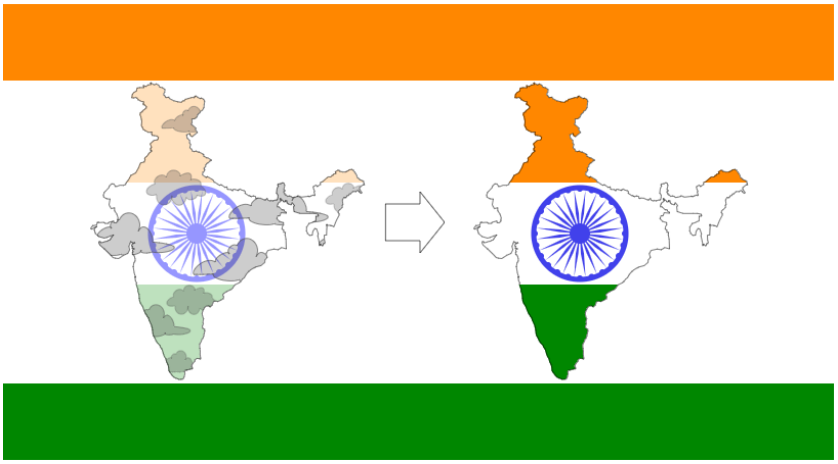
RESET INDIA

With Political and Education Reforms



Every nation, at certain moments in its history, must pause, reflect, and reset the systems that shape its journey—two in particular: the **political system** that shapes its leadership, and the **education system**, which shapes its next generation. In India today, both are failing to function as they should.

Corruption, nepotism, sectarianism, entitlement, and duplicity have seeped into these two vital pillars. Instead of nurturing ethics, excellence, and initiative, the systems often reward expediency, dependency, entitlements and manipulation. The consequences are visible everywhere. Across many critical measures—science, technology, manufacturing, infrastructure, sports, and global influence—we continue to trail our large neighbor to the east.

As faith in governments and institutions erodes, people increasingly retreat into survival mode. Personal welfare begins to take precedence over collective progress. Some withdraw quietly; others exploit whatever opportunities they can find. Society continues to function, but not in a way that inspires pride, fulfillment, or confidence in the future.

It is tempting to believe that human weaknesses are hollowing out these systems. But could it not be the other way around? Could it not be systemic weaknesses that allow human vices to rear their ugly heads, trumping virtues? After all, when weeds outgrow crops, the fault lies in the agricultural practices.

History offers compelling examples of how systemic changes can end crises and alter the course of nations. A decisive reset in 1978 propelled China toward a historic transformation. India's economic reforms in 1991 rescued the country from crisis and unleashed unprecedented growth. Brazil's Plano Real (URV reform) in 1994 stabilized the economy, lifted millions out of poverty, and transformed it into a major exporting nation.

Inspired by these examples, we present two systemic solutions for India: one to cleanse and revitalize politics, and the other to reimagine education. We offer them for the consideration of fellow Indians and leaders who possess the zeal, strength, and courage to bring about change and steer our nation toward accelerated and equitable growth.

RESET POLITICS

Open the System. End the Crisis. Lay New Foundations.

Our political system is in crisis. Corruption, nepotism, sectarianism, populism, and cynicism have seeped deep into the body politic. Public life has become awkward, unsavory, uninspiring, unfulfilling, embarrassing, and even disorienting. Very few leaders with values and vision are able to enter and survive the system, even as we need many more of them.

There are three systemic reasons for this deterioration:

1. Constituencies fragment people of various communities, concerns, and aspirations into powerless minorities within each one. By forcing these disparate groups to elect a single leader, the system tilts the scales toward the wealthy and the influential sections. Many communities rarely see their own leaders in power; desperate for recognition and representation, they fall prey to sectarian arithmetic and token appeasement.
2. Political parties have monopolized the paths to power. Leaders who want to serve the nation or its people have to first join a political party, surrender their independence, play party politics, support its legacy, leaders, policy and positions, and become entangled in local factions.
3. The FPTP system forces contestants to fight tooth and nail for every single vote. In desperation, they resort to devious methods to raise, distribute—and later recover—huge sums of money, turning politics into a game for the unscrupulous. Since a mere 50% (or less) is enough to win, parties are incentivized to cultivate "vote banks," exploiting and deepening social fault lines instead of erasing them.

Voters helplessly choose between the “lesser of two evils” lest their votes be wasted, accept an entire manifesto including items they do not support, and resign themselves to the high probability that the winning party will ultimately implement its own agenda. Public opinion and concerns get lost in the noise of political rhetoric. Voters trade their meaningless vote for cash, liquor, or other inducements.

