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THE REALITY OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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Abstract

Since independence, country is trying its best to fulfill all the commitments for making education freely and easily accessible to its citizens. From time to time, different policies and programs were initiated to boost education system in India and to encourage Universalisation of Elementary Education, but the real scenario is really unacceptable. However, whatever the achievements are, these were still only on papers and actually due to various reasons and factors, these obligations could not be achieved yet. One of the best moves on this way was to provide free and compulsory education to the Children from the age of 6-14 years as a fundamental right that is RTE (2009). RTE Act was enacted by Govt. of India on 4 August 2009 and came into effect on 1 April 2010 all over the country except Jammu and Kashmir. The RTE Act promises to guarantee free and compulsory education to each and every child with and age group of 6 to 14. Various provisions are given in the Act to deal with issues related to enrollment of children from minorities and socially backward classes as well as children with special needs; re-admission of drop out students; teaching learning material; special resources to needy students etc. The current study highlights the status of RTE Act, with special focus on admission of students under this act and provision of resources to the needy students in grant in aid schools of Vadodara city.

Keywords: Right to Education, Grant in aid schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important aspect in everyone's life. The importance of education could be compared with the importance of air, water and food in our life. In other words we can say that, education is as important as air, food and water in our life. Just as we could not live without these important things, we could not manage to survive without education. World is continuously changing with advanced and new knowledge in every second, if we want to continue to exist in this techno savvy and revolutionized world, we must be educated. It means it is important for each and every being. That is why, almost all the countries, all over the world realized the importance of education. In 1990 at World Conference for Education for All, the goal of Universalisation of Education upto the age of 14 years irrespective of caste, colour, creed, ethnicity, community and even disability, was accepted. In independent India, first Education Commission also known as Kothari Commission (1964-68) focused on Education for all irrespective of caste, colour, creed, community, religion, economic condition and social status. After that, in 1968, National Education Policy while accepting the recommendations of Kothari Commission suggested the expansion of educational facilities to physically and mentally handicapped children and enrolls them to study in regular schools. Even our National Policy on Education (NPE 1986) also focuses on inclusion of each and every child in classroom.

Right to Education Act (2009)

Various policies and programmes were initiated by the government to encourage education and help each and every child to enroll in the class so that everyone gets education, but the real scenario is really unacceptable. However, whatever the achievements are, these were still only on papers and actually due to various reasons and factors, these obligations could not be achieved yet. One of the best moves on this way

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was to provide free and compulsory education to the Children from the age of 6-14 years as a fundamental right that is RTE (2009). With Eighty-sixth Amendment Act in 2002, Article 21-A was inserted in the Part III of the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right which means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. RTE Act was enacted by Govt. of India on 4 August 2009 and came into effect on 1 April 2010 all over the country except Jammu and Kashmir. This gives a new thrust to the education, which will ultimately boost the concept of Universalisation of Education in the country. A variety of provisions of the act such as mapping of children, schools within one kilometer, facilities of transport to children with disabilities, trained teachers, promise of quality education, child centered curriculum etc. supports inclusion of almost all the marginalized groups of children even including children with disabilities resulting in the education according to the needs of the child.

Though country is trying to put all the efforts to include each and every child in educated world by enforcing education as an important part of life for children of all the strata's and communities. Whether child is able or disable (minor disability or disability defined in clause (i) of section 2 of The Indian Equal Opportunities and Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 1995), he or she should be provided equal opportunities for education upto the age group of 6 to 14 years. Even though there is widespread support for Right to Education at a philosophical level and results are also impressive but is it a really a reality or just a myth. Here, the concern is not only about access to schooling, but it is also about ensuring meaningful participation in a system in which achievement and success is available to all (Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2007).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since, six years has been passed away after the implementation of RTE Act (2009) and various studies were conducted at different levels in different states to know the status of the act. Mahanadi (2014) focused on the role of teachers for the effective implementation of RTE Act. According to the author, the headmasters and teachers need to be oriented about the objectives and provisions of RTE Act. Fareed (2014), Deepthi (2014), Gaddipati (2015), Reddy (2014), Prasad et al (2014) and Kalyani K. (2014) studied the challenges for the implementation of RTE Act. Reddy (2014) reported in the study that, to meet the challenges it is necessary for all the stakeholders to work with full dedication and commitment. According to Abbas (2014), for the effective implementation of the reservation in private schools there is a need to ensure a fair selection process, a leak proof payment mechanism and a transparent monitoring and evaluation system. The government needs to put a strict and effective monitoring and implementation system in place in order to make the 25% be useful for the disadvantaged groups. In 2013 the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights organized a national level workshop on the Right of Children with disabilities to inclusive education under the RTE Act 2009. In 2014, the UNESCO and the UNICEF also organized national level consultations that addressed the issue of the use of information and communication technologies in education. The researcher studied various studies and analyzed that most of the studies were conducted on effective implementation as well as on the status of RTE at various levels.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

