The background of the cover is a photograph of two young girls in school uniforms walking away from the camera on a paved path. They are carrying large, colorful backpacks. The path is lined with trees, and the scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The overall mood is one of hope and education.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION
PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS OF A CONSULTATION

Edited by

V. S. Vyas

Anju Dhadda Misra

AJIT FOUNDATION
(2016)

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V. S. Vyas
Chairpersons, Ajit Foundation

Preface

Right to Education Act came into existence on April 2010. All states in the country were enjoined to provide elementary education to every child, boy or girl, in the age group of 6 to 14 in the neighborhood school. Five years have passed since the implementation of this revolutionary program. Noticeable progress has been made in some components of the Act in every state, including Rajasthan. The more important among these achievements being access to school at a walk-able distance, high level of enrollment and, significant improvements in school infrastructure. There are gaps in all these areas; there are some regions where access to school is still a problem, enrollment of the children of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and of girls in general, is below the target, and school infrastructure, particularly toilet facilities, are woefully inadequate. But progress is made in all these directions and major gaps in these areas are likely to be corrected in foreseeable future.

There are much more serious deficiencies which in the next phase of RTE need urgent attention. These are abysmally low level of learning, high rate of dropouts even at the elementary stage and, lack of 'ownership by the community. There is enough evidence from the official as well non-official sources to suggest that these are wide spread maladies and require serious thought to tackle them.

Ajit Foundation an ngo working with youth for last 22 years invited a group of concerned persons to discuss these issues and come out with specific recommendations. UNICEF (Rajasthan) helped Ajit Foundation to organize this Consultation. Seven specialists in various aspects of elementary education were invited to write theme papers on issues that need attention in the next phase of RTE. The papers contributed by them are included in this volume.

Two-day discussion, which brought together nearly 40 persons, representing all sections of stakeholders, deliberated on the issues raised in the theme papers. Dr. Anju Dhadda Misra who acted as the rapporteur of the Consultation wrote the summery of the proceedings and the main recommendations emanating from the discussion. These are also included in the present volume. The papers submitted for the Consultation and the proceedings of the deliberations provide a road map for the next phase of RTE. Several of these are addressed to the government policy makers. However, the Consultation also recognized the role that the community as well as the teachers can play in meeting the objectives of RTE.

It is hoped that all concerned will ponder over content of the papers and the proceedings of the Consultation, evaluate recommendations made by the participants and take necessary actions so that the basic objective of RTE, i.e. quality education to every child in the country without any discrimination, is achieved.

V. S. Vyas

Right to Education: Challenges and Pathways to Realising the Entitlement in Rajasthan

- Shobhita Rajagopal

Abstract

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 ensuring entitlement to free and compulsory education to all children within the age group of 6-14 came into force five years back on April 1, 2010. The Act clearly defines the schooling-related entitlements of a child and takes into account three important aspects of education delivery - access, equity and quality. This paper presents an overview of the implementation of RTE in the state of Rajasthan over the last five years and analyzes select aspects to identify the challenges and pathways to facilitating and realizing the right to elementary education for all.

Introduction

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 ensuring entitlement to free and compulsory education to all children within the age group of 6-14 came into force five years back on April 1, 2010. The Act clearly defines the schooling-related entitlements of a child and takes into account three important aspects of education delivery - access, equity and quality. All the States were expected to comply and implement the RTE norms within a certain time frame and deadlines were set for implementation. The experience of operationalising the provisions laid out in the Act across states presents a mixed picture. It is evident that implementing RTE has not been easy and continues to be is fraught with challenges. Considering that different States are at different stages of development both in terms of economic and educational indicators, these challenges also manifest differently.

All the norms, standards and provisions of the Act are applicable to each and every school providing education from Grade I to VIII whether run by government or by private entities. These include the norms for physical infrastructure and teachers, and the responsibilities of the school in terms of making the child free from fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express her/his views comprehensively. In addition, the Act has invoked the responsibility of private schools as well to serve as neighbourhood school for all social and economic classes. It has been made mandatory for all private schools to take one-fourth of their intake at entry stage from disadvantaged and weaker sections for which respective state governments would compensate them based on criteria as determined by the state rules. All this implies that the governments face the challenge not only of upgrading their own schools to fulfil the RTE norms but also of having an appropriate governance structure to be able to regulate the private schools as envisaged by the Act (CBPS, 2013).

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Rajasthan was one of the first States to formulate the rules for implementing provisions in the Act in April 2011. However, a number of challenges and problems continue to constrain the progress of RTE in the State. Moreover many recent decisions taken by the State government on no detention policy, teacher recruitment, merging of schools, curricular reform have been contentious as they go against the grain of RTE Act. These policy decisions have met with resistance and also raise critical concerns.

This paper presents an overview of the implementation of RTE in the state of Rajasthan over the last five years and analyzes select aspects to identify the challenges and pathways to facilitating and realizing the right to elementary education for all.

The paper is divided into two sections: Section I, presents some key issues and challenges in the implementation of RTE. Section II highlights key areas that need to be addressed for ensuring meaningful promotion of RTE and suggests way forward.

Section I

In the context of school education Rajasthan has primarily followed an agenda based on national policies and programmes, with a few state specific programmes mainly the Shikshakarmi Project (1987), Lok Jumbish (1992) and Rajiv Gandhi Pathshlas (1990). Currently the principal programme for universalization of elementary education is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The overall goals of the SSA are: (i) all children in schools; (ii) bridging all gender and social category gaps at primary and upper primary stages of education (iii) universal retention; and (iv) elementary education of satisfactory quality.

The implementation of the RTE Act in the State, was notified through a Gazette notification and the rules and regulations formulated were called 'Rajasthan Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011. In compliance with the rules of the Act a decision was taken to ensure that in all government schools children studying in Grades I to VIII will be provided free education wherein the state government will bear the costs. Similarly, as per the provisions under section 30 (1) and (2) of the Act, Board examinations conducted for class VIII children's was discontinued. To ensure children's safety from physical as well as mental abuse in schools as stated in section 17, SCERT, Udaipur was designated as the academic authority. A decision was also taken to form a State level Committee and establish the Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (RSCPCR). Another decision taken was that in all government and government aided schools School Management Committees (SMC) would be constituted to ensure that children are admitted to schools as per age appropriate grades. Private schools were to provide 25% reservation of seats and free entry into these schools for children from weak and underprivileged backgrounds. All these decisions were taken in the year of 2011 and information circulated in all schools.

Some other decisions that were taken during 2011 to improve implementation of this Act included:

- Identifying 'never enrolled' and drop out children and ensuring that they are admitted into schools
- Establishing committees for teacher dialogue at the block level to address children grievances
- Piloting CCE in 60 schools as part of assessment
- Establishing a system for fee reimbursement to private schools with regard to 25% weaker section children.

It was envisaged that implementing the RTE would bring about a qualitative change in the management and delivery of elementary education and transform the schooling experience in the state. However, five years later, it is evident that there are gaps in terms of entitlements and actual provisioning. Given that the social composition of learners in the schools is changing, it is pertinent that contextualised and meaningful education is available for those who access government schools.

Availability of Schools in the Neighbourhood

One of the prerequisites for ensuring universal access to schooling is the availability of schooling facilities within reasonable distance of all children. Following the national mandate of UEE, the state has witnessed considerable expansion in the number of schools in the past two decades and official claims indicate that all habitations have been provided with a primary school. Section 6 of the RTE Act provides that it is the responsibility of the relevant Government and the local authority to establish within such an area or limits of neighbourhood, as may be prescribed, a school, where it is not so established, within a period of three years from the commencement of the Act. According to the rules in Rajasthan a primary schools should be available within a walking distance of 1 km while upper primary within a 2/3 km radius.

According to DISE 2014-15, a total of 106250 elementary schools were functioning in the state. Of these 72,200 are government schools. The data indicates that the number of primary schools reduced drastically from 2013-14. One major factor that has contributed to this reduction is that as part of government policy on rationalisation and merging schools, almost 17,000 schools were merged into other schools in August 2014. This resulted in many children from disadvantaged communities being left without a school in their neighbourhood and within the prescribed limits as stipulated by RTE. In an assessment carried out by Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Rajasthan (BGVS) of 102 schools across 5 districts, it was

revealed that the merger of schools created a situation where many children were forced to drop out of school. Multiple factors like gender, caste, change in medium of instruction, distance and mobility led to children dropping out. It was also evident that many of the schools running in dalit localities were discontinued leading to their drop out as they were hesitant to go to schools located in dominant / upper caste localities (BGVS, 2014). Later due to pressure from NGOs and civil society organisations the State government had to review the order. However, many of the schools have not been restarted.

Field level insights during Monitoring of SSA by IDSJ reveals that while school are available within the stipulated distance in most districts issues relating to access pose several challenges – as children have to cross difficult terrain, rivers and highways to reach the school.

The government primary school in Chuhanphali in district Sirohi, is located on a hill. There are 92 students enrolled who come from a distance of about 2 km and have to traverse a hilly terrain. During the monsoon the school is shut down as the road to the school becomes slippery and parents are hesitant to send their children. The UPS is located about 3km from this school (IDSJ field reports, Sirohi 2015).

School Enrolment and Drop out

According to DISE 2014-15, the total enrolment at the primary level is reported to be 81.41 lakhs and enrolment at Upper primary level reported to be 38.85 lakhs. The GER at the primary level is 98 as compared to 102 in 2013-14. The GER at the Upper Primary level also shows a downward trend from previous year. The percentage of girls to total enrolment at the primary level was 46.33% and at the upper primary level it was recorded 44.69%. It is evident that the percentage of girls to total enrolment has not changed significantly in the last five years. The drop - out rate for girls at the primary and upper primary level was recorded 8.40 and 6.05 respectively. The gender parity index continues to be 0.86 and 0.81 at the primary and upper primary level with 6 districts: Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalor, Ajmer, Sirohi and Bhilwara showing low gender parity.

The number of children reported to be out of school was 3,01,037 (Table 1a). The SRI-IMRB survey 2014 notes that the percentage of out of school children was 5.02 % and the state ranked 33 in the country. The survey also noted that more girls were out of school than boys. Higher numbers of ST and Muslim children were out of school.

The overall trend in enrolment also indicates that there is a decrease in the government and aided schools by 4.26% in the past five years (Table 1b and 1c).

Table 1(a): Select Educational Indicators

	2013-14	2014-15
Primary only schools (Govt.+Aided)	48031	41523
Upper Primary schools (Govt.+Aided)	35533	64727
Total Primary Enrolment (in lakh)	83.94	81.41
Total Upper Primary Enrolment (in lakh)	38.96	38.85
Total Elementary Enrolment (in lakh)	122.90	120.26
GER Primary	102	98
NER Primary	80	77
GER Upper Primary	85	80
NER Upper Primary	62	59
Out of School Children	410957	301037

Source: DISE 2014-15

**Table 1(b): Enrolment Trends 2009-10 to 2014-15:
(Enrolment in lakh)**

Year	All Management				Govt + Aided			
	Primary	% Increase /decrease	Upper Primary	% Increase /decrease	Primary	% Increase /decrease	Upper Primary	% Increase /decrease
2014-15	81.40	-3.03	38.85	-0.28	41.18	-5.70	19.57	-4.26
2013-14	83.94	-3.03	38.96	0.26	43.67	-8.01	20.44	-1.64
2012-13	86.56	-0.01	38.86	3.90	47.47	-6.67	20.78	-2.17
2011-12	86.57	2.66	37.4	4.73	50.86	-2.31	21.24	3.01
2010-11	84.33	-2.26	35.71	0.68	52.06	-5.48	20.62	2.18
2009-10	86.28	-0.83	35.47	-0.45	55.08	-6.10	20.18	-5.88

Source: DISE 2014-15

Table 1(c) : Enrolment of Girls and GPI

Indicator	Level	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
% Girls to total enrolment	Primary	46.81	46.98	46.93	46.59	46.33
	UP	43.72	44.73	44.78	44.65	44.69
Gender Parity Index(GPI)	Primary	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.87	0.86
	UP	0.78	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81

Source: DISE 2014-15

It is also evident that the share in enrolment of SC, ST and OBC and Muslim minority children has increased in the year 2014-15 as compared to the previous year. However, the share of general caste students has reduced significantly. This also reiterates the fact that government educational institutions continue to be the mainstay for disadvantaged groups (Table 2).

Table 2 : Total Enrolment (I-VIII) by social groups

Year	General	SC	ST	OBC	Muslim	Total
2014-15	1005145 (8.4)	2380528 (19.8)	1810690 (15.0)	5892648 (49.0)	937007 (7.8)	12026018
2013-14	2009631 (15.1)	2448234 (18.4)	1852598 (13.9)	5979789 (44.9)	1030389 (7.7)	13320641

Source: DISE 2014-15; Note: the numbers in parentheses are percentages

An area of concern is the drop out of children from schools. A Child Tracking Survey carried out by the State department of Education in 2010 estimated that there were about 12 lakh children, out of school with the percentage of girls being 12.98 %. There is no data to indicate how many of these children were mainstreamed in schools. In 2013-2014 the annual average drop-out rate at primary level was 8.39 percent and Rajasthan ranked 29 in the country. Despite various incentives for promoting girls education their dropout rate is higher than boys across social groups.

RTE and School Infrastructure

The foremost pre-requisite for education provisioning is the availability of a functional school with facilities. The RTE has laid down certain specification for infrastructure facilities for schools i.e availability of all weather school building, an office cum store for the head teacher, separate toilets for boys and for girls, kitchen for cooking the mid day-meal, access to safe drinking water, library, playground and barrier free access.

The State Elementary Education Report card 2013-14 notes that there were 25% primary schools with single teacher; drinking water facilities were available in 96.3% schools; separate toilet facilities for boys and girls were available in 98.1% and 96.1% schools respectively. Electricity was available only in 50% schools and computers were available only in 23.1% schools. 82.5% schools had boundary walls and playgrounds were available only in 48.9% schools. 76.5% schools are approachable by all weather roads. Mid-day meals were provided in 96.3% schools.

The ASER 2014 reports that usable toilets were available in 81% schools and usable toilets for girls were available in 73.7% schools.

An enabling environment is influenced and shaped by resources available, both human and material. While SSA has focussed on improving school infrastructure, i.e, construction of additional classrooms, toilets, boundary wall, ramps along with provisioning drinking water facilities, field level observations reveal that various gaps continue across districts. Recent media reports of the NEEV campaign show that many schools have poor infrastructure facilities and schools continue to function in the open, under trees. The lack of adequate classrooms and toilets and maintenance

of toilets are other issues that impact regular schooling. The issue of clean toilets has been constantly debated at all levels in the state. The lack of clean toilets further acts as a deterrent for girls, especially those in the older age group.

Having infrastructure in place does not necessarily mean that it is always functional. The SSA monitoring reports note that “though toilets were available in schools it was found that usability is a major concern. Most toilets are being used by boys as urinals. It was observed that maintenance of toilets is not a priority area and they were found to be unclean and unhygienic. It was also found that out of 160 schools surveyed water in toilets is available only in 20.6 percent schools. Only 31.8 percent schools reported that toilets were cleaned though not on a regular basis. No incinerator facility was found in the surveyed schools. Many of the newly constructed toilets are also kept locked by teachers (IDSJ, 2011/12 as cited in Rajagopal, 2013).

The government primary school in Nataniyon ki dhani in Sindhri block, Barmer, has an enrolment of 39 students. It is located right on the national highway and students have to cross the road to reach the school. There are two women teachers posted in the school. On the day of the visit only 4 children were present in the school. Toilets had been constructed in the school but the doors were broken and were very dirty and there was no water facility in the toilets (field notes, IDSJ 14-15).

Playground and Library facilities are also other weak areas. It was observed during monitoring that while library books were available in schools they are not distributed to the children; in some schools the book are torn and the upkeep was found to be poor.

Availability of teachers

The role of teachers is critical in ensuring the 'inclusion' of every child in the classroom and in ensuring schooling outcome. Teachers are expected to be aware of this responsibility and equipped to make every child feel accepted and comfortable. The issue of teacher deficit and teacher recruitment are ongoing concerns that have plagued the education landscape in the state. According to the State Report card 2014-15, the total number of teachers working in the state at the elementary level is 493877. The total number of government teachers is 259046. The gender distribution of teachers is as follows:

Table3: Gender distribution of government teachers

School category	Male	Female	Total
PS	48557	18814	67371
UPS	83667	36622	120289
Sec/Sr. Sec	49135	22251	71386
Total	181359	77687	259046

Source: DISE, 2014-15

The low percentage of women teachers and the absence of women teachers in schools does inhibit regular participation of girls in schooling particularly at upper primary and senior levels. A recent study on Women teachers in Rajasthan clearly points out that the presence of women teachers is supportive and makes a positive difference to girl students (ERU, 2014)

According to the norms laid out in the RTE Act the Pupil teacher ratio should not exceed 1:30 in primary schools and 1:35 at the upper primary level. According to DISE 2014-15, the current pupil teacher ratio in government schools is reported 21.75 (26.59 at the primary level and 13.19 at the upper primary level). Field observations indicate that in the desert districts like Barmer the PTR was 1:50. It is also evident that at the upper primary levels the availability of subject teachers continues to be a problem. While the state has tried to address the issue of teacher deficit and teachers have been appointed there continues to be a gap.

The non-availability of teachers in schools has also led to students and community members protesting and demanding teachers. One such case widely reported in the print media was related to a school in Bhim, in Rajsamand district where girls from three schools locked the gates of the schools and organised a protest against lack of teachers in their schools. They raised slogans Hum Saat sau aur shikshak paanch (we are 700 and only 5 teachers). They also demanded that the provisions of RTE be implemented. This demonstration led the district administration to fill the vacancies in these schools and appoint teachers (Times of India, 2015)

Another worrying aspect is that the information regarding RTE is not distributed evenly among teachers. Despite trainings being organised by the state department many teachers are not aware of provisions, responsibilities and implications of RTE. Notably, most teachers did not know that the RTE makes it the fundamental right of every child between 6 and 14 years of age to attend a neighbourhood school and enjoy schooling with certain quality parameters, including a 1:30 teacher-pupil-ratio, no corporal punishment and continuous and comprehensive evaluation of his/her scholastic progress.

RTE and Quality Parameters

The issue of improving quality of education has been extensively debated within the education discourse. The gap between expectations and actual performance in terms of children's learning continue. Part V of the RTE Act 8 clearly specifies those terms, under which the quality of elementary education is to be ensured, which include a comfortable teacher-student ratio, curriculum reform and improvement in evaluation methods.

In Rajasthan, the academic performance of students has not kept pace with overall improvements in enrolment. It is common knowledge that the nature of engagement

within the classrooms leaves much to be desired. National-level educational surveys have consistently shown that the vast majority of students fail to attain grade-level competencies at the end of five years. The evidence produced year after year by ASER (even though this is highly debated) give a broad indication to the poor learning levels within government schools. ASER 2014 indicates that in the State overall reading levels were low in grade V and only 46.7% children were able to read Grade II level textbook and the percentage of children who could at least do one place subtraction was 45.9%. The percentage of students who can read English sentences was poor at 15%. The situation in Grade VII was also not very encouraging.

The recent National Achievement Survey (2014) carried out by NCERT notes that in Rajasthan, the performance of students in language and mathematics was found to be significantly below the national average. In Class III the performance of both boys and girls in language and mathematics is lower than national average and all social groups also performed below national average.

On the other hand the state government has been conducting Sambalan programmes and every year similar findings have emerged. While academic performance and learning outcomes of students is dependent on a variety of factors, it is evident that teachers maintain a social and physical distance from children of disadvantaged groups.

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

To improve the quality and evaluation system, Right to Education (RTE) Act eliminated the traditional examination system and introduced a system of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). CCE prescribes a more “comprehensive” assessment of student achievement than traditional testing: it assigns scores not only on the basis of scholastic performance, but also on the basis of co-scholastic activities (such as arts, music, or athletics) and personality development as reflected in life-skills, attitudes, and values. CCE's mode of assessment is also meant to be “continuous,” in that teachers identify students' learning progress at regular time intervals on small portions of content (such as a single module or lesson). This regular assessment incorporates a variety of techniques, including unit tests, projects, and evaluation of class participation. It is designed to reduce the stress of preparing for major exams, while enabling teachers to closely monitor student progress and better tailor their teaching to student needs.

In Rajasthan the CCE was implemented in three phases. The State government has partnered with Bodh Shiksha Samiti, a well known NGO working on education in taking forward this provision.

Phase I (2010-2011): A pilot project was implemented in May 2010 in 60 schools in Alwar and Jaipur with NCERT textbooks of Classes I-V.

Phase II (2012-13) : CCE was implemented in Classes VI-IX, in 3059 government schools of 178 blocks in the State

Phase III (2013-2014) : CCE was extended to 9 more blocks covering all blocks across 2500 schools. CCE is being implemented in 5811 government schools in the State. (Sourced at rajssa.nic.in)

The implementation of the CCE as per RTE presents a mixed picture. While on the one hand it is reported that CCE is being implemented in a systematic way with support from BODH; according to the Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) 2015, in Rajasthan, while 72.8 percent of schools had heard of CCE, only 22 percent of these had received manuals. During SSA monitoring many teachers reported that it is extremely difficult for them to understand what CCE entails, especially in schools in remote and rural areas, let alone implementing it. They also articulated that the assessments take too much time as record of each child has to be maintained and it takes away teaching time.

An intrinsically linked issue that has implications on quality is the current debate on no detention policy. Section 16 of the RTE Act mandates that, no student can be held back in any grade, before completing elementary education (Class I to VIII). In September 2015, the State government cleared a proposal to amend the RTE Act. Two major amendments were proposed- one the repeal of the 'no detention' policy and two the monitoring of teacher performance by School Management Committees (SMC). Instead of 'no detention', the amendments proposed to introduce exams in at least three classes between Grades I and VIII.

While ending the no detention policy has been a demand that has been raised across several states, the fact that it has been misinterpreted as no assessment and the move to go back to a onetime assessment is problematic. In turn, as Dhankar (2015) notes 'if we were to understand the educational worth of no detention, we have to take into account three important ideas promoted by RTE simultaneously: they are admission in age appropriate class; continuous and comprehensive evaluation and no detention policy. If classroom processes have to be guided by children's interest and learning through activities it is important that there is active engagement where children can work together and progress in rational enquiry in a free atmosphere. Since children progress with varied speed and not necessarily through same conceptual routes, therefore one periodic examination on fixed questions for all becomes inappropriate and leaves much of the child's progress in scholastic as well as moral and emotional development unassessed. Hence, the need for CCE. Since children progress as per their own speed which is necessary for conceptual clarity, there is no point in pass-fail in class and the need for no detention policy'.

It is important that if CCE is seen as burdensome by teachers there should be consistent attempt to clarify the concepts and help them to improve teacher-student relationship.

Curriculum Reform

The role of the SIERT the mandated academic authority for RTE has not been proactive. The SIERT initiated review of textbooks on lines of NCF 2005, as part of the School and Teacher Education Reform programme supported by ICICI Foundation. A State level Steering Committee was set up by Government with subject experts to review the textbooks 2011-12. On the basis of review new text books were prepared for the primary and upper primary classes and reintroduced in the schools over a period of three years. However, currently on the pretext that the textbook are flawed, the SIERT has been instructed to rewrite of the textbooks. Media reports notes that the changes are being made to give prime importance to national issues and the focus will be on learning about culture and social values (ToI, 2015). The content of the textbooks has also been kept under cover. This ad hoc nature of decision making regarding the curriculum is not in keeping with the spirit of RTE.

Age Appropriate Admission and Special Training

Chapter II Section 4 of the RTE Act, enables out-of-school children to be admitted to an age-appropriate class and complete elementary education. The Act says: “Where a child above 6 years 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”. Provided that where a child is directly admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age, then, he or she shall in order to be par with others have a right to receive special training in such manner and within such time limits as may be prescribed”

It is evident that implementing this provision has been challenging in terms of scale, time frame and complexity of the task as majority of the out of school children belong to disadvantaged communities-schedule castes, scheduled tribes, Muslim minority, children with special needs, working children and children in other difficult circumstances. Girls comprise a bulk of out of school children. Ensuring their retention and completion once they are mainstreamed are critical areas of concern as they continue to face a variety of coping problems.

School Management Committees

The RTE makes it mandatory for every school to constitute a School Management Committee (SMC) under the RTE. The composition of the SMC include elected representative, parents/guardians of the children admitted in schools and a representative of teachers out of which a minimum of 3/4th members will be parents/guardians with a proportionate representation of parents/guardians from the disadvantaged and weaker sections. Overall membership should comprise 50% female representation.

One of the main objectives of the SMCs is to promote meaningful participation of parents in the schooling process. According to the SSA monitoring reports, out of 120 schools surveyed across districts of Rajsamand, Barmer and Sirohi 62.5% SMC members were generally aware about their role as SMC members but not aware of their financial powers and their role in the process of redress of grievances. 72.5% schools reported to have organised training for the SMC members. 48% schools have been provided with a copy of the guidelines to the SMC members. The information regarding RTE was found to be average. In these districts in several schools the SMCs had not been reconstituted after 2012-13 session. The role of the SMCs in the school development plan is also found to be marginal. The participation of women and members of the disadvantaged communities is also reported to be negligible.

However, a recent government order of August 2015 notes that the meeting of the SMC will be held on Amavasya days every month and a Samuday Jagriti Diwas will also be organised on the same day.

Grievance Redress and Monitoring

Monitoring of children's right to education has been given at the first level to local authorities and then to SCPCR. The Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Right (RSCPCR) is an independent state level statutory body which was set up in February 2010 by Government of Rajasthan by virtue of power given to it U/S 17 of the Commission of Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. RSCPCR works to recognise, promote and protect all rights of all children in the state of Rajasthan. The role, power, function and other modalities of the RSCPCR is enshrined in the Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights Rules, 2010, notified in April 2010.

A chairperson and members were appointed to the RSPCR in 2012 for a period of 3 years. Several workshops were organised by the Commission to discuss various aspects of implementation of the Act. According to a report within a period of three years the RTE cell received 563 complaints on various infringements of RTE provisions aspects of RTE of which 186 were disposed. Discussions with members of the RSCPCR inform that one of the key roles of the RSPCR was to create awareness on the RTE Act and also look into cases and complaints. However, a common problem that came up even when the complaints were followed up was the response of the DEO, which was not positive. There was no system of reporting back to the Commission. This made the role of the members and the Commission a mere formality. In addition the Commission had a small secretariat and RTE was only one of their mandates. They had to be dependent on the bureaucracy for support (personal communication with ex-members of RSCPCR, 2015). Currently, the SCPCR is functioning without a full time Chairperson or members.

The overall assessment of the implementation of RTE in Rajasthan denotes that there are many governance challenges and gaps remain in terms of educational provision, availability of resources and much is desired for ensuring contextualised and quality teaching and learning.

Section II

Recognising that the education system has expanded considerably in the state, it is imperative that the public education system is strengthened to ensure that every child can realise the right to education. In the context of a changing political milieu a number of issues have got mired in ideological considerations wherein the rights of children are being sidelined. These signs do not augur well for a State that has struggled to improve its educational status.

