

Awareness of Elementary School Teachers in Tribal Areas of Odisha, India about RTE Act, 2009

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Abstract

RTE Act, 2009 of Government of India has been put into implementation with effect from 1st April, 2010. It came into force in Odisha, one of the states of India from 27th September, 2010. The Govt. of Odisha has taken various earnest steps towards implementation of RTE Act 2009. There are 62 tribes in Odisha with 22.21 % of the total population of the State (Sahu, 2014). The rate of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes is 52.24% against the overall literacy rate of 72.87% of the State as per 2011 census. In tribal areas, the development with respect to economic, political and educational is lagging as compared to rest of the country. There is dearth of studies particularly, related to awareness of teachers about RTE Act in tribal areas of Odisha. Hence, the investigator was keen to undertake a study about the extent of awareness of elementary school teachers about RTE Act. survey method is used for the present study. Population of the present study is all the elementary schools of tribal areas of Odisha. Target population is restricted to all the elementary schools of four tribal districts of Odisha. Cluster sampling method was used. Six blocks were selected from these four districts- two blocks from Nabarangpur, two blocks from Koraput, one block each from Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj purposively. These blocks come under scheduled area. Ten elementary schools were selected randomly from each district. All the available teachers were selected from these schools. There were a total of 127 teachers. An awareness test for teachers was developed and used by the investigator. It was found that elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Odisha are aware about Right to Education Act. However, no significant difference was found in awareness about RTE Act among teachers on the bases of their gender, educational and professional qualification, teaching experience, mother and age.

Keywords: Awareness, Elementary school teachers, tribal areas of Odisha, RTE Act, 2009.

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/10-1-02

Backdrop

The Right of children to free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act, 2009) is a detailed and comprehensive piece of legislation of Government of India which includes provision related to schools, teachers, curriculum, evaluation, access and specific division of duties and responsibilities of different stakeholders. The Act has been put into implementation with effect from 1st April, 2010. It says, *Every child of the age of six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education* (Section 3.1). Odisha is one of the 29 states of India, located in eastern India. Elementary school includes classes I to VIII. In exercise of the power conferred by section 38 of the RTE Act, 2009, the Government of Odisha formulated and implemented “The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rule, 2010”. It came into force from 27th September, 2010. The spirit of the Government of Odisha rule as regards to free elementary education is same like that of the RTE Act, 2009. It includes issues in relation to implementation of rules in local conditions.

The Govt. of Odisha has taken various earnest steps towards implementation of RTE Act 2009 like: release of the Orissa Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rule, 2010; Consultation with various stakeholders for environment building for right to education; Orientation, sensitization and capacity development of various stakeholders; establishment of a dedicated RTE cell in School and Mass Education Department; Introduction of school monitoring system (*Samiksha*) to enhance effectiveness of the functioning of the school system; Introduction of *Sadhan* and *Samadhan* for building the capacity of the teacher; Establishment of Grievance Redressal cell and students’ Helpline, etc. Since, it has been implemented since 2010, it is expected that all the stakeholders must be aware about the fundamental features of RTE Act.

There are 62 tribes in Odisha with 22.21 % of the total population of the State (Sahu, 2014). The rate of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes is 52.24% against the overall literacy rate of 72.87% of the State as per 2011 census. The tribal male and female literacy rates are 63.70% and 41.20% respectively. Over the last decade, there has been a significant improvement in literacy level among the STs in the State, which recorded an increase from 37.37% in 2001 to 52.24% in 2011 (Government of Odisha, 2016). As per OPEPA (2015, p.13), the share of ST students enrolment at elementary level in Odisha is 30.21 during 2014-15. This shows a steady increase in enrolment trend of ST children in Odisha.

While reviewing literature, the investigator came across contradictory findings on awareness of teachers about RTE Act. Soni (2013) found that most of the teachers are aware about provisions of RTE Act. But, Thakur (2014), Choudhary (2014) and Sarvapalli, (2012) found that the overall level of awareness on RTE act was poor

