

**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India**

**Thursday, April 01, 2010**

**Prime Minister's Office**

**PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON THE  
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO ELEMENTARY  
EDUCATION**

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**8:31 IST**

Following is the text of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's Address to the Nation on The Fundamental Right of Children to Elementary Education:

“About a hundred years ago a great son of India, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, urged the Imperial Legislative Assembly to confer on the Indian people the Right to Education.

About ninety years later the Constitution of India was amended to enshrine the Right to Education as a fundamental right.

Today, our Government comes before you to redeem the pledge of giving all our children the right to elementary education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, enacted by Parliament in August 2009, has come into force today.

The Fundamental Right to Education, as incorporated in our Constitution under Article 21 A, has also become operative from today. This demonstrates our national commitment to the education of our children and to the future of India.

We are a Nation of young people. The health, education and creative abilities of our children and young people will determine the wellbeing and strength of our Nation.

Education is the key to progress. It empowers the individual. It enables a nation.

It is the belief of our government that if we nurture our children and young people with the right education, India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure.

We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender and social category, have access to education. An education that enables them to acquire the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to become responsible and active citizens of India.

To realise the Right to Education the government at the Centre, in the States and Union Territories, and at the district and village level must work together as part of a common national endeavour. I call upon all the State Governments to join in this national effort with full resolve and determination. Our government, in partnership with the State governments will ensure that financial constraints do not hamper the implementation of the Right to Education Act.

The success of any educational endeavour is based on the ability and motivation of teachers. The implementation of the Right to Education is no exception. I call upon all our teachers across the country to become partners in this effort. It is also incumbent upon all of us to work together to improve the working conditions of our teachers and enable them to teach with dignity, giving full expression to their talent and creativity.

Parents and guardians too have a critical role to play having been assigned school management responsibilities under the Act.

The needs of every disadvantaged section of our society, particularly girls, dalits, adivasis and minorities must be of particular focus as we implement this Act.

I was born to a family of modest means. In my childhood I had to walk a long distance to go to school. I read under the dim light of a kerosene lamp. I am what I am today because of education.

I want every Indian child, girl and boy, to be so touched by the light of education. I want every Indian to dream of a better future and live that dream.

Let us together pledge this Act to the children of India. To our young men and women. To the future of our Nation.”

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AD/HS