

Programme

Our Heritage

1. The Students' Federation of India inherits with pride the anti-imperialist, patriotic, secular, democratic, and progressive legacy of the Indian people's struggle for national liberation from the British colonial rule. It carries forward the heritage of the progressive student movement of our country, which has always considered itself an inseparable part of the broader struggle for social transformation. It is this legacy that the Students' Federation of India holds aloft in its slogan of "Independence, Democracy, and Socialism!"
2. The Students' Federation of India cannot be oblivious of the fact that our country had to suffer centuries of colonial slavery and ruthless exploitation of foreign imperialism and native feudalism. This led to mass-scale poverty, hunger, misery and aggravation of social evils for the vast majority of the people and forced them to lead a sub-human life. The growing consciousness against the social evils saw the birth of a social reform movement led by great rational thinkers. The people's fight to put an end to the British colonial rule and feudalism gave birth to the historic national movement for independence, in which students played an active role.
3. The formation of the All India Students' Federation on 12th August 1936 marked the consolidation of the progressive and radical trends within the Indian student community and the beginning of the organized student movement in India. The distinctive character of AISF was the manner in which it organized within its fold students irrespective of their political affiliation under the slogan of anti-imperialism. Also, on the world-scale, rapid advances were being made in the USSR vis-à-vis the deepening crisis in the industrially advanced capitalist countries, which attracted students to the Left ideology.
4. The debates during the formative years of the AISF saw the crystallization of the two basic premises that have since guided the progressive student movement. The first is the right and the necessity of students to organize themselves in defense of their rights and to struggle for an education system that would meet the needs of the vast majority of our people. The second is the recognition that such a struggle can be successful only when combined with the broader struggles of other sections of the people.
5. The post World War II years, which brought about the decisive defeat of fascism, also witnessed massive popular resistance worldwide against colonialism. During this period, the national liberation struggles in various countries gained momentum, and India was not an exception. The AISF stood in solidarity with the mass struggles, at times playing a significant role. As a culmination of these struggles, our country finally attained political independence. However, these were also the times when the communal divide aided by the British was deepening that finally led to the partition of the country.
6. Independence in 1947 brought high hopes that the progressive and democratic ideals of the freedom struggle would be realized. In the initial decades, significant achievements were registered in building up a democratic polity and breaking the colonial stagnation of the economy. These, however, were halting and inadequate to meet the needs of our vast millions. This was because the process was fraught with contradictions - the central one being that the new regime adopted a capitalist path of development on the basis of a historic compromise with landlordism and imperialism. As a result, the stranglehold of feudal and semi-feudal relations remained largely intact. Consequently, neither economic growth nor democracy could have a stable base. In the sphere of education too, while there was some progress in the post-independence period, it was in the main limited to a privileged few, and the Constitutional directive for universal and compulsory primary education remained largely unfulfilled.
7. The different perspectives regarding the policies of the ruling class led to a serious rift in the student movement. A section of the leadership insisted on supporting the line of the then Congress Government, thus making student movement tail the Government's policies. An opposing section stood for mobilizing the student community against the Government policies. Due to the dominance of the former view, the AISF by the decade of sixties was robbed of the potential of struggling against the anti-student and anti-people policies of the then Congress Government. This forced various state unit organizations to function independently. It became essential to build a new militant organization moored in the earlier fine tradition of the AISF, which led to the formation of the Students' Federation of India [SFI] at an all India conference held from 27-30 December 1970 at Thiruvananthapuram.
8. The Students' Federation of India, since its inception, successfully championed the slogan of 'Study & Struggle' and effectively countered the disruptive theory of 'Student Power' that ascribed to the student community the leadership of social revolution. The Students' Federation of India stood firmly against attacks on democratic rights and fought against the imposition of emergency. Its slogan of "Education for all, Jobs for all" found a strong appeal within the student masses of the country, rallying them to the fold of the movement and the organization. The Students'

Federation of India consistently stood in solidarity with the anti-imperialist national liberation movements across the globe.

