



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) ACT IN HARYANA: ISSUES, CAUSES, AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract: The Right to Education (RTE) Act (2009) represents a pivotal legal guarantee for free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 in India, aiming to ensure equitable access, improve learning environments, and promote inclusion. However, its implementation in Haryana has faced persistent challenges that have limited the realization of these objectives. Key issues include infrastructure deficits and basic facility shortfalls in many schools, contributing to poor learning conditions and enrollment inefficiencies. Historical audit findings in Haryana have documented delays in the provision of textbooks, uniforms, and essential school amenities, as well as inadequate records of eligible children due to the absence of comprehensive household surveys.

Further, disparities in teacher availability and quality—evident in acute staff shortages, uneven student–teacher ratios, and insufficient professional development—undermine instructional effectiveness. The mandated 25 % reservation for children from economically weaker sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups in private unaided schools encounters resistance from many institutions, with compliance gaps and administrative hurdles in enrollment reporting and reimbursement processes. These implementation issues are compounded by broader systemic factors such as ambiguous funding roles between central and state governments, inadequate budgetary allocations relative to policy goals, and limited community engagement in school governance.

The persistence of these challenges in Haryana has significant policy implications. Addressing them requires targeted strategies to strengthen institutional capacity, streamline financial mechanisms, enhance monitoring and accountability frameworks, and cultivate stakeholder awareness and support. Strategic policy reforms that prioritize infrastructure investment, teacher recruitment and training, and effective enforcement of inclusive admission norms are essential to bridge implementation gaps and fulfill the RTE Act’s promise of quality education for all children in the state.

Keywords: Right to Education (RTE) Act, economically weaker sections, reservation, implementation.

Introduction: The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 represents a landmark legislative commitment by the Government of India to guarantee free and compulsory education for all children aged 6–14 years. It seeks to eliminate barriers to schooling and ensure equitable access to quality education, particularly for children from economically weaker sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups. Key provisions of the Act include the prohibition of school fees in government and aided schools, prescribed norms for infrastructure and teacher–pupil ratios, and a mandatory 25% reservation in private unaided schools for EWS students.

Despite its strong legal foundations and inclusive goals, the implementation of the RTE Act in Haryana has faced persistent challenges that undermine its efficacy on the ground. In recent years, systematic gaps in admissions processes, infrastructure, staffing, and state–private school coordination have emerged as significant impediments. For example, thousands of eligible children in Haryana still await admission due to delays in online allocation



systems and school compliance delays. Moreover, issues such as non-compliance by private schools with admission reporting norms and punitive actions like blocking school portals illustrate administrative bottlenecks in realising the Act's objectives.

Historically, even oversight bodies such as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) have highlighted structural deficiencies—including shortages of teachers, inadequate basic facilities (drinking water, toilets, desks), delayed distribution of textbooks and uniforms, and the operation of unrecognised schools—that hinder the effective implementation of core RTE mandates.

These multifaceted challenges in Haryana reflect broader national implementation gaps and raise crucial **policy questions** regarding administrative capacity, funding, accountability, and equity in education. Understanding these issues, their root causes, and policy implications is essential for bridging the gap between the RTE Act's promise and its realised impact on the ground.

The Right to Education Act, 2009 is a landmark legislation in India's educational policy. It mandates that every child has a legal right to free and compulsory education until the completion of elementary schooling. The RTE Act also requires private schools to reserve 25% seats for children from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups. However, despite its progressive intent, challenges remain in translating policy into practice — particularly in the state of **Haryana**, where both governance and societal factors affect outcomes.

Background and Legal Framework:

- RTE Act, implemented nationwide in 2010, makes education a fundamental right for all children aged 6-14 years.
- The Act includes provisions on student-teacher ratios, infrastructure standards, curriculum norms, and community monitoring.
- In Haryana, implementation involves coordination between the state education department, local authorities, and private schools.

