

INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT AND ITS PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract: The goal of the current research is to determine how secondary school teachers feel about the "Right to Education Act, 2009" (RTE Act, 2009) and how feasible it is, in their opinion, to apply the different provisions of this act in the context of classroom instruction. In the North-24-Parganas district of West Bengal, this research was carried out. For this study, the researcher used the descriptive survey methodology. 150 teachers from 30 (thirty) chosen secondary schools in the North-24-parganas area of West Bengal make up the sample. The sample was chosen using the purposeful sampling approach. To assess teachers' attitudes on the Right to Education Act of 2009 and its actual implementation in educational settings, the researcher created a questionnaire on her own. The researcher used a straightforward percentage approach to assess the data item by item. The overall findings show that secondary school teachers' attitudes varied depending on the issue. Through the current research, it is clear that Secondary School Teachers have expressed their opinions on a few issues connected to the RTE Act, 2009, as well as on a few issues related to the Act that they do not support.

KEYWORDS: Teachers' views, Right to Education, RTE Act (2009), Basic Provisions, Practical Implementation, School Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

With 1.21 billion inhabitants, India is the most populous democracy on the planet (Census Report of India, 2011). However, educational disparity affects 42.1% of the population, making it one of the country's most pressing issues (United Nations Development Programme - UNDP, 2014). That's why when compared to other industrialized nations like the United States, Japan, and China, India ranks quite low on the Human Development Index (HDI), at number 135 out of a possible 169. (UNDP, 2014).[1] India has been independent for 68 years, yet the country has still failed to give even a basic education to all of its citizens. Only 74.04% of Indians are literate, according to the 2011 Indian Census. Almost 26.1% of Indians are still unable to read or write. Against this backdrop, the Indian government's adoption of the Right to Education Act (2009) is a historically important endeavor that has already begun to yield results in the Indian education system as of April 1, 2010.[2]

Historical Background:

Article 45 of the newly drafted Constitution mandated that within 10 years of the Constitution's inception, the state would make education up to the age of fourteen free and mandatory for all children. This provision was added after independence. Article 21A (Part III) of the 86th Amendment Act (2000) aims to establish a Fundamental Right to Education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14, making school attendance both free and mandatory.[3] In addition, the new article 21 A of the constitution mandates that parents and legal guardians must provide their children access to education. A first draft of the bill envisioned in the aforementioned article, the Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill, 2003, was drafted and uploaded on this website in October 2003, seeking comments and recommendations from the general public. After receiving feedback on this version of the bill in 2004, revisions were made and a new version of the bill was dubbed the Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2004. The 'Right to Education' Bill was written in June 2005 by the CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) committee and presented to the Ministry of HRD. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) sent the document to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, who presides over the NAC. The bill was sent to the Prime Minister of India by the National Advisory Committee (NAC). Bill was shot down by finance and planning commissions due to insufficient funding and the fact that it would have served as a model for states to follow in drafting their own implementation plans (Post- 86th amendment, States had already cited lack of funds at State level).[4]

Basic Provisions made in the RTE Act (2009):

The Indian government passed the "Right to Education Act" in 2009, which mandates a free and compulsory elementary education for all children in the country between the ages of 6 and 14 by outlining a number of foundational policies and practices. Following are some of the most fundamental requirements of the RTE Act of 2009:

1. Article 21A, which was included in the 86th Amendment in December 2002, is one of the essential rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. As of April 1, 2010, the Act's provisions were fully operational.[5]

