

After fresh election to the Lok Sabha, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government took office in May, 2004 and adopted a National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). Following are the extracts from the NCMP which have a bearing on Education :



The UPA Government will ensure that all institutions of higher learning and profession education retain their autonomy;



The UPA Government will amend the Constitution to establish a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions that will provide direct affiliation for Minority Professional Institutions to Central Universities;



The UPA Government will promote modern and technical education among all minority communities. Social and economic empowerment of minorities to more systemic attention to education and employment will a priority concern for the UPA;



The UPA Government will ensure that all northeastern States will be given special assistance to upgrade and expand infrastructure;



The UPA Government will ensure that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is given every assistance to rebuild its infrastructure quickly;



The UPA Government will ensure legislation on domestic violence and against gender discrimination will be enacted;



The UPA Government will ensure that complete legal equality for women in all spheres will be made a practical reality especially by removing discriminatory legislation and by enacting new legislation that gives women, for instance, equal rights of ownership of assets like houses and land;



The UPA Government pledges to raise public spending in education to at least 6% of the GDP with at least half this amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner. The UPA Government will introduce a Cess on all central taxes to finance the commitment to universalize access to quality basic education;



The UPA Government will take immediate steps to reverse the trend of communalization of education that had set in the past five years. Steps will be taken to remove the communalization of the school syllabus that has taken place in the past five years. A review committee of experts will be set up for this purpose;



The UPA Government will ensure that no body is denied professional education because he or she is poor;



The UPA Government will ensure that a national cooked nutritious mid-may-meal scheme, funded mainly by the Central Government, will be introduced in primary and secondary school. An appropriate mechanism for quality checks will also be set up;



The UPA Government will also universalize the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children.