

Effectiveness Of The Right To Education Act In Bridging Up The Social And Gender Gaps In Odisha

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Abstract:

Education is the cornerstone of one's life and makes an individual skillful. Thus, this is considered the key component in shaping the personal, professional, social, emotional, and spiritual life of a human being. In contemporary times, elementary education is the backbone of the entire education system. It is the foundation of the cognitive growth of a child and provides him/her with the various abilities, competencies, and skills that aid in structuring a successful future. So elementary education is crucial for every country to concentrate on delivering high-quality services and skill-based education at the elementary level to children, especially in marginalized groups, and empowers them to participate in the socio-economic process. The Right to Education Act is meant for providing barrier-free schooling for children of 6 to 14 years. Inserted as Article 21 A, in the Constitution of India, the Right to Education is meant to provide education as a part of the Fundamental Right guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

The Act is aimed to herald a new era in formal education imparted by the government of India. Education is mentioned as a subject in the Concurrent List in the Constitution. The State and Union governments carry joint responsibilities in the implementation of the same. The objective of the paper is to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of the RTE Act in bridging social and gender gaps. The paper intends to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Act, covering all targeted children, providing quality education, and bridging the learning gaps by tracking different gender and social groups.

The paper also examines the realisation of the objectives of the Right to Education Act in bridging the social and gender gaps in access, retention, and learning level through provisioning several interventions like girls' education, education of children of SCs & STs categories, and minority children learning enhancement programme and inclusive approach of education of Children with Special Needs. Regardless of the encouraging progress made in the elementary education sector in the State of Odisha; gaps in access, retention, and learning outcome continue to be quite significant in the State.

Keywords: Right to Education, Education, Retention, Effectiveness, Fundamentals Rights.

1. Introduction

Education is the foundation of life and living. Education makes one balanced and gives necessary food for thought for personal, and societal well-being. The formative years spent in elementary education are pivotal to shaping one's personality and the community must be intelligent enough to ensure that future generations have a robust nourishing for a brighter world through the right kind of elementary education. These formative years of human life with the right kind of training for mental development in a child shape his future. It helps gain a variety of skills, desired confidence, and competencies as a result. Therefore, every country needs to concentrate on giving children access to high-quality basic education, in particular to society's downtrodden people, and to give them space. This allows them to break free from poverty, advance in life, and contribute to nation-building.

The leaders of the country had the foresight to establish a policy that would make education free and mandatory for children between the ages of six to fourteen and to do it within ten years of the Indian Constitution's entry into force. The actual goal of an educated and competent India, where access to quality education is a Fundamental Right for every child born in this country rather than a privilege reserved for the wealthy, has yet to be realised as we enter our 75th year of Independence.

Nevertheless, there are not only gaps in class and geography but also gender. In face of the slow progress in closing down the gaps, it is high time for the policymakers to investigate and slash the reasons for the continuation of such discriminating gender and social category gaps. This will help to come out with effective strategies to accelerate the efforts of slashing the barriers defiant of closing down such gaps in the shortest possible time.

For actualisation of the objectives of the Right to Education Act for bridging social and gender gaps in access, retention, and quality of education, several interventions of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) like girls' education, education of children belonging to SCs, STs and marginalised groups, pedagogical improvements, and education of 'Children with Special Needs' (CWSN) had been provided. Despite encouraging progress in elementary education in the State of Odisha; gaps in access, retention, and learning achievement, although showing improvement, continue to be quite significant in the State and have not been as per the expectations laid down in the RTE Act.

1.1 Growing Importance of Education

Without any doubt, education plays two major functions in most societies: it passes on knowledge from one generation to the next and it equips people with the analytical, diagnostic, and questioning abilities they need. Most people agree that there are some general information and skill sets that everyone should possess. Education has an acculturating role, which refines and redefines sensitivities and perceptions, which in turn contribute to national cohesion. On the other hand, it creates an individual well equipped to take advantage of technological changes which in turn leads to enhancement in productivity, both social and economic.

1.2 Global Commitments

Basic education is a global concern. It is reflected in the policy initiatives across the world in the direction of Education for All (EFA). The Dakar Conference strongly advocated a holistic concept of basic education to achieve EFA by 2000 (EFA Jomtien, 1990). Though the EFA goal could not be achieved by the year 2000, the Jomtien declaration brought to the center stage the need for viewing basic education as a fundamental right of every citizen.

