

A STUDY OF CHALLENGES OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT, 2009 AMONG MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PRIMARY (MCP) SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DELHI

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Abstract

The present research is an attempt to study the challenges of Right to Education Act, 2009 among MCP School Teachers of Delhi. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, is the recent reform in the field of elementary education. By 86th amendment, Article 21 A was added as the new fundamental right in 2002. The Act was passed by both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha received the consent of President on August 26, 2009. "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009", was notified and came into effect from April 1, 2010. The present research is a descriptive survey. The data was collected from 120 in-service teachers teaching in Municipal Corporation Schools of Delhi. A questionnaire comprising of open ended questions was prepared for studying the views, challenges and suggestions of the teachers regarding RTE Act. The data collected was systematically tabulated and analysed qualitatively. The findings of the study showed that there is a wide gap between policy interventions and how it is actually perceived and implemented in the field.

KeyWords: Right to Education, Policy, In-service teachers

INTRODUCTION

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, makes education a fundamental right of every child. RTE Act, 2009 is the first Central legislation on school education which is applicable all over India (except Jammu and Kashmir). In 2010, the country achieved a historic milestone when Article 21-A and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 became operative on 1st April 2010. It is a 'historic' legislation of our country. Before this amendment, free and compulsory education was included in Article 45 of the list of "Directive principles of the State Policy" in the Constitution of India. Article 45 states that "The State shall endeavour to provide, within the period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education of all the children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

However, the states were not able to achieve

universal free and compulsory education even after the 60 years of independence. The enforcement of Article 21-A by RTE Act represented a momentous step forward for universalising elementary education in our country. In 2002, Article 21 A was added as the new fundamental right by 86th amendment. On August 26, 2009, "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009", was notified and came into effect from April 1, 2010.

"The Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2009" provides a justiciable legal framework for the children in the age group of 6-14 years for the purpose of free and compulsory elementary education. By 'free education' it means that no child is liable to pay any fees, charges or expenses, who has been admitted to a school supported by the appropriate Government, which may prevent the child from pursuing and completing elementary education and 'compulsion' is on the appropriate government.

The RTE Act is attached with the belief that the values of equality, social justice and democracy will be re-established.

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Key Features of the Act

- *“The right of children of the age 6-14 years to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.*
- *‘Compulsory education’ means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group.*
- *‘Free’ means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.*
- *The act makes it mandatory for all schools to meet some minimum norms. Government schools have to meet the student teacher ratio and other schools require a certificate of recognition.*
- *Government schools have to provide free and compulsory education to all admitted children.*
- *The act prohibits physical punishment or mental harassment, screening procedures for admission of children, capitation fees. It also prohibits children from being held back in class, or expelled, until the completion of elementary education.*
- *For children in 6-14 age group it prohibits (i) physical punishment and mental harassment, (ii) screening procedures for admission, (iii) capitation fees, (iv) private tuition by teachers, (v) running of schools without recognition,*
- *The Act makes provisions for a non-admitted or first time enrolled child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.*
- *The Act specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments,*

local authority in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.

- *The Act lays down the norms and standards of Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school working days, teacher working hours.*
- *The Act prohibits deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.*
- *The Act provides appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite training and academic qualifications.*
- *The Act provides for development of curriculum with the values enshrined in the Constitution, for the all- round development of the child, building on the child’s knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.*
- *The Act provides for protection and monitoring of the child’s right to free and compulsory education and redressal of grievances by the National and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, which shall have the powers of a civil court.”*
(Right to Education Act, 2009)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- *To identify the challenges faced by MCP School teachers in implementing RTE Act.*
- *To explore the measures for bridging the gap in implementation of RTE Act.*

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was used for the study. A sample of 120 in service teachers teaching in MCP schools of Delhi was selected.

For **challenges and suggestions** of the RTE Act, an open ended questionnaire was prepared for the teachers, which included questions related to; views of the teachers regarding RTE Act, problems and suggestions given by teachers with reference to RTE Act. The data collected through questionnaire was put to content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the teachers are not clear about the RTE Act and they were implementing it on the basis of their personal knowledge. It is very important for teachers to have full understanding about the RTE Act, so that the hindrances during implementation can be minimised. Also, the knowledge about the Act will help them in understanding it and eventually implementing it according to the need of the situation.

Forty one percent (41%) of teachers welcomed RTE as an important step in school education. Including 7% of teachers responded that the Act ensures education for all, 8% of teachers responded that the Act will help in achieving UEE (8%), 10% of teachers responded that it lays down norms for schools and 16% of teachers agreed that the Act will bring equality among children.

Whereas, the rest 59% of teachers responded that RTE Act increases the responsibility of school and teachers (10%) without giving any clarity (12%) about the implementation of the act. It compromises on quality education (15%), which leads towards the questionable implementation (7%). Guidelines for the implementation are not proper (10%) and retention of students is neglected (5%).

