



RIGHT TO EDUCATION

IMPACT 2010 - 2011

**A SHORT REPORT BY
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**Bachpan
Bachao
Andolan**

How effective has RTE Act been in 1 year?

Since it has been a year of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act henceforth) coming into effect, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) conducted a study in 251 schools across 33 districts and 146 Gram Panchayats across 9 states namely Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Some of the key findings:

- 24% of the children drop-out from school
- Education is not yet completely free - 20% schools charge admission fee, 42% schools charge money for study material
- Only textbooks are provided in 37% of schools, no free notebooks or uniforms or bags
- Admission not given at all times of the year in 30% of the schools
- No School Management Committees in 50% of the schools

Kailash Satyarthi, the founder of BBA said, "Government has utterly failed to address the children of hardest to reach categories which include bonded and child labourers, victims of trafficking, child prostitution and pornography, forced beggary, street children. Children with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, children from nomadic tribes, displaced and migrant families and those who live in abject poverty are also excluded from education." He said that exclusion of children from education is in direct relation to social, cultural and economic exclusion. He further said that education of such children must be taken care through a coordinated effort of various ministries and agencies because through issues go beyond the reach of education sector alone.

Key Recommendations:

- An honest assessment of the magnitude of out of school children needs to be done.
- Government should give more thrust to spreading awareness of the RTE Act. State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs), School Management Committees (SMCs), model rules in all states should be formed.
- 6% of budget should be allocated at both central and state levels
- Privatisation and commercialization of education should be checked. These are attributing to the fall in the quality of education in Government schools as their willingness dwindles. Simultaneously, Government schools should also give thrust to quality.
- Inclusion and retention are important for groups that are excluded socially, culturally, and economically. Multi stake-holder partnerships must be fostered at the village level for the inclusion and retention of children.
- Child labour is the biggest obstacle to fulfilling the RTE Act. Proactive steps should be taken to eliminate child labour. There needs to be joint monitoring of child labourers by Labour and Education departments.

Background

1 April 2010 heralded a new era for the children of this country, when the RTE Act came into effect. As we approach the first anniversary of this historic Act, an alarming statistic has come to the fore. As per the Ministry of Human Resources Development, there is a dip in the enrolment in schools by 2.6 million children since 2007. It is an indication that the hardest to reach children have been squeezed out or missed out of in the system of education due to one of the various reasons- child labour, child trafficking, street children, homeless children, etc. Bringing them to school needs double the effort- to remove them from situations of exploitation, and then bringing them and keeping them in the classrooms. Opening of new schools and having more teachers alone cannot address this.

BBA conducted Public Hearings on Education among 30,240 people in 42 districts of 9 states in September 2010, to find out how aware are people from the remote and not so remote corners of India, about the RTE Act and its various provisions. The findings were alarming- even after six months of the RTE coming into effect, only 16% of the people were aware of it. The lack of awareness among the Panchayat officials was also alarming. Only 33% of the children had access to free education. 60% of the children receive textbooks. Only 60% of the children had access to drinking water. Only 33% of the children had access to separate toilets for boys and girls.

On the eve of the first anniversary of the RTE Act, BBA revisited these areas and conducted another study, this time with Government schools. Now that we knew the extent of awareness among people about the RTE Act, it was only logical to see how RTE ready Government schools are. Have they made the provisions that the RTE Act mentions? Are study materials being given to the children? Is fee charged in the schools? Do they accept admissions round the year? These and several such parameters were checked upon in 251 government schools in 33 districts and 146 Gram Panchayats across 9 states namely Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

In the 251 Government schools that were a part of this study, a questionnaire was administered to teachers. The attendance of the children as present in the attendance registers was corroborated with the teachers too. To ensure that the responses were accurate to reflect the current situation, some questions were asked in different forms. What comes across is an interesting amalgam of political promises, laws and factual circumstances.

For example of Badarpur Khadar, a 250 year old village in Delhi had no electricity and no school when Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) conducted a public hearing on education in September, 2010. Subsequently, electricity connection was provided immediately after the issue was highlighted through media. Even a school was sanctioned and grants allocated. There is no building yet and no education yet for children there. Out of six colonies where Public Hearings were held in Delhi, four didn't have schools. The situation is the same even now. If this is the case in the capital city, one can understand the plight in other areas.

How RTE ready are schools?

