**All the legislation are stuck. I want to move them forward,reach out to the Opposition | The Indian Express**

All the legislation are stuck. I want to move them forward,reach out to the Opposition Summary. In this Walk the Talk on NDTV 24x7 with The Indian Express Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta,Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal talks about the Right to Education and key education bills stuck in Parliament. Related. In this Walk the Talk on NDTV 24×7 with The Indian Express Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta,Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal talks about the Right to Education and key education bills stuck in Parliament. My guest this week is Kapil Sibal who must have the finest collections of hats after Pranab Mukherjee in this government. You wear many hats,but the most important onesHRD and telecom and then when Team Anna comes calling,that of a trouble shooter. And this week,the lawyers hat as well,in a way,because you are now in the Supreme Court on very crucial policies. Absolutely,both on the telecom side as well as the HRD side. So both should please you for at least this week because the Supreme Court has decided to hear you on telecom… Thats very important. On RTE,you had the judgment that you wanted. What we wanted was clarity. This particular Act represents an entirely new philosophy on education,philosophy of integration,inclusiveness,the differently abled must be integrated,the disadvantaged must be integrated. You have filled up that lacuna. But the challenge lies ahead. Thats what I am coming to because the Indian system is so hidebound that we decided to participate in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) research and we put up two of our states which we consider to be the best in education,Himachal and Tamil Nadu,and look at how disastrous the results were in reading,math,comprehension. In some,we are ahead of Kyrgyzstan and in the odd one,we are not even ahead of Kyrgyzstan,we are at the bottom. The journey ahead is very long,very complicated,very arduous. You are right about the PISA results. The problem starts with the textbook. If you give a textbook that a child of class VIII should be reading to a child of five,he cannot comprehend. There is a mismatch between the content of the text book and the ability of the child to learn. The other problem is when the teachers dont come. Absolutely,because ultimately education resides in the states. Its the responsibility of the states to invest in education in a much broader sense. And they have not done so for many,many years. Our contribution in the central government has gone up but theirs has declined. So this has to be a national commitment. How do you fix it? You know its one thing to have,say,seats reserved for economically weaker sections in private schools which we rhetorically support,but that will not make up for the vast levels of weaknesses in government schooling. We are short by 1.2 million teachers. I am a product of the government schooling system and its a disaster. I started in a government school and later moved on. I agree with what you are saying. We have to commit ourselves to improving the quality of the school systemand that quality depends on salaries to teachers,pension benefits. They are being paid well after the Pay Commission… They are being paid well,certainly,but the fact is,a large number of private schools give the salary but they take back half the salary. So they comply with the law,yet flout the law. Its not so much that,its the quality of people who come into the teaching profession. It should be a profession of first choice if the country wants to move forward. And how do you fix that? There has to be a national commitment on that. We have to ensure that our best people go into schooling and go into higher education. Unless that happens,the quality of our education will suffer. And of course,we will have to make some systemic changes. Like what? As I said,get age appropriate textbooks. Once we have the fibre optics network,give quality teaching to students which we can do electronically. If we have the best math teacher in the country and we make him give a lesson,let everybody in India actually follow that lesson. Its possible now in the 21st century because you cant wait for the appropriate math teacher to reach a remote area and teach. Its going to take a long time. You cant wait for schools to be built over the next 15 to 20 years,we need this solution now. But you said you have a shortfall of 1.2 million teachers. So effectively 12 lakh jobs can be created. Exactly,55 lakh in all. Twelve lakh jobs can be created. But now,for the next 6 lakh teachers,we have given the money to the states and they are in the process of recruitment. But how do you then ensure that this money is used well,teachers come to work? Bound under the Act itself,there are a certain minimum number of hours the teacher has to teach. Now,we want to make sure that they come to school. There are technology solutions for that which we should be thinking about. All the state governments are on board because they realise that ultimately they have to deliver in the states because if you dont give children of the state a quality education,the elections are going to come,so one way or the other,you are going to be blamed. Because if you dont get it right,the demographic dividend will be a disaster. See,this is the big problem. Where is the demographic dividend? Its in UP,its in MP,Rajasthan,Bihar. Those are the states which are lowest down in the ladder on human resource indices. In Bihar,the chief minister is squabbling with you on locating a central university. I am not squabbling with anyone. I am ready to compromise on anything. Ive been saying give me any place for that university but ensure that when we fund that university,we get the right output from it. If you look at school kids,for example. Everybody makes fun of American school kids but actually at the age of 15,they are 24 points ahead of Indian school kids. We have really got left behind. Its bound to be. Remember,out of every 100 children in the West between the age group of 18 to 23,60 to 70 go to college. In India,15 go to college. Thats the difference between the developed world and the less developed world. First of all,what are you telling private schools,because there seems to be a lot of anxiety (on the 25 per cent EWS quota)? I am telling private schools to start from class I and in eight years,it will be 25 per cent. Its not 25 per cent from year one. So the so-called burden on you is marginal at this point in time. Now you have what is called corporate social responsibility,you can go out and raise funds from public sector corporations,from private industries,from multinationals. There are enough avenues to raise money today. Globally,people are willing to invest in education. So private schools can reach out to these sources and raise money… …if there is a shortfall. Because if we look at the entire country,different