

# Education times

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## RIGHT DIRECTION

WITH THE INDIAN EDUCATION SECTOR GOING THROUGH RADICAL CHANGES, THERE IS A LACK OF CLARITY ABOUT THEIR LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS. SURBHI BHATIA DECODES THE REFORMS

**W**hile Kapil Sibal promises that a revolution larger than the one in the telecom sector awaits the education sector, critics are sceptical. With too much happening too soon, there seems to be lack of clarity about the reforms to place and proposals in the pipeline. Here is an attempt to decode them and retrace their roots.

**The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act**  
The Act makes it compulsory for state-funded schools to provide free education to every child between 6 and 14 years. "Since it is a fundamental right, to once a school refuses free education to a child, a parent or a child may approach the Supreme Court under Article 32 of the Constitution. It is also a statutory right, which allows parents and children to approach their nearest relative or district," says Ashok Agarwal, lawyer and president of All India Parents Association.

Absent the RTE legislation that no child can be sent back, expelled, or required to pass a final examination until one complete secondary education. It is far as infrastructure is concerned, it requires schools to have three to six toilets for boys and three to four for girls. It also calls for a final teacher ratio and states RTE provisions for underprivileged students.

Two years after their board exams. However, such students who wish to move out of the CBSE system after class X will be required to take the board's entry test examination. Also students studying in CBSE secondary schools will be required to take the board's external (theory) examination. Examinations in CBSE secondary schools will be having the secondary school after class X. However, CBSE will introduce an 'on demand' provision for the students who wish to leave the current system.

**Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)**  
CCE introducing CCE in primary classes



In 2014, NCF's paper on assessment reform mentions that external examinations 'are largely inappropriate for the knowledge society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its need for innovative problem solvers'. It is important to look at the holistic assessment of a learner, which also includes co-scholastic areas of life skills, attitudes and values, sports and games as well as interdisciplinary activities. The scheme discourages mechanical testing and encourages use of tests and techniques for assessment in informal and formal settings. The scheme is applicable for the second term (October 2016-March 2017) of the current academic year in class IX. The academic year has been divided into two terms - from April-September (first term) and October-March (second term).

**The National Commission for Higher Education and Research Bill, 2015**  
(The bill is pending Cabinet approval. Once cleared, the central government will establish a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER). NCHER will work as a single regulatory body which will determine, coordinate, monitor and disseminate higher education and research. Once NCHER comes into being, regulatory bodies such as UGC, NCTE and AICTE would be disbanded. Meanwhile,

Judges member, Planning Commission, said, "Despite being a regulatory body UGC happens to be giving out grants. This is a fundamental flaw. The same authority cannot give out grants as well as function as a regulatory body. The task was split within the controls that are part of the regulatory bodies. NCHER will try to achieve a synergy."

**Unfair Practices in Technical, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2016**

One of the five major bills awaiting Cabinet nod, it prohibits institutions from accepting fees as charges without issuing receipts and mandates them not to admit any student without conducting admission tests. It prohibits institution to directly or indirectly be influenced by the institution as well as the applicant. It also provides for refund of a certain percentage of the fee deposited, if one subsequently withdraws from the institution.

The bill also seeks to curb malpractices such as overpricing of placements and buying advertisements by institutions, among other things. It has proposed imposition of civil and monetary penalties, which may extend up to Rs 20 lakh for violation of provisions to be enforced through State Education Tribunals, which are to be established under the bill.

**The National Authority for Regulation in Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions Bill**

The lack of the regulatory would be to accord, it and rate all higher educational institutions in India. In accordance with the draft legislation, the National authority - along with multiple rating agencies - would develop and regulate the accreditation process. These multiple agencies would be registered with the national authority and the agencies would certify and keep a check on the rating agencies. It would also keep an eye on its by-right, statutory. The bill would make it mandatory for all higher educational institutions and every institution of study to be accredited.

**The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill**

In a landmark decision, the foreign education bill got the Cabinet nod recently. It gives the government, first-hand control for granting regional to foreign educational institutions to set up campuses in India. As for the conversion policy for the higher educational institutions, the law of the land will prevail. The proposed law will facilitate overseas institutions to participate in the Indian education sector.

**Examination Reforms**  
Taking a cue from the changes suggested in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2013, Sibal has introduced reforms which include making the class X board exam optional, introduction of comprehensive and continuous evaluation (CCE) system and introduction of the grading system. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will grade class X board exams again, with effect from 2017.

This is meant for students studying in CBSE's central secondary schools and those who do not wish to move out of the CBSE system.

**What is important is that education has been identified as an instrument for economic growth and as a priority area, which was not the case till the 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan**

**MANMOHAN PRASAD**  
CHAIRMAN, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI, KANPUR



**The fact that so many legislative reforms are in the offing, shows that the government genuinely intends to amend the education system. However, we need to understand that the proposals are at various stages and the basic realities have not changed. It is too early to say that they have translated into action.**

**ANANDRAJ KADHAR**  
MEMBER, PLANNING COMMISSION

