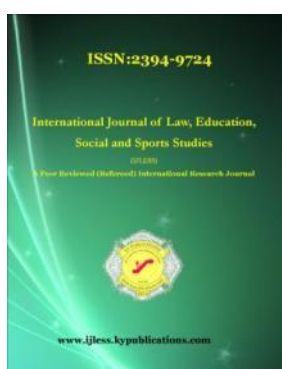




AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT (RTE) AMONG PARENTS OF STUDENTS BELONGING TO SOLIGA TRIBE

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ABSTRACT

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 is a legislation passed by the Indian Parliament that has come into effect from 1st April, 2010. It is based on the 86th amendment in the Constitution through an Article 21 (A) was inserted after Article 21 of the Constitution. The Article 21 (A) states that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age group of six to fourteen years. The parents should be aware about their responsibility of their children so that the children will get the benefits and get educated. This research was conducted in Hunsur Taluk (Yashodharapura, Beeranahalli Kavalu) to study parental awareness of RTE act. A descriptive survey was undertaken on a sample of 50 parents selected through simple random sampling technique. An interview schedule on awareness of parents on Right to Education act 2009 was constructed by the researcher. The results showed that the levels of awareness on RTE act among these parents are significantly low. There is a need for interventions to improve and create awareness among parents about RTE Act which intern would contribute to the achievement of universalization of Elementary Education.

Key Words: Right to Education Act, Awareness, Parents, Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is power and the gateway to knowledge is education. Education is the investment in human capital. Education helps an individual to achieve freedom and empowerment which contributes to societal growth. It gives a foundation in the society, enabling economic wealth, and social prosperity and political stability. Jose Marti, a poet and revolutionary Latin American thinker called says that to know how to read is to know how to walk, to know how to write is to know how to ascend, the feet's, arms, wings, all these are given to man by his first and most humble school books. These lines help to understand the importance of education but the fact is that every child in our country is not able to get this opportunity.

Elementary education forms the foundation for all levels of learning and development. It equips individuals with analytical capabilities and provides confidence. Therefore, elementary education plays a pivotal role in improving the socioeconomic condition of the nation.

The development of the country can never be possible without ensuring the spread of education among the masses. Thus, for universalization of elementary education, the Indian government has taken a landmark initiative to educate children as a compulsion for basic education by passing the RTE ACT, 2009. India has become one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child. It is a detailed and comprehensive legislation which includes provisions related to schools, teachers, curriculum, evaluation, access and specific division of duties and responsibilities of different stakeholders. "The right of children to

free and compulsory education Act, 2009" which is popularly known as RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) ACT, 2009 has been inserted by the 86th Amendment in December 2002, & passed by the parliament in July, 2009 & the provisions of Act came into force from 1st APRIL, 2010. This is a historic day for the people of India as from this day the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. The landmark - Right to Education, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, provides every child in the age group of 6-14 years the right to:

1. Admissions, Participation, and Completion of Elementary Education.
2. A stress free school experience/no corporal punishment, no mental harassment.
3. No detention and no expulsion.
4. A child-friendly curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

In its barest outline, RTE has three goals:

1. Bringing children of weaker sections of our society into the ambit of school education.
2. Ensuring that all schools & their teachers meet certain specific norms.
3. Ensuring that all children receive schooling of reasonable quality, free from any form of discrimination.

RTE also focuses on the quality of teaching & learning, which requires accelerated efforts and substantial reforms. The norms of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) have also been revised to implement the Right of children to free and compulsory education.

The awareness of parents towards right to education needs significant parents- teacher rapport for proper implementation of the Act and also The awareness of parents plays an important role in success of any new system of education. The present study has been under taken to analyse the awareness about Right to Education Act among parents of Soliga Tribal children. The Indian Constitution identifies and provides special consideration for certain ethnic minority groups, traditionally referred to as tribes, as Scheduled Tribes who constitute around 8 per cent of the total population of the country.

Solig Tribe:

Soliga is an ethnic group of India. Its members inhabit the Biligirirangan Hills and associated ranges in southern Karnataka, mostly in the Chamarajanagar and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu. A scheduled tribe, they have a population of around 20,000 individuals.

The Soligas used to practice shifting cultivation, but have more or less given up this practice now. They grow *Ragi* for life. Their main source of income is harvesting and sale of Non-timber Forest produce like honey, gooseberry, bamboo and Lichen. They also make baskets using bamboo. They are increasingly being brought to the 'main-stream' with active Government and NGO initiative. Many have been given lands closer to 'civilized areas' and most of the forest-dwelling population has been brought together into clusters called *Podus*. Education of the children of this tribe should be given importance. But it is followed that Tribal children have very low levels of participation. Education is the key to tribal development. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. In this regard it is their parents who have to take up the major responsibility of utilizing the provisions of RTE Act to educate their children.

