



# India's Education Policy of RTE Exemplary Analysis

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## Abstract:

*India has taken the responsibility of looking after the well-being of its citizens and has control over aspects such as infrastructure and economic development. The main goal was to provide free and compulsory education to all the citizens of the country as a part of its normative understanding of the idea of well-being. This paper attempts to analyze the Right to Education policy. It also discusses the importance and needs that necessitate this policy implementation, the implications that have been looked at along the lapses in the system that have arisen and been overlooked. The paper has taken up two case studies from the field in order to gain an actual understanding of its application, implementation, and problems faced during the implementation of the RTE policy.*

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**Keywords:** *Right to education, Policy*

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## 1. Introduction

India is regarded as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It is to be noted that over the last seventy-two years, post-independence, the role of the state has also changed towards its citizens and has somehow been in between a welfare state and a night-watchman state.

As the country got its independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, the role of the state was dominant and it construed the ideas of a somewhat welfare state. The state took the responsibility of looking after the well-being of its citizens and had control over most of the aspects like infrastructure and economic development. One of the priorities that have been given by the state is to provide free and compulsory education to all the citizens of the country as a part of its normative understanding of the idea of well-being. Although education as a right came as late as in 2009, the essence of focusing on human capital development was always in the bloodstream of the policies. This an attempt to mainly relate policies that surrounded and operated at the peripheries of development-related policies.

## 2. Exemplary analysis of the right to education (RTE)

This is an attempt to analyse Indian's education policy, mainly The Right to Education (Fundamental Right) the Right to Education Act, 2009, and various policies connected to it. Moreover, the effort is also made to identify the various loopholes and the lapses and flaws in the system, which affects the smooth and proper implementation of the policy.

### 2.1 Prologue of RTE

The base of the RTE policy comes from Article 21 A of the let constitution. The Act was implemented to mandate education and equitable quality of education in a formal school which stative certain essential norms and standards.

RTE policy is an example of a Strategic Type of Policy as it is concerned with strategic decisions that deal with large-scale policies and broad resource allocations. The RTE policy formulation is d through Balanced Approach Model or Eclectic Approach Model where the policy formulations and decision making are done by actors and individual leaders of respective fields together.

## **2.2 Need of RTE**

India as a country has faced various socio-economic issues. One of the major problems that have hindered growth and development is the high amount of illiteracy rate. With the implementation of the Right to Education Act, the government took an initiative to increase the enrolment of students who were not able to avail education previously. The objective of providing education as a right was to reduce the gap between the deprived classes and communities who had been denied their basic rights including education since time immemorial of young students, bridging the gender gap and providing substantial growth.

Education as a need for economic and social growth has been emphasized by various theorists, one of the main issues was raised in the Social Choice Theory by Condorcet. He argued that education is an implied right in the constitution. He further stated that there was a need to make it a right as it would increase the competence of the participants in society, leading to better and more reasonable outcomes. He further stated that the quality of inputs to the legislative process would be improved if the quality of education was improved. In context to India, India since independence understood the need for education, and the responsibility to provide it was taken up by the central government. It was realized that in order to have an enlightened citizenry the country had to have an educated population, especially the youth. The education of adults became imperative as ninety percent of citizens were not educated. It was assumed that the responsibility of the democracy lay with this citizenry, which wasn't educated; hence there was an urgent need for education. This resulted in the evolution of the concept of "social education" which emphasized literacy, health, hygiene, and economic improvement. It is thus established here, that there was a dire need to have a strong education policy since time immemorial.

## **2.3 Implications of RTE**

The passing of the Right to Education Act had various positive social and economic implications.

