

Impact of The Right of Children To Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 : A Case Study of Rural Areas Of Ghazipur District



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ABSTRACT

Ghazipur is the one of the districts in Uttar Pradesh. As per the census 2011, Ghazipur has 71.78% literacy rate. In spite of the slow development that the district has had if we look at the census reports we see that the literacy rate of Ghazipur is fair enough. But that is about education provided by the public and private players. How about public education? How about the education, particularly in the rural areas of the District? Has The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 been able to achieve its goals in the district? Has it been implemented well? Has it brought about changes? These are a few questions that I have tried to answer in this paper.

Keywords : Impact, Right, Children, Free, Compulsory, Education, Act 2009, Ghazipur District.

I. INTRODUCTION

'Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education'

- Franklin D Roosevelt.

Education is a human right. Education is essential for human emancipation and social development. It contributes to better health, higher productivity, greater income, human freedom, capability and esteemed living, increased participation in community life. ¹

Social justice and equality by themselves are a strong argument for providing basic education for all. It is an established fact that the basic education improves the level of human wellbeing especially with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality, and nutritional status of children etc. Studies have shown that universal basic education significantly contributes to economic growth.²

In India regarding education, the constitution by 86th Amendment Act, 2002 has inserted article 21A, which provides that –

*"The state should provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age 6 to 14 years in such manner as the State may by law, determine."*³

¹Literacy and Their Differential in West Bengal- Kalyan Sundar.

²Right to Education- Geeta Rani.

³The Constitution of India- P.M. Bakshi.

Until 2002 the right to education was only a Directive Principle of State Policies. However, this amendment makes it a fundamental right. The corresponding provision in Part IV, Directive Principles of State policy, namely article 45 also been amended under the constitution 86th Amendment Act, 2002.

The right of a child should not be restricted only to free and compulsory education, but it should be extended to having quality education without discrimination on the ground of child's economic, social and cultural background. The right of child to free and compulsory education has now become a part of the fundamental rights under Article 21A of the constitution. The total indifference of the governmental authorities is leading to the violation of the fundamental rights to the children. Right to development is also considered to be a basic human right.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act is a universal entitlement to education. According to international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, the RTE includes right to free, compulsory primary education for all. The RTE includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individual who have not completed primary education.

:The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act provides

- The cost which prevents a child from accessing school will be borne by the state which shall have responsibility of enrolling as well as ensuring attendance and completion of years of schooling.
- No child should be denied admission for the want of the documents.
- No child shall be turned away if the admission cycle in school is over and no child should be asked to take admission test.

- Children with disability will also be educated in mainstream of the school.
- The act says that schools should be within the radius of 1-3 km from where the child lives.
- All government aided schools have to reserve 25% of their seats for students from economically weak sections (EWS). Private schools that are not government aided also have to reserve 25% of their seats in class 1 for EWS students, the government will compensate them.
- The act further provides that all schools will have to prescribe to the norms and standards laid out in the act and no school that doesn't fulfil these standards within three years will be allowed to function.
- The norms and standards of the teaching qualifications and training are also laid down in the act.
- Financial burden will be shared between state and central government.

Thus, 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.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is:

- To find out the impact of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 on rural schools in Ghazipur District in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- To find out the facilities provided for better education,
- To know if the provisions under this Act are implemented or not
- To examine the role of Government in the implementation of RTE, 2009.
- To know the problems of education in rural Ghazipur.
- To find out best possible remedies to cope out those problems.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this project I have used both primary and secondary data. The primary source was the field area that I visited the rural areas of Ghazipur district in the state of Uttar Pradesh. I have also received data from government officials with the help of informal interview. The secondary sources that I have used are from the various journals, books, websites, Government notices, census report, other institutional reports and research papers.