The Education for All movement aims to provide all children, youth, and adults around the world with access to quality basic education. The movement began when participants in the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 at Jomtien (Thailand), decided to universalise primary education and drastically lower illiteracy rates by the end of the decade. The World Declaration on Education for All, which emphasised that education is a fundamental human right and urged nations to step up their efforts to improve education to ensure that the fundamental learning requirements of every one were satisfied, was adopted as a result of this meeting. The following six (6) objectives were set for the year 2000 by the Framework for Action to Meet the Basic Learning Needs:

- Goal 1: Ensuring that all people have access to education,
 - Goal 2: Emphasizing equity,
 - Goal 3: Stressing learning outcomes,
 - Goal 4: Extending the means and reach of basic education,
 - Goal 5: Improving the learning environment,
 - Goal 6: Strengthening partnerships,
- (Source – EFA Website)

1.3 Dakar Framework for Action

After 10 years, many nations were still far from fulfilling the aforementioned objectives. The international community reaffirmed its commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015 at a meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. By 2015, they defined six important educational objectives that would satisfy the needs of all children, adolescents, and adults.

The six goals are as follows:

- Goals 1:- Expand early childhood care and education: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children,
- Goal 2:- Provide free and compulsory primary education for all: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality,
- Goal 3:- Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes,
- Goal 4:- Increase adult literacy by 50 percent: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults,

Goal 5:- Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equity by 2015: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality,

Goal 6:- Improve the quality of education: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills" (UNESCO, 2015).

1.4 United Nations SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) has seventeen goals. One of the Goals i.e. SDG No. 04 is 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' SDG 4 aspires to give children and teenagers access to various learning opportunities as well as high-quality schooling. The achievement of universal literacy and numeracy is one of its goals. a crucial element in the learning process that helps students gain knowledge and useful abilities. To create environments that are secure, inclusive, and productive for all learners, it is important to establish more educational facilities and renovate the ones that already exist. All of these objectives must be accomplished by 2030.

1.5 Implementation of The Right to Education Act, 2009

Although the Right to Education was added to the Constitution in 2002 as Article 21 A, the RTE Act went into effect in India and Odisha on April 1st, 2010. Since education is in the Concurrent List and there is an eight-year delay, more than half of the States must ratify the Constitutional Amendment for it to take effect. According to the 86th amendment to the Indian Constitution, every child in the age range of 6 to 14 has a right to a free, public education that is required of them. The RTE Act's 2009 mainly aims at closing the gender and social category gaps and ensuring that everyone has access to and is enrolled in education, appropriate children

1.6 Implementation of the RTE Act at the national level

1.6.1 Access and Retention

Overall, India has made tremendous strides in the past 20 years toward increasing elementary school enrolment (Wu et al., 2007; Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2008; UNICEF, 2008). According to the World Bank, the net primary enrolment ratio for both sexes was 93% in 2012, compared to 81% in 2000 (World Bank, 2016). India has also displayed impressive gains toward narrowing gender gaps in basic education access. According to the UNDP (2013), the gender parity ratio at the primary level of education increased from 0.76 in 1990-91 to 0.98 in 2007-08, suggesting that the gender gap in terms of enrolment in elementary education has been almost eliminated.

Analysis of school management and enrolment patterns across the country have revealed that more boys attend private schools in India, while girls are more likely to be enrolled in government schools (Härmä, 2011; Ramachandran, 2004; Ramachandran, 2012; UNESCO, 2009). As Watkins (2004) notes, willingness and ability to pay for access to private schools differ on many factors, including gender and income. It is common for parents to choose certain children to attend private school when they lack the resources to send all of their children, and a notable pro-male bias has been reported (UNESCO, 2009; Härmä, 2011; De, Majumdar, Samson, & Noronha, 2002).

