



STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT, 2009 IN CUTTACK SADAR, ODISHA

Bijay Kumar Samal
M.Ed Student, RNIASE , Kataka

Abstract

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, represents a significant step towards ensuring universal access to elementary education in India. The present study examines the status of implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, in elementary schools of Cuttack Sadar, Odisha. The study focused particularly on physical and instructional facilities, school practices, School Management Committees, curriculum and evaluation practices, and the teaching-learning process. A descriptive survey method was adopted. The sample consisted of 160 respondents, including 40 teachers and 120 students from elementary schools. A self-developed questionnaire was administered to teachers, while focus group discussions were conducted with students. The collected data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The findings indicate that several basic facilities, including pucca school buildings, safe drinking water, electricity, textbooks and basic school infrastructure, were available in a substantial proportion of schools. However, important gaps were observed in library facilities, playgrounds, student-teacher ratio, audio-visual resources and the effective use of teaching-learning materials. The study also indicates that School Management Committees were functioning in most schools and that teachers were generally aware of several provisions of the RTE Act. Overall, the findings suggest that although implementation of the RTE Act has contributed to improving access and basic facilities, substantial challenges remain in ensuring adequate infrastructure, resources and quality-oriented teaching-learning practices.

Keywords: Right to Education, RTE Act 2009, elementary education, Cuttack Sadar, school facilities, School Management Committee, Odisha

1. Introduction

Education is an essential instrument for individual development and social transformation. In India, access to education has historically been unequal, particularly for socially and economically disadvantaged sections of society. After independence, successive constitutional provisions, educational policies and programmes sought to expand access to elementary education.

Article 45 of the Constitution originally directed the State to provide free and compulsory education to children up to the age of 14 years. Subsequently, the 86th Constitutional Amendment introduced Article 21A, making free and compulsory education for children in the age group of 6–14 years a fundamental right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, was enacted to give effect to this constitutional commitment. The Act came into force on 1 April 2010 and established a legal framework for free and compulsory elementary education.

The RTE Act places responsibilities on governments, local authorities, schools, teachers and School Management Committees. It addresses not only enrolment but also school infrastructure, teacher availability, admission practices, curriculum, evaluation, protection of children and participation of parents and communities.

The Odisha Government subsequently formulated the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010 under Section 38 of the RTE Act. These rules were brought into force through publication in the Odisha Gazette on 27 September 2010.

The mere enactment of legislation, however, does not guarantee effective implementation. Availability of adequate infrastructure, trained teachers, instructional resources, functional School Management Committees and appropriate teaching-learning practices are essential for translating the legal right into meaningful educational opportunities.



Cover Page



The present study therefore examines the implementation of the RTE Act in elementary schools of Cuttack Sadar, Odisha.

2. Rationale of the Study

The RTE Act was introduced with the objective of ensuring universal, equitable and quality elementary education. Although progress has been made in access, enrolment and infrastructure, challenges remain in relation to quality, attendance, dropout, teacher availability and school facilities. The dissertation identifies these continuing challenges as the rationale for examining the operational status of the RTE Act in government elementary schools of Odisha.

The study is particularly relevant because the effective implementation of the Act depends on conditions at the school level. Examining actual facilities and practices provides an opportunity to identify areas where implementation is satisfactory and areas requiring further attention.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the physical and instructional facilities available in elementary schools in the context of implementation of the RTE Act.
2. To examine the existing practices in elementary schools in relation to implementation of the RTE Act.
3. To examine the functioning of School Management Committees.
4. To examine curriculum and evaluation practices.
5. To examine the teaching-learning process in elementary schools.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey method, which was considered appropriate for examining existing conditions, practices and perceptions relating to implementation of the RTE Act.

4.2 Population

The population comprised primary school teachers and students of Cuttack Sadar.

4.3 Sample

A sample of 160 respondents was selected, consisting of:

- 40 teachers
- 120 students

The study covered elementary schools in Cuttack Sadar, Cuttack district, Odisha.

4.4 Tools



Cover Page



Two major tools were used:

1. Self-developed questionnaire for teachers
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students

The questionnaire covered physical facilities, instructional facilities, ongoing school practices, School Management Committees, curriculum and evaluation, and teaching-learning processes.

4.5 Data Collection

The investigator personally visited the selected schools and collected information from teachers and students. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and confidentiality of the information provided was maintained.

4.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed primarily through frequency and percentage analysis.

5. Results and Findings

5.1 Physical Facilities

The findings indicate that basic physical infrastructure was available in many of the surveyed schools. Safe drinking water and pucca school buildings were reported in all 40 schools. Boundary walls, headmaster's rooms, electricity and kitchens for mid-day meals were reported in 90% of schools. Separate toilets for boys and girls and approach roads were reported in 80% of schools.

