



PRIVATE SCHOOL FEES REGULATION IN DELHI: A MUCH-NEEDED REFORM

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ABSTRACT

Private schools in Delhi have long operated outside meaningful fee regulation, enabling arbitrary hikes and coercive collection practices that drew judicial intervention and widespread public protest. The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2025, enacted in August 2025 attempts to address this regulatory gap. Extending coverage to all private schools, aided and unaided, the Act establishes a three-tier regulatory mechanism comprising School Level Fee Regulating Committees, District Fee Appellate Committees, and a state-level Revision Committee. Fee fixation is required to follow evidence-based criteria, remain binding for three academic years, and be published for public access. The Act also prohibits coercive recovery practices and prescribes an escalating penalty regime, including the possibility of derecognition for persistent violations. This paper analyses the Act's key provisions, situates it within Delhi's prior regulatory framework under the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, and examines its reception among stakeholders including parents, school managements, and political actors. It further compares the Act with analogous legislation in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. While the Act marks a significant structural reform, its effectiveness will ultimately depend on institutional capacity, enforcement will, and the robustness of its implementation infrastructure.

Keywords: Right to Education, School Fees, Regulation, Delhi Schools

I. Introduction

“Education is the Most Powerful Weapon which you can use to Change the World”

- Nelson Mandela

Education is the most powerful tool that aids to self-development of an individual and acts as a catalyst to boost development of a nation. Nation building is achieved efficiently when the citizens of a country are well trained, possess various skills and keep on innovating with the advancement of the society. Citizens of any country will only be able to acquire such skills when its youth is trained with proper education. India is amongst the world's largest countries with a majority of the youth population therefore it's very crucial that the youth of our nation

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are trained with proper education¹. The original text of the Constitution initially treated education as a goal for the State to strive towards. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy (“DPSP”), Article 41 and Article 45 directed State to make effective provision for right to education and to ensure free and compulsory education for all children between the age of six to fourteen years. With the enactment of Constitutional 86th Amendment Act of 2002, the directive under Article 45 was converted to a fundamental right through the insertion of Article 21A under Part III². Hence, education for children between the age of six to fourteen years became a fundamental right. This constitutional shift transformed education from a non-enforceable directive into a guaranteed right, reflecting its central role in nation-building. To ensure that every child has an education right, government enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (“RTE Act”) with a similar objective³.

Over the years, the Indian government has created a wide network of government schools across the country to fulfil the Constitutional and statutory mandates of providing educational rights. Along with the government efforts, private institutions have also contributed towards this collective goal. There are numerous private schools in various Indian States, and their number has grown exponentially over the last three decades⁴. These private schools have better infrastructure, well equipped labs, quality teaching and diverse extracurricular opportunities and therefore attract a large section of society, especially the aspirational middle class. The rapid growth of private schools, especially in urban areas like Delhi has shifted the core value of the education system from being purely welfare-oriented institutions to institutions focused on commercial interest. This commercial interest has been fuelled by parental aspirations for quality education, inadequacies in the government-school system, and increasing competitiveness in higher education and employment. On one hand, basic economics dictates that commercialisation leads to competitiveness and therefore better institutions; on the other hand in reality, the commercialisation in the education system has also raised to serious

¹ Ministry of External Affairs, ‘One of The Youngest Populations in the World – India’s Most Valuable Asset’ (IndBiz Economic Diplomacy Division, 13 June 2021), *available at*: <https://indbiz.gov.in/one-of-the-youngest-populations-in-the-world-indias-most-valuable-asset/> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

² The Constitutional (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 (India), *available at*: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/2002_0.pdf (last accessed 12 September 2025).

³ The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (India), *available at*: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/19014/1/the_right_of_children_to_free_and_compulsory_education_act_2009.pdf (last accessed 15 September 2025).

⁴ Observer Research Foundation, ‘Learning Before Profits: Delhi’s Push for School Fee Transparency’ *ORF ExpertSpeak* (25 August 2025), *available at*: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/learning-before-profits-delhi-s-push-for-school-fee-transparency> (last accessed 19 September 2025).

practical concerns. Sometimes, exploitative practices adopted by private school management, with the higher bargaining power against aspirational and desperate parents, creates a risk of shifting the focus away from its true objective i.e., holistic development of children and nation-building. Excessive fees, discriminatory admission practices, and prioritising revenue over accessibility can undermine the very spirit of Article 21A and the RTE Act.

It is an undeniable fact that private schools have improved the educational standards over the time, but they have also been surrounded with the continuous grievances of arbitrary fee hikes, lack of transparency in fee structures and exploitation of parents who are left with no alternative except agreeing to the arbitrary fee demand of such private schools. This market failure has therefore birthed the need for regulatory intervention aimed at solving the problem of accessibility without undermining the institutional independence.

Delhi is at the forefront of this tension being the hub of the elite and numerous elite private schools. In the past, there have been instances of steep annual fee hikes, imposition of development fees, and compulsory charges for facilities - sometimes not even availed by all students⁵. Such issues have sparked repeated protests from parents and civil society organisations. In most of such instances the management of these schools have justified fee hikes by citing infrastructure development, staff salaries, and inflation cost. The trust of parents has however eroded due to lack of transparency⁶. This created the demand for a statutory framework that could ensure transparency and fairness.

In this context we examine and analyse the key provisions of the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025. The Education Bill was introduced by Ashish Sood, Education Minister GNCTD in the Delhi Vidhan Sabha on August 4, 2025 and was passed by a majority vote on August 8, 2025⁷. It received the Lieutenant-

⁵ Press Trust of India, 'No Annual And Development Fees Till Schools Reopen: Delhi High Court' *NDTV* (30 August 2020), available at: <https://www.ndtv.com/education/annual-and-development-fees-cannot-be-charged-till-schools-reopen-delhi-high-court-2287642> (last accessed 11 September 2025).

⁶ Himanshi Dhawan & Hemali Chhopia, "'We're Not ATMs': Why Parents Are Fed up of Arbitrary School Fee Hikes" *Times of India* (31 May 2025), available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-plus/education/were-not-atms-why-parents-are-fed-up-of-arbitrary-school-fee-hikes/articleshow/121535839.cms> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

⁷ Express News Service, 'New Bill to be implemented this year, all private schools in Delhi will be covered under the law, says Minister' *Indian Express* (28 August 2025), available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/new-bill-to-be-implemented-this-year-all-private-schools-in-delhi-will-be-covered-under-the-law-says-minister-10215278/> (last accessed 16 September 2025).