Reports also indicate that socio-economic disparity is the most influential factor in differences in education access (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2008; Lewin, 2007; South Asia Human Development Sector, 2004; UNICEF, 2008; Wu et al., 2007). While poor quality and infrastructure negatively affect all children, these impediments to access disproportionately affect disadvantaged families, especially girls and children from marginalized groups, as compared to the relatively wealthy (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008; Ramachandran, 2012). As Wu et al. (2007) state, 'gender bias intersects with social exclusion, this, in turn, intersects with the educational exclusion that mirrors the social exclusion found in wider society (Giroux & Penna, 1979; Lewin, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Kingdon, 2005)

1.6.2 Marginalized groups-

Drèze and Sen (2013) have opined that India's newly formed democratic system was focused primarily on economic growth, and as a result, the provision of basic needs, particularly for women and other disadvantaged groups, was largely overlooked. Specifically, education, healthcare, and other components of social development were not considered priorities for public resources post-independence. This oversight may be considered one of the country's largest failures from a human rights perspective.

In a report Published by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, 2014 titled "Education For All Towards Quality with Equity", it was highlighted that there has been a substantial increase in enrolment in elementary education of children from disadvantaged population groups such as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), children belonging to minority communities and children with special needs (CWSN). Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, the GER in primary education for SC children increased from 96.8 percent to 113 percent, while the GER in upper primary education increased from 65.3 percent to 98.3 percent. The GER for ST students in primary education has increased by 12.1 percentage points while the GER in upper primary education has increased by 31.1 percentage points during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14. The number of Muslim children enrolled as a percentage of total

enrolment in elementary education was 13.7 percent in 2013-14 (the share of the Muslim population in the total population was 13.43 percent in 2001). The total coverage of CWSN in elementary education in 2013-14 was 2.6 million (95.3 percent of the total number of CWSN identified).

1.6.3 Quality of Learning-

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) (2011) in the part of, 'Inside Primary Schools- A study of teaching and learning in rural India' shows that there was no correlation between gender and the sample's Std 2 and Std 4 students' attendance or academic achievement. Older girls in the 10 to 14-year-old age range were more likely than boys to participate in household chores. However, neither their attendance at school nor the quality of their learning did not seem to be affected. Children who receive more support at home perform better than other kids, even though learning accomplishment in these grades does not differ by gender or demonstrate a systematic association between social traits like socioeconomic category and religion and learning outcomes. Children whose families are unable to offer them this support, such as those from lower-income and less-educated homes,

1.7 Implementation of the Right to Education Act in the state of Odisha

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009, which is regarded as a milestone law in the history of education, was one of the first laws in India to begin the process of implementation. One of the first states to do so was Odisha. The Department of School and Mass Education has made proactive measures to ensure the Act's grounding at all important levels while interacting with as many stakeholders as it can since it is the nodal department for its implementation.

The "Odisha RTE Rules, 2010" were announced on September 27, 2010, after thorough consultation with numerous stakeholders. After Sikkim, Odisha was the second state in the nation to notify the Rules. On January 17, 2011, an amendment to the rules (Odisha State Right to Education (Amendment) Rules, 2010) was made known.

1.7.1 Issuance of Notifications under the RTE Act, 2009

The major highlights of the historic notification contain the following:

- Prohibiting corporal punishment & mental harassment in schools.
- State Commission for the protection of child rights (SCPCR) modified.
- The Directorate of Teacher Education (TE) and State Council of Educational Research and Training (TE & SCERT) was notified as the Academic Authority under the Act.
- Discontinuation of board examination at the elementary level.
- No child should be screened before admission into the school.
- No fees should be collected beyond the notification by the school Authority.
- No detention" policy.
- The guidelines for reimbursement of per-child expenditure have been notified by the State Govt. vide "Resolution no. 16624 / SME dated 05-07-2012".
- Circular on the prohibition of teachers' engagement in Non-Academic activities as per the RCFCE Act 2009 issued.
- The Local Authority has been notified. Notification in the context of Activity Mapping of Local Authority is in progress.
- Textbooks and uniforms have been declared as entitlement at the elementary level of education.
- Composition and function of the school management committee.
- A grievance redressal mechanism through the school student helpline established
- The teacher Eligibility Test (TET) was Conducted on 2nd December 2012.
- School Development Plan Prepared.
- "Shiksha Adhikar Abhiyan" is a massive campaign organized to create awareness of the RTE Act among School Management Committees (SMCs).
- Policy on eight-year education adopted.
- In-service training through distance mode for untrained teachers by TE&SCERT.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to upgrade the minimum qualification of teachers to undergo training.