amounts of money will be required in different states. Our calculations are that annually (the Centre) will be able to contribute 6,000-19,000 per student. That may not be enough because in many schools,the expenditure is much more than that,and here I am talking about some elite schools. I am sure they will be able to raise the (additional) money because all the children and the alumni are themselves multi-millionaires. So I dont think its a problem if we realise that we are all stakeholders in taking the society forward. Do you agree to criticism that UPA could have done a lot more on education in seven years than what it has done? The Prime Minister has had the finest education,coming from the most humble origins,you are a very modern politician and a lawyer,also with fine education,and many others. We could have done much better. The problem is that your national institutes of excellence are struggling,so much reform is struggling,the Foreign Educational Bill is also struggling. All the legislation are stuck. I really want to move them forward,reach out to the Opposition. The Opposition says Kapil Sibal is arrogant. I have personally rung up all the Opposition leaders. I have gone to some of their houses. I can tell you something our founder Ramnath Goenka used to say. He used to say that jab apna kaam ho to phone pe baat mat karo,doosre ke ghar jao.<U+0094> I have been to (BJP leader S S) Ahluwalia sahebs house. I said please tell me what your objection is. He said,no,we dont have any objection. This order (to oppose the Bills) has come from above. BJP ke upar kaun hota hai? There has to be a reason. I want to know because quite frankly,we have had years of dealing with each other and have you ever seen me arrogant? This is certainly not one of my traits. Nobody goes to the third umpire for such decisions. So what will you do to fix this now as the Bills are not passing? The fact is that in Rajya Sabha,we do not have a majority and if somebody says listen,we will not pass the Bills and we will not even have them debated,what do we do? We reach out,we talk to the leader of the Opposition. Are you willing to reach out more personally? I am willing to and even if they want me to walk a mile,I will walk three miles. With humility? Of course,with humility,because ultimately it is about the future of India. This has nothing to do with Sibal at all. All these Bills have been cleared by the Standing Committee…that includes members from the Opposition as well. Its unfortunate if the personal view of a particular person stands in the way of children benefiting. But I am willing to walk three miles instead of one just to make sure that the Bills are passed. I have tried to do that and I will continue to do that as there is no issue at all. Because everything else will fail if human resource development fails. I agree. I think its the most important agenda of the country. Have you thought of other innovations,for example,a national teacher service? Its not only national teaching service but there is a whole mission on teacher education in the 12th plan. Why dont we start a national service for teachers? The problem is that you require a large base of 55 lakh,thats 5.5 million. Its not the IAS where you can have a national service. There has to be a state service,if at all,and there if the conditions differ,itll be a huge problem. In universities,colleges,can you start something like that? We have national salaries in state institution but of course,states are entitled to have their setup. Most of the universities are state universities. The quality of education has to improve. I understand that the problem is that those who are not in education set up educational institutions,then based on their influence,get all the no objection from anywhere and then start dabbling in education. Its the clearest way to disaster. But it is a serious problem. Manthan hona chahiye,woh nahi ho raha hai. The system of education in our mindset has to change. At the heart of education is mobility. At the heart of mobility is choice. Unless you give choice to your children… What is it that gets you most impatient or irritated dealing with HRD,education? Well,things are not moving fast enough. In the school sector,we have done something but in the higher education sector,things are just not moving. Your Bills are not moving. Are you now making a request to the Opposition that if you have a problem,come to me? Not only that,I make a request to the Opposition that if you have a problem, I will come to you,but at least please tell me what the problem is. So in the middle of all this,you have a tiny additional charge called telecom. It was a showpiece success of Indias reforms and its now in such a mess. Whats your dream court order? My dream court order is that the court says that we have enough freedom to decide on policies. The way forward is by and large auction but still,there should be enough freedom because sometimes in certain circumstances,auction is not the best way forward. That freedom should be given to us and of course,if anybody decides arbitrarily,those acts should be struck out. Because if there is an allegation that somebody has done this,you cannot freeze policy making,you cannot freeze freedom of choice in policy making…my dream order therefore would be something like that. If that order comes about,do we see any of the current players still being in business in India? Like Uninor,Etisalat,MTS…these are giant international players. All players should be in India. More players should come to India. The market has enormous depth. So you are asking them not to run away because some of them are planning to run away? No. In fact,I have had one-to-one talks with each of them. Everybody believes in the Indian market. In spite of our brilliant retrospective tax collection efforts? In spite of whatever is happening. And I am sure that in the next six months or so,you will see a turnaround. So in the next six months,when this turnaround happens,you think well still have these big playersUninor,Etisalat,MTS? And if one of them is running away,you will hold their hand and say wait,give me time? And will you try and have a system whereby even if there is an auction,they will get some kind of option to stay on? Well,we have got a reference now to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will opine on that reference. I think if these issues are resolved,then all the questions that you have asked will be answered. So you want more players in Indian telecom and not one player? Absolutely. More competition,less prices and more benefit to the consumer. Not so much money in the pocket of the exchequer but more money in the pocket of the consumer. The consumer spends it much better than the exchequer. You sounded optimistic at the Airtel 4G launch in Kolkata. I think it was the first time I saw anybody in the Indian government talk optimistically about the telecom sector. Its a great sector. In fact,HRD and telecom are like Siamese twins. Actually both can feed into each other.