

**Shri Janardhan Dwivedi, MP
Hon'ble Chairman,
Parliamentary Committee on Human Resource Development,
Parliament House Annexe,
Sansad Marg,
New Delhi 110 001.**

Sub: Petition to the Committee w.r.t. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008, on behalf of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) National Committee on Education

Dear Shri Dwivedi,

We welcome the landmark initiative of the Government of India that seeks to implement the Constitutional provision of free and compulsory elementary education to every child, irrespective of caste, creed or gender, through enactment of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government on some of the most important aspects of the Bill as listed below:

- Making the State responsible for ensuring that every child, in the age group of 6-14 years, receives schooling between class 1 to 8;
- Mandating schools to comply with basic norms in terms of infrastructure, learning facilities and the academic calendar;
- Stipulating a minimum Pupil-Teacher Ratio;
- Encouraging an equitable system of elementary education, thereby reducing the widening social divide;
- Addressing the actual quality of education provided in schools by making teachers accountable.

However, we believe that some lacunae still exist as highlighted below:

- A school has been defined as a recognised school imparting elementary education (i.e. from Grade 1 to 8). This should also include schools providing education from Grade 1 to 5 (primary schools) but should exclude residential schools **[Clause 2 (n)]**;
- The term 'Neighbourhood schools' should be clearly defined and Residential Schools should be left out of its purview; **[Clause 6]**

- Government and aided schools should be equally accountable as private schools in complying with mandatory requirements, norms quality standards. Minimum standards should be at par with Kendriya Vidyalaya [**Clause 8 (g)**];
- We feel reserving 25% seats for free quota is on the higher side, and recommend a more reasonable 15% reservation (15% reservation of seats for EWS children is already being enforced in some States like Delhi) [**Clause 12 (1)**];
- Reimbursement to private unaided schools for providing free and compulsory education to children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups should be based on the per-child-expenditure incurred by the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya, on a fully loaded cost basis that includes depreciation and cost of capital of building, infrastructure as well as staff salaries, pensions, health benefits and other operating expenses etc [**Clause 12 (2)**];
- While no screening of child or parent is required, admission criteria should be transparent [**Clause 13 (1)**];
- Recognition should be mandatory for government and government aided schools as well [**Clause 18 (1)**];
- There should be some consequence for non-compliance in fulfilling norms within 3 years from the date of commencement of the Act [**Clause 18 (5)**];
- Approvals for setting up of a private school should be done through a single window clearance [**Clause 18 (6)**];
- The school management committee is critical to the new accountability structure. It should have representation of eminent educationist and policy makers on one hand and on the other there should be a minimum representation of women. [**Clause 21 (1)**];
- In order to have uniform minimum standards across the country yet accommodate India's vast diversity, the curriculum to be laid down by the academic authority should consist of a 'Core Section' (typically 40%), which outlines the basic minimum standards in specific areas. The balance 60% should be based on the local context and self defined school vision, revolving around the Core Section. (CII proposal for Model schools through Public Private Partnership (PPP) [**Clause 29 (1)**];
- Although teaching in mother tongue should be encouraged, English should be taught as a subject across the country [**Clause 29 (2)**];
- No exams till Class 8. However, there should be a formal exam in class 8 (before admission into Class 9); [**Clause 30 (2)**];
- The bill needs to focus on outcomes and define a framework to measure the quality of education imparted and learning outcomes; [**Clause 34 (1)**];

- An Independent Accreditation Authority should be appointed to do a fair and transparent rating of all schools- Government and private; **[Clause 34 (4)]**;

Clause-wise issues have been addressed in the attachment. We hope that the Hon'ble Members of the Committee will kindly consider the above suggestions while finalising their Report on the Bill.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,