1.7.2 Access to education in Odisha:

The status of Neighbourhood schools in 2014 in Odisha are as follows

- Access to primary schools – 96.8%.
- Habitations without PS (2013-14) –3413.
- Access to upper primary schools– 98%.

- Habitations without PS (2013-14)– 1840
- In the year 2014-15, The PAB approved the opening of 5 NPS and 10 proposals for the upgradation of PS to NUPS, which were found eligible as per the State RTE norms.
- 8 years of elementary cycle adopted in the state. A notification was issued in this regard.

1.7.3 Intervention for School drop-outs.

- In the Year 2013-14, 7556 children who are out of school are provided with residential special training.
- 4239 children are provided with non-residential special training.
- 8271 children of migrated families are provided with seasonal hostels.
- Modules required for imparting the Special training programme for out-of-school children from Class-I to VIII have been developed and distributed to all districts.
- In the Years 2014-15, 6001 children were identified as out-of-school children through the Child Tracking System (CTS), 2013. Toward their age-appropriate admission and mainstreaming of these children,
- 2783 children would be provided with residential special training.
- 3091 students would be provided with non-residential special training.
- 9930 students would be provided with seasonal hostels.

1.7.4 Retention of students in school:

To increase the rate of retention, the following measures had been taken.

Distribution of free uniforms:

- All eligible children of government elementary schools were provided with two sets of free uniforms.

Distribution of free Textbooks

- All children of elementary government and aided schools are provided with New textbooks.

1.7.5 Teachers Training

Strategy for Untrained Teachers:

- As per the RTE Act, all untrained elementary teachers are required to be trained by March 2015. The Government of Odisha is facilitating the training of backlog untrained teachers through different strategies. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has approved the training of 30067 untrained elementary teachers through Distance Education Programme (DEP) vide letter dated. 4th May 2012.
- Meanwhile, 19436 untrained teachers have been enrolled in D.El.Ed course through DEP. While 13895 untrained teachers have already completed the 2nd year course, 5541 completed the 1st year and continuing in 2nd year.
- As per the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) norm, untrained teachers having 50% marks (General category) & 45% marks (reserved category) at intermediate (10+2) are eligible to undergo D. El. Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education) course.
- Untrained teachers are working in the state having Matric qualification or less percentage at the intermediate level. To facilitate the teachers in the improvement of their qualification/ percentage of marks, MoU has been signed between OPEPA, the School and Mass Education Department, and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Bhubaneswar. 7770 untrained teachers have already been enrolled under NIOS for improvement of percentage/ acquiring +2 qualifications.
- The self-learning materials of NIOS for senior Secondary level have been translated by the Odisha Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) from English to Odia to facilitate the learning of untrained teachers.
- The Project Approval Board (PAB), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India had approved the training of 16824 untrained teachers i.e. 5541(2nd year) + 11283(1st year) during 2014-15. Thus all untrained teachers including the newly recruited untrained SS will be covered during this year.

Induction Training for Newly Recruited Shiksha Sahayaks (SS):

The newly recruited Shiksha Sahayaks had been imparted Induction Training on 'Sakshyam' Module for effective classroom transactions to attain Quality Education. The PAB has approved 10 days of residential training for newly recruited SS during 2014-15.

Leadership Training for Head Masters (HMs) and Block Resource Centre Coordinators (BRCCs)

- The HMs of Upper Primary Schools, BRCCs & CRCCs had been imparted Leadership training on modules Samanwaya-I and II. The selected HMs will be trained on the NUEPA Leadership Training module during 2014-15.

Training of Teachers

- Samarthya Training was imparted to primary and upper primary teachers on content knowledge in different subjects based on the newly introduced textbooks for effective classroom transaction.
- 4 days of training on Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and 1-day special training for Out of School Students were imparted to teachers during 2013-14.
- 2 days Cluster Level Monthly Sharing Meeting was organized on subjects like child protection and School Student Helpline, Human Rights, School Sanitation and Hygiene, Educational strategies for Focus group children, Creative Writing, SAHAJA etc during 2014-15.
- The Project Approval Board (PAB) approved separate training for teachers of Early Grade, Primary Grade on content and Gender sensitivity and Math, and Science Training for Teachers of Upper Primary Grade both at Block and Cluster Levels.
- All types of Teachers Training under SSA have been conducted through District Institute for Education & Training (DIET) /District Resource Centre (DRCs) since 2013-14 to make the training more qualitative to ensure quality education.

