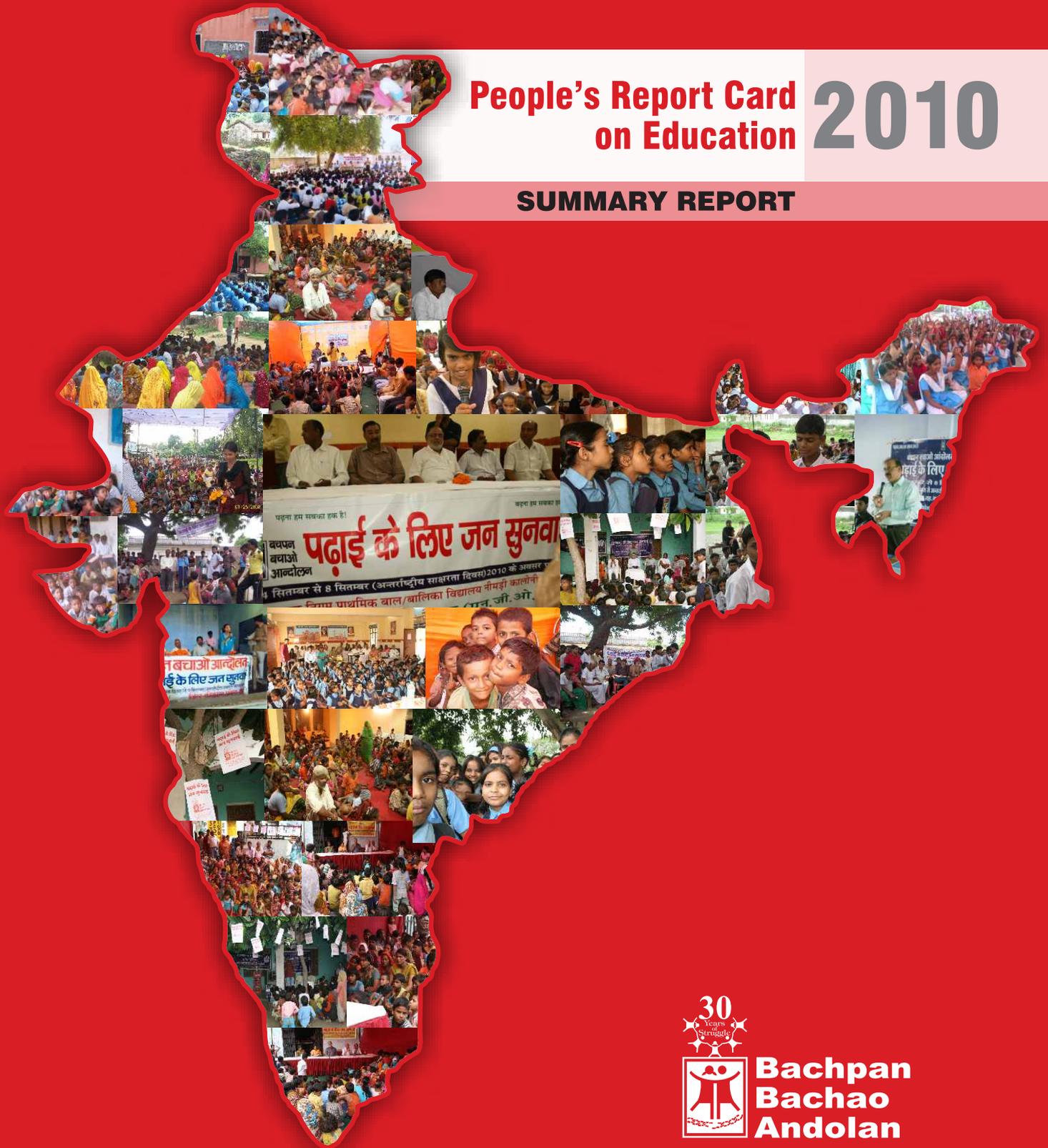


People's Report Card on Education

2010

SUMMARY REPORT



30
Years
Struggle



**Bachpan
Bachao
Andolan**

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

Nearly six months since the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE Act) was notified by the Government of India, on 1 April 2010, only one in six people are aware of it. Education has been a fundamental right for more than 8 years now though it received a concrete shape in 2010 with the RTE Act. Yet only one third of the children are availing it. These and many other details came to light through the “Public Hearings on Education” campaign conducted by Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) and its partners in 9 states during 5-8 September 2010. Mid-day meal, one of the flagship programmes to retain children in schools is availed by 61% children.

With the participation of 30,240 men, women and children, with children constituting nearly half of them, the 'Public Hearings on Education' are the first ever and the biggest ever public voice on education. Coming from 125 locations, spanning 42 districts and 9 states, these people shared their views on education and its availability. What is alarming is not just the current state of education, but the lack of effort to spread awareness about the RTE Act. Given that the hearings were conducted in the view that RTE has just come into being- it was expected that the entire machinery would be working overtime to generate awareness about the various benefits that it sets out to spread to the country's young citizens. But very little effort has been done to generate awareness or interest. Even teachers and Panchayat officials are not aware of what the RTE Act is or what it is their role in the implementation of the Act.

