



Confederation of Indian Industry

Assessing the impact of Right to Education Act

Education

March 2016

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सचिव
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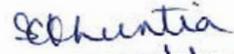


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MESSAGE

Education leads to individual freedom and empowerment. It is seen as a basic foundation of modern society, enabling social enrichment and economic growth and prosperity. Therefore, education is increasingly being viewed as a fundamental right across the globe and essential for exercise of all other human rights.

I congratulate CII and KPMG for preparing this report on '*Assessing the Impact of Right to Education Act,*' which attempts to review the Government's landmark step aimed at universalisation of elementary education for all Indian children.


20/1/2016
(Dr. Subhash C. Khuntia)

New Delhi
20.01.2016



An important landmark in the Indian educational sector is the implementation of the Right to Education Act, which aims to provide free and compulsory elementary education for children between six and 14 years of age. It is an attempt to deliver quality and equitable education to every child, irrespective of the income levels, caste, creed and sex. There is no denial that the successful implementation of the RTE Act has led to an improved net enrollment rate in primary education, increased awareness among the states to abide by the curriculum mandate under the Act, and significant improvement in the social infrastructure of schools.

However, whilst the greater emphasis on enrollment levels and infrastructure standards has had some of the desired positive effects, the Act was been less than successful in providing an adequate focus on quality in education. With various reports emphasising on poor learning outcomes, what is required are immediate reforms in the learning pedagogy to ensure a quality learning environment and better outcomes.

To assess the current status of the RTE Act as has been implemented and to understand and recommend changes to achieve higher quality outcomes we are pleased to present a report that addresses these issues. We believe the implementation of the recommendations will better help address the challenges faced by children as they go through their primary schooling years.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions by members of the CII National Committee on School Education for their continuous support. Our sincere thanks are also due to KPMG for their thought leadership and support in bringing out this report. Both, CII and KPMG, thank the various stakeholders for their valued perspectives and support for not only enriching and authenticating the report's content, but also for giving us their time.



Harpal Singh

Chairman

CII National Committee on School Education

Mentor and Chairman

Emeritus, Fortis Healthcare (India) Ltd.

KPMG in India

The Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 is undoubtedly one of the landmark regulations in the education sector in India, aimed at providing momentum to India's vision of making education compulsory for all. The RTE Act attempts to provide every child (between the age group of 6-14 years) the right to quality and equitable elementary education in a formal school. Since 2010, the year when the Act was implemented, it has successfully met key goals. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) report, published in June 2014 highlights that the Government of India and the state governments have been successful in ensuring that states follow the policies outlined in the RTE Act.

Education is one of the key drivers of growth which can help develop human potential. According to India's HRD Minister Smriti Irani, the spend on education should be at least 6 per cent of the GDP to bridge the gap between supply and ever-changing demand⁰¹. This hints at the government's commitment to further strengthen the education sector. While the government has allocated increased budget for the sector, importance needs to be accorded to learning outcomes and quality of learning. The government's focus has long been to achieve universal enrollment in the education sector, and provide infrastructural facilities. Now is the time when we shift our focus to learning outcomes.

It has been six years since the Act came into effect, thus a thorough evaluation to analyse if it suits the present education scenario is required. Given that different states and regions have different requirements, the policy 'one size fits all' cannot be implemented. The RTE Act should be modified as per the current requirements and the state's capabilities. A key criteria for the RTE to succeed is the quality of teachers. A complete rejuvenation is needed in this space. A national plan for teacher-training institutions, including and strengthening existing institutes at all levels is much needed. Proper performance and maintenance of the social infrastructure facilities is another area which requires intervention.

In this report we attempt to take stock of the progress of the Act, we have also analysed how various states have implemented the provisions of the Act, global practices and studied the areas where the RTE Act has not performed well and reasons thereof. Detailed recommendations have been made that can help strengthen the dream of a literate and educated India, where every child in the nation can freely exercise his/her right to education. The report also carries thoughts and expressions of various academic experts who can help build an enabling environment for schools and colleges in the country.

I would like to thank CII for giving us the opportunity to help them develop this report. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders (academicians and school principals), who we interacted with, for their valuable time and support.



Narayanan Ramaswamy

Partner and Head
Education Sector
KPMG in India

01. <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/TGXO47mEoX2a3wWhlRFQ9K/Education-expenditure-aimed-at-6-of-GDP-Smriti-Irani.html>

Foreword

Universal education for the children of India was planned in the first 10 years of Independence. To achieve universal education in a young country like India, multiple factors need to be considered. This task becomes even more complex with its size and diversity. There have been multiple reforms in education for schools since the country's Independence. So in many ways than one, the Right to Education Act or RTE of 2009 (hereafter referred to as the RTE Act), is undoubtedly one of the landmark regulations in the recent past. The Act clearly underlined the country's vision and intent to make education compulsory for youth in India.

The RTE Act was a landmark step by the government, an attempt to provide every child in India the right to quality and equitable elementary education in a formal school which would be of a certain acceptable standard as laid down by the Act. The Act made it legally binding for state and local governments to follow its norms. The state can refuse to grant recognition to schools or withdraw recognition that has been conferred, for schools that do not adhere to the prescribed minimum quality, standards and rules.

With the current focus and emphasis majorly targeted towards the enrollment numbers and infrastructure standards of schools, the area of concern is the loss of focus on providing quality education. The ability to reach the unreachable segments of the society with a quality education that will bring about an equal education opportunity India for all, and not an

India that is divided between the elite and the underprivileged, is yet to be achieved.

Today, after six years of its introduction, this paper analyses where we stand with respect to the implementation and impact of the RTE Act. The initial sections cover the impact of the Act in various states and its adoption stages. The paper also attempts to highlight the various challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing and realising the benefits of the RTE Act. The section on global best practices gives a glimpse of what is happening with respect to similar attempts across the world. The paper concludes with some pertinent recommendations for various stakeholders who shoulder the responsibility of the RTE Act implementation across states.

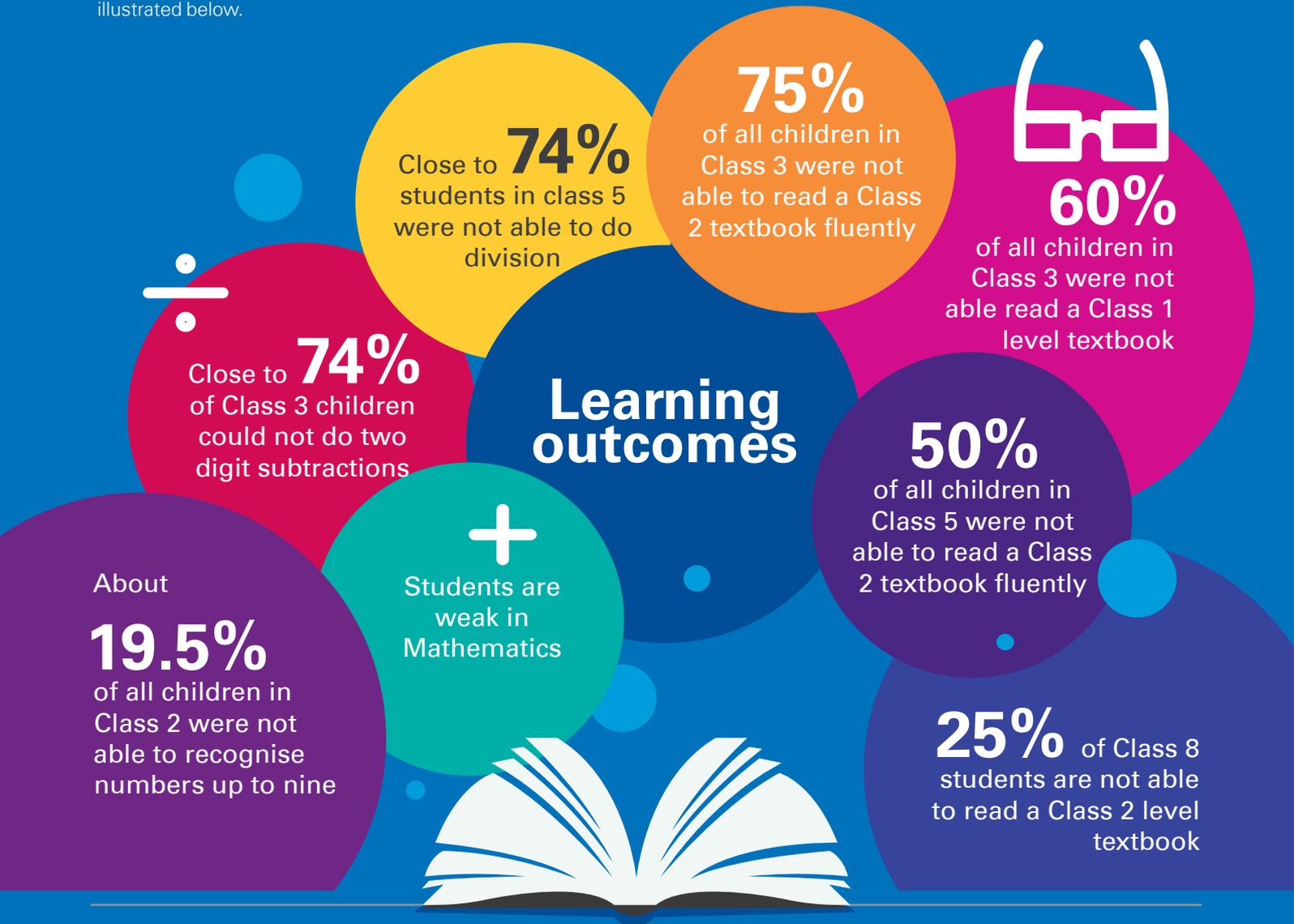
There are no quick fix solutions. A long and sustained momentum is required to achieve the benefits of the Act. Given the fact that India may soon host one third of the world's working-age population⁰¹, this becomes imperative. So it is time we get our act right to provide education for all.

01. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-is-set-to-become-the-youngest-country-by-2020/article4624347.ece>, accessed on 2 March 2016

Facts and figures

The Right to Education (RTE) Act is still a mirage in a number of cities and towns.

Though enrollment rates have improved, learning outcomes have not shown much progress. The learning outcomes as per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) of 2014 are illustrated below.



In terms of social infrastructure, there have been significant improvements in the schools, when we compare the social infrastructure indicators in FY2013-14 to FY2009-10. For instance, the percentage of schools equipped with toilet facilities for girls increased from 59 per cent in FY2009-10 to 85 per cent in FY2013-14.⁰² However, there is still a long way to go to achieve full compliance.

The percentage of primary schools that do not meet the pupil-teacher ratio criteria has also dropped from 46 per cent in FY2009-10 to 33 per cent in FY2013-14 and for upper primary

schools, the percentage has dropped from 36 per cent in FY2009-10 to 31 per cent in FY2013-14. Yet, these numbers are still significantly high.⁰²

For children in the age group of six to 13 years, the number of children not enrolled in a school in 2009 was 8 million, a figure that has declined to 6.04 million in 2014. Despite this India has a long way to go to impart quality education to its citizens.⁰²

⁰² Ministry of Human Resource Development, Annual Report 2014-15, Government of India.

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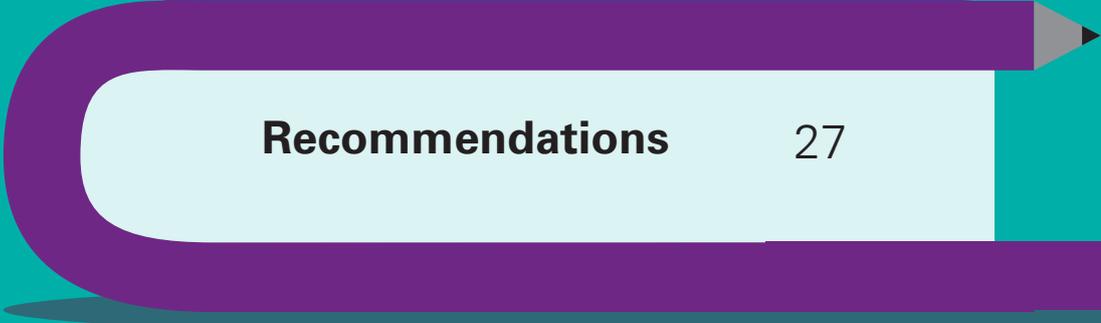
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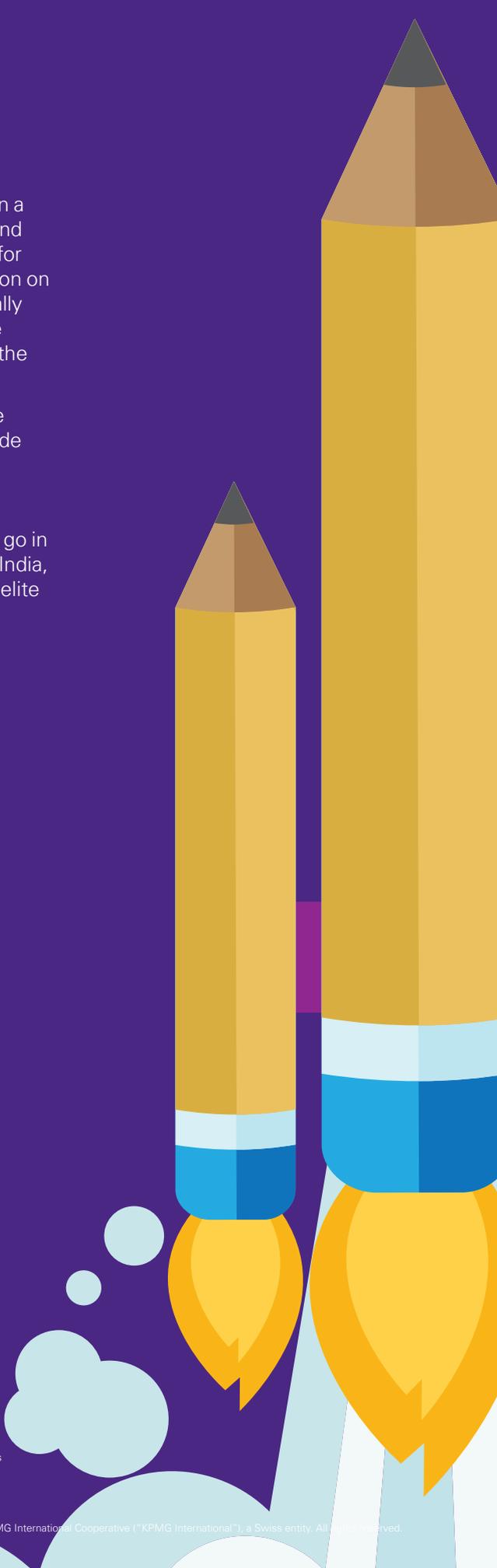
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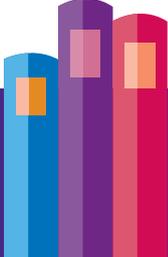
Introduction

Elementary education forms the basis of mental development in a child, and equips him/her with the analytical skills, confidence and competencies which help pave the way for a successful future for him/her. Hence, it is imperative for nations to focus their attention on providing quality elementary education to their citizens, especially to the underprivileged sections of the society and empower the masses with a quality education that can enable them to break the shackles of poverty.

