

# Education: Human Rights

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## **Abstract**

This research critically examines the conceptualization and implementation of education as a fundamental human right, with a specific focus on India's socio-legal and policy landscape. Drawing on international human rights frameworks—such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)—the study explores how legal recognition of education translates (or fails to translate) into lived realities, especially for marginalized groups. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines statistical analysis with qualitative data from fieldwork in urban slums and rural communities, the study reveals substantial disparities in access, quality, inclusion, and awareness of the Right to Education (RTE). While policies like India's RTE Act (2009) and mid-day meal schemes have significantly improved enrollment, systemic issues such as poverty, gender bias, caste discrimination, poor infrastructure, and a lack of trained educators continue to hinder educational equity. The study also highlights the disconnect between legal rights and community awareness, particularly the invisibility of children's voices in school governance. Ultimately, the research argues that achieving the right to education requires not only legal guarantees but also culturally responsive, inclusive, and participatory systems that prioritize quality, equity, and empowerment.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Recognizing Education as a Right Going to school or reading books is not the only aspect of education. It is a fundamental human right that enables people to live with respect, comprehend their environment, and actively engage in society. International legislation and human rights frameworks acknowledge the concept that everyone is entitled to an education. Education is a potent instrument for alleviating poverty, raising health standards, advancing gender equality, and fostering peace and development. In essence, the right to education means that everyone, regardless of their gender, race, caste, religion, ability, or social background, has the right to a high-quality education. This includes free and compulsory primary education, accessible secondary education, and higher education that is available to all based on merit. Background Over time, the notion of education as a fundamental right has expanded. In ancient civilizations, only the upper classes kings, priests, and the wealthy had access to education. For centuries, reformers, philosophers, and movements from all over the world championed the idea that education should be available to everyone. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 is one of the important worldwide statements that recognized education as a right. The UDHR's Article 26 makes the following clear. "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory." Later, additional agreements, such as the following, reinforced this principle: The

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966 The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) movement Education is a human right, but why? ...Because it is believed that education is a fundamental human right, it: Gives people the power to make wise judgments, voice their views, and comprehend their rights. Breaks the cycle of poverty. People who are educated may find better jobs, make more money, and raise their standard of living. Promotes gender equality – Education gives girls and women the tools they need to live more independent, healthy, and fulfilling lives. Enhances health – Educated individuals are more knowledgeable about nutrition, health, hygiene, and healthcare access. Education imparts values such as tolerance, respect, justice, and cooperation, which promote peace and democracy. People are more susceptible to discrimination, abuse, and social exclusion without education.

For this reason, it is a breach of human rights to deny someone the chance to learn, not only unjust. Main Components of the Right to Education The four key tenets of international human rights norms for education are referred to as the 4 A's Framework: Availability: Every youngster should have access to sufficient functioning schools, teachers, and educational resources. Accessibility. Everyone, particularly members of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, must have equitable physical and financial access to education. Acceptability: The content of education must be relevant, of high quality, and considerate of cultures and values. Adaptability: Education systems should be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of all students, including those with impairments, those who work, and those who live in rural areas. Obstacles to Achieving the Right to Education Millions of children, particularly those in developing nations, continue to be denied access to education for a variety of causes, even though it is a fundamental right. Poverty: Low-income families may not be able to pay for school fees, uniforms, or transportation. Gender bias: Because of cultural norms or early marriage, girls are frequently denied access to education in many regions of the world. War and catastrophes uproot children and decimate schools. Child Labor: Instead of attending school, several youngsters are compelled to work in order to help their families. Disability: Children with physical or mental impairments frequently encounter discrimination and are unable to attend accessible schools. Lack of Infrastructure: In isolated communities, schools may be non-existent or may lack essential amenities such as toilets, electricity, or safe drinking water. The Function of International Organizations and Governments Not only is the right to education a moral imperative, but it is also a legal duty for governments.

