



अखिल भारत  
शिक्षा अधिकार मंच

# RECONSTRUCTING EDUCATION

*An organ in support of free and equitable education from KG to PG  
and in resistance to all forms of trade in education*

**Quarterly publication of All India Forum for Right to Education**

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## Editorial

These days, one may feel quite baffled by a few perhaps insightful questions thrown-up afresh in the context of some recent events. These events may include (though not limited to) the following:-The media responses on the recent verdict of Supreme Court upholding the constitutional validity of RTE Act on the question of 25 percent reservation for disadvantaged children in private schools,. The media coverage of the lately assent of both Houses of Parliament to the RTE amendment act (2010) providing disadvantaged status to disabled children, home-based education for severely disabled and exempting minority institutions from RTE. Discussion on Delhi Government's decision to start a residential school for SC, ST, OBC and minority children on PPP model of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. The recently commenced broadcast of a television serial Satyamev Jayate on Star Plus (particularly its episode dated June 10th 2012) along with its follow-up program Asar broadcasted on Star News (dated June 15th 2012), wherein a public celebrity issued call for donations/charities for the education of disabled children to the trust/aided schools without at all discussing the aspect of public (state) funded schools.

This state of affairs raises certain pertinent questions. whether fundamental rights of citizens of any particular group/ community/class can be (and should be) protected through benevolence/charity/philanthropy/compassion/sacrifice of another individual/group/community/class? Whether such a focus grounded in these forms of benevolence is not distorting the modern notion of rights itself, which is essentially centered on the principles of dignity and equality; and according to which, rights are rooted in their recognition by the state and guaranteed protection under the law of the land? Whether personal or familial purchasing capacity of an individual or someone's donation and sacrifice should be (or could be) a guarantee for enjoying a fundamental right of a citizen? Further,

**"Educate! Agitate! Organise!"**

*and continue struggle for*

**Reclaiming Knowledge, Reconstructing Education**

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is it sufficient to focus on inclusion, or equality / equitable should be our objective? Is it sensible and essential for the media (particularly its electronic avatar) to focus on non-implementation question, instead of engaging in an analysis that is informed by policy shortcomings as well? How should one deal with a perspective that is based on glamour and exceptional/genius instead of being situated in the framework of ordinary? How should we respond to the interventions launched ostensibly for the protection of rights of certain people particularly by the media involving public celebrities, corporate houses and other agencies of neoliberal global capital who only refer to political

in very elusory manner so as to perhaps capture the political leadership of potential mass struggles from genuine mass leaders to themselves?

We believe that this issue of “Reconstructing Education” along with the previous and the forthcoming ones will equip the inquisitive reader to more critically engage with the affairs of our times by throwing some light to the above outlined searching questions. No progressive peoples movement striving for some colossal objective, like the establishment of ‘common school system based on the concept of neighborhood schools’ (CSS-NS) can succeed without unmistakably resolving these fundamental questions.

## PERSPECTIVES

# The Common School System- A Dream For Ever

Even during freedom struggle, our national leaders conceived of a National System of Education and some institutions were started in different parts of the country by nationalists. Many of them were open to all and were non-discriminatory in character. Mahatma Gandhi proposed Basic Education which had the characteristics of a Common School System. Schooling for a period of eight years was considered essential for every citizen. Thus even before Kothari Commission came up with the concept of Common School System, the idea was there for long. Kothari Commission gave an impetus to the idea. Even though more than forty years have gone since the Report, it is regretful that not only a Common System has not come up, but we are drifting apart due to the neo-liberal policies adopted by successive governments and the undue influence of the World Bank on policy-making.

### ONSLAUGHT OF PRIVATISATION

Mohini Jain and Unnikrishnan judgements gave a lot of hope to all educationists and social activists that education, as a fundamental right would give the State a

pre-dominant responsibility to provide education for all children less than 14 years. But RTE Act 2009 belied their hopes and desires. The Act does not mention CSS anywhere; on the other hand it has permitted privatization of schools and provided for re-imbursment of the cost of education foregone by the private managements in admitting poor children against 25% of seats reserved for them in private schools. It has also restricted the period of compulsory education for just 8 years between the ages 6 and 14. Pre-school education can only be a desirable activity of the State and it is not a fundamental right. All these show that CSS is not in the agenda of the Centre. Almost all the States are encouraging private schools and have reduced their budget allocation to education. Tamilnadu, for example, which was spending anything between 25-34% of its budget on education is now allocating only 14.6%, which includes central contribution under SSA and allied schemes. Unaided English Medium schools which numbered just under 40 in 1978 exceed 4500 at present which does not include thousands of nursery and primary schools.

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## ESSENTIALS OF COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. A common School belongs to every child and entry is not restricted to any religion, caste or creed or community.
2. It is wholly funded by the State. No fees are levied and children are entitled to free education.
3. No discrimination of any kind is permitted not only in admission but in the classrooms .  
The infra-structure and practices in the school are disabled-friendly.
4. Mother-tongue will be the medium of instruction.
5. Education of equitable quality will be assured to all children in a full-time regular school It will promote the development of the Head, Heart and Hand of the child.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL

Neighbourhood school is the necessary corollary to the Common School System. By this strategy, it becomes the duty of every school to admit every child in its neighbourhood and it is the right of every child to seek admission into the nearest school. Neighbourhood school lays no other condition than proximity to the school. This has several advantages to the child as well as the community.

1. The travel time to meander to the school is reduced, thereby the child has extra time for study and recreation. The child can also help the parents in household work.(This should not be misconstrued with child labour)
2. There will be no need for free bus passes, resulting in considerable saving for the State.
3. School transport system will be greatly reduced, leading to saving of fuel as well as improvement of the eco-system. Air pollution will be reduced. In Tamilnadu alone nearly 25000 vehicles-buses, vans, autos- take children from home to school.
4. Death of children due to accidents will also be minimised.
5. Every child comes to know of other children in her neighbourhood which will increase comradery. The socio-economic barriers will have little effect on children.
6. The community will consider the School as its own and will take greater interest in its functioning. Parents of diverse backgrounds will play a useful role.

### THE STATE AND THE CSS-NS

It will be evident that all these require a kind of society where equality is guaranteed to every citizen. While the Preamble to our Constitution grants equality, in practice it

is not so. While socialism has been thrust into the Preamble during the Emergency, no effort was taken to bring in a socialistic State. If only the status of the Directive Principles had been converted into mandatory duties of the State, some change could have come.

### CSS IN SOCIALISTIC NATIONS

CSS-NS are being fully practiced only in Socialistic countries. I was fortunate to be in a village in the erstwhile Soviet Union before its disintegration. Then enrolment of children was going on and I was delighted when little children with bugles and drums went from house to house and invited the children to be enrolled to join their procession. The procession ended in the school and the new children had a happy time with other children. I was told that that would go on for a fortnight for the new children to get acclimatized to the school and the children there. No dragging of unwilling children to the school by the parent. I dreamt that at least in one of the 7 lakhs of hamlets such a method is adopted. Children were given great respect. Teachers were fully trained and child-friendly. Quality education was provided to all children. This is what I consider as the hallmark of CSS.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE NOT CSS

Some link Public schools in US and elsewhere with CSS. Of course Public Schools provide education without discrimination. Privatisation of education is in full swing in most countries. An article in a magazine complains, "A small group of billionaires is promoting privatization, deprofessionalisation and high-stakes testing as fixes for American public schools". The argument in favour of privatization is that when parents and students have greater choice, schools would be forced to compete for customers, thereby driving the schools to up their quality. But a study by the Teachers' College, Columbia University finds that private schools serve far fewer students than traditional public schools, and have high attrition rates among their lower performing students(2011). A powerful movement is going on against privatization of schools.

Since the sole motive of private schools is profit-making, it cannot co-exist with public schools. While Kothari Commission has not barred private schools from CSS, experience within and without has shown it is well nigh impossible to implement a non-discriminatory system of education available to all children under the dual provision

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of private and public schools.

#### WHAT NEXT?

A survey of history will show that nowhere has educational revolution preceded social revolution. Changes in the education system will happen only when the socio-political climate is congenial to change. Our objective therefore boils down to bring about a radical change in the political system. Political parties have evinced little interest in CSS-NS. People, though aware of the need for quality education, are not prepared to fight for free quality education through Government schools. Their eagerness to get their children into private schools taking advantage of 25% reservation shows they are not eager to send their children to government schools. We have to build a powerful movement to convince the common people that their children are entitled to free quality education and they have to force the government to upgrade their schools and ensure good education. CSS-NS should turn out to be a mass programme. It is possible and we will make it possible.

#### MOBILISATION OF PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

All these call for activating the masses in favour of CSS-NS. AIFRTE can at best provide a theoretical support, but

mobilization of the masses has to be undertaken on a large scale. In this, students, teachers, trade unions and like-minded persons and organisations are to be used to send the message. Street plays, dramas, public meetings, press conferences etc., are some of the means to reach the people at large. AIFRTE's perspective statement should be translated into all regional languages. Posters should also be printed in all languages. Not only publicity but the spirit of the masses should be aroused so that CSS-NS becomes a universal demand of the people. AIFRTE cannot undertake this mission all by itself. Its member organizations should be assigned the job. In whatever State AIFRTE has no affiliated unit, we have to find one. In Tamilnadu, the demand for Uniform Equitable Quality Education was conceded by the Government only when it turned out to be a mass movement and student wings courted arrest and faced police brutality. Unless CSS-NS turns out to be a mass demand, it would just be a utopian dream.

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## Pseudo Educationists and Edpreneurs

One important argument advanced in favour of the formation of a state, scholars confer is to provide indivisible public services like Education and health to the citizens. They are called as merit wants that can be provided by an institution that stands for sovereign political power. The World Bank economists have used their intellect to distinguish between public goods and private goods even in education. They have called only school education as a public good and higher education as private good as it provides benefits to the individual and not to the public (even if one becomes a Nobel laureate we should not claim him or her as a citizen of a country). Even this distinction did not save school education in India is a different matter. Those who are familiar with the American higher education know that around 65 percent of the students are provided with free education through scholarships. The private universities survive with the munificent endowments and the research projects that the distinguished alumni get from private sector. However, they are very few. The situation in

the higher education of the advanced countries varies from country to country. Now the Indian government is seeking ideas and recommendations from concerned citizens, business groups etc as to how to expand higher education to meet the growing needs of an economy.