among teachers. The awareness of RTE Act was high among those teachers who attended more number of training programs on RTE Act (Mahanadi, 2014). Significant difference was found about the awareness of RTE Act on the basis of gender (Islam & Chakraborty, 2013; Abdul and Rajan, 2008; Kumar, 2014; Krishnarao & Mangesh, 2015; Kaur, 2015 and Mahanadi, 2014), locality (Thakur, 2014 and Kaur 2015), management (Mahanadi, 2014; Kumari & Allam, 2014; Abdul and Rajan, 2008), marital status (Kumar, 2014), experience (Kumar, 2014) and stream of study (Kaur, 2015). Whereas, no significant difference was found in awareness of teachers on the basis of gender (Kumar, 2015; Patel, 2015; Kumari & Allam, 2014; Thakur, 2014), management (Krishnarao & Mangesh, 2015; Kumar, 2015), locality (Kumar, 2015; Islam & Chakraborty, 2013; Abdul and Rajan, 2008), stream of study (Kumar, 2015; Islam & Chakraborty, 2013) and parental educational level (Kumar, 2015). There is no significant difference in the awareness of RTE Act, 2009 among the prospective teachers on the basis of nature of the college (Kumar, 2015).

The investigator came across contradictory findings while reviewing literature on awareness of teachers about RTE Act in relation to their gender, locality, management, marital status, stream of study and parental educational level. In tribal areas, the development with respect to economic, political and educational is lagging as compared to rest of the country. There is dearth of studies particularly, related to awareness of teachers about RTE Act in tribal areas of Odisha. Hence, the investigator was keen to undertake a study about the extent of awareness of elementary school teachers about RTE Act.

Methodology

Since, the investigator studied the awareness level of teachers in tribal areas of Odisha, survey method is used for the present study. Population of the present study is all the elementary schools of tribal areas of Odisha. Target population is restricted to all the elementary schools of four tribal districts of Odisha: Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Koraput and Nabarangpur. The entire district of Mayurbhanj, Koraput and Nabarangpur come under scheduled area. Th. Rampur and Lanjigarh blocks of Kalahandi district come under scheduled area. Cluster sampling method was used. Six blocks were selected from these four districts- two blocks from Nabarangpur, two blocks from Koraput, one block each from Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj purposively. These blocks come under scheduled area. Ten elementary schools were selected randomly from each district. All the available teachers were selected from these schools. There were a total of 127 teachers.

An awareness test for teachers was developed and used by the investigator. It consisted of 34 multiple-choice items. Four alternatives were given against each item out of which one was correct answer. The dimension-wise distribution of items is given in the following table-1.

Table-1: Dimension-wise Distribution of Awareness Test for Teachers

S. No.	Dimensions	Number of items (Total=34)
1.	Preliminary	08
2.	Right to Free and Compulsory Education	05
3.	Provision for weaker sections	02
4.	Admission guidelines	07
5.	Duties of stakeholders	03
6.	School Management	09

The data collection work started from the month of January, 2016 and continued till December, 2016. The data were analysed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results were presented both graphically and tabular forms.