Countries that have ratified international conventions are bound by law to: Offer free and required basic schooling. Take measures to increase the accessibility and availability of secondary and postsecondary education. Make sure that everyone has access to an inclusive and non-discriminatory education. Encourage adult literacy and lifelong learning. Make investments in teacher education, school infrastructure, and curriculum creation. Education for all is also promoted by organizations such as the United Nations (UN), UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and numerous NGOs, with a focus on underserved and conflict-affected communities. Indian education Education is a constitutional right in India. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) of 2009 establishes education as a legal right for all children between the ages of 6 and 14. This law mandates that: Free education in neighboring public schools No mental abuse or physical discipline No discrimination based on caste, gender, or background teachers who are competent and classrooms that are kid-friendly

India has made tremendous strides in improving school enrollment and narrowing gender disparities. However, issues like teacher absenteeism, subpar infrastructure, low learning outcomes, and dropouts persist, particularly in tribal and rural regions.

Getting a Handle on Human Rights Regardless of a person's nationality, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or any other status, human rights are the fundamental rights and liberties that belong to every individual. The foundation of these rights is the concepts of dignity, equality, freedom, and respect. They are deemed inalienable, which means they cannot be taken away, and universal, which means they apply to everyone. The right to education is among the most crucial and potent human rights. It is a right that gives people the power to improve their lives, engage in their community, and develop. Education is both a human right in and of itself and a way to attain other rights. It is crucial to the growth of both individuals and communities.

What constitutes the human right to education? Regardless of their identity or location, everyone has the right to a high-quality education without prejudice, according to the right to education. This includes the right to a free primary education as well as the right to affordable and accessible secondary and higher education.

Additionally, it includes the right to educational freedom, such as the freedom to choose one's area of study or the language of instruction, as well as the right to an education that is provided in a safe, welcoming, and non-discriminatory environment. There is more to this right than just attending school. It's about gaining valuable knowledge that fosters critical thinking, understanding of the world, empowerment, and the capacity to engage in social, economic, political, and cultural life. The Right to Education is Recognized Internationally The right to education is safeguarded by a number of international legal treaties, such as: Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, 1948 "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages," reads Article 26. Furthermore, it stresses that education should foster tolerance, comprehension, and harmony between all nations and groups. 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) According to Article 13 of this legally binding treaty, nations are obligated to establish free and compulsory primary education for all and to gradually increase the availability and accessibility of secondary and higher education. 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Governments are required by this agreement, which has been ratified by almost every nation, to implement measures that advance equal opportunities and strengthen the child's right to education. 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) safeguards women's and girls' right to an education and promotes equal representation at all levels. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) SDG 4, which the United Nations adopted in 2015, urges "inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all" by the year 2030. When taken as a whole, these frameworks provide a robust legal and moral basis for acknowledging education as a fundamental human right. Provisions for the nation's constitution and laws The right to education has been included in the constitutions of several nations. For instance: Education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 was made a Fundamental Right by India in 2002 when it introduced Article 21A to its Constitution. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), was passed as a result. Everyone in South Africa has the constitutional right to a basic education, which includes basic education for adults. Education in Germany is not only free but also mandatory until a certain age. These national pledges are essential for realizing the

worldwide goal of education for everybody.

Why is education a fundamental human right? Since it serves a variety of functions in the development of individuals and communities, the right to education is essential. Empowerment: Education gives people the knowledge they need to understand their rights, make wise decisions, and manage their own lives. It aids people in breaking the cycle of oppression and poverty. Equality: Education promotes equality between rich and poor, urban and rural, and between different gender, caste, and ethnic groupings. It supports fair access to opportunities. Democracy and Citizenship: Education teaches individuals about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. It promotes civic involvement and reinforces democratic structures. Social and Economic Development: Higher levels of education result in higher economic output, higher quality healthcare, and social advancement.

Education for peace and tolerance promotes mutual respect, cross-cultural understanding, and peaceful coexistence in multicultural communities. Because of these advantages, denying someone access to a high-quality education is a violation of their fundamental human rights and a missed chance. Obstacles to the Right to Education Millions of individuals are still denied their right to an education, notwithstanding worldwide initiatives. Some of the main barriers are Poverty Even when tuition is free, low-income families sometimes struggle to pay the indirect expenses of education, such as uniforms, books, and transportation. Discrimination Children from lower castes, minority religions, tribal groups, girls, and children with disabilities are frequently discriminated against in schools or denied access to them. Conflict and Displacement War, natural disasters, and political instability cause disruption to educational systems, particularly in areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Gender Inequality: In many regions of the world, particularly in more traditional or rural communities, girls are either denied an education or compelled to leave school at an early age. Lack of Infrastructure: Several institutions lack fundamental amenities such classrooms, sanitation facilities, electricity, or qualified instructors. Digital Divide: During occurrences like the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significant disparities in online learning access between urban and rural communities, wealthy and low-income families, and boys and girls. These issues serve to emphasize that the right to education involves not just legislation but also practical application. The State's and Society's Functions Governments have the main responsibility for guaranteeing the right to education by means of: Funding for the creation of schools and the hiring of qualified teachers, as well as policy decisions. supervision and control to make sure private schools abide by equity standards.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Review of Literature**