Indian higher education of the modern variety was introduced by the British to meet their requirements and to help create an elite class that helped them to survive and would run the state once they leave. There are several issues in this statement, but we concentrate on the current discussion on a report given by a group of business-cum-educationists recently in Delhi on private participation in higher education. The committee on "Corporate participation in Higher Education" constituted by MHRD under the chairmanship of Mr. Narayana Murthy presented the report to the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, in New Delhi on May 08, 2012.

It is reported that the committee wanted land free of

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cost (wanted on lease for 999 years like the Mulla Periyar dam) from the government and a 300 percent deduction from taxable income. The wish list continues; a 10 year multiple entry visa for foreign students, a national loan fund of Rs 1 lakh crores, no space index for institutions in urban areas to start campuses (like one room universities) and the Prime Minister should personally write to the business houses to take part in higher education. We could not access the detailed report and could pick up few points from the media reports. It appears that neither the Professors nor the civil society organizations have voiced their views on this important issue that would impact the future generations and the country.

Some of the experts who have given the recommendation are being considered by a section of the media as great Intellectuals and Educationists who brought a turnaround in the system. While the critiques and a few educationists consider them as body shoppers with naked craving for money and success. It is also alleged that some of these self styled educationists brought disaster to the system as they were responsible in influencing the whole system to concentrate on the production of men-machines or so called software personnel to meet the lower level skill requirements of USA and other advanced countries in their transition from manufacturing economies to service providers. It is difficult to evaluate the ultimate result from this transformation is a gain or drain; the country lost the best brains of few generations due to the private interests and profits of the few. We all know how the Engineering colleges in the country particularly in the South where English medium helped the boys and girls to access the job market of English speaking advanced countries flooded with BCA, MCA and such related degrees. Those who could not get in to it used the informal sector to get the tag soft ware engineer certification even without a degree and left formal education in the mad rush for jobs in the 1990s and 2000s. The froth is gone now. There is some kind of homogeneity and a guarantee of minimum salary structure comparable to some central government jobs now in the soft ware sector for a select few. The repugnance for these courses is reflected in the closure of several colleges in the South. Can a developing country with less than 15 percent enrolment in higher education and a dropout rate of around 70 percent at school stage afford this?

The collegiate education or higher education in the country was initiated through the Grant-in-aid system of

the East India Company that promoted philanthropic organizations including private charities to establish educational institutions. If we look at the history of these institutions, we realize that those who have occupied important positions in India and abroad in the past and being flaunted now as educationists were the beneficiaries of this phenomenon. We must pay our respect and gratitude to these institutes that have invested their resources without expecting anything in return. Some of them are still surviving along with the religious charities that have a different mandate, but have contributed for the development of education in the private sector. The funding agencies like UGC, AICTE, state departments of education etc have been providing grants to maintain these institutions that are generally declared as nonprofit organizations. But, majority of these institutions that came in the boom period with the support of political and business interests have made money out of the social demand for a certain category of education. Some of these institutions have flouted norms and put all kinds of pressure on the regulatory authorities to get their licenses to operate renewed. As a result, some of the regulators are in jail and several professors are going round the CBI, CVC etc for their extraordinary service rendered to higher education. Majority of these characters are involved in the operations as educationists and are being unmasked as pseudo Educationists. Amusingly, some of the professors who never taught in a school are producing text books for school children (not the school teachers) that create ripples in Parliament.

The land grant scheme to develop university education in the USA is different as there is a built-in character of charity in some of the well established private universities. They have shown results and produced Nobel laureates and transformed the economy. But, none of the entrepreneurs of education in India who can be called as Edpreneurs (including the experts of the Report) did not spell out the benefit to the society at large, if public resources are provided to the Edpreneur. If agreed, how it is possible to reconcile this with the arguments of the World Bank that higher education is a private good?

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# Issues arising out of school transport in a multilayered system of education

## Introduction

Every now and then, almost on every day basis, we hear of some school bus accident in some corner of India in which a few to a few dozen school going children are killed or admitted to hospitals with grievously fractured limbs and other major or minor injuries in school bus accident. Thus ends the life of the country's Naunihals - the would - be builders of the Nation. The private TV channels and the print media compete with each other in reporting such incidents along with all the hypothetical solutions to help their sale or TRP ratings. But even after this, combined with the various orders of the Supreme Court and the sane advice of the country's elders on this issue no change is affected. The very next day the country and its school buses are back to square one-back on the road. This raises a barrage of questions on the need of ferrying children to distant schools, long travel time, chance of accidents, effect of Air pollution, adverse effect on body and mind and loss of useful time by 2-4 hours (journey time) by every child every day. Issue before the society is whether the sacrifices of these young citizens in this manner are necessary for education. It should be given serious consideration whether such travels can be avoided without compromising with the overall output of education.

## Background

My school has 20 buses and other vans and autos for transportation. Also hundreds of private cars come to the school to drop their children and take them back. This condition prevails in all the schools in my city Ranchi. For thousands of school buses and vehicles running in Ranchi everyday pollution due to burning of petrol and diesel, not to talk of other wear and tear additives causing damages to environment, can be easily calculated. This must be the story with majority of schools in India.

As per the DISE Report<sup>1</sup> the total number of schools were 12,85,576 in 2008-09. A miniscule number of schools

in India provide bus service. It is estimated<sup>2</sup> that of the 60,000 buses sold in India annually, schools account for nearly 10,000, which is close to 20 per cent of the total bus market. For proper evaluation of the net effect private cars or commercial vehicles including public transport used for transporting children to and fro their schools also need to be accounted for along with the school buses. This must be generating a large number of polluting gases in still higher quantity affecting the environment adversely in much bigger way<sup>3</sup>. The rich private schools are hiring Air-conditioned buses to protect their travelling students from pollution. Renowned environmental magazine 'Down To Earth' (May 1-15, 2012 edition<sup>4</sup>) has reported various studies and concluded in its editorial that AC buses/vehicles have higher pollution effect on their travellers/own passengers than those which have their windows down. This shows that even AC equipped vehicles are not safe for the owner or the user. The climate change and global warming caused by increased pollution are already knocking at our doors in different ways. International conferences and Global summits are warning us day in and day out of an impending disaster due to the ever increasing pollution. A more accurate estimate can easily provide data for the variety of damages caused to children in particular and public in general. They can be one or all of the following

1. Reduced safety and security of children during travelling
2. Increased difficulty for parents in visiting school and keeping track of their wards
3. Improper/ undesired use of vast and costly resources of the country in the form of school bus and imported fuels like petrol and diesel.
4. Increase in Air pollution
5. Traffic Jams leading to waste of time, money and other resources

The first two items listed above affect the mental and physical health of the travelling children and their

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academic output. But it is for sure that as long as the system provides different kind of schools with different patterns like syllabi, standard etc. such a rat race of sending children to distant schools and millions of vehicles transporting them is destined to take place.

### **Neighbourhood Schools**

If school is in the neighbourhood with facilities for free equitable quality education, parents will agree to send their children to such a school without any hesitation. Children can go just by walking to the school. My school is around 100 metres away from my residence. One can watch my whole school from my house. No transport facility is required. So if school is in the same locality as one's residence then no buses, vans, cars would be required. No fuels will burn releasing a mix of polluting gases. Hence, human race will be saved from their bad influences. In addition the other important advantage of Neighbourhood Schools is that this also helps in safety and security of children. Walking down the school just a half or one km from the house is safe for children. Parents can keep eye on them. I can describe many incidence of my school. Many students who come by school bus elope away with their friends before entering the school premises. And they are back to catch the return bus on time to go back home. Neither school nor parents know that their children are bunking classes. Thus children succeed in keeping their parents in the dark. This can be prevented if school is in the neighbourhood.

If parents desire to visit the school they can easily go to the school in the neighbourhood. Just opposed to this the parents will delay their visit if they are residing far away from the school. The last but not the least is the saving of school bus fees in terms of money which sums up to a respectable amount in the days of ever rising cost of living.

### **Solution is CSS-NS**

CSS in neighbourhood school could be a boon for people. If there is a school in every locality with common facilities, educational services of perfect standard etc. then it will convince both rich and poor parents to send their

children to the school in the neighbourhood rather than sending to a far away school in a bus/ vehicle. To successfully implement it both Central and State Governments will need to focus and work towards a fully public-funded Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools from pre-primary stage to senior secondary stage (i.e. Class XII).

This alone can guarantee free and compulsory education of equitable quality to all children without any discrimination whatsoever. It is also a fact that those of the countries which had common school system in neighbourhood schools developed and created better place to live in than those which imparted education in a selective or preferential way.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, my take is strongly in favour of the Common School System in Neighbourhood School (CSS-NS). This system will really help a student to study and grow up fearlessly. All schools must be upgraded to a common standard, let us say of Central Schools level, with common facilities like Science Lab, Computer Lab, Library, regular trained teacher, high quality prescribed books etc. for free to all. Government should set up such new schools in the localities where this is not available. I support this and wish this system to succeed in India.

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# Capitalist Crises, Privatisation and Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Capitalist globalisation has been masked under the neutral term called globalisation in these days. Marx analysed and showed that crises is inevitable in capitalist mode of production. (Marx,1954). Capital itself is barrier to capitalist mode of production. History is replete with many evidences such as global crises of 1930s,1970s and 2008 in last less than hundred years. However, here we mainly focus on the crises of 1970s and how privatisation, public-private participation policies are designed in an attempt to come out of this crises.

The world capitalism got enmeshed into crises in 1970s due to many reasons like contradictions among imperialist countries namely America, Germany and Japan; the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 and 1978 etc. As a result, the profitability of capitalists in advanced capitalist countries got reduced drastically, dragging the entire world capitalism into crises. Some alternative was called for if the crisis was to be overcome (Harvey,2009) It is to solve this profitability crises of 1970s,the policies of privatisation and public-private participation have been thrust on third world countries by imperialist countries and their servitor institutions namely Brettenwood institutions.

