



# Right to Education Forum

To,  
Sh Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

**Subject: Civil Society Appeal to ensure that rights of children are protected during this unprecedented crisis.**

Dear Sir,  
*Greetings from Right to Education Forum!*

Hope you are safe and healthy during this unprecedented crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As we attempt to tide over this, I am writing to you, on behalf of Right to Education Forum (RTE Forum), a civil society coalition of nearly 10,000 organisations across 20 states of the country, to ensure that the rights of children are protected during this critical period.

It is a very challenging period for the whole country and impacts everyone, especially the elderly, the very young, street dwellers, informal sector workers and marginalised sections who have suddenly lost their livelihood in the wake of the lockdown. Children of street dwellers and informal sector workers are also suffering as their parents are deprived of income. This is creating challenges for children in terms of availability of food, clothing, shelter and other essential requirements. There are also long-term consequences as a result of loss of access to education.

**Hence to ensure the rights of children during this crisis period, the RTE Forum appeals to the government to take the following necessary steps:**

1. To ensure food security of India's children, ensure smooth implementation of the [notification for home-delivery of mid-day meals](#) and the SC suo moto order for providing nutritional food for children and lactating mothers through the Anganwadi centres for children on an urgent basis. The mid-day meal can include either dry rations or cooked meals. All Anganwadi and ASHA workers and personnel supplying mid-day meals must be declared as essential workers, and provisions made for their safety (including protective equipment and hazard pay) and public transportation to reach the delivery points/households on a regular basis. Enforce orders for ensuring uninterrupted supply of food to students residing in residential schools and hostels.
2. In coordination with the MWCD, ensure uninterrupted growth monitoring and health services, especially for the malnourished children, to prevent adverse health conditions during this period. All adolescent girls should continue receiving sanitary napkins, IFA and supplementary nutrition under SABLA and RKSK or under the ICDS scheme or School Health Program.
3. Promote all school children of elementary standards without examination, as being undertaken by Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra among others.



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4. Take steps to ensure health and welfare of India's poor which would benefit their children. Ramp up testing for Covid-19 and make it free in both Government or private hospitals. While enhanced pension and fund transfers under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana are welcome, the amount needs to be enhanced in line with the prevailing minimum wage.
5. Take steps for child protection including identification of children at risk of violence and abuse as a result of the lockdown. Helplines and other child protection measures should be declared essential services and kept open. Safety of children in homeless shelters and on the migration routes of urban migrants is essential. Members of Village Level Child Protection Committee must be tasked for tracking children at risk, especially girls who are vulnerable to early marriage or trafficking. In rural areas, it should conduct door to door roll call while maintaining social distancing to ensure that children at risk, especially girls, are present in their homes to prevent trafficking and inform Childline or Police or the local Child Welfare Committee if risk is identified. Schools must be instructed to track all enrolled children especially girls once normalcy returns to ensure that no child drops out.
6. With several private schools moving to online teaching, [children admitted under 12-1c](#) find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Several states have also started using ICT for instruction in government schools as well. Low tech means of delivering education should be followed to avoid leaving children from poor families behind.
7. Put in place a ban on collection of school fees in private schools until normalcy returns and classes resume in line with the orders issued by Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Karnataka.
8. Prepare for an early return to normalcy by planning for an early re-opening of schools when felt safe and in the interim put in place measures to minimize instructional time lost in line with the government orders issued by Gujarat, Assam and other states.
9. There should be stronger integration of health and hygiene components within school education to develop basic hygiene practices for self and community.
10. It is evident that our school education has somehow failed in inculcating social and emotional resilience in our generation in this hour of crisis. So, it's imperative build awareness and to prepare children to deal with such situations. School curriculum objectives need to have a stronger focus on building attitudes and perspective not just on acquiring skills.
11. In the long run, the government needs to recognize the role that the public sector has played in the response and increase investments in strengthening the public health and education systems.

Warm Regards,  
Ambarish Rai,  
National Convener RTE Forum.  
Mobile: 8800315595