

Bill No. 41 of 2024

THE PROMOTION OF RATIONAL THOUGHT BILL, 2024

By

SHRI BENNY BEHANAN, M.P.

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BILL

*to promote rational thought, critical thinking and evidence-based decision-making
in society with a view to create an environment that fosters the
cultivation of reason and intellectual discourse.*

WHEREAS, rational thought and critical thinking are essential for informed decision-making, fostering innovation and creating a society based on reason and evidence;

AND WHEREAS, a culture that values rational discourse contributes to the well-being of individuals, communities and the nation as a whole;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is expedient to enact legislation to promote and uphold the principles of rational thought,

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called The Promotion of Rational Thought Act, 2024.

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

(3) It shall come into force on such date, as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “Appropriate Government” means in the case of a State, the Government of that State and in other cases, the Central Government; 5

(b) “Board” means the Board for the Promotion of Rational Thought and Critical Thinking constituted under section 6;

(c) “critical thinking” means the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing and /or evaluating information to make a reasoned decision about any concept; 10

(d) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act; and

(e) “rational thought” means the thought based on reason and logic to consider and analyze any information with a view to arrive at systematic conclusion.

Appropriate Government to promote rational thought and critical thinking in educational institutions and workplaces.

3. Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, it shall be duty of the appropriate Government to— 15

(i) promote rational thought and critical thinking in educational institutions, workplaces and public discourse;

(ii) encourage evidence-based decision-making in their policies, public programmes and social initiatives; and 20

(iii) foster a culture that values intellectual discourse, respectful debate and open-mindedness,

in such manner as may be prescribed.

Formulation of policy for integration of critical thinking, logic and scientific reasoning in education.

4. The appropriate Government shall, for the purposes of promotion of rational thought and critical thinking by notification in the Official Gazette, formulate a policy provided that,— 25

(i) every educational institution may incorporate curricula and teaching methodologies that emphasize critical thinking, logic and scientific reasoning; and

(ii) teacher training programmes shall include component for fostering rational thought among students; 30

(iii) public awareness campaigns to promote the importance of rational thought, critical thinking, and evidence-based decision-making may be initiated in such manner as may be prescribed; and

(iv) the media organizations be encouraged to contribute in awareness campaigns initiated under clause (iii) by providing requisite platforms for rational discourse and fact-based reporting. 35

Central Government to provide funds to institutions for research on cognitive science, logical reasoning and educational methodologies.

5. **The Central Government shall provide requisite funds to institutions who are engaged in research on cognitive science, logical reasoning and educational methodologies that enhance rational thought and critical thinking.**

6. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Board to be known as the Board for the Promotion of Rational Thought and Critical Thinking for implementing the provisions of this Act.

Constitution of Board for the promotion of rational thought and critical thinking.

(2) The Board shall consist of a Chairperson and such other members as may be prescribed.

(3) The salary and allowances payable to and other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and members of the Board shall be such as may be prescribed.

7. The Board shall—

Functions of the Board.

(1) monitor the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act; and

(2) evaluate the impact of rational thought and critical thinking in the society,

in such manner as may be prescribed.

8. The Board shall prepare, in such form and at such time each financial year, as may be prescribed, its annual report, giving a full account of its activities during the previous financial year, and submit the report to the Central Government.

Annual report.

9. Any person or institution found violating the provisions of this Act shall be liable for penalties as prescribed by regulations.

Penalties.

10. The Central Government shall, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, provide adequate funds, from time to time, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Central Government to provide funds.

11. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force regulating any of the matters dealt with in this Act.

Act to supplement other laws.

12. (1) The appropriate Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

Power to make rules.

(2) Every rule made under this Act by the Central Government shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both the Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

(3) Every rule made by the State Government under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before the State Legislature.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Rational thought and critical thinking are the bedrock of a progressive and informed society. In recognizing the fundamental importance of fostering intellectual curiosity, logical reasoning, and evidence-based decision-making, the proposed Bill seeks to:—

(a) emphasize the integration of curricula and teaching methodologies in educational institutions that focus on nurturing critical thinking skills, logical reasoning, and scientific inquiry;

(b) foster an environment that encourages questioning and analysis aimed to empower individuals with the tools necessary for sound decision-making;

(c) promote the use of empirical evidence and rational analysis in government policies, public programmes, and societal initiatives, evidence-based decision-making to ensure that decisions are grounded in facts rather than unsupported opinions;

(d) cultivate a culture that values intellectual discourse, respectful debate, and open-mindedness by encouraging individuals to engage in constructive conversations based on reason and evidence and seeks to build a society that celebrates diverse perspectives while upholding the principles of rational thought;

(e) recognize the influential role of media in shaping public opinion, by encouraging media organizations to contribute to the promotion of rational thought;

(f) provide platforms for well-informed discussions and fact-based reporting is essential in countering misinformation and promoting public understanding;

(g) advance our understanding of cognitive processes and effective educational methodologies, allocate resources to support research in areas such as cognitive science and logical reasoning as a commitment to research is essential for continually refining educational practices that enhance rational thought;

(h) establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess the impact of its provisions on society; and

(i) submission of reports to the Parliament to provide insights into the progress made and areas requiring further attention, ensuring the continuous improvement of initiatives promoting rational thought.

In conclusion, the proposal "Promotion of Rational Thought Bill" is a forward-looking legislative initiative aimed at fortifying the intellectual foundations of our society. By prioritizing critical thinking, evidence-based decision-making, and a culture of reasoned discourse, the Act envisions a society better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Hence this Bill.

NEW DELHI;
July 3, 2024

BENNY BEHANAN

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 5 of the Bill provides that Central Government to provide requisite resources for research on cognitive science, logical reasoning and educational methodologies. Clause 6 provides for constitution of Board for the promotion of rational thought and critical thinking. Clause 10 provides that the Central Government shall provide adequate funds for implementing the provisions of the Bill. The Bill, therefore, if enacted will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. It is estimated that a sum of rupees two hundred and fifty crore will be involved as recurring expenditure per annum from the Consolidated Fund of India.

A non-recurring expenditure of rupees one hundred crore is also likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 12 of the Bill empowers the appropriate Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. As the rules will relate to matters of details only the delegation of legislative power is of normal character.

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