From an international perspective, the RTE Act is India's tool to achieve Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG 2) to achieve Universal Primary Education. What happens in India is very essential for education world over, because India has the largest number of out-of-school children. The timing of these public hearings comes just a few weeks before the MDG Summit being held on 20-22 September 2010 in New York to review the progress of MDGs and accelerate their fulfillment by all member states. With 5 years to go, time is ticking by and the onus is on every member state and citizens of those States to fulfill it successfully.

The 'Public Hearings on Education' show the real picture of education in the country and also includes the people's opinion of education and the various facilities that they demand; most of them being those facilities that are promised under the RTE Act. The timing of the notification of the RTE Act was perfect in the sense that it came just before the academic session began in schools across the country. But greater awareness must be generated by the Government machinery to ensure free compulsory education to all children. These public hearings should be seen not just as a report card to assess the situation of awareness of RTE Act and its provisions, but one that reveals the gaps in order that they are remedied.

Further, the Public Hearings on Education herald a civil society movement in the field of education - one that is led by the people. The fact that people came out in large numbers and expressed their views openly only reveals their enthusiasm and firm belief in education. A couple of examples will suffice. In Koderma, Jharkhand, the hearings were held in grave danger of Maoist threat. In addition, para-teachers were on strike and rains were lashing out. Despite this, people participated in large numbers. In Sitamarhi, Bihar, the demand from the children of a school was heartening - 1165 children, 2 toilets, classes taught even on the terrace of the school; yet they complained not. All they want is more teachers! Such burning desire towards education despite all odds is reason enough for us to throw in our full weight to ensure that education becomes a living reality for all children of our country.

BBA's key interventions in Education Sector

Since its inception in 1980, BBA has strongly advocated the relationship between child labour and education as two sides of the same coin. In all demonstrations, public protests, marches and all sorts of mass mobilizations, BBA has raised strong demand for free education of good quality. The demand was strongly reflected in the memorandum and petitions sent to Honorable President and Prime Minister of India, Education and Labour Minister and to the Parliament. BBA identified socially concerned Parliamentarians and has lobbied with them intensely, to raise the issue of education in the Parliament.

- Education was one of the two missions during the country-wide marches, joined by millions of people in 1995, 1996 and 1997, as well as in the Global March Against Child Labour in 1998.
- In 1990s BBA initiated a Parliamentary Forum on Education with 166 members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, headed by Shri Ravi Prakash Verma which is still active.
- A strong coalition with the Teachers Union and other Civil Society Organizations - National Coalition on Education was founded by BBA.
- In an innovative and path breaking grassroots campaign, BBA approached more than 80,000 village Panchayat heads and about 20,000 relevant state institutions individually in 1995 demanding elimination for child labour and education for all.
- A nation-wide movement for Constitutional Amendment for making education as a Fundamental Right was launched through the 15,000 km, 6 month long march, Shiksha Yatra across 20 states of the country. A complementary action for this demand was taken up by the Parliamentary Forum in the Parliament. This has impacted the 86th Constitutional Amendment in making education a Fundamental Right in India.
- Hundreds of child advocates and child leaders of BBA have played a significant role in prioritizing Education at the Panchayat level across 9 states through Bal Mitra Grams (child friendly villages). They have been able to make significant improvement in mid-day meals, teacher's attendance and other aspects of quality in the villages.
- Some of the most heartening and powerful intervention of these child leaders include-'Knock the Door Campaign' in 2000-2001. In this the children knocked the door of every single Parliament member at 6 A.M. and handed them an empty slate as a symbol of wide spread illiteracy due to lack of political will. The impact was eminent as for the first time in Indian parliament history more than 200 interventions were made by the members in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha within a week and that resulted in a special debate on Education in the house.
- BBA spearheaded several campaigns for the candidates contesting for Parliamentary or State Assembly Elections since 1994 to sensitise them and to hold them accountable for public education.
- Letter writing campaigns were carried throughout the year for the enactment of the Right to Education Act. Nothing could be more significant or be a matter of pride than India's Union Minister of Education announcing the legislation for the Right To Education, during the inauguration of BBA's national conference in Delhi on 12 June 2008.
- BBA's founder President has been one of the key architects of a worldwide movement for education known as Global Campaign for Education (GCE). He has been leading the GCE since its inception in 2001.
- BBA's child leaders like Devli, Suman, Amarlal, Om Prakash, Kinsu Kumar and Samsur are among those young champions who have inspired world leaders in some of the most important and high level global events on education.

Background

The 21st century may well be termed the century of dreams- the peoples of the world are realizing what it means to have dreams and how to fulfill them, in all spheres of their lives. The beauty is that the underlying principle of these dreams is a wish for equitable growth of all people, irrespective of class, race, country, region or religion. Never in the history of mankind has the need for overall development emerged more than in the late 20th century.

