RTE Report

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the implementation of the RTE Act in six schools in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, identifying systemic challenges and practical solutions. Even though progress has been made, issues such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and socio-economic barriers continue to hamper the effectiveness of the Act. Schools are plagued by huge deficits in functional classrooms, sanitation, and drinking water, while teacher shortages, high student-teacher ratios, and absenteeism compromise the quality of education. Socio-economic constraints, such as poverty and children working, present inconsistent attendance with high dropout rates, especially by marginalised groups. Based on global best practices, investment in infrastructure was recommended for Finland, teacher capacity building for Singapore, cash transfer programs alleviating economic pressures for Brazil, and community accountability for Kenya. It also advises strong monitoring systems, such as regular inspections and performance reviews, inspired by South Korea, to ensure compliance and improvement. Conclusion In the context of the RTE Act, although it has increased access to education, there is a need to address the systemic issues to reach its goals of universal, quality education for all children.

I. Introduction

The KIIT Legal Services Clinic believes that education is a transformative force and not only a right but a moral imperative. Guided by the mission of KIIT University to promote social justice, we focus on empowering marginalised communities and ensuring equitable access to fundamental rights like education. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, promises free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 but faces significant challenges in its implementation due to socio-economic disparities, infrastructural gaps, and systemic inertia.

To analyse these issues, we visited six schools in Bhubaneswar: **Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha, Pathani Samanta School, Jharpada Primary School, Government Primary School (GGP Village), Laxmisagar High School, and Debraj Primary School Bomikhal.** Our method included field visits, interviews with stakeholders, and analysis of reports and case law, providing a grassroots view of the shortcomings of the Act.

Our study re-iterated familiar concerns: crumbling infrastructure, teacher shortages, poor sanitation, and socio-economic barriers. However, we found equally concerning were weak monitoring mechanisms and a minimal level of community engagement. Still, there were glimmers of hope; practical reforms in other regions and countries show that change is possible through teacher training, grassroots programmes, and stronger community involvement.

This report is a call to action. The RTE Act is not only a legal commitment but also a gateway to equity, empowerment, and opportunity for every child. It is a call to honor our collective responsibility to create a future where education is truly universal and transformative.

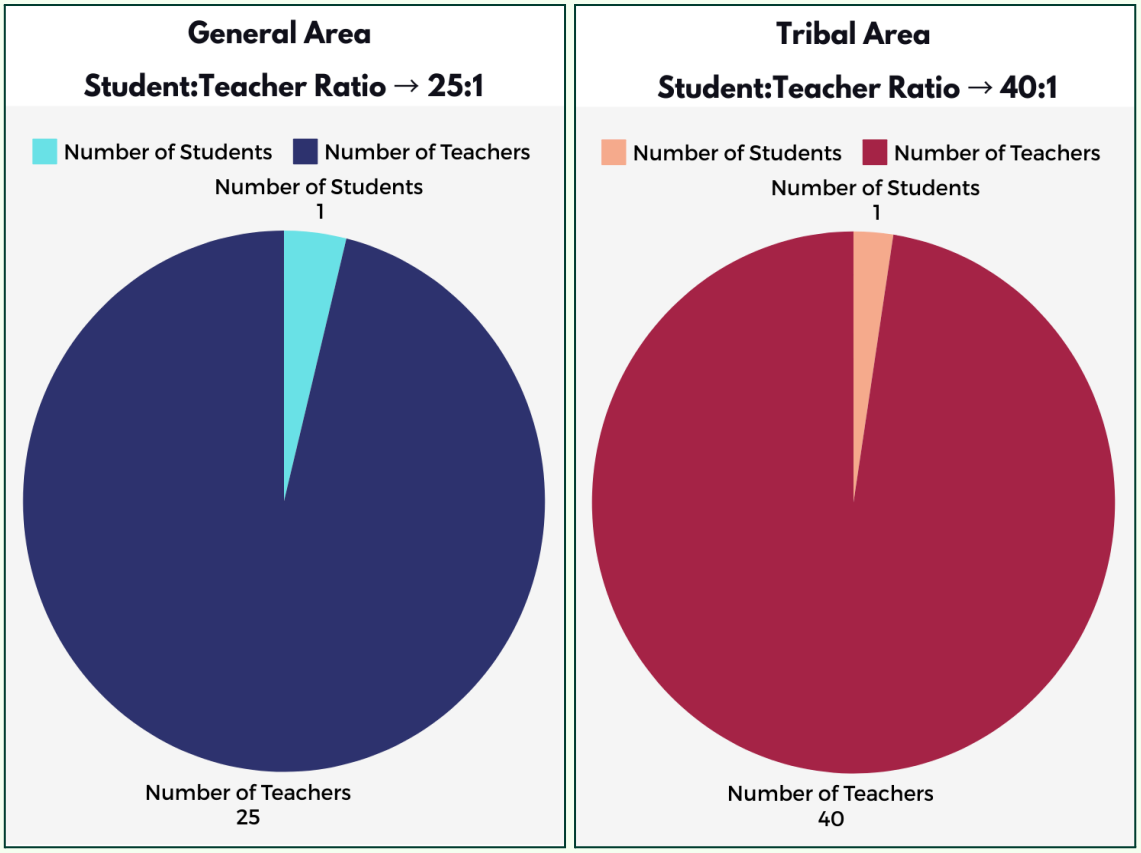
II. RTE & Education in Odisha

In Odisha, the RTE Act has had a challenging existence and enforcement veiled by successes though under the national average, putting forth the complex tapestry of India. **With a literacy rate of 72.9%, Odisha is below the national average of 77.7%.**[1] This gap points to regional disparities that the RTE sought to correct and improve upon, yet it reflects issues particular to the socio-economic situation challenging states, especially Odisha.