With the formation of a free Indian state, it was the vision of the then leaders of the nation to set up a policy⁰¹ which would provide free and compulsory education to children between six to 14 years, and achieve the stated objectives within 10 years of the commencement of the Indian constitution.⁰¹ However, we have embarked on the sixty-eighth year and there's still a long way to go in terms of fulfilling the real vision of an educated and competent India, where a quality education is not a privilege provided only to the elite class, but the right of every child born in this nation.

01. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/EFA-Review-Report-final.pdf, Education for All: Towards Quality with Equity, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, August 2014





Education policies in India

The Constitutional and legal policies of the nation have worked towards and upheld the vision of the universalisation of elementary education in India. Some of the key milestones are covered below:

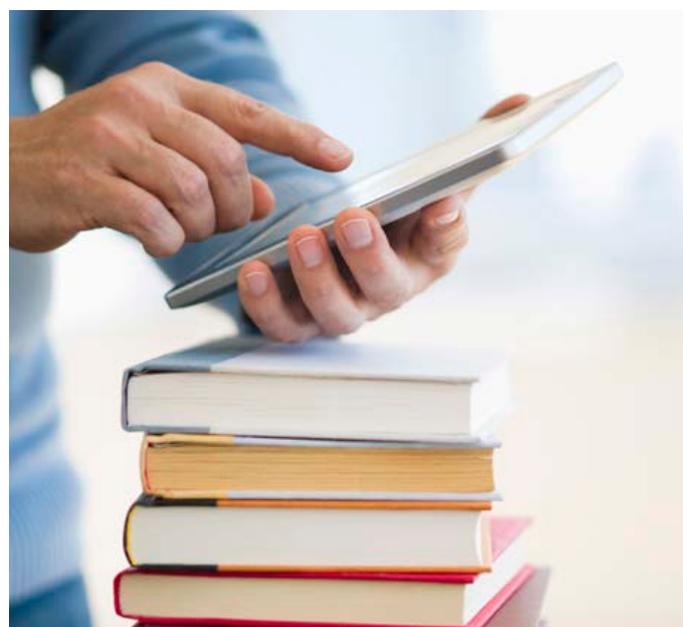
Significant government policies/interventions that have shaped the education landscape in India

Year	Policy	Description
1950	Constitutional mandate	The Constitutional Mandate made education a directive principle of state policy. It states that "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years".
1986	National Policy of Education(NPE)	Through the National Policy on Education, 1986, the Government of India resolved to introduce a radical transformation in the education system that would promote national integration. Its principles state free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age, adequate and satisfactory emoluments and training for teachers, emphasis on the development of languages, equalisation of education opportunities, high priority on science education and research, low cost and high quality textbooks for students and examinations to be introduced as a continuous evaluation process for learning assessment.
1993	Shri Unnikrishnan Judgement	The Supreme Court accorded the status of fundamental right to 'free and compulsory education' for all children till they attain 14 years of age.
1995	Mid-Day Meal Scheme	To enhance enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among children.
1998	Education Ministers' Resolve	"Universal elementary education should be pursued in the mission mode. It emphasised the need to pursue a holistic and convergent approach towards UEE"
1999	National Committee's Report on UEE in the Mission mode	The Report emphasised the preparation of District Elementary Education Plans for UEE.
2001	Sarva Shiksha Abhiya(SSA)	Sought to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of six to 14 years by 2010. It recognised the need to improve the education system with active participation of the community and envisioned to bridge the prevalent gender and social inequalities, leading to a nationally integrated country.

Source: <http://www.educationforallindia.com/ssa.htm#minis>, accessed on 2 March 2016, National Policy on Education 1986, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Gol, http://www.ncert.nic.in/oth_anour/hpe86.pdf, accessed 2 March 2016

From 1950 to 2005, India's education sector witnessed enormous progress in terms of an increase in the number of institutions, rise in enrollments for primary and secondary education, increase in the enrollment of girls and students belonging to the weaker sections of the society and growth in the number of teachers and teacher training institutes since the formation of our Constitution.

The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary education increased from 95.7 per cent in FY2000-01 to 116.0 per cent in FY2010-11 and then declined to 101.4 per cent in FY2013-14. Whereas, the GER in elementary education, declined from 104.3 per cent in FY2010-11 to 97.0 per cent in FY2013-14⁰¹.



01. Education for All, Towards Quality with Equity, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Gol and NUEPA, First Edition August 2014

Progress in Indian education since 1950

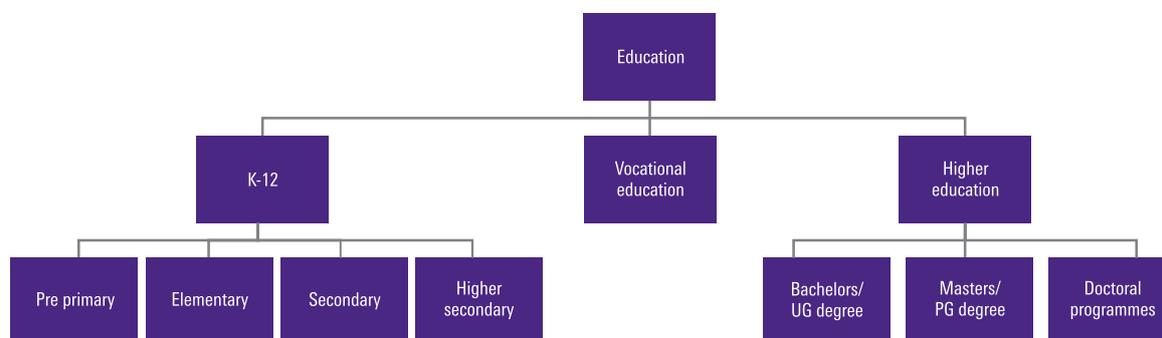
Indicators	FY1950-51	FY2000-01	FY2004-05	FY2009-10	FY2013-14
Number of schools imparting elementary education	223,600	845,007	1,042,251	1,303,812	1,448,712
Number of teachers in schools imparting elementary schools (in millions)	0.624	3.22	3.75	5.82	7.72
Enrollment in primary schools (in millions)	19.20	113.83	130.8	135.6	132.4
Enrollment in upper primary schools (in millions)	3.00	42.81	51.2	59.4	66.5
Enrollment in elementary schools (in millions)	22.20	156.64	182.0	195.0	198.9

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI; Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, MHRD, GoI; and U-DISE, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)

At present, the India's education sector is experiencing fast-paced growth with the advent of private participation in education. The CAGR (2008-2014) of the education sector, which can be split into K-12, Vocational Education and Higher

Education, together stands at 13 per cent, with K-12 CAGR at 13 per cent, Higher Education at 11 per cent and Vocational Education at 22 per cent.⁰²

Education landscape in India



Source: KPMG in India's analysis based on research and industry discussions, February 2016

02. KPMG Social Infrastructure Report for CII, 2014



The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, was a consequential legislation that was passed to achieve the vision that was envisaged under Article 21-A, which was inserted in the Constitution of India by the Constitution (Eighty Sixth Amendment) Act 2002 which stated that: 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age six to 14 years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine'. The RTE Act was a landmark step by the Government to provide every child the right to quality and equitable elementary education in a formal school which would be of a certain acceptable standard as laid down by the Act. The Act made it legally binding for state and local governments to follow the norms laid down under the Act. The state can refuse to grant recognition to schools or withdraw recognition that has been conferred, for schools that do not adhere to the prescribed minimum quality, standards and rules.

However, an area of concern is the loss of focus on providing quality education, with the current focus and emphasis majorly targeted towards enrollment numbers and improving infrastructure standards of schools. The ability to reach the unreachable segments of the society with quality education that will bring about an equal education opportunity India for all, and not an India that is divided between the elite and the underprivileged, is yet to be achieved.

India, being at the cusp of economic growth, and its demographic arguably at its peak with nearly 63 per cent of the

population between the age group of 15 to 59 years,⁰³ it will be a challenge for the country to effectively utilise this huge population in the next few decades.

The main challenge for the nation, at this time will be to envision and implement effective policies which will work to the advantage of the demographic dividend, hence spurring the nation's economic growth. Investments in social sectors like education will be crucial to garner the benefits and potential of this demographic dividend. At such an important juncture, it will be worthwhile to look back at one of the most important Acts with respect to education i.e. the RTE Act. India became one of 135 countries⁰⁴ to make education the fundamental right of every child when the RTE Act was passed by the Indian Parliament on 4 August 2009.

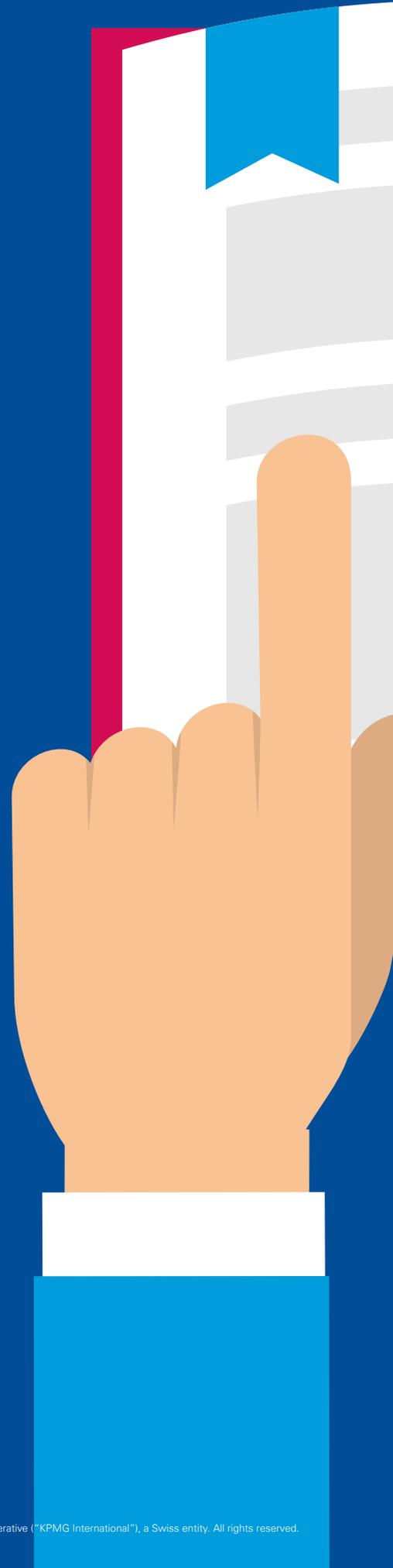
This year, we have completed over half a decade since the Act came into effect on 1 April 2010 and now we can sit back and take stock of the progress and ponder over the success stories that the Act has achieved in these six years. Also, more importantly, we must analyse where the Act has failed to significantly impact and the reasons thereof, so we can strengthen the dream of a literate and educated India, where every child in the nation has the fundamental right to education.



03. http://finmin.nic.in/press_room/2015/FM_preBudget_SocialSector.pdf, accessed on 2 March 2016

04. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-joins-list-of-135-countries-in-making-education-a-right/article365232.ece>, accessed on 2 March 2016.

Standards and regulations for a school under the RTE Act



Apart from making free and compulsory education a fundamental right for every child, the Act lays down specific guidelines for schools. The Act prescribes the following standards and regulations as compulsory to ensure the goals of the RTE Act are met:

1. A child must be admitted in an age appropriate class and in order to be at par with others, has the right to receive special training as may be prescribed.
2. A school to be established in neighbourhood, as may be prescribed, within a period of three years from the commencement of the Act.
3. The Central Government and State Governments shall have a concurrent responsibility to provide funds for carrying out the provisions of this Act.
4. Private schools to reserve at least 25 per cent of the strength of the class for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory education till completion.
5. No school or person shall, while admitting a child, collect any capitation fee and subject the child, or his or her parents or guardian/s, to any screening procedure.
6. No child admitted in any school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary school.
7. No school, other than a school established, owned or controlled by the appropriate government or local authority, shall be established or function, without obtaining a certificate of recognition as may be prescribed. In case a school is established before the commencement of this Act, it shall take steps to fulfill such norms and standards at its own expense, within a period of three years from the date of commencement.
8. All government and aided schools shall set up a School Management Committee consisting of elected representatives of the local authority, parents of children admitted in such schools and teachers, with 75 per cent members as parents or guardians.
9. Any person possessing minimum qualifications as prescribed shall be eligible for appointment as a teacher. If a teacher at the commencement of this Act does not possess the minimum qualifications, he or she shall acquire such minimum qualifications within a period of five years.
10. While laying down the curriculum, the academic authority shall ensure comprehensive and continuous evaluation of child's understanding of knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same.

The RTE Act clearly specifies the minimum standards every school should meet with respect to infrastructure and human resource requirements.

Infrastructure and human resource requirement as per the Act

Number of teachers	FY1950-51	FY2000-01
Class I to Class V	Admitted children	Number of teachers
	0-60	2
	61-90	3
	91-120	4
	121-200	5
	>150	5 plus 1 Head teacher
Class VI to Class VIII	>200	PTR(excluding Head teacher)<40
	At least one teacher per class so that there shall be at least one teacher for science and mathematics, social studies and languages	
	At least one teacher for every 35 children	
Where admission of children is above 100, a full time teacher and part time instructors for Art education, Health and Physical education and Work Education		

Building

All weather buildings consisting of at least one classroom for every teacher and an office cum store cum Head teacher's room, barrier free access, separate toilets for boys and girls, safe and adequate drinking water facilities for all children, a kitchen where mid-day meals are cooked in the school, a playground and arrangements for securing the school building by a boundary wall or fencing.