The policy making in Third world countries started changing drastically after the so called 'golden age' of capitalism from 1970s onwards. As part of this general trend,during the last three decades or so, educational policies in India are formulated according to "Washington Consensus",which emphasised the role of market forces in the economy as the main mechanism for resource allocation. The prescriptions emanating from these frameworks have emphasised the need to redefine the role of the public sector in to promotion and regulation of free and competitive markets,rather than direct provision and subsidisation of goods and services." (Ha- Joon Chang,2008). The application of these policies to third world countries where markets are not developed did not yield positive results. In fact, most of these countries have recorded poor performance. This has resulted in the so called post-Washington consensus, which claims to be less fundamentalist in the sense of being sensitive to the institutional foundations of policy success. Whatever may be the claim, "the core policy proposals of the Washington Consensus still remain at the top of the post- Washington

Consensus agenda." (privatisation of public education, public health, common property resources like mines, forests etc.)(Ha-Joon Chang,2008). Along with all other peoples resources, public education is being made as means of capitalist investment to solve the crises of profitability of world capitalism. During this period,another important change had taken place. The nature of capital has changed significantly from industrial capital to finance capital. This is basically the period of capitalist globalisation or globalisation of finance capital. Since then, the responsibility of government to provide education to its own citizens is being challenged on the plea of a fiscal crunch almost in every nation and particularly in India. In this era of globalization all national governments have started taking resource crunch as pleas to shirk the responsibility of providing free education to their citizens and to encourage commercialization, corporatization and privatization of education. The paper deals with changes in the dominant form of capital and its grave implications for educational policy making and also show as a result, how the recently formulated policies like RTE Act (2009), Foreign Educational Institutions Bill (2010), etc. are likely to restrict the access of education to the poor and deny social justice and right to education to the Dalits, Adivasis and other marginalized groups.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part explains briefly about globalisation and particularly globalisation of finance capital and its impact on the state's ability to provide basic necessities such as education, health, food and safe drinking water etc. The second section highlights trading in education provisions present in the RTE-Act and Foreign Educational Institutions Bill mooted by the government. The third part is about questionable assumptions underlying 'efficiency of market's role' in allocation and distribution. The fourth section ends with some concluding remarks.

## I Globalisation of Capital

The process of development of finance capital was discussed in detail by Hilferding and Lenin. In the course of development of capitalism, there was a merger and coalescence of industrial capital and banking capital giving birth to finance capital at national level. In this period, finance

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capital was closely connected with and assisted by industrial capital. The present day finance capital is different from the finance capital of the earlier period in two different ways. First, it is detached from its national moorings. Secondly, it is also detached from industrial capital. Therefore, it represents highly volatile force roaming around the world in search of speculative gains. Thus, finance capital is internationalised and basically interested in speculative gains rather than industrial production. (Patnaik P, 2005). When restrictions on the cross border flows were removed as the Brettonwoods system based on fixed exchange rates collapsed, the capitalist states started withdrawing from the project of demand management. (Patnaik P, 2008.).

The opening up of the Indian economy to these international finance capital in the name of economic reforms in 1990s has led to paralysing of many pro-poor public policies. India has comfortable foreign exchange reserves position for quite some time, although our imports of goods and services are more than our exports. This is because of the accumulated portfolio investments (finance capital) form different financial institutions. (You may like to reconsider the underlined sentence formation.) The government has to protect the interests of these portfolio investors who take signals from the IMF and the World Bank either to stay or to leave the Indian stock market. Therefore, IMF and World Bank have considerable influence over the government policies (Bhaduri, 2009)

The finance capital is opposed to state activism because of four reasons.

- 1) It leads to fall in the value of shares: The increase in public spending leads to increase in inflation. Especially at high levels of employment and activity, exports decrease as a result of inflation because the prices of our goods increase both in terms of our currency and also in terms of foreign currency. Therefore, the demand for exports decline.
- 2) The demand for imports increases. A rise in imports and fall in exports will make the balance of trade adverse leading to current account deficit. This situation creates fears of exchange rate depreciation (fall in the external value of currency) which results in decline in the profitability of finance capital. When that happens, the financial institutions will pull out from share markets.
- 3) It leads to fall in real interest rates: As said earlier, increase in public spending means increase in the quantity of money and results in inflation. During the period of inflation, prices will rise persistently and the

value of money falls. Then the real interest rate also falls because it is the difference between nominal interest rate and inflation. (Since the rate of interest remains fixed at least for some period)

- 4) It erodes the state of confidence of the capitalists: In the absence of state intervention, the employment depends upon the state of confidence of the capitalists. If the increase in public spending promotes employment, then that undermines the social legitimacy of the capitalist class. This is much more so of financial capitalists.

Since finance capital both international and national, is going to stock market and money lending, public spending will adversely affect the finance capital. Thus government is more sensitive to the moods of the stock market and the financial sentiments of its players. IMF and World Bank are in a pivotal position to influence the perception of players like financial institutions, banks and other institutions of finance capital. Indian government wants to protect the interests of finance capital by becoming sensitive to mood of stock market and its major payers who are being predominantly influenced by IMF and WB. Indian government wants to secure and retain the approval of these international financial institutions. To please them, Indian government passed FRBM Act in 2003 , restricting deficit spending for the welfare of the poor. If government dares to be activist, it would find itself confronting capital flight with grave consequences for the economy. Therefore the government will favour cut in public spending.

Since government cannot spend, the idea has gained support that the government should raise resources through privatisation and the so called public-private partnership (PPP) but not through raising the fiscal deficit or imposing a turn over tax on securities transactions of finance capital. PPP is "another name for various arrangements in which the risk is public and the profit private. It is specifically favoured in developing countries these days by the World Bank, which warns countries at the same time against raising fiscal deficit" (Bhaduri, 2009). That is why all the policies formulated by the government, do have provisions which encourage privatisation and public private partnerships. The essential services like health, education, drinking water etc., are no exception. The Right to Education Act of 2009 and the Foreign Educational Institutions Bill 2010, in the field of education, are taken up to show how the policies of privatisation and PPP reincorporated. The 12th plan document on education displays the same trend.

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## II. FOREIGN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BILL AND RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT

### A) Foreign Educational Institutions Bill.(FEIB)

The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill has 4 chapters, 17 sections and a statement of objects and reasons. In the Foreign Educational Institutions bill, there is no provision to regulate the fee structure in foreign educational institutions i.e., foreign universities. It is completely left to the management of these institutions. But the 6th section of chapter 2 of this Bill dealing with fee structure indicates that the amount of fees charged is to be published in the prospectus (FEI Bill). The management of these institutions can charge any amount of fees from the students, the only thing that is mandatory is to publish this amount in their prospectus. Probably they may term this as 'transparency'.

Thousands of years of struggle of the oppressed classes and castes particularly of last 150 years had resulted in the inclusion of constitutional provisions namely reservation policies. With the coming of the foreign educational institutions bill, this provision becomes inapplicable. Indian government has no role in the entire administration process, recruitment of faculty or other staff, their qualifications, salary structure etc. in these institutions.

"All this means a very high degree of laissez-faire is on-non-involvement of the government in higher education to be provided by the foreign institutions" (Tilak, 2010). (The above underlined sentence needs reformulation.) Moreover, once they get permission from the government these institutions can decide anything and everything. Their operations will not be subject to any examination by anybody. In short, they are not accountable to anybody. As Tilak (2010) rightly says 'this reflects the neo-liberal government's unquestioned faith in markets'. In other words, government has unquestioned faith in the foreign capitalist who start educational institutions in India. According to the bill some foreign educational institutions which are not giving degree or diploma need not get even recognition within the country. About placing confidence in the market i.e. in private and foreign capital to provide education to the poor is a questionable assumption of market solution, which is discussed little later.

### B) Right to Education Act

There are 7 chapters, 38 sections in this Act. Firstly, there is problem with definitions. In the Chapter I, which gives definitions of concepts used here, defines capitation fee as "any kind of donation or contribution or payment other than the fee notified by the School" (RTE Act, 2009. chapter 1

section 2(b). It means a private school can charge any amount of fee by notifying it. In implementing foreign universities, any amount of fee can be charged by publishing in prospectus whereas in private schools any amount of fee can be charged by notifying it. In the same chapter elementary education is defined as the 'education from 1st class to 8th classes. Pre-primary education which became so important today, is not the responsibility of the state as per this 'fundamental right'. Neither secondary nor higher secondary education is responsibility of the state. Even for the elementary education, if school has less than 60 students in a primary school (and in majority of existing primary schools in Andhra Pradesh, have the strength below 60 students) then there will be only one teacher according to this act. That means, quality education is not guaranteed even in elementary education.

Secondly, regarding the funding of implementation of even this defective act, the central government did not give any commitment. Section 3 of chapter 3 of RTE Act that deals with sharing of financial responsibilities says that "the central government shall provide to the state governments as grants-in-aid of revenues, such percentage of expenditure referred to in sub section 2 as it may determine from time to time in consultation with the state governments" (ibid. Chapter 3, section 7)

It is also said that the central government prepares the estimates of capital and recurring expenditure for the implementation of the provisions of the Act. As it usually happens the central government may ask state governments to share certain percentage of total expenditure, if state governments are not able to share that amount then on that plea, central government may not give required money for the implementation of this Act. In the matters of funding, central government shifts to states and states shift to local governments thereby leading to underfunding of even elementary education.

Last not the least, the section 12, sub-section 1 and 2 which talks about private school's responsibility for free and compulsory education provides the provision of 25 % seats reserved for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged group, in schools of "specified category" and private schools aided or unaided. It further says that these schools "shall be reimbursed expenditure so incurred" (RTE Act, 2009 Chapter 4, section 12 (b) and (c), point 2)

This indicates that the meagre budget allocated to education also does not go to strengthening of government schools in the villages and towns but will be diverted to elite government schools and corporate schools in the name of

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public private partnership (PPP). The government becomes agent of private and corporate sector in education rather than a regulator of private and corporate schools. These measures further weaken, and destroy, government schools. In the words of Anil Sadgopal, this act opens a "new market by demolishing the vast government school system, except some specified categories of elite schools such as Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas or the proposed Eleventh plan's block-level model schools and such other counterparts in various states and union territories" (Anil Sadgopal, 2011).