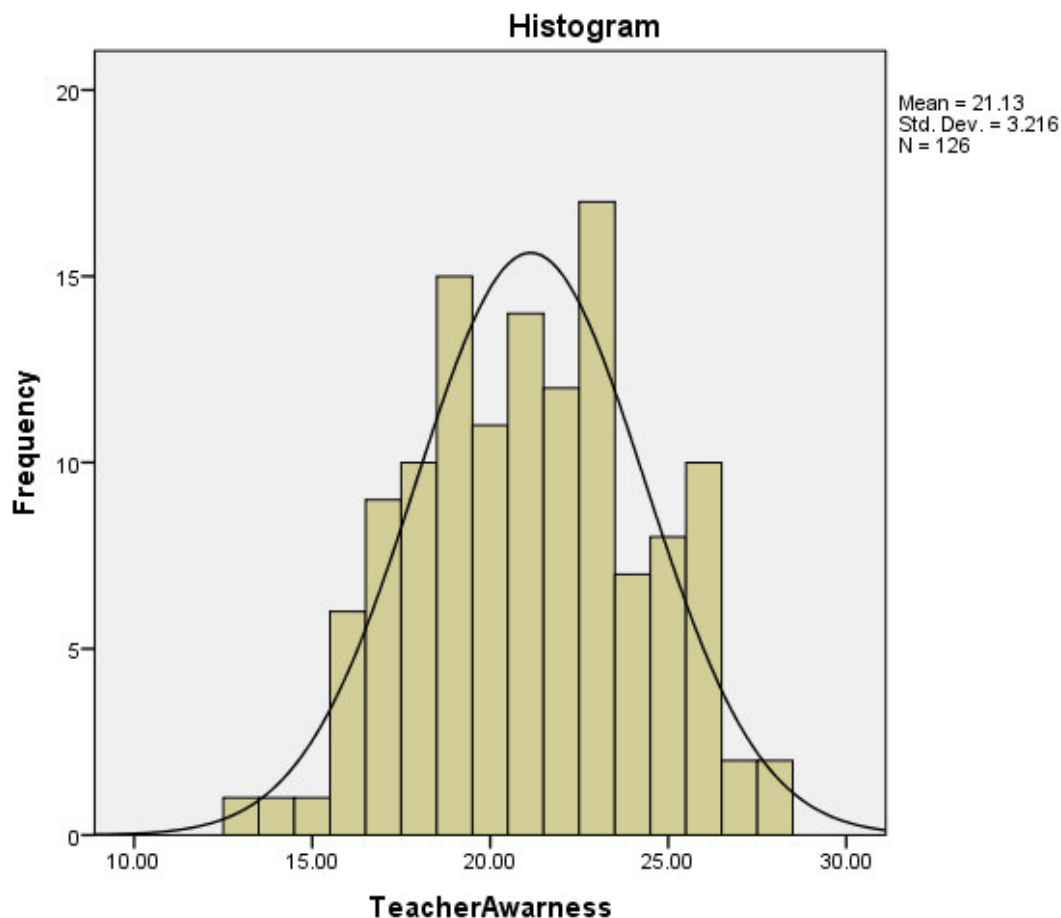
Results

Overall Awareness of teachers about RTE Act

Overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act are analyzed using descriptive statistics as given in the following table-3 and fig-1.

Table-3: Overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act

	N	Mean	Median	Mode	S.E of Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Awareness	126	21.13	21.0	23.0	0.286	3.216	10.342	-.026	-.612



Graph-1: Histogram of overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act

Table-3 depicts the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of awareness test score of teachers. Graph-1 depicts the distribution of teachers' awareness score. The value of mean, median and mode are 21.13, 21.0 and 23.0. Standard deviation of 3.216 represent the marginal scattered scores from the mean position. The value of skewness is -0.26 that shows the distribution is negatively skewed which shows more individuals score more than the average score in their group. The value of kurtosis is -0.612 that shows the distribution of kurtosis is greater than the normal distribution i.e. 0.263. Thus, the curve is platykurtic. It can be concluded that the elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Odisha are aware about Right to Education Act. Similar finding was also made by Soni (2013). However, it contradicts to the findings made by Thakur (2014), Choudhary (2014) and Sarvapalli, (2012).

RTE Act 2009 is now included in the curriculum of preservice teacher education programme. Teachers are exposed to different inservice training programme on RTE Act. This may be the reason for their awareness about RTE Act.

Comparison on overall awareness of teachers of Kalahandi, Nabarangapur, Mayurbhanj and Koraput Districts about RTE Act

In order to study the inter-districts comparison on overall awareness of teachers of Kalahandi, Nabarangapur, Mayurbhanj and Koraput Districts about RTE Act, data has been analyzed in the following table-4.

Table-4: Summary of ANOVA depicting overall and component-wise awareness scores of teachers about RTE Act of Kalahandi, Nabarangapur, Mayurbhanj and Koraput Districts

Components	Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	p-value
Preliminary	Between groups	3	2.595	.865	.710	0.548
	Within groups	122	148.683	1.219		
	Error	125	151.278			
RFCE	Between groups	3	1.585	.528	2.160	0.096
	Within groups	122	29.843	.245		
	Error	125	31.429			
Provision for weaker section	Between groups	3	1.299	.433	2.339	0.077
	Within groups	122	22.574	.185		
	Error	125	23.873			
Admission guidelines	Between groups	3	.772	.257	1.581	0.198
	Within groups	122	19.863	.163		
	Error	125	20.635			
Duties of stakeholders	Between groups	3	.410	.137	.629	0.598
	Within groups	122	26.519	.217		
	Error	125	26.929			
School management	Between groups	3	7.889	2.630	1.573	0.199
	Within groups	122	203.984	1.672		
	Error	125	211.873			
Overall	Between groups	3	125.304	41.768	4.365*	0.006
	Within groups	122	1167.402	9.569		
	Error	125	1292.706			

***Significant at 0.01 level of significance**

It is revealed from the above table-4 that the calculated F-ratio of all components of awareness of teachers about RTE Act among four districts are not significant at 0.05 level of significance with df 3/122 except in overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act among four districts whose calculated F ratio (4.365) is significant at 0.01 level of significance as p-value is 0.006. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the awareness about RTE Act among elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Kalahandi, Nabarangapur, Mayurbhanj and Koraput districts. Similar finding was also made by Thakur (2014) and Kaur (2015).