Minimum number of working days/instructional hours in an academic year

Working days	Class I to Class V	200
	Class VI to Class VIII	220
Instructional hours	Class I to Class V	800
	Class VI to Class VIII	1000

Minimum number of working hours per week for the teacher – 45 teaching, including preparation hours

Teaching learning equipment shall be provided to each class as required

Library – a library in each school providing newspapers, magazines and books on all subjects, including story books

Play materials, games and sports equipment shall be provided to each class as required

Source: MODEL RULES UNDER THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION ACT, 2009

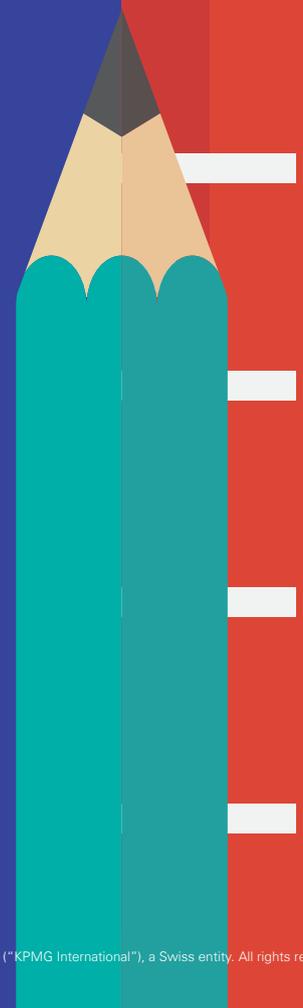
Impact of the RTE Act

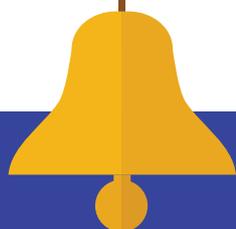
The impact of the RTE Act can be understood from the fact that India was reported to have the largest number of illiterate adults in the world at 37 per cent of the global total in the year 2014. This shows the disparity that still exists with regards to the access to education in the nation, pointing to the fact that the provisions of the Education Act have failed to target those in the society who need it the most. According to UNESCO's 11th Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2013-14, the poorest young women in India are projected to achieve universal literacy only by 2080, whereas the richest young women in the nation have already achieved it.⁰¹

Though there has been an increase in the enrollment rates in schools, quality of learning has been diminishing. Various reports and studies reveal that there has been a decline in learning outcomes since the enactment of RTE Act⁰². This has also been proved by The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2014 by education non-profit Pratham, which clearly spells out that learning outcomes in reading, writing and arithmetic in state-run schools is poor. At this point, we need to divert our attention from enrollment rates, infrastructure etc. to learning outcomes to ensure the young generation get access to quality education.

01. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/In-India-poor-kids-are-illiterate-despite-4-years-of-education-Unesco-report/articleshow/29524124.cms>, accessed on 2 March 2016

02. An analysis of Outcomes in India's Implementation of the Right to Education Act, Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs, accessed in February 2013





Status of schools under the RTE Act

The RTE Act has met with success in meeting some of the goals with which it started in the year 2010. Many of the states have been successful in ensuring that the schools meet the infrastructure requirements as prescribed.

As per the June 2014 Report published by MHRD, GoI, the status on adoption of the Act by the states is as follows, which shows that the Central Government has been successful in ensuring most of the states follow the policies outlined in the Act.

RTE implementation status

Sr. No.	Details	Number of states/UTs	
		2009	2014
1	Constitution of SCPCR/REPA	11	33
2	Notification of state rules	15	34
3	Notification of academic authority	20	35
4	Policy on eight year elementary education	28	35
5	No detention	27	35
6	No corporal punishment	28	35
7	No board examination up to Elementary level	26	34
8	Banning Private tuition	18	35
9	Banning screening procedure and capitation fees	18	35
10	Working days notified	21	33
11	Decentralised grievance redressal mechanism		24
12	Local Authorities notified		31
13	% of school with SMC constituted		91
14	25% admission in private unaided schools at entry level		27

Source: MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, GoI

The impact of the RTE Act has been studied under four categories:

- Enrollment
- Quality
- Teacher
- Social infrastructure.

Enrollment

The RTE Act has been able to bring an improvement in the enrollment number of girls in the upper primary section. The percentage of girls' total enrollment in upper primary has increased from 48 per cent in FY2009-10 to 49 per cent in FY2013-14. Also, the gender parity index (the number of females divided by the number of males enrolled in a given level) has increased from 0.93 in FY2009-10 to 0.95 in FY2013-14. The enrollment numbers for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) has increased to nearly twice of the number in FY2009-10 and the annual dropout rate has considerably dropped from 9 per cent in FY2009-10 to below 5 per cent in FY2013-14. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in primary education increased from 84.5 per cent in FY2005-06 to 88.08 per cent in FY2013-14⁰¹.

Regional disparities across India is prominent as per the latest reports. The All-India GER for primary schools is 101.36, it ranged between 80.59 per cent in Lakshadweep to 149.15 per cent in Manipur⁰². For states like Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Kerala, Odisha, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, the GER is 113.43, 97.96, 110.67, 95.42, 105.84, 101.53 and 102.56 respectively.⁰¹ Given that different regions and states have different requirements, one act or a scheme cannot be universalised. Schemes have to be modified as per the requirements and the state's capabilities.

Enrollment indicators

Sr. No.	Indicator	FY2009-10	FY2013-14
1	Total enrollment primary	13,34,05,581	13,24,28,440
2	Total enrollment upper primary	5,44,67,415	6,64,71,219
3	% of girls to total enrollment primary	48	48
4	% of girls to total enrollment in upper primary	48	49
5	Gender parity index (primary)	0.94	0.93
6	Gender parity index (upper primary)	0.93	0.95
7	% SC to Total Enrollment	20	20
8	% ST to Total Enrollment	11	11
9	% of Muslim to Total Enrollment	13	14
10	CWSN (Children with Special Needs) Enrollment	14,02,817	25,03,907
11	Annual average drop-out rate (primary)	9.1	4.7

Source: MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, GoI

01. Education for All, Towards Quality with Equity, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI and NUEPA, First Edition August 2014

02. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA, Progress towards UEE, U-DISE Flash Statistics Report 2013-14, NUEPA and MHRD, GoI

Quality

The quality indicators indicate that most of the states have adopted the curriculum mandate under the RTE Act.⁰³ In government schools, 80 per cent of the teachers have the prescribed professional qualification to teach. However, average attendance of students and teachers in primary as well as upper primary schools still is an area of concern (Table: Teachers indicator).

Quality indicator

Sr. No.	Indicator	FY2013-14
1	% of teachers with professional qualification in govt. school	80
2	Number of states with revised curriculum	33
3	Number of states with working hours as per the RTE Act	34
4	Number of states with instructional hours as per the RTE Act	34
5	Number of states implementing CCE	32
6	Average attendance % of students in primary	76
7	Average attendance % of students in upper primary	78
8	Average attendance rate of teachers in primary	84
9	Average attendance rate of teachers in upper primary	81

Source: MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, Gol

Teachers

The teacher indicator indicates the increase in the number of teachers working in government and aided schools. There has been a drop in the number of schools that do not fulfill the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) as laid down by the Act. The PTR ratio, as mentioned in the RTE Act, is meant to ensure that schools maintain smaller classrooms which will enable personal attention to each student by the teacher which would serve as the basis of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation policy.

The percentage of primary schools that do not meet the PTR criteria has dropped from 46 per cent in FY2009-10 to 33 per cent in FY2013-14 and for upper primary schools, the percentage has dropped from 36 per cent in FY2009-10 to 31 per cent in FY2013-14.⁰³ Yet, the number is still significantly high which stresses the importance of hiring more human resources and hence, the need for quality teacher training institutes in the nation.

Teachers' indicator

Sr. No.	Indicator	FY2009-10	FY2013-14
1	Total teachers (Government and Aided Schools)	44,77,429	45,32,803
2	% of primary schools with PTR>30% (Govt. schools)	46	33
3	% of upper primary schools with PTR>35% (Govt. schools)	36	31
4	% of Single teacher schools	9	8
5	Number of state conducted TET(Teacher Eligibility Test) for teacher recruitment		30

Source: MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, Gol

Social infrastructure

There has been significant improvements in the schools when we compare the social infrastructure indicators in FY2013-14 to FY2009-10. Playground, boundary wall and kitchen sheds have still not been developed in many schools. There has been significant increase in the percentage of schools that are equipped with toilets for girl students, from 59 per cent in FY2009-10 to 85 per cent in FY2013-14, but there's still a long way to go to achieve full compliance.

Social infrastructure indicator

Sr. No.	Indicator	FY2009-10	FY2013-14
1	Number of elementary school(Government and aided schools)	11,20,968	11,61,789
2	Student Classroom ratio	32	28
3	% of primary schools with SCR>30(Govt. schools)	40	25
4	% of upper primary schools with SCR>35(Govt. schools)	36	31
5	% of schools with drinking water facilities	93	95
6	% of schools with girls' toilet facilities	59	85
7	% of schools with ramps	47	82
8	% of schools with playgrounds	51	58
9	% of schools with boundary walls	51	62
10	% of schools with kitchen sheds	43	75

Source: MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, Gol

As per the tenth ASER report, released in January 2015, the following facts have been highlighted about the education status in rural India. ASER report is an annual survey which assesses children's schooling status and basic learning levels in reading and arithmetic in the rural districts.

03. MHRD Annual Report 2014-15, Gol

ASER 2014 indicators

Sr. No.	Indicator	Per cent	Details
1	Enrollment in school in the age group of six to 14 years	96.7	For the sixth year in a row, the enrollment rates have been greater than 96%
2	Attendance in government schools	71	UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Manipur have relatively low attendance (50 to 59%)
3	% of children enrolled in private schools	30.8	Increase from 23.7% in 2010 to 30.8% in 2014. Punjab, Haryana, UP have the highest % enrolled in private schools (>=50%)
4	% of out of school girls	5	Except for Rajasthan and UP, most of the states have girls who are out of school, aged between 11 to 14 years, at relatively low numbers, namely close to 5%. Bihar has seen the steepest decline from 17.6% in 2006 to 5.7% in 2014.

Source: ASER 2014 Report: Main findings

Improvement in school facilities in government schools in rural India

Sr. No.	Indicator	FY2009-10	FY2013-14
1	% of schools with drinking water available	72.7%	75.6%
2	% of schools with useable toilets	47.2%	65.2%
3	% of schools with girls' useable toilets	32.9%	55.7%
4	% of school with library books	62.6%	78.1%
5	% of schools with computers	15.8%	19.6%
6	% of schools complying with pupil teacher ratio norms	38.9%	49.3%
7	% of schools complying with classroom teacher ratio norms	76.2%	72.8%
8	Complying with mid-day meals being served on day of visit	84.6%	85.1%
9	% of schools with boundary wall	51%	58.8%
10	% of schools with playground	62%	65.3%
11	% of small primary schools (enrollment less than 60%)	23.7%	36%

Source: ASER 2014 Report: Main findings

The adjacent table suggests there has not been a considerable improvement in the infrastructure facilities in government schools in rural India from 2010 to 2014, after the implementation of the RTE Act. Facilities like boundary walls and useable toilets, especially useable toilets for girls have not improved as per standards. The percentage of schools with computers have also not seen much increase. Though basic infrastructure has improved in government schools in rural India, the pace has been very slow and a lot still needs to be done to achieve the set standards.

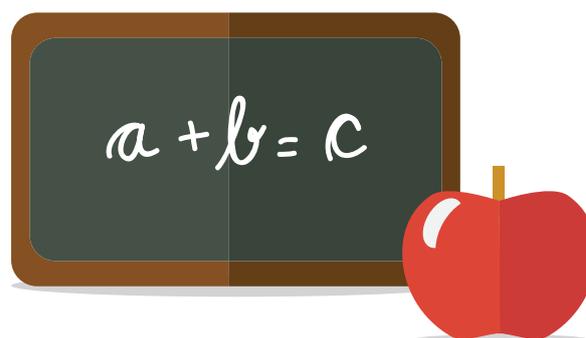
In 2014 an estimated 6.04 million children in the age group of six to 13 years are still out of school and a million others drop out before they complete their elementary education. According to reports in the Indian Express published on 27 March 2015, only about 10 per cent of the schools across the nation are 100 per cent compliant.⁰⁴

The government has initiated a national campaign Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya meaning 'Clean India: Clean Schools'. A key feature of this campaign is to ensure that every school has a set of well-functioning water, sanitation, and hygienic facilities. A healthy school environment is a prerequisite for children to learn and grow. A clean and a healthy school will improve the health of children, boost attendance and decrease drop-out rates, help ensure better student performance and ultimately lead to economic growth. The technical components include provision of drinking water and hand wash toilet and soap facilities in the school compound, for teachers and students to use.

Research shows that such provisions results in a number of benefits for children, especially girls and teachers⁰⁵. These include:

- Increase in enrollments by 12 per cent in primary schools and 8 per cent in upper primary schools, leading to low-dropout rates
- Increased female students' enrollment
- Increase in the retention of female teachers
- In the Alwar District, school sanitation increased girl's enrolment by one-third, and improved academic performance for boys and girls by 25 per cent (UN-Water 2008).

Though the coverage of schools with drinking water and toilet facilities has improved, but poor performance and maintenance of these facilities is one of the main challenges which needs to be addressed. Secondly, the poor quality of construction and low compliance with standards and norms reduces the life of an infrastructure. Hence, it becomes essential to make an appropriate, investment to reap long term benefits.



04. Education for All, Towards Quality with Equity, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Gol and NUEPA, First Edition August 2014

05. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDIA, Progress towards UEE, U-DISE Flash Statistics Report 2013-14, NUEPA and MHRD, Gol



Status of states under the RTE Act

Although most states have adopted the RTE Act, there are wide variations in the performance of individual states. India being a geographically large nation, the challenges faced by each state in the implementation of the Act is specific to its internal structure. In the following sections, we have tried to assess at how various states have performed w.r.t three important areas of the RTE Act, i.e. 25 per cent reserved seats in private unaided schools, percentage of out of school children, and learning outcomes.

Reserved seats for Economically Weaker Section (EWS)

The mandate for reservation of 25 per cent seats in private unaided schools for EWS groups was a major step to bridge the gap between the quality of education offered by the government and private players. However, this requires a deeper scrutiny in terms of how eligible children will be selected, what is the criteria for EWS status, who decides these criterias and whether it is being implemented.

The definitions of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections has been defined under Section 2, Clauses (d) and (e) of the RTE Act as:

Definition of disadvantaged groups and weaker sections

Disadvantaged group	Weaker sections
'A child belonging to disadvantaged groups' refers to 'a child belonging to a Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, a socially and educationally backward class or such other group having disadvantages owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other fact, as may be specified by the appropriate Government, by notification' (RTE Act, 2009, Section 2, Clause (d)).	'A child belonging to weaker section' refers to 'a child belonging to such parent or guardian whose annual income is lower than the minimum limit specified by the appropriate Government, by notification' (RTE Act, 2009, Section 2, Clause (e)).

However, the ground realities are different and various states follow their own parameters while deciding the EWS status. Himachal Pradesh rules, 2011, specifies that children belonging to SC/ST/OBC/BPL or with disability would be considered as disadvantaged.⁰¹ Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have similar guidelines. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh has a different, well-defined eligibility criteria for EWS.