### III. Questionable Assumptions of Market

The unquestioned belief of the policy makers in markets is based on questionable assumptions of market. There is a fundamental problem with the market in a poverty stricken country like ours." If it is left to the market to decide what goods to produce, it may simply end up not producing even the most basic and necessary goods needed by the poor" (Bhaduri, 2005). It means market does not bother about those who don't have purchasing power i.e., (most of) dalits, tribals and the poor (and disabled and Muslims?) in India. It is concerned only with rich people and looks after fulfilling their needs.

Although education is not exactly like commodity, in the sense here education service commodity takes long time than any usual commodity, but here also if education is left to the market to decide, it will eliminate access to the poor and provide access to the rich. Is it justified and civilised to eliminate the historically discriminated groups like dalit's, tribal's and poor people from the field of education? Must not, certain basic necessities like water, housing, sanitation for the poor be provided by the governments?

The theory of market solution is based on questionable assumptions such as perfectly functioning market, where no producer or consumer has any power to influence the process etc. In reality there is no perfect competition because there are power imbalances, discrimination, transaction costs, and information asymmetry. No producer or consumer influences price is also untrue. In reality, powerful monopolies, monopolies, oligopolies abound in the real world even in the education sector. Being the powerful and large producers, these monopolies, oligopolies influence the prices to a substantial extent. Thus under very highly artificial assumptions, producers will produce goods efficiently by utilising scarce resources and get normal profits. Consumers also get good quality products and also at lowest possible

prices because of competition among producers. Since this does not exist in reality, it is inappropriate to apply market principles to the education sector.

### IV. Concluding Remarks

The change of capital from industrial form to financial form, the belief of policy makers and other intellectuals in unrealistic and questionable assumptions of perfect market to protect finance capital is resulting in the policies of withdrawal of state from providing education to its own citizens. This is why, even policies which talk about providing fundamental rights to the people like RTE Act, (Food Security Act etc) end up in supporting anti-people policies like privatisation and public private participation thereby denying access to education to the poor and social justice and right to education to dalits and adivasis in our country.

Therefore, even the day today struggles against privatisation and PPP must be protracted mass struggle and definitely become part of transformative struggles of oppressed and exploited masses of the society politically and ideologically.

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# Making Provisions for a Right to Education: Converting 'Liabilities' into 'Assets'?

According to recent news reports, the Delhi Cabinet proposes to start a residential school for children from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Muslim communities "in order to provide them opportunities to excel". This school shall not only be modelled along the lines of the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences based in Bhubaneswar, but will also be managed by the institute. A MoU will be signed between the Department of the Welfare for SC/ST/OBC/Minorities and the KISS. The institute shall also provide guidelines for constructing the school in Ishapur (Najafgarh area of South-west Delhi). Most interestingly, according to Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, the school will be expected to be "self-financing" after the first five years during which it will be financially supported by the Delhi government.

In analysing this decision, I also argue that every policy-decision regarding education can and must become a reason for us to engage not just with the most immediate questions relating to schooling, but also with the relationships between schooling, social-injustice and structural inequalities in India. I, therefore, propose to analyse role of private sector in education, and residential schools for underprivileged children in terms of the overall policy and philosophical frameworks within which they are located. I will also draw upon the discussion that took place on the e-forum of All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) 'Kagazkalam' [kagazkalam@googlegroups.com].

As Madhu Prasad (Member, Presidium-AIFRTE and former Professor, University of Delhi) rightly argues, it is not sufficient to apolitically analyse this step in terms of what it provides as compared to the existing state-government run schools or low-fee private (LFP) schools (these being the only options available to children from marginalized sections in India). An apolitical analysis fails to investigate how schooling is related to wider socioeconomic structures and processes, and the social

relations which shape children's identities and experiences inside and outside school. Such an analysis will thus misleadingly isolate questions of schooling from debates raging over the dominant economic paradigm in India, and social-political struggles over distribution of and access to resources. Instead, we need a thoroughly political reflection on the ideologies underlying this political economy of education which allows private institutes to develop as substitutes for a state-funded system of education. It is also essential to engage with the ideological assumptions underlying the curriculum and teaching-learning processes in an experiment in schooling before replicating it.

## **Policy issues : Conditional and ad hoc provisioning for a fundamental right**

Were there a reliable and fully accountable public-funded school system in place for these children and a KISS were only an alternative to that system, it would be a very different situation. Instead, efforts like the KISS may become the only mechanism available to these children to exercise their right to education. This kind of residential and private institutes, and such Public-Private-Partnership models of schooling for underprivileged children are very likely to become an excuse for the Indian state to further withdraw from its Constitutional responsibility towards these children, a point made by several members on Kagazkalam.

Rajesh Mishra, another discussant on Kagazkalam, and member, AIF-RTE points to the most alarming aspect of the proposed school in Delhi: that the school is expected to become "self-financing" after five years. Why should this be so? Would such an approach not render this fundamental right temporary? A right only for five years, only for five batches of underprivileged children? After that they either pay for their "free" education, rely on charity, or pay through sale of the products of their vocational training? These are the sources of funding for the KISS -

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corporate philanthropy, individual donations, "vocational products", and funds from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Details of how the Delhi government expects the school to become self-financing are not yet clear, and we need to demand all such details before the government makes budgetary allocations for yet another layer of schools designed to weaken the existing public-funded school system.

There are quite a few problems with such a model of schooling, and of funding for schools. Firstly, it is clearly another category of schools planned to cater to a certain group of children in a certain way, which will be added to the existing hierarchical, multi-layered school system. By involving yet another set of Ministries and Departments instead of making the MHRD or the state Departments of Education fully and permanently responsible, this approach complicates issues of governance. More alarmingly, it strengthens a policy of segregating children along lines of social class, ethnicity, caste and religion. Ramesh Patnaik (Organising Secretary, AIFRTE) and Vikas Gupta (Asst. Prof. University of Delhi and Member, National Executive, AIF-RTE) both vehemently oppose such segregation. Supposedly ensuring inclusion and special opportunity, such segregation may actually prove to be seriously problematic in the long term; and having to suddenly face harsh realities of discrimination may even traumatise children when they leave school. Thirdly, their right to education does not remain an unconditional fundamental entitlement of these children any more. They have to either pay an emotional price by leaving their homes, and all that is familiar and provides a sense of rootedness and identity, or pay a financial price and attend private schools. Else, they may risk life and limb by travelling long distances in frail boats and buses along frailer bridges. Or, remain uneducated.

Further, if philanthropy is part of the solution for "self-financing" residential schools, then the question we need to raise is: why should these children's right to education be a function of the charity of our society's richer sections? Why should education for one section be dependent on the resources of another section instead of on public-funds? Do we not need to question the skewed distribution of resources which makes such an inherently unjust situation possible? Most importantly, what happens if and

when this corporate and individual charity comes to an end? These children's rights will be automatically terminated and the state will sit twiddling its thumbs, protesting lack of resources as usual?

#### **Another Pointer to the Obvious Failure of RTE Act**

As Madhu Prasad points out, such an ad hoc provision only shows how seriously the RTE has failed in ensuring universal access to quality education for a majority of children. If the RTE were able to guarantee quality education closer for these children close to their homes why would these children and their families opt for residential schools? That there are about sixteen thousand children at the KISS may say much that the institute can be proud of, but it certainly points to the state's failure in multiple areas. The Act cannot ensure that there will be enough good schools, and that children and parents will not be forced to take up options like private fee-charging schools or residential schools which take children away from their homes and families.

The Act neither declares education free in an unequivocal manner, nor intends to bridge the widening gaps in quality existing within our multi-layered school system. Instead, it allows the state to go on adding different categories of schools to this system. With such flaws, how can this Act ensure underprivileged children's right to equitable education which may liberate them from oppressive lives and learning-processes? It basically just pushes them further away from the state-funded system of education towards options like private fee-charging, and/or residential institutes (which may also promise other facilities such as health-care, adequate food and a safe environment).

As Harsh Mander argued on Kagazkalam, "the right to education of a child is indivisible and inseparable from her other basic rights, such as the rights to protection, food and nutrition, health care and shelter". For him, state-run residential schools are the answer for children without families to depend on, and children from underprivileged groups. However, Ramesh Patnaik, though strongly in favour of seeing all these basic rights as part of the right education, does not agree with the concept of residential schools. He argues that these schools will segregate and divide children, and allow the state to abandon its

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responsibilities. Ashwini Singh, (School teacher, Faridabad & member, AIF-RTE) too argues against residential schools because they may strengthen disparities within marginalised communities. Instead, quality schooling and other basic rights provided for by the state in all neighbourhoods would truly ensure a right to education for the most marginalised children without their having to leave home. If the state can promise to deliver this to all underdeveloped and under-served areas in a time-bound manner and commit adequate funds for it, then residential schools could be an acceptable solution for the time being (except for institutionalized and street children who would need it for much longer).

Mainstreaming and marginalisation through curriculum : A look at microprocesses

The KISS does much for its 16, 500 children from tribal communities. It does not charge any fees. It provides health care, education in health and hygiene, information about infectious diseases, etc . It provides vocational training - offering training in a variety of skills which will fetch a range of opportunities and incomes . It also performs much better in both board examinations than schools run by the state government . Which is why it seem to be a good idea to replicate this experiment, and let the KISS help with managing school education elsewhere.