However, significant deficiencies were observed in playground and library facilities. Only 40% of schools were reported to have playground facilities, while library facilities were reported in only 30% of schools. The data also indicate limitations regarding the availability of one teacher per class.

These findings suggest that while basic infrastructure has improved, facilities that contribute to a richer educational environment remain inadequate.

5.2 Instructional Facilities

All surveyed schools reported the availability of textbooks and the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Stationery materials were available in 95% of schools, while teachers' handbooks were available in 90%.

The availability of audio-visual aids was comparatively limited, with 55% of schools reporting their availability. Musical instruments were available in only 25% of schools. Proper student-teacher ratios were reported in 70% of schools.

The findings indicate that basic instructional materials were relatively well provided, but modern and supplementary teaching resources were less adequately available.

5.3 Existing School Practices

All respondents reported that no fees were charged from students and that students were allowed to transfer to another school for completion of elementary education. Ninety percent reported admission of children above six years into a class appropriate to their age.



The study also examined admission without a transfer certificate and found that respondents did not support such admission under the practice reported in the study.

5.4 School Management Committees

The findings indicate relatively high awareness and functioning of School Management Committees. Ninety-five percent of teachers reported that schools were required to have School Management Committees. Ninety percent reported awareness of the provision concerning parent representation and preparation of School Development Plans.

However, only 70% reported maintenance of records relating to government or local-authority grants, suggesting a need for stronger monitoring and documentation practices.

5.5 Curriculum and Evaluation

The majority of teachers viewed the prescribed curriculum positively. Eighty percent considered the prescribed syllabus helpful for the overall development of children, while 65% considered it helpful in developing children's knowledge and talent.

Ninety-five percent reported that the curriculum encouraged activity-based learning, and 75% reported the practice of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. All respondents stated that passing an examination was not mandatory for promotion to the next class.

5.6 Teaching-Learning Process

The teaching-learning findings indicate generally positive perceptions among teachers. Eighty percent reported a conducive study environment, while 95% reported regularity and punctuality of classes. Eighty percent expressed satisfaction with teaching methods.

However, only 60% reported completion of courses within the stipulated period, indicating a notable area requiring improvement.

5.7 Students' Perspectives

The focus group discussions with 120 students provided additional information about implementation at the school level. Ninety percent of students reported the availability of safe drinking water and electricity. Eighty percent reported separate toilet facilities, while 95% reported the availability of kitchens for mid-day meals.

Only 30% reported library availability, while 45% reported playground availability. All students reported receiving free textbooks and uniforms and indicated that no fees were demanded from them. Ninety percent reported regularity in classes, and 95% reported absence of physical punishment.

The qualitative observations further indicated that although toilets existed in several schools, some were reportedly locked or not freely accessible to students. Playground space was also reported to be inadequate in some schools. Teaching-learning materials were available in many schools but were sometimes kept in cupboards or store rooms rather than being actively used during classroom teaching.

6. Discussion

The findings demonstrate a mixed picture of RTE implementation in the sampled elementary schools. On one hand, important aspects of access and basic infrastructure appear to have improved. The availability of pucca buildings, drinking water, electricity, textbooks and basic school facilities reflects progress towards the infrastructural objectives associated with elementary education.



On the other hand, the study identifies considerable gaps in facilities that directly support the quality of children's educational experiences. Library facilities were particularly weak, and playground facilities were inadequate in a substantial proportion of schools. The availability of audio-visual aids and musical instruments was also limited.

The findings concerning teaching-learning materials are particularly important. The presence of resources does not necessarily ensure their educational use. The study reports that teaching-learning materials were available in many schools but were sometimes stored rather than used in classroom instruction. This indicates that implementation requires attention not only to the provision of resources but also to teachers' capacity and motivation to use them effectively.

The functioning of School Management Committees appears comparatively satisfactory, but the reported gaps in monitoring and record maintenance suggest that community participation and institutional accountability require continued strengthening.

The study therefore supports the broader observation in the dissertation that implementation of the RTE Act has contributed to improved access and facilities but that the goal of quality education has not been fully achieved.

7. Major Findings

The major findings of the study may be summarised as follows:

1. Basic physical facilities were available in many of the surveyed schools.
2. Safe drinking water and pucca buildings were reported in all surveyed schools.
3. Library facilities were inadequate.
4. Playground facilities were not available in a substantial proportion of schools.
5. Textbooks and basic stationery materials were widely available.
6. The use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction was reported across the surveyed schools.
7. Audio-visual aids and musical instruments were comparatively less available.
8. Most teachers reported the existence and functioning of School Management Committees.
9. Awareness regarding parent representation in School Management Committees was relatively high.
10. Activity-based learning was reported by a large majority of teachers.
11. Most teachers reported regular and punctual classes.
12. Completion of the prescribed course within the stipulated period remained a challenge.
13. Students generally reported positive experiences regarding teaching, drinking water, textbooks, uniforms and absence of physical punishment.
14. Important gaps remained between the availability of facilities and their actual usability or educational utilisation.