- **24% of the children drop-out from school**

Out of a total of 43,786 students in these 251 schools, 9,138 or 21% of the children were newly enrolled children. 24% of the children have dropped out of school. 30% of the school children in UP and 25% in Bihar have dropped out of school.

- **Education still has hidden costs- 20% schools charge fee during admission, 40% schools charge money for study material**

While almost 97% of the schools in all the five states claim that free and compulsory education is provided, 1/4th of the schools in UP, MP and Bihar still charge tuition fee. In contrast, only 3% schools in Rajasthan and Jharkhand charge fee.

- **Only textbooks are provided in 37% of schools, no free notebooks, uniforms or bags**

None of the states provides all the study material and accessories for free. 75% of the schools in Jharkhand provide only textbooks books but no notebooks or uniform or bag. 66% schools in Rajasthan and 33% in UP provide only textbooks. 80% of the schools in Bihar don't provide any study material, not even textbooks. As per the RTE Act, the schools should provide free textbooks, free notebooks, free uniform and bag for all the children. What is interesting to note is that the Public Hearings too had highlighted that while free textbooks are available, free notebooks aren't available. This situation still prevails as per this study.

- **30% schools don't allow admission at all times of the year**

As per the Act, children can not only gain admission at any time of the year but that they need not submit any identity proof during admission. Yet, about 1/4th of the schools in Bihar and MP, and 1/5th of the schools in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh still require identity proof at the time of admission.

In addition, more than 50% of the schools in Bihar, 31% of the schools in UP, 27% in MP and 20% schools in Rajasthan don't allow admission at any time of the year. Jharkhand fares better with 88% of schools allowing both- admission at any time of the year and without identity proof.

- **16% of schools don't have drinking water facility, 33% no separate toilets**

Hygiene factors continue to be a problem in the states. Drinking water is not available in 1/2 the schools in Jharkhand, 1/5th of schools in Bihar, 1/10th of the schools in Rajasthan, MP and UP. During Public Hearings, 2/5th children in Rajasthan and 1/2 the children in UP had said that they did not have access to drinking water. Assuming a proportionate distribution of children within schools, one can draw a rough comparison that the situation has improved in these two states.

3/4th of the schools in Jharkhand, 2/3rd of the schools in Bihar and 1/2 the schools in Rajasthan and 1/4th of the schools in MP don't have separate toilet facility for both boys and girls. UP fares better on this count with almost 9 out of 10 schools having separate toilets for boys and girls. This more or less tallies with the data from public hearings- 2/3rd children from Bihar had said that they did not have access to toilets. The proportion in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and UP are 1/6th children, 2/5th children and 1/3rd children having access to separate toilet facility.

- **The state of mid-day meal**

Mid-day meal which brought out the most responses during public hearings fared better during this round of study in schools. Only 10% of the schools in Bihar reported not providing mid-day meal in school. All the schools in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and UP reported providing mid-day meal to the children. The findings need to be taken with a pinch of salt, as the respondents were all teachers. This is more so when the surveys carried out by the Supreme Court Commissioners has also raised several pertinent questions like are children getting stipulated amounts for 200 days? They also said that there is heavy mismanagement in the mid-day meal with a patchy, irregular delivery at the ground level.

- **No School Management Committees in 50% of the schools**

School Management Committees (SMCs) are entrusted with the duty of preparing the school development plan, monitor the working of the school and monitor the utilisation of the funds for the school. Since the SMCs are to be formed with the parents and local authorities, i.e. Panchayats, SMCs are at the intersections of the Village Education Committees (VECs) and parent-teacher bodies.

68% of the schools in Bihar don't have SMCs, this is validated by the fact that parent teacher meetings PTMs don't take place in 57% of the schools and 70% of the villages don't have VECs. UP is an interesting case, where SMCs are present in 2/3rd of the schools but PTMs take place only in 1/10th of the schools, while VECs are present in 1/3rd of the villages here. Rajasthan has an opposite trend. While SMCs are formed in all schools, PTMs don't take place in 70% of the schools and 66% of the villages don't have VECs. 90% of the schools in Jharkhand have SMCs and almost all schools have PTM meetings regularly. VECs are also formed in these villages. 73% of the schools in MP don't have SMCs though only 10% schools don't have regular PTMs while 18% villages don't have VECs.

It is pertinent here to mention about State Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs) as they are responsible for ensuring the proper implementation of the RTE. SCPCRs have been constituted in only 7 states- Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. They need to be formed in all the states to ensure speedy implementation of the RTE.



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