Some of the issues that need to be addressed without delay include:

- **Improving the quality of schooling in government institution:** There has been extensive discussion on improving the quality within government schools. In view of the fact that the overall trends show that the enrolment in government school is decreasing, it is pertinent that the state governments seriously follow all the norms in making every school RTE compliant. In addition, if the state does not succeed in making their delivery system more responsive and if the quality does not improve significantly, this situation may deteriorate.
- **Addressing the gender gap:** Girls constitute 46.17 percent of the total enrolment in rural areas at the elementary stage. Even though the state government has put in place various incentives to promote education of girls, i.e, free textbooks, transport vouchers, scholarships, the gender gaps at 8.22 percent at the elementary level continues to be challenging. The gender parity is low in several districts. It is evident that the institutional structures would need to gear up to the paradigm shifts envisaged and demands raised by RTE. The major challenge is how to deliver gender just quality education given the diversity of conditions under which elementary education is provided and demanded in the State.
- **Reviewing the recent decision on no detention:** It is imperative that the decision to reintroduce examination system in Class VIII be reviewed. It has been well argued that the traditional examination system does not necessarily enhance learning comprehension and understanding. It is also hasty to assume that the no detention policy and CCE are solely responsible for the low learning outcome levels of recent years.
- **Affirming role of the teacher:** It is important that there is a reiteration of belief in the teacher and classroom interaction. There is a need for a constant dialogue with the teachers and to give dignity to the teachers rather than shift the entire

blame of poor quality on teachers. There needs to be constant investment in training teachers through creatively designed teacher training programmes to help improve classroom interaction.

- **Effective teacher recruitment policy:** The lack of a teacher recruitment policy in the State has also contributed to the uneven distribution of teachers in rural and urban areas. The shortage of teachers in schools has a direct impact on academic performance and quality of teaching and learning. The need for an effective teacher recruitment policy to fill the gaps is the need of the hour.
- **Strengthening the SMC:** There is enough evidence to show that the SMCs are not contributing to the functioning of the school in a substantial way. There is a need to for improvement in the training and capacity building of SMC members. The state government has now fixed the dates when monthly SMC meetings are to be held. These should be monitored closely for effective functioning.
- **Reviewing Public Private Partnership policy:** A big threat looming over the education system is the move to bring in PPP in the education sector. According to the policy document prepared by the state government, it aims to involve the private sector in improving management and operation of government schools through PPP. The assumption that private schools have better learning outcomes despite low per student expenditure is misleading.
- **Debating the Curriculum changes:** Changes to the existing curriculum have been initiated without a public debate. Textbooks for classes I to XII have been rewritten by a select group constituted by the State department. Recent media reports indicate that many foreign authors in the English textbooks have been dropped as part of education departments directive to the textbook drafting committee to include content that evoke a sense of pride in the state and the country. The Hindi textbooks have also been overhauled and many Urdu writers have been dropped. These ad-hoc changes based on particular ideological leanings would impact teaching learning processes in the long run.

Conclusion

As the foregoing analysis shows the implementation of the RTE Act in Rajasthan has been challenging. While in the initial years, the State was a forerunner in implementing the RTE by putting necessary mechanisms in place, a number of decisions taken subsequently by the State government have been contrary to the spirit of RTE. It is pertinent that issues of quality and inclusive education are addressed systematically and in a transparent manner to ensure that the entitlements of the children are realised.

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शिक्षा के अधिकार के पांच साल

- विश्वंभर

भारत में आजादी के करीब 62 साल बाद सन 2009 में 'देश का भविष्य' कहे जाने वाले बच्चों के लिए अनिवार्य एवं निःशुल्क शिक्षा का अधिकार कानून पारित हो पाया। सभी के लिए अनिवार्य शिक्षा की आवाज आजादी के आंदोलन के वक्त से उठने लगी थी। यह माना जा रहा था कि शिक्षा का अधिकार कानून आने के बाद अभी तक शिक्षा से वंचित सभी तबकों— दलित, पिछड़े और कमजोर वर्ग— के बच्चों और बालिकाओं को शिक्षा मिल पाएगी। लंबे अर्से के इंतजार के बाद बनने वाले इस कानून के बारे में दोनों तरह की प्रतिक्रियाएं आईं। एक पक्ष का कहना था कि इससे सभी बच्चों को बेहतर गुणवत्ता की शिक्षा मुहैया हो पाएगी और गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा के लिए आवश्यक पर्याप्त भौतिक एवं मानव संसाधन सभी स्कूलों को उपलब्ध हो पाएंगे। दूसरे पक्ष ने कानून के आधे-अधूरे प्रावधानों के प्रति निराशा जाहिर करते हुए कहा कि यह कानून सीमित आयुवर्ग के बच्चों को ही शामिल करता है और इससे निजीकरण को बढ़ावा मिलेगा। कुल मिलाकर, शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में काम करने वाले सभी की नजर इस तरफ थी कि यह कानून शिक्षा की स्थितियों की किस प्रकार बेहतरी कर पाएगा।

शिक्षा का अधिकार कानून का क्रियान्वयन अप्रैल 2010 से हुआ। इस कानून में यह प्रावधान किया गया था कि समस्त सरकारी और निजी स्कूलों में कानून लागू होने के तीन साल के भीतर बुनियादी सुविधाएं पूरी तरह मुहैया करवा दी जाएंगी। साथ ही कानून में वर्णित अध्यापक की योग्यता/अर्हताओं को इस कानून के प्रावधानों के अनुसार मार्च 2015 तक तय मानकों तक अर्जित कर लिया जाएगा। यानी, मौजूदा स्थितियों को कानून के प्रावधानों के अनुसार बदलने के लिए तीन एवं पांच साल का वक्त दिया गया।

फिलहाल कानून को लागू हुए पांच साल पूरे हो चुके हैं। कानून के अस्तित्व में आने के बाद यह उम्मीद की जा रही थी कि इस कानून के आने के बाद:

- सभी बच्चों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा हासिल हो पाएगी
- सभी स्कूलों में तीन साल की तय समय सीमा में बुनियादी सुविधाएं मुहैया करवा दी जाएंगी
- संविधान के मूल्यों के अनुरूप पाठ्यचर्या, पाठ्यक्रम एवं पाठ्यपुस्तकें निर्मित होंगी
- कक्षा-कक्षाओं में परंपरागत शिक्षणशास्त्र के स्थान पर बाल केन्द्रित शिक्षणशास्त्र का व्यवहार होगा
- मूल्यांकन की परीक्षा केन्द्रित तरीकों के बजाय सतत् एवं व्यापक मूल्यांकन बच्चों के सीखने एवं आकलन में मदद कर पाएगा
- प्रत्येक स्कूल में कानून के अनुरूप प्राथमिक कक्षाओं में 1 : 30 एवं उच्च प्राथमिक कक्षाओं में 1 : 35 का शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात में शिक्षक मुहैया करवाए जाएंगे
- सामुदायिक भागीदारी के लिए शाला प्रबंधन समितियों के जरिए बेहतर प्रयास होंगे

लेखक शिक्षाविद् और "शिक्षा विमर्श" के सम्पादक हैं। ई-मेल : [E-mail : shikshavimarsh@gmail.com](mailto:shikshavimarsh@gmail.com)

- स्कूल स्तर पर शाला विकास योजना के निर्माण के जरिए निर्णय प्रक्रिया के विकेन्द्रीकरण को बढ़ावा मिलेगा
- बच्चों को स्कूल में भय के माहौल और दण्ड से मुक्ति मिलेगी
- सभी स्कूलों को कानून में तयशुदा योग्यता के शिक्षक मिल पाएंगे

इस लेख के जरिए इस कानून के पांच साल पूरे होने के बाद राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर शिक्षा की वर्तमान स्थिति को समझने की कोशिश की गई है। इस लेख के माध्यम से यह भी समझने का प्रयास है कि जब कानून लागू नहीं हुआ था तब विभिन्न मानकों पर शिक्षा की क्या स्थिति थी और आज तक उन्हीं मानकों पर देश कितना आगे बढ़ पाया है। देश की मौजूदा स्थिति को समझने के लिए मैंने तुलना के लिए साल 2009–10 के आंकड़ों को लिया है। तब यह कानून बना ही था और लागू नहीं हुआ था। वर्तमान स्थिति को समझने के लिए मैंने 2014–15 के मौजूदा आंकड़ों के साथ 2009–10 की तुलना से समझने का प्रयास किया है। ताकि तुलना के आधार पर समझ सकें कि हमारा देश 2009 के बाद शिक्षा में सुधार की दिशा में कितना आगे बढ़ा है। इस तुलना से यह समझने में भी मदद मिलेगी कि हमारे सामने फिलहाल किस तरह की चुनौतियां मौजूद हैं।

एक बात आरंभ में ही स्पष्ट कर देना आवश्यक है कि भारत जैसे विशाल देश की इतनी व्यापक शिक्षा व्यवस्था के बारे में शिक्षा संबंधी विभिन्न जानकारियों/आंकड़ों के लिए पर्याप्त स्रोत उपलब्ध नहीं हैं। अक्सर उपलब्ध जानकारियाँ/आंकड़ें सरकारी संस्थाओं के द्वारा एकत्रित किए जाते हैं। सरकारों पर बेहतर प्रदर्शन के दबाव के चलते यह कह पाना मुश्किल है कि ये जानकारियां और आंकड़ें जमीनी हकीकत को कितना सही अभिव्यक्त करते हैं। इन जानकारियों/आंकड़ों की अलग-अलग भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में विभिन्न संस्थाओं के द्वारा किए जाने वाले छोटे-छोटे अध्ययनों से विसंगति नजर आती है। अनेक बार ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि ये आंकड़े जमीनी हकीकत को सही मायने में बयान नहीं करते, लेकिन हमारे पास इन आंकड़ों के अलावा कोई दूसरे स्रोत मौजूद नहीं हैं जो पूरी शिक्षा व्यवस्था की तस्वीर पेश कर सकें। अतः एकत्रित आंकड़ों और जमीनी हकीकत के इस फासले को जानते हुए भी इन्हीं आंकड़ों की मदद से मौजूदा शैक्षिक स्थितियों और शिक्षा के अधिकार कानून की वर्तमान स्थिति को गढ़ने की कोशिश की गई है।

आरंभिक शिक्षा का फैलाव

आजादी के करीब 50 साल बाद तक भारत देश के सामने यह चुनौती रही थी कि सभी बच्चों तक स्कूल कैसे पहुंचाया जाए। पिछले करीब 20–25 सालों में शिक्षा की पहुँच के लिए सरकारी और गैर-सरकारी संस्थाओं के जरिए काफी काम हुआ है। सबसे पहले हम मौजूदा वक्त में आरंभिक शिक्षा के विस्तार या पहुँच को समझने की कोशिश करेंगे। हम सभी जानते हैं कि हमारा देश भौगोलिक विविधताओं से भरा देश है और इसके चलते शिक्षा की पहुँच एक बड़ी चुनौती रही है। पिछले तीन दशकों में सरकारों ने विभिन्न परियोजनाओं के द्वारा सभी तक स्कूल की पहुँच बनाने के प्रयास किए हैं। फिलहाल यह कहा जा सकता है कि अधिकांश बच्चों की पहुँच में किसी न किसी तरह का स्कूल है। सभी बच्चों तक स्कूल की पहुँच बनाने के प्रयास इस कानून के आने से काफी पहले से तेजी से किए जाते रहे हैं। लेकिन फिलहाल शिक्षा सभी बच्चों का हक बन चुकी है। यह तालिका पिछले पांच साल में स्कूलों की पहुँच के साथ उसमें वृद्धि और पूरे देश में शिक्षा के फैलाव को दर्शाती है।

तालिका-1

देशभर में स्कूली व्यवस्था का फैलाव (2009-10 एवं 2014-15 में तुलनात्मक स्थिति)

स्कूल श्रेणी	2009-10	2014-15	संख्यात्मक वृद्धि	वृद्धि (प्रतिशत में)
सरकारी	1,048,046	1,080,757	32,711	3.12
निजी	254,178	328,854	74,676	29.37
कुल	1,303,812	1,445,807	141,995	10.89

स्रोत: एलीमेन्ट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस

तालिका से जाहिर होता है कि 2009-10 की बनिस्बत स्कूलों की संख्या में वृद्धि हुई है लेकिन सरकारी स्कूलों के बजाय निजी स्कूलों की वृद्धि की गति कहीं तेज है। पिछले पांच सालों में निजी स्कूलों में करीब 30 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि के साथ ही सरकारी स्कूलों में यह करीब 3 प्रतिशत के आसपास है।

हालांकि यहां यह कह देना उचित होगा कि शिक्षा का अधिकार कानून आने के बाद किसी भी राज्य ने कानून में स्कूल की पहुँच के नियमों के अनुसार सभी बच्चों तक स्कूल की पहुँच को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए "शाला मानचित्रण" का कार्य नहीं किया है। यानी, इस कानून के आधार पर प्राथमिक और उच्च प्राथमिक स्कूलों की पहुँच की तय दूरी के अनुसार स्कूलों की पहुँच के लिए कोई सर्वे नहीं करवाया गया है। फिर भी यह माना जा रहा है कि वर्तमान में ज्यादातर आबादियों में करीब 1 से 2 किलोमीटर के दायरे में प्राथमिक और उच्च प्राथमिक स्कूल उपलब्ध हैं।

इस कानून के आने के बाद यह आशंका जताई जा रही थी कि यह कानून शिक्षा के निजीकरण की दिशा में ले जाएगा क्योंकि इस कानून में यह प्रावधान किया गया है कि सभी निजी स्कूलों में गरीब एवं कमजोर वर्ग के बच्चों के प्रवेश के लिए 25 प्रतिशत सीटों का आरक्षण होगा और उनके खर्चे का पुनर्भरण सरकार के द्वारा किया जाएगा। वर्तमान में प्रति बच्चा पुनर्भरण की राशि अलग-अलग प्रदेशों में फर्क है। राजस्थान में इस साल पुनर्भरण की यह राशि प्रति बच्चा करीब 17 हजार रुपये सालाना है। यह तालिका दर्शाती है कि निजी स्कूल ज्यादा तेजी से फैल रहे हैं और उनमें नामांकन लगातार बढ़ रहा है हालांकि इन आंकड़ों के आधार पर इसके कारणों का पता नहीं लगाया जा सकता है। फिर भी यह बदलते परिदृश्य की ओर संकेत तो करते ही हैं।

स्कूलों में नामांकन एवं ड्रॉप-आउट

सरकारी एवं निजी स्कूलों में कुल बच्चों के नामांकन की स्थिति को तालिका-2 में देखा जा सकता है। हमारे देश में 2014-15 के आंकड़ों के हिसाब से आरंभिक शिक्षा में करीब 19.77 करोड़ बच्चे अध्ययनरत हैं। नामांकन में भी वृद्धि दिखाई देती है।

तालिका-2

सभी (सरकारी एवं निजी) स्कूलों में नामांकन की स्थिति

कक्षा	2009-10	2014-15	संख्यात्मक वृद्धि	वृद्धि प्रतिशत में
1-5	133,405,581	130,501,135	-2,904,446	-2.17
6-8	54,467,415	67,165,774	12,698,359	23.31
कुल	187,872,996	197,666,909	9,793,913	5.21

स्रोत: एलीमेन्ट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस

तालिका-2 से जाहिर होता है कि सरकारी स्कूलों की बनिस्बत निजी स्कूलों में नामांकन में काफी वृद्धि देखी जा सकती है। हालांकि ये आंकड़ें सिर्फ नामांकन के हैं। इन नामांकित बच्चों में से कितने बच्चे नियमित आते हैं, इसकी जानकारी नहीं मिलती। साथ ही प्राथमिक स्तर पर स्कूलों में नामांकन में कमी आई है जबकि उच्च प्राथमिक स्तर पर यह वृद्धि करीब 23 प्रतिशत की दिखाई दे रही है।

तालिका-3

स्कूलों से ड्रॉप-आउट की स्थिति (प्राथमिक स्तर पर)

साल/सत्र	कुल नामांकन	ड्रॉप-आउट बच्चों की संख्या	प्रतिशत
2009-10	133,405,581	9,018,217	6.76
2014-15	130,101,135	5,611,548	4.3

स्रोत: एलीमेन्ट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस

तालिका-3 दर्शाती है कि पिछले 5 साल में ड्रॉप-आउट की दर में कमी आई है। फिर भी कानून के बाद भी इस समस्या से छुटकारा नहीं मिल पाया है। यानी कुछ बच्चे अभी भी स्कूल की जद से बाहर हो रहे हैं।

यदि सरकारी एवं निजी स्कूलों के नामांकन की स्थिति पर गौर करें तो यह जाहिर होता है कि सरकारी स्कूलों की अपेक्षा निजी स्कूलों में नामांकन में तेजी से वृद्धि हो रही है। जैसा कि तालिका-1 से भी जाहिर होता है कि निजी स्कूलों की संख्या में वृद्धि हो रही है, उसी अनुपात में निजी स्कूलों में नामांकन में भी वृद्धि हो रही है और प्राथमिक स्तर पर सरकारी स्कूलों में नामांकन में कमी आ रही है। इस स्थिति का जायजा तालिका-4 में लिया जा सकता है।

तालिका-4

प्रबंधन के अनुसार नामांकन की स्थिति

स्कूल	कक्षा	2009-10	2014-15	संख्यात्मक वृद्धि	वृद्धि प्रतिशत में
सरकारी	1-5	96,222,886	79,952,199	-16,270,687	-16.90
	6-8	34,368,617	39,021,735	4,653,118	13.53
निजी	1-5	37,099,124	46,626,355	9,527,231	25.68
	6-8	20,055,701	26,929,030	6,873,329	34.27

स्रोत: एलीमेंट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस
निजी स्कूलों की बढ़ती संख्या में कुछ प्रदेश काफी तेज गति से आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। 2013-14 में सबसे अधिक और सबसे कम निजी स्कूलों वाले प्रदेशों की इस स्थिति का जायजा निम्न तालिका से लगाया जा सकता है:

तालिका-5

सबसे अधिक एवं कम निजी स्कूलों वाले प्रदेश

सबसे अधिक निजी स्कूल वाले प्रदेश		सबसे कम निजी स्कूल वाले प्रदेश	
प्रदेश	कुल निजी स्कूलों का प्रतिशत	प्रदेश	कुल निजी स्कूलों का प्रतिशत
केरल	59.63	बिहार	2.22
दिल्ली	47.54	झारखण्ड	5.04
चण्डीगढ़	41.67	त्रिपुरा	5.96
पांडिचेरी	39.69	प. बंगाल	10.17
मेघालय	39.61	-	-

स्रोत: फ्लेश स्टेटिस्टिक्स 2013-14, डाइस
यदि निजी स्कूलों की वृद्धि का प्रतिशत इसी प्रकार जारी रहा तो अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि अगले कुछ सालों में निजी स्कूलों का प्रतिशत सरकारी स्कूलों की तुलना में अधिक होगा। भारतीय समाज पर इसके क्या असर होंगे इसकी कल्पना की जा सकती है।

शिक्षकों की उपलब्धता

गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा के लिए योग्य शिक्षकों की उपलब्धता एक अनिवार्य शर्त है। शिक्षा के अधिकार कानून के बाद यह उम्मीद की जा रही थी कि कानून की अनुसूची में वर्णित शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात को सुनिश्चित किया जाएगा और तयशुदा योग्यता के शिक्षक सभी स्कूलों, फिर चाहे वे सरकारी स्कूल हों या निजी स्कूल, उपलब्ध करवाया जाएगा। शिक्षा का अधिकार कानून प्राथमिक स्कूलों में शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात 1 : 30 और उच्च प्राथमिक स्कूलों के लिए शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात 1 : 35 का प्रावधान करता है।

तालिका-6

स्कूलों में शिक्षकों की उपलब्धता

शिक्षक	2009-10	2014-15	वृद्धि
कुल शिक्षक	5,816,673	7,963,161	2,146,480
सरकारी स्कूलों में प्रतिशत	68	58.8	-9.2
सहायता प्राप्त निजी स्कूलों में प्रतिशत	8.8	8.6	-0.2
गैर-सहायता प्राप्त निजी स्कूलों में प्रतिशत	23.1	29.9	6.8 प्रतिशत

स्रोत: एलीमेन्ट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस

हम देख सकते हैं कि कुल शिक्षकों में सरकारी शिक्षकों का अनुपात अभी भी करीब 59 प्रतिशत है। हालांकि पिछले पांच सालों में सरकारी शिक्षकों की संख्या में कमी आई है और यह कमी करीब 9 प्रतिशत है जबकि निजी स्कूलों में शिक्षकों के प्रतिशत में करीब 7 प्रतिशत वृद्धि दिखाई देती है।

शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात को यदि राज्यों के स्तर पर देखा जाए तो यह कानून के तय प्रावधानों के अनुरूप ही आते हैं लेकिन शिक्षकों का बंटवारा एक बड़ी समस्या बनी हुई है। शहर के नजदीक स्कूलों में शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात कानून में तय अनुपात से कुछ अधिक है लेकिन दूरस्थ गांवों में यह अनुपात कई गुना अधिक हो जाता है।

यदि शिक्षक बालक अनुपात की स्थिति 2009-10 में देखें तो यह 1 : 32 है जबकि यह 2014-15 में घटकर 1 : 25 हो जाती है। शिक्षकों की इस उपलब्धता का असर शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता पर दिखाई नहीं देता।

तालिका-7

शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात की साल 2009-10 एवं 2014-15 में तुलनात्मक स्थिति

शिक्षक-बालक अनुपात	2009-10	2014-15
	1 : 32	1 : 25

स्रोत: एलीमेन्ट्री एज्युकेशन ट्रेंड्स 2014-15, डाइस

2009-10 की एवज में 2014-15 में महिला शिक्षिकाओं की भागीदारी में वृद्धि हुई है। 2009-10 में महिला शिक्षिकाओं की भागीदारी 44.8 प्रतिशत थी वहीं यह 2014-15 में बढ़कर 47.7 हो जाती है। हालांकि 2009-10 में स्थायी शिक्षकों की एवज में 2014-15 में अनुबंधित शिक्षकों के प्रतिशत में वृद्धि हुई है। जहां 2009-10 में अनुबंधित शिक्षकों का प्रतिशत 11 था वहीं 2014-15 में अनुबंधित शिक्षकों का प्रतिशत बढ़कर 13.6 हो जाता है।

शिक्षा का अधिकार शिक्षकों की अर्हता तय करते हुए बीएसटीसी/बीएड या इनके समकक्ष योग्यता हासिल करना सभी शिक्षकों के लिए मार्च 2015 तक अनिवार्य बनाता है। मार्च 2015 गुजर जाने के बाद भी करीब 20 प्रतिशत नियमित शिक्षक कानून में तय अर्हता/योग्यता को पूरा नहीं करते जबकि अनुबंधित शिक्षकों में अभी भी 35 प्रतिशत शिक्षक ऐसे हैं जो तय अर्हता/योग्यता को पूरा नहीं करते।

अध्यापक शिक्षा

अध्यापक शिक्षा को गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा के लिए अनिवार्य शर्त के तौर पर देखा जाता है। यदि शिक्षकों की सेवापूर्व अच्छी शिक्षा होगी तो इसका असर कक्षा-कक्षीय प्रक्रियाओं और सीखने-सिखाने पर होगा। लेकिन हमारे देश में 2013 के आंकड़ों के अनुसार अध्यापक शिक्षा पर सरकार के द्वारा किए जा रहे निवेश में कमी हुई है। अधिकांश अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थान निजी हाथों में हैं। अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थानों के भीतर क्या होता

है इसकी प्रमाणिक जानकारी नहीं है फिर भी यह कहा जा सकता है कि इस क्षेत्र में बढ़ता निजीकरण चिंता पैदा करता है।

तालिका-8

अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थानों में सरकारी एवं निजी की हिस्सेदारी

अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्था	डीएलएड संस्था	बीएड कॉलेज	एमएड
सरकारी	764	226	72
निजी	6,528	6,622	837
कुल	7,292	6,848	909

स्रोत: टीचर एज्युकेशन, डिपार्टमेंट ऑफ स्कूल एज्युकेशन एण्ड लिटरेसी, मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय

तालिका-8 से जाहिर होता है कि अध्यापक शिक्षा में निजी संस्थाओं का दखल ज्यादा है और उनके शिक्षण की गुणवत्ता पर सरकार का किसी तरह का नियंत्रण नहीं है। निजी क्षेत्र के अधिकांश अध्यापक शिक्षा संस्थान अनियमित और शिक्षण के गुणवत्ता के लिहाज से खराब संस्थान हैं। सरकारों ने पिछले दशकों में अध्यापक शिक्षा को निजी क्षेत्र के लिए खोलकर व्यवसाय का माध्यम मान लिया है। अतः गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा की दिशा में यह एक निराशा की स्थिति में ले जाने वाला कदम ही प्रतीत होता है। इन संस्थानों में पढ़कर निकलने वाले शिक्षार्थियों की संख्या में भी भारी फर्क है। सरकारी डीएलएड कॉलेज में अध्ययनरत शिक्षार्थी 45,230 हैं वहीं निजी डीएलएड कॉलेजों में पढ़ने वाले शिक्षार्थी 362,114 हैं। वहीं सरकारी बीएड कॉलेज में अध्ययनरत शिक्षार्थी 25,831 और निजी बीएड कॉलेजों में पढ़ने वाले शिक्षार्थी 768,318 हैं। सरकारी एमएड संस्थानों में अध्ययनरत शिक्षार्थी 2660 जबकि निजी एमएड संस्थानों में पढ़ने वाले शिक्षार्थी 24,176 हैं।

कानून के लागू होने के बाद यह उम्मीद की जा रही थी कि सरकार भौतिक एवं मानव संसाधनों की उपलब्धता के लिए अपने बजटीय प्रावधानों में इजाफा करेगी लेकिन पिछले पांच सालों में सरकार ने पहले से चले आ रहे वित्तीय प्रावधानों से इतर कानून के लक्ष्यों को पाने के लिए अतिरिक्त धनराशि उपलब्ध नहीं करवायी है। अतिरिक्त वित्तीय प्रावधानों के बजाय सरकार ने साल 2015-16 के बजट में शिक्षा के वित्तीय प्रावधानों में कटौती की है।

सीखना एवं सीखने की गुणवत्ता

हमारे देश में इतनी व्यापक शिक्षा व्यवस्था में स्कूलों में सीखने की गुणवत्ता पर नियमित शोध नहीं होते हैं कि स्कूलों के भीतर क्या सीखा-सिखाया जा रहा है। यदि देशभर की स्थिति का जायजा लिया जाए तो सिर्फ दो अध्ययन/सर्वे हैं जो बड़े स्तर पर किए जाते हैं। राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, नई दिल्ली द्वारा हर चार साल में आयोजित “नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे” और प्रथम द्वारा हर साल आयोजित होने वाला “असर” अध्ययन।

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, नई दिल्ली के द्वारा 104,374 बच्चों, 34 राज्यों/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेशों, 298 जिलों एवं 7046 स्कूलों में किए गए नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे के आंकड़ें बताते हैं कि स्कूलों में सीखने की गुणवत्ता औसत और औसत के आसपास है। नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे के अनुसार:

भाषा

- 14 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से ऊपर हैं
- 15 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से नीचे हैं
- 8 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से कोई ज्यादा फर्क नहीं है

गणित

- 14 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से ऊपर हैं
- 12 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से नीचे हैं
- 8 राज्य/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेश राष्ट्रीय औसत से ज्यादा फर्क नहीं है

(स्रोत: नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे, कक्षा 3, 2014, एनसीईआरटी, नई दिल्ली)