Strategy for Demand-Supply mismatch: The Government in School and Mass Education Department has taken steps for the enhancement of seats in D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. course to meet the requirement of trained teachers.

1.7.6 Pedagogy

- According to the 2013 Pratham Annual Study for Education Report (ASER), less students in class III in government schools can read at the class I level or higher than they could in 2009. This decreases from 43.8% in 2009 to 32.6% in 2013. Similar to this, the proportion of students in class V of government schools who can read at the class III level or higher has decreased from 50.3% to 41.1%.
- Similar to this, the 2013 ASER reveals a fall in the proportion of class III students who can solve subtraction arithmetic problems, from 36.3% in 2010 to 26.1% in 2013.
- While student performance in government schools has decreased more quickly than that of students in private schools in these areas of assessment, the performance gap between students has increased.

1.7.7 Multilingual Education (MLE):

- The state policy for MLE has been finalized.
- Mother Tongue (MT) based MLE programme was introduced in the academic year 2007-08 to cover primary level education.
- To adopt MT-based MLE, schools having more than 90% of students speaking a particular tribal language have been chosen. Local tribal teachers placed in MLE schools. In the event of the non-availability of adequate teachers for a particular language group, educated tribal youths were hired and trained to support the classroom transactions.
- In a phased manner 777 schools have been adopted under the MT-based MLE programme in 12 districts covering 45633 children.
- Text materials from classes I to V are in tribal languages, incorporating the cultural context while keeping conformity to the NCF and SCF
- The state language (Odia) and English are introduced in Std. II and III respectively and proficiency is developed in all three languages. By class V, the children are taught in the state language while their mother tongue is taught as a language subject and from Std. VI onward children study as per the general state programme.
- The pre-primary curriculum “*Nua-Arunima*” was adapted in 10 tribal languages for facilitating mother tongue-based pre-primary education.
- Additional nine new tribal languages were approved for implementing the MLE and steps have already been taken to identify the schools, teachers, and community resource persons.

1.7.8 Computer Aided Education

- 2645 Upper Primary schools have been provided with Computer Aided Learning.
- 3, 97,347 students benefited from this programme.
- SCERT has designated teacher educators and faculty members from DIETs and training institutes who have received training in "technology-assisted teaching" as resource persons.
- OPEPA has created 67 digital materials for classes V, VI, and VII that address 144 additional identified rough spots in the subjects of science, mathematics, social studies, English, and computer literacy.

1.7.9 Bridging of Gender and Social Category Gaps

Girls Education

- All of the girl students enrolled in elementary government schools receive free uniforms. Teachers of government and aided schools are provided with training
- The state's 49880 Upper Primary girls received self-defense instruction. To increase girls' self-confidence and end their fear psychosis at the upper primary level.
- School management committee members were also included in this process.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), a crucial component of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), offers a dynamic framework to expedite the study of girl pupils in educationally underdeveloped blocks through the opening of residential schools only for upper primary out-of-school girls. Presently, Odisha has 182 operational KGBVs throughout the state. During the year 2013-14, a total of 18180 girls benefited through this scheme.

Education for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe

- SRUJAN (name of the module of the training programme for teachers) activities were organized at the cluster, block, and district levels where students from various schools participated in different creative, curricular, and extracurricular activities. It covers 2886 clusters of 254 blocks of 30 districts with 391037 beneficiaries.
- Summer camps have been conducted for urban-deprived children.
- Multilingual education was implemented in 1485 schools in tribal sub-plan areas.

