PRIVATE SCHOOLS PUBLIC LOSS
SUJATA VS PRIVATE SCHOOL

NO FEE HIKE DURING THE PANDEMIC
END DISCRIMINATION IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

RightsOverProfits
The plight of a private school teacher

I, Sana have been teaching English at Mount Kailash High School for the past twenty years.

The COVID pandemic revealed their apathy towards both their teachers and students and they used this as an opportunity to make more profits.

During the first lockdown, they reduced our salary by 40%. I am a single mother and this affected my household significantly.
After the shift was made to online classes, no skill training was done for older teachers like me who are not very familiar with technology.

We were also not provided with laptops. I had to save up my reduced salary to buy a laptop to be able to teach my students well.

During the second wave of the pandemic, we were expected to go to school everyday and conduct online classes, which could have been done from home.

I contracted COVID during the third week of May and was hospitalized.
Our school had not provided any healthcare benefits and on top of that, they cut my salary as I was unable to work for three weeks.

I got into debt, while trying to pay for my medical bills. With my reduced salary, there is little I can do to pay back my debts.

Despite my love for teaching and my students, I have decided to quit working at this school and seek employment elsewhere to be able to support my family and pay off my debts.

Sana is not the only private school teacher facing problems from the management. According to a UNESCO report, 69% teachers in private schools are working without a contract and any benefit.
Parents, private schools and the pandemic

We have to pay Sujata's term fees by the end of the month.

Haven't they increased her fees to Rs 3000 per month. They are charging Rs 1000 extra for online classes. How are we going to afford that?

I just paid Suresh's school fees yesterday. I lost my job three months back because of the pandemic. I am freelancing for now, but it just isn't enough to send both of them to this fancy English medium private school.

What do you mean by that?

We can send Sujata to the local public school. The fees are Rs 250 per month. She doesn't need to study in an English medium school anyway. This way we can also pay for Suresh's computer classes.

I am not going to withdraw Sujata from this school. She tops her class and is a very dedicated student. I want both my children to have equal opportunities to excel.
These private schools have been taking advantage of the pandemic by increasing fees and making a profit. I am not going to let my child's education suffer because of this. Sujata is our daughter and withdrawing her from East Point High is not fair on her.

What are we going to do?

I will provide for her education. I will take up the offer at the hospital as a night nurse and pay for her school fees.

I shouldn't have suggested withdrawing Sujata from this school. I will also take up extra work. We will figure it out together.

Increasing privatization has exacerbated gender inequality. An Oxfam India study found that in families which have both sons and daughters, sons are 8% more likely to go to private schools.
I am Sujata Mondal and this phone has been my classroom for the past two years.

I miss my desk where I had carved my name and my friends.

I miss playing on our school grounds. I used to be a state level football player.

This pandemic has been extremely difficult for me and my family.

I use my mother’s phone to attend my classes. It has been really difficult to follow my lessons online.
My maths teacher, Mrs Chakroborty always ignores my questions and seems to favour the other children over me and tries to humiliate me in class.

Why does my teacher always humiliate me in class?

Students from some families just don’t have what it takes to be in this prestigious institution.

Why does my teacher always humiliate me in class?

Some people will always look down on us. Remember it says much more about them than about us.

I hear my parents argue about the hiked school fees in hushed voices. My father wants to withdraw me from East Point School to be able to pay for my younger brother’s education. I don’t want to leave. Even though I don’t go to school anymore, seeing my friends everyday online makes me so happy.
Several parents and students like me have been facing similar issues at school and we realized we are not alone. We have decided to come together and ask the school to be more responsive and inclusive towards communities like us.

We have been pushing school management, education officers and elected representatives to create schools which are accessible for all, not just privileged.

Maa started working night shifts at the hospital and the results of the exams came in last night. I topped my class. But I don't want to give my next exams while being stressed about my education.

According to an Oxfam India study of private school parents in Delhi, almost 2 in 5 parents report that their child was targeted and humiliated by a school staff member (including teacher) based on their identity.
Let's create an education system that works for all, not just the privileged!

Join Oxfam India's #RightsOverProfits campaign to regulate private schools.

Scan the QR code below:

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