In order to identify exact difference among districts, Tukey HSD test of multiple comparisons was calculated. This is given in the following table-4.5.

Table-4.5: Multiple Comparisons

Variables	District(I)	District(J)	Mean Difference	Standard Error	p-value
Overall Awareness of Teachers about RTEAct	Kalahandi	Nabarangpur	1.49	.75	.200
		Mayurbhanj	1.49	.75	.200
		Koraput	2.911*	.80556	.002

The mean difference between Kalahandi and Nabarangpur (1.489) and Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj (1.489) districts on overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act are not significant at 0.05 level of significance as p-value is 0.200. In case of the mean difference between Kalahandi and Koraput (2.911) districts on overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act is significant at 0.01 level of significance as p-value is 0.002. It means that the teachers of Kalahandi District are significantly more aware than the teachers of Koraput district about RTE Act. Similar finding was also made by Thakur (2014) and Kaur (2015).

Awareness of Teachers about RTE Act with reference to Gender

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to gender, the data was analyzed in the following table-5.

Table-5: Significance of difference in mean scores of overall and component-wise awareness of male and female teachers about RTE Act

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	t-ratio	P value
Preliminary	Male	68	4.367	1.171	0.196	0.993	.323
	Female	58	4.172	1.011			
RFCE	Male	68	.470	.503	0.998	0.135	.893
	Female	58	.482	.504			
Provision for weaker section	Male	68	.764	.427	0.078	0.518	.605
	Female	58	.724	.451			
Admission guidelines	Male	68	.735	.445	0.072	1.760	.081
	Female	58	.862	.348			
Duties of stakeholders	Male	68	.676	.471	0.083	0.365	.715
	Female	58	.706	.459			
School management	Male	68	4.985	1.072	0.233	0.158	.874
	Female	58	4.948	1.538			
Overall	Male	68	21.558	3.063	0.571	1.612	.109
	Female	58	20.637	3.344			

The obtained t-ratio of overall (1.612) and all components (0.135, 0.135, 0.518, 1.760, 0.365 and 0.158) of awareness of male and female teachers about RTE Act is not significant at 0.05 levels of significance. It means that there is no significant difference in the mean awareness scores of male and female teachers in all the components of RTE Act. Similar finding was also made by Kumar (2015), Patel (2015), Kumari & Allam (2014) and Thakur (2014). This contradicts to the finding of Islam & Chakraborty (2013), Abdul and Rajan (2008), Kumar (2014), Krishnarao & Mangesh (2015), Kaur (2015) and Mahanadi (2014).

Awareness of Teachers about RTE Act with reference to Educational Qualification

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their educational qualification, the data was analyzed through one-way ANOVA in the following table-6.

Table-6: Summary of ANOVA depicting overall and component wise awareness scores of teachers about RTE Act belonging to Intermediate, graduation and PG and above qualification

Components	Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	p-value
Preliminary	Between groups	2	5.927	2.963	2.508	.086
	Within groups	123	145.351	1.182		
	Error	125	151.278			
RFCE	Between groups	2	.086	.043	.168	.845
	Within groups	123	31.343	.255		
	Error	125	31.429			
Provision for weaker section	Between groups	2	.145	.073	.377	.687
	Within groups	123	23.728	.193		
	Error	125	23.873			
Admission guidelines	Between groups	2	.051	.026	.154	.858
	Within groups	123	20.583	.167		
	Error	125	20.635			
Duties of stakeholders	Between groups	2	.042	.021	.095	.909
	Within groups	123	26.887	.219		
	Error	125	26.929			
School management	Between groups	2	4.978	2.489	1.480	.232
	Within groups	123	206.895	1.682		
	Error	125	211.873			
Overall	Between groups	2	18.009	9.005	.869	.422
	Within groups	123	1274.697	10.363		
	Error	125	1292.706			

From the above table-6, no significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their educational qualification.

Awareness of Teachers about RTE Act with reference to Professional Qualification

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their educational qualification, the data was analyzed through one way ANOVA in the following table-7.