Governor's assent on 13 August 2025 and got published in the Delhi Gazette on 14 August 2025. (Delhi Act No. 4 of 2025)⁸.

Old Regulatory Framework Governing Education in Delhi

The Delhi School Education Act, 1973 (hereinafter referred as “the old Act”) regulated the administration and fee structures of schools in Delhi for almost 53 years. However, the old Act primarily focused on government aided schools which received land allotments from Delhi Development Authority at concessional rates⁹. Section 17 of the old Act states that no aided school in Delhi can levy any fee or collect charge except those specified by the Director of Education. It further puts a mandatory requirement on the school to take prior approval from the prescribed authority before collecting any fee or charge which is not specified. The old Act mandates filing of full statement of the fees to be levied by the school before the commencement of each academic session and puts a bar on charging excess fee except with the prior approval from the Director of Education¹⁰. The provisions for fee regulation in the old Act did not mention unaided schools; only the word ‘aided’ has been used in such provisions. Hence, the scope of the old Act is limited. It merely covers approximately three-hundred private aided schools in Delhi and has left majority of the private unaided schools beyond its regulatory reach¹¹. This gap in the regulatory mechanism and the ensuing consequences led to a cycle of litigation, protests by parents and various government orders. Due to these limitations, Delhi government enacted the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2025 as a major legislation to curb the arbitrary fee hikes by private schools. This Act expands the government’s jurisdiction to all private unaided schools in Delhi. It aims to eliminate the prior loopholes and bring uniformity, transparency, and fairness to the process of fee fixation.

II. Recent Overhaul in School Fee Regulation in Delhi

⁸ Delhi Legislative Assembly, *DLAS – Government Bills*, available at: <https://delhiassembly.delhi.gov.in/dlas-govt-bills> (last accessed 20 September 2025).

⁹ PTI, ‘Bill Regulating Fees in Private Schools to Bring Greater Transparency, Accountability: Delhi CM’ *Indian Express* (11 August 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/education/bill-regulating-fees-in-private-schools-to-bring-greater-transparency-accountability-delhi-cm-10180606/> (last accessed 22 September 2025).

¹⁰ Delhi School Education Act 1973, s 17.

¹¹ NDTV Education, ‘Delhi School Education Act 2025: What New Law Means For Parents, Schools’ (18 August 2025) <https://www.ndtv.com/education/delhi-school-education-act-2025-what-new-law-means-for-parents-schools-9108702> (last accessed 23 September 2025).

The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 (“the Act”) is a significant move by the government to regulate private schools in the National Capital Territory. This Act has not been enacted in vacuum. It is in fact a result of policy discussions, judicial interventions, and continuous social pressures that highlighted the urgent need for reforms. Recent incidents in Delhi showcased dramatic episodes which brought the arbitrary fee hike crisis to public attention¹². There have been instances where students were reportedly barred from entering the school campus by bouncers¹³, expelled, confined to school buses, or forced to sit in the library¹⁴. All of this because the parents of those students did not pay the fee or challenged the arbitrary fee hikes.

Parents criticized such measures by school and called them as inhumane and coercive. More than hundreds of parents have approached the Hon’ble Delhi High Court with petitions against schools, accusing that the schools had removed name of their child from schools’ roll or used physical measures to prevent them from attending classes¹⁵.

An inspection report submitted before the Hon’ble Delhi High Court by an eight-member committee led by a District Magistrate (South-West) flagged the coercive and discriminatory practices by the private schools against students¹⁶. The report highlighted that students who did not pay the fee were barred from attending classes, confined to the libraries, not allowed to use the school canteen, isolated from peers, and were monitored by school security guards whenever they used restrooms¹⁷. Based on this report, Hon’ble Delhi High Court condemned

¹² BBC, ‘Delhi: Rising School Fees Push Indian Families to the Brink’ (27 June 2025) <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2le110pv95o> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

¹³ ‘Bouncers at School Gate: Parents Accuse DPS Dwarka of Inhumane Practices over Fee Hike’ *Times of India* (16 May 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/inhumane-methods-parents-allege-dps-dwarka-used-bouncers-to-manage-children-amid-fee-hike-row/articleshow/121204132.cms> (last accessed 21 September 2025).

¹⁴ ‘DPS Dwarka Fee Hike Row: Here’s What Panel Formed to Look into “Harassment” of Students Found’ *Indian Express* (14 April 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/no-regular-classes-restroom-visits-monitored-panel-flags-discrimination-against-students-at-dps-dwarka-amid-fee-hike-row-9942626/> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

¹⁵ SNS, ‘Parents Move HC against Expulsion of 32 Private School Students over Fee’ *The Statesman* (15 May 2025) <https://www.thestatesman.com/cities/parents-move-hc-against-expulsion-of-32-private-school-students-over-fee-1503433127.html> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

¹⁶ Sanjana Dadmi, “Very Disturbing State Of Affairs”: Delhi HC Raps DPS Dwarka For Discriminating Against Students Over Alleged Non-Payment of Fees’ *LiveLaw* (17 April 2025) <https://www.livelaw.in/high-court/delhi-high-court/delhi-public-school-inspection-discrimiantory-treatment-to-its-studetns-over-alleged-non-payment-of-fees-289611> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

¹⁷ ‘DPS Dwarka Fee Hike Row: Here’s What Panel Formed to Look into “Harassment” of Students Found’ *Indian Express* (14 April 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/no-regular-classes-restroom-visits-monitored-panel-flags-discrimination-against-students-at-dps-dwarka-amid-fee-hike-row-9942626/> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

the conduct of schools and called such practices as “shabby and inhuman”¹⁸. The Court ordered that no child should suffer because of fee disputes¹⁹. The Directorate of Education (“DoE”) was directed by the Hon’ble Court to ensure that all the affected students are reinstated, and no discriminatory treatments shall be repeated. Following the Court’s order, DoE directed immediate reinstatement of 32 students who were expelled over the fee dispute²⁰. In one instance the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (“NCPCR”) issued notice to DPS Vasant Kunj. It was reported that the students were forced to stay in the school’s library whole day and were denied attending their classes due to unpaid fees. Similar complaints were also reported from DPS Rohini and several other schools²¹.

These incidents reflect the systemic failure and absence of a robust and transparent fee regulation mechanism. The developments emphasised the need for a comprehensive legislation. The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 thus emerges not just as policy reform, but as a necessary corrective measure aimed at ending arbitrary fee practices, enforcing accountability, and safeguarding children’s right to education without fear or discrimination.

