

Name of the University/College.....
Town/City.....Name of the State.....

Date.....

To
The Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi.

Dear Sir

Sub: requesting to withdraw Eight Higher Education Bills in the Parliament regarding:-

The HRD Ministry has introduced many Higher Education Bills over the last four years in the Parliament. Few of them affect the entire Higher Education System and are pregnant with serious consequences. We, the under signed draw your attention to the anti-people and undemocratic nature of the Bills and request you to withdraw the Bills or refer them to a wide public debate.

The HRD ministry has introduced eight Bills related to Higher Education in the Parliament during the last four years (2010 to 2013) which cover whole area of Higher Education. They, by short names, as you know, are 1) 'The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill- 2010'; 2) 'The Educational Tribunals Bill- 2010'; 3) 'The National Accreditation Bill - 2010'; 4) 'The Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill – 2010'; 5) 'The Higher Education and Research Bill-2011'; 6) 'The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, 2012; 7) The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill, 2013; 8) IIT Bill, 2013. These Bills have been introduced, ostensibly, to bring about a thorough reform in our higher education system. Yes, these Bills, if enacted and implemented will bring thorough reform, of course, in the interest of domestic and foreign market and against society. Your government, unfortunately, is bent upon bringing about these legislations at the earliest.

The Bills listed above, if enacted, would a) open flood gate to Foreign Direct Investment in higher education and reduce education into a tradable service, b) Tribunalise Justice in the field of education, c) privatize assessment and accreditation process resulting in widespread corruption, d) reduce concept of fairness in 'education service' to one of transparency which allow transparent plunder, e) establish an 'Independent Regulatory Authority in Higher Education (IRA in HE) in line with WTO guidelines ,of course, with a different name 'NCHER'. This NCHER will be independent from democratic pressures of the people and regulate the 'trade in education service' in the interest of foreign and domestic corporate houses. Government of India has already made 'offers' to World Trade Organisation in Higher Education Sector which eventually will become 'commitments' if not withdrawn before

conclusion of Doha Round Trade Negotiations. All the reforms in the field of education, the government intended to bring about, will only establish a legal and institutional set up for operationalisation of agreements related to education under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) – WTO regime.

It seems that your government believes in a) state cannot and need not spend its resources for higher education and so, the expenditure shall be met by the youth or her/his family directly – this leads to denial of education to the poor and disadvantaged, b) private agencies, compared to public institutions, can render better, efficient and cost effective services; therefore the limited government funding should go to private agencies rather than to public institutions – all facts about private colleges stand against this assumption; c) the Constitutional principles of *equality* and *social justice* can be replaced by the neo-liberal principle of *inclusion*, therefore, the ideal ‘free education to all’ can be replaced by the scheme ‘reimbursement for few’; d) education is a service rather than being a right or an entitlement of every child and youth and, therefore, equal provision for all need not be ensured; e) Education is a tradable commodity and therefore, profiteering through education is a legitimate objective, just like in any other trade; f) education is a private good and therefore, it is valid that opportunity and quality of education one receives is proportionate to one’s capacity to pay; g) education is an industry for producing human resources for corporate and market needs rather than a social process for building harmonious human beings for a democratic polity and therefore, the character of knowledge should be determined by market, rather than by the internal requirements of the discipline or the economic, political and cultural needs of the society. So, basing on such misconceived premises the government is trying to bring all reforms in the favor of trade in education sector. People of India cannot agree with such premises. Education cannot be spread in the medium of commerce and trade. Reducing education to a tradable service not only denies education to disadvantaged sections in the society, but also that those who get education will not get it worth the name. Trade in education develops servile attitude in the youth and such youth will not be able to protect the nation and its democratic polity from external and internal threats. Trade in education reduces society into a market. Instead, education should be developed as process of social development and transformation. Hope, you would agree that public educational institutions which are free from narrow interest in profit can only produce a new generation of youth which society requires for its all-round development.

The pro-people reforms in higher Education requires to be directed at a) abolition of trade in education, b) abandoning the so-called Public Private Partnership designed to siphon public funds and transfer public facilities and assets to private agencies, c) strengthening government universities and colleges by providing necessary infrastructure and appointing qualified teaching and non-teaching personnel, d) democratizing and decentralizing administration in the field of education, e) universalizing school education upto age 18 years and constantly increasing opportunities in higher education to meet the aspirations of the youth and needs of the society, f) building an education system in conformity with the basic values of constitution of India and g) last but not least, allotting minimum 6% of GNP through Union and State Budgets. However, the reforms aimed at by the Government of India are just in opposite direction.

Dear Prime Minister Sir, we appeal you earnestly to immediately withdraw all the referred neo-liberal Higher Education Bills [1) ‘The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill- 2010’; 2) ‘The Educational Tribunals Bill- 2010’; 3) ‘The National Accreditation Bill - 2010’; 4) ‘The Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill – 2010’; 5) ‘The Higher Education and Research Bill-2011’; 6) ‘The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill; 2012; 7) ‘The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill, 2013’; 8) IIT Bill, 2013] or to put them for wider debate in the society before pushing them for voting. Further we appeal to you to establish public education system from KG to PG in conformity with the values enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution that directs the State to build an education system for promoting a democratic, socialist, secular, egalitarian, just and socialist society in the Republic of India!

With Regards

S.No	Name	Occupation	Signature
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Copy to the President of India

Copy to Chairperson, Parliamentary Standing Committee for Ministry of Higher Education

Copy to the Minister for Human Resource Development, Govt. Of India

Campaign organized by
as a part of nationwide Campaign initiated by All India Forum for Right To Education