Table-7: Summary of ANOVA depicting overall and component wise awareness scores of teachers about RTE Act belonging to D.Ed., B.Ed. and untrained

Components	Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	p-value
Preliminary	Between groups	2	5.717	2.859	2.416	.094
	Within groups	123	145.561	1.183		
	Error	125	151.278			
RFCE	Between groups	2	.637	.319	1.273	.284
	Within groups	123	30.791	.250		
	Error	125	31.429			
Provision for weaker section	Between groups	2	.411	.205	1.077	.344
	Within groups	123	23.462	.191		
	Error	125	23.873			
Admission guidelines	Between groups	2	.410	.205	1.246	.291
	Within groups	123	20.225	.164		
	Error	125	20.635			
Duties of stakeholders	Between groups	2	.953	.477	2.257	.109
	Within groups	123	25.975	.211		
	Error	125	26.929			
School management	Between groups	2	7.453	3.727	2.242	.111
	Within groups	123	204.420	1.662		
	Error	125	211.873			
Overall	Between groups	2	32.014	16.007	1.562	.214
	Within groups	123	1260.693	10.250		
	Error	125	1292.706			

From the above table-7, no significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their professional qualification.

Awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to teaching experience

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their teaching experience, the data was analyzed through one way ANOVA in the following table-8.

Table-8: Summary of ANOVA depicting overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act belonging to less than 5, 5 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years and above 20 years teaching experience

Components	Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	p-value
Preliminary	Between groups	4	5.717	1.429	1.188	.320
	Within groups	121	145.561	1.203		
	Error	125	151.278			
RFCE	Between groups	4	2.478	.620	2.590*	.040
	Within groups	121	28.950	.239		
	Error	125	31.429			
Provision for weaker section	Between groups	4	1.769	.442	2.421	.052
	Within groups	121	22.104	.183		
	Error	125	23.873			
Admission guidelines	Between groups	4	.782	.195	1.191	.318
	Within groups	121	19.853	.164		
	Error	125	20.635			
Duties of stakeholders	Between groups	4	1.672	.418	2.003	.098
	Within groups	121	25.256	.209		
	Error	125	26.929			
School management	Between groups	4	9.440	2.360	1.411	.234
	Within groups	121	202.433	1.673		
	Error	125	211.873			
Overall	Between groups	4	45.830	11.457	1.112	.354
	Within groups	121	1246.877	10.305		
	Error	125	1292.706			

*significant at 0.05 level of significance

It is revealed from the above table-8 that the calculated F-ratio of all components of awareness of teachers about RTE Act among four categories of teachers on the basis of teaching experiences are not significant at 0.05

level of significance with df 4/121 except in awareness of teachers about RTE Act in the component Right of children to free education (RCFE) whose calculated F ratio (2.590) is significant at 0.05 level of significance as p-value is 0.04. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the awareness about RTE Act in the component Right of children to free education (RCFE) among four categories of elementary school teachers on the basis of teaching experiences which contradicts to the earlier finding by Kumar (2014).

Awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their mother tongue

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their mother tongue, the data was analyzed in the following table-9.

Table-9: Significance of difference in the mean scores of overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their mother tongue

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	t-ratio	P value
Preliminary	Odia	91	4.3626	1.11072	.217	1.402	.164
	Local language	35	4.0571	1.05560			
RFCE	Odia	91	.5055	.50274	.099	1.058	.292
	Local language	35	.4000	.49705			
Provision for weaker section	Odia	91	.7912	.40870	.086	1.890	.061
	Local language	35	.6286	.49024			
Admission guidelines	Odia	91	.8132	.39192	.080	.869	.386
	Local language	35	.7429	.44344			
Duties of stakeholders	Odia	91	.6593	.47656	.092	1.216	.226
	Local language	35	.7714	.42604			
School management	Odia	91	5.1209	1.20033	.255	2.152*	.033
	Local language	35	4.5714	1.48097			
Overall	Odia	91	21.4725	3.14233	.632	1.920	.057
	Local language	35	20.2571	3.28403			

* significant at 0.05 level of significance

From the above table-10, the obtained t-ratio of overall and all component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their mother tongue is not significant at 0.05 levels of significance except in the component school management (t value=2.152 and p-value=0.033). The teachers with mother tongue Odia is significantly more aware about RTE Act in the component school management than the teachers with local language as mother tongue.

