

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT, 2009 IN DISTRICT SAMBA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract

The Right To Education (RTE) Act 2009, places the onus of ensuring the right to a fair quality education, founded on the principles of equity and non-discrimination, on the state. This study examines the perceptions of elementary school teachers and principals in District Samba, Jammu and Kashmir, regarding the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009. The RTE Act, which became applicable in the region after the abrogation of Article 370, aims to ensure free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. The study employs a quantitative survey methodology, using self-constructed perception scales to gather data from 150 participants, including teachers and headmasters from both government and private schools. The findings indicate no significant differences in perceptions based on gender, school board affiliation (CBSE vs. State Board), or urban-rural location. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers in government and private schools, with government school teachers displaying a more favourable perception of the Act. Additionally, elementary school principals showed general awareness of the RTE Act, though some lacked understanding of specific provisions, such as the prohibition on capitation fees. The study underscores the need for professional development programs to enhance teachers' understanding of the RTE Act and suggests further research to explore factors affecting its effective implementation. The results further provide valuable insights for policymakers to address gaps and strengthen the education system.

Key words: Right to Education Act 2009, Perception, Free and Compulsory Education, Constitution of India.

INTRODUCTION

Article 21-A was introduced to the Indian Constitution by the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002, which established free and compulsory education for children aged six to fourteen as a fundamental right, as established by the State through legislation. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, which was passed in 2009, makes it feasible to execute Article 21-A. Every child has the right to a full-time primary education of acceptable quality in a formal school that complies with fundamental criteria and norms, according to this legislation.

On April 1, 2010, both Article 21-A and the Right to Education Act, became effective. 'Free education' means that no child, except for those admitted to non-government supported schools, can be charged any fee, charges, or expenses that may hinder their pursuit of elementary education. The term 'compulsory education' requires the government and local authorities to provide and guarantee that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 are enrolled, attend class regularly, and successfully complete elementary school. India is moving toward a rights-based approach with the enactment of the Right to Education Act and Article 21-A. Upholding this fundamental child right and adhering to the principles of the Right to Education Act are now legally required of both the federal government and state governments.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION, ACT 2009 IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR (J&K)

The right to education became applicable in Jammu and Kashmir with the repeal of Article 370. As per the Right to Education Act, any government teacher is prohibited from providing private tuition or engaging in private teaching. The Right to Education Act also prohibits the assignment of teachers to roles that are not related to teaching. Their utilization is limited to time-sensitive tasks such as conducting a census, administering elections, or responding to disasters. The Jammu & Kashmir administration has the authority to take strict measures against any teachers who violate these regulations. The declining quality of education in publicly run schools might be improved by putting the Right to Education Act into effect.

For the effective implementation of Right to Education Act, the role of teachers is very vital. The engagement and participation of the teachers in Right to Education Act is very important with specific reference to Jammu and Kashmir. As the nation's builders, teachers must understand their tasks and responsibilities and have a clear perspective in order to properly participate with the Right to Education Act of 2009. The Right to Education Act and the goal of free and compulsory education will both be accessed in this study, which will assist to raise educational standards. Additionally, this study will gauge how Jammu and Kashmiri educators feel about the 2009 Right to Education Act.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. Astalin and Virendra (2018) compared awareness among primary teachers in Banda district, finding that General category teachers were more aware of the Act than OBC and SC teachers, with male teachers more aware than females. Sen & Nazimuddin (2018) studied teachers' attitudes in Burdwan district, West Bengal, concluding that both government and private school teachers had a favorable attitude towards the RTE Act, with no significant difference between them. Navale (2019) examined attitudes of headmasters in Thane district, Maharashtra, finding highly favorable attitudes toward the Act, with differences based on school type and qualification. Kaur (2020) assessed the perceptions of school heads and teachers in S.B.S. Nagar, Punjab, revealing that teachers had more favorable views than principals, with no significant urban-rural differences. Kumar & Sheeraz (2022) explored teacher-student ratios in Gwalior, finding ratios of 1:21 in government schools and 1:16 in private schools. Singha (2022) evaluated the impact of the RTE Act on rural upper primary schools in West Bengal, reporting positive teacher views, increased enrolment, decreased dropout rates, and improved female education.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Right to Education Act, 2009, recognizes education as a fundamental right for every child in India, aiming to provide quality education to all children aged 6-14, regardless of socio-economic background. By promoting universal education, the Act seeks to combat social issues like poverty, child labor, and discrimination. It consists of seven chapters and 38 sections that outline the government's obligation to provide free and compulsory education, the roles of schools, teachers, parents, and local authorities, and a framework for monitoring its implementation. Emphasizing the importance of teachers, the Act calls for a collective effort from educators and administrators to enhance education and benefit society.