Local leaders dominate national and state legislatures, often lacking the vision, outlook, and stature these bodies demand. Every area—from agriculture and education to sports, tourism, and environmental protection—has suffered from a lack of consistent and competent leadership since independence, contributing to the nation’s slow progress. MPs and MLAs often compete for local dominance, eroding the autonomy of local bodies.

It is time to end this dysfunction. We must restore the power of the vote and elect leaders capable of leading communities and the nation. This is how we can do it: by erasing constituency boundaries and opening all leaders to all voters, and all voters to all leaders.

Leaders with values and vision would return to the system, build their own voter bases based on their social standing, passion and dedication to various communities, causes and fields, appealing directly to voters across the nation (state in state elections)—without needing to join a political party. Political parties, in time, would become irrelevant and fade away.

Voters should be allowed to endorse and elevate multiple leaders, not just one, from across the nation (or state in state elections). A woman from an agricultural family, for instance, could endorse a leader championing farmers’ issues, another working for women’s empowerment, a

third focused on her community, and a fourth dedicated to improving general compartments and toilets in trains. Similarly, a Dalit teacher who is also a Divyang could distribute his votes to three leaders, one dedicated to the Dalit community, another to education, a third advocating for Divyang issues, a fourth dedicated to controlling inflation.

This can be achieved by giving voters multiple votes—say, a dozen—and allowing them to distribute these among multiple leaders in any proportion, through a new, easy-to-use and secure voting process.

Candidates with the highest vote counts—543 for the Lok Sabha and an appropriate number for Vidhan Sabhas—would be declared elected, and their voting power in legislatures would be proportional to their vote count, a system of Proportional Voting Power (PVP).

We will call this **MAPS**: Modern Age Political System.

MAPS guarantees committed leadership and fair representation for all communities, as each could elect its own leader. The nation would see rapid progress, with every community, sector, and field led by capable leaders and every cause finding a champion. Leaders with a national vision would rise to Parliament; those with a state vision would rise to state assemblies, leaving local bodies autonomous to be led by leaders focused on local development.

There would be no delimitation issues, as aspirants to the Lok Sabha would develop pan-India voter bases and acquire a national identity, shedding their local and regional affiliations. The Lok Sabha would truly become a "Lok Naayak Sabha," while the Rajya Sabha would continue to serve as a "Rajya Pratinidhi Sabha."

Special constituencies, such as teachers' or graduates', would no longer be needed, as these groups could elect leaders directly. Seats for them, and nominated members as well, can be shifted from upper houses to lower houses. Eminent personalities from all fields would be elected by their supporters directly.

Elections would transform from a high-drama spectacle of demagoguery with unpredictable outcomes into a quiet process of renewing effective leaders and replacing non-performers, ensuring both continuity and stability.

Legislatures would transform into Leadership Councils, composed of representatives from all sections of society. Legislators with deep expertise and strong voter connections would sponsor bills that genuinely reflect public opinion and concerns through the "Private Member's Bill" provision.

With each member of the legislature being independent, the era of party-line voting would give way to issue-based debates and merit-based support for bills and policies. Freed from partisan constraints, legislators could elect broadly respected leaders—such as Vajpayee and P. V. Narasimha Rao—as heads of government and hold them accountable without fear or favor.

Open the system. End the crisis. Lay new foundations. We did this once in 1991 for our economy and reaped the benefits. Now it is time to do the same for our political system. Let us urge our leaders to adopt MAPS sooner rather than later. It makes even their own work easier and more fulfilling.

Please see the full-length article at resetindia.org/maps, which elaborates the necessity, value and features of MAPS, answers related questions, and presents a new voting process for implementing it.

RESET EDUCATION

From Factory and Farm Models To Vibrant Forest Model

The current education system is a haven for the 10% to 15% who relish academic content. Its rigid clockwork of instruction and evaluation is painful and wasteful for the 5% or so who are gifted and talented, and it deprives every child of many vital familial and social events and experiences. Furthermore, the “educated” often discover that much of what they learned is irrelevant to their careers and lives.

The system suffers from an "RRR" problem: too much **Rigidity**, and too little **Relatability** and **Relevance**. The majority—some 70% to 80% of children—are left to navigate this system through rote memorization, lenient evaluation, or outright cheating in assignments and examinations, tacitly and even strategically blessed by schools under pressure to boost pass rates. Growing up amidst this duplicity, children learn that exigencies matter more than ethics and excellence. The system breaks the nation’s backbone of ethics and excellence day by day, year by year, and child by child.