9. The introduction of new education policy in 1986 saw a renewed attack on the public education system. Students' Federation of India initiated a united struggle against these proposals intended to drastically curtail the scope of education in the Government sector. SFI was able to withstand the anti-reservation stir against the Mandal Commission recommendations due to the principled position it had taken. It fought in defense of the unity and integrity of the country, for communal amity, social justice and made heroic sacrifices in these struggles.
10. The Students' Federation of India is fully aware of the fact that the imposition of the neo-liberal economic policies on our country is disastrous to the vast majority of the people, which deprives large sections of students from access to education and employment. On the other hand, the right wing communal forces systematically undermine even the modest democratic and secular content of our education system to propagate their politics of hate and religious frenzy in an attempt to draw a wedge between different communities. Students' Federation of India has been at the forefront of struggles against this dual danger, in defense of students' rights and for upholding the secular, democratic character and sovereignty of our Republic.
11. The earlier generations of the student community played their proud and glorious role in fighting for the achievement of political independence from the British. Following their example, it is the historic and patriotic duty of our generation of students to take an active interest in the struggle for elimination of the evil legacies of dependence, backwardness and poverty, and laying the foundation for a really free, prosperous, and progressive future for our people. The Students' Federation of India presents before the student community a programme that guides them to achieve a democratic, scientific and progressive education system. It commits to carry forward the uncompromising struggle for the establishment of a socialist society, a social order free from all kinds of exploitation.

Our Perspective

1. The Students' Federation of India takes upon itself the historic task of leading the student community of our country in its endeavor to establish a democratic, scientific, and progressive education system to ensure education and job for all. The student community is an integral part of the society and the upliftment and betterment of their conditions of life and education depends upon and is determined by the all-round development of our society. Hence, they cannot but evince keen interest in the socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions of the country and its radical all-around development and progress.
2. Every demand for education, employment opportunities, and the right to work, and every slogan in defense of civil rights such as right to speech, assembly, and association, and every protest against any injustice or oppression are invariably connected with the policies of the state and thus assume a political character. In the face of this reality, it is hypocritical to subscribe to bankrupt slogans such as 'students should abstain from politics' and 'education should be apolitical'. The Students' Federation of India is of the considered view that such deceptive slogans have the political motivation of perpetuating political ignorance among the student community to conceal from them the harsh implications of the anti-people policies of the ruling classes thus help the conservative, exploitative social order to stay.
3. Even after more than five decades of independence, the State has miserably failed to provide universal elementary education. Millions of children though interested in attending schools, are forced to work as child laborers due to their abject poverty. Without bringing a thorough change in their socio-economic conditions, neither the obnoxious practice of child labor can be abolished nor the goal of universal elementary education achieved. Whatever expansion took place in the volume of educational institutions also is limited to some privileged few; the vast sections of the toiling masses still largely lack access to education - pre-primary to university. Large-scale commercialization and the abdication of the State from its responsibility to fund education has stifled the public education system and resulted in a rapid decline in the standard of and access to education.
4. SFI is of the opinion that ensuring education for all is the duty of the State. The deepening of the neo-liberal reforms since the closing decades of the last century has seen the State abdicating from its responsibility of disseminating education in the country. Due to this failure of the State, private educational institutes are mushrooming throughout the country with a disastrous impact on fees, admission policy and democratic rights. In the background of this reality, SFI demands that the State fulfill its responsibility of providing higher education, and for private educational institutions, a mechanism to ensure social control - especially in the area of admissions, fee and content - should be established.

