

The National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA) is the unified voice of budget private schools (BPS) in India, that aim at improving access to affordable and quality education for the economically weaker.

editor's pick: MORE WORKING HOURS FOR TEACHERS?

The Government of Delhi recently decided to increase the working hours of teachers in the state's government, government-aided and un-aided recognized schools to 45 hours per week (against the existing 36). The decision was rolled back in no time following massive protests by the teachers.

While Padmini Singla from the Department of Education holds that the decision was in accordance with the RTE act and the orders were passed by the Right to Education Branch under sections 19 and 25, it does bring us to an important question — how are student learning outcomes and student performance related to the working hours of teachers?

In our inaugural edition, we had shared some

findings of a School Choice experiment by Dr Karthik Muralidharan, which showed that private schools (1) deliver slightly better learning outcomes, and (2) are almost 3 times as cost effective as government schools.

Another important finding from the study was that such schools had longer school days and longer school years, and in addition, saw lower teacher absence and higher teacher activity.

Critical question to ask is: *Does increasing the working hours of teachers translate into better learning outcomes for the children?*

The RTE Platform is running a poll on this. Cast your vote at: www.righttoeducation.in.



EVENTS

Launch | March 2014, New Delhi

The RTE Platform

Centre for Civil Society (CCS), in partnership with Central Square Foundation (CSF) is organizing the second launch of the Right to Education (RTE) Platform. The Platform, which is available at www.righttoeducation.in, is your go-to resource on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. It is being launched in a brand new avatar in March, with easy navigation, functionalities integrated with social media, and improved content. Watch this space for the date!

eWalk | April 2014, Online

The RTE Walk

Join the website tour as we take you through the Right to Education Platform. The 30-day eWalk will give you a detailed idea of RTE and how education works in India.

Join the event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/566699086733459/>

[The RTE Platform](#)

[The RTE Walk](#)

featured story: ASER 2013 — KEY FINDINGS

Madhav Chavan, CEO-President of Pratham Education Foundation, writes in the notes to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2013:

“Among others, ASER surveys highlight two major issues that need to be addressed urgently. First, the dramatic shift to private school enrolment in rural areas. It is a development that demands a new approach to how our education is organized. The second issue is the crisis of learning. It affects both government and private schools where large numbers of low income families send their children. This crisis of learning simultaneously

threatens the economy of the country and the future of millions of children and youth.”

The article titled *Old challenges for a new generation* is available at http://img.asercentre.org/docs/Publications/ASER%20Reports/ASER_2013/ASER2013_report%20sections/madhavchavanarticle.pdf.

Also, the provisional ASER 2013 could be downloaded at http://img.asercentre.org/docs/Publications/ASER%20Reports/ASER_2013/ASER2013_report%20sections/aser2013fullreportenglish.pdf.

ask your lawyer: LEGAL BOUNDARIES

Q. Does the Act imply that private schools can no longer charge fees? What are the other regulations for private schools?

A. No. Private schools and schools in the specified category can continue to charge fees as before. However, they are required to admit in their incoming class, at least 25% children from disadvantaged and weaker sections of the society, without charging any fee. They will have to adhere to the norms and standards prescribed by the schedule and have three years to do so. Their teachers shall also be required to have the nationally prescribed teacher qualifications, within five years. They will have to get recognition within the three year period; if they don't have recognition after three years, they can not function, and

heavy fines will be imposed on them if they do. Also, they can not conduct tests or interview children or parents for admissions; all admissions have to be based on random selection and violations will lead to financial punishments. They must announce at the beginning of the term the fees they will charge, after that they can not ask for other charges during the year (capitation fees).

Q. What does the RTE Act say about private aided schools?

A. These schools are required to provide free education to children in a proportionate relationship to the grants in aid received, subject to a minimum of 25%. However, unaided minority schools are exempt from this clause.

Legal Boundaries is an answer to all your law-related queries on RTE and budget private schools, whether you are a school administrator, owner or parent.