NEP 2020 tries to address this RRR problem and its ill-consequences, rightly so, by advocating flexible learning trajectories and erasure of rigid barriers between arts and sciences, curricular and extracurricular activities, and so on. However, there are a few issues with its formula to make this happen—granting autonomy to institutions and asking them to innovate.

First, it is difficult for true innovation to flourish under centralized frameworks and bureaucratic weight, which remain largely unchanged. Second, the pressure to innovate can simply turn into greater pressure on teachers. Third, it invites "retail" interference—masquerading as innovation—from heavy-handed bureaucrats, school management, and influential figures or NGOs, adding to the "wholesale" political and bureaucratic interference from the top that already weighs down the system. Worse yet, fourth, autonomy risks abuse by unscrupulous elements offering meaningless courses or selling degrees.

Genuine innovation cannot be ordered or forced. It happens when it happens. What we need is an ecosystem where innovation is harvested, distributed, and field-tested regularly—without disruption or additional cost. And the innovation should not be about teaching children superficial memory tricks to pass "prep" content designed backwards from major academic disciplines and delivered over uninspiring and relativistic phases of learning—primary, secondary, higher, and lifelong education; rather, it should be about helping them discover and pursue fields and functions of the economy and society that match their potential and interests, in a seamless **learning continuum from childhood to grandparenthood** mirroring the natural biological, psychological, and sociological development of a person, focused on:

- **Sampling in Childhood**—exposure to languages, science, law, spirituality, heritage, carpentry, sewing, music, cooking, and more.
- **Discovery in Adolescence**—understanding oneself, human diversity, major fields and functions of society, collaboration, and interdependence.

- **Adventure in Youth**—diving deep into one's own interests and testing one's own true mettle in them.
- **Strategy in Adulthood**—balancing responsibilities, ambitions and fancies.

With this shift, we also let go of the Factory model integral to the primary and secondary education, the Farm model that dominates higher education, and the associated exams, grades, age-wise groupings, rigid schedules, academic years, expected learning outcomes, and the slavish rush to finish the syllabus.

Instead, we let a Vidyaranya (Educational Forest) Model emerge where educators, like trees, offer innovative learning experiences that are like fruits, and learners consume what matches their palate and system. In fact, this kind of ecosystem is nothing new; this is how classical music, dance, yoga, and other traditions have survived and thrived for ages. The only external intervention needed is to prevent the fallible palates from succumbing to 'junk foods,' and minds to peer pressure, fads, and shortcuts.

We can accomplish this with three foundational constructs:

- **Growth Centers**—open from ages *5*–9 (not 9–*5*), year-round, designated as Child, Adolescent, Youth, and Adult Centers. Learning unfolds throughout the day; educators and learners set their own hours. Existing school, college, and university buildings and campuses would be repurposed.
- **Grownules**—Multi-dimensional learning experiences—short or long, dense or sparse, immersive or light—around both contemporary and timeless topics and skills, customized for all backgrounds, with embedded reflective evaluation; open to any creator from any walk of life to design, and to any educator (today called a teacher) to offer in any Growth Center, and any interested learner to participate.
- **Edvisors**—a new role, similar to financial advisors and family counselors, devoted to helping children and parents craft personalized curricula, selecting Grownules that match each child's interests, potential, and ambition, and various other aspects of human nature. For example, nothing means the same to everyone; an elephant's food is the squirrel's terrain and the monkey's playground.

The four-phase continuum and the three-construct ecosystem resets the education system, addressing the RRR problem and its ill-consequences. It makes quality education affordable and available everywhere, from urban neighborhoods to tribal villages and expensive private schools to neighborhood government schools. It reduces stress on children, teachers, parents, schools, and even governments, eases work-family-education balance and even addresses transportation challenges. Last but not least, it gives the economy and the nation truly **fortified talent**. And it will do all of this without needing any additional budget.

For full details of the Vidyaranya model and how it accomplishes these goals, see the long-form article at: resetindia.org/education.

Call to Action

These solutions, the LCCF+ model, Inculot model, Varishth Parishad, Vidyaranya Model, unconventional by design, demand fundamental change. The leaders who summon the courage to champion them will secure a place in history and earn the gratitude of the nation—much like the duo of P. V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh, whose bold reforms in 1991 saved our economy from the brink of collapse.

Once set in motion—ignoring the cynics and naysayers, as was done with UPI—transformative ideas tend to carry themselves forward through their own innate power and appeal.

India does not lack talent, energy, or aspiration. What it needs is a systemic reset—one that releases the virtues and energies of its people rather than trapping them within failing structures.

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