सीखने की गुणवत्ता की स्थिति पर अधिक बारीकी से काम किए जाने की आवश्यकता है। हालांकि राष्ट्रीय औसत से यह जाहिर नहीं होता है कि इस औसत का पाठ्यचर्या और पाठ्यक्रम से क्या संबंध है।

इसके अलावा एक अन्य सर्वे प्रथम संस्था द्वारा हर साल आयोजित होने वाला “असर” सर्वे है। प्रथम संस्था ने साल 2014 में 569,229 बच्चों का सर्वे किया। इस सर्वे के अनुसार बच्चों के सीखने की गुणवत्ता की स्थिति इस प्रकार है:

भाषा

ऐसे बच्चे जो भाषा में कक्षा 2 के स्तर का पाठ पढ़ सकते हैं:

कक्षा	सभी बच्चों का प्रतिशत
3	23.6
5	48.1
8	74.6

स्रोत: असर रिपोर्ट, जनवरी 2015, प्रथम असर सर्वे के अनुसार कक्षा 2 के स्तर का पाठ पढ़ पाने में कक्षा 3 के 23.6 प्रतिशत बच्चे ही सक्षम हैं और कक्षा 5 के 48 प्रतिशत बच्चे कक्षा 2 का पाठ पढ़ पाते हैं जबकि कक्षा 8 के करीब 75 प्रतिशत बच्चे कक्षा 2 का पाठ पढ़ पाते हैं। असर सर्वे बच्चों की भाषा में सीखने की स्थितियों की काफी निराशाजनक तस्वीर पेश करता है। यदि इसकी तुलना नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे से करें तो स्थिति भिन्न नजर आती है। वहां राष्ट्रीय औसत के आसपास की स्थिति अधिक नजर आती है।

इसी तरह यदि गणित में असर सर्वे की बात करें तो सर्वे के अनुसार गणित में बच्चे 86-47 जैसे बाकी कर और 876÷8 जैसे भाग कर सकते हैं:

86-47 जैसे बाकी कर पाने वाले बच्चे

876÷8 जैसे भाग कर पाने वाले बच्चे

कक्षा	बच्चों का प्रति	कक्षा	बच्चों का प्रतिशत
3	25.3	5	26.1
4	40.2	6	32.2
5	50.5	7	44.1

स्रोत: असर, जनवरी, 2015, प्रथम असर सर्वे और नेशनल अचीवमेंट सर्वे पर अधिक गहराई से विश्लेषण किए जाने की आवश्यकता है। फिर भी यहां यह कहा जा सकता है कि अध्यापक शिक्षा, अध्यापकों की योग्यता और व्यवस्थागत कमियों का सीधा असर बच्चों के सीखने पर देखा जा सकता है।

स्कूलों में बुनियादी सुविधाओं साल 2009-10 एवं 2014-15 की तुलनात्मक स्थिति

बुनियादी सुविधा	2009-10	2014-15
शिक्षार्थी-कक्षा कक्ष अनुपात	32	27
पुस्तकालय	—	82.1
स्कूलों में पेयजल सुविधा प्रतिशत	92.6	96.1
स्कूलों में बालक शौचालय प्रतिशत में	31.0	95.4
स्कूलों में बालिका शौचालय प्रतिशत	58.8	87.1
चारदीवारी सहित स्कूल प्रतिशत में	51.5	64.5
स्कूलों में रेम्प प्रतिशत में	47.1	77.4
स्कूलों में बिजली कनेक्शन प्रतिशत	39.0	58.9
कम्प्यूटर प्रतिशत में	16.0	25.2

स्रोत: फ्लेश स्टेटेटिक्स, 2014, डाइस

इन आंकड़ों के आधार पर कहा जा सकता है कि बुनियादी सुविधाओं की स्थिति में सुधार आ रहा है। हालांकि कम्प्यूटर शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में काफी बड़ी चुनौती अभी भी बरकरार है। बिना चारदीवारी वाले स्कूलों का प्रतिशत अभी करीब 35 है और इसी तरह विकलांग बच्चों के लिए रेम्प अभी भी 23 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में मौजूद नहीं है। बिजली से करीब 40 प्रतिशत स्कूल महरूम हैं।

पुनः यह ध्यान देने योग्य है कि ये सरकारी आंकड़ों के आधार पर पेश की गई तस्वीर है। इससे उलट जमीनी हकीकत की तस्वीर अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में किए गए कुछ छोटे-छोटे अध्ययन पेश करते हैं। असर रिपोर्ट 15206 स्कूलों के अवलोकन के आधार पर कहती है: 2010 में 72.7 एवं 2014 में 75.6 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में पीने का पानी था, 2010 में 47.2 एवं 2014 में 65.2 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में बालकों के लिए इस्तेमाल योग्य शौचालय थे, 2010 में 32.9 एवं 2014 में 55.7 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में बालिकाओं के लिए इस्तेमाल योग्य शौचालय थे, 2010 में 62 एवं 2014 में 65.3 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में खेल मैदान थे, 2010 में 51 एवं 2014 में 58.8 प्रतिशत स्कूलों चारदीवारी थी (सरकारी एवं सरकारी सहायता प्राप्त स्कूलों की स्थिति। साल 2009-10 का डेटा उपलब्ध नहीं है)।

शाला प्रबंधन समितियों का गठन

2010-11 में 46.32 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में शाला प्रबंधन समितियों का गठन हुआ था। 2014-15 में इसमें आशातीत बढ़ोतरी हुई है और वर्तमान में 93.4 प्रतिशत स्कूलों में शाला प्रबंधन समितियों का गठन हो चुका है। शाला प्रबंधन समिति के सदस्यों के प्रशिक्षण और कार्य प्रणाली में अभी भी ढेर समस्याएं हैं। शिक्षा का अधिकान कानून शाला प्रबंधन समितियों को हर साल शाला विकास योजना जैसा महत्वपूर्ण कार्य सौंपता है लेकिन इस कार्य में इन समितियों का दखल अभी भी नहीं बन पाया है।

कानून की अनुपालना के लिए बनी विभिन्न संरचनाएं

शिक्षा के अधिकार कानून के प्रावधानों की अनुपालना और मॉनिटरिंग की जिम्मेदारी राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर "राष्ट्रीय बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग" और राज्य स्तरों पर "राज्य बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग" को सौंपी गई है। अद्यतन जानकारी के रूप में 30 राज्यों और केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों में आयोगों का गठन हो चुका है लेकिन इनकी कार्य प्रणाली और शिक्षा के अधिकार कानून पर दी जा रही तवज्जो में गंभीरता नहीं है। राष्ट्रीय बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग में पिछले करीब एक-डेढ़ साल से अध्यक्ष और सदस्यों के पद खाली हैं। इसी तरह राजस्थान में पिछले करीब डेढ़ साल से अध्यक्ष नहीं हैं और करीब 6 महीने से सदस्यों के पद भी खाली हैं। शिक्षा विभाग के स्तर पर शिकायतों के निवारण का ढीला-ढाला रवैया है।

जिला स्तर शिक्षा संवाद समितियों का गठन किया गया है और स्कूलों में व्यवस्था संबंधी समस्याओं पर कार्यवाही को ध्यान में रखते हुए जिला परिषद् के जिला कार्यकारी अधिकारी, सीईओ, को इसका अध्यक्ष बनाया गया है। इसके साथ ही सदस्यों में जिला शिक्षा अधिकारी के साथ स्वयंसेवी संगठनों के प्रतिनिधियों को रखा गया है लेकिन इनकी बैठकें नियमित नहीं

होती हैं। ब्लॉक स्तर पर शिक्षा संवाद समितियां बनी हुई हैं। लेकिन इनकी बैठकों में भी नियमितता नहीं है।

साल 2010 में लागू होने के बाद तीन साल के नियत समय में बुनियादी सुविधाओं के मानक को हासिल करना था और मार्च 2015 तक अध्यापकों की योग्यता के मानकों को भी पूरा करना। फिलहाल डाइस के आंकड़ों से प्रतीत होता है कि बुनियादी सुविधाओं के मानकों को मुख्यतः हासिल कर लिया गया है लेकिन उनका जमीनी स्तर पर सच्चाई फर्क है। इसके साथ ही अध्यापक योग्यता के सवाल भी बने हुए हैं। उपरोक्त विश्लेषण के आधार पर मौजूदा स्थिति को देखते हुए लगता है कि शिक्षा के अधिकार कानून की संकल्पना को जमीनी स्तर पर साकार होने के लिए और इंतजार करना होगा।

Status of Key Education Indicators: An Analysis of U-DISE in Rajasthan

- Ganesh Kumar Nigam

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (henceforth referred to as the RTE Act), implemented in India since April 2010, guarantees every child between the ages of six to fourteen the right to free and compulsory education provided by the state. The Act stems from the Fundamental right to education as laid down under Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, the Act ensures the legal entitlement of education to all children (between ages six and fourteen) and further sets forth certain norms and standards for schools to follow- in order to achieve the overall objectives of the Act.

Some of the prominent features of the Act, apart from free and compulsory education, include - schools in the neighborhood, infrastructural norms and standards, a framework for national curriculum, never being denied admission, enforcement of standards for teacher training, prescribed Pupil Teacher Ratio, filling up the teacher vacancies through the recruitment of qualified teachers, prohibition of detention of students in the same class, prohibition of corporal punishment, creation of a friendly, child centered teaching learning experience for the children and a comprehensive and continuous system of student assessment.

It has been five years since the enactment of the RTE Act and there have been certain significant improvements in terms of overall enrolment figures and infrastructural availability. However, gaps persist and a Herculean effort is needed to fully realize the objectives of the Act.

This paper presents an overview of some of the key education indicators in the state of Rajasthan. Overall, in comparison to the rest of the country, Rajasthan is lagging in some of the indicators (as highlighted below) and renewed efforts have to be made in order to implement the RTE Act in the state. The education indicators discussed here include statistics on education finance, enrolment, infrastructure, teachers and various outcome indicators. Additionally, this article also provides a comparative analysis of Rajasthan with respect to (a) other states and (b) the national level figures.

The data discussed in this article is primarily taken from two sources – Census and U-DISE. The U-DISE or the Unified District Information System for Education is the computerized management information system for school education in India. It is the single largest statistics collected by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and forms the basis of planning, monitoring and evaluation

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of school level interventions. The U-DISE covers around 1.5 million schools (1.1 million government schools and 0.4 million private schools) across all the 662 districts and 35 states and Union Territories. The database contains information about multiple educational indicators including school particulars like infrastructural availabilities, information on RTE norms, details about teachers, enrolment rates and so on. Moreover, the data which is collected is often segregated by gender and social groups.

Out of a total of 1, 20, 875 schools in Rajasthan, around 1, 06, 254 schools are under the RTE; and out of the ones under RTE, 68, 997 schools are managed by the Education Department or local bodies (broadly considered to be Government schools). An analysis of these schools is presented in this article. However, before moving on to the indicators, a brief glimpse of the position of Rajasthan with respect to national level figures and other neighboring states is presented.

Rajasthan in Comparison to other States

The RTE Act has been implemented in Rajasthan since March, 2011. However, in terms of 'literacy rate', Rajasthan ranks at number 33 nationally. While the national literacy rate stands at 72.99%, the literacy rate in Rajasthan is 66.11%, based on Census 2011. In comparison, the literacy rates of Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are much higher at 78.03%, 75.55%, 69.32% and 67.68% respectively.

Similarly, in the case of the 'percentage of children within the age group of 5-14 years who are working', Rajasthan ranks at the position of 30 nationally. While 4.51% children in India are found to be working within this age group, the percentage in Rajasthan is higher at 5.85%. The comparative figures for neighboring states like Haryana, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh is 2.69%, 4.23% and 4.79% respectively. This clearly indicates that a large number of children continue to be employed in the state instead of being enrolled in educational institutions.

The data for the 'percentage of out-of-school children' is available from the SRI-IMRB Survey that was undertaken in the year 2014, commissioned by the MHRD. It was found that there are approximately 5.02% children who are out-of-school in Rajasthan, ranking it at number 33 within the country. In comparison, it was found that there are 2.97% out-of-school children in India with the percentage being 1.05 for Haryana, 1.94 for Gujarat, 3.78 for Madhya Pradesh and 3.90 for Uttar Pradesh. As far as the number of girls who are married off before the legal age of marriage is concerned, it was found that the percentage is extremely high for Rajasthan where 33.77% girls were married before it was legally permissible to do so. This clearly indicates that social problems persist in the state and education of girls continues to remain a big challenge. For the country as a whole, it was found that 19.80% of girls were married before the legal permissible age. As far as other states in the region are

concerned, the figures are 13.04% for Gujarat, 18.59% for Haryana, 20.43% for Uttar Pradesh and 25.67% for Madhya Pradesh.

Consequently, the 'annual average drop-out rate' for Rajasthan was found to be quite high. While the national average drop-out rate at the primary level for 2013-14 was 4.34%, the percentage in Rajasthan was almost double at 8.39%, placing it 29th within the country. The drop-out rates, in comparison, was 0.41% in Haryana, 0.76% in Gujarat and 10.14% in Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, the 'transition rate from Primary to Upper Primary Level' was 88.23% in Rajasthan, in 2013-14; whereas the overall transition rate was 89.74% for the country as a whole. In the case of Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), it was found that 27.11% schools at the primary level and 14.11% schools at the upper primary level had PTR that violated the mandated norms of the RTE Act.

Thus, it is seen that for most indicators, the performance of Rajasthan is not only below national average but it is worse than the performance of its neighboring states.

Enrolment Rate

Out of the 120.26 lakh children who were enrolled in classes 1 to 8, 59.40 lakh were enrolled in government schools. The number of children enrolled in the primary and upper primary levels have seen a marked increase of 5.6% in the last ten years, from 77.12 lakhs in 2004-05 to 81.41 lakhs in 2014-15. The figures from the upper primary level is even more astounding, with an increase of 72.5% (from 22.52 lakh in 2004-05 to 38.85 lakh in 2014-15).

However, it is important to note that the enrolment share in government schools for the elementary level has actually decreased from 65.18% in 2007-08 to 49.40% in 2014-15. The share of enrolments in the private schools, on the other hand, has witnessed an increase from 34.82% in 2007-08 to 50.60 in 2014-15, a jump of approximately 16%. While the state average for percentage of enrolment in government schools is around 49.40%, the highest number of children enrolled in government schools can be found in Banswara district (79.25%) while the lowest in Jaipur (27.04%). This shows a clear preference for private schools in urban areas such as Jaipur. In most of the districts, the ratio of enrolment of girls to boys was found to be lower, when compared to their overall population.

The 'student attendance rate' is found to be lower at 71.3% for the primary level as compared to the national average of 76%- in 2012-13. The rate is found to be higher for boys (72.9%) than girls (69.7%) at the primary levels. However, at the upper primary level, the trend reverses with more number of girls attending school (74.6%) than boys (69.7%). The attendance rate is found to be the lowest among children belonging to the STs and Muslim groups.

As far as trends in 'out-of-school' children are concerned, over the last ten years, there has been a decrease in 1.7% (from 7.95 lakhs in 2005 to 6.01 lakhs in 2014). The percentage of children of school going age who are attending education institutions is lower in Rajasthan (at 79.07%) as compared to the national average of 81%. The highest is seen in the Jhunjhunu district with 86.45% while the lowest is recorded in Jaisalmer with only 65.73% children attending education institutions. As per NSSO data, 'age specific attendance ratio' was 88% in 2013-14, for children within the ages of 6-13.

Outcome Indicators

Out of the 21.89 lakh students who were enrolled in class 1 in the year 2010-11, only 15.90 lakhs (around 72%) could reach class 5 in 2014-15; indicating that 5.99 lakh (almost 28%) could not successfully complete their primary education. The figure for elementary education is equally alarming. Out of the 22.34 lakh children who were enrolled in class 1 in 2007-08, only 12.25 lakh (around 54.5%) could reach class 8 in 2014-15; implying that about 45.5% children could not complete their elementary education and dropped out in between.

The U-DISE data of Rajasthan suggests that the 'retention rate' for 2014-15 is 72% at the primary level. It is 71.24% for girls and 72.68% for boys. At the upper primary level, the retention rate saw a sharp decrease and was recorded to be 54.54% at the state level- 56.21% for boys and 50.06% for girls.

The district-wise segregated data shows the 'retention rate' to be highest in Jaipur at 79.95% and lowest in Jaisalmer at 30.87%. There are about thirteen districts in Rajasthan where the retention rate is 50% or less. Further, the gender parity is less than 0.80 in as many as six districts- Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Sirohi, Ajmer and Bhilwara.

Moving on to 'grade-wise drop-out' figures, it is seen that maximum number of children drop out of schools, almost 11.77%, in grades 5-6, the period of transition from the primary to the upper primary level. The trend then repeats itself at the transition period from the upper primary to the secondary levels- with 9.38% children dropping out of schools.

Scrutinizing the figures based on social groups, it is seen that 9.13% girls and 7.76% boys drop-out of school at the primary level in Rajasthan. These figures are alarmingly high for children belonging to Muslim families. In all, 18.50% of Muslim children drop-out of schools at the primary level. The figures are further high for Muslim girls, where as many as 20% children drop-out of schools at the primary level itself. Overall, for all the social groups, the drop-out rate for girls is more than that of boys at the primary level, with approximately 10% girls belonging to the SC and ST communities dropping out of school. Exploring the district wise data, it is noticed

that Jaisalmer has the highest level of drop-out rate at the primary level, with as many as 13.30% children dropping out in 2013-14. Jaipur, on the other hand, has the lowest drop-out rate. The difference between the drop-out rates of boys and girls was found to be the highest in Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalor and Sirohi.

At the upper primary level, it is found that 4.49% boys and 7.95% girls dropped out of school in 2013-14. Similar to the trend seen at the primary level, at the upper primary level the drop-out rate of children belonging to Muslim families is seen to be the highest at 20.59%. Among Muslims, the drop-out rate of girls is observed to be higher (at 22.90%) than that of boys (at 18.77%). Once again, the drop-out rate of girls is higher across all social groups; except in the case of STs where the drop-out rate for boys was 7.20% while that of girls was 6.75%. District-wise, Jaisalmer recorded the highest drop-out rate at 17.79% at the upper primary level while the lowest is seen at Jaipur at - 0.78%. The difference between the drop-out rates of girls and boys is seen to be the most in the districts of Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Jalor, Pali and Sirohi.

As stated above, the overall 'transition rate from primary to upper primary level' is 88.23% in Rajasthan, with larger number of boys reaching upper primary levels as compared to the girls. Disaggregating the data by social groups, it is seen that the transition rate is lowest for children belonging to the Muslim community with only 67.75% of Muslim girls moving forward from the primary to upper primary levels. The transition rate for Muslim boys is 72.82%. Across social groups, the transition rates for girls are lower than that of boys. District-wise, it is noticed that the transition rate is the highest in Jaipur (98.34%) while it is the lowest at Jaisalmer (67.54%).

The transition rates from elementary to secondary levels present a similar picture, with 90.62% of the children enrolled at the elementary levels progressing on to secondary levels. However, once again it is seen that the transition rate of girls (at 86.66%) is significantly lower than that of boys (93.75%). The trend with respect to children belonging to Muslim communities continue; with only 67.68 Muslim girls and 75.18% Muslim boys moving onto secondary levels. District-wise, Kota recorded the highest transition rates at elementary to secondary levels at 100.42% while the lowest was recorded in Jaisalmer at 63.57%.

Teachers

As per the norms and standards stipulated in the RTE Act, there must be at least one teacher for every thirty students at the primary level and one teacher for every thirty five students at the upper primary level. However, Rajasthan faces an overall shortage of teachers. As per data collected under U-DISE in 2014-15, it was observed that there is an overall shortage of 42,361 teachers, if the norms of the RTE Act have to be adhered to. At the primary level, there is a shortage of almost 15,078 teachers whereas at the

upper primary level, the shortage is of 9, 464 teachers. At the secondary and higher secondary level, the shortage is once again around 17, 819 teachers.

District wise, the gap is highest in the district of Pratapgarh while it is lowest in Kota. It is also noted that whereas there is a gap of more than 20% in eight districts (Bikaner (20.52%), Jailsamer (34.51%), Barmer (33.62%), Jalor (24.80%), Udaipur (22.04%), Dungarpur (27.74), Pratapgarh (35.35%) and Dhaulpur (26.71%)), there were three districts where teachers are in excess (Jhunjhunu -4.95%, Sikar - 0.44% and Kota -5.40%).

Further, block-wise, it is found that certain blocks have more than 10% teachers in excess. Some of these blocks, for example, are Neemrana (-29.64), Sanganer (-24.43%), Behrore (-24.22%), Sultanpur (-24.12%) and Nadwai (-19.57%). Similarly, there are blocks where the teacher availability gap is more than 35%. Some of these blocks are - Dhariyawad (48.04%), Chohttan (43.55%), Bap (43.38%), Sam (41.05%) and Kotra (40.98%).

Focusing exclusively on government schools, it is noted that 33, 703 schools require teachers. Out of these schools, 57% (19, 273) schools require only one teacher; 18% (6, 218) schools require two teachers; 12% (3, 875) schools require three teachers; 6% schools (2, 105) require four teachers while 7% schools (2, 232) require more than four teachers - to fulfill the RTE norms with respect to teachers.

Out of the 68, 997 government schools in Rajasthan, 13, 305 schools (almost 19.28%) are single teacher schools. The highest number of single teacher schools can be found in Jaisalmer (almost 43%) while the lowest can be found in Kota (3.57%). Additionally, there are five blocks in Rajasthan where the percentage of single teacher schools is more than 50%, namely, Baytu, Sam, Bap, Dhariyawad and Kotda.

Availability of Infrastructure

As a part of its norms and standards, the RTE Act prescribes certain infrastructural requirements to be fulfilled in every school. These include norms related to building, head master's cum-office cum-store room, one classroom for one teacher, ramps, separate toilets for boys and girls, drinking water facility, kitchen shed, boundary wall, playground and so on. In Rajasthan, it is seen that most of these infrastructural norms have been met at a majority of schools.

However, certain gaps do persist. For example, around 40, 280 schools are without a playground. Similarly, 30, 719 schools are without a ramp, clearly creating access barriers for the differently-abled children. Around 28, 307 schools are yet to have a separate room for head master/ storage room while 17, 927 schools still do not fulfill the one teacher one classroom norm. Almost 10% schools (6, 985) fulfill all the ten infrastructural norms.

District wise, it is seen that Tonk has the highest rate of compliance with infrastructural requirements under the RTE Act at 84.38% while the lowest is found in Udaipur (71.67%). Further, blockwise, it is seen that 52 blocks have infrastructural availability rate at 75% or more while 24 blocks have an infrastructural availability rate of more than 85%. The top five blocks in terms of infrastructural availability are- Todaraisingh, Rani, Malpura, Bilara and Laxmangarh; while the bottom five blocks are – Kherwara, Kotra, Peepalkhoot, Rishabhdev and Gogunda.

In terms of number of classrooms in government schools, 36% of schools have classrooms as per RTE norms. However, around 26% (17, 927) schools still require about 34, 600 classrooms to fulfill the stipulated norms. Specifically, about 46% of these schools (8, 221) require one classroom; 31% (5, 480) schools require two classrooms; 14% (2, 590) schools require three classrooms while 9% (1, 636) schools require more than three classrooms.

Conclusion

To summarize, it is seen that although certain progress has been made in Rajasthan with respect to education, challenges continue to persist and rigorous efforts are needed to achieve the goals of education for all. One of the biggest challenges that emerge from this analysis is the education status of girls; and especially those belonging to the marginalized communities. Ensuring regular attendance, retention of students and curtailing drop-outs remains a major task for the educational authorities. Taking into account the challenging topography of the state, special attention needs to be paid towards people inhabiting these areas.

The shortage of teachers is another major challenge that plagues the system. More than 42,000 teachers are required and unless these positions are filled and qualified teachers recruited, problems will continue to persist. Additionally, the state has a huge number of single teacher schools- directly impacting the quality of education. Rationalization of teachers must be undertaken to ensure that the provisions under the RTE Act are met.

To conclude, it can be stated that the state has made significant progress in ensuring the availability of infrastructural access to the children. However, recruitment of teachers, curtailing drop-outs and ensuring children complete their education are areas that need to be focused upon. Lastly, special attention must be paid to ensure that children within the age group of 6-13 are not employed so that they can continue their basic education and complete schooling.

Teaching a Mixed Class: Education Set Right?

- Neeraja Raghavan

A teacher had taken her class (of primary school children) on an excursion. Before setting out, every child had received (from the school) a list of things that they must carry: like a sleeping bag/bed sheet, a toilet pouch, etc. Upon reaching their destination after a daylong journey, the children excitedly opened their suitcases and unzipped their sleeping bags. Their animated chatter was in sharp contrast to a few students who were sitting apart and quietly watching their fellow classmates unzip their sleeping bags. Slowly, these children spread out their bed sheets and opened their polythene bags to take out their toothbrushes. The teacher's heart pricked, as she recounted to me: “These were our RtE children. I cannot forget their faces as they watched their more privileged classmates spread out their fancy belongings. I wondered if we should just have asked all of them to come with bed sheets instead of sleeping bags...”

The above is a true account. While I was preparing to write this paper, I happened to talk to a teacher in an alternative school in Bangalore. Armed with my literature survey, I began asking her questions about the various (academic) challenges that a teacher encountered, with the RtE in place.

But all of those paled into insignificance after I heard the above story.

In the light of the Right to Education Act (2009) [RtE], this paper is an attempt to examine the question: How to make teachers in Rajasthan more motivated and competent? Situated as it is in the very specific context of the RtE, this paper will address the issue of teacher competence therein by adopting the following sequence:

- What are the implications of RtE for teachers?
- What sorts of demands are made upon the teacher as a result of these implications?
- How best can a teacher meet these challenges?

To begin with, the question of teacher motivation will be explored – within as well as outside the RtE. We then proceed with an examination of the Act and the demands that it makes of a teacher's competence. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations that serve to address the above question in Rajasthan.

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A large part of the literature referred to in this paper stems from the report titled *Teacher Motivation in India* by Vimala Ramachandran et al (2005). Ramachandran's study of teachers in Rajasthan (http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/PolicyStrategy/3888Teacher_motivation_India.pdf) has used government data, policy documents and published material on India and interviews with stakeholders in the state of Rajasthan and rapid survey in ten schools of Tonk District of Rajasthan.

Teacher Motivation

While there is a vast amount of literature on this subject, there is no significant research on why some teachers are able to stay motivated under the very same conditions that others find de-motivating. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) clearly states that a need fulfilled no longer motivates.

In the context of this paper, then, the question arises: what do teachers (in Rajasthan) need?

Teacher absenteeism has been written about at great length. Ramachandran (2005) reports that even teacher's attendance is impacted by the power/position of a teacher. For instance, those who hold leadership positions in trade unions, or have connections to the political party that is in power, seldom attend school. Transfers to preferred locations and continuing in a desired location can be maneuvered through the right connections. Thus, motivated and honest teachers are the ones who get transferred to 'tough' locations, and are even burdened with a number of non-academic duties. If at all there are incentives, then, they could be seen in just forging the right connections so as to work where one wishes.