Though these make for a great plan to help these children survive individually within current development paradigm, nothing in these strategies or curriculum is intended to challenge this paradigm which marginalised them in the first place, or the hierarchical social order that marginalisation builds on. Problem is, we are conceiving marginalisation narrowly in terms of access to schools, and ignoring marginalisation through curriculum & pedagogy. We need to focus on whether and how school curricula deny or help voice the realities and concerns of underprivileged communities. Here are some examples of what the KISS tries to do for its students, and the related issues that should be, but are not raised in most classrooms (even apart from KISS):

1. It provides Vocational training to enter organised and unorganised sector. But, are questions regarding exploitation of rural and urban workers in unorganised sector raised? Does this training equip learners to assert their rights in current exploitative

scenario? Can it talk about market forces and state power which collude to sustain it? Learners may choose from a range of vocations, but will they be empowered to challenge the conditions under which they work? Will they be able to bring in experiences of their families and communities?

2. It teaches tribal children to preserve forests. Well, tribal communities are hardly exploiting forests even though they depend on them for survival. It is their rights and traditional ways of preserving forests which are being violated. Do teachers and textbooks talk about efforts of Dalit and tribal communities, particularly women, to organise and struggle for rights over land, forest, water?

3. It claims to deliver on gender equality and empowerment. Though it talks about decision-making in schools, participation in academic and extracurricular activities, access to vocational training and jobs, does it also teach to challenge deep-seated gender biases? The paper Gender Issues in Education (NCF 2005) asserts that such biases regarding marriage & motherhood, issues of control over bodies, choices, incomes, and assertion of citizenship by women, must be brought out. It argues that empowerment does not necessarily follow from education or even having jobs unless students learn to challenge norms and values in families and larger society. Further, is gender seen to be working with divisions along caste, ethnicity, religion and class?

There is difference between imparting skills and information to learners so they can act, speak and think in ways acceptable to the mainstream, and providing a critical education which helps them understand how their lives are shaped by power relations in the society, state policies and distribution of resources. The former is what most schools, and the KISS attempt. "To transform 'liabilities' into 'assets'" is one of its stated goals "and the secret to its success" . This approach is based on a particular understanding of "marginalised" and "mainstream" that also governs India's development paradigm. The understanding is that underprivileged people are a drain on the nation's resources, rather than 'productive' contributors to its growth. That they need to be trained - in skills and attitudes - to fit neatly into the machinery of a

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neoliberal and globalising India. That is how they will become assets to the Indian economy. So, schooling is not about with challenging this economic paradigm or social relations, but about converting students into agents of this economy.

Further, if and when we have a more meaningful curriculum, implementing it in segregated schools would be counter-productive. Diverse realities need to be discussed in classrooms where children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds learn together. Children need to listen to each other, understand and respect difference, and know that the same policies and worldviews shape their lives differently. It cannot be achieved in residential schools either, because they isolate individual learners from families and communities, rendering questions of structural inequality invisible and irrelevant.

Vikas Gupta and Ramesh Patnaik rightly assert that what is required is a state-funded common school system implemented through neighbourhood schools which would have common minimum standards for quality in curriculum and infrastructure. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 would do very well as a guiding document for curriculum reform. Further, the right to education must explicitly promise a right to relevant and transformative education which does not ignore concerns of socioculturally marginalised groups. Currently, the Act does not lay down any serious guidelines for curricular design or reform. The Indian state also needs to ensure that sufficient funds are devoted to curriculum planning, implementation and teacher-training.

### **On 'empowering' the state**

An important aspect of the discussion on Kagazkalam, was the role and status of the state in this era of globalization. Educationist Martin Carnoy explains how nation-states both lose and gain as a result of globalization. They have to agree to policies which increase global competitiveness even as they lead to sociopolitical destabilization. On the other hand, they retain some powers as the ones regulating the "political climate" in which corporate capital conducts its business globally every day. However, Michael Apple, Professor of

Education, argues that within the neoliberal paradigm the state's role is precisely this - to regulate this political climate in favour of market forces.

It is in this context that Firoz Ahmad, (teacher MCD School, Delhi) and member AIF-RTE underscores the need to think of how the state can "empower" itself to act against the interests of global capital, and commit itself to systematically invest in the welfare and development of those it has kept on the margins for too long now. It has to plan for transformation to a school-system and an economic growth paradigm which do not reproduce and deepen structural inequalities and sociocultural hegemony.

### **Some things we can do...**

One way to guard against uncritical, unthinking replication of any experiments in education is to ensure reliable and thorough research on the impact and processes of schooling in various such experiments. Indian public and policy-makers currently lack any understanding of the importance of social science research in guiding policy, a situation that needs to be urgently and systematically remedied. Education is an area of policy-making where quantitative and qualitative research into various aspects is badly needed; e.g. questions of curriculum, teacher's education and experiences, pedagogic processes; and through these, issues of access, social justice and empowerment in and through schooling. In fact, most developed countries, irrespective of their dominant economic paradigm, try to ensure that their universities continue to develop a body of research which is responsive to their major sociological concerns. And India does really need to follow suit.

A most important need of the hour though, is to build a demand for public-hearings on such policy-decisions related to education. This must become part of the larger agenda to democratize governance and decision-making given the diversities disparities in India.

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# All India Seminar at Patna

Ms. Guddi, the National Convenor of Yuva Biradari, Yusuf Meherally Centre, Mumbai, while inaugurating the Seminar, called upon the audience to stand by the weaker section of the society and do everything required to provide quality education to their children as the Government and the Corporate class do not seem to be worried about them at all. According to her, the RTE Act 2009 is an eye-wash and it is meant to help privatise education and make it a part of profit making and market economy. She further said that the Common School System in Neighbourhood schools is the only way to fulfil the dreams of our earlier generation of Nation-builders. The inaugural session of the Seminar



organised by the Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association was chaired by a Presidium consisting of Prof Wasi Ahmad, President of the Association, Dr. V.N.Sharma, Member, Secretariat, All India Forum for Right To Education (AIF-RTE) and Prof. S. P. Verma, formerly of Patna University.

Prince Gajendra Babu of Tamil Nadu Platform for Common School System (spoke in English; Hindi interpreter: Sri Ashwini Kumar) narrated the story of two years of implementation of RTE Act 2009 and drew attention of the audience to the fact that Bihar was the first State to set up a Commission for CSS-NS and it was expected that others

like Tamil Nadu will follow suit. But the Bihar Report is dumped without action to fulfil the ruling class agenda. He further said that TN Government opened Malls and police station in schools and merged the school with other schools. Doubting the intention of the ruling elite, Sri Ashutosh Kumar Rakesh desired that their hidden agenda must be exposed as the Act is only to help multi layered system of education. Prof. Anil Sadgopal said that the Government is determined to close down the Government schools so that the children are forced to go to Private schools where they may or may not go due to financial constraints. The Government is openly making anti-people laws which is

leading to from bad to worse situation in the field of education. He further stated that 30 schools in Bhopal were closed recently and they have all been asked to work in P.P. mode thus getting support of the market forces. Prof Wasi Ahmad summed up the session by asking how long the Government will speak something and do something differently. He desired that in the sessions ahead there will be convergence of views in making Education a political agenda. Sri Ankan Kumar, the working committee member, Sri Om Prakash Ojha, the State Secretary of the Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association, Prof Meher Engineer,

Chairman AIF-RTE and Aaj correspondent Sri Amalendu Mishra also spoke on the occasion.

The second session on Child Labour and Education was co-chaired by Prof. Madhu Prasad, Member, Presidium, AIF-RTE, Md Taslimuddin, General Secretary, Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association, and educationist Sri Akshay Kumar. Dr. Vikas Gupta of Delhi University dwelt upon at length on the problems faced by the handicapped children in their education. He clarified that census keeps no proper account of the handicapped. It is natural, therefore, that policy and laws made in this connection do not benefit them. Prof. Anil Sadgopal

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explained that economically distressed parents cannot bear the educational expenses of their children. This requires to be changed so that children can get educated upto class 12. S/Sri Lalan Kumar and Sanjay Kumar and Rajeshwar Das, Vice-President of Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association, Ashwini Kumar of Haryana, Dr. Vikas Gupta of D.U., Sri Rajesh of AISF also took part in the discussion. Sahdeo Ravidas, the Vice - President of Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association presented a beautiful song on differential in infrastructure affecting the educational environment.

The third session, jointly chaired by Sri Md. Taslimuddin, General Secretary of Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association, Prof. Meher Engineer, Chairman, AIF-RTE and Dr. Anil Sadgopal, Member, Presidium AIF-RTE, discussed what will be the mode and intensity of struggle to achieve the free and compulsory education of equitable quality for all. The house was also informed that when (Late) Brahmadeo Narain the founder of Bihar Non-gazetted Elementary Teachers Association organised movements 2.25 lakh teachers were participants. Teachers income have shot up now between 20000 and 50000 but the organisation is a pale shadow of the past.

The fourth session on 29th April was co-chaired by Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Prof Wasi Ahmad and Dr. Vikas Gupta. Prof. Minati Panda of JNU introduced the issue of Language and education and said that in 1970 81 languages were used in India which has reduced to 41 in 1999. Sri Surjit Singh Thokchom from Shillong, member, AIF-RTE talked about language issues in the N-E States whereas Dr. Vikram Singh Amrawat, the Office Secretary of AIF-RTE talked about the differences being created in

the name of language and dialects. According to Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri the difference between language and dialects is the language has tank and bullets behind them to support, dialects have nothing.

Dr. V.N.Sharma spoke at length on the Role of Common School System in National Integration wherein he explained how the later was a serious issue in 1960-80. It is not talked about anymore but the national integration can be achieved through imparting education to all in Common Education System in CSS-NS as education is a powerful tool. Teachers must be trained to impart education with this in mind. He called the RTE Act 2009 as a tool to weaken national integration rather than strengthening it.

Sri Ashwini Kumar of Harayana, Prof. Khagendra Kumar, Principal, Patna Training College, Dr. Kumar Sanjeev of Patna Training College presented their views on the subject. Dr. Anil Sadgopal quoted the case of Finland saying that it had the best system of education in whole of Europe after adopting CES in CSS-NS. Prof.S.K. Ganguly, Secretary of Patna University Teachers Association critically examined the State of Education in Bihar in his talk.

The fifth session had Prof Meher Engineer, Prof S.K. Ganguly and Prof Minati Panda in the Presidium. Prof Madhu Prasad, Sri Chaturanan Ojha of Gorakhpur, Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Prof S.P. Verma and Prof. Minati Panda of JNU took part in the discussion.

