

The Right to Education Act

Passed by Indian Parliament in August 2009

Makes education a fundamental right of every child aged 6 to 14

Requires all private schools to hold 25% of seats for children from poor backgrounds

States that no child shall be held back, expelled or made to sit an entrance exam until the completion of elementary education



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Raising School Performance

School Management and Development Committees Focus on Quality of Learning

The Hindustan Times, one of India's leading newspapers, has highlighted in a recent news article¹ that the Right to Education Act (RTE)² is improving school facilities and has encouraged more students to attend school. The Annual Status of (Rural) Education Report³, published by Pratham, says that it is clear that many schools are meeting RTE norms and have also acquired better library facilities and books. However, quality of learning does not meet requirements outlined in the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)⁴ and more needs to be done to raise student performance in schools across the country.

The RMSA Roll Out for Quality Secondary Education project, implemented by the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), seeks to improve the quality of student learning. CYSD is working with 25 School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in Sambalpur district, Odisha, to help develop and implement school development plans. These plans focus on the physical development of schools such as water supply, classroom construction and boundary walls. The plans also focus on improvements to the curriculum and raising levels of attainment and the quality of learning.

The baseline study for the project, which assessed the schools at the start of the project, was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods in 25 intervention and 25 control schools.

The data from the study shows that since the introduction of school development plans there has been a considerable improvement in school performance in the intervention schools. SMDC members have become more active and aware of their roles and responsibilities towards the academic development of their schools and the introduction of teacher training has led to an improvement in teaching methods. The research also highlighted that sustainable interventions such as professional development for teachers and providing opportunities for interactive learning are necessary in order for the overall academic performance of schools to improve. With support from Kusuma Trust UK (The Trust) CYSD continues to work with SMDC members to improve the quality of secondary education in the district.

¹ <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/RTE-high-attendance-low-learning/Article1-992519.aspx>

² Right to Education Act (RTE) was passed by Indian Parliament to ensure free and compulsory education for all aged 6 to 14 years

³ <http://www.pratham.org/file/ASER-2012report.pdf>

⁴ Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is India's national scheme for improving the quality of secondary education



SMDC Members receiving training from CYSD in Sambalpur, Odisha Photo: CYSD

Annual Celebration for Fellows

Pragathi Seva Samithi

The Kusuma Young Achievers' Award provides financial support to 1,200 fellows, in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, in order to complete secondary school and for students who have completed senior secondary school to pursue higher education and professional courses. 'Pragathi Kusumalu' is an annual two-day residential event that provides an opportunity for the fellows to come together and celebrate their achievements. The recent Pragathi Kusumalu took place at the Arts and Science College in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh. Over two days fellows competed in sporting and team building activities, attended cultural events and visited science and art exhibitions. The event culminated in a prize giving ceremony for the fellows.



Fellows gather for the flag raising ceremony at Pragathi Kusumalu
Photo: Pragathi Seva Samithi

Kodishala Vinay, one of the fellows who attended the event said "This annual meet has helped me to connect with other fellows and also come in contact with a new cohort of Kusuma fellows. Together, we have shared our experiences of being a fellow and the opportunities that we obtained through the fellowship programme. We also had fun and excitement at the meet and got several opportunities to be a part of the competitions, sports, motivational camps, cultural activities, quiz programmes and science exhibitions which have helped me to improve my confidence levels."

Kitchen Construction for Mid-day Meals

Akshaya Patra Foundation

The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF) supports the Government's Mid Day Meal Programme. With funding from The Trust, TAPF is building a Mid Day Meals Kitchen in Bhubaneswar. When fully operational, the kitchen will feed up to 100,000 children daily. The inauguration of the kitchen and the launch of the feeding programme is planned for the middle of 2013. Recruitment of a management team and front line staff to run the kitchen has taken place and 10 vans have been purchased and branded with the TAPF and Kusuma logos ready for the distribution of meals to local schools.



Delivery Van for Mid-day Meals Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Vocational training courses get accredited

Better Education Through Innovation

The Better Education Through Innovation Foundation (BETI) provides vocational training opportunities for children from Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, who have dropped out of school. The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM) recently accredited the training courses delivered throughout BETI's training centres. ASSOCHAM will assess trainees in several vocational courses such as Information Communication Technology (ICT), automobile repair, welding and electrical engineering. On successful completion of examinations, trainees will receive formal certification that is highly regarded within local industry.

The first cohort of trainees are due to graduate with the accreditation in April 2013. They will receive mentoring and be supported to apply their trade skills and newly obtained qualifications in the world of work.

ICT Clubs have an encouraging start

Thomas's Schools Foundation

The Trust recently provided funding to support an ICT project in West London. The Thomas's Schools Foundation, whose aim is the advancement of education, is coordinating an ICT Club to help primary school pupils gain the confidence and skills required to use ICT whilst completing their homework. The project aims to improve the Mathematics skills of 165 pupils from the Kensington & Chelsea borough until the end of December 2013.

After the first term of the project, pupils participating in the club, from St Thomas's School and the Clement James Centre, have already shown an improvement in online Mathematics learning. Pupils have also shown increased skills in word processing, using spreadsheets and online research. Colville Primary School joined the project in January 2013.