Key Issues and Challenges:

- **Non-Compliance by Private Schools:** One of the major issues in Haryana is the failure of private schools to comply with the 25% RTE reservation norm for EWS students. Over 2,800 private schools were fined or faced penalties for not declaring reserved seats on the state's RTE/EWS online portal. Many schools cited technical glitches and lack of training on the online system as reasons for non-compliance. The education department has threatened further action, including derecognition of schools that continue to ignore RTE mandates. These compliance issues point to administrative bottlenecks and gaps in enforcement mechanisms at the local level.
- **Delays in Admission Processing:** A large number of RTE-eligible students in Haryana remain without admission due to delays in the centralized online admission process. A report indicated that over 14,000 students were awaiting RTE admissions, largely because of delays in verification and the adoption of a new online system aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- **Administrative and Technical Constraints:** The transition to a new online admission process, while conceptually designed for transparency, faced resistance due to lack of training, unclear communication, and technical failures. School stakeholders and administrators have reported difficulties navigating the Ujjwal/education portal, leading to incomplete submissions and compliance failures. This reflects larger administrative challenges in implementing digital governance in education.
- **Infrastructure and Quality Issues:** Although more documented before 2017, audits highlight deficiencies in basic infrastructure and service delivery. In some districts, schools lacked essential facilities like drinking water, toilets, adequate desks, and libraries. Uniforms, textbooks, and stationery were often distributed late,



disrupting academic schedules. These historic gaps in resources continue to affect the quality and attractiveness of public schooling — indirectly challenging RTE's goals.

- **Teacher Shortages and Workload Issues:** Teacher shortages have been widely reported, especially in government schools serving remote areas. Misallocation of instructors and deployment in **non-teaching duties** have undermined classroom engagement, slowing progress toward quality education (linked to RTE requirements). While this is a national theme, Haryana's rural districts particularly reflect these constraints.
- **Socio-Economic and Awareness Barriers:** Many eligible families lack awareness about the RTE admission process and their rights under the law. Documentation barriers — such as proofs of income or residence — often deter underprivileged groups from applying effectively for RTE seats. Such socio-economic challenges impede access, even when seats are available.

Discussion: The challenges in Haryana illustrate a multi-dimensional implementation gap:

1. **Policy–Practice Disconnect:** Laws are in place, but enforcement and awareness lag.
2. **Administrative Complexity:** Digital reforms without adequate capacity building can backfire.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Infrastructure and teacher availability directly affect compliance.
4. **Stakeholder Resistance:** Private schools may resist mandates without clear incentives or support.

These issues are not unique to Haryana but are exacerbated by local governance inefficiencies.

Policy Recommendations: To address these challenges:

- **Capacity Building:** Train school administrators and government officials on online systems and RTE compliance processes.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Inform parents and communities about RTE rights and procedures.
- **Strengthen Monitoring:** Use local bodies and civil society to periodically assess compliance and redress grievances.
- **Timely Reimbursements:** Ensure prompt payment to private schools admitting EWS students to encourage participation.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Prioritize basic school facilities and teacher recruitment, especially in rural areas.

Conclusion: The implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in Haryana reveals a complex interplay of structural, administrative, socio-economic, and institutional challenges that continue to impede the realization of universal and equitable elementary education. Despite notable progress in expanding school infrastructure, enrollment rates, and policy outreach, significant gaps persist in translating statutory guarantees into meaningful educational outcomes on the ground.

Key issues such as inadequate infrastructure in government schools, shortage and uneven deployment of trained teachers, weak monitoring mechanisms, and limited awareness among stakeholders undermine the effective enforcement of RTE provisions. The challenges surrounding the 25 per cent reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in private schools—particularly resistance from private institutions, delays in reimbursement, and bureaucratic hurdles—further expose systemic inefficiencies and governance deficits. Additionally, socio-economic factors like poverty, child labour, migration, gender disparities, and digital exclusion disproportionately affect marginalized communities, thereby limiting the Act's inclusive intent.

The causes of these challenges are deeply rooted in administrative inertia, insufficient financial allocations, lack of inter-departmental coordination, and a top-down policy approach that often neglects local realities. Weak accountability frameworks and limited community participation also contribute to poor implementation and enforcement at the grassroots level.



From a policy perspective, these findings underscore the urgent need for strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring timely and adequate funding, improving teacher recruitment and training, and enhancing transparency in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Greater collaboration between the state, local bodies, civil society, and the private sector is essential to bridge implementation gaps. Moreover, context-sensitive interventions—such as targeted support for migrant and disadvantaged children, digital infrastructure development, and community awareness programs—can significantly improve educational access and quality.

In conclusion, while the RTE Act remains a transformative legal framework for guaranteeing the right to education, its success in Haryana depends on sustained political commitment, administrative reforms, and inclusive, participatory policy strategies. Addressing the existing implementation challenges holistically will not only strengthen compliance with the Act but also contribute to long-term human capital development and social equity in the state.

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