

Dileep Ranjekar
Chief Executive Officer

February 11, 2009

The Chairperson
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development
Room No. 122, Parliament House Annexe
New Delhi 110 001

Sub.: Memorandum on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008

Sir,

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008, is landmark legislation in the history of Indian Education and Azim Premji Foundation is happy to see the Bill being introduced in Parliament.

Since this is a unique moment in the history of our nation it is absolutely critical that we get the Bill passed in the best possible form. We believe that all possible improvements be made now rather than being introduced later as amendments since the spirit of the original bill remains forever.

We therefore request your urgent attention to the following amendments in the Draft Bill of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008 before it is passed in Parliament:

1. **The Bill in its present form fails to guarantee that a child has achieved curricular goals as articulated in assessable indicators from the education process. In other words the bill does not guarantee education but only guarantees schooling.** There needs to be explicit commitment that every child will achieve expected learning outcomes commensurate with the years of schooling.
2. **The Bill in its present form places no accountability on the officers or officials who should guarantee the education with required quality of learning outcomes for every child.** The Right to Information Bill is a good example where the Parliament passed the clause that the Press Information Officer is accountable to provide the required information within one month failing which he / she is penalized. Similarly in the Right to Education Bill, there ought to be a clause which in some way at least builds the accountability of the concerned official – such as the Commissioner for Public Instruction, - towards the guarantee of a certain standard of education to every child.
3. **There should be a uniform Teacher Pupil Ratio for all primary schools which should not exceed 1:30.** In its present form, the Draft Bill specifies a PTR of 1:30 only for primary schools whose enrollment is within 120 students and arbitrarily lowers standards for schools whose enrollment exceeds that limit.

4. **All the components of the Bill should cover all categories of schools and not just State or Aided Schools.** While some provisions apply to all schools, others apply only to aided/State schools, such as the constitution of a School Management Committee. The Bill leaves out a large chunk of unaided schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and high-end private schools which really defeats the purpose of an equitable education.
5. **The Bill needs to bring into its ambit all children in the age group of 3-16 years,** which will ensure that a child is guaranteed a comprehensive and meaningful education till Grade X. Research has established that 3-6 yrs. is a vital period when children need to be exposed to literacy-rich environment to enable them to take advantage of the educational process.
6. **There should be a prescribed essential profile that a person should have to indicate professional teacher competence.** Merely laying down minimum criteria for teacher qualifications will not bring about the expected quality improvement.
7. **The bill does not specify the financial obligations of the Center and State Governments for its implementation.** The state shall be responsible for providing all the necessary financial resources to implement the provisions of this Act with or without support of the Union Government.

We hope that you will consider the above suggestions and incorporate the same. We will be happy to discuss the same with you if required.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Dileep Ranjekar

Copy to:

1. **President of India**
2. **Prime Minister, Govt. of India**
3. **Speaker, Rajya Sabha**
4. **Speaker, Lok Sabha**
5. **Deputy Speaker, Rajya Sabha**
6. **Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha**
7. **Minister of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.**