2. Titled "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009," it mandates free and mandatory education for all children.
3. The whole country of India, except the state of Jammu and Kashmir, would be covered.
4. Class I through Class VIII students (ages 6 to 14) are mandated by law to attend school for free.
5. The federal government and the state governments will equally contribute to the costs and other requirements.
6. Children under the age of fourteen who live within a certain area's jurisdiction are tracked by the local authority, which is responsible for making sure they all enroll in, attend, and graduate from primary school.[6]
7. Children from migrant families must be accepted by the local government.
8. Every parent or legal guardian is responsible for enrolling their kid in, or arranging for enrollment for, the local primary school.
9. At the time of admission to Class-I, private school administrations must accept at least 25 percent of their student body from the area's economically weaker sections (EWS), to whom they must thereafter give free and mandatory primary education all the way through graduation.
10. There must be no capitation fee or screening method for admission to elementary school, and no kid who is otherwise eligible for admission may be refused entry.
11. No student enrolled in a school may be demoted or expelled until he or she has completed the primary school level.
12. No child must be exposed to any kind of physical or psychological abuse.
13. A teacher is expected to have a regular schedule at school and to finish all assignments within the allotted time.
14. Classes one through five will have a 30:1 student-teacher ratio, while classes six through eight will have a 35:1 ratio.
15. A school may not have more than a ten percent vacancy rate among its teaching staff.
16. Except for activities associated with the decennial population census, disaster relief, and general election, no educator may be used for any purpose other than teaching.
17. No educator may provide private lessons or participate in any kind of independent tutoring.
18. Before finishing primary school, no kid should be obliged to take any Board examination.
19. Class I through V must have a minimum of 200 working days or 800 instructional hours each academic year, whereas Classes VI through VIII shall have a minimum of 200 working days or 1000 instructional hours per academic year.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shruti Kant Pandey (2013) has finished a research titled "An exploratory study on the apprehensions and implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009" According to the results, the RTE Act of 2009 is not being properly implemented due to inadequate implementation, laziness on the part of numerous governments and their ministries, and unhappiness within a small subset of our community.[7]

Sarika Malik & et al. (2013) have studied "Awareness of Right to Education Act among Prospective Teachers." The research found that the ratio of urban to rural prospective instructors is large, indicating the need to raise understanding of RTE, which in turn would assist to raise student awareness of the concept.[8]

Ajay. M. Gadam (2013) researchers looked at teachers' knowledge of their obligations under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. The research shows that teachers' levels of familiarity with their responsibilities under the RTE Act, 2009 vary greatly depending on how long they've been in the profession.[9]

Fathima Jaseena (2011) has compiled research titled "Right to Education-A Study on the Awareness of M.Ed Trainees." The research shows that male M.Ed students are more knowledgeable with the Right to Education Act, 2009 than their female counterparts. In addition, the M.Ed College administration has no bearing on students' familiarity with the Right to Education Act of 2009.[10]

Niradhar Dey & Binod Beck (2011) teachers' perspectives on the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 :Teachers perception". The survey found that senior educators generally had the least knowledge of the RTE Act of 2009. Senior faculty members were uninterested in learning the Act by memory and then making physical copies. There was a little improvement in performance among younger instructors compared to their seniors, but overall the results were unimpressive and unsatisfactory. Most primary school teachers were also found to be against a ban on the prohibition of admissions test and fail system[11]

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this research is to better understand how secondary school teachers feel about the Right to Education Act of 2009 and how it is being put into practice in classrooms throughout the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do secondary school teachers have positive views regarding the different provisions of the RTE Act, 2009?

2. According to secondary school teachers, are the different provisions of the RTE Act, 2009 implementable in the context of educational institutions?

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Method of the study:

For this study descriptive type survey- based research method is used.

Population of the Study:

For the purposes of this research, all Secondary School Teachers in the North-24-parganas district have been considered the population.

Sample of the Study:

For the current study, the researcher selected 150 secondary school teachers from the 30 (thirty) selected secondary schools in the North-24-parganas district of West Bengal as sample.

Sampling Technique:

The purposive sampling technique has been used in the selection of the sample for the study.

Tool of the Study:

One questionnaire was employed by the researcher to gather the data for the current investigation. There are 15 items total in the questionnaire, both positive and negative. The questionnaire has been constructed on the basis of Likert's five point scale, i.e, Strongly Agree, Agree, Indifferent, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Analysis of the Levels of Agreement seen by the Teachers:

Item-1: Only quantitative improvement, not qualitative enhancement of education, is attainable with the RTE Act (2009).

Table 1: Shows the levels of agreement of teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	8
Agree	13	8.66
Indifferent	10	6.67
Disagree	42	28
Strongly Disagree	73	48.67
Total	150	100%

According to the data in the table above, 8% of the 150 teachers surveyed strongly agree, while 8.66% agree, 6.67% are neutral, 28% disagree, and 48.67% strongly disagree. What this indicates is that 76.67 percent of teachers are disagree, whereas 16.66 percent are agree and 6.67 percent are indifferent with item no.1. Finally, most secondary school educators agree that the RTE Act has the potential to enhance education in both quantitative and qualitative ways (2009).

