

# Perception of Parents of Elementary School Children in Mizoram about the Implementation of Right to Education Act 2009

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## *Abstract*

*The present study is a study of the perception of elementary school teachers in Mizoram about the implementation of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 popularly known as the Right to Education Act 2009 or RTE Act 2009. The Right to Education Act 2009, enacted on 4th August, 2009 by the Parliament of India received the assent of the President of India on 26th August, 2009 and came into force on 1st April 2010. In compliance to the Act, State governments are assigned responsibilities where the state of Mizoram is not an exception. The present study is a descriptive research. A sample of 208 parents comprising of 126 from Government and 82 from private elementary schools was selected by following stratified random sampling technique. Primary data were collected by administering a questionnaire. The study reveals that Right to Education Act, 2009 has not been effectively implemented in Mizoram due to various reasons. Many parents are still not aware of the pertinence of this Act and pay no heed to it. Parents especially from Government elementary school children are completely ignorant about the implementation of the Act and the provisions mentioned therein whereas parents from private elementary school children are mostly aware of the implementation of this Act and the impact it has upon their children. The study also reveals that proper awareness and sensitization programme should be conducted more often especially to the parents residing in rural areas, discuss the various provisions that are mentioned in the Act, make them realize the importance of quality education and how their co-operation and support to their child's school could help in the successful implementation of the Act rather than just ignore it or be silent about the Act.*

**Keywords:** Perception, Elementary school, Parents, Implementation, Right to Education Act

## **Introduction**

With insertion of article 21A in the Constitution of India by the Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 wherein it is provided that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state, by law, provides, it became imperative to enact a law to implement the provision of Article 21A of the Constitution. Consequently, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament. The Bill received the assent of the President on 26th August, 2009 and came on the Statute Book as the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 commonly called Right to Education Act or RTE Act 2009. 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 (RTE Act 2009). In order to achieve the aims set out in the Right to Education Act, 2009, State governments are assigned responsibilities. Since then, Mizoram, being one of the states of India has been taking initiatives for implementation of the Act. How far Mizoram has gone in this regard is an important issue. Since parents of elementary school children are directly involved with education of their children for whom the Act has been prepared, their perception about the implementation of the Act will go a long way for making the implementation more effective.

## **Objective of the study**

The present study was carried out with the objective of studying the perception of parents of elementary children in Mizoram about the implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009 in terms of management of schools i.e., government and private.

## Methodology of the study

The present study mainly adopts descriptive approach to research. All elementary school parents in the State of Mizoram constituted the population. Stratified random sampling was adopted for selection of samples. Firstly, district-wise stratification of elementary school parents was done and parents from four districts namely, Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai and Mamit districts were randomly identified to be the sub-population. The parents from these districts were again stratified into parents of government and private elementary school children. Samples were then selected by following simple random sampling technique. A total of 208 parents comprising of 126 from Government and 82 from private elementary school children were taken as sample parents.

## Analysis and Interpretation of Data

**Table 1**

**To study and compare the perception of parents about the provisions of RTE Act 2009 and their implementation in relation to management of schools i.e., government and private**

Sl.No.	Perception	Parents from Government Schools N=126		Parents from Private Schools N=82	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	The provision is very good for ensuring universalization of elementary education	126	100%	NA	NA
2	The provision of free education is very good as our children can receive free education	119	94.44%	NA	NA
4	I find compulsory completion of elementary education good	126	100%	NA	NA

It is found vide table 1 that-

- a) Cent per cent parents from Government schools perceive the provision of free and compulsory education for every child as very good for ensuring universalization of elementary education
- b) As many as 94.44 per cent of parents from Government schools perceive the provision of free education as very good as their children could receive free education
- c) Cent per cent parents from Government schools find compulsory completion of elementary education good

According to section 3 (1) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, "Every child of the age of six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education". Cent per cent of parents from Government schools perceive the provision of free and compulsory education for every child as very good for ensuring universalization of elementary education and compulsory completion of elementary education. Majority of the parents also perceive the provision of free education as very good as their children can receive free education. As this provision is applicable only to Government schools, the questions pertaining to this provision are responded by parents of children from Government schools only