5. The Students' Federation of India is critical of the existing education system also because of its inadequacy to boost the development of the enormous natural and human resources available, and to make use of the great growth potential of our country. The colonial influence in the curriculum of education is still more or less unaltered. The Union Government has continually eroded the federal character of our country and it is trying to vest major powers for itself in framing the policies on education. The attack on the democratic rights of the academic community, particularly those of students, has become very common. Students across the country have seen their basic right to associate and elect representatives being taken away and student resistance often being met by brutal repression.
6. The future of the youth is in grave crisis due to the severely deteriorating employment situation in the country. Lack of dynamism in the private industrial and service sectors coupled with the shrinking Government sector has constrained the growth of employment opportunities. The escalation of unemployment, both in general and especially among the educated youth, renders waste the vast social and material investment made in education.
7. The problems of education and its development or the unemployment crisis cannot be understood in isolation of the overall socio-economic conditions. Feudal land relations on the one hand and the dominance of monopoly and imperialist capital on the other have fettered the pace of industrialization in our country. In the absence of comprehensive land reforms, agricultural income continues to remain highly concentrated with a few. This has resulted in the failure to create an extensive and effective demand for industrial products, which could have in turn spurred the industrialization process. Monopoly and foreign capital compel the already existing relatively smaller units to close down. In the face of such hurdles, a sustained process of industrialization could never really take off. Such a lopsided industrialization in turn has failed to generate employment and an effective demand for manpower. In the absence of sufficient demand for trained and schooled labor in the economy, the spontaneous process of extension and development of education has lagged. Ultimately it is the actual and effective development of the real economy - industry and agriculture - which is crucial for extensive employment, education and overall prosperity. In the light of such an understanding, the task of land reform and elimination of the stranglehold of monopoly and imperialist capital are central to the objective of extensive generation of employment and concomitant expansion and development of education in our country.
8. Institutions of higher education play a crucial role in fostering the intellectual self-reliance of a country. The attack of imperialist globalization on education is part of the imperialist strategy to perpetuate its hegemonic influence on the third world by ruining independence of thought and research in natural and social sciences in higher academic institutions, which are very essential for any country to preserve sovereignty and self-reliance. The Students' Federation of India realises the urgent necessity of overhauling the present educational system. Equal access of opportunities at all stages of education should be ensured. SFI urges for a scientific and democratic education system that is suited to explore and develop all the capabilities and special aptitudes of the students that will help in propelling the rapid development of our people and the country.
9. The setback to socialism in the Soviet Union and East European countries paved the way for US-led imperialism to use its economic, political, and military power aggressively to establish its hegemony the world over. Imperialism has resorted to predatory wars in order to maintain its dominance and divert attention from the exploitative nature of the new economic reforms of globalization. The US, with its vast nuclear arsenal, exhibits an aggressive militarism, disregarding even basic international norms and treaties and superseding multilateral world forums such as the United Nations. The Students' Federation of India declares its deep-rooted commitment to world peace and nuclear disarmament and extends its solidarity to all the progressive forces of the world fighting for freedom, democracy, territorial integrity, national independence and socialism against imperialist hegemony. The Students' Federation of India strongly denounces US imperialism as the foremost enemy of humankind and declares its resolve to join hands with all progressive, anti-imperialist forces the world over in the battle to wipe out imperialism forever.
10. The insecurities, uneven development and deprivations generated by imperialist globalization has provided fertile grounds for the growth of fundamentalist and chauvinist forces. These forces have often received the support of imperialism because of their potential of disrupting people's unity. The imperialist aggression which is nothing but State terrorism and the violence unleashed by these forces seek their justification in each other. All forms of terrorism and fundamentalism pose a serious threat to our national unity and integrity. SFI is also opposed to the curtailment of democratic rights by the State in the name of combating terror. SFI defends the unity and integrity of our country and believes that it can be safeguarded only through student and other popular mobilizations.
11. In our country the most dangerous manifestation of the divisive tendencies is the communal fascistic policies of the Sangh Parivar. The communal forces are using education system as a means to inject the communal venom to further vested interests. They are using all the means at their disposal to disrupt the secular fabric of our country. This majority communalism in turn breeds minority communalism and vice-versa, which are detrimental to the interests of the people.

12. The period of liberalization is also a period of increasing attacks on the democratic rights of the people. The judiciary, which is regarded as a protector of the rights, is increasingly influenced by these policies as is evident in a series of anti-people judgments. Together with this, corrupt practices within a section of judiciary are undermining the faith of people. Though formally, both the rich and poor are equal in principle. The system of justice in essence is serving the interests of the exploiting classes.
13. The student movement is an integral component of the wider democratic movement of the workers, peasants, and other progressive forces. It can neither achieve its immediate day-to-day demands nor realise its aims and objectives without a combined and united effort of all the progressive and democratic forces of our country. The Students' Federation of India will continuously educate its ranks and propagate among the broad student masses the importance of the unity of all the democratic forces of the country in the struggle for a just and equitable social order. As such, it seeks the cooperation and the support of the democratic movement of workers, peasants, and the middle classes and extends its co-operation and support to all these movements and their aspirations. It raises its voice against all exploitation and oppression of workers, peasants, women, Dalits, and tribals.
14. As a student organization with a progressive outlook, Students' Federation of India is interested in encouraging free and frank discussion on what scientific socialism is and what are the correct means and methods of achieving it. The Students' Federation of India declares itself as an united and broad-based mass organisation of students and not a political party but is primarily interested in the upliftment and betterment of the student community, and pledges to zealously protect the independent, scientific, progressive, democratic, and secular character of its organization.