- **Item-2: The RTE Act of 2009 has guaranteed the kids from all sociometric strata have the right to pursue an education.**

Table 2: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	14.66
Agree	90	60
Indifferent	0	0
Disagree	13	8.66
Strongly Disagree	25	16.67
Total	150	100%

Out of a total of 150 teachers surveyed, the percentage who strongly agreed, agreed, were ambivalent, disagreed and strongly disagreed range from 14.66% to 60%, 0%, 8.66% to 16.67%. A majority of instructors (74.66%) agree, whereas zero percent are ambivalent and 25.33% disagree with the item no.2. In conclusion, we can state that the vast majority of secondary school instructors believe that the RTE Act (2009) has guaranteed the right to education for all children.

- **Item -3: The RTE Act (2009) has brought about a number of serious issues with how kids are admitted to schools.**

Table 3: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	3.33
Agree	8	5.33
Indifferent	47	31.34

Disagree	50	33.33
Strongly Disagree	40	26.67
Total	150	100%

Out of a total 150 teachers surveyed, 3.33% are very strongly agreed, 5.33% are agreed, 31.34% are neutral, 33.33% are disagree, and 26.67% are strongly disagree with item no.3. That suggests the RTE Act (2009) has not caused many serious difficulties with students' entrance to schools, as voted on by the nation's educators (8.99% agree, 31.34% are ambivalent and 60% are disagree).

- **Item 4: Passing all pupils through eighth grade in the test is improper in order to preserve the standard of education**

Table 4: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	27.33
Agree	85	56.67
Indifferent	5	3.33
Disagree	17	11.34
Strongly Disagree	2	1.33
Total	150	100%

Of the 150 teachers polled, 27.33% strongly agree, 56.67% agree, 3.33% are neutral, 11.34% disagree, and 1.33% are strongly disagree. This suggests that 84% of educators agree, 3.33% are ambivalent, and 12.67% are strongly opposed. We may thus conclude that most secondary school educators believe it is inappropriate to guarantee passing grades for all pupils up to and including grade eight in the sake of preserving educational standards.

- **Item-5: The RTE Act (2009) claims that the flexibility in the admission procedures would persuade parents to enroll their children in a school**

Table 5: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	85	56.67
Agree	55	36.67
Indifferent	5	3.33
Disagree	5	3.33
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	150	100%

The preceding data reveals that out of a total of 150 teachers, 56.67% strongly agree, 36.67% agree, 3.33% unsure, 3.33% disagree and 0% strongly disagree with item no.5. this equates to an overall agreement rate among teachers of 93.34%, with 3.33% expressing ambivalence and 3.33% expressing disagreement. Therefore, we may conclude that most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act-2009's admission flexibility will encourage parents to bring their children to school.

- **Item-6: With the RTE Act, the issue of elementary school dropouts may be entirely resolved.**

Table 6: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	6.66
Agree	58	38.67
Indifferent	20	13.34
Disagree	20	13.33
Strongly Disagree	42	28

In the table above, we can see that out of a total of 150 teachers, 6.66% strongly agree, 38.67% agree, 13.34% are neutral, 13.33% disagree, and 28% strongly disagree with item no.6. This equates to a total of 45.33% of teachers agreeing, 13.34% being neutral, and 41.33% disagreeing. This suggests that the majority of secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act 2009 would be effective in reducing primary school dropout rates.

- **Item-7: The elimination of the Pass-Fail system up to class VIII is a contributing reason to the decline in elementary education's standards of quality.**

Table 7: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	50	33.33
Agree	83	55.34

Indifferent	0	0
Disagree	9	6
Strongly Disagree	8	5.33
Total	150	100%

According to the data shown above, 33.33% strongly agree, 55.34% agree, 0% neutral, 6% disagree and 5.33% strongly disagree with item no.7, among a sample of 150 teachers. This indicates that 88.67% of teachers are in favor, 0% are neutral and 11.33% are against. Since the Pass-Fail system was eliminated up to eighth grade, most secondary school teachers believe this has had a negative impact on the quality of elementary schooling.

