

Implementation of RTE in Unaided Private Schools: A Study of Tribals of Jharkhand

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Abstract

The Right to Education Act was implemented in Jharkhand state in 2011 to universalize elementary education. One of the most essential components of the RTE was to provide 25 percent reservations to a weaker section of students in private schools. However, the present research found its unsatisfactory implementation and private schools are not interested in proceeding with Section 12 (1) (C) of the RTE Act, 2009.

Keywords: RTE, Jharkhand, Tribal, Private School, Elementary Education

The learning levels of students in government schools in India have been a cause of serious concern. In this situation, private schools have an advantage over government-run schools. Several studies have also confirmed that students in private schools have better learning outcomes than government school students (French & Kingdon, 2010; Muralidharan & Kremer, 2008; Tabbarok, 2012; Singh, 2013). These studies have found that private schools tend to have a more extended school day, longer school hours, lesser teacher absenteeism, better pupil-teacher ratio, higher teaching activity, and better school hygiene (Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2013). This knowledge about the advantages of private schools can help us make informed decisions about the future of education in India.

However, access to private schools is not easy for everyone as is dependent on income. More specifically, access to 'well-known' or 'good' private schools is restricted to only those who can afford to pay the high school fees. Since inequalities in education translate into inequalities in all spheres in adult life, such a system is likely to create and foster an unequal society.

The historic Right to Education (RTE) act has taken a bold step to address this issue by reserving 25% of seats in private unaided schools for 'disadvantaged' students. These students are exempt from school fees, with the government reimbursing the schools based on the per student expenditure in their own schools. If effectively implemented, this provision could significantly enhance access to quality education for thousands of students from disadvantaged backgrounds^[OBJ], potentially reshaping the socio-economic landscape of India¹.

¹ This policy is similar to the policy of providing vouchers to any students wishing to attend private school, implemented in Chile in the 1980s and Colombia in the 1990s (Angrist et al., 2002; Mizala & Romaguera, 2000; Hsieh & Urquiola, 2006).

Thus, this provision can change the socio-economic life of disadvantaged groups and Indian society. However, not much systematic information is available on how this scheme is being implemented across the states, how many students are applying for the available seats, how many are being enrolled, and how many manage to continue. Information captured through DISE Data capture format (DCF) becomes highly significant in this context. The DISE data tries to address *how effectively the provision of 25% reservation is being implemented*. Hence, the following questions are pertinent in this regard:

- A. How many schools have implemented this provision?
- B. What is the demand for the seat available under this provision?
- C. Do the children get enrolled under this provision?
- D. Is there any difference in approach to factors related to rural/urban and tribal/non-tribal in implementing the provision?
- E. Is there any relation with the literacy rate?

Information Available Through DISE

The School Report Card (2013-14) was used for several children applying to private unaided schools and a number of students who enrolled in grade I under 25% reservation. Total enrollment in grade I was also used, which can allow us to calculate the total number of seats available for children from the weaker sections i.e. 25% of the total enrollment.

Methodology

Using the above-mentioned data points, it analyzes the following -

1. Calculate the total number of private schools and the number of schools that implemented a 25% reservation of seats for weaker sections of students.
2. Analyze the total number of seats available under 25% reservation and the number of applicants.
3. Number of children enrolled under 25% reservation /Total seats available. This will allow us to assess to what extent schools are able to meet the reservation or not and whether there has been any change over time. Together, these data points will give us a sense of the status of implementation of this important provision of RTE across different states and changes over time.

Discussion and Analysis

In this connection, the research analyzed the RTE data regarding the provision of enrolment of 25 percent of reservations from disadvantaged groups in almost all the recognized private unaided schools in the selected tribal-dominated districts, i.e., Ranchi, Dumka, Lohardaga, Pakur, Gumla, and Paschimi Singhbhum. Let us discuss the profiles of schools selected for discussion and analysis.

Status of Unaided Recognized Schools

Tables 1 and 2 indicate the profiles of schools in selected districts in which the nature of areas in terms of tribal and non-tribal has been outlined. Of 122 recognized unaided private schools in Ranchi district, 62 are from rural and 60 are from urban areas. In rural areas, 35 schools are located in 29 tribal-dominated villages, of which 25 villages (86.2 %) have a literacy rate of more than 50 percent. 27 schools are located in 24 non-tribal villages where no single school has implemented the RTE Norms. Most importantly, only 8 schools (13 %) out of 62 have implemented the RTE Norms, which are all located in tribal villages (Table 1). In urban Ranchi, 10 schools are located in 5 tribal-dominated urban

areas, of which 4 (80 %) have a literacy rate of more than 50 percent, and 2 schools have implemented the RTE Norms. 9 schools are in 7 non-tribal areas where 5 (71.5 %) have more than 50 percent literacy rate, and only 1 school has implemented the RTE Norms. Another important fact is that 41 schools are in 32 urban locations where the data regarding tribal population and literacy rate are unavailable. Only 7 schools implemented the RTE Norms (Table 2). In brief, 8 schools from rural and 10 from urban areas implemented the 25 % reservation in enrolment from weaker sections of students.

