

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.

photo: KRISHNAMACHARI SRIKKANTH SPEAKS TO NISA SCHOOL LEADERS DURING A WORKSHOP AT ASSAM



editor's pick: ASSAM DIARY

NISA SECRETARIAT

Rohan Joshi, Associate Director at NISA, made a quick trip to Assam recently. He met some senior govt officials, facilitated a workshop on school leadership and also engaged with some budget private schools (BPS) associations. Some reflections:

1. Meeting owners of Assamese-medium BPS based in Guwahati made me realize that there is so much that they have to do, even during summer breaks, shuttling between one task to another—admissions, classroom management issues, handling government queries. The Municipal Corporation of Guwahati had served notices to 200 schools for not complying with safety norms, without even a mention of the required norms and how to adhere to them. Funny part was, a third-year engineering student did this research with a sample of 60 schools! We also discussed the Non-Government Educational Institutional (Regulation and

Management) (NGEI) Act, 2006 of Assam, which has several rules focusing largely on inputs in education with little to no attention to learning outcomes. The owners wanted NISA's help to strategise how to get the State to amend some of the rules. The meeting ended with a concrete action plan.

2. We met Runumi Gogoi, Chairperson, Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (ASCPCR). We talked about RTE implementation and focus of state government vis-à-vis that, and overall view of ASCPCR on private schooling etc. She was greatly concerned about children in both private and government schools. We ended the meeting on a positive note, as she expressed willingness in collaborating with NISA/CCS on diagnosing problems of BPS in Guwahati. We also met Sri Chand, Secretary, Elementary Education, and gave him some literature on RTE's 25% reservation rule.

3. The Assam Private Schools Association had organized a highly engaging and creative leadership workshop with 15 BPS principals. Pankaj Das, association head and a second generation school owner had secured sponsorship for the event, and also had Srikanth, former Indian cricketer travel from Chennai to talk to the school leaders. One key learning from facilitating the workshop was that most school leaders were familiar with the basic concepts. The real challenge was around how to use these concepts in schools. We covered a few topics, largely through case studies, a few 'do-it-yourself' exercises leveraging on the problems stated by the participants. It was heartening to see in the face of adversities a network of service providers, teachers, principals and school owners developing in a small city like Guwahati — with each one doing their best to survive, develop, support each other and together achieve quality education for all.

photo: PARTICIPANTS AT THE RTE 2.0 ROUNDTABLE



featured: RTE 2.0: Building consensus on amendments

THE RTE PLATFORM



Abysmal learning outcomes in students across grades, less than 2% government-qualified teachers passing the TET, large-scale closure of private schools – we have witnessed infinite cases where the right to education only lived up to right to access to education, and sometimes, not even that. Quality, equality, choice, accountability, autonomy, freedom, outcomes – such things remain far from reality in the current landscape.

With an objective of bringing in the above perspectives in education of tomorrow, some of India's leading educationists took part in a four-hour roundtable focused on specific amendments to the RTE Act, which would ensure quality education for all in India.

The roundtable, **RTE 2.0: Building Consensus on Amendments**, truly aimed at

weeding out the pain areas in the existing scheme of things, finding out what works and what doesn't, and introducing appropriate amendments to the actual text of the Act. The meet, anchored by Centre for Civil Society and The RTE Platform, was facilitated by Amit Kaushik and saw a high-profile participation and some really interesting engagement.

The delegation included the likes of Ashish Dhawan, Avani Kapur, Binu Nair, Gurcharan Das, Jasmine Shah, Kruti Bharucha. Luis Miranda, Meeta Sengupta, Pari Jhaveri, Parth Shah, Shailendra Sharma, Shantanu Gupta, Shrutipriya Dalmia, Subhalaxmi Ganguly, Swati Sahni, Tarun Cherukuri, Vijay Chadda, Vimala Ramachandran, Yashaswini Mittal, discussing nuances of the Act in detail, sharing experiences, and putting forward recommendations.

A section of the discussion specifically focused on the school recognition norms, teacher qualifications and training, and the no-detention policy – some aspects that are closely linked to protection and promotion of budget private schools in India.

Read more about the background of the roundtable on this blog:
<http://righttoeducation.in/blog/the-rte-blog/2014/07/01/re-writing-a-right-to-set-it-right>

Read more about the outcomes of the roundtable in this blog:
<http://righttoeducation.in/blog/the-rte-blog/2014/07/16/rte-20-act-for-tomorrow>

Read the live tweets of the discussions at www.twitter.com/theRTEplatform.

What troubles you the most about RTE Act? What amendments would you like to make in existing Act, that would make it a better law? What changes will make the Act provide for affordable, equitable and quality education for all?
Drop your comments at www.righttoeducation.in/forums/suggest-rte-amendments.



photo: IIC TEAM INTERACTS WITH NISA MEMBERS AT UCHICAGO CENTER IN DELHI

at work: UCHICAGO GRADUATES SPEND A WEEK AT NISA

Work on improving quality in budget private schools
NISA SECRETARIAT



Through a one-week programme called **Design Sprint**, University of Chicago Graduates under the International Innovation Corps (IIC) Fellowship initiative partnered with NISA at New Delhi. They worked closely with NISA schools in East Delhi on ways of improving quality in BPS in India, and presented at UChicago Center in Delhi.