Hence, the present study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the perceptions of elementary school teachers in District Samba towards the Right to Education Act, 2009. By doing so, the study seeks to develop a better understanding of the concerns and challenges faced by teachers and school leaders in implementing the Act. Given that teachers and school leaders play a critical role in the educational process, their perspectives can provide valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of the Act.

The study is significant as it can help in the development of awareness among teachers about the Act, which in turn can contribute to improving the education system in the country. Additionally, it can provide evidence for future teachers regarding the perception towards the Act and promote the awareness among students.

In nutshell, the Right to Education Act is a significant step towards promoting universal education and eradicating social ills in India. The Act aims to guarantee that every child has access to high-quality education and the chance to realize their full potential by acknowledging education as a basic right. The Act's success depends on the collective efforts of all stakeholders, especially teachers and school leaders, who have a crucial role in the entire educational process.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the perception among elementary school principals of District Samba regarding the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009.
2. To find out the perception of elementary school teachers of District Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009.
3. To suggest educational implications regarding Right to Education Act, 2009.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the perception level of urban and rural elementary school teachers of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
2. There is no significant difference between the perception level of male and female teachers of elementary schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

3. There is no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in CBSE and State Board schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
4. There is no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in government and private schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative type that employs the survey method. In order to obtain a representative sample, the Stratified Sampling technique was adopted. The sample included a total of 150 participants, comprising of 36 male and 87 female teachers, as well as 27 headmasters/principals, of which 13 were female and 14 were male. The participants were selected from both government and private aided schools in the selected zones of district Samba.

In regards to the perception of the Right to Education Act, 2009 appropriate standard questionnaires were not accessible. Thus, it was necessary to develop questionnaires that specifically address the perceptions of stakeholders, including headmasters, principals, and teachers, towards the Right to Education Act.

Table 1: Tools used for the study:

S.NO.	NAME OF THE TOOL	DEVELOPED BY	YEAR
1.	Perception Scale (For Principals/Headmasters)	Self-Constructed	2023
2.	Perception Scale (For Teachers)	Self-Constructed	2023

In this present investigation, the questionnaire for Headmasters/Principals contained 15 items, and it consisted of three categories responses: Yes, No, and Not Decided. For the scoring of perception scale for principal the researcher were converted the scores into percentage for further interpretation. The questionnaire for teachers contained 25 items. To measure the responses of the teachers, Likert's five-point scale was used. The scale included five possible responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The Scoring procedure of perception of teachers of elementary schools shown in tables' no. 2.

Table No.2: Scoring of Teachers' Perception Scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis of data in research studies may involve various statistical techniques. In the present investigation, the researcher was primarily focused on examining the perceptions of elementary school teachers towards the Right to Education Act, of 2009. As such, the investigator employed a t-test (one sample) to achieve the objectives of the study.

Hypothesis- 1 There is no significant difference between the perception level of urban and rural elementary school teachers of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

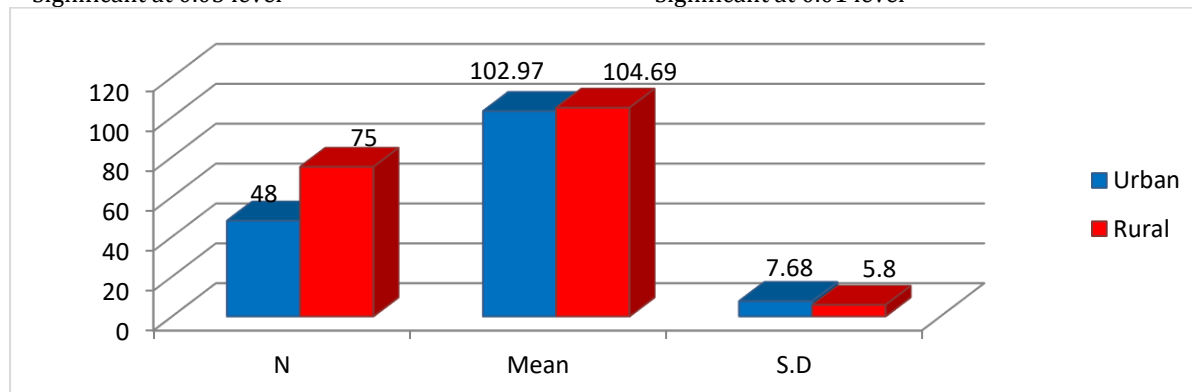
Table 3: Represent the t-value of perception of elementary school teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to their locale

