



Effect of RTE Act 2009 in Rural Schools of Odisha

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ABSTRACT

The right to education is a universal entitlement to education. This is recognized in the international convenient on economics, social and cultural rights as human right that includes the right to free and compulsory education for all, still there is lacuna in elementary education during that juncture the right to education act 2009 came into force in the year 2010 for improving elementary education. In this present study, the investigator intended to examine and explore the effect of RTE Act, 2009 in rural area. The investigator adopted exploratory survey research method for the present study and select the headmaster and SMC members from our elementary school as sample population. Interview cum observation scheduled adopted for data collection regarding effect of RTE Act, 2009 in rural elementary school. The researcher used content analyses and percentage for data interpretation. The findings of the study are that RTE Act was not effective or properly implement in rural areas. However, the present study found there is gap in its implementation of RTE Act in rural areas in terms of physical infrastructure of the school, student teacher ratio and establishment of neighbourhood school. It can be concluded that the RTE Act is neither effective nor properly implemented in rural areas. Further the study found there were many problems in elementary education after implementation of RTE Act in rural area due to lack of physical infrastructure, student teacher ratio and neighbourhood school which is a big challenge for both the state govt. and stakeholder. Therefore, require physical resource, human resource and financial resource should be allocated to overcome the existing problems in elementary education in rural area.

Keywords: Right to Education, Rural Schools, Odisha

INTRODUCTION

The present study is in the area of elementary education. The prime purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of RTE Act, 2009 for improving elementary education in rural area. The study explored the enrolment status, physical infrastructure, student teacher ratio, textbook and drinking water facilities in rural schools. The study also looks in to the plan and strategy adopted by the school authorities for improving the progress of elementary education in rural area. The RTE Act provides a ripe platform to reach the unreached, with specific provision for all section of the children owing to social, cultural, economic, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factors. The act serves as building block to ensure that every child has his or her right to get quality elementary education.

Right to Education

The Right to education is a universal entitlement to education. This is recognized in the international convenient on economics, social and cultural rights as a human right that includes the right to free and compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education. It also includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to these access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve the quality of education. Universalization of education is widely adopted by India and many other countries. The passing of RTE Act 2009 in India was a historic moment for the children of India, the children will be guaranteed their right to elementary education. The right of children to free and compulsory education bill or right to education bill, which was passed by the Indian parliament on 4th August 2009, describes the modalities of the provision of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child, when the act came into force on 1st April 2010. The right to education Act seeks to give effect to the 86th Constitution Amendment Act. The Government school shall provide free education to all the children and the schools will be managed by school management committees (SMC). Private schools shall admit at least 25% of the children in their schools without any fee. The National Commission for Elementary Education shall be constituted to monitor all aspects of elementary education including quality. It is observed that our government has been making various rule and regulations for the improvement of education system. But the problem is that due to attitudinal problem and lack of commitment it becomes fruitless.

Right to Education Act in Odisha

The Article 21-A in the Constitution of India is to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. The RTE Act, 2009 passed by the Parliament in 2009 and came into effect in Odisha on April 01, 2010. Odisha is one of the leading States in India to initiate the process of implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 considering it as a landmark act in the history of education. The Department of School and Mass Education, being the nodal Department to implement the Act, has taken proactive steps towards its grounding at all crucial levels, while reaching out to as many stakeholders as possible. SSA is the principal vehicle for the implementation of the RTE Act in the state. The RTE Act, 2009 implemented in Odisha on 1st April, 2010 (OSEPA).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Right of children to free and compulsory Education Act 2009 came into effect on 1st April 2010 which makes provisions that all children between 6-14 years shall get free and compulsory education till the completion of elementary education. Eight years already has been passed in the implementation of RTE Act, but the implementation is not effective and satisfactory in terms of enrolment and retention in India. It is very difficult to implement this law especially in rural area. (CH. 2015). The fulfilment of right to education is an ongoing process and that requires governments, communities and individual to work together to recognise and overcome obstacle for effective implementation of RTE Act. (Thakur, 2014). Chaturvedi and Kuldeep (2015) revealed that “there is poor implementation and slackness on the part of govt. that hampers the proper progress on implementation of RTE Act 2009. There is urgent need of taking appropriate steps for inclusive education and organizing program for community awareness in order make school for all children. “There is lack of awareness among the members of the Panchayats, the officials of the GP and SDMC members. They are unaware about roles and responsibility of the local authority under the RTE Act” (Praveen & R. P, 2018). Supporting to this, Sethi and Muddgal (2017) revealed that “most of the teachers in rural areas are not the aware about the norms, standard and criteria of the RTE Act, and they were implementing based on their personal knowledge.” The study of Babu & Sekarayya, (2018) also shows that it is necessary to involve the Local Govt. especially Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in rural areas for universalisation of elementary education through implementation of RTE Act effectively. Singh (2016) revealed that “there are a number or challenges and issues such as lack of requisite infrastructure, lack of co-ordination between various implementing agencies and challenges to provide quality education, effort should be focused on qualitative improvement of the whole program by the govt. with full dedication and commitment. Singh M. (2017) reported that RTE Act was not implemented effectively in terms of pupil-teacher ratio, trained teachers and in providing quality education. Mandal (2021) revealed that “RTE Act is not implemented properly, Govt. should take immediate action to ensure all the basic facilities in the school like safe drinking water, library,