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*(Brief & English translation by Dr. V.N. Sharma)*

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## State Level Seminar on RTE Act at Hyderabad

Andhra Pradesh Save Education Committee (APSEC) has conducted a State Level Seminar on RTE Act and its implementation for two full years in Andhra Pradesh.

Prof. K. Chakradhara Rao (President, APSEC and Member, Board of Advisers, AIFRTE) presided over the meeting. Prof. G. Haragopal (Gen. Secretary, APSEC and Member, Presidium, AIFRTE) presented the key note address. Sri Madhusudhan, State coordinator, RTE cell, Government of Andhra Pradesh was the special guest of the evening. Reports of implementation of the RTE Act from

four districts namely; Karimnagar, Warangal, Mahaboobnagar and Guntur were placed in the Seminar. Sri D. Ramesh Patnaik (Organizing Secretary, APSEC and Member, Secretariat, AIFRTE) welcomed the gathering and laid down the purpose of the seminar. More than two hundred delegates participated in the seminar. They included activists of Democratic Teachers' Federation, Andhra Pradesh Teachers' Federation-257, Andhra Pradesh Teachers' Federation-1938, Andhra Pradesh Residential Educational Institutions' Teachers'

Association, Progressive Youth League and Progressive Democratic Students' Union. Many individual activists and groups also joined the seminar.

**Prof. K. Chakradhara Rao** in his presidential address analytically showed how disinterested are the government in providing education to the children. While the constitution of India directed the state to provide free and



compulsory education to all children up to age 14 years within ten years of implementation of the constitution of India, the successive governments in Delhi and in states never took it seriously. Supreme Court had reprimanded the government in Unnikrishnan case (1993) for not providing free and compulsory education to all children for almost four decades and interpreted that the right to education flows directly from the fundamental 'right to life'. Central government took almost one decade to affect an amendment to the constitution for the purpose. The half baked 86th amendment to the constitution (2002) did not include right to preschool and secondary education and limited only to elementary education. The central government took seven more years to bring the legislation, 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009' and took one more year to notify it. The 'Act' does not provide necessary measures to achieve the core elements of right to education like education for all, quality education for all and equitable education for all. The state government of Andhra Pradesh took one more year to notify the rules and is not serious about the implementation of the minimal provisions in the Act for development of government schools and regulation of private schools for

the last two years. It seems that the Act and the associated rules are prepared on the axiom that trade in education is unquestionable. He opined that all government schools will be closed within ten years if the present policy of the Government to neglect its own schools and encourage private schools along with reimbursement for 25% seats continues. The Government policies in every field (including education) are being formulated on the basis of

model of development imposed by World Bank. Such design is necessarily fraught with crises. He called upon the delegates to take the movement to the people in order to build strong pressure on the state for equal and democratic education for all.

**Prof. G. Haragopal** addressing the seminar exclaimed what the meaning of independence is if it can not provide elementary education to the disadvantaged, Dalits

and tribal children even after six decades of its achievement. Referring to his engagement in Bastar (talks between Government of Chattishghad and CPI (Maoist) party for mutual release of arrested tribal persons and abducted District Collector), he said that the children there are naked under age five and semi naked above age five. They are not going to school and are roaming in the forests with self-made sets of bow and arrows. He opined that the state has failed completely in providing education to the children in tribal areas and called up on the people's movements (wherever they are strong) to take up this cause. He said that he advised to Mr. Manushi Varma, a member of National Advisory Committee under chairmanship of Ms. Sonia Gandhi when the latter met him in Delhi to abolish trade in education and to establish common school system if the government is really serious about right of the children to education. In course of his speech, he recollected a reported experience of Prof Anil Sadgopal when the latter was invited to a meeting of the Election Manifesto Committee of Congress Party before general election in 2004 which was headed by Ms. Sonia Gandhi and attended by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Sri Pranab Mukherjee and few others. He narrated that Dr. Manmohan

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Singh did not agree to the proposal of Prof. Anil Sadgopal when the latter suggested that 6% of GNP should be allotted to education and further commented that no sensible nation would do it. Here stands the statesmanship of Manmohan Singh, Prof. Haragopal added. Prof. Haragopal reminded to the audience the famous statement of Mahatma Gandhi that education is very important for consolidation of freedom of the country and freedom is not real if it were to depend on police and military forces. He called upon the member organizations to build strong education movement in all districts.

**Prof. K. Nageswar**, graduate MLC addressing the Seminar said that while the Act is half baked one, the few good aspects of the Act are not implemented by the state government. He said that according to the RTE Act, every state is required to form a State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights or an equivalent body within six months from the date of the notification of the Act. State governments are not doing it even two years have lapsed after notification of the Act. (Only four states and Union Territories have so far appointed such Commissions.) The tragedy, he said, is that the aggrieved persons are destined to go to the same officers who have violated Act as there is no (autonomous) any grievance redressal mechanism in place. Prof. Nageswar Rao criticized the Act for not providing necessary support measures for retention of children in schools. He told that the government allowed teacher training programs in the private sector leading to fall of standards to a dismal levels. The private managements in D.Ed and B.Ed colleges are admitting students on the basis of capitation fee, they are providing fake attendance and teaching practice and records have also become fake. The private managements collect money for each of the fraud, he added. The reimbursement policy included in the Act, he criticized, would lead to the closure of government schools, siphoning funds to private managements and in the ultimate analysis will prove the Act to be a 'reimbursement Act' instead of a 'Right to Education Act'. He cited the appalling low standards in private engineering colleges which are more than seven hundred in number and are running purely on the basis of reimbursement from government and added that reimbursement only breeds corruption and do not produce quality. He called upon the teachers, who comprised the majority of the seminar participants, to recognize the rights of the children and fight for them.

**Sri Madhusudhan**, State coordinator, RTE Cell, addressing the seminar said that the government is trying to establish necessary infrastructure in all government schools and also to appoint qualified teachers according to the schedule of the Act. However, he consented, that there is a general collapse of governance and is causing weakening of public institutions. He said that the 25% reservation with reimbursement provision in private schools may play havoc with government schools leading to closure of the latter.

**Sri A. Narasimha Reddy**, vice president, APSEC and chairperson, Education Cell, APTF-257 reminded the house that the APSEC was born in 1986 to struggle against the National Policy on Education, 1986 which initiated commercialization of education through out the country. Criticizing 'RTE Act', he drew the attention of the house to different surveys which only proved that the 'RTE Act' failed in developing government schools in the last two years as expected, he added. He said that none other than Dr. Manmohan Singh should be ashamed of the fact that 40 percent of children are suffering from malnutrition in the country where he has been Finance Minister for two terms and Prime Minister for two terms. He demanded that the Mid-Day-Meal should be developed in to a proper program of nutrition. He analyzed that the finance capital is ruling the world and all policies are framed to serve this finance capital throughout the world. He analyzed that struggle against commercialization of education is a struggle against neo-liberal policies and imperialism. He called upon the teachers to own the save education movement and build it strongly.

**Sri K. Narayana Reddy**- State President of DTF, Sri. M. Balanna - state leader of APTF-1938, Ms. Ramadevi- State leader of APREITA, Com. M. Hanmesh - state Gen. Secretary of PYL, Com. J. L. Goutham - Gen. Secretary of PDSU also spoke in the seminar. Sri. Srinivas from Warangal District, Sri. Rajpavan from Karimnagar district, Sri Govardhan from Mahaboobnagar district, Sri Ramesh Patnaik from Gunturu district placed the reports of their survey in the seminar. All the reports clearly showed that the minimal staffing and infrastructural provisions made in the schedule of the Act are not implemented in the state.

A resolution was passed in the seminar after a thorough debate demanding abolition of commercialization of education and establishment of Common School System and abolition of reimbursement

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policy. The resolution demanded the state government to immediately strengthen government schools and to regulate private schools on the basis of G.O.no. 1/1994. The resolution called upon the save education activists to take up survey in every district and mobilize parents schoolwise to bring pressure on the government for strengthening of government schools. The resolution called upon the activists to build mass movements, schoolwise, wherever the conditions of schools are even behind the schedule of the 'RTE Act, 2009'

**Dr. K. Laxminarayana** (Secretary, APSEC and

Associate Professor of Economics, HCU) concluding the proceedings of seminar said that government will be interested in implementing negative aspects of the Right to education Act and commercialization of education on which it is based but, the education loving people shall build mass movement to achieve whatever small good things in the Act to start with and proceed further to achieve a democratic education system.

- **D. Ramesh Patnaik**

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May 25-26, 2012

# Workshop at Lohaghat, Uttarakhand

**Organized by : Rachnatmak Shikshak Mandal**

The sixth State level Workshop on Education, organized by Rachnatmak Shikshak Mandal, was held at Lohaghat on May 25-26, 2012. Initiating the discussion the poet/critic teacher Sri Mahesh Punetha detailed out the activities of the Rachnatmak Shikshak Mandal with respect to Education. The programme organizer Sri Govind Bohra welcomed the guests on behalf of the organizing committee. The State Convenor Sri Navendu Mathpal dwelt upon how the Mandal was fighting against privatization of education and helping to strengthen the public (Government) system of education through Common School System while working at the same time against their NGOisation. Peoples poet Sri Balli Singh Cheema formally inaugurated the Workshop by reading out his radical gazals/poems.