Aligned with the above findings, and also since we have not conducted a need analysis, we are going by certain logical implications of decisions that affect teachers' lives. In order to analyse these implications, we refer to the theoretical framework that has been used by Jarret Guajardo (2011). Eight interconnected categories are taken to affect teacher motivation, and these are –

1. Workload and Challenges
2. Remuneration and Incentives
3. Recognition and Prestige
4. Accountability
5. Career Development
6. Institutional Environment
7. Voice
8. Learning Materials and Facilities

1. **Workload and Challenges** - As far as their workload goes, the usual teaching duties are accompanied by an expectation (stated in the RtE) that teachers will be made available for the decennial population census, disaster relief duties and duties related to elections. It is important to note that when a teacher is called out for such duties, no support is provided to him/her for completion of the teaching duties that she missed. An unspoken message is therefore conveyed that the teacher's work is dispensable: (s)he may miss any number of classes while (s)he attends to these non-academic duties – there is no real accountability. Against this backdrop, how can a teacher be expected to remain accountable and regard her work as important? Indeed, how can the teacher herself feel important? To quote Ramachandran (2005), Teachers complained about feeling demeaned when they were sent out to collect data or for door-to-door polio campaigns. They argued that their job was not do research surveys and campaigns for the government and felt that when they had to do so it affected their social status.

2. **Remuneration and Incentives** – Ramachandran (2005) concluded that, on the whole, teachers were not unhappy with their salaries and that many male teachers had alternative sources of income. But when it comes to the issue of incentives, there are practically none. Teacher awards are largely seen as politically influenced. Hardly anyone deems an award as recognition of actual performance. It is thus clear that both by way of professional support as well as incentives, teachers' needs are not met.

3. **Recognition and Prestige** – While the profession of teaching was highly respected in the early years of independence, it is not so any longer. Recognition, if it does come, is highly politicized in the form of awards that can be obtained through lobbying. As a profession, teaching is not prestigious.

4. **Accountability** – As already pointed out in 1 above, the demand for a teacher's availability for non-academic duties conveys an implicit lack of accountability. In addition, a teacher's job in India is tenured for life, with pension. There is no link between the performance of a teacher and the receipt of these benefits. Accountability has only to stem from within, in such a context.

5. **Career Development** - A teacher just moves up the ladder of promotion according to her seniority (years of service). The career options that open up for a teacher as she builds on her teaching experience are those of a Head Teacher or a Principal.

6. **Institutional Environment** – Where one-room and two-room schools prevail, without boundary-walls and toilets, it is imperative that basic amenities such as these be addressed, before 'higher needs' like an academic and fearless atmosphere are gone into. 47% primary schools in Rajasthan lack these amenities. Interestingly, Ramachandran (2005) reported that

Not a single teacher talked about the absence of a library or teaching-learning materials as affecting the working environment.

This goes to show that the need for resources has not been felt by teachers: hemmed in as they are with a lack of basic amenities.

7. **Voice** – A teacher should have a say in matters like the choice of textbook, development of curriculum, methods of transaction of content, methods of assessment, and teaching-learning resources that can be acquired by the school. Better still if the teacher can have a voice on community-related issues, and can anchor debates in Parent-Teacher meetings on issues of concern to the community. The current situation, as described above, requires that a teacher has connections with those in power in order to have a voice.

8. **Learning Materials and Facilities** – Since teachers themselves do not have high expectations as far as infrastructure is concerned (Ramachandran 2005), learning materials are few and far between. It is the textbook that is the main resource.

The above needs can be scrutinized through the lens of Maslow's pyramid.



Going upwards from the bottom of the pyramid, it appears (from this writer's own experience in working with teachers as well as from reports like that of Ramachandran 2005), that government teachers are reasonably secure and safe, financially and otherwise. According to Ramachandran (2005), the teachers in Rajasthan (by and large) feel that they are well paid and do not have serious complaints about their standard of living. Some male teachers – who are the sole breadwinners in their families – do feel the need to take up other jobs for extra income. So, increments and perks will not go far in motivating these teachers. As Maslow pointed out, a fulfilled need no longer motivates.

It is this writer's submission that it is their self esteem which needs to be enhanced. A glaring need of a teacher (why, of any professional) is to feel valued and recognised. Unless this happens, why would a teacher demand learning materials and facilities, take pains to teach better, or even seek his/her own capacity enhancement? The significance of the work that a teacher does is – very understandably – not felt by the teacher, who is seen by those in power as merely discharging routine and dispensable duties. The very first step in restoring a teacher's dignity and value is to put an end to the practice of using teachers to carry out duties other than teaching. Until and unless this is done, there is little hope for motivating teachers and therefore, for teacher development. Given the enormity of bringing about such a shift in policy, it is realised that sustained and multi-pronged effort will need to be invested to effect such a policy change. **No measures to establish teacher accountability will be successful until this happens.**

Maslow's higher needs can be addressed only after this need for self esteem and recognition is attended to. As argued above, this is the most critical need for teachers in Rajasthan – and unless this is met, no act (RtE or otherwise) will truly find realization.

Implications of the Right to Education Act 2009 for the Teacher

According to the Act, the age of a child is the determining factor to decide the class of admission. Thus, for example, a never-enrolled nine-year-old will have to be admitted in Class IV, regardless of whether or not that child is at the learning level of a Class IV student. Further, if a parent is transferred mid-year, or, for that matter, at any time of the year, the Act dictates that the child of that parent must be admitted to a school in the new location. No screening procedures are allowed for admissions, under the Act. Most importantly, no child can be denied admission. In addition, the Act stipulates the minimum number of working hours per week for a teacher as 45 (this includes preparation hours). It also states that teaching-learning equipment shall be provided to each class as required. [There is, however, no mention of who will provide this and who will ascertain what exactly is required.]

We now turn to the second aspect of the question: teacher competence, particularly in the light of the RtE.

Demands on the teacher

From the above, the following demands upon a teacher can be envisioned:

- While some children could go along with the flow, many others could be lost – and each lost at a different stage

- With about thirty five children in the class - of multiple learning levels and abilities - the teacher may find that (s)he has to deal with too many challenges all at once
- Assessment could be a huge challenge – especially with never-enrolled children, who may still need to get acclimatized to the written mode of assessment
- The teacher may not know what resources are needed for transaction of certain content
- If and when these resources are identified by the teacher, they may not be available
- Above all, the episode described at the start of this paper throws up the most significant point that a teacher needs to address: the stark socio-cultural contrast between the RtE children and the more privileged ones. [Vimala Ramachandran's study of teachers in Rajasthan (Ramachandran 2005) has revealed that the capacity of teachers to reach out to all children with empathy and love is determined in great part by their social attitudes and community prejudices.]

Meeting these challenges

In order to equip a teacher to meet some of the above challenges, it is necessary to take a look at the existing scenario in Rajasthan. In summary, Ramachandran's report (2005) concludes that teachers, for the most part, seem to be doing a job – for a living. How supported do teachers feel? Teachers have acknowledged (Ramachandran 2005) that the quality and frequency of in-service teacher training leaves much to be desired. While they lack the skills to manage so much diversity in the classroom, there is also a mismatch between the training programmes that teachers attend and those that they sorely need - for the programmes are usually aligned with large urban schools where one teacher manages one class. However, here, teachers often have to teach multi-grade classes, where teacher-pupil ratios are high, and these are seldom addressed in training programmes. It is not surprising therefore that most teachers interviewed found training to be more of a burden than an aid.

Labels like joyful learning and child- centred learning do not mean anything to teachers who have to deal with social diversity, different levels of students and most importantly, children who are undernourished, hungry and frequently ill (Vimala Ramachandran et al, 2004b). Focus group discussion with teachers in Rajasthan revealed that teachers wanted subject-specific training for multi-grade situations. (Ramachandran 2005)

This throws up a huge lacuna – for the power of effective training in boosting the motivation of a teacher can hardly be denied. The task therefore is tremendous: from changing mindsets and mitigating caste prejudices, to designing well-planned training programmes that equip teachers to transact content innovatively to a multi-grade (and multi-socio-economic) class - daunting indeed!

Where does one begin?

The introduction of an act like RtE stems from the intent to effect a change. Sustaining this change warrants change agents who will see the change through. Rogers' theory of change management (Rogers 1963) – though having its origins in the field of management – lends itself well to other domains as well. To quote Rogers (1995):

It is useful to remember, that trying to quickly and massively convince the mass of a new controversial idea is useless, It makes more sense in these circumstances to start with convincing innovators and early adapters first.

If a certain threshold number of people can adopt the desired change – so as to reach a tipping point, so to speak – others will slowly follow suit. The theory is simple and explains why some people are willing to change while others are slow to follow suit. His theory is based on five personality traits –

- Innovators – Usually the implementers of change
- Early Adopters – Cautious about change
- Early Majority – Adopt to change quickly
- Late Majority – Change skeptics
- Laggards – Stick to tried and tested methods

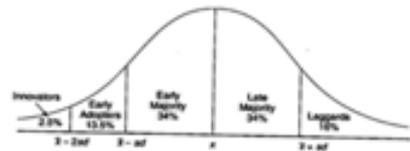


FIGURE 5.4 Relationship between types of adopters classified by innovativeness and their location on the adoption curve
Source: Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1983), p. 247.

To quote Ramachandran (2005):

Everyone – the different categories of people we spoke to – was of the opinion that 25 to 30% teachers are highly motivated and work very hard regardless of their personal circumstances. Another 30% comply with all the formal requirements – regularity, attendance, data on enrolment and retention, mid-day meal distribution and so on. These teachers have the potential but the system has worn them out. The remaining 40 to 45% can be categorised as 'indifferent' – they are just not motivated and really do not care.

Quite clearly, there was a mix of personality types encountered in Ramachandran's study as well.

In course of the study, we came across teachers who loved children and were highly motivated regardless of where they were posted. These were exceptional people. It was, indeed, humbling to meet teachers who worked hard despite all odds. We came across situations where good teachers received tremendous community support that led to improvement in their teaching and overall results. The reverse was also true. There were villages that had a wonderful teacher in the past but could do little to motivate/support a new teacher who just refused to teach.

It is therefore suggested that either innovators or early adopters are worked with - at the start – across the body of teachers, school management, government officials, policy makers, etc. This is one way of finding change agents in each microcosm.

Through the investment of sustained efforts in engaging with these people, a slow changeover of the early and late majority in the remaining segment may later become possible.

How does one go about this?

It has been the experience of this writer (Raghavan & Sood, 2015) that teacher development programmes which are pre-designed with content, pedagogical techniques or classroom management methods seldom impact teachers in a sustained manner. Not every participant feels the need for the content that is being transacted. Instead, drawing out of each teacher his/her own burning issue has been found to be an effective starting point for teacher development. Facilitating teachers to carry out Action Research on their specific issue has organically drawn from them many deep insights and even the urge to build their own capacities. Slowly, this will turn into a mode of teacher development wherein the onus of development lies with each teacher, and the road is carved uniquely by each teacher, with facilitation by teacher educators. It will result in an organic way of equipping these teachers with sound content knowledge, innovative pedagogical techniques and critical thinking skills – instead of a pre-designed workshop that imparts such knowledge, regardless of any such felt need in the participants.

Some successful action research studies have been conducted by teachers in the very same issues listed under the section: **Demands on the teacher**. RtE or no RtE, similar challenges were encountered and met. For instance, one teacher duo successfully raised the level of Class VI students in Math, as they began the academic year with five of the students not even knowing place value. Through their Action Research, they tried different methods of raising the level of these five children without ignoring the rest. Another teacher devised novel assessment methods to include those children who were first-generation learners and therefore were not yet comfortable with the written mode of assessment. Through his Action Research, he revisited his assumption that children who cannot write or articulate their thoughts 'do not know anything', and came to the conclusion that this bias was a carryover

from his own school days. Instead, he now realised that such children only lacked confidence, and, once supported, they slowly came out of their shells and even fared better than the more articulate children. [For want of space, more such examples are not being elaborated here. More examples will be presented during the consultation.] Against this backdrop, it is not unreasonable to expect teachers who conduct Action Research (in specific problems that they identify, in the context of the RtE) to slowly move towards questioning archaic teaching-learning practices, exploring various modes of assessment of learning and undergoing shifts in their perception of the role of the teacher. Indeed, small but significant beginnings were made in this direction by teachers who participated in the study described by Raghavan & Sood (2015).

We now turn to the final section where recommendations are proposed, in light of the RtE. It is pertinent to share here the writer's own dilemma while penning these: each time an idea came to mind, it was swiftly followed with the fear of politicization of that idea during implementation! The only way this writer could emerge from this repeated cycle was to put down the ideas regardless of the possibility of their being politicized. It is worthwhile mentioning this here: as the reader is also likely to face the very same cycle while reading through these recommendations. Perhaps the basic caveat that finds mention in this paper could help bail one out of this cycle: that of beginning to work only with the early adopters and the early innovators.

Recommendations:

- To begin with, it is proposed that the glaring contradiction between expecting accountability from a teacher and simultaneously dismissing it (while sending teachers out for non-academic duties) be addressed. As long as this practice continues, it is unlikely that the prestige of a teacher will be enhanced in any significant manner. Professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers and lawyers are never called upon to perform such duties. A teacher cannot be blamed for continuing to disregard her daily work, when it is expected that she disregards it during 'exigencies' like census data collection, election duty, etc.
- Secondly, it is suggested that programmes and processes be put in place for bringing into the public domain the real lived-in experiences of successful professionals vis-à-vis their own teachers. It is not hard to find a successful professional who can recall a teacher who impacted him/her greatly, and perhaps, even inspired him/her. Right from government officers to businessmen, an investigative/exploratory programme can be set up wherein these people are interviewed about their influential teachers. These interviews can be regularly shared over television/radio or newsletters – which, if done for a long enough period, may effect a slow change in the manner in which teachers are perceived! Too often, such efforts are a 'one off' effort – on Teachers' Day – which seldom has a lasting impact. Instead, what is being

proposed here is a steady and sustained effort to make the public aware of the critical role of teachers in every single person's life. Funding for such an effort can also be drawn from the wellspring of gratitude that the successful professional of today feels for yesterday's teacher that (s)he owes a debt to. A Teacher Empowerment Fund can be set up where inflows come from contributions of grateful professionals towards the teacher who impacted them – and perhaps, even made them what they are today. [Policy makers, particularly, can be interviewed about the teacher who impacted them. This also can be done with the early innovators and early adopters in the sector of policy makers. Once such a person has admitted to the debt that (s)he owes the teacher of yore, it will be that much more difficult for the policy maker to support a demeaning policy for the teachers of today.]

- Thirdly, certain mechanisms need to be put in place for parents to be constantly aware of the impact of good teachers on their own children. The school management can request parents to speak to their children about the teacher who really inspires them, or impacts them, and have their children talk to them/write an essay on the subject. The conversations/essays could also be just about an interesting class of the day, a 'feel-good' practice adopted by a certain teacher, a concept that became clear thanks to the patient explanation of a teacher...and so on. Topics for such essays can be suggested by school managements, and the written essays/conversations can be regularly shared by parents with the school management during Parent-Teacher Meetings. If this is done in a sustained and structured manner, it will have a dual benefit: first, it will make parents aware of what constitutes good teaching practices and second, also make them more aware of how important a role the teacher plays in the lives of their children. While all parents need to engage with their children's education to some degree, this sort of inclusion into their child's education will particularly help parents of RtE children value education more significantly.
- Such an effort can also be extended to the school management: again, those amongst the management who fall under the class of early adopters or early innovators. What, according to the Head Teacher/Principal, is a 'good' teaching practice? An 'effective' classroom management strategy? How would they like others to also learn from these practices? How have they found their teachers dealing with the challenges that RtE poses? In what way can they lend support to teachers to face such challenges? A periodic scrutiny of such practices (by the management) with a sharing of the same – in a non-judgmental manner – not only with the teaching faculty, but also with government officials like Block Education Officers, Cluster Resource Persons, etc. would aid the breaking down of the mindset that a teacher's work is not as noteworthy as that of those in 'more powerful professions'.

- Processes for the authentic recognition of teachers who perform well should be put in place. Instead of awards - that already carry the stain of politicization – teacher conferences can be held. In such platforms, teachers can be invited to present their own action research in teaching techniques, classroom management, or any of the challenges that RtE throws up for them, and their presentations judged by an impartial panel – of other teachers.
- The RtE throws up many questions that challenge the traditional mindsets that most teachers are naturally conditioned with. Their notions of caste and class differences are challenged when they have to teach children of the marginalized sections of society (See episode described at the start of this paper.) Sharing platforms for teachers to openly talk about their dilemmas – again, in a non-judgmental atmosphere – would go a long way in bringing together the teaching community and helping them see that it is natural for them to be wondering how best to deal with such problems. Solutions emerge best from a ground of empathy and understanding. [Prescriptions never work.]
- The entire system of education that we have carried down the ages needs to be examined critically. This, again, works best if such an examination comes organically from the stakeholders. If it is thrust upon them in a top-down manner, it will defeat the very purpose. It is proposed that Teacher/School Leader Development Programmes through Action Research (encompassing problems identified by each teacher/Leader in areas spanning content enrichment, pedagogy, classroom/school management, etc.) be launched for the teachers/leaders. It has been the experience (Raghavan & Sood 2015) of this writer that several skills like
 - critical thinking,
 - identifying one's own assumptions and questioning them,
 - becoming cognizant of one's own areas of capacity enhancement,
 - building of a broad perspective of the nature of each subject, etc.

unfold organically through facilitation of action research by teachers. Needless to say, these programmes should begin by targeting the 'early adopters' and 'early majority' amongst the relevant community. In their very design, these training programmes will be participative, so that the targeted participants' issues are selected even to kick start the programmes. Action Research is just such a route, and this writer has found this route to be very powerful and effective indeed. This will also help in lending a voice to the teacher right from the start of (and all through) the teacher development programme.

- Lastly, teacher networks can be formed to facilitate exchange of ideas and innovative practices, either through the Net or printed publications. While political clout is the gain now seen in networking (Ramachandran 2005), the

proposed intent of teacher networks will demand (and recognize) effective ideas and successful practices – in place of power and authority. One such has been initiated by this writer in the magazine TEACHER PLUS (<http://www.teacherplus.org/category/in-the-staffroom>) and has been successful in bringing together many teachers across the country into rich discussions around topics of relevance to them as well as to many other teachers who read the magazine.

- To sum up, one can only quote Margaret Mead: Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

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DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Situation, Challenges and the Way Forward

- Hridaykant Dewaan

Introduction:

The discussion on quality has to be foregrounded by a clarity on the following questions:

What is Education? What do we include as elements in it? Why should we have or provide opportunity to everyone for education? Why do we people want to be educated and why do want them to be educated?

And when we think of education whose education, are we talking about, for what purposes and then think about the implications of our choices?

What does quality education mean? What kind of education is good quality? How would we analyse whether good quality education is being imparted or not?

These questions are being considered in the context of India, a democratic state. The idea of a democratic state has in its basis and its goal an equity of opportunity, agency and justice. It requires the participation of all its citizens in its endeavors. There are various ways in which this has been expressed with these elements ingrained. One of the most remarkable ways of expressing this idea is in the Preamble of the Constitution of India. It is a declaration by the people of forming themselves into a group that would give each of them certain rights. The assumption in this is that the declaration of the kind of ambience we want to build with specification of the rights assured, promised or anticipated for each was sufficient to describe the way citizens would relate to each other, the way, institutions and structures would relate to the citizens. This partially addresses the question why we want all Indians to have education and also has implications for the question what education should be provided.

Why Education: In any society education has two components; a component of education by the family and the community and the second of more formal education. The educative process also has to perform two roles; one is to communicate to the learners traditions, practices and way of thinking of her community and the other is to provide her with the capability to go beyond that and to help transform the community and society. To carry forward the knowledge of the community through learning more and also develop the ability and the confidence to challenge what is believed and practiced by the community.

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The choices of the change that we may want education to induce are also to be carefully chosen. For example it may be towards more co-operation, humanising and merging into the group or it may be of competition, standing out and forming and/or consolidating a group/sect/community identity and pursue its interests. Thus, education at any historic time struggles to perform two dialectic roles, one that locates a student within his society/community and people and become a part of it, and the other that it gives him the awareness and critical insight into his society and develops in him the capacity to stand up to and against the evil prevalent in it and endeavor to change it. The question of quality and the notions we have relates directly to this aspect of his/her struggle. There are no situations in which a society can say it has reached an absolute or even optimal level of adherence to the principles it wants and hence it has only to stay there.

The reality would require a struggle to deepen the principles and make the effort to ensure their retention as well as redefinition and refinement. This also points out that what the manifestations of quality would be, thus is contentious. The nature of these would depend on the beliefs and understanding of the society that we have in mind. We may argue that change is not needed or that the pace at which it would change cannot be too rapid and some may have the impatience that the inequity and the injustice in society have to go more rapidly. Within these some may argue that economic growth is the engine for equity while others may say it is redefining the way we look at equity and distribution that is the key. The nature of the choice affect and structure the notion of quality we advocate. It is in this sense we have to always keep track of the constitutional goals and commitments and use that as a touch stone to place the notions of quality of education in. The question of quality thus relates directly to curricular debates and struggle. Embedded in that are questions about what the child needs to learn, how well does she manage to lean that, how she uses the learning and the status and the earnings she acquires etc. Clearly this is not an individual struggle and thus putting the onus of learning the curricular choices imposed on the child and arguing that those who have the will find their way through the educational system and the socio-economic system is an inadequate response to the commitment.

The education and the Indian context: The commitment – The key words in the preamble of the Indian Constitution¹² are Justice, Liberty, Equality of status and opportunity and Fraternity. These demand from each citizen an understanding of the meaning of these and how he or she may express it. The constitution in its emphasis expects the political and the executive to ensure that all citizens are aware of, understand, feel themselves capable and connected enough to attempt these goals not only for themselves but for all others too, and in this process challenge the status quo and provide all citizens the scope to aspire widely and be supported to make that attempt. It is not that each can be assured of the place she aspires for but the support to enable her to make the effort must be complete, transparent and equitable. The

meaning of these or any other terms is best learnt and internalised through experiencing it. The road towards actualising this is through education and hence it has to lay the foundation of the way we look at our education and try to build it. Good education would thus have to ensure that the child experiences this. Obviously while, much of education happens outside the institutional framework in the community and other interactions, the education in the school system has to reflect these notions. The implications of this are not just on the curricular expectations and the stratified treatment to children in the school but also on the stratified nature of schools available.

The commitment to social, economic and political justice and equality of status and of opportunity was made as a vision. It was a promise to move from the then highly iniquitous and stratified society in terms of caste, gender, economic status, political space, a society that was deeply unequal, unrespectful and deeply repressive for a large section, towards a liberal and democratic society with dignity to each individual with education and other entitlements. It has to be a right for all, not to be available as a kind gesture or in tokenism to a few. It is important to think how far have we progressed towards this and how far are we from this goal. And are we closer to it compared to where we were at independence and are we moving towards it. While we know it is as an arduous task, the intensity of commitment and its implications on many counts seems to be dimming.

Reaching the goal - a mirage or a serious attempt: This commitment can only be enabled and marginally effected through acts and law. The critical aspect is how we can make this functional on the ground and in the lives of all people. There can be some immediate improbable occasions that can produce chastisement and punishment through the enforcements of law via the courts, the only effective way is to build in the people an understanding of the principles and the commitments and develop the faith and confidence to think that they can choose what they want to do and also enable and help others do that too. Thus while they need to be aware of the possibility, at the same time, they also must accept the rationale of this equitable contract to form the group of citizens. This confidence can be described as the ability to create options and have the opportunity to build capability and awareness to aspire for the choices emerging from these options. This clearly requires first the knowledge of possibilities and the belief that anyone can actually aspire to be whatever she chooses to be. Clearly we are yet far away from the reaching this, even though we started the journey many decades ago. It may be pointed out that these commitments are to be repeatedly clarified and defined in an evolving manner as we move forward. The real freedoms and opportunity to choose and achieve the functioning that the person desires, requires, the nature of and possibilities of freedom to also grow. And for all this and to develop citizens' capabilities, education is the central tool.

Over the 60 years of independence, we have suffered from the lack of conviction on this account in our policies, governance and executive systems and most importantly in the fabric of the people of the nation itself. The effort at making education possible has seen many twists and turns; many commitments and recommitments but has never become the priority. It has always lost out to economic development and to internal security and internal defense among other things. The first step towards building equitable opportunities is the step towards equitable educational opportunities for all. It has taken us 60 years to make access to the structure called school possible for all. The structure however, is inadequate and inappropriate in many ways. There are concerns about the infrastructure but even more importantly about the atmosphere and the program followed in the school, the expectations the school has and the welcome it gives to children. We shall come back to these issues later.

The enrollment figures show that perhaps all children are in school but they also show a large amount of children dropping out fairly quickly and by the secondary school most have dropped off. It is also not clear if we know why they drop out or whether as a system we are concerned about it. In a stratified Society organized education in order to be equitable has to compensate for the differential support and opportunity available outside the formal structure. They need additional investments carefully planned for them so as to support and scaffold their efforts. Our system has to ensure that all those who arrive at the gate of the structure of education feel welcome and find themselves in reasonable degree of comfort and meaning in whatever is going on.

Is the school really for all: In recent years there is a lot said about the fact that schools are available at the door step of the child. And now there are no children who cannot access the school even though the quality of the education provided maybe suspect but there is no difficulty in reaching and being in school. This is a convenient half truth as while the physical distance may have decreased the actual distance is substantial and access not really there. Besides this, the subtle exclusion, its nature and the way school comes across to underprivileged children is sufficient for them to not stay in. Its ironic that those who require the maximum support and encouragement to stay in the school are the ones who are provided the least support and are in many cases actively pushed out as they cause discomfort to the teachers and the parents of the other children if not to the children themselves in the same proportion. This attitude and its instances are documented, even though insufficiently.

The stunning fact that emerges from these documentations is that children stop going to schools because they are not welcome there and are neither expected to learn nor is there any way even for the rare positively inclined systems to make that extra effort. The effort also fails as it stems from the feeling of superiority to help with a bit of condescension and expecting gratitude and good behaviour. These efforts are also

individual and not systemic, where an atmosphere of support and respect is a part of the culture of the place. There is a lack of recognition and belief in the responsibility that Constitution places on each of us to work towards equitable opportunities for all children. And for this children and parents need to be aware of all kinds of possibilities and feel themselves capable of aspiring for them. There is strong wish and a hidden agreement that high level, prizes and 'complex' roles are only for the 'meritorious' and they would be from the dominant elite. The underprivileged are condemned to the menial roles as they are supposed to be intellectually and attitudinally inferior. There are many rich descriptions of this attitude and the manner it comes to the fore. Unfortunately these are hidden from the eye and even when visible hidden from the mind due to the premises we start with.

In studies of attitudes of functionaries at the district and block levels there are repeated examples of this. Head masters many years ago and today mention that schools for the poor and the rich would become separate as the rich would not leave their children in such schools. The functionaries responsible to focus on inclusion of underprivileged and special ability children also have no faith in this possibility and are cynical about their role. This is also brought out by Harsh Mandar in 'Looking away' 11 His description is ringing and brings out the convenient strategies we employ to escape the responsibility even though the concerns are larger than what can be influenced by individual roles. There is rampant disdain for the background, learning abilities and aspirations of under-privileged children. There is no respect for the community, culture and capability of their parents either and the children and the parents are held responsible for their own plight (and so also for the unjust situation they find themselves in). The children who are thus capable of learning all that that enables them to survive and manage in the world around them are discarded as those with no ability, no motivation and no IQ!! The communities who manage their lives with minimum of resources and with minimum exploitation of the environment and of others are described as with low intelligence, no motivation or sense of purpose. The children who can manage siblings, help in house work of all kinds, negotiate the tough world unprotected and uncocooned are described as those who cannot learn. 15

We also need to consider how the school would appear to the diversity of the children expected to come there. It is important to look at the symbols on display in the school and match them with the Constitution preamble promises. As noted in many analyses of the text books the lack of inclusion and the absence of sensitivity to all those who would be reading the books is palpable. I have in an earlier paper given some less violent examples of these instances. I quote from that 2 "The symbols and the practices largely arise from the beliefs and rituals of the upper caste Hindu traditions. It is so sub-conscious that it appears natural to everyone. The dominant culture in the school does not recognize the diversity of students and if it does, it is with condescension or as an alien exotica.

