



# Are Indian Government School's In Par with the Contemporary Times?

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## Abstract:

Education is termed as the ultimate power which can change the world and bring wisdom to the minds. Education is an essential human right, which means that every human being should be admitted to the educational institutions in the nation. When we talk of India, then the Indian Constitution in its 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act (2002), inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution which mentioned that every child from the age group of six to fourteen years should be provided with compulsory education. Right To Education in India is termed as a Fundamental Right by the Constitution which was envisaged with The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represented the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, which meant that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. When we talk about the Indian schooling system which forms the base for the starting of the educational journey of a kid, then the schooling system is divided into private schools and government schools managed by centre/state government, both follow a common pattern of curriculum set by the governmental educational board. Government schools in India play an essential role in delivering the gift of education to every nook and corner of the nation as their fees structure is affordable for every economic section in the society supported with various scholarship opportunities for meritorious students and being available in both the urban and rural areas of the nation, making education both affordable and accessible to every citizen. But the Indian Government schools are surrounded by various infrastructural and administrative problems and issues which demand a fast delivery of solution. This paper aims to throw light over how the Indian Government schools in par with the contemporary times?

## Key Words:

Right To Education; Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act (2009); Vocational Education

## I. Introduction

There is a popular saying by Socrates which goes by, "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel". Education is an important means which brings insight and wisdom to the humans. Education is a fundamental human right, as every human should have a right to study and should possess a proper access to get admitted to an educational institution who can help the student guide their path of study.

When we talk of India, India termed 'Right to Education' as a Fundamental Right through 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment which was inserted in the Indian Constitution in 2002 as Article 21-A. Article 21-A talks about that the Government should provide free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State, may, by law, determine. The Right of Children and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 was envisaged under Article 21-A which meant that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school. Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on 1 April 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words 'free and compulsory'. By 'free education' the Act means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by their parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges which may prevent the child from pursuing and completing elementary education. By 'Compulsory Education' the Act means that the Government and local authorities should ensure to provide admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age group. With this, India aims to move forward to a right based



framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child rights as enshrined in the Article 21-A of the Constitution. The Act is essential because it makes education more accessible and affordable to the economically weaker sections of the nations in both urban and rural areas. The 'Right to Education' Act lays major importance on the duties of the respective governments, the local authorities and the parents to ensure that the education of the child is completed and no child is deprived of this right. The Act lays focus on the Pupil to Teacher Ratio, infrastructure along with the prescribed working days of the school. The Act envisages that the curriculum should be developed in coherence with the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution, and should ensure the holistic development of the student

When we talk about the Indian schooling structure, then majorly there are Private schools and Centre/State Government aided schools, commonly known as Government schools, both of them follow a set pattern of curriculum laid down by the respective governmental educational board. The Government schools play an important role as they deliver education to the most ground level including every nook and corner of the nation along with an affordable fees structure making education accessible to the economically weaker sections of the society. As the 'Right to Education' Act mentions that the child should be imparted with quality education which ensures the child's overall development, we need to assess that how the government schools are working efficiently at the ground level?

## II. STRUCTURE OF SCHOOLS IN INDIA

The structure of schools in India, mainly, comprises of Government schools which are entirely owned and supervised by the government and private schools who are financed by a private management but they follow the same curriculum and syllabus prescribed by the government. In government schools, the government is in charge of the formulation of the curriculum, study materials, syllabus, examinations and so on. Further these schools are fully or partially funded by the government and the job recruitment is also under the government control.

As per the data from UDISE, the total number of schools in India is 15.1 lakh, in which the number of Government schools in India is 10.32 lakhs in the academic year of 2020-21

The Government schools are vital for a reason, as they provide affordable education and are

accessible to almost every nook and corner of the nation. But despite it, the government schools are surrounded by various problems whether its slow-paced recruitment process or infrastructural problems, they demand an immediate address to these problems through the right administration so that the students can get access to quality education.

## III. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Government schools have come up with various innovations to keep their curriculum in par with the contemporary by introducing mental health related courses in the curriculum, increasing interactions with the parents by conducting regular Parent-Teacher Meetings and so on, the Government schools are faced by many administrative and infrastructure problems which are as follows:

1. **Infrastructure Issues:** Many Government schools do not have proper infrastructure and well-developed infrastructure which includes the absence of laboratories and libraries. With the introduction of digital education, the Government should focus on developing necessary facilities to keep up with the contemporary times
2. **Student to Teacher Ratio:** Many Government schools suffer from the improper Student to Teacher Ratio, due to which fewer classes are conducted affecting the quality of education.
3. **Higher Student Absenteeism Rate:** There still exists a higher student absenteeism rate because of the delivery of poor quality of education
4. **Over-working the Teachers with other miscellaneous works:** The Government school teachers are generally equipped with various other tasks during elections and during disaster relief works, but sometimes they are over-worked with other non-political work, For instance, The Delhi Government teachers opposed the Delhi Government's order which said that the government school teachers will be deployed on CoVid Duty at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Many teachers opposed this and questioned this order which led to the withdrawal of this order. To avoid over-working the teachers, the 'Right to Education' Act lays down the provisions that the teachers will not be deployed in other miscellaneous work other than the election duty, census duty and duty during natural disasters relief work.
5. **Patriarchal norms and gender bias:** According to the ASER Report by Pratham in