III. The Ordinance: A Precursor to the Act

Amidst the protest by parents against the arbitrary fee hikes by private schools, the Delhi Government used the executive route to bring immediate reforms. In June 2025, Delhi government promulgated the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Ordinance, 2025 to regulate arbitrary fee fixation and bring greater transparency²². This Ordinance was enacted with retrospective effect from April 1, 2025 which reflects the urgency of this issue.

¹⁸ ‘Deserves to Shut down: Court Slams DPS Dwarka for Confining Students over Fees’ *India Today* (17 April 2025) <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/law-news/story/delhi-high-court-slams-dps-dwarka-for-confining-students-over-fees-deserves-to-shut-down-2710444-2025-04-17> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

¹⁹ The Hindu Bureau, ‘Delhi High Court Slams DPS Dwarka for “Inhuman” Treatment of Students’ *The Hindu* (16 April 2025) <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/delhi-high-court-slams-dps-dwarka-for-inhuman-treatment-of-students/article69457915.ece> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

²⁰ ‘DPS Dwarka Ordered To Reinstate 32 Students Removed Over Fee Dispute’ *NDTV* (16 May 2025) <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/dps-dwarka-ordered-to-reinstate-32-students-removed-over-fee-dispute-8429498> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

²¹ ‘NCPCR Notice to Education Official over “Arbitrary” Fee Hike by School’ *Times of India* (20 March 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/ncpr-notice-to-education-official-over-arbitrary-fee-hike-by-school/articleshow/119267316.cms> (last accessed 13 September 2025).

²² ‘Delhi Govt Approves Ordinance to Curb Arbitrary Fee Hikes in Private Schools’ *News on AIR* (10 June 2025) <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/delhi-govt-approves-ordinance-to-curb-arbitrary-fee-hikes-in-private-schools/> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

The Ordinance sought to bridge immediate gaps in the regulatory regime of fee regulation in private schools across NCT Delhi. Its key features included:

- i. Prohibition on arbitrary fee hikes without prior approval from a government-appointed committee.
- ii. Creation of a grievance redressal mechanism for parents, including the establishment of district-level committees empowered to entertain complaints.
- iii. Penalties for non-compliance, including fines and withdrawal of recognition in cases of repeated violations.

While the Ordinance was welcomed by many parent associations and schools, it was also subject to significant criticism. Private School were aggrieved by executive interference in fee fixation thereby in their opinion eroding autonomy and financial viability, particularly for institutions that did not receive government aid²³. However, despite the Ordinance the issue of establishing long-term accountability still remained.

Nonetheless, the Ordinance laid the groundwork for the 2025 Act, functioning both as a trial mechanism and as a political signalling tool. It highlighted the state's willingness to intervene decisively in school fee regulation and tested stakeholder responses before the introduction of a permanent statutory framework.

IV. The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 – An Overview

The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 is one of the most ambitious educational reforms in recent years in NCT Delhi. This Act has been enacted to bring transparency in the matters of fee fixation, collection and regulation of fees in schools across Delhi and any other matters related to the said objective. The Act is to be read as a supplement to the Delhi School Education Act, 1973. It attempts to create a comprehensive

²³ 'Private Schools Say Rule Changes Meant to Crush Autonomy' *Indian Express* (24 June 2015) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/private-schools-say-rule-changes-meant-to-crush-autonomy/> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

legal regime that balances financial autonomy of schools with the rights of parents and students to affordable and equitable education²⁴.

The New Education Policy of 2020 advocates for curbing Commercialization of Education. It mentions that erstwhile regimes have not been able to curb such commercialization and exploitation of parents by private schools which are solely focused on profit generation²⁵. Considering this aim of the New Education Policy, the Delhi Government decided to take necessary steps to prevent commercialisation of education through profiteering by the private schools²⁶. Hence, keeping in consideration the public interest, the Delhi government has enacted this Act for regulation of fee charged by private schools.

This Act applies to all the schools across the NCT Delhi, be it private aided school or private unaided school. This broadened coverage of school is a significant leap from the 1973 Act as the old Act only applies to private aided schools²⁷. The 2025 Act covered these gaps by ensuring that no private schools can remain outside the purview of fee regulation regime. At its core the Act consists of three interlined objectives, which are ensuring transparency, protecting the rights of parents and students, and balancing the autonomy of schools. To ensure transparency, the act mandates regular disclosure of accounts and provide justifications for any proposed fee increase²⁸. This is intended to prevent profiteering and hidden charges by the school management, which have been common complaints from parents. To protect the rights of parents and students and for balancing the financial autonomy of schools the Act provides for proper representation of parents and school management in the committees mentioned in the Act.

²⁴ The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 <https://delhiassembly.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/dlas/govt-bills/bill03.pdf> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

²⁵ Ministry of Education, *National Education Policy 2020* https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf accessed 15 September 2025.

²⁶ Express News Service, “‘New Fee Law Will Boost Trust between Parents & Schools’, Says Delhi CM Rekha Gupta” *The New Indian Express* (19 August 2025) <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2025/Aug/19/new-fee-law-will-boost-trust-between-parents-schools-says-delhi-cm-rekha-gupta> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

²⁷ ‘New Bill to Be Implemented This Year, All Private Schools in Delhi Will Be Covered under the Law, Says Minister’ *The Indian Express* (28 August 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/new-bill-to-be-implemented-this-year-all-private-schools-in-delhi-will-be-covered-under-the-law-says-minister-10215278/> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

²⁸ Malhotra NV Abhishek, ‘Strengthening Oversight through Legislation: Delhi’s School Fee Reforms’ *Bar and Bench* (20 August 2025) <https://www.barandbench.com/view-point/strengthening-oversight-through-legislation-delhis-school-fee-reforms> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

Regulatory Mechanism under the Act

One of the most significant moves of this Act is its effort to impose a clear statutory bar upon arbitrary fee hikes by private schools in Delhi. Section 3 of the Act unequivocally prohibits charging any fee above the amount determined under the Act. This is important under the current educational system where indiscriminate fee structures usually weigh down parents, generating public frustration and frequent litigations. In taking fee fixation within a legal framework, the Act aims to find a balance between schools' financial autonomy and safeguarding parents from exploitative practices.

