

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**SHRI KAPIL SIBAL : HRD MINISTRY MULLING CLOSE COOPERATION
WITH UID AUTHORITY
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF HRD MINISTRY HELD**

New Delhi, 19th December, 2009.

The HRD Ministry is mulling close co-operation with the recently set up UID Authority. The HRD Ministry is keen on this as this will provide all school going children and teachers with a UID number, so that a countrywide monitoring of schooling and educational outcomes can be undertaken. This was stated by Shri Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, during the meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the HRD Ministry held here yesterday. The subject of the meeting was, 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009'.

The Ministry officials made a brief presentation on the salient features of the act. These include, besides the right of a child to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education, the consequent duties of the appropriate Government and Local Authority. It was also shown how the Act provides for minimum qualifications for teachers in elementary schools. The academic and infrastructure standards which schools are required to adhere to as per the Act were shown as was the requirement of the constitution of school management committees.

Various members of Parliament gave their views regarding the Act. Most members, while appreciative of this landmark initiative, were of the view that the actual implementation of the act will face challenges, especially in terms of monitoring and accountability, retention of poor students, teacher quality and absenteeism, ability of states to finance the implementation of the Act and adequate infrastructure. Shri D. Raja called for the strengthening of the government school system and that attempts must be made to build a common school system. Shri Mohammed Shafi suggested that states be categorized as per their requirements for RTE. While Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar and Shri Kabindra Purkayastha wanted to know how it will be ensured that children go to school, Smt. Vasanthi Stanley wanted clarity on the provisions for specially abled children. Shri Jagda Nand Singh and Smt. Rama Devi wanted the parents/guardians to be given the right to judge the teachers. Shri Prem Das Rai that the RTE and UID schemes can be put together. Shri Baijyanta "Jai" Panda wanted to know the timelines for the framing of rules and for the notification of the Act. Shri Lalji Tandon stated that masses will need to be involved for successful implementation of the Act. Dr. Chinta Mohan expressed the concern that states would not have the finances of the scale required for the implementation of this Act. He also suggested that Gram Panchayats must have a say. Dr.

(Smt)Kapila Vatsyayan said that the schooling must neither result in deculturation nor in parochialism and a balance needs to be created so that the children are locally rooted and globally relevant. Shri Jose K. Mani stressed upon the need for counseling in schools.

Shri Kapil Sibal assured the members that the people are very keen to get their children to school and there will be pressure from the public on the appropriate governments to get the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for their children. He stated that with 93 percent of the schools in the country being government schools, the main purpose of the Act is to improve the quality of the government school system. The Minister underlined that the provision in the Act of School Management Committees with 50% women would make the schools monitored and they would be accountable, besides monitoring being done through the proposed association with the UID. The Minister also explained that there were laid down norms for infrastructure, teacher qualification and student-teacher ratio in the Act, which would ensure certain standards. As regards specially abled children, he said that the government's policy is to encourage inclusive education. He said that to ensure children going to school, while there is a provision in the Act for the authorities to ensure and monitor admission of children in school, the civil society and stakeholders will have to come forward in a big way to help make this 'National Mission' a success. He said that the Act would be notified after the sharing pattern of the finances, between the centre and the states is decided by the government.

Smt. D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for HRD was also present in the meeting ..Members of Parliament who attended the meeting included Dr. Chinta Mohan, Shri Jose K. Mani, Shri Jagda Nand Singh, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, Shri Ghanshyam Anuragi, Shri Ganeshrao Nagorao Dudhgaonkar, Shri Prem Das Rai, Shri Baijyanta "Jai" Panda, Shri Kabindra Purkayastha, Smt. Rama Devi, Shri Lalji Tandon,, Shri Sucharu Ranjan Haldar, Shri Ishwar Singh, Smt. Vasanthi Stanley, Shri Mohammed Shafi, Dr. (Smt)Kapila Vatsyayan and Shri D. Raja.