In the enrolment statistics, Odisha has reached nearly full and complete enrollment in primary education, with a net enrolment ratio of 99.3% as reported in 2020.[2] However, this figure veils the underlying problem of retention where dropout rates, particularly in rural and tribal areas, remain a cause for concern. **Nationally, dropout rates in upper primary levels remain around 17%, whereas in Odisha, the figure is slightly higher at 19.3%.**[3] This is confirmed by a study from the *Indian Journal of Human Development*, which highlights socio-economic factors contributing to dropout rates in Odisha's rural regions.[4]

[1] National Statistical Office, *Annual Report on Education Statistics* (2021).
[2] Ministry of Education, *State of Education in India: A Comparative Analysis* (2020).
[3] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Dropout Rates in India: A Regional Perspective* (2020).
[4] Tripathy, S., & Patel, S., "Socio-Economic Factors Influencing School Dropouts in Odisha", *Indian Journal of Human Development* (2018).

→ Graph - I – *General Area v/s Tribal Area Student-Teacher Ratio*



Teacher availability and student-teacher ratios also provide important insights. The RTE mandates a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 30:1 for primary schools. **Odisha has made considerably noticeable progress, with an average PTR of 25:1, compared to the national average of 26:1.**[5] However, the disparity within the state is stark, with **tribal and remote regions experiencing ratios as high as 40:1, undermining the quality of education.**[6] Research published in *Economic and Political Weekly* within its **exegesis analyses this inconsistency, bringing forth the adverse effects of such disparities on learning outcomes.**[7]

[5] District Information System for Education (DISE) Report (2019-20).
[6] Pratham Education, *Foundation, Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)* (2020).
[7] Banerjee, A., "Teacher Shortages and Learning Outcomes: A Study of Odisha", *Economic and Political Weekly* (2019).

Infrastructure is another area where Odisha struggles. **According to the District Information System for Education (DISE) report of 2019-20, only 78% of schools in Odisha have functional toilets, compared to the national average of 92%.**[8] This on the edge stat is more representative of rural areas, where basic facilities like drinking water and electricity are often absent, directly impacting attendance and retention rates. A study from the *Journal of Education Policy* highlights the **correlation between infrastructure deficits and student performance.**[9]

The state's expenditure on education as a percentage of its GDP stands at 2.8%, slightly above the national average of 2.7%.[10] However, this still f**ails to meet the recommended 6% by various education commissions.** The quality of education, availability of learning resources, and overall school infrastructure are reflections of the lack of adequate funding. A research paper in the *International Journal of Educational Development* puts forth that higher funding **positively correlates with improved educational outcomes in under-resourced regions.**[11]

Even though the not so flattering statistics exist, Odisha has been taking very aggressive measures for educational delivery with the support of technology for rural and tribal regions. ***Mo School* in the state has become popular due to the community-centered approach, providing infrastructure to improve quality at a per school level.**[12] It has inspired other states dealing with comparable problems.[13]

In a nutshell, the RTE journey in Odisha does show significant progress in many areas. However, the challenges are far from over and remain more of an issue, particularly in the distant rural and tribal sectors. These statistics, in comparison with the national average, put Odisha's progress in the right perspective while, at the same

[8] Ministry of Education, *School Infrastructure Report* (2019-20).
[9] Sharma, R., "Infrastructure and Educational Outcomes: An Analysis of Indian States", *Journal of Education Policy* (2021).
[10] Reserve Bank of India, *State Finances: A Study of Budgets* (2020).
[11] Kumar, N., "Education Financing and Learning Outcomes in India," *International Journal of Educational Development* (2020).
[12] Government of Odisha, *Mo School Abhiyan: A New Paradigm in Public Education* (2021).
[13] Singh, P., "Community Participation in Education: Lessons from Odisha's Mo School Initiative", *Asian Journal of Social Science* (2021).

time, emphasising the much deeper systemic challenges India faces to make education free and compulsory for every child.

III. Schools Covered for Survey

1. Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha (Cuttack, Semi-urban)

- Classes: Anganwadi–10; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students 73.62%, Teachers 83.33%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 22 rooms, minor repairs in 5 classrooms.
- Facilities: Library, Aquaguard water, functional toilets, temporary playground.
- Challenges: Staff lethargy.

2. Pathani Samanta School (Bhubaneswar, Urban)

- Classes: LKG–8; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students ~92%, Teachers 100%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 16 rooms, no repairs needed.
- Facilities: Library, medium playground, Aquaguard water.
- Additional: Two shifts, unofficial classes for Class 10.

3. Jharpada Primary School (Bhubaneswar, Urban)

- Classes: 1–5; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students 83.8%, Teachers 83.33%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 10 rooms, 3 needing repairs.
- Facilities: Library, large playground, Aquaguard water.
- Challenges: Shared toilets for teachers.

4. Govt. Primary School, GGP Village (Bhubaneswar, Urban)

- Classes: 1–5; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students 70.06%, Teachers 100%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 5 rooms, no major repairs.
- Facilities: Aquaguard water, no secure playground.
- Challenges: Lacks boundary wall, safety concern.

5. Laxmisagar High School (Bhubaneswar, Urban)

- Classes: 1–10; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students 82.23%, Teachers 100%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 23 rooms, 5 need major repairs.
- Facilities: E-library, science lab, large playground.
- Additional: Tennis court under construction.