1. Firstly, it resulted in an increase in enrolment number to 96 percent since 2009, with girls making 56 percent of the new students between 2009 and 2013, The reason being that there are over a million government schools (1.4 million approximately in India) 98 percent of the habitations have access to primary education (class I-V) located within one kilometre and 92 percent to secondary education (class VI-VIII). Apart from proximity to schools, there are other reasons that have increased the enrolment in the few years.
2. The Act also has provisions where the state has to provide other amenities like uniforms, textbooks, and writing materials. This in the past has encouraged students to attend schools and has encouraged parents to send their children to school, rather than putting them to work and resorting.
3. The education policy also tends to look at reducing the gap between various communities by providing reservations for socially and economically deprived classes. In a recent Supreme Court judgment, it was held, that there would be a 25 percent reservation in all the schools in Delhi (also operational in 18 other states). The provision was applicable to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections of society. The purpose of this move was to introduce "social inclusiveness in primary education" in all schools, except unaided minority institutions.
4. Furthermore, the rules prescribed under the act made an explicit responsibility of the state to make sure that the students coming from the disadvantaged and the weaker sections are not discriminated against. Reservation in primary education has been a positive step, as India has had a history of discriminatory practices towards certain sections. The act, it still carries the essence of providing a need to free pre-schooling and education and urges the state governments to do so.
5. The Ministry of Women and Child Development along with various other ministries like the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E) have taken steps to progress and develop early childhood education. One of the initiatives which have been taken under the Integrated Child Development Scheme has shown a positive result in the form of the "Anganwadi" system. Even though the act does not prescribe it, it clearly gives heavy weightage and importance to it. The Anganwadi system, also known as the courtyard shelter was a government-sponsored child care development program made for children

between the ages of 0-6 The purpose of the scheme was to create a foundation for proper development (psychological and physical) of the child and to reduce the incidence of mortality and malnutrition and to provide pre-schooling education. The number of students who had enrolled in this pre-schooling education program had in fact increased from 16.7 million in 2001-02 to 35.3 million in 2012-13. In fact, the data on Anganwad also depict the reducing gender gap and the high enrolment of girl children. During the period 2005-06 to 2012-13, girls who 5.3 million while boys who received pre-school education increased by 5.5 million. Girls constituted 49 percent (12 million) of the total number of children who received pre. who received pre-school education increased by 44 percent during the period 2005-06 to 2012-13 while the number of who received pre-school education increased.

6. The midday meal schemes were started by the government provide nutritional valued meal to all the students enrolled the public schools. The purpose was to make sure that the students who are enrolled are able to attain basic amount of nutrition in their meals during school in order to sustain themselves and lead a healthy lifestyle which could further afford them a healthy growth pattern for future development. The scheme involved every child getting cooked food with a minimum of 300 calories of energy and 8-10 grams of protein per day (for a minimum of 200 days). The Right to Education Act also mandates all schools, within its ambit to have a kitchen. The act also ensures that no person availing the mid-day meal shall be discriminated against. Furthermore, the government has taken steps to ensure food safety and the testing of meals. The focus has been on the quality of meals. The state further issued some basic minimum standards of cleanliness of the kitchen, utensils, and food storage. Out of the total enrolment of 13.16 crore children, 10.03 crore children availed mid-day meals on an average basis in 11.50 lakh schools under the Mid-day meal scheme during 2015-16. This clearly shows how the state has taken the responsibility of making sure that its inhabitants receive not just education bar through the provided provisions of education.

### 3. Loopholes and lapses in the system

1. The problem of inequality of education takes place in four different stages. Inequality in Educational Opportunity (IEO), Inequality in Educational Attainments (IEA), Inequality in Occupational Attainments (IOA), and Inequality in Returns to Education (IRE). The first two are the causal factors and the latter ones are the resultant inequalities. While the education policy of India has certainly focused on reducing the inequalities in educational opportunities, it has failed to reduce the other three.
2. The main predicament with education in India is with the standard that has been provided. Teaching methods are quite often dominated by mindless rote learning, including repetition typically without comprehension. According to Amartya Sen, the basic problem that exists in the education setup of the country is that importance is given to higher education and the neglect of primary education has been "intolerably large". This has been the sole reason for not being able to develop a proper base that would help students cope with higher education standards. It thus leads to not giving the expected outcomes. Further students, who did not receive sufficient education and failed to cope up, end up dropping out. In fact, the dropout rates in government schools were as high as 50.4 percent in (2012-2013) and 47.4 percent retention of education, the high dropout rates have 55times. out after the completion of 8" grade. This is mostly noticed in the rural areas where the societal norms are such which compels the girl child to drop out in order to get them married Furthermore, after receiving basic education parents from poor backgrounds feel that the students do not need further education and put them to child labor. It is noticed that "father's educational level has a significant impact on child's education, and the impact is almost equal among both the backward and the non-backward castes". Moreover, the dropout rate for students coming from reserved categories is more, as compared to general categories. This shows the inequality between various communities while availing education. Due to this disparity, various communities are bound to fail in developing themselves. The reason that the dropout rates are high among SCs, STs, and OBCS is that most of them come from the low economic background. The general perception