Table 3

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	SD_{EM}	t-value	Result
Urban	48	102.97	7.68	1.11	1.32	Hypothesis 1 is accepted
Rural	75	104.69	5.8	0.67		

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level



From the above table 3 the mean of perception level of teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to locale came out to be 102.97 and 104.69. The calculated value of t is 1.32 which is less than the value at 0.05 level of significance i.e., 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis stated as, “There is no significant difference between the perception level of urban and rural elementary school teachers of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009” is accepted. Hence, there is a no significant difference between the perception level of urban and rural elementary school teachers of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. This finding is in agreement with the findings of **Kaur** (2020).

Hypothesis- 2 There is no significant difference between the perception level of male and female teachers of elementary schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

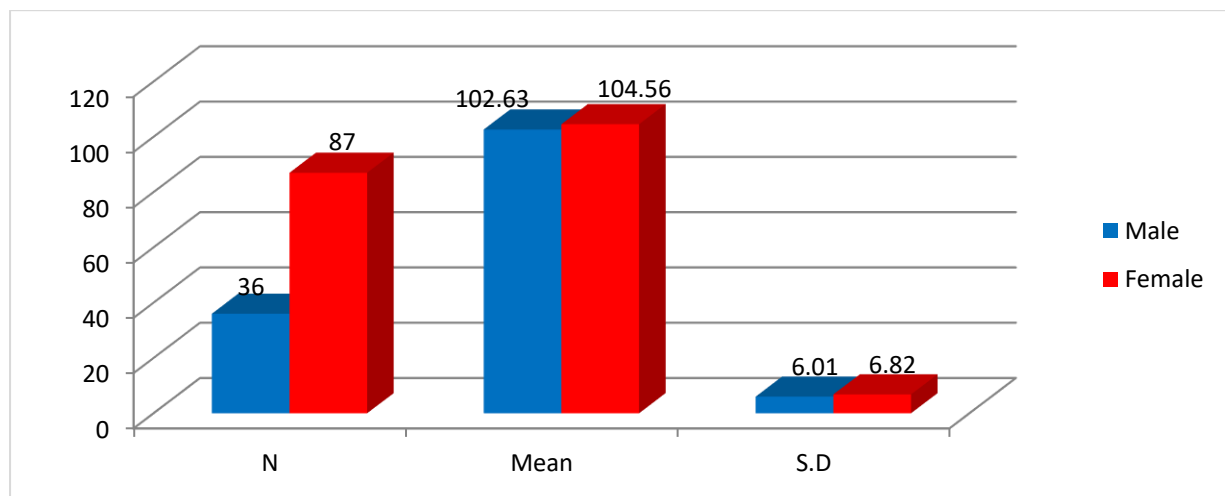
Table 4: Represent the t-value of perception of elementary school teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to their gender

Table 4

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	SD _{EM}	t-value	Result
Male	36	102.63	6.01	1.00	1.58	Hypothesis 2 is accepted
Female	87	104.56	6.82	0.73		

* Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level



From the above table 4, the mean of perception level of teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to gender came out to be 102.63 and 104.56. The calculated value of t is 1.58 which is less than the value at 0.05 level of significance i.e., 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis stated as, “There is no significant difference between the perception level of male and female teachers of elementary schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009” is accepted. Hence, there is a no significant difference between perception level of male and female teachers of elementary schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. This finding is contrasting with the findings of **Astalin** and **Virendra** (2018).