6. Debraj Primary School, Bomikhal (Bhubaneswar, Urban)

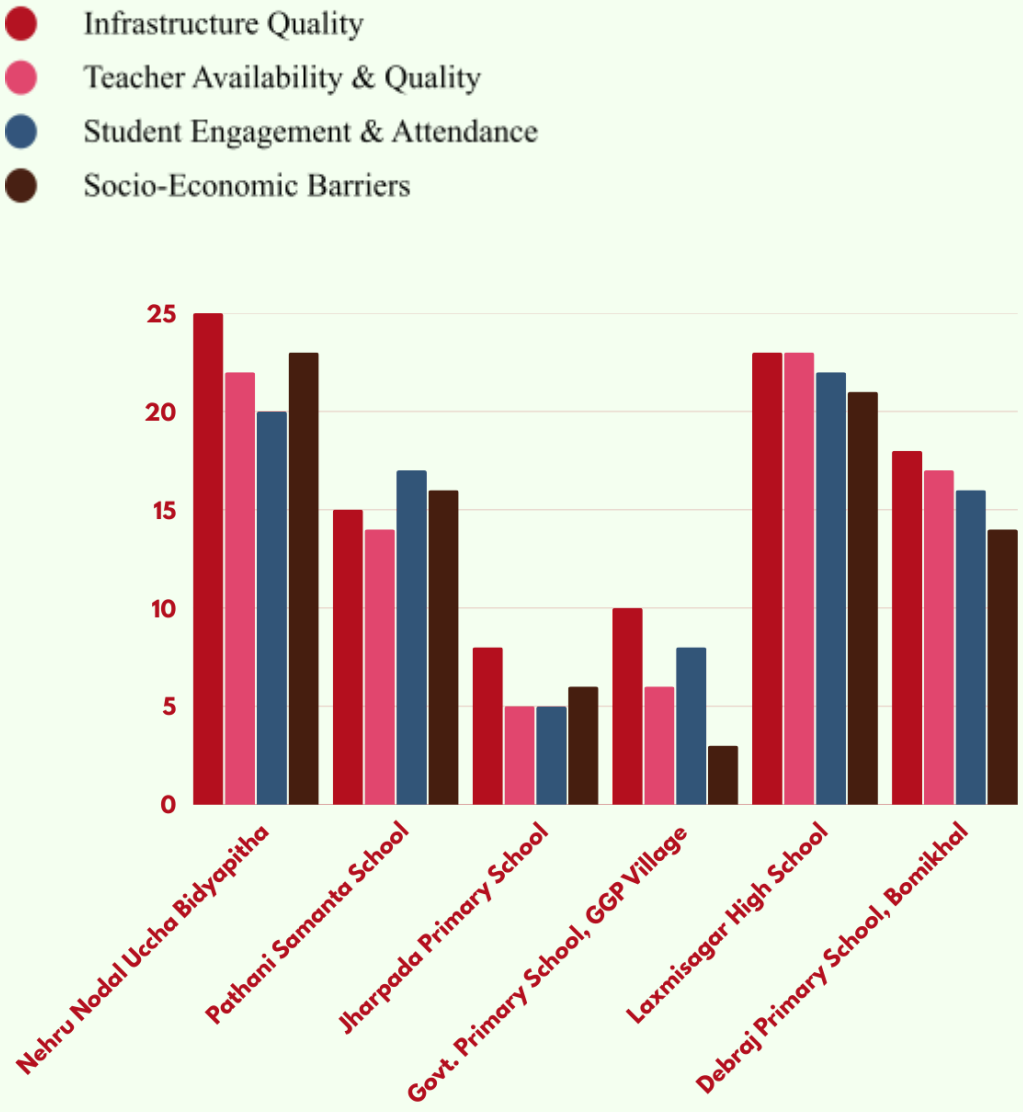
- Classes: 1–8; Co-ed.
- Attendance: Students 59.88%, Teachers 100%.
- Infrastructure: Pucca building, 3 rooms, roof repairs needed.
- Facilities: Inclusive toilets, Aquaguard water.
- Challenges: Poor student attendance, major repairs required.

IV. Analysis of Findings

An evaluation of six schools – Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha, Pathani Samanta School, Jhārpada Primary School, Government Primary School (GGP Village), Laxmisagar High

School, and Debraj Primary School (Bomikhal), unveils the nuanced interplay of infrastructure, teaching quality, student engagement, and socio-economic factors under the Right to Education (RTE) Act. While progress is evident, persistent gaps underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions.

→ Graph - II – *School-wise Analysis of Findings*



Overall the RTE Act has had mixed success across these schools. (Score out of 30)

1. Infrastructure Quality

Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha and Laxmisagar High School shine as models, boasting well-maintained buildings, functional libraries, sufficient classrooms, and clean drinking water facilities. These resources foster higher attendance and better learning outcomes.

On the other hand, Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School (GGP Village) struggle with decaying classrooms, poor sanitation, and the absence of recreational areas. Such conditions dampen enthusiasm and attendance, creating a hostile learning environment. Debraj Primary School, though staffed with dedicated teachers, faces a pressing need for repairs, particularly to its roofs and classrooms.

2. Teacher Availability and Quality

Teachers make or break a school. Their presence and their calibre determine outcomes.

Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha and Laxmisagar High School benefit from skilled and motivated staff, resulting in impressive student achievements. In contrast, Pathani Samanta School and Debraj Primary School grapple with an overburdened workforce and a lack of subject specialists.

For Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School (GGP Village), the issue is even graver. High absenteeism and frequent turnover among teachers disrupt the learning process. These schools highlight the cascading impact of inadequate working conditions and a lack of professional development.

3. Student Engagement and Attendance

Engagement levels diverge sharply across schools.

Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha and Laxmisagar High School boast attendance rates above 80%. Their secret? A positive teacher-student relationship, ample extracurricular activities, and accessible libraries and sports facilities.

Meanwhile, Pathani Samanta School and Debraj Primary School hover at a moderate 70–75% attendance, held back by insufficient extracurricular opportunities. At the bottom, Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School (GGP Village) suffer from attendance rates as low as 60%, driven by poor infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and socio-economic pressures like child labour.

4. Socio-Economic Barriers

Socio-economic disparities shape educational trajectories.

Urban schools like Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha and Laxmisagar High School thrive in favourable conditions, marked by active parental involvement, lower dropout rates, and significant government support.

The picture is bleaker for semi-urban and rural schools. Pathani Samanta School and Debraj Primary School face challenges like poverty and early marriages for girls, stalling progress. Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School (GGP Village) endure the brunt of child labour, poverty, and limited parental awareness, leading to low retention and poor outcomes.

