

[AS PASSED BY THE SENATE]

A

BILL

further to amend the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020 (XXXV of 2020), for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows: -

1. Short title and commencement. - (1) This Act shall be called the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability (Amendment) Act, 2024.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of Section 9, Act XXXV of 2020. - (1) In the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2020 (XXXV of 2020), hereinafter referred to as the said Act, in section 9,-

(i). after sub-section (3), the following new sub-section 3(A), shall be added, namely:-

“(3A) Furthermore, suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system shall also be made to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.”

(ii) in sub-section (4), after the phrase “persons with” the phrase “mild and moderate” shall be inserted.

(iii) after sub-section (9), the following new sub-section, shall be added, namely:-

“(10) The Government shall provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to the students with disabilities, free of cost up to the age of eighteen years.”

3. Amendment of Section 22, Act XXXV of 2020. - In the said Act, in section 22, in sub-section (6) after the phrase “conduct research” the phrase “and survey” shall be inserted.

4. Amendment of Section 28, Act XXXV of 2020. - In the said Act, in section 28, in sub-section (1), after the full stop at the end, the expression “Such fund may also be used to provide scholarships in appropriate cases to students with disabilities.” shall be added.

5. **Amendment of Section 30 , Act XXXV of 2020.** – In the said Act, in section 30, after sub-section (3), the following new sub-sections shall be added, namely:-

“(4) The government shall impart exclusive skill training programs for the persons with disabilities with active market links, for those with developmental, intellectual, multiple disabilities and autism.

(5) The Government shall formulate schemes and programs, including the provision of loans at concessional rates to facilitate and support the self-employment of the persons with disabilities.”

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Inclusion is anchored on the fundamental human right to education for all promulgated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Pakistan is a signatory of this Convention since 2011. While Pakistan has taken vital steps to advance the right to education through the provision of free and compulsory education for children aged 5-16, the government needs to give utmost attention to improving the quality of education, including reforming curriculum, increasing the capacity of teachers and improving the governance mechanisms in the education sector. These challenges impact marginalized groups of children the most, including those with disabilities, who are experiencing difficulties in accessing schools, learning materials, and adequately staffed services.

One of the biggest challenges being faced by our students with disabilities is the restrictive learning environment in separate schools allocated for them in our country. They remain socially, emotionally and psychologically detached from normal students and society. By including them in a regular school the children with disabilities have shown to be more confident and display qualities of self-efficacy. Better social skills and communication: Social skills are learnt just through observation and imitation.

The purpose of this bill is to enable the students with special needs to receive their education in the least restrictive setting. The bill requires public and private schools to create the setting that educates them appropriately and assures their safety and the safety of others in the school. Such students should where possible be taught in classes with staff trained to deal with their individual disability needs and capabilities so they learn at a level they can cope with, all students should be able to mix at break times, this could be seen as part of the education of both able bodied and disabled students as they learn to accept each other as people regardless of the differences in abilities, they all have to live in the world so need to know and learn how to get on together in it, this would also help prevent the prejudice there can be against people with disabilities that can exist and help make disabled young people included rather than isolated.

Through inclusion of these students in Vocational Training Programs, they would get chance to economically empower them and become a more productive component of our skilled population.

The bill has been designed to achieve the aforementioned purpose.

SENATOR DR. ZARQA SUHARWARDY TAIMUR
MEMBER-IN-CHARGE