



AWARENESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS ABOUT RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT

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Abstract

The Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education Act has come into force from April 1, 2010. This is a historic day for the people of India as from this day the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Every child in the age group of 6-14 years will be provided 8 years of elementary education in an age appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his/her neighbourhood. The researcher undertook the present research to assess the level of awareness of two most important stakeholders responsible for the proper implementation of RTE i.e. parents and teachers. The sample for the present study comprised 80 parents and 80 teachers selected by using stratified sampling technique. The data were collected by using self prepared questionnaire form the sample selected for the present research. The study found the 59 % of the parents have negligible awareness about RTE Act while 36 % of the elementary teachers are highly aware about RTE Act. No significant difference was found in the level of awareness of rural and urban parents about RTE Act. Significant difference was found in the level of awareness of govt. and private elementary school teachers about RTE Act.

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Introduction:

India's greatest wealth lies in its human resources. Universal schooling of decent quality could be the single biggest move it makes towards future prosperity. Towards this end the Government has come up with Right to Education Bill which promises free education for every child in the 6-14 age- group.

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With a new law making education a fundamental right India joins a small group of countries with such a provision. All children in the 6- 14 age-group can now exercise the right under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009. The enabling legislation to the Eighty-sixth Constitutional Amendment that provides elementary education as a fundamental right to every Indian child has been welcomed across different sections of society. The RTE does not only remove the caption fees, screening procedure for admission to schools but also sets out norms and standards of working hours per week for the teachers and teaching learning equipment etc. it lays down duties, obligation, functions and procedures for appropriate administrative authorities at different levels to monitor the progress of free and compulsory

education in neighbourhood schools till completion of elementary education.

The Right to Education Bill seeks to achieve 10 broad objectives including free and compulsory education, obligation on the part of the state to provide education, nature of curriculum consistent with the Constitution, quality, focus on social responsibility and teachers' obligations, and de-bureaucratization of admissions. Also, provision for neighbourhood schools to be set up by states within three years.

Journey of RTE

After India's Independence, one of the foremost concerns in acknowledging a fundamental right to education had been the problem of 'economic capabilities' of the State. Indeed, subsequent Governments have chosen to hide under the garb of unavailability of resources in implementing National Policies on Education. Several high-level Committee Reports have debunked the myth of financial constraints and shown that the provision of free and compulsory education at the elementary level is well within the wherewithal of the State. It is this aspect that has, for the first time in over 60 years, been tacitly accepted by the Government in passing the Act of 2009.

- **December 2002**

86th Amendment Act (2002) via Article 21A (Part III) seeks to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group 6-14 years.

- **October 2003**

A first draft of the legislation envisaged in the above Article, viz., Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 2003, was prepared and posted on this website in October, 2003, inviting comments and suggestions from the public at large.

- **2004**

Subsequently, taking into account the suggestions

received on this draft, a revised draft of the Bill entitled Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2004.

- **June 2005**

The CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) committee drafted the „Right to Education“ Bill and submitted to the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD). MHRD sent it to NAC (National Advisory Council). NAC sent the Bill to Prime Minister for his observation.

- **14th July 2006**

The finance committee and planning commission rejected the bill citing the lack of funds and a model bill was sent to states for the making necessary arrangements. (Post-86th amendment, states had already cited lack of funds at State level) July 19, 2006.

Seventy one years since Mahatma Gandhi gave the call for universal education in 1937; sixty one years since independence; fifty eight years since the Constitution, instead of making education a fundamental right made it part of the Directive Principles; fifteen years since the Supreme Court in 1993 ruled on the right to education; six years after the 86th constitutional amendment was passed by the Parliament in 2002 by inserting Article 21A making education a fundamental right for children in the restricted age group of 6 to 14 years; and four years after the draft bill was prepared by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 15 December 2008.

The bill was approved by the cabinet on July 2, 2009. Rajya Sabha passed the bill on July 20, 2009 and the Lok Sabha on August 4, 2009. It received Presidential assent and was notified as law on September 3, 2009 as the Children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act.

Key provisions of the RTE Act:

- 25% reservation in private schools for disadvantaged children from the neighbourhood, at the entry level. The government will reimburse expenditure incurred by schools.
- No donation or capitation fee on admission.
- No interviewing the child or parents as part of the screening process.
- The Bill also prohibits physical punishment, expulsion or detention of a child, and deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes other than census or election duty and disaster relief.
- The RTE Act lays provision of teacher-student ratio of 1:30, setting up school management committees, and introducing continuous evaluations instead of the examination system.
- The model rules for implementation of the Act, as approved by the HRD ministry say that state governments or local authorities will determine neighbourhood schools by undertaking household surveys and school mappings. Such agencies shall ensure that no child is subjected to caste, class, religion and gender abuse at school.
- Local authorities will conduct household surveys and maintain a record of all children in their area. The record will contain detailed information on children and their parents, and will specify whether they belong to a weaker sections or disadvantaged group, or have a disability.
- The state government or local authority will identify children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged groups every year. Unaided and private schools shall ensure that children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups shall not be segregated from other children in the classroom, nor shall their classes be held in places and timings different from classes held for the other children.
- Such children shall not be treated differently from

the rest of the children in any manner pertaining to entitlements and facilities like textbooks, uniforms, library, ICT facilities, extra-curricular activities and sports.

