

## Scrapping the no-detention policy may not improve the learning levels

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed [The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education \(second amendment\) Bill, 2017](#), to abolish the “no-detention” policy in schools. Under the current provisions of the RTE Act, which provides for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to 14 years, no student can be detained up to class 8.

The provision was made in the Act because examinations are often used for eliminating children who obtain poor marks, which compels them either to repeat the same grade or leave the school altogether. It was felt that compelling a child to repeat a class is both demotivating and discouraging.

But the change was necessitated by the fact that many states and Union Territories felt that the [no-detention policy has adversely affected the learning levels of children](#).

The government’s decision is also backed by the parliamentary standing committee report that noted that there is no pressure on the children to learn and on the teachers to teach because of the no-detention policy.

There are equally strong arguments against the scrapping of the no-detention policy: This will mean that the State is blaming students (many of whom are first-generation learners) for their failure to learn in class. But the State needs to answer important questions: Did it try to implement the CCE policy and tweak it when necessary, and explain to schools that CCE does not mean no evaluation? Did it provide the right resources for a child to learn? Did it invest enough in teacher training, pedagogy, textbooks, learning materials to make education a “joyful exercise”, as the Act states? Was a rational deployment of teachers done and a specified pupil-teacher ratio maintained in schools?

Now that the State has moved the amendment to the RTE (Rajya Sabha is still to pass the Bill), the onus is now on the central and states governments to provide the right atmosphere, curriculum and teachers so that learning levels improve. Hope this time around they will rise to the challenge.

END

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