

**Struggle**

**Unity**

**Progress**

# **All India Democratic Students' Organisation**

## **All India Committee**

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### **Press Release**

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009 The Right to education Bill has been passed in the Parliament. The All India Committee of the All India DSO expresses its grave concern over passing of the Bill in the Parliament by the UPA Government, which is having the provision of so-called 'free and compulsory' education for every child of 6 to 14 years of age, penalty of Rs. 10,000.00 or more if anyone causes any hindrance to school going of any child of this age. The Bill also bans pass-fail system in annual examinations upto class VIII. All the provisions are ostensibly to prevent school dropout, abuse of children of this age as child labourers and to ensure free and compulsory education to all of them.

The curse of school dropout and child labourer is rampant in our country due to extreme poverty. While it is true that there are some cases of ruthless exploitation and abuse of children but in most of the cases the parents who send their children to work do that only because they have no other means of subsistence. Unless there be sufficient compensatory financial support to those poverty stricken families or measures for alleviation of poverty, merely punitive measures don't solve the problem at all. In fact this step is merely to shift the onus of dropout, illiteracy, poverty and existence of child labourer, from the government to the poverty stricken guardians and others.

By making no-detention upto class-viii a legal compulsion, the Bill would help to destroy the very foundation of education, i.e. the thorough knowledge of 3R's.

The Bill, by proposing education for children from 1<sup>st</sup> standard up to 8<sup>th</sup> standard only to be free and compulsory, indirectly asserts that the government is not going to shoulder the responsibility of other levels of education, which will be virtually left to the process of rampant privatisation and commercialisation. Furthermore, the Bill fixes viii-th standard as the Minimum Level of Learning, which also is strongly condemnable. The Bill has not made it clear what will be the exact attitude of the government regarding pre-school education. It is most unfortunate that when the existing multi-layered school system is creating inequality and discrimination among our children, the Bill by confining itself to making proposals for admission of students in these multi-layered institutions is promoting and strengthening more discrimination and more inequality.

Noteworthy is the fact that the Bill has allowed two parallel system of schooling by allowing private costly English medium schools but has not clarified what the government must do to ensure best standard of education in the general schools. When severe shortage of teachers, lack of educational infrastructure including class rooms toilets, drinking water are posing great hurdle for the children's education in general schools this issue has not been addressed at all! Instead the Bill has allowed deployment of teachers for census, election duty and disaster relief, and such other non-educational purposes.

The AIDSOS demands of the government to review the provisions of this Bill. It also demands concrete steps on the part of the Central and the state governments to ensure universal, uniform, free and quality education free from discrimination and extend the same to include pre- school, secondary and higher secondary education. AIDSOS calls upon the teachers, parents, educationists and education loving people in general and students, in particular, to raise their voice with this demand.

M.N.Sriram  
President

Sourav Mukherjee  
General Secretary

**All India DSO**