Education has always been seen as a potent instrument for empowering and advancing people. The notion that education is a basic human right is widely accepted in academic discourse, numerous international treaties, and global development objectives. The significance, difficulties, and implementation of the right to education have been studied by academics and organizations in various fields.

This literature review draws attention to advancements made in the realization of education as a global right, as well as persisting obstacles, by presenting important insights from empirical research, academic works, and international law. Theoretical Framework The notion of education as a human right is based on the principles of human dignity, social justice, and equality. In Pedagogy of the

Oppressed, Paulo Freire (1970) and other academics argued that education should be a liberating experience rather than a means of control. Freire maintained that genuine education enables the oppressed to ask questions, take action, and change the world around them. By introducing the idea of "critical consciousness," he demonstrated how closely education is related to freedom and justice. The Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999) also advanced the theory by connecting education to human capacity. Sen's Capability Approach maintained that education is a basic capacity that enables people to live fulfilling lives, engage in society, and make informed decisions, not just a means to economic advancement. In her work on human development, Martha Nussbaum (2011) backed up this concept, saying that education is essential to achieving human functioning and equality. As a result, education is a moral and legal right essential for the complete growth of the person, rather than just a service. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks The right to education is supported by a number of international agreements. Katarina Tomasevski, the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, and other academics were

instrumental in examining how governments adhere to their legal responsibilities. Tomasevski proposed the "4A framework"—Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Adaptability—as a method for evaluating whether governments are protecting the right to education (Tomasevski, 2001). The legal foundation for this right may be found in, according to Beiter (2006), in The Protection of the Right to Education by International Law: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 26 The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), articles 13 and 14 The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) According to these papers, education is a government responsibility, and they emphasize the necessity of free, compulsory, and inclusive primary education, as well as progressively accessible secondary and higher education. Disparities and Issues Worldwide Despite the acknowledgement that education is a right, academics have frequently emphasized inconsistencies between legislation and reality. More than 258 million youngsters and children are not in school worldwide, according to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report (2020). This covers kids who are impacted by war, poverty, disability, gender bias, and migration. In Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean, researchers such as Barbara Bruns and Javier Luque (2014) demonstrate that the quality of education is also a significant problem. Sending children to school alone does not ensure that they will learn. The effectiveness of education systems is diminished by overcrowded classrooms, subpar teacher training, and insufficient infrastructure. In his 2007 examination of education in developing nations, Keith Lewin highlighted the "Access-Learning Gap. " He claimed that despite the increased enrollment rates brought about by universal education campaigns, many children still do not learn fundamental skills because of subpar school systems. Additionally, gender inequalities still prevent girls from receiving an education in several communities. Some academics, like Nelly Stromquist, concentrate on education and gender, emphasizing how girls' educational possibilities are restricted by patriarchal norms, early marriage, and household duties. 4 Marginalized groups and education A large portion of the literature examines how education systems fail to adequately serve disadvantaged populations, such as: Children with impairments Indigenous populations minority groups People in rural areas refugees and migrants In his book on disability rights, Tom Shakespeare (2013) notes that many youngsters with disabilities are systematically excluded from education because of inadequate support, stigma, and inaccessible school