Table 1: Profiles of Schools (Rural)

District	Total Schools Located at the Tribal ² and Non-Tribal Villages		Number of Villages	Literacy Rate>50 %	Number of Schools Implemented RTE
Ranchi	Tribal	35	29	25	8
Ranchi	Non-Tribal	27	24	23	0
Dumka	Non-Tribal	1	1	1	0
Lohardaga	Tribal	8	8	7	2
Lohardaga	Non-Tribal	1	1	1	0
Paschimi Singhbhum	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Gumla	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pakur	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total		72	63	57	10

Source: DISE School Report Card (2013-14) and Census of India 2001 & 2011

In Dumka district, there are only 3 recognized private unaided schools, of which 1 is in urban areas. All 3 schools are found in non-tribal settings. No school has implemented the RTE Norms (Tables 1 & 2). In the Lohardaga district, 9 schools are found in 9 villages, of which 8 are tribal-dominated villages, and 7 villages have literacy rates of more than 50 percent. Out of 9 schools, only 2 schools have implemented the RTE Norms (Table 1). In urban areas, only 2 schools are there, and each one is in tribal and non-tribal locations. These schools, again, have not implemented the RTE Norms (Table 2).

Table 2: Profiles of Schools (Urban)

District	Total Schools Located at the Tribal and Non-Tribal Villages		Number of Urban Location	Literacy Rate>50 %	Number of Schools Implemented RTE
Ranchi	Tribal	10	5	4	2
Ranchi	Non-Tribal	9	7	5	1
Ranchi	NA	41	32	NA	7
Dumka	Non-Tribal	2	1	1	0
Gumla	Non-Tribal	1	1	1	0
Lohardaga	Tribal	1	1	1	0
Lohardaga	Non-Tribal	1	1	1	0

² Tribal villages define as those villages whose population is more than 26.2 percent, the percentage population of the Jharkhand state.

Paschimi Singhbhum	Tribal	1	1	1	0
Paschimi Singhbhum	Non-Tribal	1	1	1	0
Pakur	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total		67	50	15	10

Source: DISE School Report Card (2013-14) and Census of India 2001 & 2011

In the Gumla district, not a single school is in the rural area, whereas 1 school is in the urban area, which is in a non-tribal setting. In this district, not a single school has implemented the RTE Norms (Tables 1 & 2). In the Paschimi Singhbhum, again, there is no recognized unaided private school in the rural areas, whereas 2 are found in urban areas, each in tribal and non-tribal locations. Unfortunately, no single school has implemented the 25 % reservation in enrolment for weaker sections. Lastly, the Pakur district has no recognized private schools (Tables 1 & 2).

Status of RTE Provisions

In Ranchi district (Table), only 18 (14.75 %) schools have implemented the RTE provision of enrolment of 25 percent from weaker sections. Out of the 10, 1 school is in tribal and non-tribal areas, respectively, whereas 7 schools are in unidentified areas. Nevertheless, the major and serious issue is that a few or negligible numbers of schools have admitted the required number of students, i.e., 25 percent in Grade 1. If we count in numbers, then it comes to only 4 schools. Most importantly, all 4 schools are in tribal areas. The study also finds that a significantly lower number of students have applied under this provision.

Table 3: Status of RTE Provisions (Ranchi District)

Name of School	Rural/Urban	Tribal/non-tribal	Literacy Rate	Total No. in Grade 1	Applied in Grade 1	Admitted in Grade 1	% Children Admitted in Grade 1 Total Grade 1 Enrolment
MZTHS Hahap	Rural	Tribal	45.94	29	4	0	0
APSKV Korri	Rural	Tribal	57.53	10	5	4	40
BGHS Tertri	Rural	Tribal	69.05	48	10	28	58.33
BCS Makhmandro	Rural	Tribal	84.87	63	1	1	1.67
BMHS Beradih	Rural	Tribal	45.94	30	0	15	50
DAVPS Hehal	Rural	Tribal	61.44	366	19	19	5.19
FSHS Baheya	Rural	Tribal	58.73	67	10	0	0
LHSH Ratu	Rural	Tribal	55.87	50	15	16	32
BWBS Namkum	Urban	NA	NA	146	0	15	10.27
CHPS Kanke	Urban	Tribal	88.7	48	2	2	4.17
DAV Gandhinagar	Urban	NA	NA	154	2	6	3.9

DAVK Kanke	Urban	NA	NA	194	5	8	4.12
FPS Ranchi	Urban	Non-Tribal	77.04	76	2	8	10.53
GPS Kanke	Urban	NA	NA	10	4	2	20
IPS Kanke	Urban	Tribal	86.6	43	7	4	9.3
LCS Kanke	Urban	NA	NA	144	1	0	0
SAA Kanke	Urban	NA	NA	33	10	10	3
DAV Nandraj	Urban	NA	NA	100	4	5	5

Source: DISE School Report Card (2013-14) and Census of India 2001 & 2011

In the Lohardaga district (Table 4), only 2 schools have implemented the RTE provision of 25 percent reservation in admission from weaker sections. However, only one school has the required number of students despite having sufficient applications for admission to another school.

Table 4: Status of RTE Provisions (Lohardaga District)

Name of School	Rural/Urban	Tribal/non-tribal	Literacy Rate	Applied in Grade 1	Admitted in Grade 1	% Children Admitted in Grade 1 Total Grade 1 Enrolment	% Children Admitted to Total
IPS Kuru	Rural	Tribal	65.29	15	11	2	13.33
SSM Sneha	Rural	Tribal	64.61	33	11	14	42.42

Source: DISE School Report Card (2013-14) and Census of India 2001 & 2011

Conclusion

As discussed above, most of the districts of Jharkhand have not implemented the RTE provision of 25 reservations for students belonging to weaker sections. This seems to be a critical issue in Jharkhand's educational situation, especially for tribal students.

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