Further, there is also a need to maintain the records of children by the local authority, through a household survey. Various state rules do not even specify which agency or authority would maintain these records. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the responsibility is vested in the hands of Jan Shikshak or Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator (CRCC), whereas in Rajasthan this is being taken care by Block Elementary Education Officer (BEEEO). In Himachal Pradesh, the School Management Committee (SMC) is required to send these records to the local authority. Some state rules does not even specify the name of the government official who would keep a track of such records. This is a matter of great concern, as these records would form the basis of the admission of children under the EWS category.⁰¹

Variations have also been observed even in terms of provisions of entitlements for EWS children across states. For example, in Madhya Pradesh state rules there is no such explicit definition of what children are entitled to in private schools, whereas Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan do mention in their state rules. However, different states have different entitlements for EWS children. For e.g. private schools in Rajasthan ought to provide textbooks, uniforms, library, ICT facilities, sports etc., whereas, schools in Maharashtra are not entitled to provide ICT facilities, sports etc. Though such variations are obvious in a vast country like India, the varying levels pose a huge challenge to the implementation of this Act.

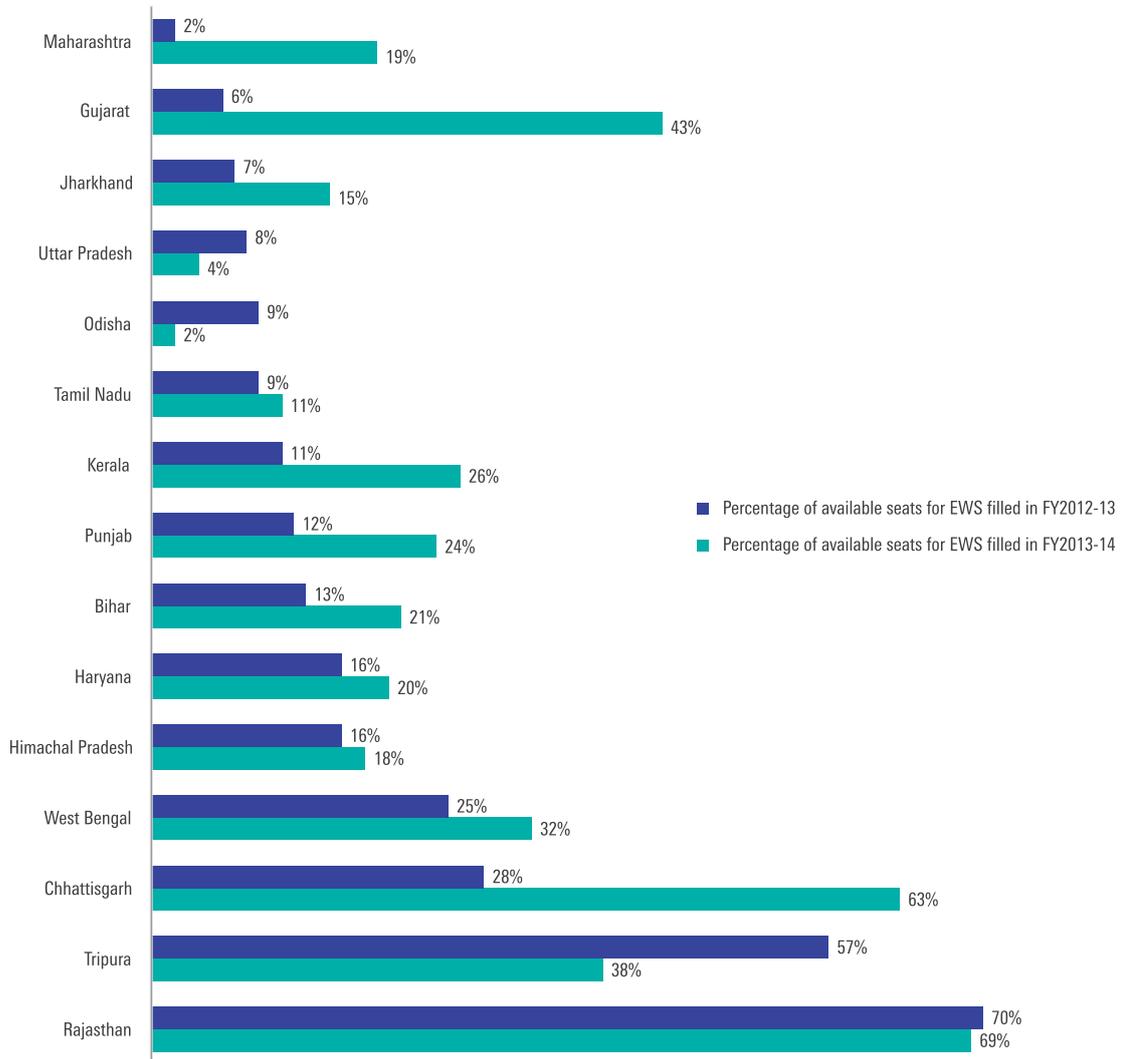
Considering the recent increase in the enrollment numbers in private schools in urban as well as rural India, and parents' preference for private schools in anticipation of better quality education, private schools are increasingly becoming an important stakeholder in Indian Elementary education landscape. However, although some states have been successful in implementing the 25 per cent criteria, there are some states that have failed miserably.⁰²

01. 25% Reservation under the RTE: Unpacking the Rules in PAISA States-Accountability Initiatives Policy Brief, June 2012

02. Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15



Percentage of available seats for EWS that has been filled



Source: Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

The above figure indicates that Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are the only two states that have filled more than 50 per cent of their seats available for EWS. Odisha has filled a meagre 2 per cent of the allotted seats for EWS in FY2013-14 and for Uttar Pradesh the number is at 4 per cent of the allotted seats. Gujarat has seen huge improvement in the same area from filling 6 per cent of the available seats in FY2012-13 to 43 per cent in FY2013-14. On the other hand, for Tripura and Odisha the number of filled seats in the category has decreased from 9 per cent and 57 per cent in FY2012-13 to 2 per cent and 38 per cent in FY2013-14 respectively.⁰³

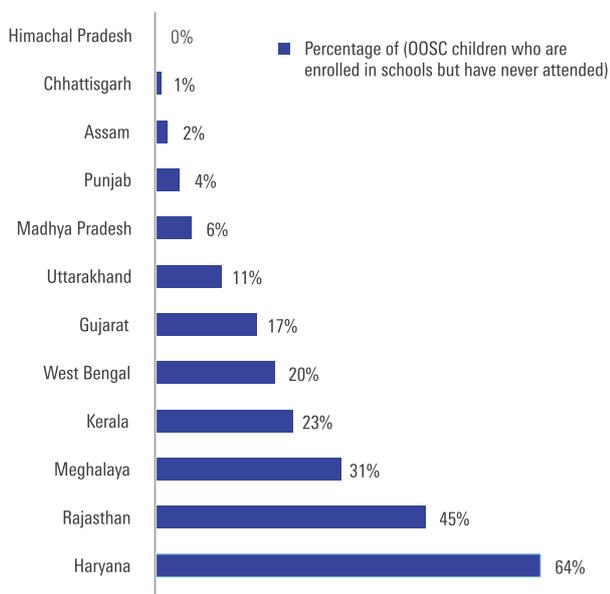
03. Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

Out of School Children

The National Sample Survey (NSS) estimates the percentage of Out of School Children (OOSC) as of September 2014 to be only 3 per cent of the total children between six to 13 years of age.⁰⁴ However, between states there is a large section of such OOSC children, who have enrolled in schools but have never attended. Such data throws light on the fact that though we have been able to highlight certain numbers as success indicators, the end benefits have not really percolated to the society at large. There are other social issues like prevention of child labour etc. which is an important area to consider for providing benefits to such OOSC children who are enrolled in schools but never attend. In Haryana and Rajasthan, the numbers of such OOSC students are highest.⁰⁴

The UNESCO global education report released in April 2015 reflects that India has made a significant progress and has reduced the OOSC by over 90 per cent and has achieved the target of 'universal primary education'. Though enrollments are increasing, school infrastructure is improving, access to schools is becoming easier, learning outcomes among children are not improving. Though infrastructure and access to school is important for a child, and has been given due recognition, now is the time for the government to shift its attention to learning outcomes. As these years are the building blocks for a child's future, without much delay, provision of quality of education should be on the radar of the government under the RTE Act.

Percentage of OOSC (children enrolled in schools but have never attended)



Source: Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

Assessment of learning outcomes

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) and Ministry of Human Resources Department, (MHRD) have made an attempt to assess the state level performance based on an Educational Development

Index (EDI). A set of 24 indicators has been chosen for the computation of EDI based on four broad parameters namely: Access, Infrastructure, Teachers and Outcome indicators.⁰⁴

According to the DISE 2013-2014 reports, Puducherry was ranked first in EDI ranking, followed by Lakshadweep, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. The worst performing states based on EDI score are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. However, the question that looms large is the effectiveness of the EDI indicators in the assessment of the quality of learning outcomes.

When a correlation was made between the EDI scores of 2012 and the National Assessment Survey Results (NAS), 2012 conducted by National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2012 to assess learning outcomes in English and Mathematics, it revealed significant variations among states based on the two parameters. Kerala which ranked first in learning i.e. NAS, ranked fourteenth in EDI. Similarly, West Bengal which ranked seventh in NAS, ranked one of the lowest in EDI i.e. 31 out of a total of 38.⁰⁴ This reinstates the fact that some states are increasingly focusing on compliance with the RTE Act norms and compromising on the learning ability imparted to the children.

Compliance does not necessarily imply better quality learning outcomes. In the face of such results, we should look back and reassess the indicators to formulate new assessment methods that will measure the quality of education and not only the quantitative aspect.



04. Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

EDI v/s NAS survey ranking



Source: Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

A closer look at some states

A closer look at some of the states and the challenges they are facing in implementing RTE throws light at the diverse profile of Indian states, and hence the difficulty policy makers face while formulating such a national Act. They should ensure that the most deprived states can enjoy the fruits of such policies and at the same time, the advanced states should not be at a disadvantage for complying with the Act.

Assam

One of the systemic hurdles in the effective implementation of the RTE Act has been corruption. The relatively slow speed with which the Government, both Central and State, implement policies can paralyse the progress of the Act in the government schools. In the state of Assam, a city-based NGO Sangrami Krishak Shramik Sangha (SKSS), has conducted a survey where it recovered receipts against fee payments by children below 14 years of age, which should have attracted punitive measures. However, the authorities have failed to act, on the grounds that the receipts have not been verified.⁰⁵

ActionAid NorthEast, which is part of the National RTE Forum, commissioned studies to study the impact of the SSA and the RTE Act on the marginalised communities in Assam. Assam, being a state where ecological disasters and militancy have had severe negative implications on the livelihood of the local community since many decades, providing free and compulsory education for children belonging to rural areas is still a far-fetched dream. There are many flaws at the policy level as well as the implementation level. The no detention policy was severely criticised in the state because teachers found it difficult to teach children who had very low quality elementary education and hence could not cope up with the academics once they entered high school. Some of the other major areas of concern for the state are the lack of specialist teachers in Science and Mathematics, high percentage of vacant seats for teachers as per the sanctioned criteria, and frequently changing course and curricula to which the existing teachers haven't adapted.

05. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/RTE-Act-going-MGNREGA-way-in-state/articleshow/11917620.cms>, accessed on 2 March 2016

The other major hurdle for Assam is the inaccessibility to roads and transportation facilities for a large number of schools. The unreachable areas of the state remain largely untouched by the RTE Act. Such areas remain out of the purview of the authorities who provide support visits only to places with transportation-friendly roads. The enrollment in government schools is steeply falling vis-à-vis the enrollment in private schools. Even Assamese medium private schools are seeing an increase in the enrollment numbers because of the ill-equipped government schools. In December 2014, the Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights expressed that the state might not be able to reach its March 2015 objective under the RTE Act, as infrastructure facilities like vacant seats for teachers, availability of drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls, library facilities and boundary walls in many primary schools continue to be an area of concern.

Rajasthan

On similar lines of corruption, the private schools are hoodwinking the government in Rajasthan. The provision under the the RTE Act which demands that 25 per cent of seats are reserved for the marginalised society, is implemented only on paper and is far from the grim reality. The slow pace of action of the Government will be a major impediment to the success of one of the major policies of India. In 2014, 1.78 lakh students were admitted under the 25 per cent reservation policy in the state against a total enrollment of 6.4 lakh in 31,496 registered schools, which implies more 27.5 per cent of the total registrations are for the EWS students. Among the cities in Rajasthan, Jaipur and Ajmer have admitted 27 per cent and Jalore 30 per cent students under the Act. However, a closer look at the profile of the schools reveals that they are only the lower and middle level schools which have been ahead of the minimum 25 per cent stipulation of the RTE Act. The elite schools in almost all towns have defied the rule, and on the other hand, smaller schools have admitted more than 50 per cent under the Act, resulting in a skewed result of implementation.⁰⁶

According to a Financial Express report⁰⁷, parents in the state expressed their disapproval of the CCE policy and the ban on exams till Class 8, and stated that the policy is against the interests of the students, during the Chief Minister's 'Sarkaar Aapke Dwar' Programme following which, the Rajasthan State Government intends to re-introduce exams in at least three classes from Class 1 to Class 8.

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu claims to have admitted the maximum number of students under the RTE Act. However, the level of awareness about the Act among the people is relatively low. The Government is yet to popularise the benefits of the Act to the people living in rural areas or the urban slums. According to a report put out by SKI (Sama Kalvi Iyakkam), a Child Rights Movement based in Tamil Nadu, most private schools have not implemented the Act and awareness among several schools is very poor. Also, a large number of government schools in about 12 districts including Chennai, Vellore, Salem and Kancheepuram faced the possibility of being closed down due to non-compliance with regards to infrastructure requirements.⁰⁸

Kerala

Kerala claims to have achieved an average PTR ratio of 26:1 which is better than the mandate. The state government draws a distinction between the division-based PTR ratio of 45:1 in Kerala and the 30-35:1 ratio mandate for the entire school, stating that they have already achieved a better than the required mandate for overall PTR.

The infrastructure facilities in most of the schools have already been developed according to the standards laid down in the RTE Act. However, faced with the difficulty of allocating funds for construction and deployment of teachers as per the elementary classification of the RTE Act, the Kerala government order states that upper primary schools with Class V will be designated as lower and upper primary schools, and high schools with class VIII will be designated as upper primary and high schools, which is in deviation of class I to V as lower primary and Class VI to VIII as upper primary. Kerala, due to its high levels of literacy even before implementation of the Act is a role model for the nation. This, however, has given rise to concerns over the devolution of funds under the Act.