- The school management committee or local authority will identify drop-outs or out-of school children above six years of age and admit them in classes appropriate to their age after special training. The duration of the training shall be for three months and can be extended to two years. After admission, these children will continue to receive special attention by teachers for their successful integration into the class academically and emotionally.
- The state gover
- nment and local authorities will establish primary schools within a walking distance of 1 km from the neighbourhood. In case of Class VI to VIII children, the school should be within a walking distance of 3 km from the neighbourhood.
- In the absence of schools in small hamlets, the state government shall make adequate arrangements like free transportation and residential facilities. For physically challenged children, the state government will make arrangement for their smooth transport and schooling.
- The states are now expected to draw up their own rules based on these model rules for implementation of the Act.

Justification of the Study:

RTE has been a part of the directive principles of the State Policy under Article 45 of the Constitution, which is part of Chapter 4 of the Constitution and the rights in Chapter 4 are not enforceable. For the first time in the history of India we have made this right enforceable by putting it in Chapter 3 of the Constitution as Article 21. This entitles children to have the right to education enforced as a fundamental right. The RTE, as a revolutionary enabling measure, could lead India far in

its commitment to an equitable and progressive society. The Act has been well framed but certain debatable provisions and lacunae therein require critical attention. The realization of the set objectives of UEE in general and RTE in particular is possible only through its proper implementation and the whole hearted participation of all the stakeholders. The researcher, therefore, undertook the present research to assess the level of awareness of two most important stakeholders responsible for the proper implementation of RTE i.e. parents and teachers.

Statement of the Problem:

AWARENESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS ABOUT RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the level of awareness of parents about Right to Education Act (RTE Act).
2. To study the level of awareness of teachers about RTE Act.
3. To study the difference in level of awareness of rural and urban parents about RTE Act.
4. To study the difference in level of awareness of govt. and private elementary school teachers about RTE Act.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There exists no significant difference in the level of awareness of rural and urban parents about RTE Act.
2. There exists no significant difference in the level of awareness of govt. and private elementary school teachers about RTE Act.

Research Methodology:

The present study aimed at investigating the level of awareness of parents and teachers about RTE Act. For this purpose the Descriptive Survey method was used. The sample for the present study comprised 80 parents and 80 teachers selected by using stratified sampling technique. The data were collected by using self prepared questionnaire form the sample selected for the

present research. For the interpretation of the data statistical techniques used were frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test.

Results:

The results of the present study are discussed below

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Parents about RTE Act

Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
25-30	05	27.5%
20-25	09	
15-20	08	
10-15	11	13.75%
05-10	22	58.75%
0-05	25	

It is clear from the above table that the 59 % of the parents have negligible awareness about RTE Act whereas only about 14 % of the parents have moderate level of awareness about RTE Act. Only about 27 % of the parents are highly aware about RTE Act.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Elementary Teachers about RTE Act

Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
25-30	08	36.25%
20-25	10	
15-20	11	
10-15	26	32.5 %
05-10	16	31.25%
0-05	09	

The above table shows that about 31 % of the elementary teachers are least aware about RTE Act while 36 % of the elementary teachers are highly aware about RTE Act. About 33 % of the elementary school teachers have moderate level of awareness about RTE Act.

Table 3: Significance of Difference in Level of Awareness of Rural and Urban Parents about RTE Act

Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value
Rural	40	11.18	2.86	1.67*
Urban	40	10.26	2.01	

***Not Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance with df =78**

Table 3 shows that the mean awareness score of rural parents is 11.18 and the standard deviation (SD) is 2.86. The mean awareness score and the SD of the urban parents come out to be 10.26 and 2.01 respectively. The calculated t-value is 1.67 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis- there exists no significant difference in the level of awareness of rural and urban parents about RTE Act is accepted.

Table 4: Significance of Difference in Level of Awareness of Govt. and Private Elementary School Teachers about RTE Act

Type of School	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value
Govt.	40	14.26	3.27	2.36*
Private	40	12.84	2.02	

***Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance with df =78**

It is clear from the table 4 that the mean awareness score of govt. elementary school teachers is 14.26 and the standard deviation (SD) is 3.27. The mean awareness score and the SD of the private elementary school teachers come out to be 10.26 and 2.01 respectively. The calculated t-value is 1.67 which is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis- there exists no significant difference in the level of awareness of govt. and private elementary school teachers about RTE Act stands rejected. The difference is in favor of govt. elementary school teachers. It may be attributed to the explanation that the

private schools are not enforcing the provisions made in the RTE Act and therefore the faculty in such schools possess little knowledge about the RTE Act as compared to their govt schools counterparts.

Conclusion:

To translate the current RTE bill into practice, union and state governments of India, need to initiate effective steps towards its proper implementation. The Right to Education has opened up many opportunities for children from economically weaker sections. Yet, despite the best efforts to spread awareness, the parents seem to have little knowledge about the policy. Section 12(1)(c) of RTE Act has the potential to put roughly 10 million children across India on a different path in the next five years, making it the single largest opportunity seat scheme in the world. But we need a better state-wide implementation plan for that to happen. The major stakeholders i.e. teachers and the parents must be motivated to come forward to help govt. to realize the objective of universalisation of elementary education.

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