The key feature of this Act is setting up of three-tier mechanism for school fee regulation. The Act has provision regarding formation of a three-level committee at school, district and state level²⁹. This three-tier mechanism is necessary since there are numerous private schools in Delhi. By operating at school, district and state level, the Act ensures proper checks and balances at multiple stages.

The School Level Fee Regulating Committee (Section 4–5)

Section 4 of the Act mandates every school in the NCT Delhi to set up a School Level Fee Regulating Committee for each academic year. This committee is structured in a way that all representation of all the stakeholders shall take place. This committee consist of five categories of members which are the Chairperson, Secretary, Group of Members from Schools' side, Group of Members from Parents side and Observer. Such representation at the grassroots level reflects inclusivity and participatory governance. Following is the composition structure of school level committee:

- i. The Chairperson shall be a representative of school management and shall be nominated by the management of school.
- ii. The Secretary is the principal of the school.
- iii. Three teachers from the school are included as members, the selection of these teachers will be through draw of lots.

²⁹ 'Fee Regulations to Cover All Private Delhi Schools: Minister Ashish Sood' *The Economic Times* (27 August 2025) <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/fee-regulations-to-cover-all-private-delhi-schools-minister-ashish-sood/articleshow/123547330.cms?from=mdr&utm> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

- iv. Five parents from the Parent-Teacher Association are also selected through draw of lots for being the member of committee.
- v. An Observer nominated by the Director of Education to ensures governmental oversight³⁰.

The Act also provides representation from marginalised sections in the committee. It mandates that the school level committee shall include at least one member from Scheduled Castes, Schedules Tribe or Socially and Educationally Backward Class. Further, the Act provides for representation of women in the committee. It mentions that there shall be at least two women members in the school level committee³¹. These requirements in the school level committee not only make the committee representative but also makes it inclusive and gender neutral.

Section 5 of the Act provides for mechanism for deciding the fee for school. As per the section, the management of the school shall propose the school fee for three academic years to the School Level Committee for its approval³². The School Level Committee can either accept the said proposal submitted by the management or can decide the fee amount afresh while giving the approval. Such fresh decision by the School Level Committee cannot be more than the fee proposed by the school management³³. This provision prevents arbitrary fee increases while giving the school level committee meaningful discretion. The Act also stresses transparency by mandating schools to publish the fee decided by the School Level Committee on website of school and on the notice board of school in Hindi and English³⁴. The fee decided by the School Level Fee Regulation Committee shall be binding on the school for three academic years³⁵, ensuring clarity for three academic years.

Further, the Act puts a deadline of 15th September on the School Level Committee to fix the fee. This ensures administrative efficiency and predictability. In case the School Level Committee fails to do so, the school management can approach the District Fee Appellate Committee³⁶. Similarly, if the School Level Committee has fixed the fee, then any aggrieved

³⁰ The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025, s 4(1)(b).

³¹ *Id.*, s 4(3).

³² *Id.*, s 5(2).

³³ *Id.*, s 5(3).

³⁴ *Id.*, s 5(4).

³⁵ *Id.*, s 5(5).

³⁶ *Id.*, s 5(7).

parent can challenge such decision before the District Fee Appellate Committee within thirty days³⁷.

District Fee Appellate Committee (Section 6)

- i. The second level of the three-tier mechanism is District Fee Appellate Committee. Section 6 of the Act provides for constitution of district level committee. This committee shall be constituted by the Director of Education and shall comprises of six categories of members. The structural composition of the district level committee is as under:
- ii. The Deputy Director of Education of the connected District shall be the Chairperson.
- iii. The Deputy Director of Education (Zone) shall be the Member Secretary.
- iv. A Chartered Accountant shall be member of the committee.
- v. The Account functionary of the Region/ District shall be a member.
- vi. Two representatives of school, and
- vii. Two representatives of parents shall be the members of the committee³⁸.

The District Committee is vested with the power to adjudicate disputes between aggrieved parents' group or the management or the Parents Teachers Association regarding fee to be charged by the school management³⁹. The Act confers the District Committee with powers equivalent to the civil courts under Code of Civil Procedures, 1908 for the purpose of making any inquiry under the Act⁴⁰. The quasi-judicial powers of the district level committee make it an essential disputes resolution body in the three-tiered structure. It's a strong step since it reduces the burden on courts while providing specialised forum to address school fee related grievances. Further, the district committee shall communicate its decision within thirty days from the date of receipt of an appeal, failing which the matter shall be referred to the Revision Committee⁴¹. In case any parent or management or Parents' Teachers Association has any grievance with respect to the decision of the District Committee, they can prefer an appeal to Revision Committee⁴². This ensures that the issue does not remain unresolved. Also, the strict timelines play a crucial role in education related disputes where the delay in decision of any

³⁷ *Id.*, s 5(8).

³⁸ *Id.*, s 6.

³⁹ *Id.*, s 7(1).

⁴⁰ *Id.*, s 7(4).

⁴¹ *Id.*, s 7(7).

⁴² *Id.*, s 7(9).

committee directly affect the financial planning of families and continuity of academics of students.

Revision Committee (Section 9)

The third and final level of three-tier structure is the Revision Committee, which shall be constituted by the government under section 9, through a notification⁴³. Section 9 of the Act lays down the structure and constitution of Revision Committee. This committee shall act as the highest appellate forum under the three-tier structure, it shall be comprised of six categories of the members⁴⁴. The structural composition of the Revision Committee shall be as under:

- i. An eminent person having made valuable contribution in the field of education shall act as the Chairperson,
- ii. Additional Director of Education shall act as Ex-officio Member-Secretary,
- iii. A Chartered Accountant,
- iv. Controller of Accounts/ Deputy Controller of Accounts,
- v. Representative of schools, and
- vi. Representative of parents.

The presence of an eminent person from the education sector ensures that deliberations are not purely administrative or financial but also sensitive to the pedagogical needs of schools and students. This tier provides the final opportunity for redressal within the regulatory framework before parties resort to constitutional remedies.

Critical Oversight

The three-tier structure of Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act reflects a progressive regulatory framework by the Delhi government. This mechanism decentralises the decision-making through an active involvement of parents and school management directly at the grass root level with appellate oversight within the hands of District Level Appellate Committee and Revision Committee. While bringing together transparency, social representation, and quasi-judicial authority, the Act attempts to strike a balance of stakeholders' interests in a sector as sensitive as education.

⁴³ *Id.*, s 9(1).