Parents' responsibility towards education of their children:

Parents, the primary care takers have to support the education of their children. Hence, parents should be aware about the benefits and provisions of RTE Act so that it will be helpful for their children to access education.

Significance of the study:

The study is primarily to understand the awareness about Right to Education Act among parents of Soliga Tribe. Recently different provisions are given by the government to tribal development and are not appropriately utilized by the tribals. Hence for the effective implication of the Universalization of Elementary Education program, the awareness regarding RTE act would help the Tribals to understand and encourage the

child to go to school. The different provisions of RTE Act which are literally help the weaker section including tribals. Hence there is a need to study the awareness about RTE among parents of students belonging to Soliga tribe.

The review of related literature has revealed that there are no attempts to study the awareness about RTE Act among parents of students belonging to soliga tribe.

Review of related literature:

The investigator tries to review the relevant literature to the area of the present study that is presented below:

A study, carried out by S N Tripathi of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), has analysed that the present provisions in the RTE, which says that children of the tribal population will be provided schooling at a neighboring village, will not help improve their literacy rate. The paper was presented at a national seminar on RTE and excluded people' recently in Pune organized by GIPE. In his paper, Tripathi argues: "Experience as an empirical evidence shows that utilization of school facilities is subject to distance. The nearer a person lives to this facility, the more likely it is that he or she will use it assuming, of course, that there are no socio-economic barriers." According to the RTE, tribal students can get themselves enrolled at a nearby village school. But, in the study, Tripathi said that, "Under the RTE, reaching those still out of reach does not mean merely expanding existing education system. It will mean designing and developing new models and delivery systems tailored to specific groups, in a concerted effort to ensure relevant high-quality basic education for every child and adult."

D. Purandeswari, minister for state, Union ministry of Human Resource and Development, said that, "Under the RTE, we are trying to strengthen government-run schools and add more classrooms wherever necessary. We have also asked all states to do a mapping of schools in their state and submit a report on the same. The mapping would be done using geo-spatial technology which will help us determine where there is concentration of schools and places where there is need of more schools."

Tripathi said: "Dysfunctional school systems in tribal regions, coupled with the mindset of decision-makers tend to worsen the inequities. Some of the factors responsible for these inequities for tribal children are pervasive teacher absenteeism, psychological and social distance between the teacher and students, lack of concern on the part of teachers for children, and so on." According to the study, in 2001, there were 14 million tribal children enrolled in elementary schools as against 20.24 million in the 6-14 age groups. Thus, 6.24 million were still out of school in 2001. The dropout rates among tribal children were as high as 52.3 % for primary and 69.5 % for upper primary level.

Education expert Prasanna Hulikavi said, "On paper, fundamental right to education and all looks good. But, when it comes to implementation of these rights, it does not seem to work. If students still have to walk 4-5 km a day to reach their school, then no mother will send her child to school. The motivation among students is going to be limited. The RTE aims to spread education to all, but whether the tribal population is going to benefit from it, remains a big question."

The review of related studies on RTE Act reveals that most of the research that have been conducted have emphasized on awareness of teachers and students, government schools, and private schools and about the implementation of RTE act but none of the studies have attempted to study the awareness about Right to Education Act among parents of students belonging to soliga tribe. Hence this study is a modest venture in this direction.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the awareness of parents of students belonging Soliga Tribe among Right to Education Act.

Methodology:

In this study has been based on primary data. The design used was descriptive in nature. It is a process to find the existing awareness of parents of students belonging Soliga tribe regarding Right to education act in Hunsur (Yashodharapura, Beeranahalli Kavalu).

Sample of the study:

The data was collected from parents of soliga tribal children studying in primary schools in Hunsur taluk (Yashodharapura, Beeranahalli Kavalu). A sample of 50 parents of soliga tribal children was selected by using simple random sampling method.

Tool used for the study:

Researcher used Right to Education Act Awareness interview schedule for parents of students belonging to soliga tribe.

Statistical Techniques Used:

Percentage analysis was used to analyse the data.

Procedures:

The researcher has used a self-made Right to Education Act Awareness interview schedule for parents of soliga tribal children. The data was collected from parents of soliga tribal children in Hunsur taluk (Yashodharapura, Beeranahalli Kavalu). Parents of children going to elementary school were interviewed by the researcher.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Results:

Objective: To study the awareness of parents of soliga tribal children towards Right to Education Act.