Extracts from textbooks analysed in detail indicate that the reader is assumed to be an upper caste, economically comfortable Hindu student.² Description of Id is of a festival of 'our Muslim brothers', 'Diwali is the festival of all and of the nation', other statements like 'he was poor yet he was honest', 'Rita's father was poor, they only had a scooter and no car' or 'tribals live in jungles' and so on. These symbols, rituals and descriptions exclude most children." Imagine tribal and socially different children reading these, they obviously would do the best to hide their identity and in fact try to forget and move away from it. If there is any doubt the attitude of the school teachers and even other children, because the school system does not do anything to educate them about the principles enshrined in the Constitution, leaves no space for her not to recognize that she is not wanted and the school is not for her. Even where such children are in larger number they feel in-confident and unsure outsiders. It is difficult to reconcile to this with the rhetoric about education that has all the correct noises and principles. The difficulty is the unwillingness of the dominant population to accept them and welcome them. There is non-acceptance of their experience and a simultaneous reluctance to share their resources and the knowledge. They do not acknowledge and are perhaps unaware of the tremendous handicap each child from the poor community starts with. So called merit is considered to be a fair measure ignoring the grotesquely unfair and unequal opportunities available to children. In analysis of the text books being written with awareness and sensitivity to the inequity and exclusion the criticism is on presenting the reality and discussing that in the class-rooms and with children.

Talking about the caste system and its forms that trouble us still or talking about the need to dialogue on the communal strife or the gender disparity or exploitation and its manifestations etc and in short presenting either the examples of reality of life lived by many people and presenting the features of governance and polity that make for iniquitous treatment and lack of adequate provisions and facilities for the large majority is at least anti government if not anti national. There is a universal clamour about the fact that there is none of this seen today why talk about it and pollute the minds of the youngsters. You should also not talk about the challenges of growing up and the temptations in the path and develop in the learners the need for control on one self and consciousness of the choices made and the reasons for them. What is desirable is to talk about the nice sanitized reality whatever may be the reality the around the child. All this reluctance to talk about what is right and wrong about life around with the young learners reminds us of, "We Never Make Mistakes" written by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, WW Norton, 1981 and of the poem by Dushyant Kumar Mat kaho aakash mein kohra ghana hai, Yeh kisi ki vyaktigat aalochana hai; from his collection Saaye mein Dhoop.

We often have started hearing the unease about the underprivileged acquiring dominant roles. The fear that they may soon over run the meritorious elite is felt strongly. The spoken emphasis on commitment to equity in all dimensions and the shadow boxing around it has generated a reaction against it. The voice of the weak is

extremely weak, and to get a mention and still not attention, drastic steps are often required. The news and the newspaper is full of the fall-outs of the under-privileged attempting to have a voice in the affairs of the community around. More discussions on RTE have been around the 25% forced admission to the elite schools than on the more significant and important points made. In analysing and criticising the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE 2009) we also conveniently forget it is actually a gross dilution of the Constitutional commitment and intent. The notions that define the relationships of the elite with the under-privileged are of inequity, lack of respect and a sense of inherent distinction. We seem to believe the principle that let no man from the lower strata aspire to be a part of the elite and all retain their place in the socio-economic hierarchy and also in the political space and rights allowed.

There is little acceptance of the values of the under-privileged. The belief is that they are not cultured and also not equal in a deep sense. They are expected to be silent and subservient. If they speak their mind, they are impertinent and if they do not they are dumb and have nothing to say. There is an inherent urge in elite parents to discourage children to mix with those with a different background. They feel concerned that the uncouth and uncultured children would corrupt their children as well. They need to be kept away and if they are admitted to the school then the elite or those pretending to be elite, would and do leave the schools. This happens not only in the private schools but also in Government schools. The feeling is that children from elite, upper caste and well off families are keen to study, well behaved and straightforward. It is the under-privileged children that bring the ailments in behaviour and character to the school. Good schools are expected to have children from cultured families and the schools for the rest have to be different.¹⁶ One of the reasons for Government schools losing most of the well off and elite background children is the focus on universalisation and hence the entry of the under-privileged children to the same school and the same class-room. The Government schools continue to lose students as the status become more stratified and they cannot actually refuse anyone admission. Fearing erosion in values of their children and apparently non-challenging teaching in the class-rooms, parents take their children to those schools that they can afford and people at their level or higher can afford. These behaviour patterns also make the school fear inclusion and do its best to exclude the under-privileged children from the school.

This is not a recent experience as the following articulations of frustrations of those inclined to attempt inclusive schools show. ¹⁶ Pandey writing in 1951-52 laments “for some years the school did not become popular with high caste Hindus because it admitted Bheel children also”. ¹⁶ (i) While some may like to argue that maybe this was true then but it is not true today, the numbers in the Government schools belie that argument. It is the special category children and the girls who throng the Government schools as their education is not worth investing in. Dyal Chand Soni and Kalu Lal Shrimali express the same sense as they describe the education and the

clientele of the schools in the context of basic education and its non-acceptance by the community because of the essence of inclusion represented in all its aspects and the hint of the notion of the common school inherent in it. Soni writes in 1953 “यदि कमी रही है तो एक बात की ओर वह यह कि शिक्षा की इमारत जनसाधारण की आधारशिला पर नहीं खड़ी की गई। वह हमेशा ऊपर से नीचे की ओर बनी और सोचा यह जाता रहा कि जैसे पानी छन छन कर जमीं के गर्भ में पहुंचता रहता है वैसे ही शिक्षा भी छन छन कर जन साधारण में पहुंच कर अपनी जड़ें जमा लेगी।” 16 (ii) This in many ways may be as relevant today as it was then. Even though the alternative may not lie in the idea of basic education nonetheless the exclusion of the experience, culture and identity of the majority of the children from the school and the added insistence that they come in to the schools on the terms of the dominant and hegemonic minority, is a major reason for their dropping out. Shrimali in 1954 writing about the two schools of Vidya Bhawan that were meant to be an experiment of two ways of inclusive nation building education admits that the situation that the schools had reached could be only understood in terms of them being for separate clientele. He writes “एक पब्लिक स्कूल में और एक ग्रामीण स्कूल में कोई समानता नहीं है। एक समाज के उच्च वर्ग के लोगों के लिए है दूसरा निर्धन ग्रामवासियों के लिए” 16 (iii)

The cost and the expense on education in schools: The investment per child in the government school for the poor is much lower than in the other schools. Even the government system is skewed in expense as children of the better off parents get admissions to the much better funded central schools and the schools run by the public sector institutions. This leaves the poor and the powerless in the government schools. There is no strong assertive voice from the community to question the system. The teachers in the schools cannot be/ are not allowed to be/are not worried about the children or their parents but have to be instead worried about the whims and fancies of the lowest rung administrators, senior officers and the local influential people. The teachers from these schools are assigned roles and responsibilities that take them outside the school and the classrooms. Their answerability is to the immediate schemes, programs or sometime just the events that are launched by the administration rather than to long term plan for the children and the school.

In the stratified government school system the per child expenditure goes from as low as 7-8 thousand per annum (in some cases even less) to almost 40 thousand per child. As pointed out the large expenditure ironically is on children from better off families. These may be employees of government or State agencies admitted because of their father's profession or selection process. All such selection processes generally pick those who already have resources to learn and can succeed in such tests. The battle to increase resources for poorer children has been fought for very-very long but it is a losing battle. The current average Government expenditure on an elementary school going child in India is around 12000 per annum. This figure has increased over the years. But this figure hides also the large difference in expense across different kind of schools and children. Even in the Government schools the expenditure per child is

more for those who are affluent compared to the marginalised. The system subsidizes the rich more than it provides for the poor. In any case the figure in the high end elite private schools of the country^{3,4,5} hovers around Rs 12-13 lacs per annum. It is of course true that this amount is spent by the parents but nevertheless it is highly iniquitous education that it results in. The trend away from building equity has sharpened in recent years as more privileged Government and private schools have been set up. This has coincided with a reduced hope for educating the rich and giving up of the attempt to even make a pretense. The cut of Rs. 11000 crores in the education budget this year has to be seen in this context.

It is not that all private schools have per child expenditure that is high. The private schools are similarly and in fact more stratified and have a differential fee structure based on the category of population that they are addressing. Many of the even 'for profit' schools have actually less cost than the average government school cost. What they save on is the facilities provided and more so on the salary and conditions of employment of teachers. The only way to challenge this extreme stratification of education opportunity seems to be to have a common school system. It may have been easier to do this at the time of forming the republic with a larger outlay for education. The challenge of taking on board the upper echelons of highly stratified society and making them believe in a common system seems impossible at this stage. The enforcement of it impossible because of the lop sided social and political strength. The growing disparity among the rich and the poor makes the need to have exclusive preparation for achieving higher economic and social status acute. This would lead to more and more stratified educational opportunities even cutting across continents as the systems globalise.

What becomes important in schools: The Curricular Choices:

The challenge of retaining children also comes from the choices that are made about the content, the way it is presented and the manner of assessment and its sharing. The emphasis on high scores and comparative performances without taking into account the equitability of the environment and the background and hence opportunity for learning available, implies that this process squeezes out even more rapidly those who need the maximum support to learn. The system fails to recognize the larger time to start up their learning process and an environment that is friendly and believes in them. This is accentuated by the nature of the alleviating examination process.

The nature of education that emerges from the preamble is a universal inclusive program that is imbued with equity and has space for adapting to the purpose that different communities may have in their minds. This is far from what the practice is. The government system itself encourages standardized grading of children and even of schools, irrespective of their background, the exposure and alignment to the curricular choices and the teaching learning materials including textbooks. The handicap on the curricular pre-requisites that the individual child and the school

starts from is ignored while making an analysis and drawing up conclusions. The rating of schools and degree of satisfaction of their performance is the basis of entries to merit list and high scores in public exams. There is no mechanism to track the value added to children by the school. We do not value development of a sense of fraternity, dignity for herself among students. The expenditure on the school and the inputs are driven by the success in the public examinations. There is a clamor for more and more competition, more filtering public examinations. There is also a clamor for adding more to the load of children so that they can leap forward. It is important to recognize that besides being inappropriate and meaningless this principle works contrary to the principles of inclusion and retention.

The structure, design and content of the curriculum flow from the purposes. We need to examine purposes that flow from the agreement on the preamble and keep them in focus while we mix in other concerns. The major concerns can generally be pegged around the following a) Education for economic well being of the person and also for ability to use these resources well. b) Education to build a strong nation and a strong economy. This may also mean developing a responsible and productive citizen c) Education to build a just and humane society. While clearly these terms would need to be elaborated and interrogated the points of focus in these would be different depending on which you take to be the primary purpose.

The nature of child and learning expectation in the schools:

The other aspect important to consider is the way we look at the child and her learning. Is the child to be considered as disinterested, uncurious, unwilling to explore and make effort OR as an active curious, explorer who is inquisitive and able to make proper judgements? Is the real goal of education to become a learner or just knowing how to follow directions? Is education something to achieve? Is it about the fun in getting it and learning? We need to distinguish between joyful learning and joy of learning. It is certain that struggling against the challenges of climbing a mountain is infinitely more rewarding than walking on flat ground.

It is with this consciousness that we need to also ask as to what is it that we really want for the child: that he learns a given body of information, methods, techniques or that he learns to know and retains the confidence and the desire to explore, to be curious and to know. The choice in this and the clarity with which it is made is the underlying fabric of the curriculum that would get developed. It would also determine the touchstones that we may use to test it. A simple argument in favor of not limiting the program to known and currently important facts is that we do not know how world would change. It is not possible for the parents to know what the child should need, the teachers have been in the school and university many years back and cannot know the current dimensions being explored, in short the society including the children themselves cannot be sure of what would be needed later. It is quite possible that what may seem appropriate to know today may no longer remain so

tomorrow. That is why education should not largely be about the what of knowing but about how to learn to find out to know. There would be some elements of learning what is needed today but that also not in terms of dead facts and information but in a manner as to how it relates to the children and what they can do about it. For example the question on environment has to deal with both the role of the individual in as much as she is a part of the collective but also on the larger nations as well as corporates that exploit and overuse environment. Quality in education is a subject of constant struggling to know, and because it is a social and societal process everyone needs to participate in it.

Monitoring, over testing, scapegoat hunting and teaching:

Any attempt to improve the situation starts from the identification of the underlying factors. If the learning in the schools has to improve we need to identify the major factors that lead to the current situation that seen to be inadequate learning. The critical factor is the way the inadequate learning is analysed. What kind patterns we see in this and the reasons we ascribe to them. The system is to blame the teacher and the child for non learning. The responsibility of not learning rests with the child, her parents and then the teacher or at best the school. No one else in the system has to take any blame as they have all acquired the role of laying down the law and already fixed the responsibility of non-learning. In the system the only person responsible for the non-learning is the teacher and if by chance children do learn the credit is to the materials, the trainings and to other inputs.

And since the responsibility in the system is on the teacher hence it automatically has to be transferred to the child by the teacher. There is no other way as the teacher is not clear about her role, about the background and strengths of the children she is working with, has not been imbued with a sense of respect for them or for their ways and hence not only cannot see what the children already know and have learnt but also not think of a way of moving forward with them. With the system forcing him to forget the knowledge and experience of the child and measure them against some expected norms and standards constructed by observing some very different kind of children, she accepts and subsequently trumpets the inability of her students and the lack of awareness of the parents as the reasons for the non-learning. In any case the higher ups in the system work on the assumption that all those working below them particularly in close proximity to the community are neither interested in their work, nor are they knowledgeable or keen to learn. They cannot be left with the responsibility and autonomy to think and chart their way forward but must be told what to do. This implies constant imposition of new ways and directions for schools and teachers to follow and reach goals and targets set by very different standards. They are not seen to need or have the motivation and capability to work with freedom and/or agency.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the teachers do not have and hence children do not get any freedom. There is no initiative that either can take to function in the manner they want in the classroom. They are not doing what they themselves or even the teachers could be interested in but are engaged in following homogenized instructions. These instructions are formulated without considering the extent of diversity among and schools and within a school. In this scenario while, there is no space available for the teacher and the school to choose their path, is the responsibility of not learning to be placed at their door?

Meaningless global comparisons and its effects: In the last few years another malaise has gripped the system. With increasing globalisation the nature of comparisons and their extents have also widened. The global middle class anxious about the competing children are looking for evidence to convince them that their schools do the best. The nations and economies also keen to compete with the other nations on technological, warfare and economic front are worried and are being made worried and aware about their school standards. These comparisons are being pushed for various reasons some self seeking and others with a misplaced sense of anxiety and sense of competition. We do have to ask, How and why should children from one place be compared with those of another, why should we compare learning's of a common kind, when they have such different backgrounds, aspirations and needs. Why should we teach the whole system to be competitive, make school program focus on the tests and their direction leaving out all other purposes, make schools squeeze out children as they bring down the school scores, make them anxious and worried encouraged to use short cuts of various kinds to survive and begin to feel that the way to progress is to do better than the next child. Instead of learning to cooperate and learn from each other they feel compelled to compete. These globally standardized tests give us some sharp questions: Why are we doing these? How often should they be repeated? How do they help schools or teachers understand learn and improve? When no child is like another child how can the learning process of every child be the same? How do we reconcile to the increasing competitive preparation in schools? We had assumed that we will cultivate and emphasize cooperation through teaching but we have continuously encouraged competition through our system. Is this the correct way? Is there some way we could teach them to work together, learn to live together, co-operate and work together?

There is also the other element of recognising the ability of each child. We know that in society all children learn to use language, quantity, space and other concepts on their own. They are able to deal with the entire world. But there is no fear and anxiety generally among community members about the child learning. Each child learns in a different pattern and at her own pace, yet we attempt to force a uniform pace. The child at home is encouraged and everything small she is able to do is recognised and celebrated. The effort is to recognise and discover what she has learnt and not find sophisticated ways to find out what she does not know. In our effort to ensure conceptual confidence and competence among children, the testing was to be a

means to challenge them and identify ways to help them build on their learning. This has now changed to finding gaps and incompetence in children and teachers. Numerous testing organisations have emerged to point out and highlight the gaps and to repeatedly point out that the system is not being able to do something, the difficulty is that what they expect it to be able to do is something that is neither feasible nor negotiable. And they do not dwell enough on what the system is able to do and in what circumstances.

Teachers, their role, social position, devils or angels:

The mention of teachers often brings a passionate response. One dimension of the response is that teachers need to be sensitive to children, they need to know the concepts, have appropriate sensibilities to ensure inclusive classrooms where children are learning, be dedicated to their work and be sacrificial. The present teachers are not fulfilling the role they should and the best are not going in to teaching etc. There is also the lament that teaching is the last option for anyone and at the same time we should do an attitude test and concept test before we make teachers. On the other hand we have the statement that the highest expense in the school system is on teachers' salaries and there is nothing left to provide children with materials, so reduce salaries and appoint teachers on contract so that the expense is low and they are also aware that they will be removed if they do not fulfill the expectations of the administration. There is a contradiction in the expectation and the resources that can be spent on them. Similarly, discussion on teachers is always polarized as painting them as devils and angels. Sometime this happens within the same sentence. There is no viewing them as human beings like all others who have responsibilities at home and worries as well. They have the same aspirations as anyone in a differentiated and stratified society to be a part of the upper echelons. However, like others they have a sense of their role and would want to fulfill it as much as others and the system do. But the expectation from them is different and far more.

The system monitors and watches them and is keen to watch and regulate them. The nation has handed over its future to them as they are to provide the formal part of education to the children but it does not trust them to do anything properly. They are instead to be dictated by the managements or administration even to the extent of their presence in the class-room and what they would do with children each day. Any bureaucratic or political requirement of any kind is of higher priority than their teaching in the class-room.

In the social hierarchy the teacher is at the lowest rung below almost all employed persons. The extremely stratified and exploitative employment conditions and the increasingly inept and imposing monitoring and tracking reduces the space for the teacher and the motivation for anyone to aspire for it. While the expectation from the teacher is of the highest ethical, cultural, cognitive and inclusive performance, the wages and the social and hierarchy status are not expected to match that.

The question is that how can a teacher who is not respected, has no scope to do anything she thinks appropriate, is not expected or encouraged to take independent initiative, has no one to converse and share ideas with, to explore and experiment provide these to the children. How in the demotivated and in-confident state they are, can they instill the self-respect, self confidence, spirit of exploration, experimentation and learning that every child deserves and that s/he should receive from his/her school? The trust and will to learn can be the best training that a teacher can instill in students. And helping them to develop this ability and trust in their capacity to learn is the best education. Only a teacher who can work with freedom and self respect and can work with the courage and confidence can instill the faith in the students that they too can learn anything anytime.

Freedom to the school and the teacher

But the system and the powerful are not willing to relinquish the reins of learning into the hands of the learners and teachers. They are apprehensive that they would not know what to do and may not function as per the expectations. It is because of this the idea of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (assessment) (CCE) has been reduced to a joke. Without any respect for teacher, faith in her and in children and without an understanding of it and belief in its workability and advantage, it cannot work. Urge for a standardized assessment also is due to lack of faith in teachers intentions and capabilities. It is because of this that assessment, teaching and everything else is sought to be simplified and modularised. This of course makes everything meaningless as it loses even its essence. The push to ensure that everyone learns within the time frame without being provided additional supports or means to those entirely deprived of them, suggests a disregard for the actual idea of equitable opportunity. Given the hurry and inadequate time and opportunity to think and plan the teacher cannot cope with all expectations. In any case, her own attitudes and beliefs are also not very sympathetic to the possibility of all children being able to learn. She is also not necessarily concerned that the commitment in the Constitution needs to be met and that she has responsibility for providing equitable opportunity to all children in her charge. The question then is how do we do that?

Clearly we do that by engaging with her. In the rest it is more what not to do rather what to do. There are also some other lessons about the self image an individual teacher and the teacher collective has. The self respect also comes from the respect others around give you. In our engagement with them we have to understand and celebrate their work. We may have suggestions but those should be carefully discussed with them. The view has to be not of finding gaps but to identify and encourage the positives. This is as much true for teachers as it is for children. By not recognising the immense capability of the child and their eagerness and spirit to learn we undermine their ability to grapple with and learn the unfamiliar and for teachers we fail to see the effort they are making and judge them by standards and through ways that are alien and unachievable for them. Monitoring must be to empower and

pat on the back rather than for fault finding. We must help grow and express the ideas they have rather than impose some ideas on them.

To sum up it is important to recognise the tension in the purposes that we have for education; one emerging from the preamble and the National Curricular Framework, 2005 (NCF 2005) and the position papers associated with it or the more recent formulation of building aspirations, options and capabilities for those among all and the other that are more limited and utilitarian. In an article published in Learning Curve² examples of what other views to the purpose of education could be are described. Some other views are presented in the study done in 2002⁶. The dimension of the uneducated as being a drag on the nation emerges very strongly in the views of the people. This is also reflected in conversations quoted in Looking Away.¹¹ There are in a sense two distinct views one that the person and her education is important as it would lead to national development and hence add to the wealth that is accessible to the 'country' and the second view that it is important and necessary for everyone to get educated so that they can realise themselves and be able to aspire to be whatever they want to be and have the opportunity for the widest aspirations.

These two and many other important dimensions form the kaleidoscope of purposes from which points of focus and a coherent image has to be built. The nature of the schools, curricula and way to look at children and preparation, governing and strengthening of teachers and assessment etc has to flow from this kaleidoscope of meaningful, appropriately chosen purposes as per the Indian constitution. The other is the necessity of releasing the energy, abilities and initiatives of the people in the education system particularly the teachers and to give them the respect and status their role demands and stop this schizophrenic view of looking at them. It is not that they are angels but they are no more devilish than other professions in the community and have to be dealt with in that way.

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RTE and Education of Migrant Children

- Amit Kumar

Introduction

Internal rural migration accounts for the largest portion of India's unorganized workforce in the nation with over 387.34 million engaged workers. The migration of these workers is largely undocumented and their presence across various other states further marginalizes these communities, separating them from public services that could improve their situations in their native state. Overall, the wages of migrant workers are extremely low as are their working and living conditions, and this result in an unstable environment for their families. Migrant workers leave their homes for the most part of the year to work in places they know very little about, moving their immediate family with them to help with the labor.

The number of migrant laborers is increasing due to drought and unavailability of work opportunities in their home villages. There are around 50,000 brick kilns in India, with each employing approximately 100 permanent workers. In total, there are about 5 million workers in the brick - kiln industry. With only the male heads of the family registered on the books, an estimated 25 million people are dependent on the brick factories for their livelihoods, with one-third of this population being children.

A significant proportion of these migrant workers migrates to Rajasthan to work in brick kilns. Rajasthan is home to one of the largest migrant populations in India with the brick industry being one of the largest employers of these migrant workers. One of the most pressing concerns in respect to these migrant brick workers in Rajasthan is their children's lack of access to education and the impact of this negligence on the future of these children and on the country as a whole. This population is significant because of its number. The interruption in their education is caused because of migration and issues surrounding their health and well-being. The children who work in brick industries are the children of migrant labourers; they accompany their parents to the brick-kilns and assist their parents in their work. Typically, in the month of July during the rainy season, the migrant brick-kiln families go back to their native villages. Their native villages are primarily located in remote and impoverished districts. These families subsequently return to the brick-kilns in the month of October. Because of the migration from village to brick-kilns and from kilns to their villages, the children of these migrant families find it very challenging to maintain consistency in their education. Even if the family wanted to send their

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children to school, the brick chambers are located far away from the schools of the host villages. Furthermore, due to economic conditions, most migrant children must supplement the family income and accompany their parents to the kilns. Their work at the kiln dramatically interrupts their education, that is, if they at all went to school in their home villages. The typical scenario in a migrant brick kiln family is that most of the school going children drop out of school and support the family's hand-to-mouth existence by working at the kilns with their parents or taking care of very young children in the camps. Needless to say, migrant children of all ages in the brick kiln camps suffer from malnutrition and ill-health. These children have become part of a generational cycle of migrant families which are characterized by extreme poverty, illiteracy, health risks, little extended family support, lack of social safety net. These children have, as we can assume, a bleak future ahead.

This paper investigates the reasons behind the non-compliance of the provisions of RTE for these migrant populations of children. It also highlights the educational issues surrounding the children of seasonal migrant workers in Chaksu, Jaipur (Rajasthan) by considering the various deterrents to their access to education. Finally, this study describes the successful effort of providing on-site schooling for migrant brick-kiln children and provides recommendations for the inclusion of migrant children in the mainstream educational system.

The main goal of this paper is to outline these specific barriers and find effective solutions that can be implemented with immediate effect. The main issues are as follows:

- Discontinuation of school in home state when parents migrate for work.
- No academic support in host state or home state for absentees from school.
- Difficulty in securing admission to schools in host state due to lack of attendance, standardized transfer policies and examination records.
- Indifference by local authorities in host state towards migrant children.
- No provision of schools near the site of work and no alternative transport arrangements to schools.
- Language and curriculum problems due to linguistic and cultural barriers, curriculum differences and limited prior attendance in a school of any kind.
- Increased school drop-out rates among adolescent children.
- The prevalence of child labor amongst migrant worker families.
- Ineffective protection for migrant children under the Right to Education Act.

Chaksu in Jaipur district is a rural area in central-east Rajasthan where fifteen brick kilns are located with approximately 2500 migrant families and 750 migrant children living on site. For detailed study, 200 families living in these brick kilns whose children are living with them and not going to school were selected and their responses with respect to the questionnaire were obtained. The living conditions of these workers are extremely poor as there is no access to proper healthcare, sanitation,

and educational services. Less than 1% of the children of migrant brick-kiln workers in Chaksu are attending school.

Right to Education Act

The Right to Education Act is the most pertinent piece of legal action relevant to migrant children's education in India. The Right to Education Act (RTE) guarantees free and compulsory elementary education to every child in India with provisions for the disadvantaged children who experience discrimination due to adverse cultural, economic, social, geographic, linguistic, or gender-related factors. RTE was enacted in 2009 under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Around the same time, one hundred and thirty five other countries joined India in a similar effort to make education a fundamental and universal right for the children.

In 2011, one year after the RTE Act came into effect, a status report from the Minister for Human Resources Development showed that 8.1 million children aged 6-14 still remained out of school and that there was also a shortage of teachers by 508,000 posts. In the year 2014, a UNICEF study was conducted on out-of-school children in India, revealing that out of an estimated 190 million children between the ages of 6-13, an estimated 8.15 million children are not in school. That number represents 4.28 % of all children in India who are out of school⁴. These numbers are highest among rural children, Muslim children, Scheduled Caste children, and Scheduled Tribe communities, making 67% of the national statistic for children who are out of school. Proportionately, more girls are out of school than boys, and more rural children are out of school than urban children.