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

However, a possible limitation is the real functioning of these committees. For instance, the dominance of school management in the School Level Committee might dilute the role of parents, even with procedural protections such as draw of lots. Likewise, marginalised group representation, might be subjected to tokenism unless supported with true empowerment. Another issue is whether District Committees will be sufficiently resourced and autonomous to be effective, considering they will be dependent upon officers already carrying a heavy load of administrative tasks.

Nevertheless, if put into effect both in letter and spirit, the Act has the potential of introducing much-needed transparency and accountability in the regulation of fees in private schools, a subject matter which has been contentious in Delhi for decades.

Factors for Determination of Fee

The Act sets clear parameters for determination of school fees. Section 8 the Act lists down various factors that shall be considered while deciding fee levied by a school⁴⁵. This provision ensures a rational and transparent way for fee fixation by preventing arbitrary or one-sided fee hikes. These factors are listed below:

- i. Location of the school,
- ii. Infrastructure and quality of education,
- iii. Facilities promised in the prospectus or website of the school,
- iv. Education standards maintained by school,
- v. Expenditure on administration and maintenance of school,
- vi. Excess funds generated as part of charity,
- vii. Contribution by the government under any schemes,
- viii. Qualified teaching and non-teaching staff as per their salary components,
- ix. Salary increments,
- x. Expenditure incurred over students over the total income of the school,
- xi. Reasonable revenue surplus and
- xii. Any other factor which may be prescribed.

⁴⁵ The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025, s 8.

By listing down the aforementioned factors the Act has emphasised on evidence-based fee regulation. School fee will be increased upon consideration of both costs and fairness, therefore striking a balance between financial viability of schools and affordability for parents.

Penal Provisions

The Act has introduced strong deterrent measure against non-compliance of the provisions, making compliance mandatory rather than optional. Section 12 of the Act deals with penal provision, it states that violation of any provision of the Act or any rule made under the Act shall attract penalties⁴⁶. There are different penalties for repeated violation under this section. These penalties are as follows:

First Violation

If a school levies fee which is not determined under this Act, the Director of Education can direct the school to roll back such fee or refund the excess fee to the student within twenty working days. In addition, such instance shall be treated as first violation by the school and a penalty of not less than one lakh rupees and extendable up to five lakh rupees shall be levied on the school⁴⁷.

Second Violation

For a subsequent violation, the school shall be charged with a penalty amounting to not less than two lakh rupees and extendable up to ten lakh rupees⁴⁸.

Non-Compliance with the Orders

In instances where the school do not comply with the directions of Director of Education to roll back or refund excess fees, the school shall be charged with double the amount imposed earlier. Such amount of fine shall be tripled if the non-compliance extends to forty days, quadruple if it extends to sixty days and so on⁴⁹.

Repeated Violations

⁴⁶ *Id.*, s 12.

⁴⁷ The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025, s 12(2)(a).

⁴⁸ *Id.*, s 12(2)(b).

⁴⁹ *Id.*, s 12(2).

In case of repeated violations of the provisions under the Act by the school management, the Director of Education in addition to the penalties can order for:

- i. Suspension or withdrawal of recognition of such school,
- ii. Taking over of the management of such school, and
- iii. Can restrict the right of such management of school to propose fee increase for subsequent years⁵⁰.

It's crucial to note that the Act also provides right of fair hearing to the school management by providing reasonable opportunity of being heard⁵¹. The Director of Education can only impose penalty or pass any order as mentioned herein after giving notice to the management of school for a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

The penal framework of the Act is strict and through, it not only ensures that parents receive refunds but also increases the penalty for repeated non-compliance. The potential for suspension or takeover of management demonstrates the government's commitment to prevent exploitation. Additionally, the guarantee of a fair hearing protects schools from unfair administrative actions. The true challenge, however, will be in enforcement of these penal provisions, it remains to be seen if the Directorate of Education has enough resources and political determination to enforce these penalties effectively.

Prohibition on Coercive Recovery of Fees

Section 13 of the Act is one of the crucial provisions in favour of students' welfare. This section prohibits fee recovery through coercive means. It states that no school shall harass any student by using coercive practices such as striking down the name of student from the rolls for non-payment of fees, withholding results of examination, denying access to education, classes or activities, public humiliation or psychological harassment⁵². In case any school is found using such practice then the Director of Education can impose a penalty of fifty thousand rupees per violation against every student. Such penalty can only be imposed after giving reasonable opportunity to the school for of being heard⁵³.

⁵⁰ *Id.*, s 12(3).

⁵¹ *Id.*, s 12(4).

⁵² *Id.*, s 13(1).

⁵³ *Id.*, s 13(2).

This provision was much need as it places the right of child to get education and their dignity above financial disputes. By putting a bar on the coercive practices, the Act protects students from becoming collateral damage in disputes between parents and schools. However, effectiveness of this provision will again depend on strict monitoring, as such practices often occur informally and are harder to prove.

Mode of Recovery of Penalties

To ensure that the penalties do not remain just on paper, the Act has categorically provided provision for mode of recovery of penalties. Section 14 of the Act provide powers of civil court to the Director of Education for enforcing penalties under the Act. The penalties under the Act shall be treated as if they were decree for payment of money passed by a civil court which shall include attachment and sale of movable or immovable property of the School Management, taking possession of the property over which security interest is created or any other property of the school management and appointing receiver for such property and to sell the same, appointing a receiver for the management of the movable or immovable properties of the School Management; any other mode of recovery as may be prescribed by the government⁵⁴.

Granting civil court powers to the Director of Education is a practical step, it ensures that fines can actually be collected. This prevents the lengthy court proceedings and adds to the deterrent effect of the Act. But there should be some restrictions on misuse of these powers since attachment of property or takeover of management can have serious implications.

Stakeholder Perspectives

The enactment of Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act has generated wide range of perspectives from stakeholders. It had received varied responses from parents and schools even at the stage when the bill was introduced in the legislative assembly of Delhi. The Times of India reported that the bill sparked a wave of reaction across the capital city and has been welcomed largely by parents and school principals⁵⁵. It's unsurprising that the bill received such wide spectrum response from stakeholders, since regulation of fee directly impacts the financial structure of schools,

⁵⁴ *Id.*, s 14.

⁵⁵ 'Delhi School Fee Regulation Bill 2025 Draws Praise from Parents, Criticism from Opposition' *Times of India* (30 April 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/delhi-school-fee-regulation-bill-2025-draws-praise-from-parents-criticism-from-opposition/articleshow/120768045.cms> accessed 18 September 2025.

affordability of education for parents and forms a larger political discourse around governance. Understanding these perspectives is essential to assess the law's effectiveness and potential challenges in implementation.