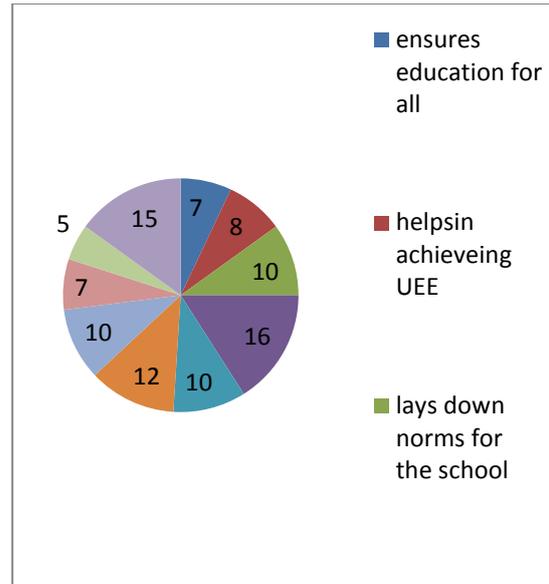


Figure 1: Views of teachers regarding Right to Education Act

Regarding the **challenges**, lack of training (27%) and adequate information (18%) are the major challenges pointed out by the teachers in the implementation of RTE Act. Seventeen percent (17%) of teachers responded that the schools had high PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio) which prohibits teachers from giving individual attention to the students and thus effects quality education. Eight percent (8%) of teachers found the Act ambiguous and lack of clarity. Eight percent (8%) of teachers responded that the authorities' need to be more pro- active and 12% of teachers' responded that they should be motivated regularly. Ten percent (10%) of teachers demanded that resources should also be enhanced, including physical infrastructure, monetary and human resources (special educators).

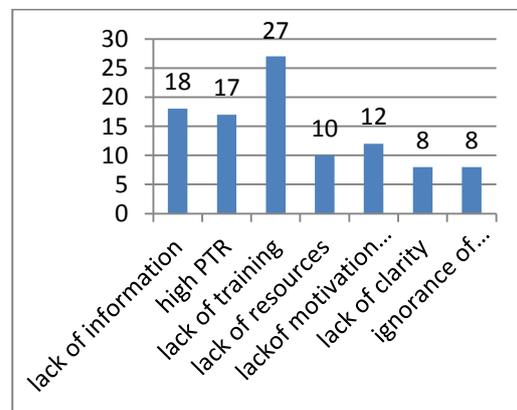


Figure 2: Challenges in implementing Right to Education Act

For **suggestions**, twenty percent (20%) of teachers agreed that there was a need of proper training and guidance for teachers. Other 18% of teachers demanded special provision for counsellors and special educators in the schools to cater the needs of CWSN and disadvantaged children. Thirteen percent (13%) of teachers mentioned that more classrooms should be made for maintain the optimum Pupil teacher ratio in schools. Fourteen percent of teachers (14%) responded that authorities should follow up and regular supervisions should be done in the school. Ten percent (10%) of teachers responded that they should not be given administrative work and 7% of teachers responded that parents should be made aware of importance of education, whereas, 5% of teachers agreed that there was a need of commitment from all the sections of society, including parents, community, civil society, private sectors, government, NGOs, as education of the child is not the sole responsibility of the school. Modification is required in the sections of RTE Act; no detention policy and age and grade appropriate placement of children, to make it more realistic.

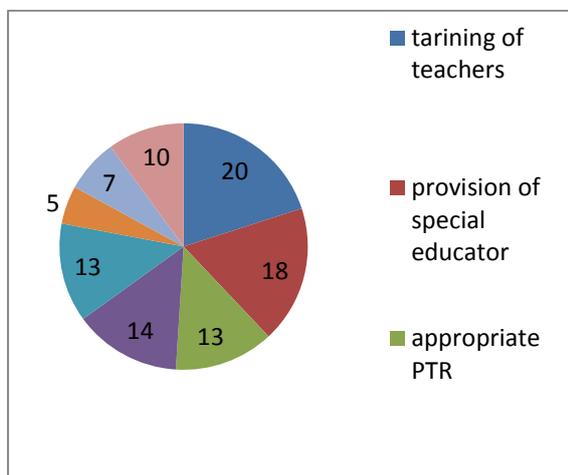


Figure3: Suggestions for successful implementation of Right to Education Act

CONCLUSION

Overall for the teachers, if RTE Act is summarised it would be; *do not turn away the child, do not hit the child and promote the child.*

From the above analysed data, one can easily see that the objective of RTE Act is not being fulfilled because lesser number of principals and teachers are aware of the act. Right to education act is blamed for the low learning level of the child by the teachers. But one cannot blame the policy for no learning, as the factors affecting the learning are still the same. So, policy cannot be blamed alone.

Also, there is a need to judge one’s own actions. RTE Act is definitely maximising the enrolment of the children in the schools but providing quality education is the need of the hour.

Teachers, who are the frontline providers of the education services, were required to implement RTE Act about which they had no clear guide lines. There are no clear guidelines for the teachers who play an important role in the implementation of the RTE Act. This had a negative impact on the implementation of the act. It is evident from the research that teachers need to be trained, materials needed for teaching are provided and they get regular tips on ways to organise their classrooms for implementation of RTE act. With an increase in enrolment into schools, it is important for the teachers to be trained and school have resources to cater to the needs of all the children

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WEBSOURCES

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