As the numbers show, complaints about the effectiveness of this law have crept up in the past few years with respect to its lack of clarity and the deficiencies in its enforcement in many states of India. This law has some major flaws in it and it has yet done very little for the education of migrant workers' children in the past four years. It's been five years since the Right to Education Act was passed, yet these statistics have only improved marginally. It is evident that the cards are stacked against the children living in rural areas, even more against those girl children and those who come from lower castes in rural areas. As discussed before, migrant worker children face a tremendous amount of stigma in addition to living in the rural areas and coming from lower castes, so it is crucial for RTE to address migrant children with more specificity than is currently stated in the law⁹.

There are three main issues with regard to the implementation of this law that directly affect migrant worker children. The first is that the law is predominately left for the state authorities to implement but they often do not have the financial ability or motivation to deliver education to the required numbers and at the appropriate level and standard outlined in the law. This deficiency is apparent in many rural areas where migrant workers live and where there are very few schools available to them.

The second issue is that despite the Act's provision to admit children without any certification, many states are still forcing children and parents to produce caste and income certificates as well as birth certificates and BPL (below poverty line) cards for admissions to the school. Many migrant worker families do not have these forms of identification for their children due to migration, ineffectiveness or non requirements of BPL cards in host state, or never having access to these documents in the first place.

The third issue is the difficulty that the disadvantaged families encounter in understanding and accessing RTE as a pertinent legal protection and aid. Other related problems that migrant worker children face with reference to implementation of RTE are as follows:

- Many families are uninformed about RTE because they are illiterate or isolated from mainstream society.
- Many families are scared to demand rights in accordance with this law for fear of threats to their work or social status in the host community.
- The law does not specify rights for migrant worker children who move seasonally due to the monsoon and have to change schools.
- The law states that local officials will check on areas that have no access to nearby schools and will provide them with an educational facility; but most of the local governments in highly impoverished rural areas do not have the means or funds to accommodate these children.
- The definition of a disadvantaged child is left to the local government's discretion without adequate specificity in the law for migrant workers.

Although it has been beneficial to allow the local government to seek and notify the authorities about the children in the area who are not receiving education, most of these local authorities are not actually reporting anything⁹. The definition included in the law that refers to “children of weaker sections” is vague and can easily be misinterpreted by school authorities. Subsequently, the 25% reservation in private schools for these “weaker sections” is not actually extended to all types of disadvantaged children. Data about household incomes for marginal workers is severely lacking, which is a key factor in including such workers' children in these reserved spots. The mapping of out-of-school children should also not be limited to children who have never attended school, but should be extended to children who drop-out or have multiple or long absences from school. Proposals have been made for mapping migration patterns of migrant children, but these are yet to be implemented formally in light of RTE⁹.

In spite of the ineffectiveness of the law for migrant laborers' children, organizations like the National Advisory Council Working Group on Education have begun working on these issues. This group has proposed four main areas of legal action with

regard to RTE and the inclusion of migrant worker children. These are amendments in rules, provisions in framework, amendments to schedule, and amendments to the act itself⁹. There is hope that organizations like this one could help amend RTE and find ways to implement the law in a more effective way that addresses the educational rights of migrant children.

Migrant children, like many others in disadvantaged positions, face what seems like an insurmountable barrier to education. The unique vulnerability of these migrant worker children demands better legal provisions within the RTE Act and other pieces of legislation like the Child Labor Act, which has done very little to address the education of the child laborer. Non-government organizations, politicians, and citizens are beginning to act on behalf of these excluded children by working towards better legal reform and advocating social justice for these minority children, but it will take the efforts of many more to solve these issues to have a significant impact.

Major findings of the survey:

- The pressure on the migrant family to make both ends meet is so much so that the worker is not able to educate his children beyond school level. Among children of participants, the highest level of completed education is class 6-10 with 68% of children in this category. Over 27% of children are in the class 1-5 category.
- During the survey an interesting fact came up that all people who have come to the kilns for work want to send their children to school. 98% of the families were of the opinion that if the education facility is made available to them at the brick site then they are ready to send their boys and girls to study. Only 2% showed no interest in the education of their children.
- Information was collected as to why these people are not interested in sending their children to the government school in the nearby village. Over 45% said that the distance of local schools was the major prevent factor. How can they send girls or even boys to unknown places? 21% stated other prohibitive reasons such that the children needed to help with the work on site, they don't live here for the whole session or year, they are not permanent residents of the area, there is a difference in the course curriculum between the native place and the work place, the school demands a lot of documents / papers which they don't have, or the school session had already started when the family arrived on site. 15% of participants said that they had no information about local schools, and 9% said that financial constraints prevented their children from going to school. 7% said that their children were unable to mix with the local children, and 2.5% said that the language barrier was another factor keeping their children out of local schools.

- During this study it was found that the parents were not interested in sending their children to local school. When asked if they would be more likely to send their children to government school if an NGO helped parents admit their children to such local government schools, 68% of participants responded in a negative way and 32% said “yes”. The reasons are already discussed earlier. This shows that the parents have little faith in the quality of education given in government schools. They find it economically more viable to keep children at home and make them help in their work instead of sending them to school for 5-6 hours. It is clear that due to various reasons the education of boys and girls is being neglected.
- During the survey it came out very strongly that hundreds of boys and girls are moving away from education. There is no facility for learning. Children spend their time in playing, helping in household work and passing time without doing any constructive work. Parents are also worried about the present state of affairs. They also want to engage their children in fruitful study.
- When they were asked if they would send children to school if it was located on the work site? The response was very encouraging, in that 98% said “yes”. They were ready to send both boys and girls to study. This reflects and collaborates the parents’ concerns about factors such as distance, children helping with work, arriving after school session starts, school timing, etc. The general opinion was that if education facility is made available at the work site then the children could study if the brick kiln owners would cooperate. Thus it can be concluded that if we want to bring the children of migrant workers in mainstream education then the school has to go to them instead of the children coming to the school.
- Right to Education: People have heard about Right to Education but they have no idea of how they can avail themselves of it. 43.5% have heard about the Right to Education Act, but 56.5% do not have any idea. Whatever they have heard is from T.V. or from word of mouth that ‘Education’ is also one of their rights. Providing education to migrant people, working laborers’ children is a big challenge. It becomes even more challenging when people start living away from their native villages with their children. There is an urgent need to address this significant lack of information.

Case Study

Momin Khan is a 7 year old boy living at Maya Brick Kiln along with his father Master, mother Usmi, a younger sister Nazarun and an elder brother Juganu. He comes from a small village of U.P. They belong to “mallah” community and their traditional occupation is to row boats on the river and ferry people from one river

bank to another. With changing times the flow of the river has turned from perennial to seasonal and a bridge has been constructed on the river, as a result of which the boat business is slowly coming to an end. Since the family does not have land or any skill to sustain itself they have come to the brick kiln in search of a livelihood.

Momin's elder brother who is 14 helps his parents in making bricks. Since he is small his responsibilities include looking after his younger sister who is deaf and dumb, watering the sand and changing the face of the wet bricks.

Due to poverty and ignorance his parents did not send him to school. His parents as well as his elder brother are illiterate. Whenever Momin saw other children going to school in their colorful uniforms he always wondered whether he would get any chance to go to school in his life time. So this year when KIGS opened a school at their brick kiln he was very happy. He started coming to school with his sister as there was no body to take care of her. There were 30 students in his class and all of them were less than 11 years of age, as older children were helping their parents in making bricks. He used to go to school at 2 o'clock and come back by 5 o'clock. He was also helping his parents before and after the school hours. After one month of school, free uniforms and books were distributed to all the students. It was a dream comes true for Momin. Now, he gets ready for school before the schedule time and is the first one to reach the school. His teacher says that he is a very hard working boy and is pretty sharp. During a short period of 4 months he has learnt Hindi, English alphabet, counting from 1-100, addition, subtraction and tables of 1-10. He enjoys learning and is requesting his parents to come back to the same kiln so that he can continue with his studies.

Recommendations:

The local panchayat and the state government authorities have the influence and position to address some of the issues that this migrant population faces. The foremost concern is awareness and action. Upon completion of research, the Kumarappa Institute noted that school officials came out to check on the educational status of the brick -kilns but did not follow it with any action on behalf of the children. There is an obvious issue of transporting the children living by the brick-kilns to school. One solution is to provide means of transportation such as bicycles or small vans for these isolated communities. Another suggestion is to implement targeted policies that address the needs of migrant worker communities in getting their children into a school⁴. Another important policy that could be implemented is flexible time schedules for these children to attend school. Because these migrant worker children enter the school system late and leave early, special provisions should be made keeping in view their unique schedules. Additionally, the RTE act should be implemented and followed closely in the case of out of school children of these migrant worker areas.

Identification policies for migrant worker children need to be strengthened so that their educational needs can be addressed quickly and efficiently. Government policy could also make special legal provisions for the validity and effectiveness of BPL cards and other documents from other states. On a general level, the state policies regarding education exist for migrant worker children, but they need to be improved upon. Additionally, curriculum revision should be implemented to address the needs of children who have been out of school for quite some time. Curriculum should also be improved to include culturally relevant material that the children of these migrant populations can relate to. On an infrastructural level, teacher absenteeism, poor maintenance of facilities, and lack of teacher training directly affects the situation of migrant worker children, so these key issues should be improved upon with immediate effect. Local and state governments should collect better census data, household surveys and timeliness of those surveys on behalf of known or potential migrant areas.

Similarly, NGOs have a unique capability to assess the needs of migrant worker communities on a more specific level with regard to their socialization into the host community, access to educational opportunities, and any other basic needs of those community members. NGOs have the ability to research and observe these communities on a more personal level and then establish cultural and educational programs that help build bridges between migrant worker families and the host community. Additionally, communities like the migrant brick workers in this study have shown interest and trust in local NGOs who provide resources and advice at the grass-roots level.

Conclusion:

To conclude we can say that there are a number of barriers that currently prevent migrant children who live by the Chaksu brick-kilns from going to school. The main barriers include location, repeated transitions, social isolation, infrastructural limitations of school facilities, and lack of information, language constraints, and economic impoverishment. In reviewing the literature on the current status of education among migrant children across India, the roadblocks to education presented in the current research further validates the aforementioned barriers mentioned in this paper. The survey results and focused group discussions from this study further confirm the barriers that migrant children face in accessing and sustaining their education. The results of study show that migrant workers want their children to continue and maintain their education at the brick-kilns, but they themselves do not possess the adequate resources to do so.

Despite these barriers, there are a number of immediate and long-term solutions that can be suggested and undertaken in order to break these hindrances to education. Stake-holders such as government officials, brick kiln owners, local NGOs, businesses, and other community partners play a significant role in improving the

educational status of these children. Additionally, better government policies are necessary specifically regarding the Right to Education Act-its provisions and monitoring processes-with targeted action tailored to the needs of these migrant communities. The research outlined in this paper paves the way for a brighter future for the educational status of migrant children living in the Chaksu brick kilns as well as migrant children all over India.

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सामुदायिक सहभागिता और शिक्षा

- राजाराम भादू

सामुदायिक भागीदारी की बात शिक्षा ही नहीं बल्कि अन्य क्षेत्रों में भी जोर-शोर से की जा रही है। इस बहस के दो पक्ष हैं। एक, सामुदायिक भागीदारी को निर्णय प्रक्रिया के विकेन्द्रीकरण के आदर्श के रूप में देखा जाता है। दूसरा, राजकीय व्यवस्थाओं में सरकार की असफलता और बेहतर प्रबंधन के अभाव में व्यवस्थाओं की जिम्मेवारी स्थानीय समुदाय को सौंपने की बात की जाती है।

शिक्षा में समुदाय की भागीदारी चुनौतीपूर्ण है। इस लेख में कहा गया है कि एक समस्या ये है कि अभी तक समुदाय की अवधारणा को ठीक से परिभाषित नहीं किया गया है। शिक्षा के संदर्भ में सामुदायिक भागीदारी के मायने क्या हो सकते हैं? शिक्षा में सामुदायिक भागीदारी के नाम पर हो रहे प्रयासों की क्या वास्तविकता है? इन्हीं समस्याओं पर इस लेख में चर्चा की गई है।

तीसरी दुनिया के देशों में सामुदायिक सहभागिता का मुद्दा विकास के संदर्भ में बार-बार उभर कर आता है। राज्य द्वारा प्रणीत विकास योजनाओं व कार्यक्रमों में स्थानीय समुदायों की भागीदारी पर काफी जोर रहता है। इसका एक आयाम सत्ता के विकेन्द्रीकरण और विकास कार्यक्रमों के नियोजन और क्रियान्वयन में लोकतांत्रिक जन सहभागिता से संदर्भित है। इन दोनों पहलुओं में निष्फलताओं ने जो रिक्ति पैदा की, उसे भरने और विकास प्रक्रियाओं में जन सहभागिता को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए नागरिक समाज (Civil Society i.e. Voluntary Agencies, NGO's) के पहलें सामने आई हैं। इस विकास क्रम में शिक्षा एक अहम घटक रहा है।

प्रारंभिक शिक्षा के सार्वजनीकरण की सफलता में जन सहभागिता को निर्णायक समझा जाता है। लेकिन इस क्रम में हुए प्रयासों को असंतोषजनक माना गया है। हालांकि इस पक्ष पर गंभीर विचार-विमर्श बहुत कम मिलता है। यहां हम उत्तर भारत के शिक्षा संदर्भ में सामुदायिक भागीदारी पर विचार कर रहे हैं। इस पक्ष में पूर्व के गंभीर विमर्शों से इस लेख का परिप्रेक्ष्य निर्मित किया गया है। अंततः हमारा मंतव्य इस ओर ध्यान आकर्षित करना है।

ग्रामीण सामाजिक संरचना और समुदाय :

हमारे अनुभव मूलतः ग्रामीण पृष्ठभूमि पर आधारित हैं। गांव की सामाजिक संरचना जटिल और संश्लिष्ट होती है। यहां हम उत्तर भारत के गांव की संरचना पर बात कर रहे हैं। यद्यपि सामाजिक संरचना आर्थिकी और भौगोलिक पारिस्थिकी से भी प्रभावित होती है। फिर भी यह कह सकते हैं कि इसमें कुछ सामान्यताएं और विशिष्टताएं परिलक्षित की जा सकती हैं। सामान्यताओं में परिवार, रिश्तों का ताना-बाना, जाति और स्तरीकरण हैं। जबकि

विशिष्टताओं में पहाड़ और रेगिस्तान में बसाहटों का बिखराव है। इसके साथ ही रोजगार के लिए पलायन एक हद तक सामाजिक संरचना को प्रभावित करता है।

गांव की भी प्राथमिक इकाई परिवार है। इधर के दशकों में संयुक्त परिवार के विघटन की प्रक्रिया गांव में भी जारी रही है और यह क्रमशः विखंडित और एकल होता गया है। फिर भी पारस्परिक पारिवारिक रिश्तों की एक हद तक भूमिका है। परिवार के बुजुर्ग मुखिया का प्रभाव घटा है लेकिन इसकी नैतिक प्रतिष्ठा लगभग बरकरार है। जाति बिरादरी का ताना-बाना लगभग यथावत है और यह परिवार को अपनी तरह से प्रभावित करता है। गांव की बसावट, गली, मौहल्ले और थोक (टोले) पारंपरिक रूप से जाति आधारित हैं एवं इनमें अधिक बदलाव नहीं हुआ है। थोक, कुटुम्ब या कुनबे का विस्तारित रूप हैं और इसकी परिधि में आने वाले परिवारों के संबंध ज्यादा घनिष्ठ हैं।

तेजी से बदलती हुई सामाजिक संरचना में समुदाय का अर्थ क्या है? एक केन्द्रीय प्रश्न होने के बावजूद अभी तक इस पर ज्यादा चिन्तन नहीं किया गया। इसे परिभाषित या विश्लेषित करने की बजाय इसे परिकल्पित कर लिया गया है। समाजशास्त्र की शास्त्रीय अवधारणाओं में समुदाय का जिक्र एक ऐसे समूह के रूप में है जो अपने उद्देश्यों तथा जरूरतों को परस्पर मिलकर समग्र रूप में निपटाते हैं। इसके सदस्यों का पूरा जीवन यहां गुजरता है — वे यहां अपने तमाम सामाजिक संबंध बनाते और महसूस करते हैं जबकि इसके बाहर उनकी जिन्दगी की साझी जरूरतें काफी कम होती हैं। इस मायने में गांव, शहर तथा जिला एक तरह का समुदाय बनाते हैं। एक समुदाय का नाम पाने के लिए यह जरूरी है कि समूह से जुड़ा हुआ स्थान (उनके जीने की जगह) अन्य जगहों से अलग हो। समूह से जुड़े हुए स्थान का कुछ मतलब हो— उस दायरे में उनके उद्देश्य पूरे होते हों।

उत्तर स्वाधीनताकालीन विकास के विमर्श में समुदाय एक केन्द्रीय अवधारणा रही है जबकि उस समय 'समुदाय' पहली बार जनतांत्रिक तौर से चुनी गयी सरकार के लिए नया 'परिकल्पित समुदाय' था। योजनाकारों और नीति-निर्माताओं ने सामुदायिक विकास योजनाओं के जरिए, जहां समुदाय की अवधारणा गांव पर लागू होती थी, कृषि आधारित अर्थतंत्र तथा ग्रामीण समाज की पुनर्रचना की परिकल्पना की थी। इस बात की योजना तैयार की गई कि एक नियोजित सामाजिक व आर्थिक बदलाव की प्रक्रिया के जरिए ग्रामीण परिदृश्य में, इनके सपनों का एक 'परिकल्पित समुदाय' उभर सके। सहयोग तथा परस्परता के साथ-साथ बंटवारा और पदानुक्रम वह सिद्धान्त और आदर्श थे जिनके ताने-बाने से भारतीय गांव परम्परागत रूप से संगठित हुए थे। इस नये ग्रामीण समुदाय में, विभाजक सिद्धान्तों को और ज्यादा कल्याणकारी जुड़ाव और एकता के पक्ष में निकाल बाहर किया जाना था जो कि जाति, वर्ण तथा धार्मिक अलगावों से परे होता।

हम सब इस कष्टकारी सत्य से परिचित हैं कि 'परिकल्पित समुदाय' कभी भी वास्तविक नहीं हुआ। इसके विपरीत मौजूदा असंगत संरचना और मजबूत हुई। स्थापित कुलीनों ने लोक संस्थाओं पर जकड़नपूर्ण नियंत्रण स्थापित कर लिया तथा इनको पुनर्निर्माण और संभागी एजेंसियों के तौर पर निष्क्रिय कर दिया। सामुदायिक विकास कार्यक्रमों में अन्तर्निहित पूर्व-मान्यताओं के विपरीत, गांव में पदानुक्रम को बनाने वाले विभाजक किस्म के तत्व आगे

आए हैं और उन्होंने प्रभुत्वशाली तथा अधीनस्थ भागों के बीच सहूलियत और फायदे के द्वन्द्व को बल प्रदान किया है तथा अन्तर्विरोधों को पहले से और ज्यादा तीखा किया है। ऐसी स्थिति में वहां कोई साझा प्रयास, कोई संगठन नहीं रह पाता है, कोई संयुक्त एजेन्डा नहीं रह पाता है, सर्व-शुभ हेतु कोई उद्देश्य नहीं रह पाता जो कि विकासात्मक प्रक्रिया को निर्देशित करे। तब वहां की ग्रामीण सामाजिक संरचना के भीतर समानता तथा न्याय के लिए कोई भी मानक स्थापित नहीं हो पाता।

कुल मिलाकर वहां कोई ऐसी राजनैतिक पुनर्परिभाषा बनती हुई नहीं दिखती है जो ग्रामीण समुदाय के जाति और गुट की संकीर्ण समझ के बाहर 'गांव विशेष की' कोई ऐसी व्यापक श्रेणी सामने लाए जो अपनी एकता की सीमा को वहां तक विस्तार दे, जिसमें गरीब, निम्न जाति तथा आदिवासी सब शामिल हो सकें। इसके विपरीत पुराने समूह आधारित मूल्य एवं एकता और खेतिहर समूह, कुटुम्ब व जाति के प्रति निष्ठा इत्यादि का बिखराव एवं क्षय होता जा रहा है। सबसे बुरा यह है कि वे एक ऐसी खण्डित राजनीति में समेट लिए गए हैं जो कि ताकतवरों की राजनैतिक और आर्थिक शक्ति को और बढ़ाती है।

पिछले दो दशकों में 'विकास' के संदर्भ में 'समुदाय' की अवधारणा की जबर्दस्त वापसी हुई है। एक बार फिर से 'ग्रामीण' समुदाय को हस्तक्षेप के तौर पर चुना गया है। समुदाय के विकास में समुदाय की भागीदारी का एक बदलाव देखने को मिलता है। पहले की सामुदायिक विकास की समझ और अब की भागीदारी वाले विकास की दृष्टि, आकार तथा दायरे के बीच कोई तुलना नहीं हो सकती है। समुदाय की भागीदारी की अवधारणा सामुदायिक विकास की अवधारणा से काफी कम महत्वाकांक्षा वाली है। प्रत्यक्षतः उद्देश्य यह है कि जो विकास से 'बाहर' रह गए हैं उनको ऐसी एकीकृत योजनाओं, जो जनता को परिवर्तन का एजेन्ट मानती हैं, के जरिए इसमें शामिल करना है। विकेन्द्रीकरण पर नया सर्वसम्मत जोर स्पष्टतः अर्थतंत्र के संरचनात्मक समायोजन की प्रक्रिया से जुड़ा है। सरकार, वित्तीय एजेन्सियां, वित्तदाताओं, नागरिक समाज के विभिन्न पात्र, जैसे गैर-सरकारी संगठन तथा विश्व बैंक जैसी बहुआयामी एजेन्सियां और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मुद्राकोष इन सबका विकास के अपने पसंदीदा मॉडल से बराबरी का लगाव है जो कि जन सहभागिता के जरिये चिरस्थायी बन सकता है।

सामुदायिक सहभागिता के स्वरूप और प्रकृति के दृष्टिकोण को लेकर एक बड़ा भ्रम है। यह कार्यक्रम में जनता की स्वैच्छिक भागीदारी जैसी सीमित संकल्पना से 'अपने खुद के संगठन द्वारा निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रिया में संलग्नता' जैसे वृहत और अति महत्वाकांक्षी संकल्पना या कार्यक्रम में 'स्व संचालित' गतिविधि इत्यादि हैं। इसलिए भागीदारी का जो नक्शा उभर रहा है वह निष्क्रिय तथा /या सीमित भागीदारी से एक सक्रिय भागीदारी और स्वयं को गतिशील करने तक की समूची सीमा तक फैल चुका है। यह महत्त्वपूर्ण है कि सामुदायिक विकास कार्यक्रम की समझ के विपरीत कोई ठोस प्रचलन और परम्परा समुदाय में अपने आप में न तो परिभाषित है और न ही परिकल्पित है। दरअसल नये वैश्विक विमर्श में समुदाय की संज्ञा को संदिग्धता, स्वेच्छाचारिता, अनिश्चितता इत्यादि से चिह्नित किया जाता है और यह विभिन्न प्रकार के संबंधित निजी हितों के एजेंडों के लिहाज से ठीक बैठता है। बहुधा इसे एक ऐसे लक्षित समूह, जो कि कार्यक्रम निर्माताओं द्वारा पहले से ही परिभाषित कर दिए गए होते हैं, के लिए एक संक्षिप्त संज्ञा के तौर पर इस्तेमाल किया जाता है।

समुदाय के वर्तमान बोध में शारीरिक आक्रामकता का एक शक्तिशाली तत्व विद्यमान है। जबकि समुदाय की सामूहिकता, स्थानिक-कालिक पहचान के रूप में होती है। स्थानिक-कालिक संदर्भ एक जुड़ाव के बोध, एक संगठन और एक सामूहिक पहचान की भावना का निर्माण करते हैं, जिसे समुदाय को परिभाषित करने के लिए आवश्यक माना जाता है।

अन्तर्संबद्धता के आधार पर समुदाय की अवधारणा के संदर्भ में ये स्वीकारना पड़ेगा कि समुदाय के भीतर पाया जाने वाला दृश्य और ठोस जुड़ाव लोगों को अपनी ओर आकर्षित करता है। यह आकर्षण परिवर्तनशील होता है, अतः समुदाय कभी स्थायी नहीं हो सकता। यह आन्तरिक रूप में स्तरीकृत एवं परिवर्तनशील होगा जिससे इसकी परिभाषा एवं इसका नामकरण संभव नहीं हो पाएगा क्योंकि किसी एक नाम का चुनाव कुछ लोगों को अपने में जान-बूझकर सम्मिलित नहीं कर पाएगा। यदि यह चुनाव सोच-समझ कर किया गया हो तो समुदाय की अवधारणा की प्रासंगिकता केवल खास संदर्भ में होगी। बेहतर यह रहेगा कि उसे एक हित समूह के रूप में जाना समझा जाए। समुदाय की अवधारणा को इससे ऊपर उठना होगा। इसके लिए हमें समरूपता की मांग से और आगे बढ़ना होगा।

माक्सवादी विचारणा 'समुदाय' को एक पारंपरिक इकाई मानती है। यह समूह की वर्गीय संरचना के विखंडन और निम्नवर्गीय समूहों की एकबद्धता पर जोर देती है। यदि ये निम्नवर्गीय समूह (सर्वहारा) वर्गीय चेतना से लैस हों तो रेडिकल परिवर्तन में ऐतिहासिक भूमिका निभा सकते हैं। किन्तु उत्तर भारत के ग्रामीण समुदायों को वर्गीय आधार पर संगठित करने और उनमें परिवर्तनकारी चेतना विकसित करने में माक्सवादी प्रयास सफल नहीं हुए। यहां श्रमिकों के असंगठित क्षेत्रों में माक्सवादी हस्तक्षेपों की जगह नहीं बन पाई। इसका कारण शायद ये भी रहा है कि ये विश्रुंखिल और अस्थिर समुदाय थे।

समुदाय का एक और बुद्धिवादी-उत्तरवादी सृजन संभव है। इस स्थिति में समुदाय को अपनी भौतिक सामूहिकता की इस दृष्टिगत पहचान के ऊपर उठना होगा जिसमें चुनाव की स्वतंत्रता एवं बुद्धिपरक बोध के रूप में व्यक्ति की क्षमता का अर्थ मात्र सामाजिक-भौतिक प्रतिनिधित्व के रूप में होता है। स्थानिक-कालिक, सांस्कृतिक या समरूपता किसी भी प्रकार से सर्व सहमति की शर्त नहीं बन पाएगी। सभी मतभेदों के बावजूद एक साझा समझ विकसित हो सकती है, जो कि व्यक्तियों की सार्वजनिक एवं निजी दुनिया को व्याख्यायित करने, चुनने एवं उससे संबंध स्थापित करने की क्षमता में हुए विकास से इसमें सहायता ले सकती है। हित की चिन्ता समुदाय को पूर्णतः समझने या व्याख्यायित करने में सक्षम नहीं है। मूल्य बोध इसके लिए आवश्यक है। वह क्षमता, जिससे विशेष एवं सामान्य में, व्यक्तिनिष्ठता एवं निर्वैयक्तिकता में तालमेल बैठ सके, जो अभिव्यक्त मूल्यों की चेतना की भूमिका का निर्माण करती है एवं जिससे 'अन्य' को निज समझने की क्षमता का विकास होता है। इससे समुदाय का निर्माण होता है।

इस प्रकार समुदाय का तात्पर्य समूह के बजाय सामूहिक संप्रेषण होता है। समुदाय समान रूप से संप्रेषित करने की क्षमता है। इसकी उत्पत्ति तभी संभव है जब सबको अपनी क्षमता को विकसित करने का समान अवसर प्रदान किया जाए। अंतिम विश्लेषण में, समुदाय का तात्पर्य