Centre for Civil Society offers free legal advice and consult on RTE. We consult with Prashant Narang, legal expert and advocate from iJustice.

Write to prashant@ijustice.in with your query. Be as brief, clear and specific as possible, and put the subject line as: 'Legal Boundaries - NISA Query'.

**Have a legal question on RTE?
Get free advice and consult!**



The fifth annual School Choice National Conference (SCNC) held by Centre for Civil Society discussed education of the future through three sessions titled *Changing the Paradigms of Education*, *Teaching for Understanding* and *Rethinking Policy*, very aptly bundled together in a theme called *Education 2025: Student First!*

We bring you excerpts from one of the panels, where speakers talked about ideas that would help India fare better in international assessments like PISA in 10 years from now. Full report is available at <http://schoolchoice.in/scnc2013/event-report.pdf>.

“One, we should define a national vision for education. Two, we should look at setting up education regulatory authorities at national and state levels to look into various aspects; and three, we should encourage private, for-profit investments in education.”

“One, we should launch standard, third party national student learning outcome assessments. Two, we should initiate different kinds of PPPs and create an ecosystem for experimentation; and three, we should give a spur to ongoing in-service teacher development to certain initiatives like professional certification and others.”

“One, you can’t ignore the government system: most of these things are not stuck at the policy level, but at the implementation level – we need to do good monitoring. Two, we need a framework from Delhi that could be translated into states with a certain level of decentralized control, and three, we desperately need more research – to find out thoroughly what works and what doesn’t.”



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nisa at work: CREATING A WHOLESOME SCHOOL | Ekta Sodha

Ekta Sodha, Vice President—Quality, NISA and member from Gujarat writes:

It is now widely accepted that budget private schools perform better than most government schools. However, we should not stop thinking there. Our schools still have a great scope of improvement. Some thoughts:

1. Quality: Achieving quality improvement at grassroots levels often requires addressing a number of dimensions. However, this shouldn't come at the price of engaging expensive methods and draining school budgets. The beauty of the low-cost sector is to provide competitive edge at incredibly low prices to cater to price sensitive parents.

2. Teachers: Teachers are the building blocks of any good school. Investing in good teacher training programmes surely yield results. These could be basic programmes on how to do board work, create lesson plans, teach students to ask the right questions, demonstrate rather than explain, give relevant examples and ultimately, take education beyond textbooks. With schools having huge teacher turnover ratios, it becomes more important to have in-house trainings for them.

3. Technology: While acquiring technology in the form of digital classrooms is increasingly



becoming easier, finding training on how to do more than just playing and pausing the preloaded content is still tough. For example, why can't we connect our smart boards to the Internet, let students access information and teach them how to critically appraise content, eventually boiling it down to knowledge?

4. Classrooms: Our classrooms have historically always looked the same. Why can't we reinvent them? Why can't we relook at learning methods, shifting focus from *one to many* to *self-learning, facilitating and guiding the process of learning*. Eventually, it is about educating a 21st century learner about the rapidly changing world, getting them ready for jobs of the next decades that probably don't even exist in the markets today.

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RTE NEWS

The Times of India | January 21, 2014
The left out in right to education
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/The-left-out-in-right-to-education/articleshow/29126054.cms>

The New Indian Express | January 20, 2014
Over 1,400 Schools Await NOC from School and Mass Education Department
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Over-1400-Schools-Await-NOC-from-School-and-Mass-Education-Department/2014/01/20/article2009665.ece>

The Times of India | January 10, 2014
RTE compliance deadline likely to be extended, again
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2014-01-10/kolhapur/46065558_1_rte-norms-10-infrastructure-norms-education-department

The New York Times | January 2, 2014
Private Schools for Poor Pressured by Right to Education Act
http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/02/private-schools-for-poor-pressured-by-right-to-education-act/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

The Times of India | November 20, 2013
Schools fail to comply with RTE norms
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/Schools-fail-to-comply-with-RTE-norms/articleshow/26063304.cms>

Courtesy: RightToEducation.in



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