



Panel Discussion: Right to Education in India: Challenges and Responses

Speaker:

Panelists: Ms Vaijayanti, Prof Nalini Juneja, Prof M. D. Ushadevi, Prof Susan Visvanathan, and Prof C.S. Nagaraju; Chair and Discussants: Prof Sudhir Krishnaswamy and Rahul Mukhopadhyaya

Date / Time:

February 20, 2013 - 2:00pm - 6:00pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Pixel A, APU

Abstract:

Public school system in India experiences numerous issues and challenges. Many of those are directly or indirectly related to socio-economic condition of our country and people living here. Most of the issues and challenges are both critical and complex. On one hand, there is a problem of illiteracy among children and adults caused by no schooling or school dropout; on the other hand, there are public schools about to shut down because of lack of students. At this point of time, Right to Education Act seems to be an initiative to address many of the issues and challenges.

The Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) became law on April 1, 2010. RTE fulfils the constitutional mandate for free and compulsory primary education, but some of its provisions have raised debates. Numerous challenges and issues are being faced by various stakeholders while implementing the Act in the schools. Already there has been a major amendment notified by the central government to comply with the Supreme Court judgement safeguarding minority rights.

Democracy entails devolution of governance in the fields of development by providing scope for involvement of local entities in sorting real life problems in alternate strategies and action rather than centralized, uniform normative strategies. In other words, defining specific roles and functions of three layers of governance instead overarching control on all aspects of education through act of central government may have to be debated.

For the students pursuing MA in Education in Azim Premji University, it is important to have a clear understanding about RTE Act, its background and relevance. Also they must understand

the debates and issues around this Act. In this context, the students must know the relevance of RTE act in the performance of educational system in India, and also they must understand changing role of PRIs and BEOs in the context of RTE and Implementation challenges of RTE. These topics are equally interesting to some of the students pursuing MA in Development as well. Considering the relevance of such discussion by some eminent experts in this domain, two panel discussions have been organized in our university on 20th February, 2013, which are open to all.

A Note on the Speaker:

Ms K. Vaijayanti is working for research function of Akshara Foundation- a not -for-profit organisation focussed on elementary education in Karnataka. She is a trained economist worked in health and decentralisation prior to venturing into education field. She has been working on issues ranging from Early Childhood Education to School education. Most of her research work has been evidence based policy research in education sector. She has headed ASER- Karnataka since last 4 years. She has been a member of several committees set up by GoK on elementary education.

She will be speaking on “Performance of educational system and RTE” during this panel discussion.

Prof. Nalini Juneja is presently a Professor at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration where she researches on, and teaches courses related mainly to rights of the child to education. Her research on the history of Compulsory Education laws in India helped to inform the emerging discourse on the right to education in India, and she played a role in the drafting of the RTE Act 2009, and it’s Model Rules. Another strand in her research is on education in cities especially issues of transition to upper primary in cities with decentralized responsibilities for provision of education, and inclusion of the 25 per cent children from weaker sections in city schools. Her book ‘Primary education in the City of Mumbai, India: the Challenge set by local actors’ was published by UNESCO in 2001. Her PhD work on Stress Management of Educational Administrators at the school level has also been published as a book.

She will be carrying out discussion on “Implementation challenges of RTE” during this panel discussion.

Prof. M. D. Ushadevi is a retired Professor from, Centre for Human Resource Development (CHRD) of ISEC. Her area of specialization includes Management of School Education, Teacher Education, Higher education. She completed her Ph.D from University of Mysore through Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore during 1992. She has published books such as “ Trends & Patterns of Migration: Interface with Education - A Case of the North Eastern Region” , “Adult Education” and “ School Education in Rural Areas: Constraints and Prospects. She has widely published in many national and international journals on educational decentralization, teacher education, women education, education of marginalized and vulnerable children and has worked on poverty-education and development issues. She has served as Chairperson, State Advisory Committee for Research & Development, SSA Mission, Govt. of Karnataka and Academic Expert in Faculty of Education, Bangalore University, Mangalore University & Karnataka University. She has been Resource Person to NCERT/MHRD-GoI on several occasions. She has been part of Monitoring of SSA Programme in Karnataka and Technical Support & Appraisal of SSA Plans in Karnataka

She will be presenting on “Changing role of PRIs and BEOs in the context of RTE” during this panel discussion.

Prof. Susan Visvanathan is Professor of Sociology from Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, JNU, New Delhi. She is author of “The Christians of Kerala” (OUP 1993) and “Friendship, Interiority and Mysticism” (Orient Blackswam 2007); “The Children of Nature: The Life and Legacy of Ramana Maharshi” (Roli Books 2010) and “Reading Marx, Weber and Durkheim Today” (Palm Leaf Publications 2012). She has written several novels, published by Roli Indianink, and her most recent work is “Nelcinda and Other stories “(2012) which play with the idea of time, memory and maps.

During this panel discussion she will be speaking on “Doing Ethnography: The relation between local practice and RTE”

Prof. C S Nagaraju comes with diverse experience of serving at different levels in education system. He started his career as school teacher in rural Karnataka. He has been a recipient of A C Devegowda Memorial Gold medal and State award for distinction in M. Ed and also received British Council Scholarship to study in the field of Adult Education in UK in 1979. He has been Professor of Education and served additionally as Registrar of Institute of Social and Economic Change. He worked as Professor and Head of Department of Pre-School & Elementary Education NCERT, New Delhi from 1998 to 2000 and, as Professor and Head of Educational Research & Policy Perspectives, NCERT, New Delhi from 2000 to 2006. He also served as Principal, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Mysore (May 2006-April 2007). Current he is Hon Professor at ISEC, Bangalore. He has been very instrumental in conceptualizing the idea of CRC in Indian education system and complemented many Studies of Classroom Processes and Case studies in DPEP states of AP, Harayana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, MP and UP Funded by MHRD commissioned under DPEP. He was part of many JRMs constituted by MHRD on school education. He has widely published his articles on educational decentralization and policy. He collaborated National Survey of Educational Achievement at the Primary Stage under taken by TISS, Bombay during 1995. He provided consultation to formative evaluation of MDP programme carried out by APF & ISEC. Presently he is engaged as consultant on Right to Education study and Right to food study being conducted by Center for Child and Law, NLSIU.

During this panel discussion he will be presenting on “Visualizing viable schools in the context of RTE”