

To

To Our Leaders, Decision and Opinion Makers

- President of Pakistan
- Prime Minister of Pakistan
- Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Social Sectors
- Federal Ministers and Secretaries for Education, Human Rights and Social Welfare & Special Education/NCCWD, Interior, Information
- Governor and Chief Ministers of Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab and NWFP
- Speaker National Assembly and Cabinet members
- Parliamentarians and Senators, Chairperson Standing Committees of the National Assembly and Senate
- CEOs /Editors of Print and Electronic Media

Dear Sir/ Madam,

REF: Civil Society Reservations on New Education Policy draft

We acknowledge the space provided to the civil society stakeholders to share their aspirations and recommendations on the earlier drafts of National Education Policy. In year 2008 PCE along with its allies organized provincial and national consultations and submitted these recommendations to Ministry of Education.

However, the latest draft of NEP (August 2009) has not incorporated most of the recommendations and had included a chapter without prior consultations. Therefore, PCE along with its allies strongly demands that the Draft Education policy should not be presented to the Cabinet for approval in its present shape.

Pakistan Coalition for Education and its allies have serious reservations and objects to some of policy principles given in the new Draft briefly narrated as follows;

1. Draft does not follow Rights Based Approach for the provision of education.
2. Over reliance on the private sector for the delivery of education services.
3. Over emphasis on Islamic Education, especially on the appointment of “Qaris” for teachers and teaching institutions.

4. Madaris and their education system should be properly supervised, managed and administered by the Ministry of Education, NOT by the Ministry of Interior or any other body.
5. The new policy draft contains a very narrow definition of emergencies and education in emergencies overlooking conflict and post conflict situations, especially what has happened in the recent decades. Education in emergencies needs greater emphasis and should be addressed by the government.

Immediate Demands:

1. The NEP should be inline with Rights Based Approach.
2. Free & compulsory education up to secondary level is a constitutional obligation of the state. The state should not shy away from its obligation; basically to be able to invest in security and other areas.
3. Inclusion of Civil Society in finalizing/revising the current draft of NEP before it is tabled in the cabinet for approval. We also demand that all our recommendations should be discussed and incorporated
4. Draft education policy be seriously reviewed and debated by the government through the parliament and the Federal Cabinet.
5. We demand that the government should address the priority issues- i.e. access and quality rather than continue with 'the subversion' by focusing on religion and ideology through education. In the same context chapter 4, on "Islamic Education" needs serious revisions.
6. Appointment of QARI in mainstream teaching institutions is strongly opposed.
7. The government's plan for placing the proposed Madrassa Education Authority under the Ministry of Interior needs to be debated widely. It is suggested that the government needs to plan its strategy vis a vis large scale reforms in *madrassahs*, their curriculum, registration and regulation *very carefully*.
8. Religious education is ideally the function of the family; the state can only facilitate, if possible, without dogmatizing society. We also believe that the said policy would result in promoting interfaith and sectarian divisions among students, teachers and the society at large
9. We demand that mainstream public school education should provide alternatives to madressa education for the children. We would like to remind the ruling Party in its election manifesto had said that free boarding schools would be opened for poor children. We demand that the promise should be kept.