**Table 2**

**Where a child above six years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted, could not complete his/her elementary education, perception about the provision of admitting that child in a class appropriate to his/her age and its implementation**

Sl.No.	Perception	Parents from Government Schools N=126		Parents from Private Schools N=82	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	The provision is good as it helps in compulsory enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education of our children	126	100%	64	78.04%
2	It is the duty of the school to accommodate such children	126	100%	64	78.04%
3	It is the duty of the teacher to guide those children and give them special attention	126	100%	74	90.24%

According to table 2, it is found that -

- Cent per cent of the parents from Government schools and 78.04 per cent parents from private schools perceive the provision of admitting a child into a class appropriate to his/her age as good as it helps in compulsory enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education of their children
- Cent per cent parents from Government schools and 78.04 per cent parents from private schools perceive that it is the duty of the school to accommodate such children
- The perception that it is the duty of the teacher to guide those children and give them special attention is held by cent per cent parents from Government schools and 90.4 per cent parents from private schools

## Comparison

As per section 4 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, "Where a child above six years of age has not been admitted in any school or though admitted, could not complete his or her elementary education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age". In the light of this provision, the perceptions of parents from Government schools are more in conformity with the provision than that of parents of private schools on the following grounds:

a) While cent per cent of parents from Government schools perceive this provision as good and helping compulsory enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education of their children and perceive that it is the duty of the school to accommodate such children and the duty of the teacher to guide those children and give them special attention, less than 100 per cent parents from private schools perceive so

**Table 3**

**Perception about the provision of admitting all the children seeking admission in the child's school even if admission is sought subsequent to the extended period and its implementation**

Sl.No.	Perception	Parents from Government Schools N=126		Parents from Private Schools N=82	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	The provision is good as it helps in ensuring universal enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child	126	100%	82	100%
2	The provision is good as it gives a challenge to the teachers to work more	7	5.56%	19	23.17%
3	Children seeking admission subsequent to the extended period should be welcome	126	100%	82	100%
4	The provision is good as my child has the chance to get admission in good schools due to migration or other problems	41	32.54%	30	36.59%
5	The provision is implemented by the schools	7	5.56%	19	23.17%

The above table 3 reveal that-

- a) Cent per cent parents from Government and private schools perceive the provision of admitting all the children seeking admission in their children's school even if admission is sought subsequent to the extended period as good
- b) As low as 5.56 per cent parents from Government schools perceive the provision as good as it gives a challenge to the teachers to work more and that the provision is implemented by the schools while 23.17 per cent parents of children from private elementary schools perceive the same
- c) Cent per cent of parents from both Government and private schools are of the view that children seeking admission subsequent to the extended period should be welcome
- d) 32.54 per cent parents from Government schools and 36.59 per cent parents from private schools find the provision good as their children have the chance to get admission in good schools due to migration or other problems

### Comparison

According to section 15 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, “ *A child shall be admitted in a school at the commencement of the academic year or within such extended period as may be prescribed, provided that no child shall be denied admission if such admission is sought subsequent to the extended period*”. In the light of this provision, parents from private school seem to agree better with this provision than parents from Government schools as follows:

- a) As low as 5.56 parents of Government schools find the provision as good as it gives a challenge to the teachers to work more and that the provision is implemented by the schools while 23.17 per cent parents from private schools perceive so
- b) Parents from Government schools i.e., 32.54 per cent perceive the provision as good as their children have the chance to get admission in good schools due to migration or other problems while 36.59 per cent parents from private schools perceive the same.

