee and finalized by the conference itself. In case of difference of opinion, majority opinion will prevail, after sufficient deliberations. The agenda of the Conference should include:

- i. Report and review of the activities from last Conference
- ii. Planning for the coming time
- iii. Accounting of fund
- iv. Electing the State Committee, the State Executives, Reporting Person(s) for cases against discrimination and sexual harassment and any other teams such as publication team, cultural team and so on.

## **5.2. Committees and Executives**

a. Between two conferences, the State Committee will be responsible for monitoring of overall organizational activities according to the guidelines settled by the conference and will take intermediate political and organizational decisions.\* Any Committee including the State Committee can include other members in the body as invited member, if it feels the need for doing so. The State Committee will have to meet at least once in two months. The State Committee can form activity based teams for better organizational functioning.

b. The conference will elect President, Vice-President (optional), General Secretary, Joint Secretaries (optional) and Treasurer. President will be chairing the meetings of the State Committee and will take decisions in consultation with Vice-President and General Secretary in between two meetings of the State Committee. In case of absence of President, Vice-President and in the absence of either, General Secretary will be responsible for these roles.

c. The area/institution based Units can form a Unit Committee taking all or a portion of its members, according to the size of the Unit. The Unit Conference will elect its President, Secretary and Treasurer for proper functioning of the unit including convening meetings and taking intermediate decisions. Between two Conferences, the State Committee can nominate members of the Unit Committee, as per the development of organizational activities.

d. Except in case of emergency meetings, information of the meeting needs to reach all members 24 hours before any meeting. The quorum for all units and bodies will be one third of the total constituent members of that body. In absence of the quorum, the meeting will be postponed. If the quorum is not getting fulfilled even in the second attempt, the committee has a right to take a decision even though the quorum is not completed.

## **6. Prevention of and Action against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

The State Committee and other Unit Committees will be responsible for undertaking sensitization workshop for members of the organization, at least once a year. The State Committee will ensure constitution of a body, with women members as majority, as and when any complaint against sexual harassment is brought to notice. Any grievance can be brought to the notice of the State Committee or a reporting person, nominated by the conference. It is the duty of every member to ensure any grievance should not be loosely discussed among members or other people but immediately brought to the notice of State Committee or the Reporting Person for due process to follow.

## **7. Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action can be taken against any member, Unit or Committee for acting against the Program, Constitution and interest of the organization. In any such case, the offense needs to

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\* Given the present state of organization and membership, the Delhi State Committee is being given the responsibility for giving membership, forming committees and monitoring organizational activities in other parts of the country and for maintaining national level coordination and fraternal relations. The next conference will review this and consider necessary changes.

be clearly stated to the concerned person and they have to be given the chance to explain their point-of-view. Disciplinary action can be only taken by the decision of the State Committee, which can include criticism, warning, removal from elected post, suspension or expulsion depending upon the case. A member facing disciplinary action has the right to appeal. Such appeal has to be submitted in written manner to the State Committee and in such cases, the State Committee has to review and respond back in a time-bound manner.

## **8. Change of Constitution**

The Program and Constitution of the organization can only be changed in the Conference with 2/3rd majority in favour of the proposed change.