

## INTRODUCING INDIA INSTITUTE'S SAVE DEEPALAYA SCHOOL CAMPAIGN TO MEDIA FRIENDS

### **About India Institute**

India Institute is a not-for-profit think tank based in Delhi promoting dignity, choice and enterprise through innovative research, evidence-based policy advocacy and litigation. We envision a free and just society in which one has the right and opportunity to live a life of one's choice. The Institute works in three broad areas at present: School Education, Higher Education and Law.

### **India Institute and School Education Policy**

The Indian school-education sector is faced with following main challenges:

1. **Artificial supply crunch of schools**, due to discretionary power to government officials which control the entry of private players in the field;
2. **Lack of accurate and updated statistical data**, an information gap due to the failure of the government to collect and maintain correct data, which leads to flawed policy making;
3. **Focus on inputs rather than outcomes**, which leads to poor quality of education as 'recognition' is accorded to schools based on infrastructural and managerial requirements but not on quality of teaching;
4. **Closure of unrecognized schools**, which further worsens the situation by adding to the supply crunch and snatching quality private education in schools. According to Section 18 of RTE, all unrecognized schools in the country are illegal. But with discretionary and unfair regulations governing the process of recognition, several good schools are not able to get recognition and thus have to shut down, leaving thousands of children in the lurch.

India Institute's policy **recommendations** are:

1. **Review** the need for **licensing** of private schools;
2. Introduce **performance-based pay** scale for **government school teachers** to improve teacher attendance and **quality of teaching**;
3. Bring low-cost private schools under the legal ambit through **graded-recognition system** which:
  - a. has **different parameters** for schools of different sizes and types;

- b. is **based on learning outputs** rather than infrastructure inputs, including student performance and teacher attendance;
  - c. considers the **minimum basic needs** such as essential safety and a provision of basic amenities to be the requirements for obtaining recognition, rather than unrealistic criteria that only elite schools can provide;
  - d. asks for the **requirements of recognition for private schools also be applicable to government schools**, so that children are not forced to go to recognised schools providing poor-quality education instead of unrecognised schools providing high-quality education.
4. Create an **independent ranking system** of schools in every neighbourhood to empower parental choice.

To know more about our work in school-education policy and other focus areas, please visit us at [www.indiai.org](http://www.indiai.org).

facebook.com/IndiaInstitute  
Twitter @India\_Institute

Baladevan Rangaraju  
[bala@indiai.org](mailto:bala@indiai.org)

### **A CALL TO SAVE DEEPALAYA SCHOOL, SANJAY COLONY**

For more than twenty years, Deepalaya, an NGO based in Delhi, has been successfully running a school in the slums of Sanjay Colony in Okhla, New Delhi. Known to the residents of Sanjay Colony simply as 'Deepalaya', the school has been synonymous with opportunity and success. Functioning from its present premises since 1992, the school is one of the best low cost private schools in the city. Thousands of poor students living in the slums have graduated from Deepalaya. The school has been instrumental in transforming the lives of poor children through quality education for a small fee, an education that was otherwise beyond their reach. Some students of Deepalaya were even given scholarships to study in the US, and have returned with a mission to transform the lives of other poor children.

Unfortunately, the government of Delhi is shutting down Deepalaya School, Sanjay Colony. A stark testimony to the mindless regulations under RTE and the Delhi School Education Act, this school has been shut down because it is not a 'recognized' school. Even though Deepalaya boasts of excellent facilities and an enviable track record, the

Delhi government refuses to recognize the school because under the Delhi School Education Act of 1973 (DSEA) every school has to own the land it is run on, and Deepalaya School stands on land leased by the Slum Board. And according to Section 18 of the Right to Education Act of 2009 (RTE) 'unrecognized' schools are illegal. The school is now functioning as a learning centre as requested by parents in the colony. The nearest government school is in a very poor condition.

RTE was enacted to give free and compulsory education to every child in India. But RTE has been more effective in shutting down several low cost private schools like Deepalaya, thereby depriving poor children of quality education and locking them up in their poverty trap. A law which set out to educate every poor child in the country has been ended up snatching-away education, albeit unintentionally, from the few who had affordable access to it.

Deepalaya School is not alone. There are thousands of schools across India, and millions of children enrolled in them, facing the brunt of ill-considered, counter-productive regulations under the RTE and other State government laws. But a journey of thousand miles begins with one step, and we are beginning our battle with Deepalaya, Sanjay Colony.

Come, join us in the fight to save good schools like Deepalaya that serve the poor.

Sign this petition( <https://www.change.org/p/government-of-delhi-savedeepalayaschool-don-t-shut-down-deepalaya-school-in-sanjay-colony> ) to the Delhi government with the following demands:

1. Issue an ordinance to exempt schools in slums and villages from the land-title requirement for recognition until the law is amended;
2. Make recognition criteria in the Delhi School Education Act and rules reasonable for quality low cost private schools to operate in Delhi.

The smiles which Deepalaya brought to the faces of poor children have been mercilessly wiped off. Let's bring those smiles back. Sign the petition.  
Save Deepalaya!

For more details, please visit:

<http://indiai.org/campaign-to-save-deepalaya-school-from-forcible-closure/>

The campaign Facebook page is:

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveDeepalayaSanjayColony>

The campaign film can be watched here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXKcqMwKRYM>