

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN BELONGING TO ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS THROUGH RTE IN MANIPUR

Written by *Thokchom Monica Devi*

Assistant Professor, Dept of Teacher education, Manipur University, Imphal, India

ABSTRACT

The right to education act 2009 is to provide education to all without exclusion of any form or any kind. Its section 12.1(c) provides at least 25 percent reservations for children belonging to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in admission to all private schools. Most of the parents, including the economically backward, in Manipur prefer to send their children in private school due to the unsatisfactory facilities and low performance in the government schools. The parents of the EWS children are not aware of the 25 percent reservation in private school so they end up giving a high fee in private school for their children. So this study is conducted to find out if the private schools in Manipur implement such reservation. Does the EWS have access to the private school as per the guideline as indicated in the RTE act? Does the private school have separate admission procedure to admit such students? Does the state of Manipur have guideline for private aided school to implement the 25 percent reservation in admission for EWS? The study is exploratory in nature. Purposive sampling techniques have been adopted to fulfill the requirement of the study. It is found that private schools do not have such reservation.

Key words: EWS, RTE, Private schools, 25 percent reservation

INTRODUCTION

Education is the means of empowering an individual to be self-reliant. The RTE Act entitles children of six to 14 years of age to free education. The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14. The act also ensure 25% of the intake reserve for student belonging to weaker section and underprivileged groups in every private unaided school (not receiving any grants from government) in the neighborhood and extend benefit of free and compulsory education to them. Malik B (2015) expressed that the level of awareness of RTE is very low. None of the eligible members knew about this constitutional provision which guarantees their children the right to education. However, some teachers were aware that such an Act was in operation. Due to the lack of awareness EWS children are deprived of the benefit and private schools are ignoring the act as it is like an additional burden to them. A PTI report on 21st February 2019 claimed that over 80 per cent of the private schools in Delhi are not participating in the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act and are also not reserving 25 per cent seats for students from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

In a state like Manipur the condition of government school are in a sorry state, so most of the parents want their children to study in private school irrespective of the parents' income. Most of the parents are not even aware of the fact that a private unaided school should reserve 25% of their seats for weaker section and underprivileged groups so the poor parents end up paying high fees in private school. The school did not implement the provision of RTE as indicated in the RTE act of the state. The admission in class I, to private unaided catholic schools is through a lottery method which did not categorize any reservation. Private school chooses children according to the names come up in the lottery method and no such reservation as 25% of intake for the weaker section is followed. Some parents lined up for queue from midnight so the craze to send their children in private school is highly visible.

HISTORY OF RTE

Article 45 of the constitution of India stated: “The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until the age of fourteen years.” A new article 21-A was added by the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, “ The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine.” By the same 86th Constitutional Amendment, a new Fundamental Duty was added under Part4(A) under fundamental duties, which is as follows: “Parents or guardian has to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of six and fourteen years.” Later in 2009, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was passed also known as the Right to Education Act or RTE. The Government has enforced this law from 1st April, 2010. According to this Act all children in the 6-14 years age group have the Fundamental Right to get free education.

THE RTE ACT NOTIFICATION OF THE STATE MANIPUR:

The RTE act of the state Manipur was notified on 21st October 2010. According to this act, a child belonging to weaker sections means a child belonging to Backward Class, Minorities and includes OCs whose parents’ income does not exceed Rs.40000/-per annum. It also defined a child belonging to socially disadvantaged group means and includes a child belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, orphans, children with special need and HIV affected/ infected children. The act also mentioned in section 5(2) that identification of all children, including children in remote areas, children with disabilities, children belonging to disadvantaged groups, children belonging to weaker sections and children referred to in section 4 shall be undertaken, within a period of one year from the appointed date, and every year thereafter updated as on 30th September of each year. Section 7(3) mention the areas or limits of neighborhood specified in rule 4 (1) shall apply to admissions made in pursuance of clause (c) to section 12 (1): Provided that the school may, for the purposes of filling up the requisite percentage of seats for children referred to in clause

(c) to section 12 (1), extend these limits with the prior approval of the State Government. But no clear indication was given to admit 25% of students belonging to weaker section and socially disadvantage group. In the section 8(7) it mention that the school, shall in the month of July, submit the list of the students admitted in the school to the District Educational Officer of the district for reimbursement to the school under section 12. The District Educational Officer of the District shall verify or cause to be verified the enrolment of the children before making the reimbursement of the first installment. He/she shall reimburse the final installment in the coming January again after verification of the enrolment of children and attendance of every child subject to a minimum of 80% attendance every month.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 12.1(C) OF RTE IN MANIPUR

Almost after twelve years of passing the Right to Education (RTE) Act, implementation of the act is still a distant dream. As per a report published in 2013 in the Sangai Express, the Sustainable Development Centre (SDC), secretary Inaobi Meitei claim that school do not follow 25% reservation and submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister and the Education Minister demanding indiscriminate implementation of RTE as well as initiation of necessary action against schools which are challenging the Act. The Sangai Express (2014) also publish another news on 'Implement RTE Act in private schools' where the All Manipur Students' Guardian Organisation alleged the State Government that necessary steps were not being implemented in private schools of Manipur to enforce the Right to Education Act. The spokesperson stated that although RTE Act mandates every school to provide 25 percent of free education to students, no such report is receiving from private schools. The organization urged the State Government, schools authorities, to enforce the RTE considering parents who could not afford to send their children to school. Tharoor S(2018) reported in the Hindu newspaper that it came to light through an MHRD reply in the Lok Sabha that five States (Goa, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Telangana) are yet to issue any notifications regarding admissions under the RTE section 12 (1)(c). State of the Nation: RTE Section 12(1)(c) – 2017 reported that Manipur along with other 19 states do not submit proposal

on reimbursement against implementation of 12(1)(c) in assessment year 2016-17. So it is quite evident that the State is not seriously implementing the RTE act.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the awareness of section 12.1(c) of RTE in private schools in Manipur
2. To find out if the private schools in Manipur implement 25% reservation in school admission at entry level for EWS
3. To suggest measures for effective implementation of RTE in private schools.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhattacharjee S (2019) in a study titled ‘Ten Years of RTE Act: Revisiting Achievements and Examining Gaps’ found that there is a variation in the enrollment in all the states. The study also point out that since India does not have a common schooling system, even without execution hurdles, the 25-percent quota system is susceptible to inequalities at different levels. Some of the criticisms levelled against this provision include discriminatory behavior towards parents, difficulties experienced by students to blend in with a different sociocultural environment, reliance on the private sector to provide quality education. In 2018, more than 44,000 students in Indore in the state of Madhya Pradesh were not granted admission in time. Such delays, even if rectified in a few months, can severely impact the academic progress of a student. The study suggests that to implement the 25-percent provision, schools must release the number of seats available under the quota and publicise it through different avenues. Parents can then identify a nearby school and fill in the application for admission.

Afza M and Mazha S (2017) in a study titled Quality education: a case study of Delhi/NCR schools (post right to education act, 2009) found that no such provision of RTE has been implemented in the private schools. These 25% reserved seats were converted for management

quota seats. Private schools choose children according to their benefits. Weaker section is still ignored.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (2017) report on A Study on Implementation of Section 12(1) (c) of RTE Act, 2009 in Delhi pertaining to Admission of Children from Disadvantaged Sections in Private Schools found that around 13.5 % of Principals are not in favour of admissions under RTE Section 12 (1) (c) due to various reasons stated by them.

Please find below few reasons stated by the Principals and Schools:

1. Non-Payment of Reimbursements for additional educational facilities by Government
2. False Income and Caste Certificate produced by EWS Parents
3. Poor Conduct of EWS Students
4. Learning level of EWS Students
5. Health & Hygiene is a primary concern for EWS students

Kainth G S (2014) in study titled, ‘Adoption of RTE in Private Schools of Rural Punjab’ stated that Punjab government is not serious about ensuring 25 per cent reservation at the entry level in all private schools, though the Act came into force in April 2010, government did not act against schools which failed to reserve seats because there were many issues that required clarification. The study also highlights the problems faced by the private school in reimbursement of the amount to be incurred for admitted. It also pointed out that the demand for admission is only in high end schools and not in mediocre and government schools. Majority of children taking admission in high end schools are leaving in between because of their inability to afford other costs and to be a part of school culture. Sending BPL students to high end private school does not serve the purpose. It creates more gaps than filling it.

METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory in nature. The sampling was done purposively in privately managed schools. The study includes both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data is collected

through questionnaire and informal interaction with principal and teachers from 12 private schools of Manipur. The data could not be collected from many schools due to the restriction imposed to contain the covid 19 pandemic. The secondary data used in the study are e-journals, e-newspaper and other reports on RTE.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Awareness of RTE act

Yes	No	Total
12	0	12

All the respondents in the study are aware of the RTE act 2009 but when inquire about which students are included in weaker section as per RTE rules of Manipur, respondents were unable to give the correct information. Many of them give a guessing reply that they may be students whose parents are below poverty line, low income family etc but they were not clear about it. When ask about who are included in the socially disadvantage group as per RTE rules Manipur, the response were mostly SC and ST.

2. Involvement in identifying weaker section children in the locality

Yes	No	Total
2	10	12

16% of the respondents say they help in identification of weaker section of the society but when ask about if initiative have been taken up to admit them in school the response was No. Therefore as such no admission has been taken in the name of weaker section in private schools.

3. Initiative by school authority to admit socially disadvantage children

Yes	No	Total

0	12	12
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Private schools admit whosoever can pay the fees. They do not categorize students as socially disadvantage or well to do family.

4. 25% reservation for EWS

Yes	No	Total
0	12	12

The private have no reservation for EWS. They do not have any clear instruction from the government to admit such children even though it is mentioned in the Manipur State RTE act.

5. Special incentives for children belonging to EWS

Yes	No	Total
0	12	12

All the expenses for admission, book, notebook etc are to be borne by the parents only.

6. Problem faced in relation to admission of 25% reservation for EWS

The private schools do not take 25% reservation for EWS but some voluntary organization report the matter to the Chief Minister of the state but no concrete steps has been taken up by the government to address the same.

7. Reimbursement of amount from the state government and problem faced by school incurring the same

The private schools do not take 25% reservation for marginalized group so there is no claim of reimbursement. State of the Nation: RTE Section 12(1)(c) – 2017 report shows that Manipur along with other 19 states do not submit proposal on reimbursement against implementation of 12(1)(c).

8. Admission procedure at the entry level in private schools

Two out of the school surveyed informed that they follow lottery method, one school of the school informed that the admission is through entrance but other admit on first come first basis for admission at the entry level. One of the missionaries school inform that they do not have 25 % reservation for EWS but they have some management quota which is adjusted from time to time as per the requirement of the locality.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Government should take proper initiative against the reservation of 25% of EWS seat in private school.
2. The government should reimbursed the amount spend on educating the 25% seat of EWS on time as directed in the RTE act of the state.
3. The government should conduct public awareness on the same as many poor parents are not aware of it
4. The government should monitor the implementation of such Act as some may fraudly claim to be EWS to get admitted to private school and also ensure that no corruption is done by any administrative authority of the schools.
5. The government should give proper instruction to the private unaided school about admitting the 25% of seat to EWS
6. Orientation programme should be organized by the government for the head masters and the senior teachers so that they are clear about the admission procedure in accordance with the RTE Act, 2009.

CONCLUSION

This study is conducted to assess the awareness of section 12.1(c) of RTE in private schools in Manipur and to find out if the private schools in Manipur implement 25% reservation in school admission at entry level for EWS. The study shows that most of the private schools are aware of the RTE act but their awareness is more on the corporal punishment and separate toilet for boys and girls. Some of the schools are aware of the fact that they have to admit 25% of student in EWS but there is no proper indication from the State government. So they are confused whom shall be consider in this category even though the RTE act of the government mention annual income of 40000 as the criteria. The finding shows that not all the private schools implement the provisions properly. Combine efforts of government, community, parents and teachers are needed for proper achievement of the goal of RTE to provide education for all. The student's organization in Manipur can also help to check the proper compliance of the Act and spread awareness in the community regarding the right of the stakeholders of the RTE.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study suffers from several limitations, due to the Covid 19 pandemic the study could not be done comprehensively. The sample is taken on convenience basis due to the restriction on movement due to lockdown and so it doesn't represent whole population of Manipur.

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