is that even though the government provides for free education and provides financial assistance, it is not equivalent to earnings forgone or urban-oriented high-cost education.

3. Another problem in the education policy is inequality in educational attainments, which is because of the lack of teachers or lack of "good teachers" in school. The government school teachers are paid well, however, that has led to cost cuts which have led to a reduction in recruitment of teachers who were not well qualified and were untrained. This reduces the standard of education and in turn, restricts the opportunities of these students to avail jobs. The puosad who has attained education from a government school would be at a disadvantage as compared to a private school and would thus face inequality in occupational attainment.
4. Furthermore, the 25 % reservation policy in all private schools for students coming from socially and educationally backward classes has created a debate with a strong dissent from the policymakers and private school owners. The repercussion of the move is said to be disastrous as it would create financial constraints on the schools or create financial burdens on the parents sending their children to private schools. The schools in order to recover their costs would either increase the fees or cut down the curriculum or their quality of teachers. This would thus affect the quality of education that the students in the private sector were receiving, which is supposedly better than government-sponsored.
5. The midday meal scheme has seen certain flaws too in its implementation. A total of 306 complaints have been received on misappropriation, poor quality, irregularities under Mid-Day Meal Scheme from 2013 to August 2016. It was observed that "too many layers of government were involved in the scheme, resulting in poor information, coordination and monitoring". This resulted in causing various hazards including situations where there was uncooked food served to cause death. This resulted in distrust over the midday meal scheme. The scheme was one of the reasons that encouraged students to come to school. Lapses and mismanagement of the scheme removed trust over it. There have also been cases of financial mismanagement of funds for the midday meal scheme. Various schools were not able to avail the midday meals scheme because of this. Furthermore, there have been complaints about schools not meal. These kinds of mishaps could create malnutri with the end result being inequality of educational attainment and opportunities.
6. One of the biggest loopholes in the Right to Education Agt the automatic promotion of students from one class another. There is no formal form of examination which mandatory to clear in order to reach the next grade, The distorts the whole idea of learning outcomes. Even though there would be certain prescribed learning outcomes for every course but there wouldn't be an assessment to analyze the learning outcomes. This is also one of the reasons for the high number of dropouts as students are unable to cope up with assessments and tend to fail.
7. Another issue with the Act while its implementation is that the schools usually don't follow the student-teacher ratio. The prescribed student-teacher ratio is 30:1. However, the government schools usually have a high student-teacher ratio ranging up to 60:1. This also hampers the quality of education and affects outcomes.

#### **4. Case studies from the field: the Haryana story**

A small glimpse of how the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act is implemented on the ground level is illustrated here. It gives a narrative of how government schools in Haryana have construed the education policy of India, its objectives, and outcomes. The government schools in this part of India are governed by Haryana rules of the Right to Education Act, 2009 (State act) as well as the Central Act of the country. It follows the same rules and regulations and gives weightage to schemes like mid-day meals and early childhood care.

##### **4.1 Case study 1: Jatheri village, Sonipat**

The first case study is that of a government school located in Jatheri Village, Sonipat. Located approximately 20 kilometres from the national capital, Jatheri gets electricity for not more than 12 hours a day. The village has two schools: primary (nursery-class IV) and secondary (V-X) having a

total strength of 468 students. On a first glance, the school has sufficient infrastructure, which includes a classroom of specific dimensions mentioned in the Act, a kitchen, a playing ground, washrooms, etc. However, on closer analysis, the flaws and non-compliances became visible. Starting with the Infrastructure, the classrooms were not sufficient for the number of students enrolled. The washrooms were in unhygienic conditions and the school was surrounded by waste and dump. There was no medical aid and no first aid, It was a clear violation of prerequisites mentioned in Appendix 2 of the Haryana rules and Regulations.