Awareness of Teachers about RTE Act with reference to Age

In order to study the overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to age, the data was analysed through one way ANOVA in the following table-11.

Table-11: Summary of ANOVA depicting overall and component-wise awareness scores of teachers about RTE Act belonging to less than 30, 30 to 40 and above 40 age group

Components	Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	p-value
Preliminary	Between groups	2	8.663	4.332	3.736*	.027
	Within groups	123	142.614	1.159		
	Error	125	151.278			
RFCE	Between groups	2	1.304	.652	2.661	.074
	Within groups	123	30.125	.245		
	Error	125	31.429			
Provision for weaker section	Between groups	2	.748	.374	1.989	.141
	Within groups	123	23.125	.188		
	Error	125	23.873			
Admission guidelines	Between groups	2	.692	.346	2.134	.123
	Within groups	123	19.943	.162		
	Error	125	20.635			
Duties of stakeholders	Between groups	2	1.443	.721	3.482*	.034
	Within groups	123	25.486	.207		
	Error	125	26.929			
School management	Between groups	2	2.216	1.108	.650	.524
	Within groups	123	209.657	1.705		
	Error	125	211.873			
Overall	Between groups	2	25.349	12.675	1.230	.296
	Within groups	123	1267.357	10.304		
	Error	125	1292.706			

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

From the above table-11, it is revealed that the calculated F-ratio of overall awareness of teachers about RTE Act belonging to less than 30, 30 to 40 and above 40 age group are not significant at 0.05 level of significance with df 2/123. However, significant difference was found at 0.05 level of significance among teachers belonging to less than 30, 30 to 40 and above 40 age group with respect to dimensions preliminary and duties of stakeholders of RTE Act. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the awareness about RTE Act with respect to dimensions preliminary and duties of stakeholders among elementary school teachers of less than 30, 30 to 40 and above 40 age group.

Major Findings

- Elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Odisha are aware about Right to Education Act.
- There is a significant difference in the awareness about RTE Act among elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj and Koraput districts. Teachers of Kalahandi District are significantly more aware than the teachers of Koraput district about RTE Act.
- There is no significant difference in the awareness about RTE Act between male and female teachers.
- No significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their educational and professional qualification.
- No significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their teaching experience except in the component Right of children to free education (RCFE).
- No significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their mother tongue except in the component school management. The teachers with mother tongue Odia is significantly more aware about RTE Act in the component school management than the teachers with local language as mother tongue.
- No significant difference was found in overall and component wise awareness of teachers about RTE Act with reference to their age except in the component preliminary and duties of stakeholders.

Discussion

RTE Act has been implemented in the state of Odisha since 2010. Odisha is the second state in the country to have passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rule 2010. Since then, number of initiatives have been taken both by the Central and state government towards implementation of the RTE Act, 2009. Some of them are Teacher capacity building and improvement in teaching learning processes (Sadhan & Samadhan); development of variety of materials like, booklets containing RTE Act, 2009 and Odisha RCFCE

Rule, 2010, Trifold leaflets on provisions of the RTE Act, Handbook on FAQs on RTE, Comprehensive Handbook on RTE Act, Rules and FAQs, Posters on provisions of the RTE Act, Short film on the provisions of RTE Act, 2009, etc. Secondly, all the teachers at elementary level of Odisha are not scheduled tribe nor all of them belong to tribal areas. Teachers from mainland are also appointed in tribal areas. This may be the reason that elementary school teachers in tribal areas of Odisha are aware about Right to Education Act. Again, since the training programmes were mandatory for all the teachers and the materials were meant for all categories of teachers, no significant difference was found in awareness about RTE Act among teachers on the bases of their gender, educational and professional qualification, teaching experience, mother and age.

Hence, the Government at State and National level should focus more on providing teacher training how to implement the tenets of RTE Act in their own context and improve the quality of elementary education instead of focussing on creating awareness about RTE Act. Training and motivation should be given for: Identification of out-of-school and drop-out children in the locality and enrol them into school; collaboration with NGOs and community organizations; minimizing student absenteeism; minimising teacher absenteeism; emphasizing child-centred activity-based learning; creating awareness about RTE Act among parents and SMC members in tribal areas of Odisha; ensuring timely distribution of free text books, stationeries, uniforms, etc.; and creating a symbiotic relationship with the community.

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