

President's nod for Education Bill

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, DEC. 15. The President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, has given his assent for the Constitution 93rd Amendment Bill, which makes elementary education a fundamental right. I have given my assent to make education compulsory till class nine, day before yesterday," Dr. Kalam, told a gathering of women, who are part of self-help groups (SHG) in Kancheepuram district today.

The Bill mandates free and compulsory education for all children in the 6-14 age group. It had undergone an unusually long and complicated process since July 1997, before it got the Presidential assent, the last of the formalities required for a Bill to become law. Dr. Kalam mentioned his assent of the Bill at the Alandur Municipality headquarters, where he was interacting with SHG women on basic issues of village development.

He reminded them that they had a crucial role to play in ensuring economic and social well-being of their communities.

Dr. Kalam, who outlined the need to root out drug abuse, alcoholism and discrimination against the girl child in society to ensure that communities progressed, made the 99 women promise to abide by what he called Alandur declaration.

He handed over a copy of the declaration to the Collector, K. Rajaraman, and asked him to supply the gathered women with copies of the declaration.