- **Item-8: As a result of the RTE Act (2009), which prohibits passing or failing exams until the eighth grade, teachers and students have developed a lackadaisical attitude towards education.**

Table 8: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	75	50
Agree	37	24.66
Indifferent	5	3.33
Disagree	20	13.34
Strongly Disagree	13	8.67
Total	150	100%

According to the data shown above, 50% of teachers are strongly agree, 24.66% agree, 3.33% are neutral, 13.34% disagree, and 8.67% strongly disagree with the item no.8, among a sample of 150 teachers. This indicates that 74.66% of educators are in favor, 3.33% are neutral, and 22.01% are against. Most secondary school teachers believe that the elimination of pass/ fail grades for pupils in grades K- VII as a result of the RTE Act- 2009 has resulted in a general apathy towards education.

- **Item-9: The RTE Act (2009) cannot be fully implemented in a practical setting since it is not based on realistic imagination.**

Table 9: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	3.33
Agree	8	5.33
Indifferent	56	37.33
Disagree	25	16.67
Strongly Disagree	56	37.34
Total	150	100%

The above table shows that 3.33%, 5.33%, 37.33%, 16.67%, and 37.34% of 150 teachers are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree with item no.9. What this indicates is that 8.66% of teachers are in agreement, 37.33% are neutral and 54.01% are against. As a result, we may conclude that most secondary school teachers disagree with the claim that the RTE Act (2009) is hard to implement in its entirety due to the lack of realistic imagination.

- **Item-10: The RTE Act (2009) has restricted teachers' flexibility in the educational area, particularly with regard to running or managing the classroom.**

Table 10: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	115	76.67
Agree	30	20
Indifferent	5	3.33
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	150	100%

The above table shows that out of 150 teachers, 76.67%, 20%, 3.33%, 0% and 0% teachers have given their opinion at the level of strongly agree, agree, indifferent, disagree and strongly disagree with this statement. This equates to a total of 96.67% of teachers agreeing, 3.33% remaining neutral and 0% disagreeing. In conclusion, we can state that the vast majority of secondary school teachers feel that the RTE Act (2009) has limited their autonomy in the classroom.

- **Item-11: According to the RTE Act (2009), giving students from underprivileged classes a 25% seat reservation in private schools would improve the desire in continuing their education.**

Table 11: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	26	17.34

Agree	85	56.67
Indifferent	13	8.66
Disagree	16	10.66
Strongly Disagree	10	6.67
Total	150	100%

Based on their responses, the following table shows that, out of 150 teachers, 17.34% strongly agree, 56.67% agree, 8.66% are neutral, 10.66% disagree and 6.67% are strongly disagree with the item no.11. What this entails, in sum, is as follows: the majority of secondary school educators believe that the RTE Act- 2009's mandate for private schools to set aside 25% of their student bodies for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds would pique their pupil's interest in furthering their education.

- **Item-12: The RTE Act (2009) has enhanced the likelihood that pupils from underprivileged classes would attend school more often.**

Table 12: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	23.33
Agree	81	54
Indifferent	11	7.33
Disagree	14	9.33
Strongly Disagree	9	6
Total	150	100 %

Out of a total of 150 Teachers surveyed, 23.33% strongly agreed, 54% agreed, 7.33% were ambivalent, 9.33% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed with item no.12. This suggests that 77.87% of educators are in agreement, 7.33% are ambivalent, and 15.33% are opposed. Thus we may conclude that the majority of secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act (2009) has enhanced the propensity of children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend class.

- **Item-13: The RTE Act of 2009 is making several serious issues in the realm of education.**

Table 13: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	8
Agree	23	15.33
Indifferent	9	6
Disagree	85	56.67
Strongly Disagree	21	14
Total	150	100%

As can be seen in the table above, out of a total of 150 teachers, 8%, 15.33%, 6%, 56.67% and 14% strongly agree, agree, be indifferent, disagree and strongly disagree with item no.13. This equates to a 23.33% agreement rate among teachers, a 6% apathy rate, and a 70.67% opposition rate. Consequently, it seems that the majority of secondary school teachers do not believe that the RTE Act (2009) is causing any serious difficulties in the classroom.