Case Study

Analysing the literacy rate of various districts in Uttar Pradesh, Ghazipur ranks among the top literate districts. Average literacy rate of Ghazipur in 2011 was 71.77 compared to 59.55 of 2001. This is also above the state literacy rate of 69.72%. If we look at it gender wise then, male and female literacy were 82.80 and 60.26 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 74.85 and 44.04 in Ghazipur District. Total literate in Ghazipur District were 2,197,549 of which male and female were 1,293,553 and 903,996 respectively. Rural Ghazipur has 1952 Primary schools, 801 upper primary schools, making a total of 2,753 schools in rural Ghazipur.

Analysing various research, articles, survey and also the interviews conducted these are a few findings. To begin with the actual status of Education in rural Ghazipur and the impact of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education I would like to begin with the socio-economic status of Ghazipur District. Every study and every official I interviewed said that the main problem of the status of the education system is the poor status of the society and economy of the district as a whole.

Unemployment problem has led huge number of Ghazipur residents' migration to bigger cities like Delhi, Kolkata and even abroad. This according to the various principals leads to the dropout of children from their schools. When their parents

migrate to better cities in search of better living and job they also leave school and go with their parents. People who are well off send their children to private schools and boarding schools, but the labour class people have but no option to move away with their children.

Teachers at Sasana Primary school, Bechu Ram also said that how the children often leave and come to school on their own will. Because of the provision of no admission test children often take it for granted. They talked about how a Labour's son kept going to and for from Sasana and his native place with his parents, often missing classes.

Another social problem is the children often being orphaned because of their mother or father going for a remarriage which often leaves them with their grandparents or cousins who do not give proper guidance at home. The principal of Bal Bharti Higher Secondary Schools says that in spite of them having qualified teachers it is a difficult task to teach children because of the lack of guidance at home.

Selling and drinking of liquor has been one of the social evils that has been destroying the youth in rural Ghazipur says the principal. With no conducive environment for studies children often fail but again due to no detention policy of RTE they get promoted to another higher class.

With teachers' recruitment lying stagnant how can an education system run effectively. There are teachers who are on contract basis and some volunteers who come to teach. This has created a vacuum and one of the major problems in almost every school.

With the coming of RTE not much has changed in the education system. In fact, looking at the data it shows that there has been a gradual decline in the admission rate to public schools in spite of the no admission and screening test, the principals grieved

about how pre RTE there used to be so many students seeking admission that they conducted screening test, today the number of students is such that no screening is required. In primary schools the admission per year is just up to 10 children.

Though the funds for uniform, books and mid-day meal do come in, it is often delayed by higher authorities. The funds for uniform often come at the end of academic session which makes little sense. There are however little fund given by the government when it comes to infrastructure. Therefore, leaving the infrastructure in a bad state. It is due to the personal initiation of the principals and teachers that they have good enough classrooms for study. A teacher in primary school shows me how they were given one book rack which was almost falling.

Talking about gender equality in schools it has been seen that there are equal number of male and female teachers but the number of female students were often higher in the schools compared to male. This the principal explains the mindset people for love of male child, where people think that sending a boy to school private school is better and sending a girl to public school which is free of cost seems like a better idea.

Of course, private schools have often been a threat especially in the past decade. Parents no matter how economically weak they maybe if they have a will to educate their child, they do everything to send them to a private school which provides better facilities and greater exposure.

When I talked about RTE to parents, there was little knowledge about it among them. Principal of Rabindranath Higher Secondary School says that, they had a parents' gathering after the coming of RTE in which they were explained about the Act. However, that was one time gathering and did not yield much. Schools often have parents' teacher

meetings but the initiation on the guardians' part is scanty. There is little cooperation from the side of the guardian. Often they do not make it for the meeting or send someone like a young sister or aged grandmother who hardly understands the curriculum.

When asked about the inspection, there are hardly any inspections on part of the government about the running condition of the schools. The implementation and monitoring of RTE is very few. In fact, in some cases they did not even have inspectors due to vacancy in the post. Schools often are in rural areas where cars do not reach up to the school so teachers grieved about inspectors doing the rounds just in schools on the wayside and do not bother to come to the interiors.