Parents and Parents Association

Parents, especially the middle-class families that dominate Delhi's education landscape has widely welcomed the Act. Different episodes of 2024 and early 2025 where students were stopped by bouncers, expelled, confined to libraries or denied entry in classrooms over fee disputes has stemmed the public opinion and strengthened the demand for systemic reform. According to PTI News Update, the president of Delhi Parents' Association called the bill as a long-awaited development⁵⁶. Similarly, parent groups like the United Parents' Voice (UPV) and other locals have praised the Act for placing legal limits on profiteering and establishing forums where grievances can be heard.

Most of the parents opined that transparency provisions such as mandatory disclosures, publication of fee structures on schools' website, and disclosure of financial statements are a form of empowerment⁵⁷. Earlier fee demands had often arrived as unilateral circulars and there was very little scope for questioning. The Act requires compulsory disclosures and prior approval from the school level committee for fee hikes. These reforms have shifted the balance of power in the direction of a more dialogic relationship between the parents and the schools.

Despite the enactment of the Act and its stringent provisions, parents are still cautious. Since, experiences under the old Act of 1973 and earlier orders by Director of Education demonstrate that schools have consistently managed to evade regulations, by simply bringing in fresh categories of charges or exploiting loopholes in legislation. Parent groups thus assert that the test of the 2025 Act lies in implementation capacity and political will. There is also a fear amongst parents regarding frequent litigation and bureaucratic processes that could cause delays, compelling parents to keep paying disputed amounts in the meantime.

Schools and Management Bodies

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ 'Explained: Delhi School Education Bill, Key Provisions, Three-Tier Watchdog, and Whether It Really Reins in Profiteering' *Times of India* (5 August 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/explained-delhi-school-education-bill-key-provisions-three-tier-watchdog-and-whether-it-really-reins-in-profiteering/articleshow/123113667.cms?utm> accessed 11 September 2025.

The new Act has also been welcomed by most of the schools in Delhi. As reported by PTI News Update, principal of ITL Internation School in Dwarka stated that the Act would bring transparency between parents and schools and will resolve the longstanding concerns regarding unexplained fee hikes. Likewise, chairperson of Sovereign school in Rohini supported the inclusion of five parents in the fee regulation committee and called it a unique approach allowing parents to directly share their perspective of fee related matters⁵⁸. However, some schools have also shown concerns and disagreement against the implementation of the Act. The president of Action Committee Unaided Private Recognised Schools (an organisation representing over four-hundred schools in Delhi) opined that while private schools play crucial role in nation-building, it is equally important that the autonomy of these institutions is respected and preserved⁵⁹. Hence, there are mixed reactions amongst the schools across Delhi.

Historically, private school especially the unaided schools across NCT Delhi had operated with significant financial autonomy. The main contention of all such schools lies in the perception of interference of State in financial decision-making. To justify the fee hikes, it has been argued by management of schools that fee structures are closely related to the quality benchmarks such as salaries of teachers, infrastructure, extracurricular facilities, and international collaborations. Further, regulatory approval requirements for even slight fee hikes may lead to bureaucratic delays that might undermine the swiftness of institutions in coping up with the inflationary pressures.

Many schools claimed that provisions of the new Act, specifically with respect to surplus generation, risks their financial sustainability. Unlike government schools, private schools depend exclusively on fees for operational expenditure. Without a reasonable surplus, schools may be unable to invest in modern facilities, digital infrastructure, or competitive teacher salaries. The cap on ancillary charges is therefore viewed as problematic, since transport, development, and activity-related fees constitute an important portion of operational budgets for schools.

⁵⁸ 'Delhi School Fee Regulation Bill 2025 Draws Praise from Parents, Criticism from Opposition' *Times of India* (30 April 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/delhi-school-fee-regulation-bill-2025-draws-praise-from-parents-criticism-from-opposition/articleshow/120768045.cms> accessed 17 September 2025.

⁵⁹ 'How Delhi's New Draft Bill Seeks to Regulate Private School Fees & Why Schools Are Apprehensive' *ThePrint* (1 May 2025) <https://theprint.in/india/education/how-delhis-new-draft-bill-seeks-to-regulate-private-school-fees-why-schools-are-apprehensive/2611226/> (last accessed 18 September 2025).

School associations has also pointed out the historical inconsistency of government regulation in Delhi. They highlight that the Directorate of Education (DoE) has often been unable to implement orders effectively, leading to an unpredictable climate. From schools' perspective, the Act risks becoming another "command-and-control" instrument without addressing ground realities such as delayed reimbursements, litigation backlogs, and lack of capacity in Fee Regulation Committees.

Political Opposition

The Opposition Aam Aadmi Party ("AAP") had criticised the Act since its introduction as an Ordinance. It was contended by the Opposition that the government by introducing the Act as an Ordinance attempted to bypass the legislative process and public consultation. The Leader of Opposition ("LoP") in Delhi, alleged that the BJP led Delhi government in Delhi lacks transparency and the Act instead of regulating fee hike, intends to enable fee hikes⁶⁰. Opposition termed the Act as an eyewash⁶¹, the LoP argued that provisions of the Act only come into force from the academic year of 2026-27, hence it does not offer any immediate relief to the parents who are currently facing the increased school fees.

The Opposition critiqued the Act and questioned the timings of introduction of the Ordinance, calling it electorally motivated. In a letter to Delhi CM, LoP Atishi stated that the draft bill was necessitated due to sudden spurt in the unregulated and arbitrary fee hike by many private schools immediately after the formation of BJP government in Delhi⁶². The Opposition argued that although the fee regulation sounds attractive, but it does little to address the deeper structural problems of education in Delhi, such as inadequate capacity in government schools, rising costs of teacher training, and urban disparities in educational access. By focusing excessively on private schools, the government is attempting to score political mileage rather than building long-term educational infrastructure.

Some opposition leaders have also suggested that stringent fee caps on private schools may inadvertently drive down the quality of education. They claim that institutions competing with

⁶⁰ 'Education Bill Favours Private Schools over Parents, Omits Audit, Bars Civil Cases: Atishi' *Times of India* (9 August 2025) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/education-bill-favours-private-schools-over-parents-omits-audit-bars-civil-cases-atishi/articleshow/123194279.cms> accessed 12 September 2025.

