

INTEGRATION OF SSA AND RMSA: A MAJOR POLICY SHIFT IN SCHOOL EDUCATION OF INDIA

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Introduction

- Integration of SSA and RMSA introduced in the ‘Integrated scheme for school education’ is a new development in the school education of the country.
- SSA launched in 2001 became the flagship program for implementation of RTE Act 2009 after it came into effect in 2010.
- In 2009 RMSA was launched for universalization of secondary education in India.
- Like SSA transpired into an umbrella scheme for implementation of RTE Act, which entitles every child in the country to Right to education, RMSA continued to exist in as a scheme. Article 21(A) was inserted in the constitution of India to make right to education a fundamental right which makes it justiciable in the courts of law.

How elementary education became a right?

- An analysis of policy landscape of the country post independence primarily shows particular trends
- To reinforce the mai-baap image of the colonisers, diffusion of western knowledge
- Literacy through primary education, technical through secondary education. Emphasis on secondary education but reach was very low
- Mass education , common school system
- Sources: (**Hartog Committee Report, 1929, Wardha Committee Report, 1938**), (**Sergent Committee Report 1944**) **1964-66**, (**Kothari commission**), **National education Policy 1986/1992**)

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- Mass literacy, drawing commonness with the entire nation with appreciation of diversity each region offers. Bilingual/multilingual schools etc. gained prominence.
- Spread of private schools, low cost private schools, linking industry to schools which brought forth the voices of the increasing private sector in financing education especially secondary education and low cost primary schools)
- Universalization of school education through RTE ACT.
- Sources: (**Ramamurti committee report 1990, Janardan committee report 1992, Chavan Committee Report**), (Birla 2009)

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- Departures inherent in the planning processes for primary and secondary education.
 - Mass literacy and technical education(primary and secondary)
 - Mass literacy and secondary education vis-à-vis role of the state
 - Literacy for the masses and quality education for a few
 - Education as a concurrent subject and a directive before RTE , despite that role of private sector on education was never regulated. 15% seats for EWS was also not fulfilled.
 - Spending on education never reached the recommended 6 % GDP. In elementary education it continued to be a significant low.
 - Mass education through primary/ elementary education eventually becoming a right

Departures in provisions

- 30% schools with requisite teachers as per RTE norms
- 34% teachers are contractual in elementary and 75% in secondary
- Budget less than 3%(minus 2% CESS)
- More than 5% schools have not constituted an SMC even today and in secondary 25%
- 85 % schools are managed by state and in secondary schools it is 49%
- Proportion of govt schools to private schools (8% in secondary schools, 80% in elementary)

Sources: UDISE

After RTE

- Strict demarcation of free and compulsory education for 6-14 years
 - Separate CSS, SSA to implement the Act
 - Norms and standards
 - Community participation through SMCs
 - Role of state/public provisioning for elementary education
 - Defined time frame to implement the Act
 - 25% reservation for children belonging to EWS.
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- The logical next steps towards universalisation till secondary education should have been including pre-school and secondary education under the RTE umbrella. Second a financial memorandum should have been charted so that RTE norms and standards could be met within a new set timeline. This would have led to a much needed integrated planning and arrangements for school education in the country.

Why integration ?

- In the month of April 2018 new scheme which looks at school education *holistically* as the draft document mentions has been launched.
- The major objectives of the Scheme are:
 - Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
 - Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education; Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
 - Ensuring minimum standards in schooling provisions;
 - Promoting vocationalisation of education;
 - Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009; and
 - Strengthening and up-gradation of SCERTs/State Institutes of Education and DIET as a nodal agencies for teacher training.

Major Shifts

- **Shift from universalization of education to a fragmented approach**
- Universalization of Education: Universalisation of education implies five things namely, universalisation of provision, universalisation of enrolment, universalisation of retention universalisation of participation and universalisation of achievement. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, in short RTE Act, is the most important development in the Universalisation of Elementary Education in India. It guarantees universalisation of quality education at elementary level in the country.
- The scheme has approached universalization cursorily and limited it to access and has treated quality, equity as separate components. However in India and globally universalisation of education is an approach which addresses quality, equity and social justice at its core. Implanting social and gender equality in a fragmented manner will dilute the vision of education of building a nationalist identity and a modern nation embedded on scientific temperament.