- **Item-14: The RTE Act (2009) declares that punishing pupils physically or psychologically is illegal.**

Table 14: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	54	36
Agree	75	50
Indifferent	8	5.33
Disagree	10	6.67
Strongly Disagree	3	2
Total	150	100%

From a total of 150 teachers, the percentages who strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree and strongly disagree are 36%, 50%, 5.33%, 6.67% and 2% respectively, as shown in the table above. Consequently, 86% teachers are agree with this statement, while 8.67% disagree. To conclude, we may state that the vast majority of secondary school teachers support the RTE Act's stipulation that the use of physical or mental punishment on pupils is illegal.

- **Item-15: The RTE Act (2009) has to be modified in certain areas since it is impairing the quality of education.**

Table 15: Shows the levels of Agreement of Teachers

Levels of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	52	34.67
Agree	43	28.66

Indifferent	13	8.67
Disagree	27	18
Strongly Disagree	15	10
Total	150	100

Out of a total of 150 teachers surveyed, 34.67% strongly agreed, 28.66% agreed, 8.67% were ambivalent, 18% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. This suggests that 63.33% of teachers are in agreement, 8.67% are ambivalent and 28% are opposed. The vast majority of secondary school teachers agree that the RTE Act of 2009 needs to be revised in order to improve the quality of education.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act (2009) has the potential to enhance education in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

Most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act (2009) has guaranteed the opportunity for all children to get a quality education. The vast majority of secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act (2009) has not caused any major disruptions to the admissions process for pupils.

Most secondary school teachers believe that, in the sake of preserving educational quality, they cannot support the practice of automatically passing all pupils up to the eighth grade.

Most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act-2009's provisions for a more flexible admissions procedure would persuade more parents to take their children to school.

Most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act-2009 will be effective in reducing primary school dropout rates.

The majority of secondary school teachers believe that eliminating the Pass-fail system for students in grades K-VIII has had a negative impact on the quality of primary education.

Since there is no pass-fail in examination up to class VIII as per the RTE Act (2009), most secondary school teachers believe that both teachers and students have become apathetic towards education.

Most of the of high school teachers have said they think the RTE Act -2009 is a practical fantasy that can be implemented in full. However, over % teachers have no opinion on the claim that the RTE Act -2009 can not be implemented in its entirety since it is based on an unrealistic fantasy world.

The majority of secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act (2009) limits their ability to use professional judgement in the classroom.

Most secondary school teachers believe that the RTE Act-2009's mandate for private schools to set aside 25% of their student bodies for kids from disadvantaged backgrounds would boost enrollment.

The majority of secondary school educators believe that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are now more likely to attend class as a direct result of the RTE Act (2009).

The majority of secondary school educators believe that the RTE Act (2009) is not causing major disruptions in the educational system. While the RTE Act makes it illegal to use physical or mental punishment on pupils, the vast majority of secondary school educators agree with this provision (2009).

Most secondary school educators believe that changes are needed to the RTE Act of 2009 because it is stifling efforts to improve education quality.

CONCLUSION

In the history of Indian education, the RTE Act-2009 made abrupt changes. According to this Act, the education up to 14 years of age for every child is a fundamental right. The teachers of secondary schools of North-24- Parganas district have supported few components enshrined in the RTE Act-2009. For example, they support the provision of the right to take education for the students of all classes of the society by this Act. They are enthusiastic about the provision of 25% seat reservation for the students of backward classes of the society in private schools as it will increase the interest among them to take education. They also support the admission procedure flexibility of the Act, which will encourage the parents to send their children to school. The secondary school teachers also believe that the problem of drop out in elementary education will be reduced by the RTE Act-2009.

However, there are a few components of this Act that are very challenging to apply in actual situations for school principals and their deputies. As a result, the current research shows that secondary school educators are not enthusiastic about the RTE Act's provisions for basic education (2009). For instance, to keep the standard of education high, the North-24-Parganas district secondary school teachers believe that it is inappropriate to provide exemptions to kids in grades K through 8. They feel that the elimination of the Pass-Fail system beyond eighth grade is to blame for the decline in elementary school quality. Since there is no pass-fail in examination up till class VIII under the RTE Act-2009, both teachers and students have become apathetic about education. Teachers in the secondary schools in the North-24- Parganas district have spoken out against some provisions of the Right to Education Act of 2009 (RTE Act), arguing that the law is stifling basic education in West Bengal and the rest of India.

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