The provision about 2 schools not being within the distance of 1km was not followed in some areas. Also some children walk for almost 45mins every day to get to school. This is primarily because of lack of transport facility. They do not attend the nearest primary schools even if available because of the quality of teaching.

Majority of primary schools did not have electricity and little had computer facilities. Parents' main demand was for electricity and the facility of computer. Apart from that, they are quite happy about the running of the school and since most of the students are first time learners their parents lack knowledge. However, the teachers say that the younger parents at least have minimum education, so they help children at home, send them neatly to school and encourage their education.

Most of them had proper functioning toilets, separate for boys and girls, drinking water facility. Kitchen shed of almost all the schools were good and running. However, children wanted variety in food. Some also had library or some sort of extra reading facility but again the books were in dilapidated state.

Teacher absenteeism was not a problem but due to vacancies a teacher often has to take several classes.

Before ending this, I would like to appreciate some of the dedicated work of the teachers and principals in a few schools. In spite of what the status of the district is like, the lack of funds, the delay in funds, lack of proper infrastructure, the socio-economic condition of the area, they have left no stone unturned to educate and give quality education to their pupil. While in some school's children of class 6 could not read well in some schools they were fluent with their vernacular as well as English Language. The teachers in few primary schools even had rhymes in their smart phones which they taught to the children. Teachers are often qualified and trained and had various non-traditional methods of teaching. Parents were happy about changes in the school, their children being taught lessons like in nursery school and the discipline they learn.

IV. CONCLUSION

The above findings show the status of education in rural areas in Ghazipur. Though many would want to send their children to a public school because of the facilities provided and the free of cost education, the majority would still prefer to send them to a private school if they have the means. This, primarily is because the children get a better exposure at nursery schools, has better infrastructure, better facilities like sports, computer, etc.

Also we see that Ghazipur and its rural areas largely suffer from socio economic problems where the parents are not encouraging enough towards their candidates. The economic condition of the family has had a very negative impact on the education system in the Ghazipur district. We can say that the public education has become stagnant or come to a halt if not declined.

Right to Free and Compulsory education of course has had its own positive impact as well. Like giving mid-day meal to children has encouraged and helped children learn better. An Ex-Principal of a Higher Secondary narrated a story of how children often came to school without having a meal or just a yam or so. It has also helped girls receive education and helped empower them to greater extent.

Due to no detention policy of RTE, the rate of dropouts has been less but this does not mean we have a literate citizen. What is often seen is a child reading in class eight is unable to read lessons from a book from class five syllabus. Therefore we should not go by literally by the quantity or the number of pupils getting enrolled or passing out from a public school. What should be more emphasised upon is the quality of education received and how much literate that child actually is in the real sense.

One of the major problems in Ghazipur was the migration of the students along with their parents for a better living to bigger cities. So to tackle this problem hostel facilities could be provided at a minimal rate to these students.

Apart from the numerical data what is important is the assessment of the quality of the education received by children. Education should not be only in numbers and data or else we will fail the objective of achieving 100% literacy rate or at least the primary education.

Recruitment of trained teachers, more fund for infrastructure, transport facilities, proper monitoring of the implementation of various government programmes and schemes, restoration of the Panchayati Raj system, inspection of schools and general awareness of education will go a long way in making Ghazipur a truly and a 100% literate district in the real sense.

Therefore, we must know that basic education is catalyst to social change. An illiterate person is certainly less equipped to take part whether successfully in modern economy or political activities. Basic education is widely perceived by members of socially and economically disadvantaged groups of people as the most promising means of upward mobility. An educated person is better equipped to overcome the marginalization in a modern society and it is in this sense education is considered as an instrument of empowerment. RTE act is source of national pride and offers unprecedented opportunities. It is challenge but with resources and political will, it is not an impossible task.

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