laboratory etc. for achieving universalisation of elementary education”. From the review of related literature of this study it can be concluded that RTE Act is not properly being implemented. Many schools have not fulfilled the criteria norms prescribed by RTE ACT 2009. Many studies have been conducted regarding issues, challenges, and problems in the implementation of RTE Act. Therefore, there is a felt need to study how far the RTE Act 2009 is effective in terms of enrolment of relevant age group children, age 6-14, accessibility, student teacher ratio and provision of infrastructure such as classroom, textbook, drinking water and toilet in elementary education in rural schools.

Research questions

1. What is the status of the enrollment of the children of relevant age group after the RTE ACT, 2009?
2. What is the status of student teacher ratio and infrastructure facilities in elementary schools of rural areas?
3. What are the problems faced by the school authority while giving enrollment to the children of the relevant age group?
4. What are the strategies adopted by school ensuring universal enrollment of children of relevant age group?

Objectives of the Study

- I. To study the status of the enrollment in elementary schools of rural areas.
- II. To study the status of student teacher ratio in elementary schools of rural areas.
- III. To study the status of infrastructure facilities in elementary schools of rural areas.
- IV. To study the problems faced by the school authority while giving enrollment to children of the relevant age group in rural areas.
- V. To examine the strategies adopted by school in ensuring universal enrollment of children of relevant age group in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at investigating the Effect of RTE Act 2009 in rural schools of Odisha. The elementary education system has been successful to some extent in urban areas. However, in terms of enrolment of relevant age group children, age 6-14, accessibility, student teacher ratio and provision of infrastructure such as classroom, textbook, drinking water and toilet in elementary education in rural schools. Hence the present study is stated as “Effect of RTE Act 2009 on Enrolment and Retention of Children in Rural Schools. For this research exploratory survey method was used. All the elementary schools of Bargarh District, Odisha was population and four purposively selected elementary schools of Bijepur block of Bargarh district. SMC members and headmaster of school were selected as the sample of study. The relevant data were collected though interview cum observation was adopted for this research study.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In present study techniques like content analysis and percentage analysis were used for processing collected data and draw relevant conclusions.

Objective I

Status of the enrolment in elementary schools of rural areas

Enrolment status in 2019 in Absolute Number

School	Eligible Population	Enrollment Population	Children Out of School
Charpali Sebashram School	220	214	6
Majhipali U.P.M.E School	310	300	10
T.Gandapali U.P.M.E.School	195	185	10
U.P School Badipali	200	195	5

It is indicated from above table that the enrolment status of elementary school of rural area in 2019, there were 4 schools. The enrolment ratio of elementary school in Charpali Sebashram school the eligible population was 220 and the enrolment population was 214 out of them 6 children were out of school. It was also found that in Majhipali U. P. M. E. school the eligible population was 310 and enrolment population was 300 out of them 10 children were out of school. Beside there was a smaller number of eligible populations i.e., 195 and 185 enrolment population out of them 10 children were out of school in T Gandapali U.P.M.E school. Also, in U.P. school of Badipali the eligible population was 200 and the enrolment population was 195 out of them 5 children were out of school. However, the enrolment status of elementary school of rural area in 2019, there was majority of students were enrolled in elementary education and less no. of students were out of school.

Objective II

Status of student teacher ratio in elementary schools of rural areas

Student Teacher Ratio

Name of the School	Students I-V	Teachers	Ratio	Students VI-VIII	Teachers VI-VIII	Ratio
Charpali Sebashram School	89	4	30:1	125	3	41:1
Majhipali U.P.M.E School	170	4	42:1	130	3	43:1
T.Gandapali U.P.M.E.School	85	5	17:1	100	3	33:1
U.P School Badipali	95	5	19:1	100	4	25:1

According to the criteria norms and standard prescribe by RTE Act 2009 the student teacher ratio should be 30:1 for primary class and 35:1 in upper primary or at least one teacher per class. But the table no. 4.4 reveals that in rural area the schools were not fulfilling the criteria of student teacher ratio as per the Act. In Charpali School there was insufficient teacher student ratio. 4 teachers were available for class I to V the teacher manage to conduct class I and II at a time. And in upper primary level student teacher ratio is 41:1. In Majhipali U.P.M.E. School student teacher ratio for primary school is 42:1 and in upper primary level the ratio is 43:1. In Gandapali U.G. M. E school the student teacher ratio was 17:1 and at least one teacher per class but in upper primary level there was insufficient teacher 3 teachers available for class VI to VIII, and they manage to engage the student by taking combined classes. Only Badipali U.P. School fulfils the criteria of student teacher ratio. Most of the school rural areas don't fulfil the criteria of at least one teacher for one classroom.