The state has already achieved the universalisation of education up to 16 years of age and has taken steps in the direction of providing free education till higher secondary levels. The provisions of the RTE Act, in such situations, causes administrative problems and creates additional expenses for the state.⁰⁹

Delhi

Delhi, is not without its drawbacks and criticisms on the implementation of the Act. According to Delhi NGO JOSH (Joint Operation for Social Help), which is a Youth Initiative that runs a public awareness programme in East Delhi and a part of the RTE Forum, schools in the National Capital lack in many aspects. The survey conducted by JOSH had enlisted 60 volunteers for the survey and covered 1823 households and 46 schools in nine districts. Also, JOSH had pointed out the discrepancies in reports by DISE and JOSH, which suggests a lack of a robust monitoring and assessment channel to take stock of the changes that the RTE Act has brought into the civil society. According to JOSH reports released in March 2014,¹⁰

- Forty three per cent of the kids reported they had no functional toilet in their school.
- Forty seven per cent of the kids agreed they had no clean drinking water in their school.
- Eighty per cent of the parents responded that they do not complain even though they have grievance, because of the lack of a Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
- Ninety five per cent of the parents responded that they have no idea about the formation of SMC and that it exists only on paper.
- Twenty five per cent of the children stated that they were asked to pay from their pocket for things like ID cards, PTA funds, exam fees, etc.
- The presence of OOSC children was reported to be high in many areas with Rithala basti being the highest.
- Quality of teaching remained an issue with 28 per cent children stating they could not understand simple mathematics.

06. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Raj-schools-exceed-25-RTE-cap/articleshow/45011672.cms>, accessed on 2 March 2016

07. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/education-news/bring-back-exams-more-weight-on-learning-teachers/>, April 2015

08. http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/Many-Schools-not-Aware-of-RTE-Act/2014/08/09/article2370736.ece, accessed on 2 March 2016

09. <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Implementation-of-RTE-Act-will-be-a-smooth-process-claims-government/2013/05/23/article1601834.ece>, accessed on 2 March 2016

10. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/RTE-still-not-implemented-in-most-schools-Survey/articleshow/32874492.cms>, accessed on 2 March 2016

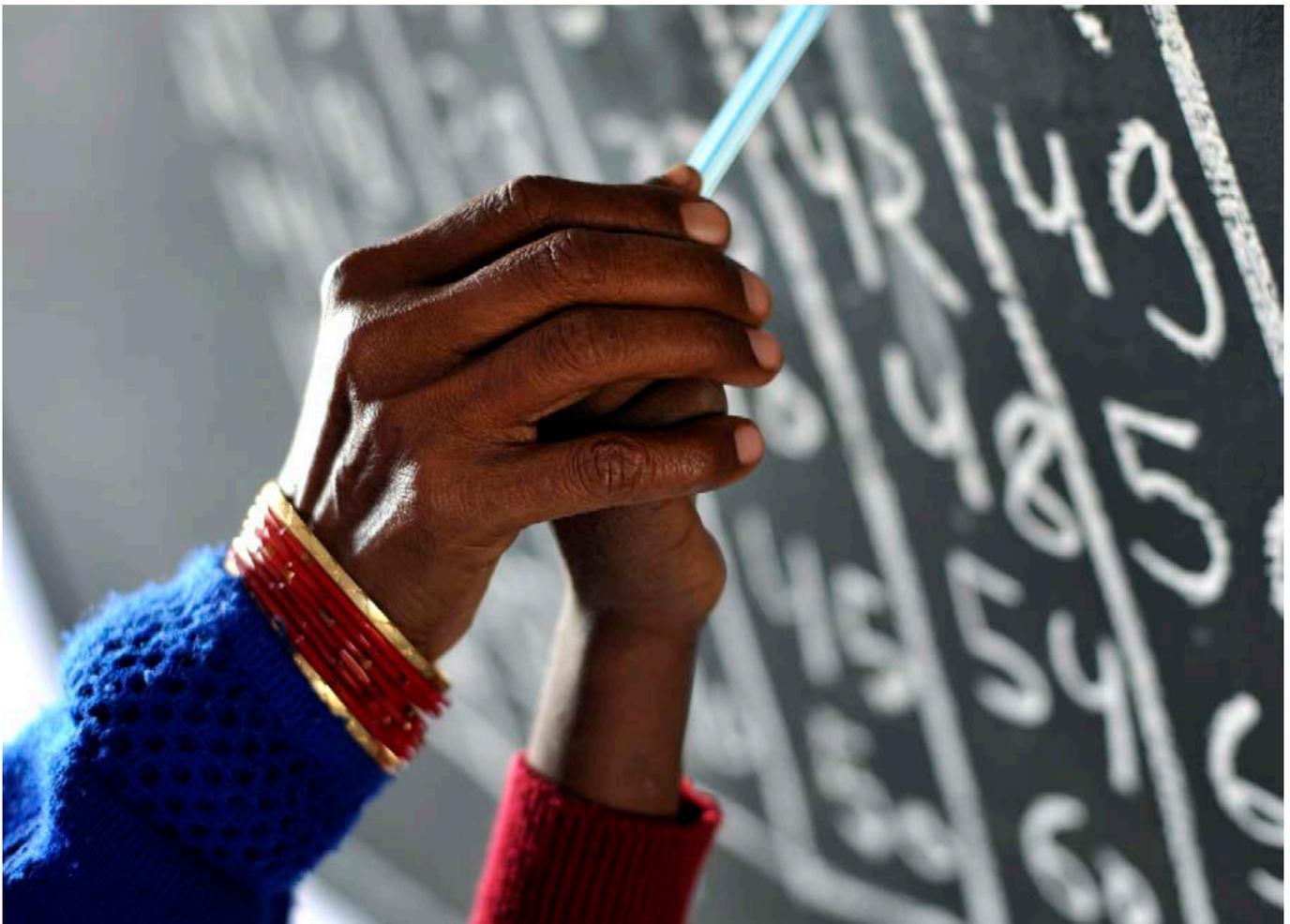
- 52 per cent of the parents reported that they send their children to private schools because they were not satisfied with the teaching in government schools.
- 50 per cent of the children reported being subjected to corporal punishment and abuse in school.
- 49 per cent of the parents reported the quality of Mid-day meals was of inferior quality - stale, undercooked, and/or with insects and lizards in the food.
- 25 per cent of the students reported being made to sit on the floor or to stand along the wall due to inadequate desks and chairs in class.
- 73 per cent of the schools reported that they had contract teachers.

Odisha

Odisha is one of the states which has not been able to progress as per the RTE Act mandate. In 2015, 92 per cent of the schools did not meet the prescribed standards. Around 6 million children are out of school (OOSC) and a majority of these children belong to minority groups. The Grievance Redressal Mechanism is not functional which renders action against non-compliance infeasible.¹¹

The current education scenario in the state is as follows:¹¹

- 23 per cent of the government schools in the state do not have toilet for boys and 14 per cent do not have toilets for girls.
- 3 per cent of schools do not have drinking water facilities.
- 82 per cent schools have no electricity facilities.
- 17,060 elementary schools are without ramp facilities, 17,949 elementary schools without boundary walls and 12,093 elementary schools without kitchen sheds.
- There are 2857 single classroom elementary schools and 3440 single teacher elementary schools.
- The number of private schools in the state is increasing at a rapid pace.



11. <http://orissadiary.com/printStory.asp?id=58051>, accessed on 2 March 2016



Challenges in the implementation of the RTE Act

Despite the progress and improvement in the statistics in the four broad areas as mentioned above, which can be termed as some of the success that the RTE Act has achieved, the quality of education in the country is still not at par with the expected standards of quality education. A minimum benchmark is important which has not been mentioned in the RTE Act. The principals whom we interviewed suggested that a basic format and a structure should be given to schools to maintain quality of education. The provision of quality education needs to be the priority of the government. The concept of quality education is very notional in the RTE Act and needs to be revised. The percentage of children with reading skills as per their standard of study is significantly low, and more so among the rural schools vis-à-vis the urban schools. Even in urban schools the learning standards of the economically disadvantaged groups are much lower than the rest. Thus, the Act has not been able to adapt to the needs of a divided and differentiated Indian society.

The Act is excessively input-focused rather than outcome-oriented. A high enrollment ratio, better infrastructure, PTR (Pupil teacher ratio) alone cannot justify the greater cause that education will play in nation building. What is required is an Act that focusses not just on the inputs, but also on quality output. Despite significant efforts by Central as well as State Governments in implementing the policies laid down in the Act, there have been various dimensions of the Act which have been severely critiqued as being detrimental to the successful implementation of the Act.

No detention policy

The 'no detention' policy, which states that no child until class VIII can be held back or expelled from school, was introduced as part of the RTE Act with the ambitious goal of providing an environment for the stress free and holistic development of a child, has come under severe criticism by the states. It is critiqued by many that policies like these work only on paper, as policy makers fail to envision the ground realities and hurdles in their implementation.

The no detention policy, however, was meant to help the student learn in a stress free environment, but it has actually defeated that purpose by decreasing the motivation of students for learning. One of the school principals during an interview mentioned that when students know that they cannot be kept back to repeat the year, there is lesser seriousness towards learning and lesser pressure to meet the minimum benchmarks. This indirectly affects their competitive skills. If schools or a state cannot even detain 5 per cent of academically backward students each year, this will lead to an unwelcome load of at least 40 per cent (in some schools 60 to 70 per cent) of poor performing students reaching standard IX. The end result will be that these academically backward

students will be promoted at the SSC/HSC level and they would enter the job market. The potential employers on the other hand, may realise their skills are not upto the standard. These students may then feel that they have been cheated of their right to get a job, leading to social discord.⁰¹

Various school principals whom we interviewed were of the opinion that the no detention policy is likely to have a negative impact on children as there will be little motivation to study and perform in school. Parents are also less likely to be interested and teachers' accountability may also decline since standard XII will be the first time that these children would appear for their first examination.

As mentioned by one of the school principals during our interviews, this would also put a humongous pressure on the 25 per cent of students when they move up the education ladder, and hence they are likely to drop out at a later stage being unable to cope up with the pressure of the academic system, post elementary education. The greater motive of the policy makers is to create human capital in India which would engage, participate and contribute to the nation's success story. Hence, what is important is to ensure that checks and evaluations are put in place at regular intervals for the student to grow in a competitive environment where he or she has an incentive to study hard and perform better than his colleagues. This will instill the spirit of competition and the zeal for achievement at an early stage, which will play a vital role in shaping their careers.

A step in addressing this issue was taken by the Central Government authorised panel which was constituted by CAGE (Central Advisory Board of Education), the country's highest regulatory body for school education, which was also in the favour of withdrawing the no-detention policy up to standard VIII. However, as of today no amendments been passed in the Act. According to the sub-committee, representatives from over 20 states had opposed the no detention policy, with the view that it has failed to achieve the purpose with which it was formed.⁰² Especially in Government schools, where the facilities, teacher quality and teacher student ratio is not in line with expected standards, where the students are taught by para teachers and teachers with very less motivation to work and hence high absenteeism, the provisions of 'no detention' has become a farce. Such policies will work only when the teacher is equipped, committed to deliver quality education and manages a small class so as to ensure focused attention on every child. Only under such circumstances, the teacher will be able to identify the differentiated needs of children from different backgrounds and give remedial solutions and more attention to students who require extra attention to ensure an equitable quality of education to all.

01. http://www.dnaindia.com/opinion/column_sibal-s-kiss-of-death_1385602, accessed on 2 March 2016

02. http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2014-11-30/news/56582752_1_sub-committee-class-v-herd-minister-smriti-irani, accessed on 2 March 2016

Challenges arising from enforcement of the RTE Act

One of the challenges as mentioned by various school principals in our discussions, is the lack of seriousness on the part of the state governments. Though some of the state governments are enforcing RTE, for some RTE does not even come under their agenda. In metro cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, etc. there is a thrust by the department for effective implementation of the RTE Act. As cited by one of the principals, 60 per cent of the implementation has been undertaken in these cities. Whereas, in neighbouring cities such as Faridabad, etc. RTE is still a mirage. The entire idea of RTE needs to be restated by the central government and the focus should be on quality education and not mere enrollments.

Disciplinary issues and the lack of motivation

With children coming from diverse backgrounds in schools, disciplinary issues arise which hampers the learning and progress of other children, as cited by the principals during our interviews. Discipline is almost eroded in schools. Children coming from the EWS category use abusive language and have no proper etiquette. This impacts the mainstream children. This phenomenon is observed by almost all the school principals that we interviewed. This phenomenon is observed by almost all the school principals that we interviewed.

Anti-social elements and local goons take the maximum advantage from this. There have been instances when these local goons extract money for admission from schools as cited by one of the principals who has experienced it first hand. School principals also mentioned that RTE has become a tool of harassment by these goons.

Inferiority complex among children

As mentioned by the interviewed principals, children from EWS category often suffer from an inferiority complex while studying in private schools. The huge income difference and standard of living between children of middle income and high income families and children from slums often has a huge impact on the mental and psychological development of EWS children. They are exposed to an environment which is very different and are asked to survive in it.

The EWS children's living space also plays an important role. In many cases, these children go back to the same clusters, filthy and dirty surroundings wherein people use abusive language, and end up playing with the same set of children living in their neighbourhood. They face two different environments at a very tender age, one in school and the other in their living space. This leaves a huge impact on a child and increases their materialistic desires once they start going to a private school.

Digitalisation in schools

Lot of schools these days are moving towards digitalisation and are giving homework through the internet. The question that arises is how this 25 per cent (as mentioned earlier in the Status of states under RTE section) of students will cope with this. Implementation of such new measures becomes a challenge. Since these children are not likely to have computers or laptops at home they will be deprived of ICT. The gap is too wide between the haves and have nots and measures have to be adopted to combat these issues, as cited by one of the school principals during our interviews.

Non-timely payments from the state governments

Almost all the school principals raised their concern over the non-timely payment from the state governments. Private schools are feeling the pinch because of this problem as they have to bear the cost of the 25 per cent of children admitted under RTE. The state government has to take the responsibility of ensuring timely payments to the private schools. Though RTE is a good idea as agreed by everyone, but the state government's role is important for effective implementation of the same. In Nashik, as cited by one of the school principals, one of the schools did not receive any money from the government for two years and they were bearing all the cost. This affects the balance sheet of schools and imposes a greater burden on the school management and parents of remaining 75 per cent.

Moreover, private schools conduct a lot of outdoor and indoor activities which involves additional costs and expenses. Our interviews with school authorities reveal that there is no clarity as to who would bear these expenses. Will the state government pay for these additional expenses or private schools will have to bear the cost? Children from the EWS category of course cannot be left out from such activities as this would have a psychological effect on them.

There are a lot of hidden expenses as well, for e.g. conducting tutorials and extra classes for 25 per cent category of students. Since, these children cannot afford to take any tutorial activities, the respective schools have to invest and put another check on these students. This not only imposes additional cost on schools but also requires teachers to devote extra hours in school have cited by the school principals during our discussion.