Dr. Vikas Gupta, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi; and member-National Executive, All India Forum for Right To Education (AIFRTE) delivered a lecture on the first day of the workshop on "Basic understanding of education and two years of implementation of Right To Education Act - any hope for fundamental Transformation?" Prof. Gupta described in detail the historical, social, philosophical and psychological tenets of basic understanding of education, the initiatives taken to ensure Right To Education during Freedom movement which could not succeed due to various reasons. Building upon this foundation, and on the basis of the available data, Dr. Gupta underlined that the present

design of education is such that it throws out majority of our children out of the sphere of education. 25 percent children admitted in class I do not go beyond class V and 42 percent beyond class VIII. The condition is much worse for the poor and marginalized classes of our society. Official data clearly spells out that the Government schools lack in basic facilities like water and toilets and majority of teachers are engaged in a good number of non-teaching activities. He demonstrated how the RTE Act takes away the Right to Education rather than giving it to the children. It has enhanced the rate of privatization. Unfortunately, instead of improvement, the condition of Education and Government Schools would become worse under the poor provisions of RTE Act. Para teachers are replacing the full-time teachers in large numbers. In the name of 25% reservation for the poor children, huge public money is being transferred to private schools. The Government was expected to strengthen over 10 lakh existing schools but it is, in fact, working overtime to finish them. Decisions with respect to Education is being taken by corporate houses (likes of Birla-Ambani) in stead of the teachers. Education has been converted into a profit making business. RTE Act recognizes multilayered system of education. It ignores the basic principle that education system can be made stronger if teachers are given better working conditions and due respect. While pleading strongly for the Common School System in

Neighborhood Schools he stated that almost all the developed countries of the world have implemented this system at some point of time in their development. He urged that the Government must fulfill its constitutional responsibilities by establishing Common School System and replacing RTE Act with a new one based on people's aspiration and constitutional vision. However, he lamented that the Government, in a very planned way, is bent upon closing all Government schools; and knowledge is being converted into marketable commodity. Essential relationship between Education and society is being overturned in favour of market. Prof. Gupta also explained the undesirable effects of the five Higher Education Bills brought to Parliament. The changes in education are being worked out in favour of Corporate houses. At the same time interference of NGOs are on the rapid increase.

In the second session of the first day Sri Mohan Chauhan of Tehri, Dr. Nidesh Joshi of Nainital, Bhuwan Joshi 'Kannu', Dr. Vivek Pandey, Dr. Dinesh Karnataka, Actor D.N. Bhatt, Shailendra Ghapola Hema Joshi, Pradip Bahuguna, Anita Bahuguna from Bageshwar, Dinesh Bhatt, Chandralal Verma from Pithoragarh shared their experience with the audience about their activities for improving the school education.

In the third session of the same day poetry recitation (Kavi Sammelan) was held in the presence of Sri Balli Singh Cheema. Swami Sarvasadanand and Swami Nihilshwaranand also delivered their talk. The session presided over by the District Education Officer Sri P.R. Kohli and conducted jointly by the State Convenor Rajiv Joshi and Naresh Rai was attended by a large number of teachers.

The second day of the workshop was addressed by Senior journalist Prof. Anand Pradhan of IIMC (Delhi) on the issue of "Privatisation of Education and Role of Teachers". Prof. Pradhan discussed at length how the privatization of primary to higher education has converted into a commercial venture and education has become a marketing commodity. Its objective and direction has

changed. Due to the policy of globalization and liberalization education is being handed over to market forces with only objective-profit making. Due to the privatization the education is not only going beyond the reach of the weak and the poor students but also becoming anti-people and distorted. The Corporate capital in the country is eyeing on the expanding education market and taking shelter behind privatization and improvement in quality of education is being used as an excuse. All attempts are being made in a planned way to encourage privatisation of education. Under the garb public



education system is being devoid of resources to weaken the present structure. The parallel system of private education from primary to universities and colleges is being established which is creating a further strong environment of inequality and non-governmental interference in the country. The process of privatization and its adverse effect is dominating the total economy and politics and it cannot be looked at separately from the neo-liberal economic policies. It should always be looked at as a part of market economy. Now the time has come to challenge the privatization of education at philosophical, political, educational and creative level. The teachers must take the leadership role and must challenge the policies which is handing over the education to market forces.

In the second session on the second day young journalist Bhupen Basera talked on Social relationships of Cinema. A good number of films were screened in this session.

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In the third session discussions were held on the future plans and programmes of Rachnatmak Shikshak Mandal. It was decided to hold the next workshop in Dehradun on Dec. 25-26, 2012

Total expenses of the Workshop was born by the

Teachers' contribution which was Rs. 25,000 only.

- Navendu mathpal

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(English Translation by Dr.V.N.Sharma)

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Itarsi, May 21, 2012

# The status of education: Challenges and solutions

Discussion hosted by Shiksha Adhikar Manch, Hoshangabad

Participants included students, teachers, social workers and public intellectuals.

## Summary of lecture by Anil Sadgopal:

Until the Common School System (CSS) is instituted, public education will not improve. Until the commodification of education is stopped, the common school system will not be viable. By supporting the privatization of education, we are denying all of our children a meaningful/equitable and quality education. The 25% reservations provision will not meet the demand for education. An estimated 2.5 crore children enter primary school every year. The 25% reservations will only affect approximately 20 to 25 lakh fortunate children. What will happen to the rest?

Less than 5 % of schools in Canada are private. Public education is paid for by public resources and rich and poor children study in the same school. It is a decentralized system where the cost is borne by local government but they do not have control. In California, USA, schools with large numbers of poor children have larger budgets, more teachers, and more resources. It is the reverse in India where poor and disadvantaged children receive the worst education. In the

state of Madhya Pradesh, poor and Adivasi children are guaranteed to receive the lowest possible quality of education.

All persons receiving public resources (salary, profit) in any capacity should be required to send their children to government schools then government schools will improve.

The challenge is not implementation but the law itself. It is not possible and even dangerous to try to implement a flawed law. People need to be educated, mobilized and organized.

## Comments by other speakers

Teacher union representative Rajiv Dube spoke about the deterioration of conditions in government schools. Rajiv Bamne from Khesla discussed the challenges starting from Class I to B. Ed programmes. Teacher Deepali Sharma shared that when she was in government school she studied with the children of judges and officers. The quality of education was such that nobody needed tuition.

-Rajesh Vyas

President, District Forum for Right To Education,  
Hoshangabad

Translated from Hindi by Nisha Thapliyal  
(nthapliyal74@gmail.com)

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Bhopal, 19 May 2012

## Right To Education, Order of the Supreme Court & Struggle for Common School System

Shiksha Adhikar Manch, Bhopal, All India Revolutionary Students' Organisation and Revolutionary Youth Federation of India organized a panel discussion on the Right To Education, Order of the Supreme Court & struggle for Common School System. The principal speakers included noted author Ms. Jyotsna Milan, (retd.) IAS officer Sri Sharad Chandra



# All India Federation of Elementary Teachers Organisation

## Resolutions

1. Resolved to urge the Government of India to ensure free and compulsory elementary education to every Indian child envisaged in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, with amendment for quality and all facilities through "Common School System" up to 18 years.
2. Resolved to urge the Government of India to withdraw the Pension Fund Regulatory Authority Bill once for all and restore Old Pension Scheme to all the Teachers and Employees working in India.
3. Resolved to urge various State Governments including Tamil Nadu to grant parity of pay scales of the respective State Government Secondary Grade Teachers with that of the Central Government Secondary Grade Teachers.
4. Resolved to urge the Government of India and various State Governments to immediately fill up the existing Secondary Grade Teacher vacancies, estimated more than 5 lakhs.
5. Further resolved to urge the Central and State Governments to fill up all the Teacher vacancies on the basis of Employment Registration Seniority and Government policy on reservation.
6. Resolved to urge the Central and State Governments not to privatize the Elementary Education.
7. Further urge the Central and State Governments to ensure pursuing and completing elementary education to all children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantages groups without any discrimination on any ground.
8. Resolved to urge the Central and State Governments not to appoint Teachers on contractual basis and make appointments only on regular and permanent basis.
9. Further resolved to urge the Central and State Governments to regularize the services of the existing contractual teachers and make them permanent teachers with eligible scales of pay.
10. Resolved to urge the State Governments to sanction full pension for all those who have completed 20 years of service on a par with the Central Government Teachers and Employees.
11. Resolved to urge the State Governments including Government of Tamil Nadu to ensure House Rent Allowance at the rate of 30%, 20%, 10% for urban, semi-urban, and rural places on par with the Teachers and Employees of Central Government.
12. As the percentage of Dearness Allowance, has crossed 50% and stands presently at 65% and also as per the policy of the Government of India, the conference resolves to urge the Central Government to merge 50% of Dearness Allowance with the Basic Pay and take into account the merged pay for the purpose of calculating dearness allowance, pension and Family pension.

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## Press Release of AIFRTE against the MHRD Move to Ensure the Entry of Foreign Universities through Back Door

# Stop Centralization of Power In Education

The Ministry of Human Resource Development and its Minister Kapil Sibal are once again in the news (The Hindu June 1, 2012) for the unseemly haste being shown in clearing the way for the entry of 'foreign education providers' (FEP) into the higher education 'market' in India. The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, which has been criticized vociferously by All India Forum for Right to Education (AIF-RTE) and other progressive students and teachers organizations and groups, was introduced in Parliament in May 2010. It met with strong opposition, particularly from the Left parties, and was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which recommended major changes.

What Mr. Kapil Sibal could not achieve through democratic parliamentary procedure, he is now trying to do by browbeating the already pliant University Grants Commission. A scheduled meeting for July 21 was advanced to June 2. No agenda was circulated but apparently members were orally told that issues relating to entry of FEP were to be urgently decided upon. UGC has hurriedly issued a clarification that devising a regulatory framework for such entry falls within their purview and that is what the Commission will decide at its meeting.

When the Bill is still pending before Parliament, resorting to such maneuvers constitutes a blatantly anti-democratic attempt to push through the 'backdoor' what cannot be achieved through public debate and accountability.

The Minister's need for urgency is not motivated by concern for student interest, faculty improvement, or the desire to develop higher education sector in India both in quality and equality. The problems facing more than 500 universities, thousands of colleges, and the lakhs of students studying in them, have been grossly neglected by successive governments over the past three decades. The present MHRD Minister too has displayed no anxiety or concern regarding their fate. Mr. Kapil Sibal's impending visit to the United States later this month, where he must

announce during the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue that India's higher education sector is now 'opened up', i.e. is now a market to be rapaciously exploited by FEPs, is the real reason for throwing even the fig-leaf of parliamentary approval to the winds and racing down to where the proverbial fools rush in.