Aims and Objectives

1. The Students' Federation of India takes upon itself the task of organizing the students in schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions of the country and also Indian students studying abroad under its banner to build a powerful and well-knit student movement for the upliftment and betterment of the student community.
2. The Students' Federation of India fights for the realisation of its aim to establish a democratic, scientific, secular and progressive educational system ensuring education and job for all that calls for the implementation of comprehensive land reforms, elimination of the stranglehold of international finance capital and indigenous monopoly capitalism. The Students' Federation of India aims to accomplish this by organizing the student community in the struggles of the wider democratic movement of the workers, peasants, and other progressive forces.
3. The Students' Federation of India as a forward-looking and progressive student organization shall inscribe on its banner, "Independence, Democracy and Socialism". It is with this perspective that Students' Federation of India is committed to strive for a society free from all exploitation. It shall fight all such alien trends and tendencies that are disruptive of our struggle for the emancipation of our people and country.
4. The Students' Federation of India will continuously work to ensure all necessary facilities for complete and meaningful education - hostel, library and laboratory, sports and games, athletics and physical training, culture and entertainment, and other educative and social activities - that will be adequate and within the reach of all students. The Students' Federation of India will continuously fight for the attainment of all just and democratic rights of students. It will fight and work for the right of students to democratic and independent expression and conduct, to form unions and associations, to assemble, to participate in the management of educational institutions and in all activities connected with the academic and other aspects of student life. The Students' Federation of India will strive to develop the Students' urge for more and more knowledge and to inculcate among students the practice of self-education and self-discipline. The Students' Federation of India will further strive to develop close-knit relations between teachers, non-teaching staff, guardians, students and the rest of the academic community, and foster mutual respect and regard between them. The Students' Federation of India will untiringly resist any attempt to drive a wedge between the students and the rest of the academic community. It will also oppose all attempts to alienate the student community from other democratic and toiling sections of our people.
5. The Students' Federation of India, while stressing the duty and necessity of the student community for diligent and industrious study of the humanities and the sciences to equip themselves with adequate knowledge and enlightenment, simultaneously seeks to encourage and promote their thirst for political and social knowledge and consciousness. The students should thus be adequately prepared, on leaving school or college, to play their rightful role as conscious citizens of this fast changing society of our times.
6. The Students' Federation of India pledges to fight for equality of all, irrespective of religion, caste, gender, language, and race and as part of this struggle, commits to fight for the empowerment of the disadvantaged classes, castes, tribes and communities, the women, and other marginalized sections of the society and for the protection of the rights of the

linguistic, ethnic, racial, religious and other minorities. The Students' Federation of India upholds the constitutionally guaranteed rights for minorities to run and manage educational institutions in the country. However it should be ensured that these institutions are not run with a commercial motive to earn profits and misutilised for spreading irrational and fundamentalist ideology.