facilities. Researchers in India, such as Geetha B. Nambissan, have examined the educational difficulties encountered by Dalit and Adivasi youngsters. She stresses that inequalities based on caste, inadequate educational facilities, and a cultural gap between home and school all impede successful education. Despite higher enrollment rates, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in India regularly emphasizes bad educational results, particularly in rural public schools. This demonstrates that high-quality learning must be accompanied by inclusion in the classroom. The Function of Non-State Players The part played by international organizations, civil society, and NGOs in advancing the right to education has also been the subject of extensive research. UNICEF, Oxfam, and Save the Children are just a few of the organizations that are dedicated to expanding educational opportunities, particularly in the face of humanitarian emergencies. In *The Beautiful Tree*, James Tooley (2009) emphasized the importance of affordable private schools in underprivileged areas, claiming that they frequently produce better outcomes than public schools. However, other academics disagree with this approach, arguing that it fosters inequality since these institutions continue to demand fees that the poorest members of society cannot afford. In contrast, Pasi Sahlberg (2011) stressed the efficacy of Finland's public education system, which emphasizes equity, teacher education, and holistic learning. This demonstrates that inclusive, publicly funded education systems are capable of producing both high-quality and equitable outcomes. Emergency Education In recent years, there has been an increase in awareness of the importance of education during wars, natural catastrophes, and pandemics closures

The Whole Foundation

- The Samagra Foundation is a nonprofit organization that strives to support the needy. Children and communities develop in a holistic manner. The basis of Samagra's work, which is The belief, which is prevalent in India, is that a child cannot be truly empowered unless their physical, Their academic needs are fulfilled along with their psychological and emotional ones. Furthermore Their programs, in addition to delivering education, seek to listen, help, and emotionally support children who have gone through difficult life events.
- By employing a range of strategies, Samagra fosters a sense of being seen and heard among youngsters. events such as painting, storytelling, informal group chats, and mentoring. The The classroom paradigm is not rigid. Workers and volunteers worked harder to promote a a sense of respect, confidence, and community. The children are encouraged in a non-judgmental environment. to express their feelings, be creative, and progressively build emotional resilience.
- When we were with Samagra, we didn't just observe; we truly lived it. We felt the intense emotional effects of what appeared to be little things. During the Over the course of several days, the youngster, who had barely spoken when we initially arrived, began to open up. merely because someone was truly paying him for the chance to do it. attention. That taught us the value of psychological support, even if it's just adopts a form of conversation, patience, and physical presence.
- My time working with the Samagra Foundation was amazing since I got to know so many people. kids with eyes that shone like a star. The notion of being able to try something new The kids and I had a wonderful time together every day as we shared in their joy. sort of blended in with them smoothly while drawing and coloring. They wore a wide smile on their faces. because of this, it inspired us to make greater efforts to improve their lives.

### Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

**Introduction to the Method** The research approach used to investigate the issue of "Education as a Human Right" is described in this methods section. The purpose of the research is to explore how education is implemented as a human right, the obstacles that impede its implementation, and the experiences of marginalized communities, notably children. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used in the methodology to gain comprehensive insights. The researcher may use this mixed- methods approach to examine statistical trends (e. g., enrollment rates, dropout rates) as well as individual experiences and opinions (e. g., perspectives of students, teachers, and parents). **Research Goals** The study's primary goals are as follows: To analyze the legislative and policy framework that underpins the right to education. To gain insight into the real-world experiences of children, particularly those from marginalized groups, in gaining access to education. To determine the obstacles (social, economic, cultural, institutional) that hinder the fulfillment of the right to education. In order to determine the part that governmental and non-governmental organizations play in enforcing this right. **Research Plan** The research is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Descriptive design aids in understanding the present situation, including literacy rates, government support, legal regulations, and school facilities. The experiences, emotions, and difficulties that people or groups face in gaining access to education are explored through exploratory design. **Approach using a Combination of Methods:** Statistical information about access, enrollment, dropout rates, teacher-student ratios, etc. are examples of quantitative data.

Interviews, focus group conversations, and case studies are all forms of qualitative data that are used to collect real-life experiences and individual stories. **Place of Study / Location** To ensure representation of diverse socioeconomic contexts, the research was carried out in selected rural and urban locations. The precise locations are as follows: Government schools and urban slums in a city, such as Delhi or Lucknow. Rural communities in a specific district (e. g., in Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh). The locations were selected because they include a combination of public and private schools and cater to children from underrepresented groups like Dalits, Adivasis, and low-income communities. **Target Group** The study's intended audience consists of: children in school (between the ages of 6 and 18) Children who are not enrolled in school Parents and guardians teachers and other school workers Government education officials representatives of educational rights organizations