AIF-RTE strongly condemns the actions of the Minister. Its opposition to the policy of giving a free hand to foreign interests to exploit the genuine and widespread desire of all sections of Indian youth, particularly the deprived, the marginalized and the challenged, to have access to quality education, is well known and articulated in its resolutions, literature and through its protest actions. It has repeatedly warned of the threat to the country's independence and sovereignty that the present policy represents.

AIF-RTE welcomes the prompt response of the CPI (M) in rejecting the Government's moves as constituting contempt of Parliament. It warned the Minister against taking steps which would subvert the system of higher education, increase elitism and promote rampant commercialization of higher education. AIF-RTE appeals to all parties and members of parliament to protest against the Government's moves. We further appeal to all left, democratic and oppositional parties inside and outside the parliament to resist this anti-democratic imposition through protests and struggles and not to confine only to paper statements. We call upon all member-organizations and individual members of AIF-RTE to expose the nefarious designs of the Human Resource Development Ministry and Kapil Sibal and mobilize a strong public opinion against the operations of foreign capital in education in India.

**Prof. Meher Engineer,**  
Chairman, AIF-RTE &

**D. Ramesh Patnaik**

Organising Secretary, AIF-RTE

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## Beware! Danger Ahead

# Lok Shikshak Manch

We, on behalf of the Lok Shikshak Manch, want to draw the attention of the readers towards a very serious issue that is concerned with the 'identity' of our schools, teachers and students. For the past few years the intervention of NGOs in our schools is continuously increasing. Though permitted officially, their intervention is limited to certain activities such as teaching some children, giving books, , doing activities with children, etc. However this does not involve willing assent of all participants in the education process. Since the teachers have to complete non-teaching tasks, these organisations overshadow the teaching-learning process in schools. Teachers are being constantly burdened with non-teaching tasks so that the teaching- learning process could be taken over by the less-educated, untrained 'volunteers' of these NGOs, for salaries as low as Rs. 1000-2000. As far as we know, the teaching learning process in these extra classes not only falls out of line with the present curriculum and progressive agenda of education; rather it is completely opposite. The untrained teacher-volunteers cannot be blamed and should not be blamed for this.

In the current economic-political context the pressure of unemployment places them as merely the last links in the chain. The need of the hour is to question the structure which exploits their labour and marginalised conditions for its own interests. Many private organisations are now working very hard to prove that the teachers of government schools remain absent from the classrooms and are not interested in teaching. This same is emphasized in the report of Pratham (NGO) ([http://www.prathamdelhi.org/articles\\_reports/annual\\_reports.php](http://www.prathamdelhi.org/articles_reports/annual_reports.php)). It states that the main reasons for falling standards of education in MCD schools is the absence of teachers in classrooms and their lack of interest in teaching. Furthermore, these NGOs also claim that the result of the work done by their initiatives in schools is substantial. For this, one can look up the website of 'nanhi kali' project, which is being run with the help of Keshub Mahindra Trust and Naandi Foundation ([http://www.nanhikali.org/nanhikali/about\\_nanhi\\_kali.aspx](http://www.nanhikali.org/nanhikali/about_nanhi_kali.aspx)). It has been specifically posted on the website that the results of the children with whom they have worked has improved by 78%. Many NGOs claim that the retention and

enrolment of children in schools has improved during the period of their work in school. We need to ask a few questions- If untrained, less salaried teachers can work with 'weak' children with such great results, then how well would they do with 'talented' children? It also questions the worth of teacher training. And why is it so that the work of these 'teachers' is not being utilised for the children of 'haves' in central and prestigious private schools? It means that educated, professionally trained teachers are required for the children from a particular group and less educated, untrained teachers will suffice for the children of marginalised sections!

It is problematic that the responsibility of girl students of Nanhi Kali project is being handed to a 'third party' by the NGO. This third party, in lieu of a donation of Rs. 2400, is shown as the 'parent' of these girls. The permission for this is neither taken from the student nor from the parents. An important issue that arises here is that how these students could be given away in 'adoption' when the responsibility of their education lies with the state. This is an ugly example of the government outsourcing (shirking) its fundamental responsibilities. No doubt the regular, trained and educated teacher of any government school is more aware and accountable towards overall educational development of the students than any private organisation. As far as we got to know, under Nanhi Kali project the personal information of girl students (like photo, family, bio-data, etc.) are recorded. Organisations invite private donors to make available particular amounts of money for the care and 'development' of a Nanhi kali; and in return they send reports of the Nanhi Kali to the donors from time to time. Clearly, this practise is against the norms of privacy and transparency. It is an attack upon the self-respect of the girl students and their families. There is a high probability that most parents are not informed that their daughters have been 'adopted' with the help of donations. Secondly, if some parents do accept the 'adoption' of their daughter by somebody else, then why should be this whole unethical process mediated through government and its schools?

Let us think as to what will happen if the government schools cease to act as a medium to reach out to students

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and people for these organisations. Firstly, most of these organisations will have to wander around in streets and localities in order to gain the trust of the people. The result of which, if we anticipate, could be disappointing for them. The process in itself would cost a lot of money and energy. Secondly, if by any chance some people do agree to be involved with these organisations a place will be required to run their centres. And for running a centre in a costly city like Delhi one can fairly estimate the rent of required rooms. Likewise expenditure on electricity, water, sanitation, security & safety for the same cannot be avoided. The state schools provide a readymade structure - facilities and 'captive' children - to these organisations. Freeing them of all worries of infrastructural requirements, the government too pats their back.

Why has this situation arisen? The main reason for the present situation is our active passivity. We do not refuse the routine technical and non-teaching tasks. We are not challenging it at the level of our association either. We are not registering our protest against the intervention of such NGOs in our schools. However, if we continue to be mute spectators, the day is not far when the government would hand over the schools completely to these NGOs (the instance of Agha Khan Foundation in context of Nizamuddin School is significant). Through these interventions the organisations are striving to take the schools into their possession. Village Panchayats along with the community have been making consistent efforts to make land available to the government for the construction of schools so that their children get easy access to better education. In this way they have contributed significantly to the efforts of universalizing education. On the other hand, these NGOs in the name of improving standards of education and ensuring better facilities are heading towards taking possession of the school system. There is great possibility that one of their aims is to grab land worth crores of rupees to make education a profit making machine. This is one of

the ugly examples of the government shirking its responsibility towards the constitutional right of universal education. The sad and dangerous part is that government is working hand in hand with those in power, whose understanding about the concept of justice is not only weak but accompanied with doubtful intentions. The state is avoiding its constitutional responsibilities towards the citizens in two ways - first, by selling public mechanisms

directly and second by shrewdly letting private powers to encroach into public units. In a democracy people hold due status to exercise their rights with dignity. People want to exercise their constitutional rights without seeking charity or help from any of the profiteering private powers. The promise and beauty of democracy lies in ensuring respectable livelihood to people.

The solution of the above mentioned problem can be found in employing educated and trained regular teachers, freeing them from the regular burden of non-teaching tasks and simultaneously employing regular personnel for non-academic tasks in schools. Ironically what is happening now is the opposite; there is an increase in other forms of non-teaching tasks for teachers in schools, like making

arrangements for electricity and water. In such a situation where the untrained, less salaried personnel are 'teaching' the students and trained qualified teachers are caught up with other activities, the students are at the receiving end, especially the students of those sections who are befooled by the tokenism of right to education. Our appeal to you is to unite and protest against the intervention of NGOs in schools and subsequent possession of the same by these organisations. We also demand that educated, trained, regular teachers be employed in required numbers in schools along with the employment of regular personnel for non-teaching tasks so that the right to education does not remain a meaningless formality.

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Organisations invite private donors to make available particular amounts of money for the care and 'development' of a Nanhi kali; and in return they send reports of the Nanhi Kali to the donors from time to time. Clearly, this practise is against the norms of privacy and transparency. It is an attack upon the self-respect of the girl students and their families. There is a high probability that most parents are not informed that their daughters have been 'adopted' with the help of donations. Secondly, if some parents do accept the 'adoption' of their daughter by somebody else, then why should be this whole unethical process mediated through government and its schools?

# Ghazal by Balli Singh Cheema

People's poet from Uttarakhand  
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Lays marble in strangers houses  
Makes houses but sleeps on the footpath  
He counts me as a tool of this predatory system;  
He counts me only when he counts the resource.  
He who claims that everyone is equal;  
Pulls me down and elevates others.

He plays with words and meanings;  
My hunger is only malnutrition to him now.  
In my free India who was supposed to go to school;  
That child now sweeps the floor in trains.  
Your heroes will never be called heroes, Balli!  
Some pull rickshaws and some heave ploughs.

Translated from Hindi by Nisha Thapliyal (nthapliyal74@gmail.com); Vikas Gupta (vikasedu@gmail.com); and Yamal Gupta (yamalgupta@gmail.com).

## INVITATION

**All India Conference**  
for  
Building Common School System &  
Abolishing Commercialization of Education  
at  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu  
on  
**June 30 – July 01, 2012**

**Organised by**  
All India Forum for Right to Education (AIF-RTE)  
and  
State Platform for Common School System, Tamil Nadu (SPCCC, TN)

**Participants :**  
About 2000 delegates (1500 from Tamil Nadu and 500 from other parts of India) are expected to attend and participate

**INVITE**  
All Members of the Member- and Associate- organizations are invited with strong delegations to participate in the conference. They can bring all those people to the conference who clearly 'stand against trade in education and for secular and democratic education system, for government funded public education system from KG to PG and for Common School System based on Neighborhood Schools'.

- Expenses**
- Delegates will bear their travel cost between their place and Chennai
  - Delegates will be provided Local hospitality (accommodation and food) free of cost by the host organisation of the conference.
  - Each delegate will pay a registration Fee of Rs. 100/-

- Contacts**
1. Sri. Prince Gejendra Babu, Ph: 04428341456 (off), e-mail: <tnpcommonschooll@gmail.com> ,
  2. Dr. Vikram Singh Amravat, Ph: 08128293711, e-mail: <vsamarawat@gmail.com>