Poverty may be an old enemy, but its effects are deeply modern in how they perpetuate educational inequality.

5. Implementation of the RTE Act

The RTE Act has had mixed success across these schools.

Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha and Laxmisagar High School exemplify what's possible when the Act is implemented well. Solid infrastructure, sufficient teachers, and engaged communities converge to fulfil its promise.

In contrast, Pathani Samanta School and Debraj Primary School show partial success. They achieve access to education but falter in quality and inclusivity. Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School (GGP Village) highlight significant gaps, poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching, and low engagement remain persistent barriers.

6. Recommendations for Improvement

Bridging these gaps demands concerted action.

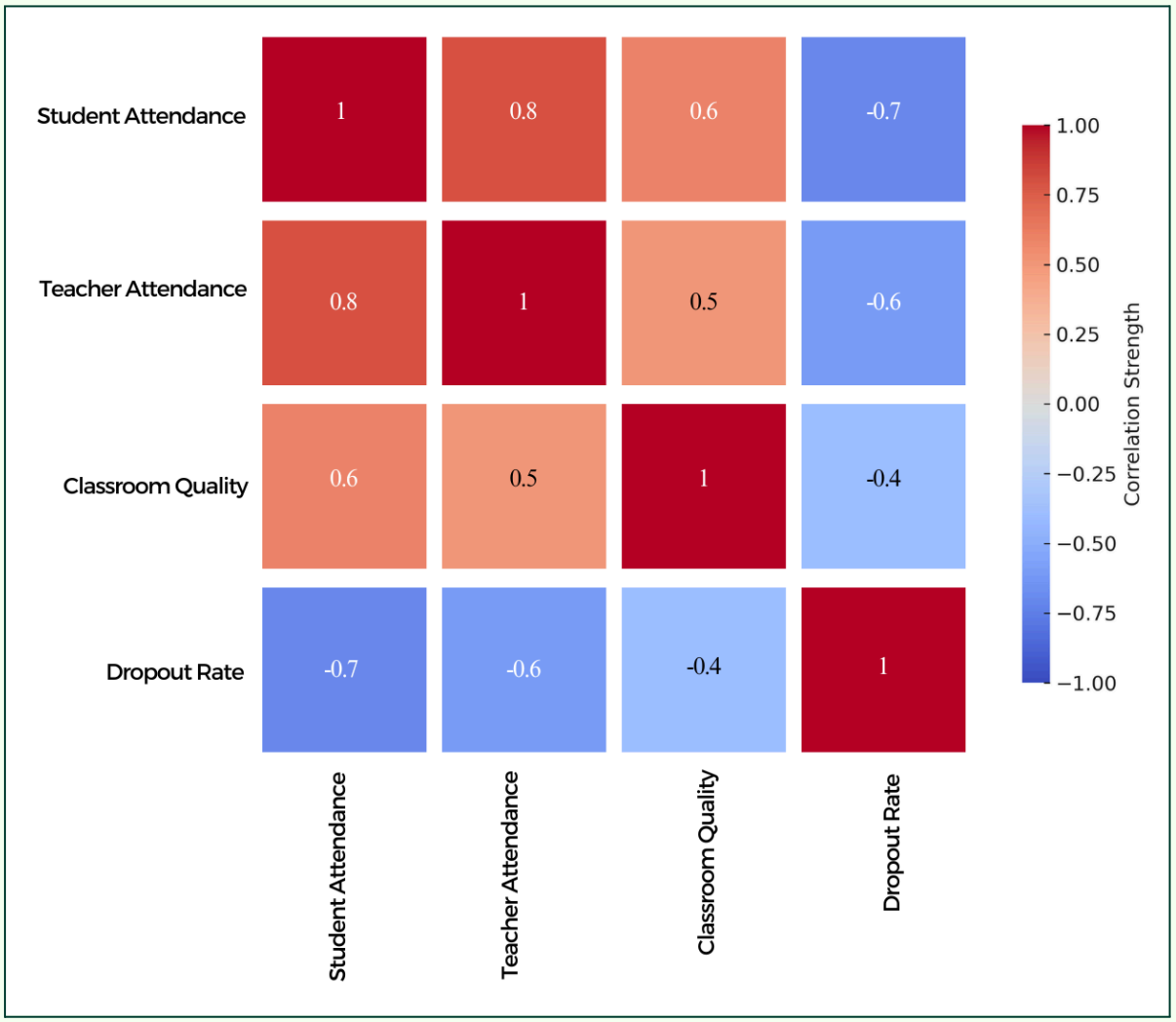
1. **Infrastructure Development:** Prioritise repairs and upgrades to classrooms, sanitation, and recreational spaces.
2. **Teacher Training and Retention:** Offer professional development and incentives to attract and retain skilled teachers.
3. **Community Engagement:** Strengthen School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to mobilise resources and accountability.
4. **Support for Marginalised Groups:** Implement targeted programmes like scholarships and awareness campaigns to encourage attendance.
5. **Effective Monitoring:** Establish robust systems to assess and address gaps in RTE implementation.

This analysis shows progress but also reveals a daunting truth: gaps in infrastructure, teaching, and socio-economic equity still hold back the Act's full potential. Address these challenges with intent, and the RTE Act can truly transform education in India.

V. Correlation Matrix of Elemental Impact

This analysis dives into how different attributes attendance, infrastructure, facilities interact across six schools: Nehru Nodal Uccha Bidyapitha, Pathani Samanta School, Jhārpada Primary School, Government Primary School in GGP Village, Laxmisagar High School, and Debraj Primary School in Bomikhal. These factors don't just coexist, they influence each other in ways that are hard to ignore.

→ Graph - III – *Correlation Matrix of Various Fields of Survey*



The correlation matrix provides insights into the relationships between various educational factors:

1. **Student Attendance & Teacher Attendance (0.8):** A strong positive correlation suggests that higher teacher attendance is associated with higher student attendance.
2. **Student Attendance & Classroom Quality (0.6):** A moderate positive correlation indicates that better classroom quality tends to increase student attendance.
3. **Student Attendance & Dropout Rate (-0.7):** A strong negative correlation implies that higher student attendance is linked to a lower dropout rate.