Objective III

Status of infrastructure facilities in elementary schools of rural areas

Infrastructure Status

Name of the School	No. of Class	Classroom
Charpali Sebashram School	I-VIII	6
Majhipali U.P.M.E School	I-VIII	9
T.Gandapali U.P.M.E.School	I-VIII	8
U.P School Badipali	I-VIII	7

Classroom: All the SMC members including headmaster of school viewed that there was insufficient classroom for holding classes. From class I-VIII, 8 classrooms are needed but in Charpali School there was 6 classrooms due to lack of classrooms they conduct classes I to II in single classroom. It was also observed that the classrooms were too small for holding the class. In Badipali School there were also lack classrooms for holding the classes. There were 7 classrooms for class I-VIII. At least one more classroom is required for holding the class. In Gandapali U.G.M.E School and Majhipali U.P.M.E School there were adequate number of classrooms, but the classrooms were too small and there was no enough space for seating.

Boundary wall: The headmaster and SMC member of the school viewed that they have well equipped boundary wall and through observation it was found that the schools were well equipped with boundary wall.

School Garden: The investigator observed that the school has the broader area of beautiful garden.

Kitchen shed: All the SMC members including headmaster of school viewed that they had a kitchen for mid-day meal and the investigator observed that the school had kitchen shed and there was water facility and the sanitation.

Drinking water: The Investigator observed that there was sufficient filter drinking water available for students.

Playground: The headmaster and SMC members of the school said that they have a playground. Whereas it was also observed by the investigator that the school has the Playground, but it was not adequate.

Toilet facility: The headmaster and SMC members viewed that there was toilet facility. Whereas the researcher observed that schools had separate toilet facility for both boys and girls and for the staff members.

Textbook: The investigator observed that the school provided sufficient textbooks to the students and it was also available for students. Comics and story book was also available. It was also accessible by the students.

Objective IV

Problems faced by the school authority

Physical infrastructure and other resources: As per the RTE Act 2009 the school building should include adequate number of classrooms, separate toilets for boys and girls, office and staff room, store room, a kitchen for cooking mid meal and have access to safe drinking water, a library, a play ground and barrier free access. The investigator found that in most of the school there was lack of infrastructure facility. Most of the school had insufficient classrooms and the classrooms were too small not enough space for holding the class there was seating arrangement problem.

Pupil teacher ratio: Pupil teacher ratio is another problem faced by the rural schools, the investigator observed that there was lack of teacher in rural school and lack of trained teacher also. The pupil teacher ratio was not as per the act and there was lack of at least one teacher for one classroom. In most the upper primary school of rural area pupil teacher ratio is very high as per the RTE Act it should be 35:1 but it was not there.

Accessibility of School: As per the Act children in classes' I-V a school shall be established within a walking distance of one km of the neighbourhood and children in classes VI-VIII a school shall be established within a walking distance of three k.ms of the neighbourhood but in the rural area some schools were at a distance place at the end of the village the schools were situated. For which the students face problem to go to the school at a distance place.

Children out of School: The SMC member viewed that in rural areas schools many children were out of school, they didn't go to school due to migration or they were engaging in farming or any other income generating work. Due to the financial problem of parents or unawareness they did not send their child to the school. It is barrier for universalisation of elementary education in rural area.

Objective V

Strategies adopted by school

To achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education in rural area different strategies were adopted by the school. These are untrained teachers were appointed for teacher absenteeism. It was observed that most of the rural schools don't fulfil the criteria of student teacher ratio as per the RTE Act. In rural areas schools they didn't have at least one teacher for one classroom for which to maintain the student teacher ratio the rural schools were appointing many untrained teachers to solve the problem.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study has its implication based on the findings of the study, the following issues and problems need to be addressed.

1. Out of school children should be enrolled in age-appropriate class so the universalization of elementary education can be achieved in rural area.
2. Professional teachers have to be recruited to fill in the gap of pupil teacher ratio at the elementary level. In most of the rural school pupil teacher ratio was not as per the RTE Act.
3. Residential facilities should be provided for those teachers and students who come from distance places.
4. Separate room for each class needs to be allocated provided the number of students should be accommodated. This needs to be done soon so that the teachers can give attention to each class.
5. Travelling or transportation facilities like school busses for children must be made for those who usually walk to school at a distance place, or the school should be established in their habitation that would be within the walking distance.
6. More awareness programme, SMC meeting and village meeting should be held in rural school for universalization of elementary education.

CONCLUSION

The Right to Education Act 2009 came into force in the year 2010 however the present study found there is a gap in its implementation of RTE Act in rural areas in terms of physical infrastructure of the school, student teacher ratio and establishment of neighbourhood school. It can be concluded that the RTE Act is neither effective nor properly implemented in rural area. Therefore, holistic study would be conducted to understand the implementation of the RTE Act in rural area. Beside both the State govt. and local bodies should take initiative to address the problems and issues and further implementation of the RTE Act in rural area. Side by side the study found there are many problems in elementary education after implementation of RTE Act in rural area due to lack physical infrastructure, student teacher ratio and neighbourhood school which is a big challenge for both the state govt. and stakeholder. Therefore, required physical resource, human resource and financial resource should be allocated to overcome the existing problems in elementary educational in rural area.

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