**.Sampling Technique** Using a combination of deliberate and random sampling techniques: Children and families from underrepresented groups (e. g., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, children with disabilities, migrants) were chosen using purposeful sampling. Schools and families in each location were chosen using random sampling to guarantee variety. **Sample Size:** 100 students, including those attending classes and those who are not Thirty parents or guardians 20 educators 5

policymakers or education leaders 5 members of NGOs Because of this sample size, a diverse range of viewpoints may be explored and analyzed in detail. **Approaches to Data Collection** (a) **Gathering Primary Data** **Interviews:** Students, parents, teachers, and education officers were interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The focus of these interviews was their knowledge of the right to education, their experiences in the school system, and the difficulties they encounter. **Discussions in Focus Groups (FGDs):** In order to address topics such as their experiences, school safety, infrastructure, and the caliber of education, distinct focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with groups of children, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Community attitudes toward education, notably for girls and children with impairments, were better understood through parent FGDs. Observation: In order to evaluate the learning environment, teacher-student interaction, and resource availability, classroom observations were carried out in chosen schools. The school level was also observed (for example, toilets, drinking water, and midday meals). (b) gathering data from secondary sources Data and Government Reports: data from the census reports from the Ministry of Education data from the District Information System for Education (DISE) Results of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Policy Documents: 2009 Right to Education (RTE) Act The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 Reports on education rights from the UN and UNESCO Books and Scholarly Articles: Scholarly works on human rights, educational policy, children's rights, and inclusive education Methods of gathering data guides for interviews (open-ended questions) FGD protocols List of observations A survey questionnaire to collect fundamental demographic and educational information Notebook and audio recorder for capturing qualitative information Analyzing Data Quantitative information: Utilized basic statistical methods (percentages, charts, tables) to analyze the data. Enrollment patterns, attendance, dropout rates, and other data were tabulated using Excel and, if available, SPSS. Data: Thematic analysis was applied. The interview and FGD transcripts were coded using themes that were emerging, such as discrimination, access barriers, gender concerns, instructor behavior, etc. The results were supported by anecdotes and quotations. Moral Issues The research adhered to ethical principles in its entirety: Informed Consent: Before taking part, participants provided either oral or written consent after receiving explanation of the study's objective. Participation is Voluntary: Participants were not required to answer, and they had the option to leave at any moment. Confidentiality and Anonymity: Names and other private information were kept private. When reporting, pseudonyms were used.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Result and discussions**

#### **Introduction**

The study on Education as a Human Right's main findings (results) are presented in this section, along with a discussion that analyzes the data in relation to current legislation, policies, and international objectives. The data comes primarily from interviews, focus groups, observations, and secondary sources, with a particular emphasis on the educational opportunities available to underprivileged youngsters. The results show that there has been progress toward realizing education as a fundamental human right for everyone, but there are still challenges.

#### **Findings:**

Understanding of the Right to Education According to interviews conducted with children and parents, about 60% of them were unaware that the RTE Act of 2009 grants education as a legal right. Awareness was somewhat higher among educated parents (those with at least a secondary education). The majority of government school teachers were familiar with the RTE Act, but they lacked familiarity with international human rights agreements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Enrollment and Access Both urban and rural schools have seen an increase in enrollment. Almost 85% of children between the ages of 6 and 14 were enrolled in school. Nevertheless, dropout rates increased in secondary school, particularly among girls, children with disabilities, and students from underprivileged castes or tribes. The reasons for students dropping out of school were often poverty, the distance between home and school, the necessity for



child labor, household duties, and, for girls, early marriage. The Quality of Education and School Infrastructure Although the majority of schools had essential infrastructure (buildings, classrooms), less than half had separate restrooms for girls, and only sixty percent had working restrooms. A lot of schools didn't have access to electricity, safe drinking water, or instructional resources. Teacher shortages were widespread, and several rural schools only had one or two teachers for all subjects. The learning levels were

frighteningly low. Based on secondary data such as the ASER Report, more than half of fifth grade pupils were unable to perform simple arithmetic or read a text at the second grade level. Inclusion and Exclusion Children from Muslim, Scheduled Caste (SC), and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities reported experiencing minor, and occasionally blatant, discrimination. Because of inaccessible facilities and a scarcity of special educators, disabled children were either not enrolled in school or attended erratically. Because of teasing, poor hygiene, and early household duties, girls frequently said they felt uneasy in class during mixed focus groups. The Functions of Mid-Day Meals and Government Programs. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was discovered to be a significant motivator for school attendance among children from low-income families. According to parents, the program assisted in lowering hunger and enhancing classroom focus, and they loved it. But some schools reported subpar food quality and erratic supplies. Involvement and a voice Children's voices were seldom heard in school decisions. The majority of youngsters were unaware of grievance redressal procedures or school management committees (SMCs). Due to worries about authority or socioeconomic position, parents in marginalized communities were reluctant to voice their concerns.