4. **Teacher Attendance & Classroom Quality (0.5):** A moderate positive correlation suggests that improved classroom quality is associated with better teacher attendance.
5. **Teacher Attendance & Dropout Rate (-0.6):** A strong negative correlation shows that higher teacher attendance reduces dropout rates.
6. **Classroom Quality & Dropout Rate (-0.4):** A weaker negative correlation indicates that better classroom quality is somewhat associated with a lower dropout rate.

Overall, attendance (both student and teacher) and classroom quality contribute positively to education outcomes, while dropout rates negatively correlate with these factors.

→ A. Table 1 – *Correlation Matrix Table*

A. Table 1 – Correlation Matrix Table	
Legend	
	= Classroom Availability
	= Student/Teacher Attendance
	= Repair Need
	= Number of Students/Teachers
	= Toilet Availability
	= Facilities

A. Table 1 – Correlation Matrix Table				
S.No.	**Field 1**	**Field 2**	**Correlation Type**	**Explanation/Comments**
1.	**Student Attendance (%)**	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	***Positive***	Higher teacher attendance is often linked to better student attendance. If teachers are present, students are more likely to attend.
2.	**Student Attendance (%)**	**No. of Students (1 to 5)**	***Positive***	Higher attendance often reflects a larger number of students present in the school, which can also suggest the school's positive environment and facilities.
3.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**No. of Teachers for Grades 1 to 5**	***Positive***	More teachers result in better management of classes, leading to higher teacher attendance and effectiveness in student attendance.
4.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**No. of Teachers Present**	***Positive***	High teacher attendance correlates with the quality of education and a good student-teacher ratio, thus impacting student engagement and performance.
5.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**Student-to-Teacher Ratio**	***Positive***	Higher teacher attendance results in a lower student-teacher ratio, improving learning conditions for students.
6.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**Classrooms Available**	***Positive***	Schools with sufficient teacher attendance tend to have adequate classroom availability to

				maintain manageable class sizes.
7.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**No. of Classrooms in Need of Repair**	***Negative***	Higher teacher attendance often correlates with better-maintained infrastructure, meaning fewer classrooms in need of repair.
8.	**Teacher Attendance (%)**	**Repairs Needed (Minor/Major)**	***Negative***	More teacher presence often suggests a more organized and maintained school, which correlates with fewer repairs needed.
9.	**No. of Students (1 to 5)**	**No. of Teachers for Grades 1 to 5**	***Positive***	As the number of students increases, more teachers are required to maintain the appropriate student-teacher ratio.
10.	**No. of Students (1 to 5)**	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	***Negative***	A higher number of students often means the teacher-pupil ratio becomes less favorable if the number of teachers doesn't increase.
11.	**No. of Students (1 to 5)**	**Classrooms Available**	***Positive***	Schools with more students tend to have more classrooms or larger facilities to accommodate the growing student population.
12.	**No. of Students (1 to 5)**	**Toilets (Girls/Boys)**	***Positive***	More students generally require more toilet facilities, especially in terms of gender segregation and adequate facilities for all.

13.	**No. of Teachers for Grades 1 to 5**	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	***Negative***	If there are more teachers, the ratio of teachers to students becomes more balanced, leading to a better learning environment.
14.	**No. of Teachers for Grades 1 to 5**	**No. of Classrooms Available**	***Positive***	More teachers often correspond with a higher number of classrooms needed to manage the student population and ensure quality education.
15.	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	**Number of Classrooms Available**	***Positive***	A lower teacher-pupil ratio often correlates with more classrooms to facilitate better learning environments.
16.	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	**No. of Toilets (Functional)**	***Positive***	Schools with a lower teacher-pupil ratio often ensure better infrastructure, including functional toilets, for students' comfort.
17.	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	**Availability of Safe Drinking Water**	***Positive***	A balanced teacher-pupil ratio is indicative of better school resources, such as safe drinking water for all students.
18.	**Teacher-Pupil Ratio**	**Playground Size/Availability**	***Positive***	Schools with a good teacher-pupil ratio typically have more resources for extracurricular activities, like a playground.
19.	**Number of Classrooms Available**	**No. of Classrooms Needing Repairs**	***Negative***	Schools with more classrooms usually have fewer classrooms needing repairs, as they tend to maintain the facilities well.

20.	**Number of Classrooms Available**	**No. of Toilets Available**	***Positive***	More classrooms generally correlate with an increased number of toilets to accommodate a larger student population.
21.	**Number of Classrooms Available**	**Availability of Library**	***Positive***	Schools with more classrooms usually have better infrastructure, including libraries, to promote a well-rounded educational environment.
22.	**Number of Classrooms Available**	**Availability of Playground**	***Positive***	More classrooms often suggest that schools have sufficient grounds for sports, ensuring a balance between academic and extracurricular spaces.
23.	**Number of Toilets Available**	**Number of Toilets Functional**	***Positive***	Schools with more toilets available usually have a greater number of toilets that are functional and usable.
24.	**Number of Toilets Available**	**Toilet Availability for Teachers**	***Positive***	Schools with a larger number of toilets for students tend to provide separate toilets for teachers as well.
25.	**Number of Toilets Available**	**Toilets Available for PWD Students**	***Positive***	Schools that focus on accessibility for PWD students also tend to have more inclusive toilet facilities for all students.
26.	**Toilets Functional**	**Safe Drinking Water Availability**	***Positive***	Schools with functional toilets often prioritize other student needs, including access to safe drinking water and clean surroundings.

