



A Critical Study on the Awareness among Primary School Teachers in The District Meerut on “The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act, 2009”

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Abstract

The study was conducted to explore the awareness on RTE (Right to Education) Act, 2009 among primary school teachers in the Meerut region. The sample of 80 primary school teachers was drawn from Meerut region. A self made questionnaire comprising 25 multiple choice items was used by the investigator. The study has brought out that the level of awareness among teachers included in this study is not up to mark, even after more than four year of implementation of this Act. Major finding of the study reveals that Government teachers are comparatively more aware as compared to Non- Government teachers.

Introduction

For the development of any country education for all is a necessary pre-requisite. To make this a reality, a positive beginning was made by the government in India and the Right to Education Act was passed by the Indian Parliament on 4th August, 2009. The Act describes the modalities having the provision for free and compulsory education for children between 6 to 14 years under Article 21A of the Indian constitution. This Act makes education as fundamental right of every child enforceable by law. The basic theme of free education implies that the children of prescribed age group shall be exempted from any fees, charges or expenses for pursuing primary education. However, this free and compulsory primary education is restricted to education from class Ist to VIIIth only. The Act is having thirty one sections which are part of eight chapters and one schedule. The disheartening fact is however, that today more than eight million children, who should be in schools are still out of schools and are sweating in and out in farms and factories as child labourers, despite the enactment of much-hyped RTE Act. India has the second largest education system in the world after China. Indeed, over a third of population

below 18 years constituting 19 percent of the worlds' children resides in India. Every third illiterate person in the world is an Indian. According to government estimates, there are nearly 220 million children in the relevant age group of which 4.6%, or nearby 9.2 million are out of school. The situation has not improved much since then. There are problems relating to drop - out rate, low levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls, tribal's and other disadvantaged groups.

The RTE Act provides 25% reservation of seats in all for, the poor children of disadvantaged economically weaker sections of the society in the schools, including in the private unaided schools in the neighbourhood. The experience however, shows that the RTE Act is not being implemented in all seriousness in letter and spirit. It is true that passage of this Act has been hailed as a historical moment in the crusade of universal literacy. RTE Act puts emphasis on quality education which has been considered as an integral part of right to education. Chapter V of the RTE Act enumerates some terms and norms under which the quality of primary education is to be ensured, i.e. adequate teacher- student ratio (the 1:30 ratio specified in the Act) and further that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction as far as possible, development of various skills in child, good & effective infrastructure, qualified and competent teachers and advanced evaluation methods etc. These can be achieved only when there is qualified and competent teaching staff always ready to accept challenges and ensure the quality education. The Indian experience with the right to education illustrates both the central issues that emerge in relation to resource constraints and the role played by the key stakeholders including the teachers.

The success of any legislation or Act lies in implementation. India is ranked at 108 as per literacy rate of the countries at the global level in 2010 and concerted efforts including creating awareness among teachers is required to make the RTE Act a reality. It is to be borne in mind that the government is required to spend an amount of Rs.2,04,000 crore over the next five years for implementation of this Act. The Union Finance Minister has allocated an increase of 24% for the education sector in the union budget for 2011-12 Rs. 21,000 crores have been allocated for Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan registering an increase of 40%. If our teachers are not well informed on the basic provisions of this Act, it will remain a piece of paper. The Act has been put into implementation with effect from 1st April 2010 and in order to find out the level of awareness among the teachers after more than four year of it being in operation, an attempt has been made through this research to find out the ground realities close to the national capital.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows -

1. To find the difference in RTE awareness among male and female primary teachers.
2. To compare the RTE awareness among the primary teachers belonging to urban and rural areas.
3. To compare the RTE awareness among the primary teachers belonging to Govt. and Non-Govt. Schools.

Hypothesis

In the light of the objectives, the following Hypothesis was formulated -

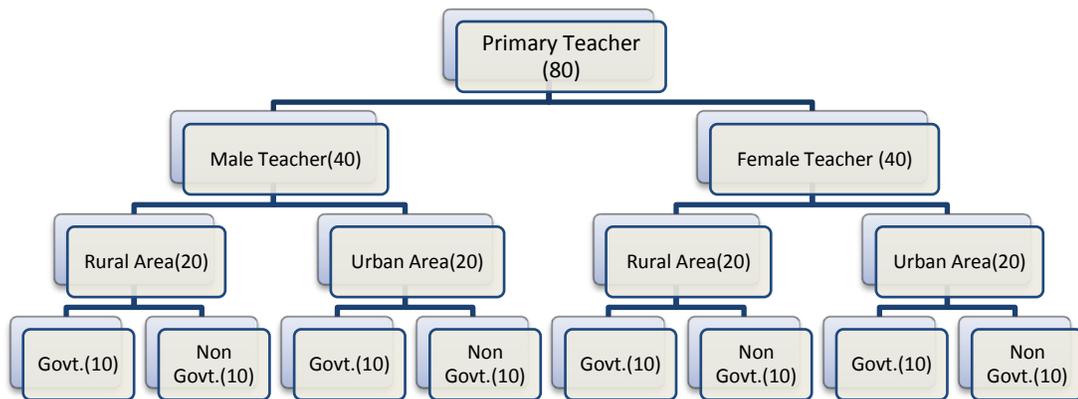
1. There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Male and Female primary Teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among primary Teachers belonging to urban and rural areas.
3. There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among primary Teachers belonging to Govt. and Non- Govt. Schools.

