

SCHOOL CHOICE CAMPAIGN

Fund Students, Not Schools!

The School Choice Campaign is an initiative of the Centre for Civil Society to advocate School Choice, a policy reform idea developed to increase the involvement of parents in responsibly schooling their children by giving them ownership of the task. Based on education vouchers as a mode of funding for the schooling of needy children, School Choice is also designed to reduce disparity in the quality of schooling offered by the government and increase transparency and efficiency. Having researched extensively the many ways in which School Choice ideas have been used to meet different goals internationally, CCS is promoting School Choice as a viable solution for the problems we are facing today in our attempt to educate all our children.

REACHING OUT TO THE PEOPLE

Article 26 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states that **parents have a prior right to choose the type of education for their children.** In the initial phase of our Mass Campaign in five states - Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Jharkhand and Delhi-we have been able to generate awareness among poor parents about the extent of the resources that the government spends, to educate their children, and what they should demand for genuine empowerment. Using various communication channels like street theatre, dance and song performances, rallies and interactive mobile vans to name a few, SCC has been successful in reaching out to more than 1,20,42,000 parents directly and has till date collected 27, 38,314 signatures on petitions seeking school vouchers for their children.

In order to create an education system in India where all children receive quality education of choice through introduction of positive and innovative initiatives, we need to reach out to the policy makers who can bring about Change. Therefore, as part of our National Advocacy Campaign, we have so far conducted over 200 meetings, workshops, seminars and presentations with various Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, Governors, States Ministers, Senior officials of Education, Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs Departments, Leaders of Political parties, Members of the Planning Commission, State Education Boards, NGO Leaders and Civil Society Activists, International Aid Agencies, Editors and Columnists, Academicians and Researchers.

Choice Ambassadors



Anu Aga

“The government needs to invest the taxpayer’s money wisely. Instead of building more inefficient government schools, it should ease the licences for private education providers so that more schools are allowed to open their doors to eager students. These students should then be given financial support to access these schools so that no child is left out.”



Gurcharan Das

“For grades 1-5, I would give vouchers to parents and allow the schools compete for these vouchers. Because of competition, schools will have to hire better teachers, who will have to teach. The leftists and old educationists are horrified at this, but don’t we owe it to ourselves to at least test this idea when all else has failed over the last 50 years?”

What do we get for all the money?

BY A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE, CITY GOVERNMENTS SPEND, ON AN AVERAGE, RS 800-1200 PER STUDENT PER MONTH IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

FACTSHEET

- Every fourth out-of-school child in the world is in India
- Three out of every four students in primary classes are from the government schools
- About half the children entering class 1 drop out before reaching class v; two-thirds do so before reaching class viii
- About 30% of primary schools do not have permanent school buildings
- About 20% of primary schools are single-teacher schools
- About 10% of primary schools do not have a blackboard
- Over 1.4 Million teachers' posts are vacant in government schools
- 25% of teachers were absent from school, and only about half were teaching, during unannounced visits to government primary schools in India (World Bank Survey)
- Government school teachers are one of the highest paid in the world (UNESCO Survey)
- Average annual expenditure per student in private unaided schools is Rs.999, in private aided schools Rs.1, 827 and in government schools Rs.2, 008

DELHI VOUCHER PROJECT

INDIA'S FIRST SCHOOL VOUCHER PROJECT

The Delhi Voucher Project, launched on 28 March 2007, is a live example of providing educational choice through vouchers. School Choice Campaign awarded vouchers worth up to Rs. 3600 per year to 408 students in 68 wards of Delhi. At the time of applying for vouchers, the children were studying in class six or below in government school. These vouchers were awarded to the winners on July 26 by the Delhi Chief Minister



ter Sheila Dikshit, Education Minister Arvinder Singh Lovely and School Choice Ambassadors Gurcharan Das, Nafisa Ali, and T K Mathew. The vouchers would be given for a minimum of 3 years but School Choice Campaign would continue to support the students further if funds are available.



As a fair and transparent method of selecting the beneficiary students from the **more than one lakh applicants**, we had a public lottery led by the local Ward Councillor to pick 6 students in each ward. Those who did not win in the lottery submitted petitions to their respective ward councillors demanding school vouchers from the government. More than 2.5 lakh parents submitted these petitions!