Furthermore, the amenities promised under the act (uniforms, stationery, books) were not sufficiently provided. A student was provided with two uniforms and three pencils for a whole year. The books were usually delivered late which denied the students from availing all the benefits of education. The kitchen was under-stocked and there weren't many utensils for all the students. Another observation that was made was that these students got their own food. When asked as to why they had packed lunches from home when meals were being provided by the school, the students stated that they "felt hungry even after the meals". Thus, the food served under the midday meal was not sufficient in quantity.

The implementation of any policy requires the strong support of government officials who are working at the grass-root level. In the present case, while interviewing the school administration, it was found that the block officer in charge of implementing the policy was "visiting regularly but was not of much help".

The school did not have a computer teacher for over a year even though they had a computer lab. The student-teacher ratio was 50:1(approximate)instead of 30:1 and most teachers did not come regularly. Also, it was seen that the school authorities themselves, as well as government officials, were not clear about the objectives of the policy which resulted in unsuccessful implementation.

#### ***4.2 Case study 2: Chettri village, Sonipat***

The second case study is based in Chettri village, Sonipat. This village was near Jatheri, however lacked the basic minimal requirements like electricity (available only two hours a day) and clean water supply. There was one school (till class X) and an Anganwadi located in the village. The Anganwadis only had eight students, and the authorities failed to keep a proper record of the students. These Anganwadis did not have the proper infrastructure or caretakers to provide early childhood care and education.

Furthermore, the school was lacking proper infrastructures like sufficient classrooms and hygienic toilets.

Apart from that, four major problems that were noted were lack of teacher, beating up of students, gender divide, and merging of various grades.

According to the Act, if a school does not have a teacher for a compulsory course, it was the responsibility of the government to provide a replacement teacher within sufficient time The school did not have a science teacher for a period of nine months. This deprived the students to study a subject so important that formed the basics for higher education. The absence of a teacher at such a basic level would create inequality in educational opportunity, inequality in educational attainments, inequality in occupational attainments, and inequality in returns to education. It destroys the objective of the act which mandates everyone to attain education and grow towards an equal society.

Our society aspires to grow towards a system where males and females are treated equally. One of the main objectives of the act is to bridge the gender gap. However, the school visited in the second case study depicted the contrary. It was observed that seating arrangements in the classrooms were gender-

based. Males were not allowed to sit with females. Any form of social contact between the boys and girls was discouraged. This would have resulted in creating a hostile environment between males and females as it would have promoted unhealthy competition and insufficient social interactions. Here again, one of the objectives of the act was defeated.

As mentioned before, according to Amartya Sen, the "low standard of education" and the "lack of decent primary education" is the reason why India has failed to progress. One of the instances were noticed in this case study, where the third, fourth, and fifth grade were merged as one class and were taught the same syllabus. This creates low standards and an unclear base for higher classes and hampers the growth of the student.

Another observation noted was that the students were subjected to physical violence. While interviewing the students, it was brought up those students were often "beaten up with sticks" and this discouraged the students to attend school regularly. This again went against the objective of the act, which aimed at universal retention.

## 5. Conclusion

Although the recipients of this policy are being provided with our India's education policy still has a long way to go. The problem just lies with the implementation of the policies; it also lies with the recipients. Kenneth Arrow talked about the idea of "information asymmetry. He defines information limitation as a form of distortion which makes the utility metric an insufficient criterion to measure well-being. His impossibility theorem highlighted the need for having sufficient information for making the social choice. India's education policy somehow lacks this in its recipients. There is a dire need to educate the recipients about their "right to education". The education policy of India does not lack anything. It satisfies all the objectives that any education policy would want to achieve and matches global standards. The unsuccessful outcomes represent an ugly depiction of its faulty implementation.

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