2020, parents prefer private aided schools for the education of boys while the girl students are primarily sent to government aided schools to get basic education. The report reflected that parents are more likely to opt for a private aided school when selecting a school for boys while government schools are primary choice of parents when it comes to girl students

6. **Lack of recruitment opportunities for Teachers:** India is dealing with an issue of teacher's vacancies. The teacher recruitment is done through an entrance exam conducted by the central/state government, but due to the delay in the declaration of results the recruitment process is delayed and sometimes often cancelled. Due to this either the positions are filled by guest teachers or they remain vacant.
7. **Lack of vocational training:** This era is moving towards a more digital and technologically powered era, the current job market moves towards a more digitally empowered workforce. There is a need for the schools to implement a more practical focused curriculum which empowers the student to be eligible with the fast- paced digital workforce

#### IV. WHAT CAN BE OUR WAY FORWARD?

Indian Government schools are surrounded by various challenges which demand a solution, so that the students can be imparted with quality education without any hurdles, so what can be our way forward to solve the problems faced by the government schools in India? Various recommendations can be provided which can help aid as a resolution to the problems, which are as follows:

1. **Faster Recruitment Process of Teachers:** The recruitment process of teachers is a slow paced process which includes an entrance exam conducted by the central or a state government. Due to this slow paced process, the results are sometimes delayed which further lower down the speed of recruitment of teachers due to which various vacancies remain unattended. A faster recruitment process of teachers is a need of the hour, which will not only fill the vacancies but also will create new job opportunities for the aspirants.
2. **Introduction of a Holistic Curriculum:** When we talk about the school curriculum, it majorly focuses on more theory subjects rather than practical experience subjects but with the increasing demand of practical courses and

more skill oriented jobs, there is a need for the introduction of a holistic curriculum in schools which not only give theoretical knowledge to the students but also give them basic framework about various practical experiences and courses which will help them diversify their career path

3. **Introduction of Vocational Courses:** Vocational courses are understood as skill oriented courses which not only diversify the skill set of the student but also empower them to run their own business or start-up in near future. Vocational courses help the students gain on field experience and learning, which aids them in connecting and interacting with the community at the ground level
4. **Adaption of the digital era:** With technological advancements being introduced to the world, the world is being more dependent on the technology and its skills. When we talk about the Indian Government schools, many schools lack a proper computer lab or does not have a proper and a stable internet connection. There is a need of the hour, to develop the government aided schools in every way possible so that the students are able to explore and learn without any infrastructural hurdles
5. **Introduction of Certificate Courses:** When we talk about short term certificate courses which generally have a 6 month to 1 year duration, they help in the introduction of the basic framework of a particular concept to the learner. Currently certificate courses are available at the graduate and post-graduate level, as there are numerous certificate courses provided by ample of universities all over the nation whether it is a certificate course in any foreign business language, movie direction, theatre, travel and tourism, hospitality, business communication and so on. Certificate courses play an essential role in introducing the learner to new fields, skills and career options which help in diversifying their career options. This is the major reason why introduction of certificate or short term courses is also necessary at the school level as well.
6. **Awareness:** Due to the gender divide and patriarchal bias, many girl students in rural areas are unable to attend school and get basic education. There is a need to spread awareness among the parents in rural areas of the nation regarding the education of the girl child. The Government has also taken various steps in this regards by launching various schemes benefitting girl students, For instance, 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme whose primary



aim is to protect girls from social problems such as gender-based abortions and to promote girl-child education. Another scheme is 'CBSE Udaan Scheme' which aims to increase the number of girl students enrolled in prestigious engineering and technical colleges across the nation. Another notable governmental scheme is 'Balika Sariddhi Yojana' which is a scholarship initiative that provides financial support to young girls and their families who live in poverty.

The awareness regarding these above schemes and many other schemes ran by central and state government should be spread time to time among the people so that the scheme reaches the right beneficiaries and help those who are in need.

## V. CONCLUSION

Indian Government schools still have a long way to go in terms to overcome the infrastructural and administrative hurdles it faces. The government as well as the citizens should ensure that no child is deprived of basic education. Along with the timely spread of awareness and development of infrastructure of the government schools, the teachers should also help the students learn and engage in the classrooms in a more interactive and engaging way. The need of the hour right now is the proper address of the problems faced by the government aided schools so that every child should get a healthy and an engaging environment to develop themselves and to learn. Along with our schools, our curriculum should be diverse and adaptive to the changing times, so that the students are imparted with both practical as well as theoretical concepts which will help them to know and explore more about their surroundings and will help them to analyze situations in a more holistic way.

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