For these 408 voucher students, it has been a dream come true to finally have the opportunity to study in a school of their choice, thanks to the Delhi School

Voucher Project. Every child in India deserves the Right to Education of Choice!

Choice Ambassadors



Mr. Jerry Rao



Ajay Shah



Prof PV Indiresan



Madhav Chavan



T K Mathew

"The Right to Education, inspite of being enshrined in the Constitution and being legislated upon remains a distant dream. School Vouchers enhance the implementation of the Right to Education and at the same time give parents a choice to place their child in a conducive environment for learning."

SCHOOL CHOICE CAMPAIGN

Milestones:

- 1,20,42,000 people directly contacted in the mass campaign
 - 743 block level and 129 district level citizen group meetings
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- 415 street play, folk song, and dance performances.
 - 251 rallies involving parents, children, NGO heads and Panchayat leaders in various districts.
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- National Alliance for School Choice : A strong network of State Alliances, NGOs and activists for school choice
 - Numerous seminars, workshops and research publications
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- 3168 memorandums submitted to Panchayats, Zila Parishads, Panchayat Samitis, MLAs/MLCs and MPs
 - Wide media coverage in leading news papers, magazines and television channels.



“Centre for Civil Society is playing an important role in guiding policy reforms in the field of education. I particularly appreciate their concept of **Fund Students, Not Schools** which holds great potential for ensuring quality education for India’s children.”



Arvinder Singh Lovely,
Education Minister of Delhi

RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF CHOICE!

Power to the People

SCHOOL VOUCHERS IN INDIA

Progressive state governments have started adopting School Choice idea to devise innovative solutions to specific problems in their states. Various pilot projects have been designed to empower the poor and improve the education system in these states in both quality and infrastructure.

RAJASTHAN

The government of Rajasthan has announced two schemes that use school vouchers- Gyanodaya for classes 6-12 and Shikshak ka Apna Vidyalaya for classes 1-5.

Gyanodaya Yojana: The yojana is to facilitate opening up of new schools for classes VI to XII under Public Private Partnership on a BOO (Build, Operate & Own) basis. A maximum of 5 such schools will be set up in each district in the first phase. 50% of the seats in these schools will be sponsored by the state government through school vouchers. The scheme has inbuilt monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and gives preference to girl and under privileged children.

Shikshak Ka Apna Vidyalaya: Under this scheme, particular emphasis has been given to the role of trained unemployed teachers. It aims to enhance the access to and quality of primary schools by letting these teachers adopt government run one-teacher primary schools and open new schools in Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the rural and the backward areas of the state. All children living within a 3 km area can access these schools with government sponsored vouchers. Such students will constitute 50% of the school strength.

School Choice Campaign conducted a one day interactive workshop on 30 July 2008 for the Rajasthan Education Department on Education Vouchers in the context of the Gyanodaya and Shikshak Ka Apna School schemes. SCC will share its research findings with Rajasthan and offer technical expertise in the implementation of these two new schemes.

UTTAR PRADESH

The government of Uttar Pradesh has decided to provide poor children from standard 1 to 8 the opportunity to study in Convent and Montessori schools. Towards this end, preparations are afoot to provide parents in backward areas of the state with an educational voucher that will cover the cost of their child's entire schooling like tuition fees, stationary and other related expenses. The private schools will be reimbursed school expenses only if the parents are satisfied with the quality of education their children receive. In the first phase, the project will be implemented only in those areas where the total population is 300 and where there are no primary schools within a kilometre.

UTTARAKHAND

PAHAL – An Innovative PPP (private public partnership) initiative has been providing education vouchers to children (6-14 yrs) of rag pickers, scavengers, snake charmers, orphans, etc. from the slums of urban deprived areas of the State. The eligibility criteria for selection are that the child should never have enrolled or has been a drop-out for at least a year and that there is no government school/EGS centre (Education Guarantee Scheme) within a kilometer of the habitation.

RANCHI

One of our partner organisations, Pratigya, raised funds, identified needy children in the slum areas of Ranchi and has been providing 40 of those children with education vouchers to study in budget private schools. These children are from slums that have budget primary schools and hardly any government schools.



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