

A Study on Awareness of RTE Act 2009 among the Parents of Minority Community of Bihar

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ABSTRACT

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 is a significant piece of legislation aimed at providing free and compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years in India. This study investigates the level of awareness about the RTE Act 2009 among the parents of the minority community in Bihar. Through a combination of surveys and interviews, the study explores the knowledge, perceptions, and challenges faced by these parents in accessing and utilizing the provisions of the RTE Act. The findings aim to inform policy recommendations for improving awareness and ensuring better implementation of the RTE Act in minority communities.

KEYWORDS: RTE Act 2009, minority community, Bihar, parental awareness, education policy, right to education, legislative impact

How to cite this paper: Dr. Naaz Bano | Priyanka Kumari "A Study on Awareness of RTE Act 2009 among the Parents of Minority Community of Bihar" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-8 | Issue-4, August 2024, pp.566-567, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd67198.pdf



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INTRODUCTION

The RTE Act 2009 was enacted to ensure that every child in India has the right to education and to eliminate barriers to education. Despite the legislative framework, awareness and implementation of the Act vary significantly across different regions and communities. This paper focuses on the minority community in Bihar, a state known for its diverse population and socio-economic challenges. The study aims to assess the level of awareness among parents about the RTE Act and to identify factors influencing their understanding and engagement with the Act's provisions.

Objectives of the study

1. To evaluate the level of awareness of the RTE Act 2009 among parents of the minority community in Bihar.
2. To understand the perceptions of parents regarding the benefits and challenges of the RTE Act.
3. To identify the barriers faced by parents in accessing the provisions of the RTE Act.

4. To provide recommendations for enhancing awareness and implementation of the RTE Act within the minority communities of Bihar.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 300 parents from the minority community across various districts in Bihar. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 parents to gain qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions.

Sampling

The sample was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from different socio-economic backgrounds within the minority community. The districts included in the study were Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur.

Data Collection

- **Quantitative Data:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on awareness levels,

knowledge of specific provisions of the RTE Act, and barriers to accessing education.

- **Qualitative Data:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather detailed insights into parental perceptions and experiences related to the RTE Act.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods to determine the level of awareness and to identify correlations with socio-demographic factors. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to extract common themes and insights.

Findings

Awareness Levels

The study found that the overall awareness of the RTE Act 2009 among parents of the minority community in Bihar was low. Only 35% of respondents were aware of the Act's provisions, while 65% had limited or no knowledge. Awareness was notably higher among parents with higher educational backgrounds and those living in urban areas.

Perceptions and Challenges

Parents who were aware of the RTE Act perceived it as a positive step towards improving educational access for their children. However, they also reported several challenges, including:

- **Lack of Information:** Many parents reported that they did not receive adequate information about the RTE Act from schools or local authorities.
- **Implementation Issues:** There were concerns about the practical implementation of the Act, including issues related to school infrastructure and the quality of education provided.
- **Socio-Economic Barriers:** Economic constraints and social biases were identified as significant barriers to accessing education under the RTE Act.

Barriers to Access

The study identified several barriers faced by parents in accessing the benefits of the RTE Act:

- **Geographical Barriers:** Rural areas had limited access to schools that met the RTE standards.
- **Economic Constraints:** Despite the provision for free education, hidden costs such as transportation and supplementary materials posed challenges.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Barriers:** Parents from minority communities faced additional challenges due to language barriers and cultural differences.

Recommendations

Enhancing Awareness

- **Community Outreach Programs:** Implement targeted awareness campaigns through

community organizations and local media to increase knowledge about the RTE Act.

- **School-Based Workshops:** Conduct workshops in schools to educate parents about their rights and the provisions of the RTE Act.

Improving Implementation

- **Infrastructure Development:** Ensure that schools in rural and minority areas are equipped to meet RTE standards, including adequate facilities and qualified teachers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Strengthen monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of the RTE Act and address issues related to its execution.

Addressing Socio-Economic Barriers

- **Financial Support:** Provide financial assistance for transportation and supplementary education materials to alleviate economic constraints.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Develop policies that address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to ensure equitable access to education.

Conclusion

The study highlights the need for increased awareness and better implementation of the RTE Act 2009 among the parents of the minority community in Bihar. By addressing the identified barriers and improving communication and support mechanisms, it is possible to enhance the effectiveness of the RTE Act and ensure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to quality education.

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