1.7.10 Inclusive Education

STATUS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Sl.No.	Name of the Activities	Progress
1.	Identification and enrolment	105019 CWSNs identified and out of which 103959 have been enrolled in formal schools & 1060 CWSNs covered through HBE.
2.	Distribution of aids and appliances	Aids and appliances have been given to 12417 CWSN, and 314 medical assessment camps have been arranged.
3.	Surgical correction	373 CWSNs have been provided with Surgical Correction in convergence with hospitals.
4.	Teacher's training on Braille	1198 teachers provided 5 days of training on Braille
5.	Teacher's training on Sign language	2746 teachers provided 5 days of training on Sign Language
6.	Teacher's training on MR	3408 teachers provided 5 days of training on MR
7.	Teacher's training on CP	2080 teachers provided 5 days of training on CP.
8.	Observation of International Day for the Disabled	International Day for the Disabled has been observed in all 314 Blocks and at the district level for awareness among the general public.
9.	Parents' training	The parents have been oriented on IE through one-day special training. 53027 parents have been provided training.
10.	Sports Meet	314 Sports meets have been conducted at the Block level for demonstrating the ability of the CWSN.
11.	Provision of Braille Books	2013 sets of Braille books have been distributed to Blind Children. The cumulative figure is 9603 sets of Braille books.
12.	Distribution of Escort allowance to severe CWSN.	12694 severely disabled students have been distributed an escort allowance.

13	Engagement of Block Resource Teacher on IE	604 no. of Block Resource Teachers are continuing to provide resource support to CWSN.
14	Organisation of co-curricular activities	National level children's festival "Anjali" has been organised in convergence with NGO Swabhiman. 200 nos of CWSN have been exposed to various activities at Bhubaneswar.
15	Review Meeting of Inclusive Education for Disabled (IED) Coordinators	4 Quarterly reviews cum orientation workshops have been conducted for the I.E coordinators at SPO to monitor the progress of IE activities. The Inclusive Education Coordinators have been oriented by the eminent resource persons/organisation.

1.7.11 Infrastructure Development

- 7405 new primary School buildings are constructed and 566 are in progress and 946 are not started.
- 7950 New Upper Primary schools are constructed, 325 are in progress and 169 are not started.
- 64862 Additional classrooms are constructed 8300 are in progress and 1672 are not started.
- 13666 HM rooms at Primary and Upper Primary Levels are constructed 2734 are in progress and 906 are not started.
- 9078 common toilets, 32792 toilets for girls, 22354 CWSN toilets have been completed.
- 133 KGBV buildings were completed, and 49 KGBV buildings were in progress.

1.7.12 Monitoring and Supervision

- School Management Committee (SMC) has already been constituted in all Govt and Aided schools at the Elementary level and capacity building of all SMC members on RTE completed.
- Enrollment drives have been conducted at school /village level.
- School Development Plan in all Govt. and Govt. Aided schools prepared by the SMC.
- Local Authority under RTE Act has been notified.
- Quarterly progress is being updated on district physical and financial progress in a web portal by the Management Information System (MIS), Finance and Planning Units of the State.
- U- DISE-2013 has already been collected, data generated and awp&b-2014-15 has been prepared on this basis for the state SSA.

1.7.13 Redress of Grievances

- The establishment of a system was made for teachers and students to file grievances at the state and district levels. In this context, a notification for the grievance redressal mechanism was issued.
- The School Student Help Line (SSH) was established to address teacher absence, student harassment instances, and any form of RTE Act infringement in the school. All schools were given out the toll-free number 1800-345-6722.
- Notification and operationalization of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), appellate systems have been put in place.

1.8 Existing Gender and social category gaps

Despite significant quantitative advancement, exclusion still plagues children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from SC and ST communities, urban poor, immigrant families, linguistic and religious minorities, youngsters in challenging situations, etc. During the last few years SSA, Odisha adopted different strategies to address the issues and challenges faced by the children of disadvantaged groups in accessing and participating in the education programme. Some of the major challenges faced by the children of the disadvantaged section in accessing and participating in the education programme are:

- Less community participation particularly of the disadvantaged groups in the SSA programme.
- The absence of a culturally appropriate and kid-friendly environment inside and outside the classroom, which results in the absence of participation from the kids in the classroom activity.
- Teachers are lacking orientation and skill toward addressing the equity issues in the Universalization of Elementary Education.
- Resource Centers like BRCC/ CRCC and DIETS / DRCs have limited expertise to contribute to the contextual issues (especially related to children's learning in linguistic minority areas).
- Wide inequalities arising out from differences in home environments. A child from a rural/tribal household or slum does not have the same opportunity as a child from an upper-class home with educated parents.

Analysis of the Unified District School Education System for Education (UDISE) of different academic years also justifies the above facts.

