



RESPONSIVENESS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TOWARDS RTE ACT

Ashok Upreti & Surjeet Singh Thakur

¹Assistant Professor, Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand²Assistant Professor, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla**Abstract**

The right based approach to education is high on the agenda of the international community. It assures that every child has a quality education to respect and promote her or his right to dignity and optimum development. India, moving in tune with the international developments, adopted this approach in the form of the Right to Education Act that came into force nearly six years back. The right laid much focus on the school inputs to have a better learning outcome at least up to the elementary level. In light of the above, the paper highlights in the responsiveness of the schools towards the approach highlighting the differences between the policy input norms and the targets achieved at the grass root level.

Keywords: Right to Education, Right based Approach, Equity



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction

Rights-based approaches¹ are the recent focus within the education sector at both national as well as the international levels yet following it is not a panacea. It brings along with it several challenges, at various levels, that need to be addressed to achieve the far sighted goals of the right based approach. The Right to Education Act, enforced on 1st April 2010 is an input based approach that lays norms or the elementary schools to improve the learning outcomes. The RTE specifies the norms and standards for a school. These include norms for teacher characteristics, school organisation as well as infrastructure.(Centre for Civil Society, 2015). The development of human capital, enhancement of economic productivity and increase in earnings levels depends on the inputs to education along with quality of education and student learning outcomes (Hanushek and Woessmann 2007). Thus it becomes immensely

¹ Education has been formally recognized as a human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. A rights-based approach to education calls for simultaneous attention to outcomes and processes. (UNICEF, 2006)

important to analyse how well the RTE Norms are being adapted to by the elementary schools in India to realise its mandate.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to analyse the responsiveness of the elementary schools in Uttarakhand towards the implementation of RTE Act, 2009 with the emphasis on infrastructural facilities, teaching learning practices and the school management committees.

Research Design

Descriptive research design was essentially adopted for the research. Survey method was used to obtain persistent and precise information concerning the current status of the phenomenon and draw valid conclusions.

- ***Sample***

Forty Government elementary schools were identified from the Almora District of the Uttarakhand state comprising of 100 teachers teaching at the elementary level. All the units were chosen by the method of incidental sampling.

- ***Tools Used***

A self prepared structured interview schedule was used to obtain information from the teachers. The questionnaire consisted of 32 closed questions in all. Apart from that, unstructured interviews were also conducted with the Head of the institutions to reach at the conclusion.

- ***Analysis of the data***

The obtained information was tabulated and organised in the form of frequencies and the tabulated data was further analysed using simple statistical techniques.

Findings of the Study

The results obtained from the interviews conducted with the teachers revealed the following:

- ***Infrastructural Facilities:*** Only 95% of the teachers reported that there are library facilities in their school providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story-books to students. 72% schools had safe and adequate drinking water facility for all children. In spite of the efforts by the government, 10% of the schools did not have separate toilets for boys and girls. Only 52% of the teachers reported that there at least one class-room for every class and an office-cum-store-cum-head teacher's room. 87% schools had a kitchen where the mid day meal was being cooked.

- **Teaching Learning Practices:** Only 18% teachers reported that a minimum of Forty Five Hours (45) of working per week were being provided to them but yet an effort is being made to assure that every child completes the elementary education before taking any board examination. Though RTE is against the practices of punishing the children yet 91% of the teachers believed that low level of punishment is necessary to enhance the performance of the children. With respect to the teaching learning equipments, all the teachers reported their easy availability to make teaching learning process more enjoyable though 40% of the teachers observed that curriculum and evaluation procedure being adopted was not helpful in the all round development and building up child's knowledge, potentiality and talent.

As RTE focuses on an inclusive development, it lays a quantum responsibility on the teacher to make sure that the children are retained in the system. In this regard, only 80% teachers agreed that they are in position to make children free from fear, trauma, and any form of anxiety.

- **School Management Committees:** Under RTE, the SMCs have been allotted significant role in the proper functioning of the school. Only 64 % of head teachers reported that their schools is being managed by as advocated by RTE & schools reported that as suggested by RTE, 75 % of its members were parents or guardians of children studying in their school. Only 80% of head teachers agreed that 50 % seats, amongst the parents, were being allotted to mothers/women guardian of children from disadvantage group. 76% of the teachers reported that SMC prepares and recommends school development plans and majority suggested that its chairperson should come up from the parents only.

Conclusion

The present investigation revealed that though the majority of the schools are trying to follow the norms framed by RTE yet some problems such as lack of resources seem to be having a significant impact on the implementation of norms at the institutional level. These problems must be worked upon to make RTE purposeful.

References

- UNICEF (2006). The Right to Education with Equity: Access and Quality Education for All in India the Right to Education with Equity: Access and Quality Education for All in India.*
Centre for Civil Society (2015). Effectiveness of School Input Norms under the Right to Education Act.

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to my guide, Prof Anita Negi, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla without who's generous and stimulating guidance the study could not have been completed.