27.	**Playground Size/Availability**	**Number of Play Materials/ Equipment**	***Positive***	A larger playground typically corresponds with more resources for physical education, including play materials and sports equipment.
28.	**Playground Size/Availability**	**No. of Teachers for Grades 1 to 5**	***Positive***	A larger playground is typically found in schools that invest more in resources, including hiring more teachers for effective management of student activities.
29.	**Playground Size/Availability**	**Library Availability**	***Positive***	Schools with large playgrounds often provide comprehensive educational spaces, including libraries for well-rounded development.
30.	**Playground Size/Availability**	**Classrooms Available**	***Positive***	Larger playgrounds are often found in schools with greater overall space, which can also translate into more classrooms for academic learning.
31.	**Safe Drinking Water Availability**	**Toilets Functional**	***Positive***	Schools that prioritize clean drinking water often have clean, functional toilets as part of their infrastructure.
32.	**Safe Drinking Water Availability**	**Toilet Availability for Teachers**	***Positive***	Schools providing safe drinking water for students usually also have dedicated water supply and toilets for teachers.

33.	**Toilets for Teachers**	**Toilets for Students (Functional)**	***Positive***	Schools that have sufficient toilets for teachers usually maintain good facilities for students as well, supporting both groups' basic needs.
34.	**Boundary Wall/Fencing**	**School Security**	***Positive***	A boundary wall or fencing directly correlates with the overall security measures in place at a school, ensuring safe premises.
35.	**Building Type (Pucca/ Non-Pucca)**	**Repairs Needed**	***Negative***	Non-Pucca buildings generally need more repairs as they may have weaker infrastructure compared to Pucca structures.
36.	**E-Library Availability**	**Library Resources (Books)**	***Positive***	Schools with e-libraries tend to have a greater variety of educational resources, including textbooks, storybooks, and magazines.
37.	**Classroom Repair Needs (Minor/Major)**	**Teacher Attendance**	***Negative***	Schools requiring more repairs often suffer from lower teacher attendance due to poor working conditions.
38.	**Repairs Needed (Minor/Major)**	**Building Quality (Pucca)**	***Negative***	Poor quality buildings are more prone to needing repairs, while Pucca buildings are more durable and require fewer repairs.
39.	**Library Availability**	**Books Issued (Last Date)**	***Positive***	Libraries that are well-stocked and maintained usually have more frequent circulation

				of books and better student engagement.
40.	**Classroom Maintenance**	**Teacher Attendance**	***Positive***	Well-maintained classrooms contribute to a better working environment for teachers, which often leads to higher attendance and teaching effectiveness.

Key Takeaways from the Matrix

i. **Infrastructure Quality** (number of classrooms, toilets, repairs) is ***crucial to*** the **teacher-pupil ratio, student engagement, and overall student attendance.**

ii. **Teacher Presence** is ***directly correlated*** with **student attendance,** and both of these are **influenced by the availability of adequate resources** (classrooms, playgrounds, libraries, etc.).

iii. **Repairs and Building Quality** are ***inversely correlated*** with the **teacher-pupil ratio and teacher attendance,** as poor infrastructure can hinder teaching and learning effectiveness.

iv. **Playground and Library Availability** help ***maintain a balance*** **between academic learning and extracurricular activities,** thus enhancing the overall learning environment for students.

v. Toilets for PWD (Persons with Disabilities) and the **availability of other inclusive facilities** are often ***correlated*** with **schools that invest more in creating accessible spaces for all students.**

VI. Issues in the Implementation of the Right to Education (RTE)

The comprehensive analysis of the six schools in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, reveals several critical issues in the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act. These findings are

based on both quantitative data and qualitative insights, reflecting broader systemic challenges. The following sections detail the primary issues identified:

1. Infrastructure Deficiencies

Poor infrastructure is a major impediment to quality education under the RTE Act. Although the law mandates basic amenities such as functional classrooms, toilets, and drinking water facilities, many schools lack these essentials. For example, Jhārpada Primary School and Government Primary School in GGP Village lack these basics.

The Supreme Court of India in ***Environmental & Consumer Protection Foundation v. Delhi Administration***[14] held that basic infrastructure in schools is an integral part of the right to education. However, the persistent gaps in facilities across these schools indicate a failure in enforcement.

2. Teacher Shortages and Quality

Availability of qualified teachers still varies and hence impacts the quality of education. For instance, in Pathani Samanta School, there are too many workloads for the teachers and also the absence of special teachers.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020 reported teacher absenteeism and inadequate training as some of the most prevalent problems in the Indian education system.[15]

3. Student Attendance and Engagement

Low student attendance and participation in schools like Jhārpada Primary School are often influenced by socio-economic barriers and the inadequacy of school facilities.

In Society for ***Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India***[16]**,** the Supreme Court has highlighted the importance of the role of the state in providing for student attendance under the RTE Act.

[14] *Environmental & Consumer Protection Foundation v. Delhi Administration*, (2012) 7 SCC 518.
[15] Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020, Pratham Education Foundation
[16] *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India*, (2012) 6 SCC 1

4. Socio-Economic Barriers

Economic conditions, child labour, and low awareness of the parents lead to irregular attendance and a dropout rate, predominantly in rural and semi-urban areas.

According to Drese and Sen (2013), socio-economic challenges are hampering educational access and quality in India, which have been recommended with targeted policy intervention.[17]

5. Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation

Due to weak monitoring mechanisms, the RTE Act is not being implemented uniformly. Schools lack compliance as a result of the lack of adequate oversight.

According to the **CAG Report on the RTE Act (2017),** there is a huge lacuna in monitoring and evaluation of education standards.[18]

6. Community Engagement and Accountability

There is a low level of community engagement and inadequate mechanisms for accountability that are inhibiting the successful implementation of the RTE Act. The schools which have been found to be actively engaging parents and the community in general, for instance, through SMCs, perform relatively better.

Section 21 of the RTE Act stipulates the setting up of SMCs as a mechanism of ensuring local accountability; however, this remains patchy.[19]

7. Policy and Implementation Gaps

Despite having adequate legal frameworks, there are considerable gaps between the design of policy and its ground-level implementation. This is clear from the variance in the quality of infrastructure and the availability of teachers in schools surveyed.