समान क्षमता एवं समान स्वतंत्रता विकसित करना या उसके लिए प्रयास करना है। इसलिए समुदाय का मतलब परिभाषित कार्य—सूची पर सर्व—सहमति न होकर, इससे भी बढ़कर विविध कार्य—सूचियों को विवेक के आधार पर स्वीकार करने से होगा। विवेकशील आधार का संप्रत्यय मोटे तौर पर मानवीय मूल्यों, जैसे – स्वतंत्रता, न्याय, समानता, मतभेदों को अपने स्तर पर दूर कर लेना, भिन्नता होते हुए भी जुड़े रहने की सर्व सहमति को परिलक्षित करता है।

शिक्षा में समुदाय की भागीदारी

समुदाय की भागीदारी के उभरते परिदृश्य तथा शिक्षा के सार्वजनीकरण के प्रयासों की अनवरत असफलताओं के परिप्रेक्ष्य में कोई इससे शैक्षणिक रणनीतियों के तौर पर क्या समझ पाएगा ? जरूरत है कि इसकी सीमाओं को समझा जाये, इसके सच्चे स्वरूप को उजागर किया जाए। इसे उन वृहत परिप्रेक्ष्यों से जोड़ा जाए जिनका कि पूर्व में हमने जिक्र किया है।

वर्तमान शैक्षिक संदर्भ में समुदाय की भागीदारी की आधारभूत सीमाएं हैं – संदर्भहीन और अरुचिकर ढंग से समुदाय की अवधारणा की व्याख्या एवं अनुप्रयोग, जो उन वृहत्तर सामाजिक प्रक्रियाओं को समाजशास्त्रीय ढंग से समझने का कोई प्रयास नहीं होने दे रही हैं जिन्होंने ग्रामीण एवं शहरी परिप्रेक्ष्यों में समुदायों के विखंडीकरण का सूत्रपात किया। बढ़ती विषमताओं, असमानताओं, अस्थिरताओं, जरूरतों में परस्पर द्वन्द्व तथा आवागमन आदि ने सामुदायिक भावनाओं को ग्राम, जाति, वर्ण तथा कुटुम्ब के स्तर तक विखंडित किया। नृजातीय आदान-प्रदानों को केवल अपने जीने हेतु बनाए रखा गया। विच्छिन्न, साधनहीन तथा राजनैतिक रूप से अशक्त हमारे समाज के विभिन्न समूहों से समुदाय के रूप में बने रहने की सामर्थ्य एवं इच्छा होने की उम्मीद करना व्यर्थ है। नवराजनैतिक विमर्श में अभी भी बिना ध्यान दिए परस्पर भागीदारी व स्व-सहायता बने एक अस्पष्ट एवं अस्थिर समुदाय की बात की जा रही है। यह केवल मान लिया जाता है कि कोई ऐसा 'समुदाय विशेष' अपनी समानताओं व जरूरतों की एकरूपताओं के साथ विद्यमान है जिसे क्रियाशील किया जा सकता है। नये शैक्षिक कार्यक्रम किस प्रकार तथा किस हैसियत से 'समुदाय विशेष' को भागीदार के रूप में देख रहे हैं ? समुदाय के संबंध में तथा शैक्षिक प्रचलनों के लिखित वर्णनों में प्रायः निम्न में से एक या अधिक रूप में जाता है—

- लक्ष्य (लाभान्वित होने वाला समूह),
- जागरूकता एवं वातावरण निर्माण के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में,
- विकेन्द्रीकृत प्रबंधन के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में जिसे व्यवस्था, रख-रखाव एवं देखभाल आदि की जिम्मेदारी दी गई है या,
- बाहरी सहायता द्वारा चलाए जा रहे उच्च स्तरीय शैक्षिक कार्यों के एक मुकम्मल प्रतिनिधि के रूप में।

समुदाय के विघटनकारी स्वभाव तथा राज्य पर हावी राजनैतिक दबाव के चलते ऊपर लिखित सामुदायिक आदान-प्रदान कहां तक संभव हो पाता है ? कई बार ऊपर से यह जनता की भागीदारी तथा निर्णय का प्रतीक है पर दरअसल यह राज्य द्वारा प्राथमिक शिक्षा के बोझ का अस्पष्ट रूप से समुदाय पर स्थानान्तरण ही दर्शाता है। सरकार जन शिक्षा की जिम्मेदारी से तो हटना चाहती है परन्तु शैक्षिक व्यवस्था पर नियंत्रण नहीं छोड़ना चाहती। अतः यह एक विसंगति ही है कि समुदाय की भागीदारी आखिरकार सरकारी नियंत्रण का ही एक साधन बनकर रह गयी है। शिक्षा के निजीकरण एवं बाजारीकरण के परिप्रेक्ष्य में, सामुदायिक भागीदारी का दर्शन जन शिक्षा के संदर्भ में सरकार के बदलते राजनैतिक दर्शन एवं क्रियाकलापों को ही न्यायसंगत बनाने में लगा प्रतीत होता है। ऐसा लगता है कि इसका उद्देश्य संघर्ष रहित 'सामंजस्य बनाना' है – उनके साथ सामंजस्य एवं सहभागिता जिनकी वजह से सही उद्देश्यों को त्यागना पड़ता है या हानि होती है।

इस प्रक्रिया में समुदाय और सरकार एक दूसरे के लिए 'अन्य' बन जाते हैं। शिक्षा राज्य का कल्याणकारी पैकेज बन जाती है, समुदाय के सीखने का माध्यम नहीं बन पाती संप्रभुतापूर्ण वातावरण में विद्यालय औपनिवेशिक संस्कृति को बनाए रखने और आगे बढ़ाने का जरिया बन जाते हैं। यह यथास्थितिवाद की कार्यशाला बनकर एक ही सांचे में ढलकर निकलने वाले बच्चों का निर्माण करती है। जब तक कि विद्यालय की सत्ता के ढांचे में इसको एक सामुदायिक संस्था के रूप में पुनर्निर्मित करने के लिए बदलाव नहीं होगा तब तक विद्यालय में सीखने की गुणवत्ता में गंभीर समस्याएं मौजूद रहेंगी।

शिक्षा के संदर्भ में सामुदायिक भागीदारी की समस्या के दो और भी आयाम हैं। एक शिक्षा की प्रकृति से संबद्ध है। विकास के दूसरे कार्यक्रमों का प्रतिफल अपेक्षाकृत जल्दी प्राप्त होता है जबकि शिक्षा के प्रतिफल प्रायः ही देर से मिलते हैं और उन्हें (अभिभावकों या गांव वालों को) नहीं मिलते जो उसमें अपनी तरह से अवदान देते हैं बल्कि शिक्षार्थी को मिलते हैं। इससे समुदाय की सक्रियता बाधित होती है। दूसरा आयाम लोगों के वर्ग-हितों से जुड़ा है। विद्यालयों की भिन्नताओं (सरकारी व निजी स्कूल) ने वर्चस्वशाली और वंचितों के शैक्षिक हितों में गहरा विभाजन उत्पन्न कर दिया है। वर्चस्वशाली विपन्नों की शिक्षा के प्रति वास्तव में गंभीर सरोकार नहीं रखते, वे इसका दिखावा मात्रा करते हैं जबकि विपन्न इस लिहाज से सशक्त नहीं हैं कि वे इस प्रक्रिया में सक्रिय भागीदारी कर सकें। यही वह क्षेत्र है जहां नागरिक समाज (स्वयंसेवी/गैर सरकारी संगठन) हस्तक्षेप कर सकते हैं।

शिक्षा की एक प्रक्रिया के रूप में विशिष्टता के चलते समुदाय की भागीदारी वस्तुतः उस तरह संभव नहीं है जैसी कि अपेक्षा की जाती है। समुदाय से पहले इसमें शिक्षक और बच्चों की भागीदारी की आवश्यकता है। दूसरी ओर समुदाय के बीच ऐसे हस्तक्षेपों की जरूरत है जो उन्हें तार्किक संवाद और निर्णय क्षमताओं के लिए सक्षम बनाएं। पहली प्रकार की आवश्यकता शिक्षा के आन्तरिक चरित्र के जनतांत्रिकरण की मांग करती है ताकि यह औपनिवेशिकता से मुक्त हो। दूसरी आवश्यकता के लिए वंचित और हाशिए के समुदायों में अधिकार चेतना का विस्तार होना है।

समुदाय और नागरिक समाज

नागरिक समाज की पहलों पर सामुदायिक संगठन (अथवा समुदाय आधारित संगठन) खड़े किए जाते हैं। लेकिन ज्यादातर मामलों में ये भी उनके कार्यक्रम क्रियान्वयन की रणनीति का हिस्सा होते हैं अन्यथा अपने लक्ष्य व उद्देश्यों की आसान तरीके से पूर्ति करने के लिए वे इनका सहारा लेते हैं। यदि स्थानीय समुदायों के सशक्तिकरण अथवा उनमें जनतांत्रिक विवेकशीलता और अधिकार चेतना उत्पन्न करने के उपक्रम के तौर पर उनके हस्तक्षेपों को देखा जाएगा तो इसमें निम्न पहलुओं पर उनकी प्रतिक्रियाएं परिलक्षित होनी चाहिए:

- समाज एक गतिशील इकाई है और यह सभी प्रकार की सोच रखने वाले लोगों से मिलकर बना है। कुछ लोगों के निर्णय सभी के जीवन पर सकारात्मक या नकारात्मक प्रभाव डाल सकते हैं। प्रायः दूसरे के बारे में लिए गए निर्णय के परिणामों की जिम्मेदारी वे लोग नहीं लेते जो अन्य लोगों के बारे में निर्णय ले लेते हैं। अंत में किसी और के निर्णयों के नतीजे किसी और को सहन करने होते हैं जो किसी भी प्रकार से जनतंत्र के ढांचे के उपयुक्त नहीं कहा जा सकता।
- स्थानीय स्तर पर भी लोगों में निर्णय कर पाने और उनका निर्वाह कर पाने की सामर्थ्य होती है।
- एक ऐसा संगठन या संस्था जो सामाजिक या आर्थिक विकास की अगुवाई करना चाहता है, वह सभी वर्गों की भागीदारी विकास की प्रक्रिया में होने की बात को स्वीकार किए बिना सफलता का दावा नहीं कर सकता।
- किसी भी समुदाय में किसी न किसी रूप में एक व्यवस्थित संगठन होना अनिवार्य है जो नेतृत्व की क्षमता का प्रदर्शन कर सके और जिम्मेदारी उठा सके। ऐसे संगठन के लिए जमीनी तैयारी होना आवश्यक है जो संगठन के लिए मार्गदर्शन प्रदान कर सके।
- समुदाय स्तर पर आने वाली समस्याओं के स्थानीय हल ही ज्यादा कारगर साबित होते हैं और ऐसे हल निकालने के लिए भी किसी ऐसे समूह का होना जरूरी है जो परिस्थिति को पूरी तरह से समझकर समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए समुदाय को राह दिखा पाए। इस प्रकार के समाधान विकेंद्रित व्यवस्था में ही संभव हो पाते हैं जो ऊपर से नीचे जाने की बजाय नीचे से ऊपर की ओर जाती है।

जब एक बार यह बात स्वीकार कर ली जाती है कि समुदाय स्तरीय संगठन होने की आवश्यकता है तो अगला प्रश्न यही उठेगा तो फिर ऐसे संगठन का स्वरूप क्या होगा? क्या कुछ लोगों के समूह को हम समुदाय स्तरीय संगठन कह सकते हैं? क्या गांव में विद्यमान सभी प्रकार के संगठन सामुदायिक संगठन की श्रेणी में रखे जा सकते हैं? ये प्रश्न इसलिए स्वभाविक रूप से उठते हैं क्योंकि जैसा पूर्व में कहा गया, समुदाय की अवधारणा में परिवर्तन होते रहे हैं तो इनके संगठन की अवधारणा भी प्रभावित होगी।

सामुदायिक विकास की जटिल प्रक्रिया के मद्देनजर अन्तर निर्भर समूहों के निर्माण भी प्रस्तावित किए जाते हैं। इस विचार के अनुसार किसी महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्य को करने के लिए अन्तर्वैयक्तिक निर्भरता की आवश्यकता होती है। जो लोग अक्सर एक-दूसरे को सहयोग करते हैं, वे एक समूह का रूप ले लेते हैं। सामूहिकता की भावना इस समूह को सुदृढ़ और प्रभावी बना देती है। समूह भावना से समूह के हर सदस्य को खुला और सहभागी वातावरण मिलता है। समूह का प्रत्येक व्यक्ति सामूहिक वांछित लक्ष्यों को पाने के लिए तन्मयता से काम करता है। सभी व्यक्ति आपस में एक-दूसरे का हाथ बंटाते हैं और अपने निजी स्वार्थों को एक तरफ रख देते हैं।

एक आदर्श समूह में प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को कार्य सीखने व नेतृत्व का अवसर मिलता है। हर सदस्य अन्तर वैयक्तिक कौशल सीखता है। समूह का प्रत्येक व्यक्ति स्वयं को सक्षम समझता है तथा यह मानता है कि समूह के लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति में उसका महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान है। समूह में उसका विशिष्ट स्थान व भूमिका है। ऐसे समूह की बैठकों व अन्य क्रियाकलापों में सभी लोग स्वयं को सहज अनुभव करते हैं। इससे सीधा और प्रभावी संवाद स्थापित होता है और आपस में विश्वास पनपता है। समूह के सदस्य लक्ष्यों को पाने के लिए पूर्व आकलित जोखिम लेने को भी सहर्ष तैयार रहते हैं। वे अपने में उन क्षमताओं को विकसित करते हैं जो इन चुनौतियों को स्वीकारने में सहायक हों।

समूह के सभी लोग मिलकर समस्या-समाधान करते हैं तथा सहभागिता से निर्णय लेते हैं। सभी सदस्यों द्वारा स्वीकृत निर्णयों को सभी सदस्य सम्मान और सहयोग देते हैं। सदस्य स्वयं अपनी व समूह की कमजोरियों और गलतियों का मिलजुल कर आकलन करते हैं। इसमें कमजोरी या गलती के लिए किसी व्यक्ति विशेष को जिम्मेदार नहीं ठहराते हैं। अन्तर वैयक्तिक क्रिया-कलापों से सृजनात्मकता का विकास होता है और नए विचार उत्पन्न होते हैं। समूह द्वारा अपने क्रियाकलापों में अच्छे विचारों को सम्मिलित कर लिया जाता है। समूह द्वारा ऐसे विचारों की सराहना की जाती है।

हालांकि ग्रामीण समाज की धूसर और ऊबड़-खाबड़ व कंकरीली-पथरीली जमीन पर ऐसे सामुदायिक समूह की कल्पना एक यूटोपिया ही लगती है। फिर भी जनतंत्र और शिक्षा का ध्येय भी अंततः इसी दिशा की ओर है।

अन्ततः हित समूह एक दीर्घकालिक समुदाय का रूपाकार नहीं ले सकते और अन्तर निर्भर समूहों के आदर्श पर भी बहुत ज्यादा भरोसा नहीं किया जा सकता। समुदाय की जनतांत्रिक अवधारणा बुद्धिवाद और अधिकार चेतना पर ही आधारित हो सकती है। यदि इस अवधारणा को प्रयुक्त किया जाता है तो इससे हित समूहों का आधार डगमगा सकता है क्योंकि इसकी प्रकृति द्वन्द्वात्मक है। जाति, जनजाति, धर्म और लिंग-आधार समूहों की संरचना में अन्तर्निहित अन्तर्विरोधों को भी यह अवधारणा प्रश्नित करती है। अस्मितावाद ऐसे समुदायों को संगठित करने के प्रारंभिक चरण में ही यहां कोई भूमिका निभा सकता है। इससे आगे जब वैयक्तिक गरिमा, स्वातंत्र्य, समता और बन्धुत्व के मूल्य अधिकार-चेतना में सक्रिय होंगे तो अस्मितावाद की सीमाएं भी उजागर होने लगेंगी। इसके मायने हैं - समुदाय की संरचना और कार्यशैली में तार्किकता और आलोचनात्मक चिन्तन को समाहित करना होगा। स्वभाविक रूप से ये जनतांत्रिक शिक्षा की संगति में हैं।

अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय और शिक्षा

अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों, विशेषकर धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों के बारे में सामान्यतः ये धारणा है कि इनमें एक आवयविक एकता और समरूपता पाई जाती है। हित समूह के रूप में भी ये अपेक्षाकृत सुदृढ़ इकाई माने जाते हैं। जबकि समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययन इन धारणाओं को भ्रामक ठहराते हैं। वे इनकी एकता के पीछे अक्सर बाड़ेबंदी या कवचीय आवरण को पाते हैं, समरूपता की बजाए अनेक स्तरीय विषमता देखते हैं और हित समूहों की संरचना में सांस्कृतिक अस्मिता का निर्णायक कारक ठहराते हैं। इनके धार्मिक प्रवक्ता वास्तव में इनका सही प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं करते क्योंकि वे प्रायः इन समुदायों की धर्म-आधारित पहचान के मुद्दों को ही प्रमुखता देते हैं। मुस्लिम आबादी में मदरसों के व्यापक विस्तार और इनमें दुनियावी तालीम के कथित दावों के बावजूद सच्चर समिति द्वारा बटोरे गए आंकड़ों से इन समुदायों की शैक्षिक बदहाली सामने आ गयी है। ऐसी स्थिति में अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों के प्रति संवैधानिक दायित्वों को पूरी तरह महत्त्व देते हुए भी कुछ मामलों में सरकार को समझौते नहीं करने चाहिए। कम से कम चार कारणों से जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था को अल्पसंख्यकों के शैक्षिक अधिकारों के प्रति सतर्क रहना चाहिए। पहला तथा चौथा कारण उदारता संबंधी चिन्ता का है और दूसरा तथा तीसरा कारण नागरिक-व्यवस्था से संबद्ध है।

1. शिक्षा बच्चों की विचार करने एवं स्वयं निर्णय करने की क्षमता को विकसित करने तथा बढ़ाने की जगह कुंठित और दमित कर सकती है। यह तथ्य बच्चों के स्वायत्त विकास में बाधक हो सकता है। जनतंत्रीय सरकार को, बच्चों के भावी स्वायत्त विकास की रक्षा के प्रति अपने उत्तरदायित्व के कारण, ऐसी शिक्षा से उनकी रक्षा अवश्य करनी चाहिए। यदि बच्चों की भावी स्वतंत्रता की संरक्षा की आवश्यकता नहीं है तो अभिभावकों की वर्तमान स्वतंत्रता (जैसे – पैतृक अधिकार, धर्म की स्वतंत्रता, आदि) की संरक्षा की आवश्यकता क्यों होनी चाहिए ?
2. कोई बच्चों को ऐसी शिक्षा दे सकता है कि वे अन्य प्रकार की जीवन-शैलियों तथा विश्वासों के प्रतिनिधियों के प्रति असहिष्णु हो जाएं; अथवा अन्य समुदायों को जो चीजें प्रेरणा देती हैं, उनके संबंध में वे अज्ञानी रह जाएं। इससे बच्चों में असहिष्णुता और समझ की कमी उत्पन्न होगी। ऐसी शिक्षा बहुलवादी जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था के विपरीत होती है।
3. जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था की एक महत्त्वपूर्ण विशेषता है कि व्यापक राजनैतिक प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने का हरेक को अधिकार होता है। इन प्रक्रियाओं में सार्थक तरीके से भाग लेने के लिए कुछ कौशल एवं अन्तर्दृष्टि और कुछ सामान्य ज्ञान तथा संदर्भित मसलों के ज्ञान की जरूरत होती है। बच्चे ऐसे कौशल और ज्ञान किसी जादू से प्राप्त नहीं करते हैं। इसके लिए वे शिक्षा पर ही निर्भर होते हैं। जब शिक्षा व्यवस्था पर सार्वजनिक या लोक की सत्ता का अधिकार कम होता है तो सभी बच्चों को पर्याप्त ज्ञान के अवसर प्राप्त नहीं होने का खतरा उत्पन्न हो जाता है। ऐसी स्थिति में जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था का भविष्य दांव पर लग जाता है।

4. तकनीकी संस्कृति तथा जटिल समाज व्यवस्था में शिक्षा आधारभूत जरूरत होती है। शिक्षा के बिना ऐसी व्यवस्था में जीवनयापन कठिन है। अतः पर्याप्त ज्ञान मनुष्य का मौलिक अधिकार है। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय संधियों जैसे आर्थिक, सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक अधिकारों के बारे में अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय करार एवं बाल अधिकारों के संबंध में समझौतों के अनुसार बालकों को भी यही अधिकार प्राप्त हैं। उदार जनतांत्रिक व्यवस्था में सरकार को प्रत्येक बच्चे की आधारभूत जरूरतों को पूरा करने के संबंध में चिंता करनी चाहिए। शैक्षिक सत्ता का परित्याग करने पर यह कार्य समुचित तरीके से पूरा नहीं किया जा सकता।

इस संदर्भ में कहना होगा कि बहुसंख्यक अस्मिता आधारित समुदायों और ऐसे संगठनों द्वारा संचालित विद्यालयों के मामले में भी राज्य की ऐसी सचेतनता उतनी ही आवश्यक है जो वास्तव में जनतांत्रिक मूल्यों की बजाय किन्हीं मताग्रहों द्वारा संचालित किए जाते हैं।

संदर्भ

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Report of the Consultation on Right to Education – The Next Phase

- Anju Dhadda Misra

"Every child, irrespective of caste, class, gender and location born in this country in the age group 6-14 years has the right to receive free, compulsory and quality elementary education, and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure her and his, right and access to it". This was the promise made to the citizens of India, through the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" (RTE) Act that came into force as a law five years ago on the first of April 2010. To assess what progress we have made in these five years and what remains to be done, a Consultation meeting was organized by Ajit Foundation with support from "United Nations Children's Emergency Fund"(UNICEF) (Rajasthan), which has been partnering these consultations nationwide, mostly with state agencies except in a couple of cases with "Non Government Org."(NGOs) of which this was one. The "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" (RTE) converges with the United Nations (UNO's) mission of total world literacy and ensuring children's education worldwide. The Consultation brought together many educators and policy advisors associated with various aspects of educational planning with rights' approach and quality awareness. Program of the Consultation is attached as Appendix 1, and the list of participants is given in Appendix 11.

The first day's discussion began with Professor Vijay Shankar Vyas, chairman of Ajit Foundation, introducing the theme as well as the need for the Consultation. He observed that though noticeable progress has been made in some components of "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" (RTE) in Rajasthan, several significant deficiencies in the implementation of the act are also now evident. These deficiencies are in the areas of low enrollment of tribal children and girls, inadequate infrastructure - including dysfunctional toilets, large dropouts ratio and most importantly low quality of education, and there was enough official evidence to suggest that the maladies were wide spread and needed serious concern and attention. Welcoming everyone to participate in the deliberations, he defined the key areas to be discussed as:

- Why students do not continue in the school
- Why learning levels are so low
- Are teachers not competent or not motivated or both
- Why communities do not own schools in the vicinity
- What role is expected of the government, civil society and media to achieve the objectives of "Right Of Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act" (RTE)?

He invited the participants to address these issues.

The two keynote speakers for the inaugural session were Samuel Mawunganidz, the head of UNICEF in Rajasthan, associated with the Right to Education since its inception; and Dr. Sharada Jain, Director Sandhan, an eminent educationist, who has been associated with National Curriculum Framework Committee of 1986.

Samuel Mawunganidz began his address with appreciation for the “Non Government Org.”(NGOs), such as Ajit Foundation. He said that the Right to Education, has become a right, because of the involvement of the “Non Government Org.”(NGOs), who also continue to play a significant role in ensuring that it is a realizable right. He felt that the responsibility of educating the masses and realizing and establishing the Right to Education, that should have passed into the hands of the people where the state leaves off, has instead, passed into the hands of the government. The implementation of the “Right Of Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) has become reduced to the more visible aspects like the 25% reservation of seats in the neighbourhood schools, while the less tangible aspects like quality of facilities, learning outcomes and quality of education have not received due attention.

He said that three areas needed to be addressed in this context are :

- 1) That there be a demand for education
- 2) That this demand be addressed with adequate supply
- 3) That there be an enabling environment for the demand and supply to be addressed.

He felt that the imbalance in the situation has only widened the gulf between the needy and the well provided, and though the demand has been created, it has only resulted in the ambition to achieve, to become; it has not translated into the desire to know, to learn. This imbalance has resulted in most parents desiring their children to be in the top brackets, not caring about what they actually learn; and how it has also resulted in escalating enrollment in private institutions and dwindling enrollment in state run schools.

He emphasized that for true and quality, learning appropriate curriculum is imperative, saying that if a child were a voter he would vote for a caring teacher. He observed that a child today is full of questions. He is asking why s/he cannot study, why s/ he has no teacher, if the country is genuinely no longer poor why s/he has no books, no toys, no learning no facilities in materials school, no playground, pointing to the glaring lack of an enabling environment. An enabling environment is that, he added, where there is a teacher available, and the teacher has the capacity to care.

He acknowledged that there was a significant improvement in the availability of toilets and the number of government school, with a separate toilet, has risen to 60%, but their functionality and accessibility needed to be assessed and ensured.

According to him every gram - sabha should have at least one school, which has all the requirements of a good school, which could serve as a model for the neighbouring schools. He felt that this forum could provide a strategic reflection on the unidentified and unelected preconditions that prevent the learning levels from rising and identify accountability for low learning outcomes; and to identify the boundary partners that provide, and result in, the necessary preconditions, that could improve learning outcomes. He felt that five years of implementation of the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) was a good moment to reflect on how best can we optimize our opportunities to make “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) a viable, livable reality.

Dr. Sharda Jain, who had an important role in the formulation of the National Curriculum Framework, felt that a retrospective of the five years' “Right Of Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) should be an occasion that allows us to shed off our reluctance to address the more basic issues relating to Education itself. She was of the firm view that the Right to Education cannot be realized unless thousands of hands come together to work for it. She felt that it can only be realized through the establishment of a just order of things in which each one's right role and responsibility is recognized. She felt that education ceases to be education if it is not quality education. But what, is this nebulous, intangible, protean thing, quality in education, has not being addressed at all. What is quality education has been defined through negation, that it is not this or that, but what is the affirmative aspect of education, still waits to be grasped fully. She felt that the expectation from the state to provide quality education has limited the Right to Education to becoming a Right to school and schooling. Can Right to Education be reduced to the Right to schooling, can education and schooling be treated as synonyms? Is schooling leading to real education? Real education should result in an immunization against exploitation, but has our education helped us do that? It has instead become an immunization against learning. She said that the main question that needs to be addressed over and over again in a changing environment is what after all is quality education, and every learner and every educator needs to address the question for the situation at hand. She felt that the National Curriculum Framework was never really implemented in its entirety. Pointing out the fallacious rationale and decisions, she expressed her concern through questions like "can sameness result in equality?" "Can we define education's priorities by asking what everyone thinks of education?" She ended on the note that the true aim of education is to equip a learner to eradicate oppression and if “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) does not equip him/her for it, it is not real education, and that without clarity on expected outcomes there can be no real education possible.

Professor Vijay Shankar Vyas, chairing the session concluded the deliberations with the remarks that the aims and expectations from education should always keep the learner in focus. Whatever is being done, whoever is doing it, Education should always be learner centric, only then can we achieve the true aim of education.