<https://heignotes.com/2016/11/09/importance-of-universalisation-of-elementary-education-uee-in-india/>

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- **Shift from its focus from Input to Outcome: Lack of vision and evidence**
 - The strategy included important components of learner centric, relevance, Public opinion, environment, process and outcomes to bring quality and equity in education as meticulously planned in the kothari commission and also recommended by the Report of the CSS Commission for Bihar government.
 - Lack of democratic processes in bringing about the planning processes through the scheme
 - Outcome as an objective not only in this scheme but also in the NITI Aayog plan of action 2020
 - Even budgets are outcome budgets based on incentivizing states by the centre, on the outcomes and improvement in learning levels

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- The expert group set up by the Government of India after the Unnikrishnan Judgment, on the financial implications of RTE, with economist Tapas Majmudar as Chair, chose the right-based approach to providing elementary education. The report said:
- **“From being an incremental development goal in the process of education for all, universalisation of elementary education has in consequence of the Unnikrishnan Judgment, now become the legal right of every Indian child...entitlements sanctioned by the Constitution cannot be deferred by the State at its convenience. The State has to make the necessary reallocation of resources, by superseding other important claims, if necessary, in a manner that the justiciable entitlement can become a reality.”**

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- Merger of schemes
- Increased allocation in a fragmented manner (technology and digital education)
- No mechanism to monitor allocation of budget in the new scheme with different levels of commitments for different levels of education. This is also not serving SDG4 but shows a deviation from the norm. SDG4 clearly mentions free and compulsory 12 years of education and public provisioning.
- Standard assessment processes instead of using the principle of constructivism mentioned in the NCF 2005 which addresses critical questions and each child gets the liberty to construct her own understanding and learning. This process of continuous comprehensive evaluation was mandated in the RTE to enhance both learning and inclusion. Academic authorities under the RTE Act were notified by the central and state governments for prescription of curriculum and evaluation procedures in conformity with the framework of the NCF 2005. This was also linked with the NPE 1992 which aimed at bringing the child closer to the community.

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- **Privileging vocationalisation of education and neglect of Teacher's and community's voice and agency**
- From a community led craft based learning which forms the basis of vocational education in India is a shift to industry led skill training to serve the market. The idea was to harmonise links between theory and monotonous learning through creative stimulation and self-expression. It helps in reducing discrimination between manual and intellectual skills and overcoming prejudices through respect for socially meaningful work that meets the needs of urban and rural Indians. It also meant scientific learning through practice:
- “Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. I am not writing this without some confidence because it has the backing of experience”.(Nai Talim)

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- Second informalisation of the role of Teachers: This is evident in terms of revisions of teacher salary, employing contractual teachers, replacing teacher competency with technology instead of complementing teaching learning process. This puts technology on par with teachers and thus illustrates a major policy shift which can be observed throughout the more than 200 pages long document. The focus on technology is a generic feature of what and not specific to India and community development. Multinational technology companies and the connected venture philanthropies to “deliver learning outcomes” and “ensure efficiency”. This completely neglect the voice and agency of teachers and community in school education which is again contrary to the National Curriculum Framework 2005 which articulated a new vision of the school curriculum as an inclusive space that extends beyond the conventional textbooks into the realm of teaching-learning processes for inclusive and quality learning.

[Source: Pasi Salberg called Global Education Reform Movement \(GERM\)](#)

- Poonam Batra (2005) Voice and agency of Teachers)
- Bihar Equal education

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- These shifts indicate a departure from RTE on several grounds and ensuring bare minimum services in school education as clearly mentioned in the objectives.
- With gradual withdraw of the role of the state and no commitment towards regulating private schools and linking schools with industry it further indicates a movement from right based education to commercialization of education.
- Children's mobility from traditional occupations will be further restricted and social transformation through education as nowhere mentioned in the document will reduce education to serving the needs of the market.
- These changes are not only happening in education but cutting across all rights of children. (Health, health policy, DBT in mid-day meal etc.), protection(CAAPLRA, POCSO, JJAct, ICPS, Aadhar etc) and overall development of the child (intermittent budgets cuts).
- These changes therefore should be located in the transformations happening at the macro level if we really want to fulfill the dream of education for the last child in the country.

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- **Implications on RTE**

- Implementation of RTE sans norms and standards will lead to massive violations of the Act 2009.
- Shift in budget allocations from input to incentivizing outcome will impact budget allocations immensely and also monitoring due to shift from a stand alone scheme for RTE.
- Extension of RTE and public provisioning as mentioned in SDG4 has been reduced to bringing pre-school, elementary and secondary education in one school premise.
- One year of pre-school as mandated in section 11 of RTE Act will be done in ad-hoc manner recognizing private providers instead of regulating them. Distance and Transportation and consolidation of schools through school closure across the country.
- Similarly conflict in the role of the state in management of schools will override RTE norms and standards and violate RTE Act at every step instead of strengthening its implementations and to strengthen the RTE Act and bring pre-school and secondary education within the umbrella of the legal entitlement focusing on the role of the state in public provisioning of school education.
- Deferred New Education Policy