[17] Drese, Jean, and Amartya Sen. *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*. Princeton University Press, 2013.
[18] Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Report on the RTE Act, 2017.
[19] Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, § 21.

According to Banerjee and Duflo (2011) in their book "Poor Economics", the success of educational policies heavily depends on the localized implementation and contextual adaptability.[20]

8. Equity and Inclusion

The RTE Act seeks to offer equal opportunities in education for children. However, the reality reflects inequality, specifically for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and economically backward sections.

State of Bihar v. Project Uchha Vidyalaya Shikshak Sangh The court held that equal opportunities need to be accorded to education, which the court felt was not an ideal situation of equality in action.[21]

9. Impact of Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Although the mid-day meal scheme has improved nutritional outcomes, its implementation varies, affecting its efficacy in enhancing student attendance and retention.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) reveals that the mid-day meal scheme has a strong impact on student health and attendance, but gaps in delivery mechanisms persist.[22]

The analysis of the six schools throws up systemic issues in the implementation of the RTE Act. The solution to these challenges lies in a multifaceted approach, which would include infrastructural investments, teacher training, socio-economic support, and robust monitoring frameworks.

[20] Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. PublicAffairs, 2011.
[21] *State of Bihar v. Project Uchha Vidyalaya Shikshak Sangh*, (2006) 2 SCC 545.
[22] National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

VII. Solutions to Issues in the Implementation of the Right to Education (RTE)

The numerous challenges identified through the implementation of the RTE Act call for a combination of practical interventions and policy reforms. Drawing from both international models and local domestic models, the following are proposed solutions:

1. Infrastructure Enhancement

The minimum requirements under the RTE Act relating to infrastructural development are to be met to ensure that all schools have adequate classrooms, functional toilets, and safe drinking water facilities.

- International Model: Brazil's Bolsa Escola program has been successful in improving school infrastructure through community involvement by providing conditional cash transfers to families for school attendance.[23]
- Domestic Reference: Consolidation of multiple education initiatives through the Samagra Shiksha scheme of the Indian government can improve school infrastructure comprehensively.[24]

2. Teacher Recruitment and Training

Teacher shortages need to be addressed and quality of teaching improved through systematic recruitment, regular training, and professional development programs.

- International Model: Finnish education focuses on teacher training and continuous professional development, as well as offering appealing remuneration packages, for which it boasts high educational achievements.[25]

[23] De Janvry, Alain, and Elisabeth Sadoulet. "Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: Are They Really Magic Bullets?" *World Bank Research Observer*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2006, pp. 57-80.
[24] Ministry of Education, Government of India. "Samagra Shiksha Scheme." Retrieved from https://samagrashiksha.in.
[25] Sahlberg, Pasi. *Finnish Lessons 2.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* Teachers College Press, 2015.

- Domestic Practice: National Education Policy 2020 is in favor of better teacher training programs and a National Mission for Mentoring.[26]

3. Increasing Student Attendance and Engagement

Community-based intervention and incentive plans can help students attend and be more engaged in their studies.

- International Example: The NCLB Act of the United States had a clause for parental involvement and community partnership to increase students' engagement.[27]
- Domestic Example: The mid-day meal scheme in India is reported to improve attendance and decrease nutritional deficiencies.[28]

4. Addressing Socio-Economic Barriers

Targeted intervention to reduce the socio-economic barriers such as providing financial support, scholarship, and even awareness programs to reduce dropout rate.

- International Model: *Oportunidades*, in Mexico, gives conditional cash transfers to families conditional on the children attending school and receiving regular health check-ups; the result has been a huge reduction in dropout rates.[29]
- Domestic Policy: The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of scholarship money will ensure the economic weaker sections access education better.[30]

[26] Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. "National Education Policy 2020." Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in.
[27] U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)." Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/nclb.
[28] Ministry of Education, Government of India. "Mid-Day Meal Scheme." Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in/mdm.
[29] Parker, Susan W., et al. "The Impact of Oportunidades on School Attendance in Mexico." *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2012, pp. 486-503.
[30] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. "Direct Benefit Transfer for Scholarships." Retrieved from https://dbtbharat.gov.in.

5. Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

Strengthening the monitoring frameworks through technological tools that would collect data and analyze it in real time ensures better compliance and accountability.

- International Example: South Korea's Education Information Disclosure System (EIDS) offers transparent data on school performance, thus increasing accountability.[31]
- Domestic Reference: The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) collects comprehensive data on school education in India, which helps in effective monitoring.[32]

6. Enhancing Community Engagement and Accountability

Strengthening the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) and promoting community participation can increase accountability and local oversight.

- International Example: Canada's School Community Council encourages parent/community engagement in managing school activities by forming the School Community Council in schools.[33]
- Domestic Example: The RTE Act provides an opportunity of engagement to all in school, for instance SMC under RTE Act although the workability is highly called for.[34]

7. Bridging Policy and Implementation Gaps

School educational policies only take a significant role when well implanted locally according to context-sensitiveness.

[31] Kim, Kwang S. "Education Information Disclosure System (EIDS) in South Korea." *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, vol. 23, no. 44, 2015.
[32] Ministry of Education, Government of India. "Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+)." Retrieved from https://udiseplus.gov.in.
[33] Gaskell, Jane. "Community Schools in Canada: Achievements and Challenges." *Canadian Journal of Education*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2005, pp. 341-364.
[34] Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, § 21.

- International Insight: Contextual appropriate intervention of schooling Indonesia's school administration has now taken the centre-stage to increase intervention.[35]

- Domestic Initiative: The NEP 2020 is decentralized and states are to tailor educational interventions to the requirements of the locality.[36]

8. Promoting Equity and Inclusion

Targeted programs for disadvantaged groups, including scholarships, remedial education, and inclusive curricula, may help promote equity and inclusion.