Hypothesis- 3 There is no significant difference between the perception levels of elementary school teachers teaching in CBSE and State Board schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

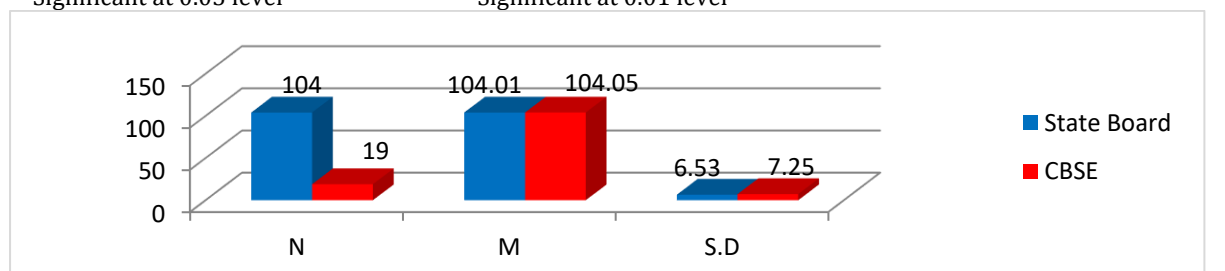
Table 5: Represent the t-value of perception of elementary school teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to their type of board (CBSE and State Board)

Table 2

Variable	N	M	S.D	SD _{EM}	t-value	Result
State Board	104	104.01	6.53	0.64	0.02	Hypothesis 3 is accepted
CBSE	19	104.05	7.25	1.66		

* Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level



From the above table 5, the mean of perception level of teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to gender came out to be 104.01 and 104.05. The calculated value of t is 0.02 which is less than the value at 0.05 level of significance i.e., 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis stated as, “There is no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in CBSE and State Board schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009” is accepted. Hence, there is a no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in CBSE and State Board schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

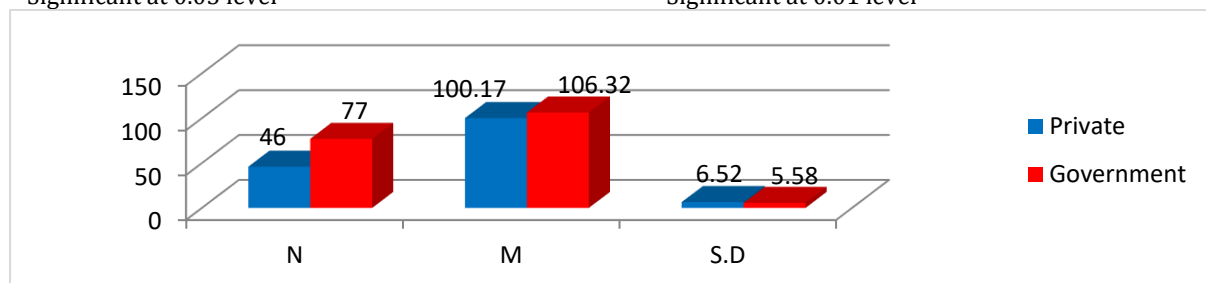
Hypothesis- 4 There is no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in government and private schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

Table 6: Represent the t-value of perception of elementary school teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to their type of school (government and private)

Variable	N	M	S.D	SD_{EM}	t-value	Result
Private	46	100.17	6.52	0.96	5.35**	Hypothesis 4 is rejected
Government	77	106.32	5.58	0.64		

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

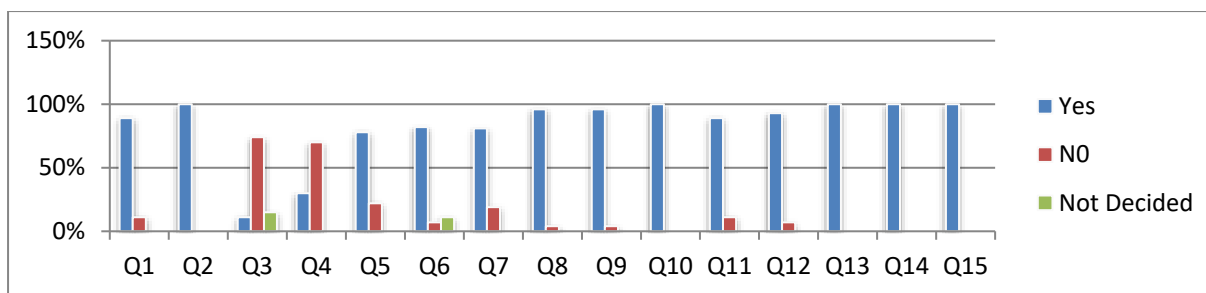


From the above table 6, the mean of perception level of teachers regarding Right to Education Act with respect to gender came out to be 100.17 and 106.32. The calculated value of t is 5.35 which is more than the value at 0.01 level of significance i.e., 2.58. Therefore, the hypothesis stated as “There is no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in government and private schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009” is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the perception of elementary school teachers teaching in government and private schools of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. This finding is aligned with the findings of Sen and Nazimuddin (2018).