The need of the hour is for the state governments to realise the fact that a government school expenditure is different from a private school expenditure. Schools have complained that the state governments are reimbursing on the basis of government spending schools and not on the basis of the private schools, expenditures. This would indirectly impact the remaining 75 per cent, as the burden could be shifted to them. The parents of these children have to pay income tax, education cess and now tuition fees of 25 per cent. This is neither desirable nor fair.

Emphasis on age and not on intellectual growth

One of the provisions in RTE says if a child above six years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted has not been able to complete his or her elementary education, they must be admitted in a class appropriate to their age (Chapter II, 4).⁰³ This provision needs modification as it lays emphasis on age and not on the intellectual growth and capabilities of a student. For example, if a 10 year old student approaches a school, then he/she would be admitted in class V as per the clause of 'appropriate to their age', even if the child has not studied for previous four years.⁰⁴ This would directly have an impact on the learning outcome, adversely affecting the teachers as they will have to put in a lot of extra effort and this might also impact the learning process of other students in the class.

Increasing pressure on teachers

Teachers find it extremely difficult to teach students from such varying background in the same classroom. It requires a lot of emotional, mental and physical investment from both the teachers as well as the school authorities. It is also challenging for a teacher to communicate with parents of children with EWS certificate. Teacher involvement time has increased considerably. Moreover, increasing number of weak students in higher classes adds tremendous pressure on the teachers. Teachers have the biggest challenge as they have to switch on and switch off between children from diverse background in the same classroom. Also if a teacher scolds the child, it would be termed as mental harassment which is again prohibited under the RTE Act. Given the consequences that the teachers will have to face because of giving any punishment, they end up being incompetent. With automatic promotion, the teacher-student ratio will also have to be improved. This would require the government to appoint more teachers, for which they do not have money and nor the teachers are available easily.⁰⁴

Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE)

Introducing a CCE system, where evaluation is based on the scholastic as well as co-scholastic achievement of the child, will be effective only where the teacher is trained and equipped to perform such evaluation. This system brings in a lot of subjectivity on the part of the teacher, and in a nation like ours where elementary schools in some states are run by para teachers, the policy is an impediment to quality learning outcome. Although there has been significant success in improving the PTR ratios, there are still many schools that fall below the prescribed PTR of 30 for primary and 35 for upper primary schools. In a larger classroom, the teacher fails to give individual attention to the students and hence CCE will not be successful in reality.

According to Maya Menon, Founder Director of The Teacher Foundation⁰⁵, the pedagogic system of CCE is an opportunity

for schools to be student centric and eliminate rote learning. However, implementing CCE will require extensive and continuous teacher training. When the teachers are preoccupied with assessment rather than diagnosis, CCE will become more of documenting assessment rather than diagnosing the child's learning needs to enhance performance.

Scarcity of trained and qualified teachers

Although the total number of teachers in schools has increased and almost 80 per cent of the teachers in government schools are professionally qualified,⁰⁶ the lack of trained and quality teachers is critiqued widely. We talk endlessly about how the GER numbers have improved and how the nation is heading towards an education system that is at par with the developed countries of the world. But we fail to focus and gauge the quality of students that the system is producing. The students will be as good as the teachers imparting the lessons in school. In absence of a stringent process of hiring of teachers fulfilling certain standards and lack of training centres for teachers, the vision will be but a half fulfilled dream. It is shocking that our vital elementary education in a large number of the schools is in the hands of 'para-teachers', who don't have access to good training and are not as well educated or as well paid as regular teachers.⁰⁷

NCTE (National Council of Teacher Education) is authorised by the Central Government to lay down the criteria for minimum qualifications for a person to be appointed as a teacher in classes I to VIII. One of the minimum qualifications is that the person appointed should have passed the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), which would be conducted as per guidelines framed by NCTE. The law was passed to ensure minimum standards of teaching, while achieving the enormous task of appointing large number of teachers across the country within the stipulated time frame laid down under the RTE Act.

It was stipulated in the Act that within a period of five years of the Act, the Government should ensure that every teacher meets the minimum qualifications laid down under the Act. Even teachers, who did not possess the requisite qualification at the commencement of the Act, were required to acquire them within the stipulated period of five years. Candidates are required to score minimum 60 per cent in the TET to qualify for a teaching job. However, there is no restriction on the number of attempts and a person can take a re-exam for improving his/her score. There has been much debate about the quality of TET qualified teachers and the para teachers adopted by some states. However, studies by researchers have suggested that there was no significant difference among the learning outcome of students taught by para teachers compared to regular teachers.⁰⁷ One area of concern in TET is the excessive focus on memory rather than the soft skills of an individual which makes him/her a better teacher. Surveys have also indicated that in some schools as high as 25 per cent of the teachers are absent at any time and 50 per cent of those present are not engaged in any teaching activity.⁰⁸

03. <http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-policy-watch-stress-on-numbers-rather-than-quality-makes-education-outlays-flawed-1946086>, accessed on 2 March 2016

04. http://www.dnaindia.com/opinion/column_sibal-s-kiss-of-death_1385602, accessed on 2 March 2016

05. <http://www.educationworldonline.net/index.php/page-article-choice-more-id-3741>, accessed on April 2015

06. Education for All, Towards Quality with Equity, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI and NUEPA, First Edition August 2014

07. <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/C1aLig8wjbMKu3qGEsQ0L/Taking-a-harder-look-at-parateachers.html>, accessed on 2 March 2016

08. <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/146%20Teacher%20Performance%20Pay%20Jan%202011.pdf>, accessed on 2 March 2016

Monitoring and accountability of teachers is also important and should be the responsibility of the schools themselves. To ensure the accountability of the teachers, one of the school principals cited that Kendriya Vidyalaya has a good balance of checks and accountability of teachers. With little bit of modification, the same methods can be adopted and introduced in government schools. For private schools, accountability of teachers may not be a priority as they may already have put a great deal of emphasis on good quality teachers, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Teachers in private schools are passionate and schools haven't faced any problem with regard to the teachers, as cited by one of the leading school principals. In fact in some of the private schools, there are special educators in the class along with the teachers in order to teach children with different needs. The investment is huge and creates a dent in their budget, but given that these schools do not want to compromise on quality, they end up spending a huge amount.

School Monitoring Committees

The setting up of School Monitoring Committees (SMCs) in government and aided schools and keeping the private unaided schools out of this formulation, have had little impact because for the weaker sections of the society who actually send their children to the government or aided schools, being part of the SMCs is likely to be an onerous burden on their time and effort. Compensation for such Committees can motivate and increase the Committee's focus on monitoring, the goal for which it was formed.

Also, the Central RTE Act indicates that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for the Committee has to be elected from among the parent members of the Committee. But this has been violated by most state RTEs. In Assam, the District Education Officer is involved in the election of the Chairperson and Vice chairperson on the basis of aptitude and educational qualification. Gujarat has a provision for having a member of the School Management or Trust in the Committee. These discrepancies in the Central RTE Act and State RTE Acts have led to discrimination towards parents of children belonging to the disadvantaged group⁰⁹, the group of people who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the Act.

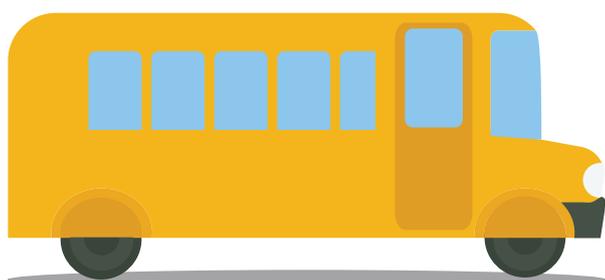
Reservation of seats for EWS students in private unaided schools

The 25 per cent reservation clause, although adopted by 27 states/UTs, as mandated by the Act has not been properly understood. As per the RTE Act, a child belonging to the EWS category has the right to gain admission into a neighbourhood private school against the 25 per cent criteria. Schools set down their own selection guidelines for filling up these seats and in a majority of the cases, this important clause has failed to create output because of the lack of awareness of such benefits among the disadvantaged sections of the society. It does not specify on what selection criteria students from weaker sections would be granted entry with complete fee waivers into such unaided private schools.

Eligibility criteria for EWS category becomes a major problem because of the data fudging prevalent in India, as mentioned by school principals who have experienced this. Since most of the state governments do not take an active interest in naming the children belonging to EWS category, schools end up taking children of the workers working in their school. In reality, schools are faced with bogus certificates, fraudulently procured to get their children admitted through the RTE Act. Almost all the school principals who have been consulted by us pointed out that these eligibility certificates are fake and bogus. Thus, the RTE Act fails to serve the deserving candidates.

The government provides reimbursements to the private schools calculated on a per child recurring expenditure basis and does not take into account the capital costs of setting up the schools. Hence, this is leading to cross subsidisation where the private schools end up charging higher fees from the other 75 per cent of the students to compensate for the inadequate compensation provided by the government.

The legislative hurdles in setting up schools and the highly controlled nature of this segment acts as a disincentive to education entrepreneurs who are actively participating in the preschool unregulated market. Attracting investments from such Edupreneurs would be an important step in mobilising funds and also in inculcating best practices and innovative practices in the elementary education segment that will raise the standards of education in our country. The government and the private sector has to work together in close proximity, learning and supporting each other to meet the vision of the right to a quality and equal education in the coming years.



09. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/states-not-following-central-rte-act-provisions-ncpcr-report/article5578849.ece>, accessed 2 March 2016

Unrecognised schools and low-cost private schools

The RTE Act does not grant recognition to schools if they do not meet the standards as per the Act and the Act mandates the closure of such unrecognised schools. The low fee private schools produce higher learning than state schools. Thus, closing down of such schools will be a huge blow to the vision of education to all.¹⁰

Different states have prescribed different rules, norms, standards and conditions for implementing the RTE Act for private schools. However, such norms are not only restrictive but also infeasible for low the low-fee or low-cost private schools, which constitute the majority of private schools in the country. Several quality low-cost schools have also been closed down due to one or the other technical issue. There is no denial of the fact that the learning outcomes in these schools are higher, but mere closing of such schools is denying children their right to education, which is the essence of the RTE Act.

Also, the government schools being kept outside the purview of this mandate is not seen as a right step by many as confirmed by our industry discussions. Such steps will not ensure fair competition among the private and public players, and in India, where private players are an important contributor, it could discourage them from setting up innovative, efficient and cost effective centres. It was estimated that almost a fifth of the schools in our country are unrecognised. However, these schools are an important part of the social milieu and the education ecosystem.

The abrupt closing of such schools will render many school going kids out of a school and new entrants will find it difficult to gain admission since the government's premise that existing government schools can be made suitable to ensure absorption of students losing their school because of this policy as well as the new entrant seems unrealistic. According to an article cited in the Indian Express, state governments have till 2014, closed or merged over 80,000 of their schools.¹² According to estimates by The Centre for Civil Society, around 34.94 lakh students have been affected due to 19,414 schools in 17 states being closed down or issued notice to close down due to their inability to meet the infrastructural criteria mandate.¹³

The treatment given to the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalayas and Sainik Schools, which the government has assigned to the 'specified category' has also been criticised. The government's actions have been perceived by many as demoralising to the private sector with prohibitive policies, thereby creating impediments for the growth of the sector.

Budget constraints

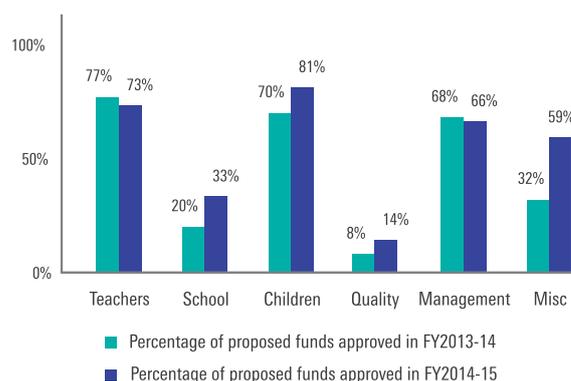
The RTE Act, being a major initiative, it is imperative for the government to allocate substantial funds for the effective implementation of the activities envisioned. The total budget for SSA has increased from INR27,552 crore in FY2009-2010 to INR69,982 crore in FY2012-13, which is a more than two fold increase. However, in the later Budget sessions, the amount has been decreasing. INR54,925 crore was approved in FY2013-14 under SSA, which is a significant drop of 22 per cent from FY2012-13.¹¹

The SSA budget is broadly allotted to six categories:

- 1. Teachers:** Including salaries, training for teachers and learning materials for teachers.
- 2. Schools:** Including infrastructure expenses.
- 3. Children:** including transportation allowance for students, textbooks, uniforms and allocations that directly benefit students enrolled in schools with an attempt to bring back OOSC children back into school.
- 4. Quality:** including funds for activities that will improve learning such as learning enhancement programmes, etc.
- 5. Management:** including allocations to administration.
- 6. Miscellaneous:** including allocations to mobilisation and community training.

The below graph paints a grim picture of the Indian story of focus on quality education. Out of the funds allocated to quality, only 8 per cent were approved in FY2013-14 and 14 per cent were approved in FY2014-15.¹¹ The gap between approved and proposed funds was also significantly high for school infrastructure.

Budget allocations to elementary education



Source: Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

In the Union Budget for FY2015-16, there has been a 29 per cent cut in the budget for schemes benefitting children and addressing issues like malnutrition, child protection, health, support for disadvantaged groups, etc. If the social issues concerning children are ignored, it will be difficult to achieve the universalisation of quality elementary education.¹⁴

10. <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-edit-page/schooling-without-learning-how-the-rte-act-destroys-private-schools-and-destroys-standards-in-public-schools/>, accessed on 2 March 2016

11. Vol 7/Issue 1, SSA, Budget Briefs, Accountability Initiatives 2014-15

12. <http://www.newindianexpress.com/editorials/Show-Intent-to-Make-Right-to-Education-Real/2015/03/27/article2731560.ece>, accessed on 2 March 2016

13. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/education-news/bring-back-exams-more-weight-on-learning-teachers/>, accessed on 2 March 2016

14. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Children-most-neglected-in-the-2015-16-Union-Budget-Child-rights-organisations/articleshow/46537698.cms>, accessed on 2 March 2016

Learning outcomes

The ASER 2014 is based on the survey in 577 rural districts and 16497 villages covering 341070 households and about 569229 children in the age group of three to 16. The report reiterates the fact that we have achieved close to 96 per cent or above enrollment ratio in elementary schools. Hence, India has been able to institutionalise the policy of compulsory and free elementary education for every child, and the GER ratios are at par with the developed economies of the world.

However, when it comes to learning outcomes, the report brought out some stark realities¹⁵.