- International Model: South Africa has an inclusive education policy in place to include children from backgrounds that are socially disadvantaged into mainstream education.[37]

- Domestic Policy: The reservation policy of India in education for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes is a step toward educational equity.[38]

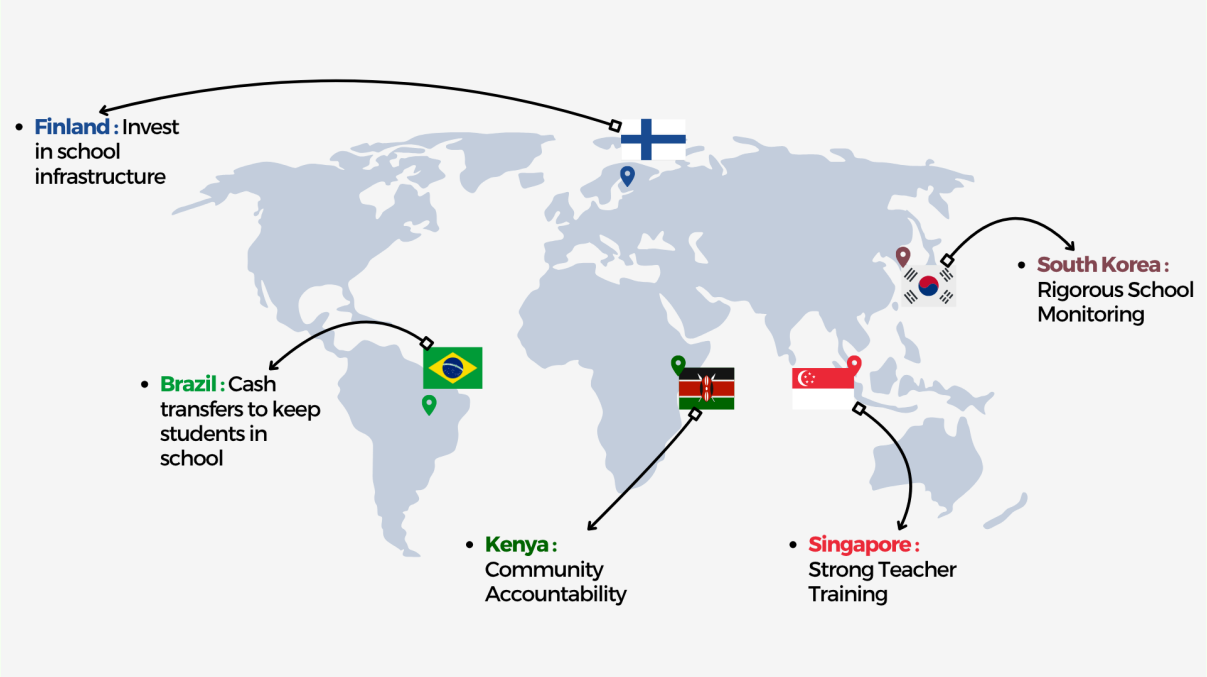
9. Optimising the Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Improving the delivery mechanisms of the mid-day meal scheme, including monitoring quality and ensuring timely distribution, will enhance its impact on student health and attendance.

- International Example: The United Kingdom's Free School Meals program supports nutrition for the children, hence better academic performances.[39]

[35] Bjork, Christopher. "Decentralisation in Education in Indonesia: Community Participation and Local Government Roles." *International Review of Education*, vol. 49, no. 6, 2003, pp. 457-475.
[36] Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. "National Education Policy 2020." Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in.
[37] Engelbrecht, Petra, et al. "Inclusive Education in South Africa: Developing a Sustainable System." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, vol. 10, no. 4-5, 2006, pp. 453-467.
[38] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. "Reservation Policy in Education." Retrieved from https://socialjustice.gov.in.
[39] Department for Education, Government of the United Kingdom. "Free School Meals Policy." Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk.

- Domestic Improvement: Leveraging technology to manage the supply chain in mid-day meal scheme can help the delivery issues, and efficiency could be improved.[40]



→ Image - I - International Models

The solutions that arise from international models and domestic models provided above represent tangible steps toward mitigating the grave failures in implementing RTE Act. A combination of interventions with long-standing political will and local community mobilisation can eventually give shape to realising this constitutional right to free education for children in India.

[40] Ministry of Education, Government of India. "Mid-Day Meal Scheme." Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in/mdm.

VIII. Conclusion

The Right to Education (RTE) Act marked a milestone in India's effort to provide free and compulsory education. However, an evaluation of six schools in Bhubaneswar, Odisha reveals significant barriers to fully realising the Act's goals.

Key Issues Identified

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Schools like Jhārpada Primary and Government Primary in GGP Village suffer from poor facilities, damaged classrooms, inadequate sanitation, and lack of clean drinking water. These deficiencies discourage attendance and hinder the learning environment.
2. **Teacher Shortages:** Pathani Samanta School faces high student-to-teacher ratios and insufficient specialised staff. Frequent teacher absenteeism disrupts education and affects learning outcomes.
3. **Low Attendance and Engagement:** Socio-economic factors, including poverty and child labour, contribute to high dropout rates, especially at Jhārpada Primary, undermining the RTE's inclusivity goals.

Practical Solutions and Global Models

1. **Investing in Infrastructure:** Finland's model of safe, well-equipped schools offers key insights for India.
2. **Teacher Development:** Singapore's teacher training programmes show the importance of improving teacher competency.
3. **Overcoming Barriers:** Brazil's Bolsa Família and Tamil Nadu's mid-day meal scheme have proven effective in addressing socio-economic challenges.
4. **Community Engagement:** Kenya's reforms underscore the value of local involvement in school management.
5. **Strengthening Monitoring:** South Korea's school inspections provide a useful model for India.

Despite the RTE's progress, addressing infrastructure gaps, teacher quality, socio-economic barriers, and monitoring will be essential for full implementation. By adopting global best practices, India can realise the vision of quality education for all.