GPI in enrollment and the percentage of girls in the total enrolment

Name of Indicators	Education Level	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
% Girls enrolment to total enrolment	Primary	48.32	48.52	48.30
	Upper Primary	48.10	48.15	48.00
	Elementary	48.24	48.38	48.19
Gender Parity Index(GPI)	Primary	0.98	0.98	0.99
	Upper Primary	0.98	0.98	0.97
	Elementary	0.98	0.98	0.98

The percentage of girls in total enrollment has been stagnant for the past few years. It is observed that the girls' percentage in the upper primary section of education is lower than that of at the primary level. This may be attributed to the large number of children leaving school at the upper primary level.

Percentage enrolment to total population by social category:

	Share of the population as a percentage (Census 2011)	Percentage of enrolment share			
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
SC	17.10	18.69	19.04	18.70	18.74
ST	22.80	28.06	29.85	27.06	27.42
Muslim	2.20	1.72	1.54	1.56	2.02

The enrolment trends of socially marginalized groups indicate improvement as far as equitable access to education is concerned. According to UDISE data for the academic year 2019–20, SC and ST children's enrollment percentages roughly match their population percentages., but the enrolment share of category of Muslim children is less than their population which is a matter of concern.

Annual average Dropout Rate - 2017-18:

Category	Year	Primary level (Class I to V)			Upper Primary level (Class VI to VIII)			Elementary level (Class I to VIII)		
		Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
All	2019-20	0.8	0.8	0.8	4.9	4.1	4.5	2.3	2.0	2.2
	2018-19	2.9	3.9	3.36	4.9	5.0	5.0	3.6	4.3	4.0
	2017-18	6.0	5.6	5.82	5.9	4.8	5.4	6.0	5.3	5.7
	2016-17	4.1	4.4	4.2	5.2	4.9	5.1	4.4	4.6	4.5
SC	2019-20	0.2	0.7	0.48	4.2	3.6	3.9	1.7	1.8	1.7
	2018-19	3.5	2.7	3.10	7.1	6.0	6.5	4.8	4.0	4.4
	2017-18	3.8	3.7	3.78	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.8
	2016-17	3.3	3.2	3.2	5.7	5.8	5.7	4.2	4.1	4.1

ST	2019-20	4.3	4.3	4.27	10.5	8.7	9.6	6.5	5.8	6.2
	2018-19	4.3	5.5	4.90	7.7	7.2	7.5	5.5	6.1	5.8
	2017-18	9.4	9.4	9.39	10.8	8.8	9.8	9.9	9.2	9.5
	2016-17	7.1	7.6	7.4	9.4	8.8	9.1	7.8	8.0	7.9

Above table shows that girls drop out at primary level is higher than that of boys. Dropout rate is higher in case of children belonging to ST communities.

1.9 Recommendations

Given the diversity of children in underprivileged neighborhoods, high levels of illiteracy, and educational inequality, as well as the need to close gender and social category gaps, the following suggestions are provided below.

- Identifying the critical gaps in the education of girls, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and minority children hinders equitable quality education.
- Designing and implementing special interventions for addressing the educational needs of disadvantaged children from girls, ST, and SC communities.
- Providing special incentives/ support for the promotion of education among children from girls, ST, and SC communities.
- Building capacities of stakeholders like teachers, parents, and education administrators and mobilizing the support of the community members for the effective implementation of the interventions.
- Primary education should be taught in the mother tongue of the child for bridging gaps between school and home language.

1.10 Conclusion

The Act was passed by the government and put into effect intending to give the target population access to high-quality elementary education. Except for a handful, the majority of the surveyed schools can meet basic infrastructural requirements, but they fall far behind in terms of curriculum, assessment, teacher training, and other relevant areas. Partnerships between the State level team, school officials, nonprofit organizations, parents, and other stakeholders are required. At all levels, collaboration is necessary because individual efforts alone do not provide the intended outcomes. The RTE Act was implemented in Odisha several years ago, but the study shows that there is still a long road ahead before all stakeholders even become aware of their rights, much less become able to exercise them.

The RTE's potential is greatly influenced by the government's advocacy and mobilization efforts as well as the capacity of parents and children to comprehend and act by their new roles in terms of elementary education. The RTE Act, which was the outcome of a protracted campaign by people's movements, is nevertheless a great accomplishment despite restrictions in its application. Even while concerns about education privatization persist, the RTE Act represents a first step towards creating an inclusive education system in India.

1.11 References

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