

Introduce the Right to Education Bill as a recognition of fundamental right of the children of this country on the completion of the 60th year of independence.

A Policy dialogue on the *Right to Education and Child Labour* was held on 22nd April 2008 at the initiative of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) in collaboration with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Among the speakers were, educationists, eminent academics and activists, Mr.Vinod Raina, Prof.Shantha Sinha, Chairperson, NCPCR, Prof.Mridula Mukherjee, Director, NMML, Prof.R.Govinda, NUEPA, Mrs.AmarJeet Kaur, AITUC, representatives of the ministries of Labour and Employment and Human Resource Development and legal experts Mr.Ashok Agarwal, Advocate and Prof.Asha Bajpai, TISS, Bombay.

The participants expressed concern over the growing numbers of children in the labour force. They expressed outrage at the fact that more than 50% of children of school going age do not enroll in school or drop out of school. This when more than 60 years have passed since independence and the country's economy has been growing in recent years at about 9% per annum. Arguing that such a situation was totally unacceptable, the participants unanimously made the following demands:

1. Article 21A of the Constitution of India guaranteeing Free and Compulsory Education for all children should be notified.
2. **The Right to Education Bill should be introduced in the current session of Parliament.**
3. In consonance with the demand for right to education for all children, the Child Labour Act, 1986 and the National Policy on Child Labour, 1987 should be reviewed and amended to implement complete abolition of child labour.