- Seventy five per cent of all children in Class 3 were not able to read a Class 2 textbook fluently.
- Sixty per cent of all children in Class 3 were not able to read a Class 1 level textbook.
- Fifty per cent of all children in Class 5 were not able to read a Class 2 textbook fluently.
- Twenty five per cent of Class 8 students were not able to read a Class 2 level textbook.
- Mathematics is an area where a majority of the students were below the standard.
- About 19.5 per cent of all children in Class 2 were not able to recognise numbers up to nine.
- Close to 75 per cent of Class 3 children could not do two digit subtractions.
- Close to 74 per cent of students in class 5, were not able to do division.

This proves that the learning environment has to be improved for ensuring quality education. The existing system provides the right to school to a child but fails to ensure that the benefit of an education i.e. the development of an intellectual mind is translated to them at an early age. The goal with which the Act was brought into effect is still far-fetched and is indicative of the fact that immediate reforms are required in the learning pedagogy in schools.

A study, financed by Mr.R.N Bhaskar, conducted in 2003 in Mumbai in privately-managed English speaking schools focusing mainly on standards V and VI and VII revealed that 65 per cent of the surveyed students failed in a quiz in mathematics and 75 per cent failed in English. A quiz in English and Mathematics was conducted in 34 schools and 16,500 students participated in north-east Mumbai, where there are more middle class and lower middle class people. Since they comprise of over 95 per cent of the population, for India to change there is a need to focus on middle class and lower middle class. The quiz was basic with some questions being as simple as putting the numbers in the right sequence. However, the results were shocking and similar tests conducted by other NGOs came to similar conclusions. One of the glaring differences some of the NGOs found was the failure rates in Bihar was low compared to those in Maharashtra, Gujarat or Madhya Pradesh. This is predominantly due to the fact that good teachers had remained with schools as they did not find alternative job opportunities, a phenomena which was being observed in other metropolitan cities in India.¹⁶

The teaching profession is deemed unattractive

A lot of good teachers are leaving the teaching profession and accepting alternative job opportunities. The reasons for this include: (i) lower wages, (ii) poor student teacher ratio, which prevents individual mentoring and increases examination correction work, (iii) violence against teachers and schools administrators which is unchecked and unpenalised, (iv) burdening teacher with non-teaching work during elections or census surveys and (v) loss of dignity. Moreover, since the part time professionals are not allowed to enter into mainstream teaching profession, in cities like Mumbai, it impedes the drive to save the teaching profession.¹⁶

Non-inclusive growth

There is still a long way to go until the education system in India becomes inclusive. This is predominantly due to the fact that low income groups do not qualify through the entrance examinations which filter students on the basis of their academic performances. This can be traced back to the basic elementary schooling which makes them weaker rather than making them strong and competitive. Financial grants need to be linked to learning outcomes as they would compel the schools to perform and ensure inclusive growth.¹⁷



15. ASER 2014 Report, accessed on 2 March 2016

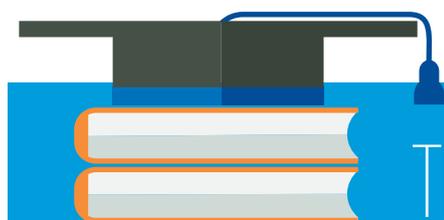
16. <http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/main-article-a-letter-to-kapil-sibal-1344735>, accessed on 2 March 2016

17. <http://www.dnaindia.com/money/report-policy-watch-education-system-promotes-non-inclusive-growth-1939390>, accessed on 2 March 2016

Global practices

In this section, we present two case studies. The first is of the U.S. which being a developed state, can highlight the differentiating practices it has used for shaping the education landscape of the nation. The second is Bangladesh, which is a developing nation whose social development story has been cited by many as a model for developing countries. Bangladesh is also one of the few developing countries that is ahead of its target on some indicators in the Millennium Development Goals. Bangladesh also has one of the largest primary education systems in the world as per the UNICEF report, 2009.⁰¹

01. [http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education(1).pdf), accessed on 2 March 2016



The United States

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), signed in 1965, was the United States' vision of providing equal opportunities for quality education to children. ESEA was the federal law providing grants to states for supporting K-12 education to improve the quality of education. The ESEA was reauthorised several times after its enactment, the most recent being in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Irrespective of the number of reauthorisations, the central goal of the Act remains the same, which is to improve the educational opportunities for children belonging to lower income families.

Differentiators of NCLB⁰¹

The following section highlights the main features of NCLB, which distinguishes it from the RTE Act in India.

Stress on mathematics and reading

NCLB mandates states to test students annually for Mathematics and reading in Classes 3 to 8 and once in Class 10 to 12, and for Science: the students will be tested once in Standard 3 to 5, 6 to 8 and 10 to 12.

Mandate on individual schools, school districts and states for publishing results

It is mandatory for states, individual schools and school districts to publish the test results publicly in the aggregate as well as for specific students' subgroups, which will include students from low income families, major ethnic and racial groups and students with disabilities.

NCLB empowers parents by making it compulsory for states and local school districts to disseminate information to parents on how their student and the schools is performing in the form of annual school report cards. Parents are also given the right under NCLB to be informed about the qualification of their child's teacher. School districts are required to inform the parents in case a teacher who is not very highly qualified is teaching their child for more than four weeks.

Flexibility for states to adopt their adequate yearly progress rate

NCLB directed the states, school districts and schools to be responsible for ensuring all students achieve cent per cent proficiency in mathematics and reading by 2014, as per grade level performances which are defined by the states. Each state chose the rate of increase of proficiency at which they would progress to achieve the final goal in 2014.

However, some states were allowed waivers in meeting certain requirements mandated by the NCLB. Although the states have struggled in meeting such requirements as per the mandate, the waivers will still continue as a de facto policy, until the NCLB is reiterated. The waiver was granted to states which demonstrated, the adoption of reforms in their student assessments, academic standards and accountability systems or a plan for implementing such reforms.

Strict guidelines and action plans with timelines for schools to meet the target

NCLB has strict guidelines for schools for meeting the target of adequate yearly progress (AYP) chosen by the state. The guidelines are as per the table below⁰²:

Year of default	Action taken
First year	No action
Second consecutive year	Identified for school improvement with school transfer option
Third consecutive year	Identified for school improvement with supplemental services
Fourth consecutive year	Implement corrective action
Fifth consecutive year	Initiate restructuring
Sixth consecutive year	Implement restructuring

School improvement

Schools that are identified for school improvement are required to provide immediate assistance. In the first year of 'School improvement', the children must be offered the option to be transferred to another school in the same district which is a higher performing school, in the form of a public school choice. School officials, with support from local agencies for implementation, will develop a two year plan for school improvement. In the second year of school improvement, the children will be offered supplemental education services from a state-approved provider.

Corrective action

In case of schools that fail to perform for the fourth consecutive year, the district will implement at least one of the following corrective actions while continuing to offer the facilities to students under the 'School improvement' plan.

- Replace the staff in the school
- Adopt a new curriculum
- Authority of school-level administration will be decreased
- External experts will be appointed for advice
- Internal organisation of the school will be restructured
- The school year or school day will be extended.

01. National Assessment of Title I - Final Report, Volume I: Implementation, A Report Prepared for IES by the Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, OCTOBER 2007

02. <https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/schools/accountability.html>, accessed on 2 March 2016

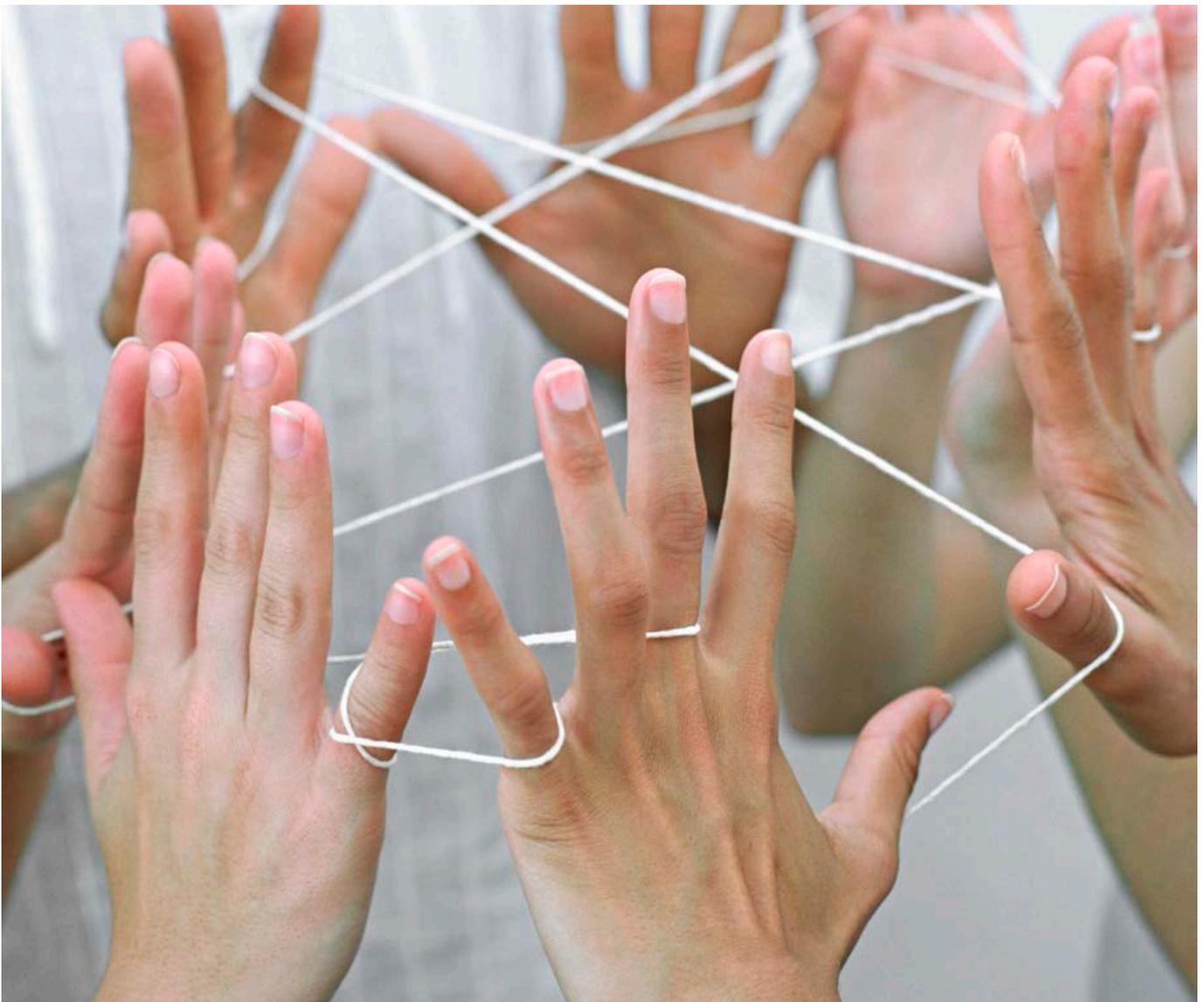
Restructuring⁰³

In case, a school fails to perform for the fifth consecutive year, the district initiates for restructuring the school and in the sixth year of default, the restructuring is implemented. As part of the restructuring, the school will implement one of the following options while continuing to offer the facilities to students under 'School improvement 'plan.cut in the budget for schemes benefitting children and addressing issues like malnutrition, child protection, health, support for disadvantaged group, etc. If the social issues concerning children are ignored, it will be difficult to achieve the universalisation of quality elementary education.

- The school will be reopened as a public charter school
- All or most of the staff in school will be replaced
- Hand over the operations of the school to the state or an outside entity
- Major restructuring of the school's governance.

Rewards and recognition for high performing schools and teachers

NCLB requires states to award schools that meet or exceed the achievement goals. States may also use funds to reward teachers in such schools. Schools that have made the greatest achievement gains are designated as 'distinguished schools' by states.



03. <http://www.greatschools.org/definitions/nclb/nclb.html>, accessed on 2 March 2016



Bangladesh

Progress in primary and secondary school enrollment

It would be interesting to look at how Bangladesh, a neighbouring country to India, has achieved success in universalising elementary education in the country and what are the specific challenges that it faces. In the early 2000s, according to national household surveys, Bangladesh had attained a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 86.1 per cent. During the same time, India had a GER of 75.2 per cent. The Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) for Bangladesh during the same time was 62.9 per cent compared to 54.8 per cent for India.⁰¹

Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education levels, with female enrollment exceeding 50 per cent at the secondary level.⁰³ The country has made significant progress in increasing enrollment at both primary and secondary levels.

Government interventions

The main provider and financier of primary education in Bangladesh is the State Government. Government primary schools constitute approximately 47 per cent of the total schools.⁰³ About 25 per cent of the schools are privately operated by Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS). Such schools are heavily subsidised by the Government who has introduced interventions like stipends and fee waiver programmes to encourage the demand for education services. Also, the private sector is incentivised to enter into elementary education and community-based programmes are introduced which ensure out of school children are enrolled into schools and receive education services which are primarily targeted towards the betterment of the masses.

Government's Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) II with UNICEF

The decentralisation of School Management through School Level Improvement Plans (SLIPs) was an important activity within PEDP II. SLIP activities empower teachers and enhance their professional motivation thus inculcating a sense of ownership for the school. The programme also provides training to government officials and school management committees to support planning at the local level. To improve the quality of teaching, the focus is not only on the minimum standards of qualification for teachers but on in-service training of teachers. Professional Development Trainings for Head masters and local education agencies are also a part of PEDP II. A focus on improving the health of children is also a part of PEDP II, as the Government believes in achieving better education through better health. Mass awareness campaigns are an integral part of the programme. Awareness campaigns are run using various channels like media, national and regional education events like theatres, TV series, cartoon promoting UNICEF's animated girl hero Meena.⁰²

Challenges

In spite of numerous interventions by the government, not all interventions have been efficient in targeting the poorest of the masses. Due to this, the NER of children from the lower economic strata of the population has not seen much improvement over time. According to the HIES data⁰³, the NER of children from the poorest quintile increased at a very modest rate from 52.6 per cent in 2000 to 56.8 per cent in 2005. The gender gap in primary completion rate (in favour of girls) is wider among children of the poorest quintile (14 per cent) compared to that of the richest quintile (1.9 per cent). Also like many other developing countries, Bangladesh does not have a system in place for effective assessment of learning achievements, which will be essential in monitoring the progress of learning achievements in the country.