Methodology

In the present study descriptive Survey Method was employed. It was designed to explore the RTE awareness among primary Teachers.

Sample

The questionnaire was used on 80 primary School Teachers in Meerut region who were selected by random sampling method. Among these primary Teachers, 40 were male and rests 40 were female. 40 primary Teachers belongs to rural areas and other 40 primary Teachers belongs to the urban areas. 40 primary Teachers belongs to the Govt. Schools and other 40 primary Teachers belongs to the Non-Govt. Schools.



Tools

The tool for this study was a self- made questionnaire. It contained 25 multiple choice items related to RTE Awareness. The test was administered and the responses made by Primary Teachers to test the RTE awareness were scored, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques.

Analysis, Result and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Male and Female Primary Teachers. Observation of Table 1 reveals that the 't' Ratio is 0.94 which is not significant at 0.05 level. It means that Male and Female Primary Teachers have equal awareness. Hence Null Hypothesis is accepted. It is therefore, concluded that there is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Male and Female Primary Teachers.

Table 1:- Mean, S.D. and 't'- Ratio showing difference in RTE awareness among male and female Primary Teachers.

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean- difference	't'- Ratio
Male	40	5.17	1.46	0.39	0.94
Female	40	4.77	1.20		

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Urban and Rural areas. Observation of Table 2 reveals that the 't' Ratio is 0.58 which is not significant at 0.05 level. It means that Primary Teachers belonging to Urban and Rural areas have equal awareness. Hence Null Hypothesis is accepted. It is thus concluded that there is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Urban and Rural areas.

Table 2:- Mean, S.D. and 't'- Ratio showing difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Urban and Rural areas.

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean- difference	't'- Ratio
U oirban Areas	40	5.09	1.29	0.24	0.58
Rural Areas	40	4.85	1.41		

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Govt. and Non-Govt. Schools. Observation of Table 3 reveals that the 't' Ratio is 2.45 which is significant at 0.05 level. It means that the null hypothesis "there exist a significant difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Govt. and Non-Govt. Schools was rejected. Hence, it is concluded that the teachers belonging to Govt. Schools are more aware about the RTE in comparison with Non-Govt. Schools Teachers.

Table 3:- Mean, S.D. and t'- Ratio showing difference in RTE awareness among Primary Teachers belonging to Govt. and Non-Govt. Schools.

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean- difference	't'- Ratio
4Govt. School	40	5.46	1.49	0.98	2.45
Non Govt. School	40	4.48	0.99		

The total means score '4.97' (49.7 %) shows that the overall RTE awareness is less than 50%. That means the teachers included in this study are less aware about the RTE (Right to

Education). From above analysis we conclude that male awareness is 51% and female Awareness is 47%, the difference between them is not significant there for we can say that they are equally aware. Awareness among Teachers belonging to Urban Areas is 50.9 % and Rural Area is 48.5 % and the difference between this score is not significant therefore we can say that they are equally aware. But the awareness among Govt. School Teachers is 54.6 % and Non-Govt School Teachers is 44.8%, the difference among them is significant which reveals that the Primary Teachers from Govt. schools are much more aware about the RTE as compared to Primary Teachers from Non-Govt. schools.

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be stated that out of three hypotheses, the outcome of the last one is shocking. It is true that there is no significant difference on awareness between the teachers in urban and rural areas and in between the male and female teachers in Meerut region. However, while juxtaposing the same between the government school teachers and the teachers working in private/public schools, there is marked difference in awareness on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The teachers working in the government schools are therefore, better informed but then the question is will it serve the mandate of the Act? It's a cause of big anxiety and poses a challenge before the policy makers. The findings of this study reveal that about 46% of the teachers working in the private schools are not at all aware about the basic provisions of this Act including the age group and level/ classes covered therein of the students. Though the level of awareness in the teachers of government schools is comparatively more (54 %) but it is also not up to the mark. This is the situation in and around Meerut region, even after more than four year of implementation of this Act. The possible reasons could be that the entire awareness campaigns (short term courses, seminars, workshops) launched by the government centered on the government schools and its teachers. It seems that no efforts whatsoever have been made by the government to create awareness among the teachers working in private schools. If the ground situation is such then the accountability of the same needs to be fixed. The owners of such schools should also be made responsible and accountable. The government needs to plan and organize one week/three days short term course/seminars/workshops together with sufficient resource material for the Primary Teachers primarily serving in the private schools also together with their counter parts working in government schools across the country followed by the refresher courses/training programs. Such initiatives to create awareness among all elementary teachers will help in making the teachers informed, who will be able to give their best to achieve the goals of RTE to make it attainable and successful. In order to achieve the main objectives of the Act, this is very much required so that the problem could be nipped in the bud, otherwise despite spending the huge amount of money, the ground realities would remain the same.

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