

INTRODUCTION

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act, 2009) has envisaged free and compulsory education of all children of the age of six to fourteen years, till completion of elementary stage, in a neighbourhood school. The RTE Act has provisions for every child who is above six years of age and has not yet been admitted to any school or could not complete his/ her elementary education due to any reason to be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. In order to be at par with other children of the class, the child has a right to receive special training or additional instructions. There is an important concern over implementation of RTE Act in the school system with reference to special training or instructions, its modalities and execution. The States/UTs are expected to respond to the situation arising out of the implementation of RTE Act. The States/ UTs are also required to pay special attention to cope with the situation in terms of appointment of qualified teachers, development of special training programmes for out-of-school children admitted to age appropriate classes, and preparation of relevant teaching learning materials. The various important provisions in the RTE Act are:

- Right of disabled child to receive free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school,
- Completion of elementary education even after fourteen years of age,
- Right of child to seek transfer to any other school,
- Prohibition of holding back and expulsion of child,
- No child is denied admission because of lack of proof of age,
- Formulating standards and norms for school management committees,
- Qualification, terms and conditions of services of teachers,
- Filling of vacancies of teachers,
- Pre-school education (States/UTs may provide for this),
- Duties of teachers, and redressal of their grievances,
- Duties of parents/guardians,
- Prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes,
- Maintaining pupil teacher ratio as specified,
- Prohibition of capitation fee and screening procedures,
- Prohibition of physical punishment and mental harassment,
- Norms and standards for schools,
- Preparation of school development plan,
- Laying down the curriculum and evaluation procedures,
- Monitoring child's rights to education, and
- Constitution of State Advisory Council, among other aspects.

Objective of Study

The present study has been designed with an objective to know the status of implementation of various provisions of RTE Act in States/ UTs, and also their concerns and problems to implement the same. As the RTE Act has been implemented from April 2010, the States/UTs need to take up lot of preparatory activities in this regard. The study would explore what steps they have been able to take so far and what further is needed to be done. It would be important to assess the level of preparedness of States/UTs to be able to take effective steps for the implementation of RTE Act at various levels. It would also be important to know how far they are ready to take steps forward in regard to the implementation of RTE Act. The readiness of States/UTs would mean awareness of various stakeholders to take advantage of the RTE Act. The present study is, therefore, exploratory in nature, and initiated with an objective to find out the status of provisions of RTE Act and implementation thereof in the 34 States/UTs (except Jammu and Kashmir).