Awareness of the parents on right to education act includes the knowledge about the RTE act, paying fees for the child's study, whether the child can go to private school for free and compulsory education. But some of the parents are paying fees and sending the children to private school.

Table No 1: Level of Parental awareness of RTE Act, 2009

Sl. No	Awareness of RTE act	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unaware	32	64%
2	Aware	18	36%
Total		50	100%

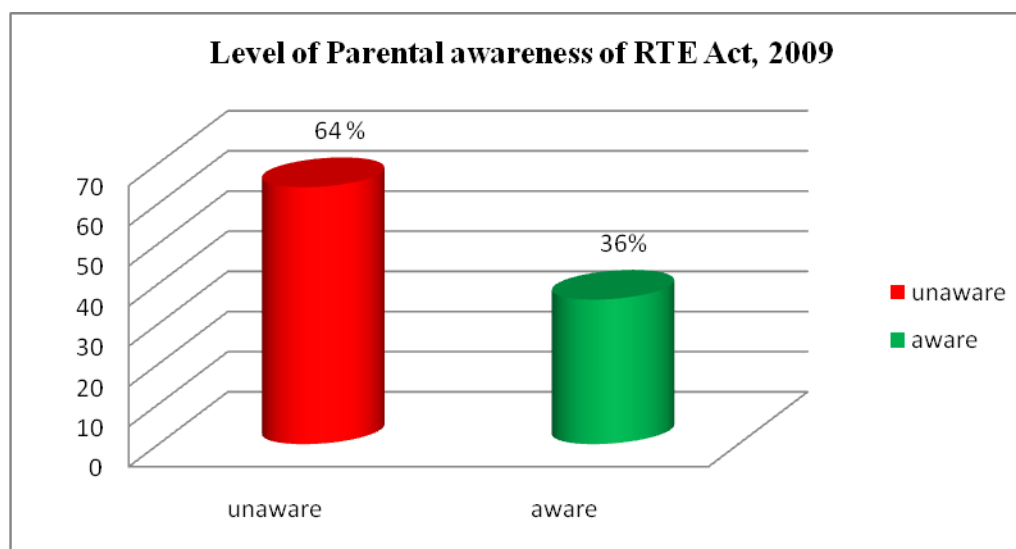


Figure 1: Level of Parental awareness of RTE Act, 2009

Table No. 1 and Figure No. 1 reveals that the levels of awareness of RTE act among parents of students belonging to soliga tribe. The results shows that 64% are unaware about the RTE act and 36% are aware about some of the aspects like free education in private schools, admission process, and application format in the

RTE act. It can be observed that the level of awareness is very low in parents of students belonging to soliga tribe.

Finding:

1. The result shows that 64% of the parents of soliga tribal children are unaware of the RTE act.

Educational Implication:

1. The finding shows that the RTE act cannot be properly implemented without the awareness of parents. Orientation programmes for parents and guardians should be arranged at different levels. If parents are aware of their rights, they would avail the services and opportunities provided under RTE act.
2. School authorities should also organize different orientation programmes, workshops and seminars for giving knowledge of provisions and features of RTE act to parents. Along with acquiring the knowledge about RTE the parents may be made able to contribute towards the fulfillment of the goal of compulsory and free education.
3. The proper implementation and consistent monitoring were important for the success rates of the acts. If the RTE act is not implemented properly then the children won't be benefited. The elected members are not aware about the RTE acts, so the awareness programs to the people in the locality will be poor. Therefore, government officers and local authorities should take initiatives for the awareness programs. The RTE act says that it is the responsible of the parent to admit the children in the elementary school. But if the parents didn't know about the RTE act 2009 then how will be the parents are engaging or encouraging the children to go to school.
4. The potential of the RTE depends a great deal on the advocacy and mobilization campaigns initiated by government, and the ability of parents and children to understand and exercise their new role relationships as far as elementary education is concerned.
5. The study further explained about the forge partnership between states, voluntary agencies, parents, and other stakeholders. Therefore, there is a long road for the stakeholders to understand their rights. The parents also see the benefits of getting the child for an elementary education so that the parents should get proper awareness regarding the RTE act and their benefits to their children. Out of the total sample no one knows about the right to education act. Some of the parents are sending to private school and paying fees without knowing the 25% reservation according RTE act.
6. Use awareness through mass media like Television, Radio, advertisements, banners, pamphlets, and newspapers. Training to elected members of village, Taluk and Zilla panchayaths.

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