

Education policy draft proposes dilution of RTE

Jatin Gandhi

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A government committee drafting India's new education policy has proposed diluting the Right to Education Act norms for recognising private schools, saying present guidelines threaten the closure of institutions doing stellar work in poor neighbourhoods.

The RTE stipulates benchmarks such as a play ground, a minimum teacher-pupil ratio and number of classrooms for accrediting recognition — and thereby government funds — to any private school.

But the TSR Subramanian committee disagreed with the uniform national guidelines and said region-specific norms should be evolved for "alternate schools" in line with local conditions.

Lauding the initiative of an NGO running schools in

**Promoting laggards
drags down the
standard of the whole
class and handicaps the
teacher's ability to teach
the curriculum at the
expected pace**

THE REPORT

Ahmedabad slums, the committee observed, "After the RTE Act, such centres become illegal as they cannot satisfy the norms, their funding under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been stopped and they can be closed any time by authorities."

The committee said instead of laying down norms, the government should look at "learning outcomes" and amend the RTE Act.

"Infrastructure norms for

recognition of private schools should also be applied to government schools. There should be no discrimination," the report said.

The RTE Act was passed by the then UPA government in 2009 and implemented from April 2010.

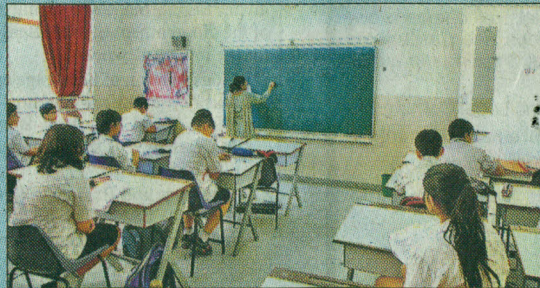
The committee also called for reviewing exemptions given to minority institutions from admitting 25% poor students for free under the economically weaker sections (EWS) category.

"The committee feels the larger national obligations to meet the rights of economic weaker sections should extend to all institutions, including minority (religious and linguistic) institutions," the report said.

The report rued that RTE Act was only partially implemented in most states, six years after it was passed, calling for "greater flexibility" to evolve area-specific norms that factor in local conditions.

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REPORT RECOMMENDS



■ **The TSR Subramanian panel says India is a vast country and cannot have uniform national guidelines.**

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■ **Recognition of private schools:** Take local conditions into consideration and give states greater say in deciding the norms

and 8 or ages 11 and 14 if they do not perform

■ **No-detention policy:** Fail students between classes 5

■ **Minority institutes:** Include minority institutions in EWS guidelines — making it mandatory for them to admit 25% poor students free of charge