

26 July 2020

Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi Ji,

The Prime Minister of India,
7, Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi.

Respected Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji,

Warmest greetings! The entire education system is facing a huge challenge today due to the long-prevailing lockdown to mitigate the life threat caused by the Covid19 pandemic. We would like to seek your attention specifically to the crisis faced by the entire eco-system under which private schools function, which was already struggling with the discriminatory policy approach even before the pandemic hit the country. Here is a brief of the challenges faced by private schools:

1. The long-prevailing lockdown of education institutions and uncertainty around the same generated the fear of learning deficit among the children.
2. To mitigate the above fear private schools started adopting various kinds of alternative methods to ensure the teaching-learning process continues such as project-based learning, experiential learning, e-learning, online teaching, and other online/offline methods.
3. Due to economic slowdown, loss of jobs, and uncertainty of the future, parents have stopped contributing school fee.
4. The repercussion is the collapse of the entire eco-system. Schools are becoming financially unsustainable and closing down. There are news reports of school leaders committing suicide. Teaching/non-teaching staffs are leaving the job. There are news reports of teachers taking up menial jobs for survival.
5. Moreover, the situation is causing deep damage to the strong trust-based relationship of school-teacher-parents-students, which once broken will do un-repairable damage to the fraternity.

Dear *Pradhan Mantri Ji*, we have done several rounds of brainstorming with school leaders across the country and have come up with a solution that may help us deal with the crisis, which is as follows:

1. The private schools need immediate financial relief to the size of roughly INR 4,50,000/- Crore (15 Crore students with the financial assistance of up to INR 30 Thousand each) for the financial year 2020-21.

2. Following the success of Direct Benefit Transfer model, a scheme can be designed where the financial assistance is given in the form of a voucher/smart card to the student/parents.
3. The voucher/smart card can be designed with security features and should only be used to pay the school fee and not any other purpose to limit the misuse of the facility.
4. The infrastructure available under the *Aadhar* and *Jan Dhan* bank account can be used to validate the genuine beneficiaries.
5. The scheme could be dedicated to the former prime minister of India Late *Shri Atal Bihar Vajpayee Ji* who had pioneered the successful *Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan* in the year 2001.

Here are a few facts that have helped us come up with the above solutions:

1. India has approximately a total of 30 Crore children in the school going age group of 6 to 14 years. Almost 97% of the children are enrolled in some or the other schools.
2. India has approximately 13 Lakh schools, out of which roughly around 5 Lakh are private schools. Roughly 50% children (15 Crore) are enrolled in private schools.
3. More than 80% of private schools are the low-cost private schools charging average monthly fee below INR 2000/- only.
4. The average monthly fee of low-cost private schools happens to be much lower than the government per child per month expenditure in most of the states.
5. The private schools have employed roughly 1.5 Crore people which includes teaching and non-teaching staffs.
6. There is an entire eco-system that survives along with the schools such as books, stationaries, uniform, local transportation, etc.
7. Schools also happen to be the source of big revenue for the regional/local administration due to multiple taxes, fee, and charges.

Dear Pradhan Mantri Ji, this would be the most meaningful investment in the future of the country to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend and the best gift to the children of the nation for which the entire education fraternity would be grateful forever. The private school teachers and school leaders have selflessly served the country for long and never asked for any support from the government. This crisis has given us the one chance to serve the education community from collapsing.

With unfeathering faith in your strong leadership,

Dr Kulbhushan Sharma

President

Vice-President (Advocacy)	Vice-President (Quality)	General Secretary	Treasurer

About National Independent School Alliance (NISA)

NISA is the national federation of private schools associations from across the country. It is a platform that brings together low cost private schools from across the country to give them a unified voice to address their concerns changing regarding education policy and to facilitate quality improvement in day-to-day teaching and learning practices. NISA, through its 50+ member associations spread across 26 states, represents over 1 Lakh low cost private schools, which cater to educational need of more than 2 crore students below government per child expenditure.