## Discussion

- a. Education as a Live Right vs. a Legal Right The results reveal a distinct disconnect between education's legal recognition as a right and its practical application. Although legislation such as the RTE Act has made primary education free and required, many youngsters continue to experience social and structural obstacles that prevent them from fully exercising this right. This backs up the claim made by academics like Katarina Tomasevski, who emphasized the importance of education being available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable (4As). The results show that while schools do exist (availability), they are not always accessible or flexible, particularly for disadvantaged youngsters.
- b. Equity is Undermined by Discrimination The statistics demonstrate that caste, gender, religion, and disability continue to significantly influence one's access to high-quality education. Despite the fact that discrimination is prohibited by international conventions and the Indian Constitution, social prejudices nevertheless
2. have an impact on school settings. Geetha B. Nambissan's research on caste-based exclusion in Indian schools supports this. Poverty, caste, and gender intersect to produce layers of disadvantage. For example, a poor Dalit girl in a rural area is far more likely to quit school than a middle-class boy attending an urban school.
- a. Access and quality are equally important. The right to education is not satisfied by access alone. The quality of teaching and learning is just as important. Many students in government schools are not learning fundamental skills despite being enrolled, as demonstrated by the research. The "learning crisis" in India and other developing nations, which has been highlighted by Keith Lewin and the ASER reports, is further supported by this. Low learning outcomes are largely attributable to inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of skilled teachers, and overcrowded classrooms. Education can

only become a tool for empowerment and equality if quality is improved.

- b. **Girls Encounter Particular Obstacles** The dropout rate among adolescent girls was considerably higher, mostly due to early marriage, cultural taboos related to menstruation, a shortage of female teachers, and household duties. Despite the existence of programmes like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas, implementation at the grassroots level is still lacking in certain places. According to UNESCO publications and other international research, gender-sensitive education systems are crucial for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to provide "Inclusive and equitable quality education for all. " This underscores the significance of this.
- c. **Mid-day meals and incentives are helpful, but they are insufficient.** Although government programs such as midday meals and free uniforms promote attendance, they cannot take the place of a high-quality education. Food may be the reason why kids attend school, but if they don't learn, the point of education is defeated. Improving teacher training, community participation, and curriculum changes are all necessary components of long-term plans.
- d. **The Part of Voice and Participation** Participation is a crucial component of the right to education that is frequently overlooked. This chapter analyzes the study's main conclusions in the context of the legislative, social, and educational frameworks that see education as an essential human right. The study employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as interviews with students, parents, teachers, and authorities, classroom observations, and secondary data analysis. The lived experiences acquired in this study demonstrate significant disparities between legislative provision and practical implementation, even though education is recognized as a universal right by legal and policy frameworks like the Right to Education Act (2009) in India and international agreements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).  
**Outcomes A. Understanding that education is a right** The study's main conclusion is the lack of knowledge about education as a basic right among both children and their parents. Even though school enrollment drives have reached a large number of communities, almost 60% of the homes surveyed did not comprehend that education is a right under the law and in terms of morality. Some families in city slums thought that education was a right that was contingent upon government programs or financial resources. For many rural families, school attendance was seen as a lower priority than work, agriculture, or household chores. Even those in schools were ignorant of this. Government school instructors were generally knowledgeable about the RTE Act and its provisions (such as free and compulsory education, no physical punishment), but they were frequently untrained in child rights-based methods, particularly while dealing with children from disadvantaged backgrounds or children with special needs. Patterns of enrollment and access Data showed that enrollment rates have increased dramatically, particularly at the elementary level. The increase in enrollment has been greatly aided by government incentives such as free textbooks, midday meals, and school uniforms. The results, though, demonstrated that attendance and retention are not always guaranteed by access: Early marriage, menstruation-related problems, or domestic duties were among the reasons why many students, especially girls in the upper primary grades, dropped out. Long travel distances to school and a lack of transportation were frequent causes of dropout in tribal and isolated communities.