In the first technical session on five years of Right to Education in the state, particularly in Rajasthan, Dr. Shobhita Rajgopal, Senior fellow, IDS, addressed the issues of unevenness in the implementation of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . Infrastructure has improved but in the remote areas, gaps remain. Academic performance continues to be a major challenge. There are many contentious issues like “Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation” (CCE), no detention policy, and curricular reform that need addressing. The image of the government schools needs to be reconstructed and requires governance structures to become accountable. The state has to be proactive in taking forward the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) commitments. Many of these aspects of the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) that had not received their due attention needed to be focused. Among these the low enrolment in government schools and in difficult terrains needed to be addressed urgently.

Vishwambhar, senior fellow at Digantar, and editor of the journal on education Shiksha Vimarsh took up where Shobhita left off, saying that under the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) the state was enjoined to ensure the completion and availability of all infrastructural requirements, but the ground reality is still far from it. Only 60% schools have the prescribed facilities and their functional quality remains to be ascertained. The teacher pupil ratio that should be 1:30/1:35 is still not achieved. Community management and control has not even begun to be addressed. The “Freedom from Fear and punishment”, basic infrastructure and amenities, learning content and materials in sync with the values enshrined in the constitution, and child centric pedagogy all need to be addressed urgently. Rajasthan finishes at a poor 30 to 35th position in all the parameters used to scale the progress of a states in the implementation of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . Comparing the data of 2009-2010 with 2014 he demonstrated that there has been a 3% increase in govt. schools against 27% increase in private schools, and there is a reduction, a negative - 2% degrees reduction, in growth in enrolment in government schools.

He further emphasized that though “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) came into force on April 1, 2010, and entailed that all infrastructure requirements should be met with, by March, 2013, and all teacher training parameters be accomplished by March, 2015, both these deadlines have been long crossed yet neither infrastructural targets nor teacher training targets have been accomplished. Contrary to this scenario, “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) enrolment in private schools has escalated and is

dwindling in government schools. Private institutions, on the other hand are growing rapidly both in direct schooling as well as in teacher education. There is very little data available on qualitative learning. National achievement survey “Annual Status Of Education Reports”(ASER) reports are the two sets of data available and in both, the learning outcomes are regrettably poor though both take different levels of learning as benchmarks and evaluate different grades by that level.

The budget outlay makes no mention of fulfilling the fiscal requirements to provide for the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) requirements, and no additional allocations are made to ensure “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . While there is visible improvement in teacher taught ratio, yet it does not portray the real school-wise situation and the situation worsens in the far flung regions of the state. Both government and non-official data demonstrate that there is still a large number of schools running without a building or in borrowed or rented premises, where there is a building, facilities are far from adequate, both in number and functionality, and that mere improvement in total teacher-student ratio will not mean anything, unless it translates into ground reality, and teachers are deployed where they are needed.

Ganesh Nigam, consultant with UNICEF, in his presentation analyzed the raw UDISE data, pertaining to “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . If the picture had looked a little skewed from earlier interventions, his presentation showed to be it acutely worrisome. He felt that Rajasthan had a history of implementing some great ideas and had pioneered some great educational schemes but it seems that even the institutional memory of these is now lost. In the case of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) , though all states were enjoined to implement “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) , Rajasthan was one of the first states to have formulated its laws and by laws as well. But many unpremeditated decisions in the recent past have actually put the clock back in whatever little progress had been made in the limited time and resources since the beginning of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . In the name of Samaanikaran Equalization 17,000 schools were closed down and their teachers/parents/students were all left clueless as to what was to become of them. As a result of this a large number of students failed to enroll in the changed school, which was quite far for many of them, jeopardizing their access to school, resulting in unexpectedly large number of dropouts. Many other aspects of the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) like age appropriate admission; continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE), no detention policy and curricular reform were all given short shrift. There is absence of necessary planning, detailing and training, needed in each one of those aspects. His presentation, and the data cited by him made it clear as to what was actually wrong with the system.

The raw UDISE data made it evident that 2.78 crore children in the 6-14 yrs age group were still out of school of which girls outnumbered boys by nearly 8% and that the aggregate enrolment percentage of the age bracket is 66% compared to the national percentage of 77, which puts Rajasthan at the 33rd position in the country. Rajasthan has 5% children still out of school compared to the national percentage of 3%. The ratio of children going to private schools has increased from 35:65 to 48:50 (2 percent in other institutions). To one lakh 26 thousands schools in the private sector there are only 69 thousand schools in government sector, and most shockingly, of the 100 children entering school only 20 do class VIII. The debilitating annual dropout rate is largely on account of the absent teachers and lack of enabling learning environment. Of the 2,92,178, teachers needed only 2,49,812 are available. What was more shocking, was that compared to the 65,000 teachers needed, nearly 22,000 teachers were deployed at places where they were not needed and were surplus.

The number of single teacher schools was still very large, 38 blocks had schools with no teachers and only 10% schools completed all the parameters required; 17000 schools require classrooms, 26,000 have accessibility issues. It is evident that we will have to tackle the problems at the level of each block, but the main difficulty has been that people recruited from the less developed blocks, have their placements changed to more advanced areas bringing things back to square one.

In the second session Hridyakant Deewan took up the aspect of “Quality of education: status, challenges and future course”. He opened his presentation by maintaining that “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) is an incomplete implementation of the promise made in the Constitution. This has to be done in a manner that everyone should be participating in education not a matter of alms but realization of a right. Education has two main aspects, one that locates a student within his society/community and people and helps her get assimilated and become a part of it, and the other that it gives him the awareness and critical insight into his society and develops in him/her the capacity to stand up to, and against the evil prevalent in it and endeavor to change it. The question of quality relates directly to this aspect of his/her struggle. We need to ask as to what is it that we really want for the child: that he learns some facts and definitions or that he learns to know. The answer to this is what determines the curriculum for the child and determines what touchstones do we use to test it. Should and can parents in any meaningful way know what the child should learn-can teachers know, can the children themselves know, what they would need to know. And in any case what may seem appropriate to know today may no longer remain so tomorrow, which is why education is not about the what of knowing but is more and also about how to learn and to find out how to know more by oneself. Quality in education is a subject of constant struggling to know, and because it is a social and societal process with constant evolution of ideas and thought and everyone needs to participate in it and learn.

The real goal of education is to be given knowledge and knowing something or is it in the effort of getting it? Should the act of getting it be made to be joyful at the cost of meaningfulness and rigour or is the fun in making the effort and breaking through to learn? Is the joy in act of learning or being given it in charity? It is just that in trying to simplify everything we make it lose its meaning, its essence.

We need to distinguish between joyful learning and the joy of learning. It is certain that struggling against the challenges climbing a mountain offers is infinitely more rewarding than walking on flat ground. But we are not willing to relinquish the reins of learning into learners' hands, not keen to make her aspire to make the effort. It is because of this we have made a laughing stock of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), and reduced it to a joke. We have tried to implement it without any respect for it, without any trust in it, and without understanding it at all. This requires a trust in the teacher, a respect for the child's ability to eventually learn and a faith in the school as an institution. We have none.

Why do we compare the children of one place with those of another, why do we want them to feel that they are competing against each other? Why can we not instead teach them to live together? When no child is like another child, how can the learning process of every child be the same? We decide the learning level by age and expect and want the learning to be the same and at the same pace across all backgrounds, all geographies, all traits and habits. We had assumed that we will cultivate and emphasize cooperation through teaching but we have continuously encouraged competition through our system.

Will we be able to instill the self-respect that every child deserves and that s/he should receive from his/her school? The trust and will to learn can be the best training that a teacher can instill in students. Helping them to develop this ability and capacity and trust in knowing is the best education s/he can impart. Only a teacher who can work with freedom and self respect and can work with the courage and confidence can instill the faith in the student that s/he too can learn anything anytime.

K B Kothari, eminent journalist chairing the session said there has been almost a lull in quality training for teachers and that there has been no state level intervention in the capacity building of teacher educators that could be passed on from one teacher to another.

In the next session Amit Kumar and Ganesh Nigam discussed the issue of 'enrolment and dropout status: causes and solution' in national perspective as well as in Rajasthan. Amit Kumar who has been working with the children of brick - kiln workers and trying to get them into a learning cycle by making all kinds of adjustments to get the children to study. He said that there was no provision for children of the displaced, and migrant labourers' children in "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" (RTE), and because there is a very large

number of migrant labourers in Rajasthan it is imperative to make separate provisions for these children. In the context of Rajasthan it may be further added that there is a large population of migrating and nomadic tribes who continue to shift bases. In this context “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) would need to address this issue specifically. A system needs to be put in place to address the issue. Similarly, homeless children, child labourers, labourers' children and children reduced to begging also need to be addressed separately, and requires a different structure and approach to focus their needs.

The second day's deliberations opened with Neeraja Raghavan and Abha Mehta, addressing the issue of “Teacher Education: Status and Challenges.” The discussions became very interesting as the two speakers took up two opposite ends of teacher education spectrum, with Neeraja Raghavan addressing the issue of teacher motivation and the challenges they faced in the inclusion of the 25% children under “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) in Karnataka, and Abha Mehta discussing up the issues of trainings of teachers in DIETS and cluster approaches. While Neeraja stressed the importance of teacher initiative, Abha Mehta's presentation exposed the lack of sensitivity while trying to duplicate best practices without paying heed to the specific conditions of individual blocks. Neeraja Raghavan in her paper Teaching a Mixed Class building upon a pilot study done in Tonk district presented an involved analysis of the aspects of teacher motivation, constructing an elaborate reticulum from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Vimla Ramchandran's analysis of factors affecting teacher motivation in India, and E Rogers model of adaption of Innovations and emphasized the efficacy of involvement of early adopter teachers in bringing about change in the desired direction. She presented a coherent model which could be put to use to generate motivation impetus and her major recommendations were :

- 1) Contradiction between expecting accountability and simultaneously dismissing it be addressed.
- 2) Records of successful professionals be put in public domain vis a vis, their own teachers.
- 3) Teacher empowerment funds be set up to which grateful students could contribute.
- 4) Mechanisms to recognize and communicate the good impact of teachers upon students to parents should be put in place.
- 5) Recognition of good performance of teachers should be made more authentic reliable and transparent.
- 6) Critical examination of the entire system should be taken up and done organically by the teachers.

- 7) Teacher networks should be created through net or printed publication bringing together teachers from a wide cross section to discuss areas of mutual concern.

Mehta's presentation also touched upon the issue of the individuals' stress on quality work. But the existing structures, she felt, often dampened the initiative and purpose of the exercise. She observed that the DIET faculty is actually not itself teaching or conducting the trainings but only organizing and managing, defeating the very purpose of DIET and their presences in it. While efforts are on to generate a cluster level approach where initiative and excellence is identified, recognized and cluster level trainings are centered around them, but the DIET faculty being made to act as facilitators and organizers naturally dilutes the entire exercise. Often teachers are deputed to DIETs for all the wrong reasons. It became evident that the selection and training of master trainers ought to be the real focus of improving quality, which, instead had turned out to be the weakest link in the chain.

In the next session Rampal Sharma addressed the issues of “Community Participation and Structural Improvements: Status Challenges and Dimensions of Change”. He felt that the image as well as the reality of government institutions needs to be improved which will not be possible without administrative accountability. It is because of the unaccountable administration that enrolment in government institutions is falling drastically, while enrolment in private institution has risen many folds. The fact that the role of state in education is declining, is, and must certainly be, a cause of concern. He maintained that dropout rate depended largely on the conditions of individual schools and so should be tackled at school level. Though it may seem that the dropout rate is on the decline it is not the true picture. In any case it is not too small that it ceases to be a concern. The UNICEF data and the government data differ widely in this regard, and the difference is significant, because the UNICEF data is recorded on international parameters. The expectations from “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) have not been realized primarily because the number of children left out of school has not reduced as much as it should and it is largely because of its half head Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) implementation.

He also felt that before expecting accountability from the teacher there should be respect for his/her work. Teachers cannot be shepherded and dumped at whim like flock of cattle and shunted from place to place. The need and desire for training should come from the teachers and it can begin from the areas of concern for the individual teacher. They should be the ones to identify the area they would like to be strengthened in, rather than be dumped into training courses that they find a drag. Teacher education and training leaves a lot to be desired and a lot of work is needed in this area. We can at least make a beginning by identifying the teachers who could be the change makers and change bearers. The children admitted under “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) also require a lot of work to facilitate and monitor their education.

He also said that the teacher is tired of training. There is very little time left after non-academic work, examinations and trainings to allow him/her to concentrate on the actual teaching. Teacher training has been implemented in a piecemeal manner because of which actual competence cannot be enhanced. He said that the redresser systems incorporated in “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) have become dysfunctional. The grievance redressal system created in Rajasthan was appreciated nationally, yet it is not fully functional yet even in the state itself. The law that we got through the 86th amendment is a fractured law. There is no provision in it for 0 to 6 age group children; only section 12-1=c of the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) makes a provision for it. It should be extended at both ends to include 0-6 and 14-18 age groups.

The training for and ensuring of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) should be monitored by SCPCR and NCPCR, which had been constituted. A structure could be put in place, which would associate civil society institutions and create a platform for a dialogue on education. Such structures were constituted in all districts and all blocks but the lack of communication has rendered them defunct. There is no redressal cell now and there are only JMCs.

For effective functioning of SCPCR, it is important to have its district and perhaps block level units and Redressal Cell should be constituted immediately. The schools announced in the planning take a long time to become functional and by that time people lose interest in them. Opening of schools should be announced only when everything is ready. Upgrading a primary school to a secondary school often results in two dysfunctional schools which needs to be done more carefully.

Teacher-trainers and master-trainers should have the freedom to choose their work, and people should be deputed to DIETs and other training institutions by taking into account their actual capacity and interest in training rather than for extra academic reasons. We should recognize that in 6-14 age bracket there are still 8.1 million children out of school, 508,000 teachers are short countrywide. Also, that the government school is the only support structure for the majority of rural and depressed classes' children still.

In the summing up session speakers, Nikhil Dey, and Rajendra Boda spoke on Community engagement in “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . Dey talked about a people's movement, called Neev (Foundation), which civil society institutions have organized together with a daily newspaper, Rajasthan Patrika, to examine the reality of government schools at ground level from the perspective of community participation. For this purpose the organizers studied the three relevant laws RTI, “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) and RTH and their implications for “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . The Movement stand “Right of Children to

Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) with documentations on the status of the government schools. Student volunteers from some prestigious institutions conducted the survey for this purpose. Many shortcomings in the schools and their functioning e.g. level of infrastructure, drinking water facilities, toilets etc., were revealed by these surveys. There was some improvement in infrastructure but the number of teachers and their qualifications left much to be desired, and SMCs were hardly functioning. Dey suggested that there was no need to generate demand, the demand for education could be heard loud and clear. But the fact is that teaching is not possible without teachers in adequate numbers and with required qualification. He also gave several examples where students themselves agitated against the shortage of teachers and got their demands met.

Rajendra Bora observed that there is a close link between the falling standards of the government institutions and the new economic policy and economic reforms, which is evident since 1992.

Addressing the valedictory session on Challenges in the implementation of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) and the Road Ahead, Rohit Dhankar, founder of Digantar, now with Azim Premji Foundation said that we cannot indulge in righting the polity of education while negating the truth. We need to acknowledge that the “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) Act, as it is, is fragmentary. While one part of it is progressive the other part is authoritarian and uncreative and the two are yoked together reducing a living idea into a hackneyed system. A ladder like examination system will not allow the school system to change. In our academic structure we have only been stressing the need to train teachers whereas there is a dire need to train the administrators involved in the education management. Latter have to understand the needs from the user end. Peoples' movement or ngos cannot achieve this. For this government has to play an active role. What makes us believe that the government actually desires an improvement in the education system or structures? Most decisions have been implemented without even understanding the spirit of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . What we need to do to set the system right is a well-equipped, irrepressible, guardian unfazed by any situation and uncompromising in securing, ensuring and upholding the children's right to learn. The common man, opinion makers and peoples' movements have to come together to generate an atmosphere where no child would be denied education.

Rajaram Bhadoo, educationist and editor of Dishabodh, a journal on education had some very perspective observations in his paper he mailed, as he could not be with the consultation group due to prior commitments outside the state. He focused the idea of community ownership. He unraveled the structural change that had come about in the community to lay bare the fact that the community was no longer what we thought it to be, as the binding threads of the earlier community had imperceptibly decayed and degenerated and what seems to have taken its place has very little

coherence now. What appear to be community leaders today may well nigh be only the heavy weights, opportunist and imposters. It is because of this and vested interests involved that the efforts to generate local community leadership that can lay a claim to “own” the school, have fallen on their face. It is in this respect that new ways of recognizing and defining community need to be defined and devised. Resident ownership of schools have to be identified, it can be done through identifying seniors with wisdom or knowledge or education.

Summing Up

As the two-day consultation drew to a close it had become evident that serious, well-examined critical action was needed urgently to plug all the gaping holes in the implementation of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) . In the list of do's and don'ts that came up in the two day consultation it may be possible to put the main conclusions in two categories: the law, and its implementation.

While it is evident that “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) Act is a very comprehensive legislation, there are a few aspects that need further strengthening. There was a consensus that “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) should cover 0 to 5 age groups, and should be extended to cover 14 to 18 age groups, i.e., .up to the secondary school level. The need to give proper education in the formative years suggests that the children below the age 6 cannot be delinked from the primary education. The suggestion for extending the scope of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) up to secondary school level was based on the premise that “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) should enable a young man or women to enter into life with basic understanding of the society and environment and should help him/her imbibe some skills. It should also enable those who wish to pursue further education a proper and necessary background.

The other area where the Act needs to be strengthened is to impart the needed flexibility. “One size fits all” approach creates problems for special areas e.g., tribal or sparsely populated areas, and for the sections, such as children of migrant labour. It was strongly felt that in implementing “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) in the state, rich experience gathered by initiatives such as Shikshakarmi, Gurumitra, Lok Jumbish, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, is being totally ignored.

Participants paid greater attention to the implementation of the Law, particularly in Rajasthan. On the part of the government the first thing to do is to provide teachers where they are needed. The first priority should be to post teachers in the places where there is shortage from the places where they are in surplus. This problem is closely linked with the transfer policy. Today considerations other than academic, play major role in transfers and postings.

On enhancing the competence of the teachers, it was suggested that with few exceptions DIETs, which are the most important institutions for teacher training, have failed to fulfill their mandate. As a first step academically sound and well-motivated teacher-trainers should be recruited in DIETs. There is also a need for an adequately staffed and well-equipped Academic Staff College to prepare master trainers.

On the motivation of teachers, which is one of the main contributory factors in reaching the objective of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) , there was a view that the dignity of the teachers in the community should be restored. They should not be yoked for tasks, which have nothing to do with teaching or taking care of the students. For incentivising able teachers, only monetary incentive is not enough, due recognition should be accorded to them. The participants also discussed the merits of “Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation” (CCE), and felt that it had been given up without looking into the causes for its apparent failure. Similar discomfort was felt while discussing textbooks and curriculum. Major changes in these areas are affected, again, on extra-academic considerations.

On the availability of infrastructure, participants felt that much has been achieved, but there is glaring lack of d functioning toilets, and playgrounds in the schools. Similar concern was voiced for the lack of provisions for libraries and teaching equipments, which are necessary for wholesome education.

On the role of government, two important points were raised. In the first place it was felt that the government couldn't abdicate its role in providing education at all levels. Second, that if the government institutions are not strengthened and reliance is made on the private sector, as is happening now, it will have a lead to growing inequality in the society. Besides, record of the schools run by private sector is not edifying. The correct approach would be to improve the functioning of the government schools and better control over the private institution to ensure that they contribute to the objectives for which “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) came into existence. This led to the suggestion that all elements in the education system, not only teachers, need training and reorientation.

The Consultation had also the benefit of learning about the role of civil society by the narration of the experience of the Neev movement initiated by Kisan Mazdoor Shakti Sangathan with support from a daily newspaper. Nikhil Dey of MKSS, in his presentation stressed the need for transparency and accountability in all aspects of public dealing, of which education was a very important facet. He emphasized that there should be participation of public and accountability towards it in all spheres. We know that ground reality is uneven and the objectives of “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) still largely unrealized. He said Every school should be under public surveillance and that education be should a subject of

public concern and political action where politicians discuss it in Parliament and Legislatures, it becomes a subject for public involvement. He said that they had carried out an ongoing campaign in the Tonk district where they combined the three rules “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) , RTI, RTH. They had carried out a campaign called Neev:

The question of education through which they carried nearly 5000 articles on education. Neeva was started “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) with a media house to talk of education, and it was because of this, that Education came centre stage in public concern. For the first time government itself came to the negotiations.

The study for SHC was kick – started “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) by interns from premier education institutions who worked in villages and realised that there are no SHCs, no one knows when SHC meetings take place. Through RTI questions were passed about infrastructure and found out about

- 1) Requisite number of sanctioned posts be filled
- 2) Availability of Drinking water
- 3) Functional toilets
- 4) Play grounds with trenches and fences had been built through Nrega and plantation was carried out with payment for their upkeep. Collectors visited schools, Good schools were identified for positive reinforcement. But in spite of all this education is not possible without teachers, he said that there is no good reason on earth except personal interest of political parties why there is no transfer policy. Its absence is extremely detrimental to teachers morale. He reiterated that the vacancies needed to be filled without delay. Since the Neev campaign began there have been nearly 260 lockouts in schools where there had been no teachers.

There is a great difference between DISE data and the information available at the Block level, which needs to be addressed.

It was clear from the narration by the principal organizer of this movement Nikhil Dey that the civil society has an important advocacy and protest role to ensure that the government and private sector play the role accorded to them in “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) .

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the presentations by the Keynote speakers and the discussions in different sessions, the Consultation made the following recommendations :

- 1) There should be a participatory research and monitoring cell specifically for “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) comprising teacher/researchers, facilitated by the school education department, reporting to Child Rights Commission.
- 2) There should be a mandatory pre-induction training whereby the strengths and weakness of the newly recruited teachers can be identified and the teacher apprised of his/her responsibility.
- 3) Teachers' profile data should be matched with school need profiles before deputing them in the schools.
- 4) “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) enjoined the government to ensure the availability of accessible place, infrastructure, facilities, caring and committed teachers and, enabling environment for securing “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) to all children between 6 to 14 years of age. These criteria should be met in the existing schools as well as those, which are planned to be opened.
- 5) The “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act” (RTE) coverage should be extended to preschool and senior secondary levels as well.
- 6) Teacher induction and adequate teacher deployment should be taken up urgently for which a judicious transfer policy needs to be put in place without delay.
- 7) Preparation of textbooks should be left to the academics with domain knowledge, eschewing partisan political agendas. Every care should be taken to ensure that the content, context and subtext of the learning materials are consistent with our constitutional values.
- 8) A data pool of domain experts, both in-service and retired, be maintained who may be available at short notice to fill in short term vacancies.
- 9) Teacher incompetence, largely due to lack of domain knowledge or incapacity

to grasp the concepts needs to be taken seriously and training required should be organized accordingly.

- 10) Only the most suitable trainers be deputed in DIETs, and they should be directly involved in training, rather than only manage it.
- 11) A teacher retraining institution be created on the lines of Academic Staff Colleges in the Universities, which should conduct regular need based trainings in vertical and horizontal groups.
- 12) A Child tracking system should be devised to track the child's progress and could be accessed by Ashas and Anganbaris, who in turn can counsel the parents to monitor progress of their wards. With present day advances in Information Technology it should not be difficult to device such a system.
- 13) Advisory and statutory bodies such as NCPCR , RCPCR, Child Rights' Commission should be made active and accountable.
- 14) There should be a syllabus upgradation committee, which takes care of continuity with innovation.
- 15) Children willing and interested to take up more challenging tasks may be permitted to take up advance levels, and children who want to take time over certain areas should not be pressurized.
- 16) Mathematics and Science should not be taught by teachers without domain knowledge. In case of paucity, domain expert teachers can be shared between schools keeping separate days for the subjects.
- 17) Colleges should adopt the schools in their vicinity to nurture and take care of on a day-to-day basis. This would work two ways. The college students will learn to be more sensitive and responsible and the schools will gain the much-needed support.
- 18) If the school bears a ramshackled, dilapidated dusty, crumbling look the students are not likely to wish to be there. There should at least be some greenery around them. The students can be encouraged to plant things they like and tend them. There is a lot of excitement and learning opportunity that can be built around the activities such as midday meal, plantation, etc.
- 19) Teachers should not be over - burdened and exploited by entrusting them extra academic tasks. Apart from their ill effects on teaching they dent the dignity of the teachers as professionals.

- 20) Useful elements from the past innovative efforts in elementary education in Rajsathan should be incorporated in the education policy.
- 21) The decision on CCE should be reviewed, and necessary conditions should be created for its proper implementation.
- 22) Parents/guardians and resident alumnae if persuaded to 'own' the schools can become a transforming force. Some capacity building workshops could be organized to make them more effective.
- 23) The government should bring out a status report (white paper) on education every year to record the efforts made by it and its successes and failures and outline the next year's plans. This would break down the five year plan targets into year wise targets and short-term goals. It will set in a rhythm of growth and development in the school, which is sadly lacking at the moment.

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Abbreviation

ASER- Annual Status of Education Reports
ASAR- Age Specific Attendance Ratio
BGVS- Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti
CBPS- Centre for Budget and Policy Studies
CCE- Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation
DEO- District Education Officer
ERU- Educational Resource Unit
GER- Gross Enrolment Ratio
GES- Gross Environment Ratio
GPI- Gender Parity Index
IDSJ Institute of Development Studies Jaipur
MHRD- Ministry of Human Resource Development
NGOs- Non Government Organisations
NSSO- data
NER- National Enrolment Ratio
NCF- National Curriculum Framework
NCPCR- “National Commission for Protection of Child Rights”
NCERT- National Council for Educational Research And Training
OBC- Other Backward Classes
PTR- Pupil Teacher Ratio
PS- Primary School
RTE- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, April 2010
RSCPCR- Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SMC- School Management Committees
SSA- Sarva Shiksha Abhyan
SC- Scheduled Castes
ST- Scheduled Tribes
SMC - School Management Committees
SAR- Student Attendance Ratio
SCERT- State Council for Educational Research and Training
SIERT- State Institute of Education Research and Training
SCPCR- “State Commission for Protection of Child Rights”
SSA- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
UT- Union Territory
UDISE- Unified District Information System for Education
UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPS- Upper Primary School
SRI- IMRB
UEE-
NEEV-

Indian Parliament passed Right to Education Act on April 1, 2010. It was a revolutionary move as it ensured, as a matter of right, free and quality education for every child born in India. Every state in the country was enjoined to meet the objective of RTE. Rajasthan with its history of several innovative movements in the field of elementary education promptly enacted rules and laid down the procedures for implementing the Act. Nearly five years have passed since RTE was introduced in the state. It is an opportune time to assess the progress made and challenges encountered at the ground level. This task was taken up by the Ajit Foundation, which is working with the youth of the state for more than two decades, with assistance from UNICEF (Rajasthan). A group of noted educationists and other stakeholders were invited in a Consultation to review the progress made and suggest measures to overcome the deficiencies. This volume contains the papers and proceedings of the Consultation. It also lists the recommendations to meet the objectives of RTE. This book will be of interest to educationists, teachers, policy makers, and programme implementers and enlightened citizens.

VISION

Empowered Youth : Enlightened Citizens



MISSION

Provide space for creativity : Inculcate sense of social responsibility