8. Educational Implications

The findings have several implications for educational administrators, teachers, school heads and local authorities.



First, greater attention should be given to the provision and maintenance of libraries and playgrounds, as these facilities contribute to children's intellectual, physical and social development.

Second, schools should be provided with adequate instructional and audio-visual resources, accompanied by appropriate teacher orientation on their classroom use.

Third, the functioning of School Management Committees should be strengthened through regular orientation, transparent record keeping and active participation of parents and community members.

Fourth, teachers should receive regular training and orientation regarding the provisions and practical implementation of the RTE Act.

Finally, monitoring mechanisms should focus not only on enrolment and infrastructure but also on the quality and actual use of educational resources and classroom practices.

9. Conclusion

The Right to Education Act, 2009, has provided an important legal framework for ensuring free and compulsory elementary education. The present study indicates that the implementation of the Act in the sampled elementary schools of Cuttack Sadar has resulted in progress in several areas, particularly basic infrastructure, access to textbooks, drinking water, electricity and other essential facilities.

Nevertheless, implementation remains incomplete from the perspective of quality education. Inadequate library and playground facilities, limitations in instructional resources, concerns regarding student-teacher ratios and the underutilisation of teaching-learning materials continue to affect the educational experience of children.

The findings therefore suggest that successful implementation of the RTE Act requires a shift from a narrow focus on access and enrolment towards a stronger emphasis on quality, functionality, equity and learning outcomes. Effective implementation is a shared responsibility involving government authorities, school administrators, teachers, parents, School Management Committees and the wider community.

10. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

The study was confined to government elementary schools in Cuttack Sadar and involved a sample of 160 respondents. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all elementary schools in Odisha. The original study itself recommends expanding future research to include larger samples and schools from different geographical regions of the state.

Future studies may compare government and private schools, examine rural and urban differences, assess teacher awareness of RTE provisions, and investigate the relationship between implementation of RTE provisions and actual learning outcomes.

References

1. Acharya, S. (2007). Problems of enrollment, retention, and achievement among the students of primitive tribes of Orissa. Post Graduate Department of Anthropology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.
2. Buragohain, T. (2009). Poverty and student dropout in Orissa. *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, XXIII(2), 169–183.
3. Choudhary, A. (2015). Online admission under RTE Act to start from February 9. *The Times of India*.



4. Deepthi, T. (2014). Role of a teacher in implementing RTE Act. In Right to Education: Issues and Challenges (pp. 424–427).
5. Dey, N., & Beck, B. (2011). Right to children to free and compulsory education Act 2009: Teachers' perception. Journal of Educational Research (EDUSEARCH), 2, 83–90.
6. Gadam, A. M. (2013). Teacher awareness of the responsibility under Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. International Indexed & Refereed Journal, 5, 38–40.
7. Imranullah, M. (2013). Advantages and disadvantages of RTE Act. The Hindu.
8. Jaseena, F. (2011). Right to Education: A study on the awareness of M.Ed. trainees. Journal of Educational Research (EDUSEARCH), 2, 63–66.
9. Kalyani, K. (2014). Right to education implemented: Challenges still in the lead. In Right to Education: Issues and Challenges (pp. 37–39).
10. Kumar, D., & Sharma, S. (2011). A study of parents' and teachers' awareness towards Right to Education Act 2009. Journal of Educational Research (EDUSEARCH), 2, 129–132.
11. Mahanandi, M. (2014). Awareness of teachers on RTE Act-2009: A study. In Right to Education: Issues and Challenges (pp. 327–328).
12. Malik, S., Serohi, S., & Tayal, A. (2013). Awareness of Right to Education Act among prospective teachers. Research Journal of Education, 1, 1–6.
13. Mandal, S., & Barman, P. (2014). Attitude of headmasters and teachers towards the Right to Education Act (2009), India. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19, 1–9.
14. Mangal, S. K., & Mangal, S. (2013). Research methodology in behavioral sciences. New Delhi: PHI Learning.
15. Pavan, M. (2015). Online application: Browsing centres fleece poor parents. The Times of India.
16. Premalakshmi, K. (2011). Right to education and common school system—Perception among teachers. Journal of Educational Research (EDUSEARCH), 2, 106–111.
17. Prasada, R., Naik, L., & Phaneendra, K. (2013). Right to education: Fee reimbursement implication.
18. Ramya, M. (2014). Children admitted in schools under RTE Act branded dirty, given leftover food: Report. The Times of India.
19. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
20. Government of Odisha. (2010). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2010.