

School fees can rise every 2 yrs: State assembly

Maharashtra state assembly unanimously cleared the bill for school fee regulation on Wednesday after making changes in tough original draft.

The state assembly unanimously cleared the bill for school fee regulation on Wednesday.

But the Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Collection of Fee) Act 2011, has diluted the tough norms applicable to educational institutes.

The Act has allowed institutions to increase fees after two years instead of three years as stated earlier.

It has also reduced the fine and punishment for violations. The penalty for first-time offenders has been reduced from Rs5 lakh to Rs1 lakh. The imprisonment also has been reduced up to six months from three years.

The Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Collection of Fee) Act 2011 has brought all schools, including pre-primary, primary, upper primary and secondary schools, under its purview.

To clarify the definition of pre-primary schools, the Act has stated that nursery, junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten level or any school imparting education to the children aged between three and six years come under the gamut of the Act.

However, creches have been excluded from the Act.

The committee felt that the capitation fee was charged for nursery admission and so that level also has been included.

The Act clearly states that the fees taken in excess of the necessary fee besides income and expenses can be called profiteering, which is an offence.

School education minister Rajendra Darda, in his speech after introducing the bill, said that it would help the government in curbing excessive fees charged by the education institutes.

The bill was referred to the 27-member joint committee of members from both houses during the budget session, when it was tabled in the assembly for the first time.

The committee, during deliberations in the nine meetings it held, has made changes in the original bill.

The Act has included all schools affiliated to any Indian or foreign board, whether aided, partially aided or unaided under the Act's purview. This is apart from ICSE, CBSE, schools run by the central boards and the schools run by foreign boards.