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Private schools free to fix their own fees, says Sibal

Neha Pushkarna, TNN, Feb 20, 2010, 01.20am IST

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NEW DELHI: In what comes as a blow to the efforts of city parents' associations which have been campaigning for reining in school fees, Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal said on Friday that the fees of private schools cannot be regulated and that each school had the right to fix the salaries of its teachers.

Sibal's claims contradict provisions in the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, which stipulate that remuneration of teachers in private schools cannot be less than their counterparts in

government schools. The minister said this contradiction will go away once the Right to Education Act is implemented from April 1 this year ^ implying that the central Act will override the state law.

"There is no such provision in RTE," Sibal said about the salaries of teachers while addressing principals at the 37th annual meet of National Progressive Schools' Conference -- a group of nearly 110 private unaided schools in the city.

"The salaries of teachers in private schools do not have to be according to the government. They will decide to pay what they want to pay," he declared, while countering a speaker at the meet who had earlier said that small schools, which are now mushrooming in the city, did not have quality teachers because they could not afford to pay good salaries.

While all schools were not required to pay Rs 22,000 (the minimum basic salary as per the Sixth Pay Commission) to their teachers, there should be no compromise on the qualification of teachers, he added.

The minister's new announcement indicates that private schools in the city may finally get a free hand in deciding teachers' salaries and consequently the fees, much to the dismay of parents. There have been many protests against schools hiking their fees last year. After the Sixth Pay Commission was implemented in the second half of 2008, schools sought to hike their fee to generate revenue to pay the teachers more.

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Delhi government then formed the Bansal Committee to decide how much fee a school could be allowed to increase and issued a notification in this regard on February 11 last year.

According to section 9 of chapter IV of the Delhi School Education Act 1973, private schools need to pay salaries at a par with government schools. ``The scales of pay and allowances, medical facilities, pension, gratuity, provident fund and other prescribed benefits of the employees of a recognized private school shall not be less than those of the employees of the corresponding status in schools run by the appropriate authority."

However, according to Sibal, this act will be rendered ineffective from April 1. ``Once the Right to Education (RTE) is implemented, the Delhi School Education Act will not apply." RTE Act has already been notified.

On regulation of fees, Sibal referred to the T M Pai case saying, ``The Supreme Court has also said that fees of private schools cannot be regulated and yet some state governments have passed such acts," he told the teachers present.

The minister said he has also moved a malpractices bill under which all schools will have to give details of their infrastructure, number of students, salaries of teachers etc on their website. If the online information is found to be false, the school can be prosecuted.

As per the provisions of RTE, all unaided private schools operating in a city should be recognized. Sibal said that the bill did not aim at shutting down unrecognized schools. ``Our purpose is to enhance infrastructure and quality of private unaided schools," he said.



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Reader's opinions (6)

Mast delhi 20/02/2010 at 02:54 am

so that means kids in private school will not get good education because teachers will take anger out on kids, and will learn shit. hey, Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal, i will give between Rs 1000 - 4000 per month and do u think the teacher will be able to feed thr own kids

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Amit NYC 20/02/2010 at 02:46 am

This is a welcome decision and there should not be any hue and cry on it. In an open competition, a school that charges high fee will have to perform well too otherwise students will move to another school that deliver more value. The fee should be determined just like stocks prices.

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vikram charlotte 20/02/2010 at 02:07 am

Bravo, Mr Sibal. Please do not do a U turn after this.

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Benin UAE 20/02/2010 at 01:45 am

Minister Sibal's statement goes as if neither he nor the government has any commitment to protect interests of the people of india and to bring in uniformity to the educational system all over the country. The minister's statement only backs those who commercialize country's educational system

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Amol Pune 20/02/2010 at 09:18 am

People should send the children to Govt Schools, and Govt too, should take care of their schools well. If all the parents will start doing this, the level and quality of education will considerably rise in all the people. Even poor people can also get quality education..

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