⁶¹ How Delhi's Move to Rein in School Fee Hikes Looks out for Middle Class That Propelled BJP to Power' *Indian Express* (1 May 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-govt-school-fee-hike-bill-middle-class-bjp-capital-9975417/> accessed 17 September 2025.

⁶² *Ibid*

global standards, through advanced curriculum, international exchanges and modern facilities require significant funding. Further it is claimed that overregulating might discourage innovation and investment in the education sector, eventually leading to lowering down the education standards. Another major criticism by the Opposition is lack of extensive consultation prior to the Act's passage. It was argued that parents, schools, and educational experts were not adequately engaged in the drafting process, not any copy of the policy was put in public domain to seek public opinion.

The Government

The BJP led Delhi government calls the Act as a step towards transparency and affordability, Delhi Chief Minister Ms. Rekha Gupta hailed the bill as victory for parents⁶³. For the government, the Act is both a policy promise and a political necessity. Education has been one of the key electoral issues in the capital city over the years, with governments attempting to showcase that they are public centric in their reforms. The 2025 Act enables the government to present itself as a protector of middle-class families and also give a warning to private institutions that profit maximisation at the expense of students would not be accepted.

Administratively, the government has some major challenges to contend with. Functional efficiency of Fee Regulation Committees is subject to timely appointments, adequate staffing, and financial expertise. There is also the issue of monitoring numerous schools spread over various districts with different fee structures. The government must act wisely, if it too strictly implements the Act then it risks offending school managements and, in the process, possibly lowering the quality of education. If it implements it too lightly then it will lose trust of parents.

The Act also carries political connotations. In advocating fee regulation, the government is appealing to the urban middle class which has already been vocal in its demands for affordability in education. At the same time, the government positions itself against elite institutions accused of profiteering by enacting an Act as a social justice measure. Critiques, argue that the timing of the Act, implies that it is as much of a political tool as it is a policy measure.

⁶³ 'Delhi Chief Minister Meets Parents, Assures Transparency in Private School Fee Rules' *India Today* (4 May 2025) <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/delhi-cm-meets-parents-assures-transparency-in-private-school-fee-rules-2719449-2025-05-04> (last accessed 11 September 2025).

V. Regulation of School Fees in Other Indian States

In recent decades there has been numerous instances of arbitrary fee hikes across the nation. The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulations of Fees) Act, 2025 is not an isolated example. State such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh⁶⁴ have already put in place detailed mechanisms that attempt to strike a balance between the autonomy of private schools and the protection of parents' interests⁶⁵. A closer look at some of these statutes provides important insights into how Delhi's reforms align with and diverge from, the national trend.

Maharashtra

The State of Maharashtra was amongst the first states to legislate comprehensive fee regulation through the Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2011. The said Act was enacted to regulate collection of fees by educational institutions in Maharashtra⁶⁶. It puts a bar on the schools to collect fee in excess as to the fee fixed under the Act. It also provides for constitution of Parent-Teachers Association and executive committee. The Executive Committee shall comprise of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, two joint secretaries, one parent and one teacher member from every standard.

The Act also provides for representation of at least one member from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes or Backward Class in the Executive Committee. Private unaided schools must submit the proposed fee before the Executive Committee. If the proposed fee is approved by the Executive Committee, then it shall be binding for two consecutive academic years. In case of any dispute or disagreement against the decision of the Executive Committee, either the management of school or parents may approach the Divisional Fee Regulatory Committee ("DFRC")⁶⁷.

The DFRC is headed by a retired District Judge and includes a chartered accountant, education officer, and a representative of parents. The DFRC functions like a quasi-judicial body, empowered to approve, modify, or reject fee proposals based on prescribed criteria. The Act

⁶⁴ 'Delhi Wants to Stop Massive Fee Hike in Schools. Here Is How Other States Do It' *Indian Express* (1 May 2025) <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-school-fee-norms-cpi-based-adjustment-9976170/> (last accessed 16 September 2025).

⁶⁵ 'Regulating School Fee' *The Tribune* (1 May 2025) <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/editorials/regulating-school-fee/> (last accessed 17 September 2025).

⁶⁶ The Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2011 https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/acts_states/maharashtra/2014/2014MH7.pdf accessed 23 September 2025.

⁶⁷ The Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2011, s 7.

also lays down various factors based on which the fee of school shall be determined. Some of these factors are location of the school, infrastructure, salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, administrative expenses, and a reasonable surplus for future development. The Act imposes penal provisions ranging from one to ten lakhs for violation of any provision of the Act.

Rajasthan

Under the Rajasthan Schools (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2016, each private school is required to constitute a School-Level Fee Committees (“SLFC”) consisting of the principal, management representatives, teachers, and five elected parents from the Parent-Teacher Association. This structure ensures that parental voices are directly incorporated into the fee-setting process. Schools must propose their fee structure to the SLFC at least six months before the commencement of the academic year⁶⁸. Once the proposed fees have been approved by the SLFC, it remains binding for three academic years. The term of three years ensures predictability and stability for parents⁶⁹.

If consensus is not achieved or there is any dispute against the decision of SLFC, the disputes are referred to the Divisional Fee Regulatory Committee (“DFRC”) which is chaired by the Divisional Commissioner and includes representatives of parents and schools.⁷⁰ An appeal from DFRC orders lie before a state-level Revision Committee⁷¹, ensuring multi-level dispute adjudication. To decide the school fee the Act specifies certain factors which has to be considered by the SLFC, DFRC or Revision Committee. These factors include location of the school, infrastructure and facilities, teacher and staff salaries, expenditure on administration and maintenance, surplus generated for reinvestment in educational development. And contributions received under government schemes⁷². To ensure strict compliance, the Act lays down penal provisions. In case any schools are found guilty of collecting fees in violation of approved structures then such school must refund the excess amounts with interest. Frequent violations or noncompliance of the provisions of the Act can lead to disqualification of members of the school management, suspension, or even withdrawal of recognition⁷³.

⁶⁸ Rajasthan Schools (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2016
https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/18865/1/14_of_2016.pdf accessed 27 September 2025.

⁶⁹ Rajasthan Schools (Regulation of Fee) Act, 2016, s 4(2)(c).

⁷⁰ *Id.*, s 7.

⁷¹ *Id.*, s 10.

⁷² *Id.*, s 8.

⁷³ *Id.*, s 15.