**Table 4**

### Perception about prohibition of physical punishment and mental harassment and its implementation

Sl.No.	Perception	Parents from Government Schools N=126		Parents from Private Schools N=82	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	The provision is good as it makes children feel safe and secured	116	92.06%	82	100%

2	The provision is good as it enhances closer relationship among students and teachers	116	92.06%	82	100%
3	The provision is bad as it enhances misbehaviour and indiscipline among students	10	7.94%	0	0
4	Teachers are no more in a position to curb and check undesirable behaviour and practices such as smoking, drinking, consumption of pan, tobacco products and other intoxicants	8	6.35%	0	0
5	Teachers are less respected by the students due to this provision	5	3.97%	0	0
6	The provision is properly implemented	68	53.97%	56	68.29%

The above table 4 reveal that-

- a) As high as 92.06 per cent parents from Government schools and cent per cent parents from private schools perceive prohibition of physical punishment and mental harassment as good and makes children feel safe and secured and enhances closer relationship among students and teachers
- b) As low as 7.94 per cent parents from Government schools children find the provision as bad and enhances misbehaviour and indiscipline among students
- c) Only 6.35 per cent parents from Government schools are of the view that teachers are no more in a position to curb and check undesirable behaviour and practices such as smoking, drinking, consumption of pan, tobacco products and other intoxicants
- d) Parents of Government schools i.e., 3.97 per cent perceive teachers are less respected by the students due to this provision
- e) The perception that the provision is properly implemented is held by 53.97 per cent parents from Government schools and 68.29 per cent parents from private schools

### Comparison

According to section 17 (1) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, “No child shall be subjected to physical punishment or mental harassment”. In support of this provision, parents from private schools are in better agreement with this provision than parents from Government schools implied as under:

a) While cent per cent parents of private schools perceive the provision of prohibiting physical punishment and mental harassment as good and makes children feel safe and secured and enhances closer relationship among students and teachers, less than 100 per cent of parents from Government schools perceive so

b) Some parents from Government schools perceive the provision as bad as it enhances misbehaviour and indiscipline among students, teachers no more in a position to curb and check undesirable behaviour and practices such as smoking, drinking, consumption of pan, tobacco products and other intoxicants and teachers being less respected by the students while none of the parents from private schools perceive the same

c) While the perception that the provision is properly implemented is held by 53.97 per cent parents from Government schools, 68.29 per cent parents from private schools perceive the same

**Table 5**

**Perception about the provision of holding regular meetings with parents and guardians and its implementation**

Sl.No.	Perception	Parents from Government Schools N=126		Parents from Private Schools N=82	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	The provision is good and enhances co-operation between teachers and parents	126	100%	82	100%
2	The provision is good but difficult to implement due to parents inability to give time	81	64.29%	8	9.76%
3	The provision is good as parents get to know the performance, attendance and behaviour of our children	126	100%	82	100%

According to table 5, it is found that-

a)Cent per cent parents from Government schools and private schools perceive the provision of holding regular meetings with parents and guardians as good as it enhances co-operation between teachers and parents and as parents get to know the performance, attendance and behaviour of their children

b)Majority of parents from Government schools i.e., 64.29 per cent and 9.76 per cent parents from private schools perceive the provision as good but difficult to implement it due to parents inability to give time

## Comparison

Section 24 9(1) (f) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 states, "*A teacher appointed shall perform the duty of holding regular meetings with parents and guardians and appraise them about the regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child*". In regard to this provision, parents from private schools are in better conformity with the provision than parents from Government schools as follows:

a) While majority of parents from Government schools perceive the provision of holding regular meetings with parents and guardians as good but difficult to implement it due to parents inability to give time, as low as 9.76 per cent parents of children from private schools perceive so.

## Major findings of the study

From the perceptions of elementary school teachers in Mizoram about the implementation of the Right to Education Act 2009, the following are major findings:

- 1) Cent per cent of parents from Government schools perceived the provision of free and compulsory education for every child as very good for ensuring universalization of elementary education and compulsory completion of elementary education as their children can receive free education. This provision is applicable only for Government schools.

