

Charter of **DEMANDS TO THE GOVERNMENT ON EDUCATION**

1) Include children from below 6 years as well as 15 to 18 years in the Act.

8th pass-outs are in no way adequately qualified either for vocations or for life. Similarly, nursery school is the foundation for education. Leaving out early childhood care and education and senior schooling seriously limits the right to education. Drop outs are a very large part of India's education challenge. The Act needs to build bulwarks to prevent this, especially girls who drop out.

2) Make sure there is a school with qualified teachers and proper facilities within 1 kilometre of any habitation.

No minimum standards have been defined for teachers, school infrastructure & facilities, including basics like drinking water, toilets, classrooms, teacher-student ratios etc.

Similarly, even though it has been proven that a child learns best in the language spoken at home, the Act does not specify mother-tongue education as a medium of instruction, in addition to learning other languages. Curricula norms need to spell out that the content of education be relevant to who the child is and where she lives. The teacher, who is the key figure in a child's learning, needs investment in improving qualifications, capacities and attitudes to be inclusive towards all children, and be well paid. The teacher's role as an integral member of the community needs to be respected by not making these appointments on a short-term, contractual basis.

3) Allocate 10% of India's GDP to education.

Latest revised estimates show 38% of Indians to be under the poverty line. Unless education gets financial backing by the State, the situation of poverty is not likely to change. No country in the world has been able to reach universal education without the State funding schools.

For 400 million children, the government's spending on education has actually reduced. From 3.84% of the Union budget in the year 2008-2009, it is now down to 3.03%. Given that this right is for 40% of India's citizens, the Act is heavily underfunded. Unless we put the State's money into education, the Act will remain a paper tiger.