The Delhi's 2025 Act to regulate school fees has many similarities with the Rajasthan and Maharashtra's Act. Both statutes aim to curb profiteering by mandating audited accounts, disclosure of expenditures, and oversight by external regulatory bodies. Delhi's Fee Regulation Committees mirror Maharashtra's DFRCs in structure and function, both chaired by experts with the power to adjudicate disputes and enforce compliance. Like Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the Delhi Act requires regulators to consider staff salaries, infrastructure, administrative costs, and a reasonable surplus. In both frameworks, profiteering and commercialisation are expressly prohibited. Both Acts impose significant fines and allow for derecognition of schools in cases of persistent violation. Therefore, the Delhi School Education Act 2025 is not an isolated case rather it is inspired by various similar pre-existing statutes in different Indian states.

VI. Way Forward

The Delhi School Education Act 2025 stands as a pioneering framework that establishes unprecedented transparency in educational governance. This forward-looking analysis identifies opportunities to enhance its already robust structure and maximize its transformative impact.

The Act's three-tier committee structure demonstrates sophisticated governance design. This multi-layered approach ensures thorough review and balanced decision-making. The collaborative model brings diverse perspectives together, creating opportunities for consensus-building and mutual understanding between schools and parents.

The 15% threshold for collective grievances protects schools from frivolous complaints while ensuring genuine concerns receive attention. This mechanism can be enhanced by creating digital platforms for parent coordination, making collective action more accessible when needed.

Reinforcing Constitutional Strength

The Act's specialized tribunal system streamlines dispute resolution, keeping educational matters within expert forums. This focused approach ensures decisions are made by those who understand educational dynamics. The penalty structure demonstrates serious commitment to compliance, encouraging schools to maintain transparency proactively.

The framework respects institutional autonomy while establishing clear boundaries. Schools retain flexibility in operations while parents gain meaningful oversight. This balance can be strengthened through clear guidelines that help both parties understand their roles and responsibilities.

Supporting Economic Sustainability

The three-year fee fixation cycle provides stability for family budgeting and school planning. This predictability benefits everyone in the educational ecosystem. To enhance this further, the framework could incorporate inflation-indexed adjustments and emergency provision clauses for unforeseen circumstances.

Schools can leverage this stability to focus on long-term educational improvements rather than annual fee negotiations. The system encourages institutions to plan strategically and communicate their vision effectively to parent committees.

Maximizing Implementation Success

Delhi's commitment to overseeing 1,700 schools demonstrates ambitious governance goals. The existing audit infrastructure provides a foundation that can be scaled through technology and partnerships. Digital tools, automated compliance tracking, and standardized reporting templates can multiply administrative capacity.

The Director of Education's expanded role creates centralized expertise in fee regulation. Supporting this office with specialized teams, including financial analysts and education experts, will enhance decision quality. Training programs for committee members will ensure informed, constructive participation.

Creating Clear Pathways Forward

The Act's provision for current fee structures as baselines creates a clean slate for future transparency. Schools can use this opportunity to justify their fee structures comprehensively, building trust with parents from day one.

Enhancing Operational Excellence

To strengthen the framework, consider these enhancements:

Transparent Criteria Development

Establish clear benchmarks linking fee increases to measurable factors like inflation rates, teacher qualification improvements, and infrastructure investments. This clarity benefits both schools and parents.

Financial Transparency Tools

Introduce standardized financial reporting templates and optional third-party audits. Schools choosing voluntary audits could receive expedited committee approvals, incentivizing transparency.

Capacity Building Programs

Launch comprehensive training for committee members, covering financial literacy, educational planning, and collaborative decision-making. Well-informed committees make better decisions faster.

Digital Integration

Develop online platforms for document submission, committee meetings, and parent feedback. Technology can streamline processes and increase participation.

Flexible Framework Options

Create specialized tracks for different school types while maintaining core transparency principles. This allows institutional diversity while ensuring accountability.

Delhi can adopt best practices from other states while maintaining its innovative approach. Tamil Nadu's expertise-based model offers insights for training programs. Karnataka's digital initiatives provide templates for technology integration. Each successful element strengthens Delhi's comprehensive framework.

The Act's success trajectory can be accelerated through targeted improvements:

- i. **Graduated Thresholds:** Implement sliding scales for grievance thresholds based on school size, ensuring accessibility across all institutions.

- ii. **Excellence Incentives:** Reward transparent schools with streamlined approval processes and public recognition, creating positive competition.
- iii. **Support Systems:** Establish help desks and guidance centers to assist schools and parents in navigating the new framework effectively.
- iv. **Phased Implementation:** Roll out enhanced features gradually, allowing the system to mature and stakeholders to adapt smoothly.
- v. **Continuous Improvement:** Build feedback mechanisms that allow the framework to evolve based on real-world experiences.

Vision for Educational Excellence

Delhi's Act positions the capital as a national leader in educational governance. This framework creates an environment where schools thrive through transparency, parents engage constructively, and students benefit from stable, quality education.

The Act's true strength lies in its potential for continuous improvement. Each enhancement makes the system more robust, efficient, and effective. Delhi is building not just a regulatory framework but a collaborative ecosystem where education flourishes.

This progressive legislation sets the stage for a new era in educational governance—one where transparency drives excellence, collaboration replaces confrontation, and every stakeholder contributes to creating world-class education for Delhi's children.

VII. Conclusion

The Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2025 marks a transformative milestone in educational governance. The Act empowers parents through direct participation in fee decisions while ensuring schools maintain complete transparency in their financial operations.

This groundbreaking legislation creates a balanced framework where educational institutions can sustainably operate while protecting families from arbitrary fee increases. The mandatory fee committees bring diverse stakeholders together, fostering collaboration between schools and parents. Schools now have clear guidelines for fee structuring, eliminating uncertainty and enabling better long-term planning.

The Act's transparency requirements build trust between institutions and families. Parents gain insight into how their fees are utilized, while schools can justify necessary expenses with documented evidence. This mutual understanding strengthens the educational ecosystem.

By establishing standardized processes across Delhi's schools, the Act ensures equitable access to quality education. Families can make informed choices, schools can focus on educational excellence rather than fee disputes, and students benefit from a more stable learning environment.

The legislation sets a progressive precedent for educational reform nationwide. It demonstrates that regulatory frameworks can protect consumer interests while supporting institutional growth. The Act positions Delhi as a leader in educational governance, creating a model that other states can adopt and adapt.

This forward-thinking approach promises a future where education remains accessible, institutions remain viable, and the focus returns to what matters most - delivering quality education to every child.