From time to time, different policies and programs were initiated to boost education system in India and to encourage Universalisation of Elementary Education. RTE Act 2009 is one more important step from government to encourage education in every nook and corner of the country. Katerina Tomasevski, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, points out: "There is a large number of human rights problems, which cannot be solved unless the right to education is addressed as the key to unlock other



human rights. Education operates as multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual rights, freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, while depriving people of the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms where the right to education is denied or violated." It means Right to Education for children is of utmost importance and need of the hour.

Various provisions are given in the Act to deal with issues related to enrolment of children from minorities and socially backward classes as well as children with special needs; re-admission of drop out students; teaching learning material; special resources to needy students etc. Most of the provisions of the RTE were already implemented long back in 2001 by SSA and now acting as a vehicle through which RTE works. There are various studies on the implementation of RTE Act as well as on the current status of the Act. The present study is very important as it helps in understanding the barriers in the effective implementation of the Act along with comprehending the challenges faced by the teachers in classes having differently abled students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the status of RTE Act with respect to admission of students in grant-in-aid schools of Vadodara city.
2. To study the provisions of resources to the needy students in grant-in-aid schools of Vadodara city.
3. To study the challenges faced by the school teachers to meet the needs of all the students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERM

Needy Students: In the present study, needy students mean students who are admitted in age appropriate classes, Children with special needs.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to only two provisions of RTE Act i.e. admission of students and provisions of resources. The study was also delimited to grant-in-aid schools of Vadodara city only.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology: Survey

Population: All the grant-in-aid schools of Vadodara city. Vadodara city has four *sankuls* and in these four *sankuls* approximately 125 schools are grant-in-aid as reported from DEO office of Vadodara City till 2015.

Sample: Sample was selected randomly. 10% of the population was selected as sample for the present study.

Development of Tool: Review of literature pertaining to RTE act and discussions with the experts gave key inputs to the researcher for developing a tool.

Tools and Techniques: Unstructured interview from principals and teachers of the school was used as a technique to get data.

Data Collection: Data was collected from the Principals and teachers of the school. Principals of schools were informed about the purpose and the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to study the status of RTE Act with respect to admission of students and provision of resources to those students who are admitted in age appropriate classes, researcher took interview from the



principals of the school. It was found from the responses of the principals that they do not face any challenge in admission procedure in most of the cases. It was found in very rare cases when they do not give admission but reasons were not disclosed with the researcher.

According to RTE Act 2009, students who are admitted in the schools should be placed in age appropriate classes. It means if a 10 year old student gets admission in a school, he/she should be placed in 4th or 5th standard. Most of the principals face challenge in placing students in age appropriate classes. As per Act trainings should be given to these students before placing them in the age appropriate classes. But in most of schools surveyed by the researcher, it was found that trainings were missing. In some of the schools, trainings were given. Generally trainings are given in those schools where the migration rate is high. Some principals of the school are not aware of any special training for any student. Even teachers were not appropriately trained to tackle these students.

The Act facilitates that schools should provide appropriate resources to the needy students. In the study it was found that in most of the cases resources such as infrastructural resources and teaching resources were not available or wherever they were available, they were not sufficient and in some cases these resources were not appropriate. Infrastructural resources such as separate toilets for boys and girls, libraries, ramps etc. are most rarely present in schools. Appropriate resources for teaching learning such as books having bigger font size for low vision students, teaching materials to make teaching learning more effective for needy students etc were missing in most of the schools. Wherever they were present could not be judged for their appropriateness. In most of the cases students admitted in age appropriate classes could not be able to cope up with daily classroom challenges such as understanding most of the concept during the class and relating these concepts with the previous one. All the above discussion shows that mostly principals face challenge in placing students in age appropriate classes.

The RTE Act ensures that each and every child should be admitted in class appropriate to his/her age and teachers had to teach them along with other students. To study the third objective, researcher surveyed teachers working in selected grant-in-aid schools. It was found through the study that teachers find difficult to teach all the students (students admitted in age appropriate classes and children with minor disabilities) in a regular classroom. Most of the teachers admitted that it is difficult to teach students with multiple disabilities in a classroom. According to few teachers, lack of educational materials in accordance with specific needs of students who were admitted in age appropriate classes or students with specific needs are major hurdle in teaching learning process in an inclusive class.

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