

## No Detention Policy

### Why in News?

Recently, Union government amended the Rules of the Right to Education Act, 2009 in December 2024 to allow schools to detain students in Classes 5 and 8 if they are unable to meet the promotion criteria after a year-end examination.

### What was the rationale behind the original no-detention policy?

- **No detention policy** - RTE Act in 2009 stipulated that “No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education [Classes 1 to 8].
- **Remove pressure** - The spirit of a no-detention policy was to ensure that children can learn without unnecessary pressure.
- **Assessment** - Single final year-end examination is not the best way to assess learning and decide on their progress.
- **Reduce Dropout Rates** - The policy aimed to prevent children from dropping out of school due to exam failure.
- **Focus on Holistic Development** - The policy encouraged a shift from rote learning and high-pressure exams to a more holistic approach to education.
- **Continuous comprehensive education(CCE)** - It promoted continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) to assess students' progress.

CCE or Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is a process of evaluating the child's development in all the school-related activities stipulated in RTE,2009.

- **Encourage Inclusive Education** - By ensuring that no child is left behind, the policy aimed to promote inclusive education and reduce disparities in educational access and quality.
- **Societal disparities** - Wide socio economic disparity in the Indian society creates disparities in educational accessibility and learning.

### Why has the no detention policy been rolled back?

- **RTE 2018 amendment** - It enabled the States to decide on the detention policy.
- **No evaluation** - Government schools in many States simply stopped testing in any form until Class 5.
- **Automatic promotion** - Promoting children without bothering to find out if they had acquired grade-specific skills and knowledge.
- **Lack of focus on outcome** - Monitoring systems focussed on inputs or maybe indicators, rarely on outcomes.

- **Alarming learning gap** - Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), found that only 42.8% of Class 5 students could read a Class 2-level text in 2022, a fall from 50.5% in 2018.
  - Only 25.6% of them could do basic arithmetic problems in 2022, a slight drop from 27.9% in 2018.
  - Quarter of the youth aged 14 to 18 years still cannot read a Class 2 level text fluently in their regional language.
  - More than half struggle with division (3-digit by 1-digit) problems, a skill taught in Class 3 and 4.
- **Continuous performance decline** - Out of a maximum 500, Class 3 students scored an average of 323 in language and 306 in Mathematics.
- By Class 5, the scores dropped to 309 and 284 respectively, and to 302 and 255 by Class 8.
- **Non implementation of CCE** - Efforts to introduce a CCE programme instead were largely stymied by a lack of resources and training, and teacher apathy.
- **High failure rate** - Failure rate in class 10 and 12 , ranges from 12% in national boards to 18% in State boards.

A government analysis of Classes 10 and 12 results across 59 State and national boards in 2023 showed that more than 65 lakh students had failed to clear their examinations.

### What can be done?

- Better mechanisms to assess children's learning and hold teachers accountable must be created.
- There must be regular assessment done at the school level in every class, not at the board level.
- Specialised inputs needs to be provided by the teacher after identifying the learning gaps at various stages of assessment.
- School Head must personally monitor the progress of the children who are held back.
- Rigorous teacher appraisal is needed to ensure inclusive teaching.

### Reference

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