

NGOs, experts seek dialogue with government on RTE Act

Policies should not be made on political reasons, they say

NEW DELHI: Civil society groups and education experts have called for a dialogue between the government and NGOs working on education issues for effective implementation of RTE and improvement in the education system.

According to experts participating in a conference on education, "The Education for all" idea which came in the form of Right to Education (RTE) needs more than just its implementation.

"We need to understand the process of learning when it comes to children. The capacity level to absorb information

varies. So instead of looking at teaching and learning in a mechanical form, we need to understand how deep and complex it is," said R Sridhar, managing director of Educational Initiatives in a conference titled 'Catalyzing Education for All: Intention, Innovation and Implementation' organized by Center for Civil Society (CCS), under its ongoing School Choice Campaign.

Personalized learning

"A step towards personalized learning in the form of identifying the areas which interests the child and allow him/her to learn more about the specific subject is something we should begin to look into," said Sridhar. The conference explored and identified critical issues in the education sector for it to reach the remotest areas and people.

Focusing on the "sorry" state of Education in the country, specially for the underprivileged sections the NGO representatives and academicians endorsed the need for more dialogues to bring the landmark legislation (RTE) to fruition.

Geeta Gandhi from Kingdon Institute of Education, University of London, emphasised the importance of evidence-based policy making in education.

"Policies should not be made on the basis of somebody's hunch, ideology or political expediency. This may be the case with regard to the RTE. The causal relationship in the education sector needs to be carefully analyzed," said Gandhi.

The discussion also supported strong public-private partnerships for building sustainable education models.

"While the primary enrolment rates in India cross the 95 percent mark, the challenge

of retaining these children and seeing them progress to secondary school remains. Though secondary education lies outside the scope of RTE, it holds the promise of innovation to evolve a framework that would be directly related to the needs of the rapidly evolving market in India," said Parth J Shah, president of CCS.

Apart from making changes in the way education is structured in the country, the participants also emphasised the need for greater concentration on vocational courses.

"Little weightage is given to vocational courses in India. The mentality to look down upon vocational courses is rampant. Vocational courses is an alternative to academics, it should be given it's required dignity," said Dilip Chenoy, MD and CEO, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

DH News Service