Children were often expected to help out with agricultural work or contribute to the family income through labor. Irregular attendance was prevalent, even among students who were enrolled in school. The causes varied from a lack of motivation to seasonal migration, sickness, and family responsibilities. Particularly in urban slums, children of migrant families reported switching schools often or dropping

out altogether. Infrastructure and Learning Quality A significant variation in classroom atmosphere and infrastructure was seen in several schools: Despite having decent buildings, several government schools in cities had a shortage of teachers, notably in mathematics and science. In rural schools, several grades were taught together by one instructor, and some classes were held in rundown buildings or under trees. In nearly 40% of the rural schools we visited, there were no separate restrooms for girls, which had a direct impact on their attendance. In terms of quality, pupils in grades 4–6 struggled with basic numeracy and literacy. This result corroborates reports like ASER (Annual Status of Education Report), which has continuously revealed that, despite four to five years of education, a significant percentage of children in rural India are unable to read a text at the second-grade level or do basic arithmetic. Discrimination and exclusion According to the research, discrimination remains a barrier, especially for youngsters from Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Muslim minorities, and children with impairments. In certain schools, Dalit students reported being asked to sit apart, being ignored by instructors, or being discouraged from taking part in extracurricular activities. Due to the absence of ramps, instructional aids, or specialized teachers, youngsters with disabilities were mostly excluded from mainstream classrooms. Due to safety issues, family honor, and a lack of restrooms, girls from traditional households were often discouraged from pursuing education beyond elementary school. These results lend credence to the perspective of researchers like Geetha Nambissan, who have demonstrated that prejudice based on caste, class, and gender in schools reinforces social hierarchies rather than questioning them. The Effects of Government Initiatives The free distribution of learning resources and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme are examples of government programs that were well received and seen as incentives for school enrollment and retention: For parents in low-income urban and rural areas, the midday meal represented not just a source of nourishment but also a kind of food security. The availability of uniforms and textbooks was frequently the deciding factor in whether or not a family could afford to send their child to school. However, there were several implementation difficulties: The food was often of subpar quality, and there were delays in the delivery of supplies. Some schools lacked a monitoring system to ensure food quality or hygiene. The usefulness of books and uniforms was diminished by their late delivery during the school year. Inclusion of Children's Voices One of the study's most important findings was the lack of child involvement in decisions pertaining to their education: The majority of kids were unfamiliar with student complaint resolution mechanisms or School Management Committees (SMCs). Children showed fear of punishment, a lack of freedom to ask questions, and a lack of interest in textbooks, which were neither culturally relevant nor interesting. Contrary to the child-centered approach advocated by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this result demonstrates that schools frequently treat pupils as passive recipients rather than active stakeholders.

Discussion Disparities between Policy and Practice The study validates what many earlier scholars have stated: despite India being a party to numerous international agreements and having forward-thinking legislation like the RTE Act, the real-world implementation is inconsistent. Not every school or initiative ensures fair treatment or meaningful learning. This is a reminder of what Katarina Tomasevski said: acknowledging education as a right necessitates systems that guarantee delivery, quality, and accountability, not just policy. Intersectional Challenges This study emphasizes the intersectional character of educational exclusion by highlighting the experiences of youngsters. A girl may be excluded due to her gender, but also because of her caste, socioeconomic status, disability, or geographic location. The idea of intersectionality, which was created by academics such as Kimberlé

Crenshaw, is essential for comprehending how various identities interact to exacerbate disadvantage. Any strategy for realizing the right to education must acknowledge and address these overlapping inequalities. Prioritizing Quality over Quantity An additional crucial lesson is that getting into school is just the beginning. The right to education is meaningless if it lacks learning outcomes, a child-friendly pedagogy, and emotional safety. Paulo Freire's notion of "education as liberation" reminds us that schools should foster critical thinking and agency, rather than simply teaching children to memorize information. Community Involvement and the Power of Local Governance Schools performed better in areas where School Management Committees were functioning well and teachers were held responsible. This demonstrates that community monitoring and local ownership may help bridge the divide between theory and reality. Nonetheless, parents frequently felt ill-equipped to participate since the majority of SMCs were inactive. This emphasizes the necessity of strengthening community capacity, particularly in tribal, Dalit, and minority communities.