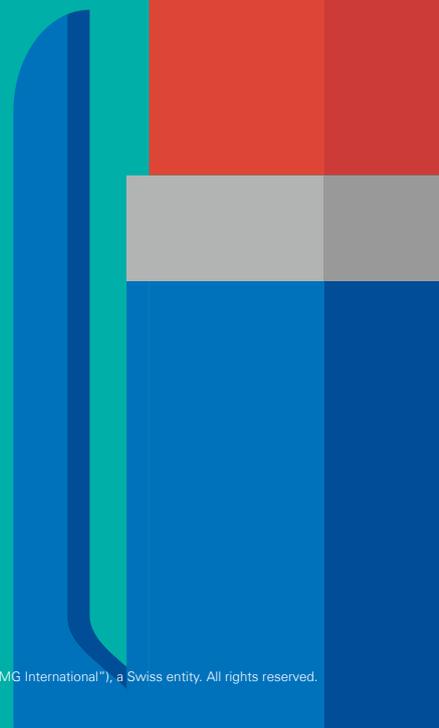
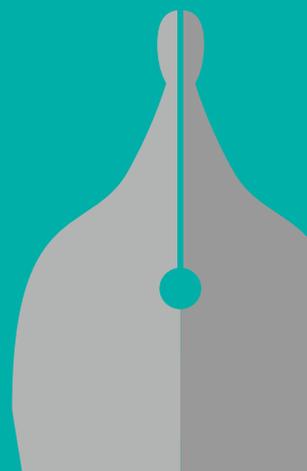


01. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTBANGLADESH/Resources/education24.pdf>, accessed on 2 March 2016

02. [http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Quality_Primary_Education(1).pdf), accessed on 2 March 2016

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Recommendations



Spread awareness

Raising awareness among parents regarding the potential benefits of the RTE Act is critical for raising the education standards of the masses. Dissemination of information to the SMC members about their role and responsibilities is key to ensuring SMCs are able to monitor and impact the progress of the schools. Boards should be painted on a wall in a common area within the school grounds and should include all relevant information.

The government further needs to reach out to towns and villages. Redefine and consider the concept of providing education in towns and villages. One of the principals from a leading school cited that boarding/residential schools could be a solution to the increasing imbalance between the developed and less developed states. The private sector should be encouraged to develop boarding schools and only children from towns and villages should be allowed in those schools. Such boarding schools could be incentive-based, wherein the government should play a leading role.

Decentralise accountability and provide clarity on roles

RTE should be decentralised and to avoid ambiguity in the roles of SMCs, state government and local authorities, the Act should clearly demarcate the roles and responsibilities. This would help ensure effective functioning of all the agencies. The degree of autonomy and distribution of power should be based on expertise of the local bodies. There is a need to increase the accountability of these institutes which would compel them to perform and improve the state of education in the country. Also, the best practices from each state should be shared and adapted according to the specifics of a state to implement a fast track learning among the authorities. The state governments ought to monitor what the schools are doing, help schools financially and the whole RTE should be well-planned for the simple fact that we are dealing with children at a very sensitive age. There is a further need to standardise the norms of inspection and have a watchdog for schools, because not all schools are self-driven.

Fix the income limit for the EWS category

Each and every state should notify an income limit as it is not possible to dictate the determinants for income limits in law. If the minimum income limit is not specified by the authorities, private unaided schools will also not be able to determine the eligibility for admitting children against the EWS category. To ensure the implementation of these provisions, a writ of mandamus could be sought from the appropriate High Court, directing states to notify annual income limits for the purpose of defining children belonging to the weaker section.

Better classification for income levels and preferences to children who are deserving must be elaborated explicitly. Deserving parents whose income might be little higher than INR1 lakh (100,000) cannot get their children admitted through the RTE Act, despite the fact that their child could be a deserving candidate. In such a way we end up depriving good parents who are not so economically backward but are definitely deserving. Hence, there is a need to redefine the income limit and give priority to prospective learners.

Provide single window grievance redressal

The creation of a 'one window' RTE Commission directly accessible to all stakeholders is a necessity to translate the potential of RTE to a reality. The commission should be an independent body that not only plays the role of an ombudsperson but also have the ability to pass binding orders. The creation of such a body would also effectively signal the commitment of the government to education and investment in India's future.

Criteria for admission in schools

To help ensure fairness to all, schools should be allowed to conduct entrance tests for admission for children coming under the category of EWS. Top schools could take children who clear the examination and the remaining children can get admitted in other schools. Premier schools will not mind admitting bright students, supporting them and showcasing their performance. One of the school principals during the discussion mentioned that the criteria for selection should be both means and merit rather than means only. One of the recommendations made was that instead of forcing private schools for 25 per cent reservation, the central government should help the private schools in building and creating another school for these children.

Conduct orientations for admission procedures

To ensure that the admission procedure is not partial and the method of selection is unbiased, an orientation programme should be conducted for the management and teachers who are involved in the admission process of the respective schools. Grouping by level and not by grade can make teaching efficient and basic skills can then be picked up faster.

Improve the physical infrastructure and human resources

Even today there are schools which do not have infrastructure facilities like toilets, proper buildings, drinking water facilities, playgrounds, etc. There is a need to improve the infrastructural facilities to ensure that a child attends school. In places where access to transportation is a hindrance for attending schools, alternative arrangements for transportation for students should be implemented. Closing down of unrecognised schools that do not fulfill the criterion laid out in the RTE Act is not a solution as it will lead to an increase in the lack of educational institutes. Mechanisms should be put in place which will ensure that such schools meet the required criteria, and support should be provided by respective state bodies.

The government could create a fiscal policy with conditions to encourage investments in new schools as well the existing ones. In this regard, Public-Private Partnership models could be explored. Private schools can adopt the government schools, so that children are comfortable in their own space instead of sending them to private schools. Loans at low rates of interest could be given to schools to improve their infrastructure facilities.

Focus on the quality of learning outcomes

The quality of learning outcomes has been a major challenge in implementation of the RTE Act. It will be essential for state governments to introduce evaluation methods which test children's conceptual understanding of subjects in the lower classes. This will shift the focus from rote learning to application of concepts and hence improve the quality of learning outcomes. The improved focus on providing books and library facilities to children can improve the reading levels, apart from the focus on reading in the school curriculum.

In order to improve the learning outcomes, various experts have suggested that defining the transaction of teaching/learning with a goal could help combat the issue of learning outcomes. For example, 'in the fourth standard, a student should be able to read a newspaper and explain it' or a student in third standard should be able to multiply three digits with two digits etc.' as per Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) guidelines or a revision thereof. MLL guidelines were adopted as per 1989/90 report. Such explicit definitions would provide a clear purpose to the teacher and students as well. This would also be a clear and a simple objective for the parent to measure the learning outcomes. It would act as a self-controlling local loop for ensuring quality education. The responsibility of a teacher as mentioned in section (24(c) 'complete entire curriculum within the specified time' allows a teacher to complete the syllabus without ensuring outcomes. There is a need to modify this and could be changed to (24(c) 'ensure minimum level of learning at each class level as defined by Minimum Level of Learning'. MLL could be adopted as per the 1989/90 committee report or the states would be free to choose their own, as suggested by one of the industry experts we interviewed.

Such a move will ensure that teachers have clear deliverables and the only way a teacher could escape from not delivering minimum learning levels would be to claim that a child has low IQ levels. Thus, to address the challenge of learning outcomes, clear definitions are important to ensure teachers deliver and we do not have to wait to interpret ASER findings after two years.

One of the principals mentioned that NCERT has a good framework for learning outcomes and has been aligned with best practices around the world. Schools should adhere to this to ensure quality in learning outcomes.

Provide qualified teachers

Well trained teachers who have the ability to understand, assess and impart learning tailored to an individual child's requirement will be a key factor in improving the elementary education system in the country. In house training for teachers should be developed which will focus not only on imparting lessons in specific subjects but in other aspects of soft skills like communication and leadership skills. Block Resource Centre's (BRC) and District Institutes for Educational Training (DIETs) will be important stakeholders in implementing such changes in teacher's training curriculum. The Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET) should have mechanisms to assess the overall competency of teachers rather than just testing memory recall. Teacher training programmes should also sensitise teachers to handle children from different social groups with care. A combination of intelligence and sensitivity should be a pre-requisite for teachers.

State governments ought to set up teacher training institutes for pre-primary, primary and middle schools to improve the

quality of teachers. In Delhi, for example, beyond Central Institute of Education (CIE), there are hardly any good institutes for teachers' training. There is a growing need to invest a lot of amount and time in teacher training as mentioned by various school heads. They should also look towards training young boys and girls and encourage them to enter the teaching profession. Better monitoring of teachers in the government schools is a must for better learning outcomes.

Teachers on the other hand, should be made more accountable. Like the corporate world, they should either perform or perish. To ensure accountability of teachers, they should be given targets and if they do not achieve those set targets, they should not be entitled for any increments. Teachers could be observed for three years and if they still do not perform they should just be fired similar to the corporate world. Given the dearth of good teachers, honest follow ups of the process is essential. It is the school and the management which need to take the responsibility of accountability of the teachers, specified one of the school principals.

Make the teaching profession attractive

In order to retain good teachers in schools, it is important to make this profession as attractive as any other profession. Teachers should be allowed to negotiate salaries as in the private sector by allowing open market competition. The schools will have to finance their own expenses and government should allow schools to opt out of the grant-in-aid concept. Moreover, the government should exempt all schools from taxes and double the salaries of teachers. There is a need to create a supply for people who consider teaching as a respectable profession. The issue of the dearth of teachers can be combated if they are paid adequate remuneration.

Involve various stakeholders

Private players, NGOs, corporate foundations and civil society organisations should be encouraged and involved to ensure effective implementation of the Act. This will encourage level playing competition among the schools resulting in efficient and innovative low cost models. Right and like-minded people need to be connected to the cause and equal participation from all stakeholders is important to give solutions to the issues faced in implementing RTE.

Cover children below six years and upto 18 years of age

Covering of children below the age of six, is important in building a strong foundation for learning on which an elementary education can be built. Age group up to 18 years should be included which would reduce social taboos in India like early marriage especially of the girl child and build the nation's biggest asset i.e. skilled manpower.

Ensure effective utilisation of teachers' time

Clerical staff should be appointed to reduce the teacher's involvement in non-teaching activities thus enabling a stimulating learning environment. Also teachers should be made free from the mandatory deployment for various non-educational purposes like elections, population census, disaster relief, etc. Absenteeism of teachers can be put in check by deploying accountability systems like biometric attendance.

Allow schools to charge higher fees

Schools should be allowed to charge higher fees to meet the cost of salaries and other overheads. Though this could lead to the management making profits from education, but this could be attached with monitoring the end result. The finance ministry could specify that management charging higher fees will be under tax scrutiny, unless 90 per cent of students appear and pass a centrally administered examination in English, Maths and Science in every two years. Thus, if more than 10 per cent of students fail, the management has the risk of losing control over the school itself. The defaulting school can be handed over to the management which has trained its students well. This fear of loss of control will compel the schools to get better teachers, improve learning outcomes and create an appropriate teaching environment.

Cross-subsidisation of fees

Cross-subsidisation of fees should be allowed. Through this provision, approximately 30 per cent of students pay lower fees, however, this percentage of students should be selected from the brightest students through a common aptitude test. Thus, bright students will be subsidised by richer ones. For other students who are poor and do not have aptitude for academics, they should be encouraged to join vocational courses.

Introduction of a national school standard of education

In order to improve the educational standards, the government ought to introduce a national school standard of education which is a practice globally. The examination would evaluate students on the basis of their quantitative (Mathematics) and verbal skills similar as in the examination of GRE or TOFEL. There is no denial that the school education is the responsibility of the state government, but the central government could strategically work with the finance ministry to link educational funds to quality education. This would encourage the state boards to impart quality education.

Stop automatic promotion

Automatic promotion till standard VIII should be abolished in order to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes. A child should focus on studies based on his/her capability. If a child does not have an aptitude for education then they should consider the possibilities of pursuing a vocational education rather than a mainstream education.

Ministry to track the performance of schools

The Ministry should work towards creating a system to track the performance of schools especially of schools who do not teach well. Passing scores of the school could be compared with the national passing scores, and if the school is not performing well for three years out of total five years, then the school with its assets must be transferred to schools who are performing well. By doing this the better performing schools will get a charge over the low performing schools and they could improve the teaching levels and impart quality education to children. The government ought to take the responsibility of education, bring accountability in government funded schools and should have zero tolerance towards non-accountability.

Assist low-cost schools

Instead of closing the low-cost schools, the corporate houses could be approached to help these schools through their CSR funds. Moreover, the government should help the low-cost schools with infrastructure facilities and make timely payments of fees. The government could standardise these schools and help them become better. Greater exemptions to be given to low-cost schools. One of the possibilities that could be explored is to shut down the government schools which are not performing and divert the funds to these low-cost schools to ensure that quality education is imparted to children. This solution was suggested by one of the school principals during our discussions.



Disclaimer

The report contains KPMG's analysis of secondary sources of published information and incorporates the inputs gathered through meetings with stakeholders. While information obtained from the public domain has not been verified for authenticity, we have obtained information, as far as possible, from sources generally considered to be reliable.

Our analysis is based on the prevailing market conditions and regulatory environment and any change may impact the outcome of our review. Our report makes reference to 'KPMG Analysis'; this indicates only that we have (where specified) undertaken certain analytical activities on the underlying data to arrive at the information presented; we do not accept responsibility for the underlying data.

In performing this engagement and preparing this report, KPMG:

- Has only tried to source, investigate and verify the information, on a best-effort basis, within the limitations of time, veracity of primary sources and to the extent possible without compromising on the identity of the client.
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Collection of data for market assessment has been limited to such information as can be collected from meetings with market participants. Wherever information was not available in the public domain, suitable assumptions were made to extrapolate values for the same. We must emphasise that the realisation of the prospective financial information set out within our report (based on secondary sources, as well as our internal analysis), is dependent on the continuing validity of the assumptions on which it is based. The assumptions will need to be reviewed and revised to reflect such changes in business trends, cost structures or the direction of the business as further clarity emerges. We accept no responsibility for the realisation of the prospective financial information. Our inferences therefore will not and cannot be directed to provide any assurance about the achievability of the projections. Since the projections relate to the future, actual results are likely to be different from those shown in the prospective financial information because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, and differences may be material. Any advice, opinion and/or recommendation indicated in this document shall not amount to any form of guarantee that KPMG has determined and/or predicted future events or circumstances.



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A red school bag with a zipper and a button is positioned vertically on the left side of the page. Below it, a stack of three books is visible, with the top one having a red cover and the others having white covers. The entire scene is set on a light-colored wooden surface against a dark background.

Glossary

RTE	Right to Education
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
DISE	District Information System for Education
MHRD	Ministry for Human Resource Development
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SCR	Student Classroom Ratio
SCPCR	State Commission on the Protection of Child Rights
NPE	National Education Policy
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SMC	School Monitoring Committee
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
OOSC	Out of School Children
EWS	Economically Weaker Section
NUEPA	National University of Education Planning and Administration
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
EDI	Education Development Index
NAS	National Assessment Survey
TET	Teacher Eligibility Test
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
CCE	Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation
JOSH	Joint Operation for Social Help
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
BRC	Block Resource Centre
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the efforts put in by the following individuals in the preparation of this publication:

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

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Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

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- Ms. Anju Yadav

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Printed in India. (001_THL0415)