Perception of Principals: The numerical information is given in the table below:

Table 7: Perception of Principals of Elementary Schools

STATEMENT NO.	YES	Percentage	NO	Percentage	NOT DECIDED	Percentage
1	24	89%	3	11%	0	0%
2	27	100%	0	0%	0	0%
3	3	11%	20	74%	4	15%
4	8	30%	19	70%	0	0%
5	21	78%	6	22%	0	0%
6	22	82%	2	7%	3	11%
7	22	81%	5	19%	0	0%
8	26	96%	1	4%	0	0%
9	26	96%	1	4%	0	0%
10	27	100%	0	0%	0	0%
11	24	89%	3	11%	0	0%
12	25	93%	2	7%	0	0%
13	27	100%	0	0%	0	0%
14	27	100%	0	0%	0	0%
15	27	100%	0	0%	0	0%



Drawing from the information provided in table 7, one can infer that the primary school principals of district Samba held a certain perception regarding the Right to Education Act of 2009. Nonetheless, after examining the data, the researcher discovered that many of these principals lacked awareness of the prohibition on collecting capitation fees from parents, as well as the clause permitting admission of children without birth certificates.

FINDINGS AND RESULT

1. The study found that there was no significant difference between the perception level of urban and rural elementary school teachers of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
2. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between perception level of male and female teachers of elementary schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
3. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the perception level of elementary school teachers teaching in CBSE and State Board schools of district Samba towards Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
4. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference between the perception of elementary school teachers teaching in government and private schools of district Samba regarding Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
5. The findings indicate that elementary school principals of district Samba had a good understanding of the Right to Education Act, of 2009. However, the analysis revealed that most of these principals were have less perception of the prohibition on charging capitation fees from parents and the provision allowing admission to children without birth certificates.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

1. Teachers' lack of perception of Right to Education Act, 2009, highlighting the need for professional development programs to increase their knowledge.
2. The emphasis on the role of elementary school teachers in implementing the Right to Education Act, 2009 and ensuring that all children between 6-14 years receive free and compulsory education.
3. The need to improve the quality of education by providing teachers with training and resources to teach effectively and improve learning outcomes.
4. The importance of inclusive education, highlighting the need for teachers to be more inclusive in their teaching practices and provide equal opportunities to all students, including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities.
5. The importance of community participation in the implementation of the Right to Education Act, 2009, emphasizing the need for teachers to involve parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the education process and create awareness about the Right to Education Act, 2009 and the importance of education.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The present study was confined to District Samba whereas it may be taken for other Districts or States of the Country.
2. The similar study can be replicated by using similar methodology on large sample.
3. The future researches can be done to know the different determinant that affects the teachers' perception of Right to Education Act, 2009.
4. Comparatives studies can be done between different districts and states of the country to know the awareness level of the teachers regarding Right to Education Act, 2009.

CONCLUSIONS

The Government of India, upon the advice of the Supreme Court of India, enacted appropriate legislation for the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). This was made possible by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002, which added Article 21-A to the Indian Constitution, declaring the Right to Education as a fundamental right for children between the ages of six and fourteen. The bill was approved by the cabinet on 2 July 2009, passed by the Rajya Sabha on 20 July 2009, and by the Lok Sabha on 4 August 2009. It received Presidential assent and was enacted as the Children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act on 26 August 2009. The law came into effect across India, except for the state of Jammu and Kashmir, on 1 April 2010, marking a historic milestone for the country.

Following the abrogation of Article 370, the Right to Education Act also became applicable in Jammu and Kashmir. The Act aims to provide quality formal education to all children, irrespective of caste, gender, creed, or religion. It establishes essential norms and standards for elementary education and ensures that every child has the right to full-time education.

In the nutshell, it can be concluded that the awareness and perception of the Right to Education Act, 2009, among elementary school teachers and principals in the district of Samba is generally positive. However, there are significant differences in the perception level of teachers based on the board type and the type of school they teach in, indicating the need for further investigation and targeted interventions to ensure effective implementation of the act across all types of schools. Additionally, the study highlights the need for greater awareness among school principals of the specific provisions of the act, particularly around capitation fees and admission requirements. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the implementation of the Right to Education Act, 2009, in district Samba and may inform future policy and practice in other similar context.

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