7. The Students' Federation of India stands firmly in defense of secularism, the complete separation of state and polity from religion. The Students' Federation of India declares its uncompromising opposition to all forms of religious fundamentalism, bigotry and communalism, and pledges to fight against all forms of communal violence, terror, and in particular communal fascism. The communal forces divide the student community thus weakening their struggles for educational and employment rights. The Students' Federation of India unflinchingly confronts all attempts to destroy the unity of the students and the people at large on religious and communal lines and with unfailing sincerity addresses itself to the task of promoting communal harmony and patriotic unity of the people against the anti-national forces of communalism.
8. Students Federation of India is strongly opposed to all forms of gender discrimination and oppression in every sphere of life. The prevalence of age-old evil traditions like sati and dowry portray the deplorable condition of women in our country. It commits to fight all patriarchal values and practices which draw their basis both from the remnants of feudal relations, outmoded ways of thought, and from the commodification of women under capitalism. SFI shall fight for the emancipation of women and demands equality of access to education for girls. SFI stands and strives for a progressive and gender sensitive ethos and curriculum.
9. The Students' Federation of India is vehemently opposed to all forms of caste discrimination and oppression. SFI strives to eradicate the inhuman practice of untouchability, all forms of social oppression and fights for the abolition of caste system. It supports reservations for the dalits, the adivasis and other backward castes and communities in the area of education and employment, and demands its extension to the private sector too. The Students' Federation of India is of the considered opinion that other forms of deprivation like economic, regional, and gender-wise backwardness should also be taken into account in providing reservations. It also raises its voice for the fulfillment of the existing stipulation of reservations and new provisions wherever required for all other disadvantaged categories (physically challenged, etc.).
10. The Students' Federation of India staunchly opposes all kinds of narrow, separatist parochialism and chauvinism, be it on linguistic, provincial, regional, or ethnic lines. The Students' Federation of India strives for a democratic realignment of power between the Union and the State Governments with emphasis on decentralization of power to strengthen the federal character of the nation in order to safeguard national unity and to ensure balanced development. The Students' Federation of India fully supports the developmental aspirations, both material and cultural, of the various nationalities in the Indian Union within the territorial integrity of the country and extends full cooperation to their legitimate and democratic struggles against the oppressive and authoritarian policies of the State.
11. The socially unplanned and uncontrolled capitalist path of development with the sole objective of reckless profiteering has precipitated dangerous environmental degradation. The Students' Federation of India is committed to environment-friendly development and will strive along with progressive peoples' movements for protection and sustenance of environment.
12. The cultural diversity of our country is facing multi-pronged attacks. On one hand the onslaught of market-oriented consumerist values is deforming our cultural foundations while on the other hand aggressive communalism is seeking to impose a Manuvadi cultural hierarchy in the name of 'cultural nationalism'. The Students' Federation of India firmly resists all attempts to mutilate the mosaic of our varied and pluralistic culture while firmly rejecting the influence of the colonial-feudal culture. It stands committed to steadfastly promote development of people's culture based on modern, scientific progressive and humanitarian values.
13. The Students' Federation of India works towards protecting identity, languages and culture of indigenous, tribal communities while fighting against their exploitation and dispossession for their overall development and helping them to integrate with the mainstream social life. At the same time, the Students' Federation of India struggles for the development of education, welfare and integrity of tribes by defending their rights. The rights of the tribal people should be protected according to the Schedules V and VI of the Constitution of India, especially at a time of intensifying attack of imperialist globalisation.
14. The Students' Federation of India is committed to strengthen the mass democratic movement in our country in order to advance the struggle for socio-economic emancipation of the people. The Students' Federation of India, along with other progressive forces, stands committed to fight against the stranglehold of feudal and casteist values and rituals that severely impair the advancement of democratic consciousness among the masses. A radical social reform movement together with the fight against feudal land relations along with other democratic and progressive forces is

an important part of Students' Federation of India's agenda to develop democratic consciousness among the vast toiling sections.

15. The Students' Federation of India as an organization and movement inspired by anti-imperialist, democratic, and socialist ideas, is pledged to combat the onslaught of imperialist globalization and domination in all areas of student and public life. The Students' Federation of India simultaneously is pledged to protect the unity and integrity of our country from the onslaught of communal and separatist forces. It extends its solidarity to all the progressive forces of the world fighting for freedom, independence, territorial integrity, democracy, and socialism against imperialist aggression. The Students' Federation of India is committed to work in close coordination with all the progressive, democratic, and socialist forces around the world and earnestly work for building a powerful international Student movement in defense of world peace, independence, democracy and socialism against imperialism.
16. The Students' Federation of India seeks to establish warm and friendly relations with all other organizations and associations of students, youth and the academic community, which are pledged to work for independence, secularism, democracy, peace, and socialism. It is prepared to unite with all those who are willing to join hands with it on specific issues and demands, and jointly act with them for the redress of the Students' grievances.
17. The Students' Federation of India places this programme before the student community and calls upon the students, youth, women, middle classes, peasants, workers and all other forces interested in the democratic advancement of our country to unite for the fulfillment of these tasks and join hands to build a prosperous life for all our people.