All the parents from Government schools perceived the provision of free education for every child not being fully implemented by the schools since they had to contribute/spent money on stationary items mainly due to the introduction of CCE, pay for some text-books and exercise books and also perceived that implementing the provision in its true sense was difficult

- 2) The RTE Act provision for 'admitting a child into a class appropriate to his/her' was perceived to be good for parents of both Government and private schools. While cent per cent parents from Government schools perceived this provision as good as it helped in compulsory enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education, perceived accommodating such children as the duty of the school and guiding and giving them special attention as the duty of the teacher, lesser percentages of parents from private schools perceived the same which shows that the perceptions of parents from Government schools were in better agreement with this provision
- 3) Cent per cent parents of both Government and private schools perceived the provision for 'no denial of admission if such admission is sought subsequent to the extended period' as good and that children seeking admission to the extended period should be welcome. However, only few parents from both Government and private schools perceived the provision as implemented by the schools which clearly shows that large majority of the parents were not aware of this provision and its implementation in their child's school
- 4) The RTE Act provision for 'prohibition of physical punishment and mental harassment' was good as it made children feel safe and secured and also enhanced closer relationship among students and teachers as perceived by majority of parents from Government and cent per cent of parents from private schools. However, few percentages of parents from Government schools perceived this provision as enhancing misbehaviour and indiscipline among students. Parents from Government schools comprising of 53.97 per cent and parents from private schools with 68.29 per

cent perceived the provision as properly implemented in their child's school. This indicates that parents from private schools had more favourable perceptions about this provision

- 5) Cent per cent of parents from Government and private schools perceived the provision of 'holding regular meetings with parents and guardians' as good and had enhanced co-operation between the teachers and parents and perceived that parents got to know the performance, attendance and behaviour of their children . However, a larger percentage of parents from Government schools perceived it could not be effectively implemented due to parent's inability to give time. This signifies that parents from private schools had favourable perceptions about this provision than parents from Government schools

## Discussion and conclusion

The study reveals that the provisions of Right to Education Act, 2009 for free and compulsory education for every child of the age of 6 to 14 years has not been effectively implemented. The amount allocated for text-books and exercise books are less than the actual price of the books. Education is not provided completely free as students still need to contribute money for stationary items and materials for performing activities for CCE. Since children admitted in Government schools usually come from weaker and disadvantaged sections of the society, contribution of even a small sum of money is a big burden for their parents. This means that the amount of money that per child gets is insufficient to bear their cost of education which includes not only books but spare uniform, extra note books, pencils etc. Parents of Government elementary school children especially from remote rural areas face more difficulty in contributing money as they are daily wage earners whose income is too meagre to spare additional sum of money for the education on their children compared to the parents of private school children.

Regarding the provision that prohibits holding back a child in any class or expulsion from school that has created immense indiscipline and irregularity of children in attendance caused by this provision where its implementation could be successfully met, the Rajya Sabha passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill in 2019 where 'no detention' will be abolished till class VIII by enabling state governments to allow schools to fail students. In compliance with this Bill, elementary schools in Mizoram have started to make visible progress as students take their studies more seriously thus, removing indiscipline and lethargy.

Physical punishment is still practiced in both Government and private schools in order to deal with students having unsavory characters and discipline them. Banning of physical punishment and mental harassment is provision that is hard to effectively implement as teachers sometimes need to give punishment as it is needed for children so that they can grow up to be competent and responsible individuals. However, majority of the parents perceived that this provision has been effectively implemented in the schools where their children are admitted.

As it is crucial for every parent to know the performance and behavior of their children from the feedback of the teachers, holding regular parent-teacher meeting needs to be conducted. In regard to this provision, while cent percent of parents from private school children can spare time for such meeting, majority of parents from Government-run school cannot do so due to unavailability of spare time.

Since, the awareness level of the parents on the importance and implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009 in Mizoram is still very low where many of the parents, especially from the rural areas do not have knowledge about the Act and the significance it can have towards the life of their

children due to lower level of literacy. Due to their low awareness level, ensuring compulsory admission, compulsory attendance and compulsory completion of elementary education cannot be effectively implemented. Instead of sending their children to school, they still want their children to stay at home and perform domestic work like doing the household chores, watch their younger siblings or other necessary chores.

Therefore, with the support of National Education Policy 2020, that envisioned the extension of the ambit of right to education for children from 3 to 18 years laying its foundation on access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability, let's hope the Right to Education Act 2009 will be more rigorously and effectively implemented for providing quality and global best education system thereby ensuring all round development of the children.

## References

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