In the week long intensive programme, the IIC fellows conducted a field study at four schools, and interacted with multiple stakeholders — parents, teachers, students and school owners — to understand different perspectives on the issues and challenges being faced by the BPS in the education space.

They also interacted with various service providers and state association leaders to get a better grasp of the current scenario regarding the quality of education in BPS.

The fellows were then divided into two teams who then brainstormed around two particular issues- Teacher absenteeism and lack of parent engagement in BPS. The second and third day of the programme was devoted towards building a prototype model which addresses the above issue and can be tested in the field on the fourth day.

Matters related to teachers, and school-parent engagement turned out to be areas of common issue among all the schools during the study. Some recommendations included putting up teacher attendance in the open to curb absenteeism, and starting an activity sheet/newsletter which

would focus on the skills taught to children in the school.

More details are available here: <http://righttoeducation.in/blog/the-rte-blog/2014/07/29/ideating-at-sprint-speed>.

We also spoke to UChicago's Will Gossin, who is leading the Design Sprint programme in India.

Read the interview here: <http://righttoeducation.in/blog/the-rte-blog/2014/07/22/design-sprint-improving-education-quality-in-budget-private-schools>.

ask your lawyer: LEGAL BOUNDARIES

IJUSTICE AND THE RTE PLATFORM

Q. How does one track funds under RTE, while providing free education to the poor under the 25% reservation rule?

Bhanu Jain, Rajasthan

A. The per-child cost in Rajasthan is INR 10,000 (ten thousand) per year. The Government of Rajasthan will reimburse either this amount or the actual fee charged by the school (whichever is less), for the children admitted under the 25% reservation rule. This amount shall be disbursed in two instalments, paid out in October and June.

Q. What action will be taken if parents don't allow children to go to school?

Rohan Mewlani, Maharashtra

A. Section 10 of the RTE Act says that it shall be the duty of every parent or guardian to admit or cause to be admitted his or her child or ward, as the case may be, to an elementary education in the neighbourhood school. If any parent or guardian is found to be not discharging this duty properly, the matter may be reported to the Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MSCPCR). The details can be found here: <http://righttoeducation.in/resources/states/maharashtra/maharashtra-state-commission-for-protection-of-child-rights>.

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



We consult with Prashant Narang, legal expert and advocate from iJustice to offer free legal advice and consult on RTE.

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

You can also get your answers at www.righttoeducation.in/ask-a-question.



photo: NISA MEMBERS AT SLS 2013



events

NISA SECRETARIAT

National Conference | 27-28 September 2014, New Delhi
School Leaders Summit (SLS)

The 3rd annual NISA *School Leaders Summit* is being held at India International Centre in New Delhi. With **advocacy for BPS** as the theme, SLS will bring together multiple stakeholders representing diverse interest groups — investors, thought leaders, education service providers, affordable school leaders, and private schools association heads from more than 20 states — to discuss challenges and deep dive into issues that confront the budget private schools (BPS) sector in India.

There would be three sessions:

- Government Perspectives on BPS
- Regulatory Challenges for BPS
- Media and BPS

The Conference will be followed by NISA's 2nd internal National Level Meeting for 2014 at New Delhi YMCA, where association leaders will discuss the progress made since the last meeting, address concerns and chart out a plan of action for the rest of the year.

More information at www.nisaindia.org/sls2014. Registrations are open. Write to:
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newsreel

THE RTE PLATFORM

Hindustan Times | 5 August 2014

25% of city's schools have minority status

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/chandigarh/25-of-city-s-schools-have-minority-status/article1-1248301.aspx>

The New Indian Express | 7 August 2014

'Parents shouldn't be burdened

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bangalore/'Parents-Shouldn't-Be-Burdened'/2014/08/02/article2360795.ece>

Times of India | 25 July 2014

37 'unrecognized' schools under education department scanner

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/37-unrecognized-schools-under-education-department-scanner/articleshow/38986875.cms>

Times of India | 18 July 2014

Schools unhappy with RTE provisions

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nagpur/Schools-unhappy-with-RTE-provisions/articleshow/38568835.cms>

Times of India | 15 May 2014

District administration to shut down 36 unaffiliated schools

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/noida/District-administration-to-shut-down-36-unaffiliated-schools/articleshow/35132750.cms>

Courtesy: **RightToEducation.in**

photo: School in Maharashtra



question: EDUCATION FOR FREE? NO, THANKS!

NISA SECRETARIAT

The Right to **Free** and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act provides a number of freebies (admission, education, computer education, books and stationery, uniform, meals and even railway passes) to children in government schools, using the taxpayers money. Even then, surveys (like ASER) reveal an increased interest of parents to send their children to (low) fee —charging private schools.

Have you ever wondered why? Send us your thoughts at nisa@ccs.in.

NISA has presence in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Sikkim.



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