In the social sphere, it began with the convergence of 189 countries that welcomed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration which was then translated into a roadmap setting out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - setting out the commitment to halving world poverty, improving health and education and regenerating the environment in the world's poorest countries. Countries have repeatedly committed themselves to achieving these goals such as universal primary education and eliminating gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015. The MDGs are important because these goals promise an equitable world for the citizens of the world.

Ten years on, the Millennium Development Goals Summit is in the offing and will be held from 20-22 September 2010 at the UN Headquarters in New York. Also known as High Level Plenary Meeting (HLPM), the main objectives of the summit are to accelerate the progress towards all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to take stock of proven initiatives that made progress on the goals and for governments to commit to concentrate action agenda to achieve the MDGs as well as other internationally agreed development goals. The summit will also discuss the good practices and lessons learnt, identify the obstacles and gaps in order to prepare concrete strategies for further action.

Education is that single tool which when provided can tilt the balance of the rest of the MDG goals towards speedier fulfillment. Education empowers the individual, facilitates the making choices in favour of a better life and breaks down barriers caused due to discrimination.

India has the largest number of out of school children in the world and hence offers the biggest challenge and biggest lessons. According to the 2008 Global Monitoring Report of UNESCO, which was a mid-term review of MDG 2, it was found that the number of out of school children worldwide reduced from 103 million to 77 million children and the major reason for this decrease lay in the successes in India. One can understand the significance the country plays in achieving the MDG 2. Another important aspect, though hidden, is the reason why children are out of school. The largest chunk of these out of school children is engaged in child labour situations which need to be tackled with proper discernment and effective action. Until this hidden reason is recognized and tackled in the strictest measures, it will prove to be a challenge in attaining universal primary education.

A few significant developments have taken place in India in the past decade which gained impetus in 2009. The movement to make education a fundamental right and provide free and compulsory education to children started in late 1990s and became a reality when the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act

2009 was passed by the Parliament in July 2009. The RTE Act, as it is popularly known was notified by the Government of India on 1 April 2010. It is now the legal obligation for the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children:

- In the age group of 6-14 years to every girl and every boy of the State,
- Up to class 8th, irrespective of the age of the child,
- By providing schools in the neighbourhood, wherever they are not present within 3 years of commencement of the Act,
- By ensuring that no child is refused admission for lack of age proof,
- By ensuring that children gain admission at any time of the academic year,
- By constituting the State Commissions of Protection of Child Rights (State Governments' duty) who are the mandated authority to address any problem regarding the delivery of the RTE Act,
- By constituting the School Management Committees to monitor the working of the school, preparing and recommending school development plan, and monitoring utilisation of grants.

These are some of the main points that the RTE Act entails for the children of this country.

This document focuses on the campaign-“Public Hearings on Education” conducted by Bachpan Bachao Andolan and its partner organisations in 9 states for a period of 4 days (5-8 September 2010). Both the start and end dates are significant education symbols. 5 September is recognized as Teacher's Day in India while 8 September is globally commemorated as International Literacy Day. The objective of the campaign was to gauge the awareness of the people who are the intended beneficiaries of the RTE Act, knowledge about the RTE Act, the provisions of the RTE Act and assess the situation of education in the public hearing locations. The findings of this campaign give voice to people's awareness and opinion on RTE and the access of the various provisions that the RTE intends to provide.

The campaign was conducted in the background of the fact that it is soon going to be 6 months since the RTE Act was notified and the MDG summit is on the anvil. Within 6 months of the commencement of the RTE Act, a few of the parameters mentioned in the Act needed to be fulfilled. Also 6 months is a good enough time to assess the amount of activity generated by the Act. Hence the objective was to gauge public opinion on matters related to children's education and the RTE Act and help identify the gaps that need to be fulfilled for the RTE Act to achieve its vision.

Awareness about MDG augurs well for its fulfillment because knowledge is the first step to empowerment and to seek its implementation. Similarly, knowledge about the RTE Act would augur well for its fulfillment. Knowing that such an Act exists is perhaps not as important as knowing the provisions and benefits that it envisions. Given this fact, the Public hearings measured not only the general awareness about the presence of this Act but also its various provisions, especially those provisions which were already being implemented under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA; trans. Education For All) programme. The parameters that the public hearings focused on are:

- 1) Awareness that a law on Right to Education has been made,
- 2) Awareness of the class till which free education is promised under the Act,
- 3) Availability of free and compulsory education,
- 4) Availability of mid-day meal and whether it is liked by the children,

- 5) Whether admission is actually being done without proof of documents and awareness that admission is possible without proof of documents,
- 6) Is any fee being charged from the children,
- 7) Availability of notebooks, textbooks, bag and uniform from the school,
- 8) Availability of drinking water,
- 9) Presence of separate toilet for boys and girls,
- 10) Presence of playground and sports equipment for girls and boys,
- 11) Presence of a school management committee and village education committee,
- 12) Awareness of who to approach in case of any problem,
- 13) Awareness about the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), and
- 14) Awareness about MDG 2

In addition, certain information about the schools was also sought from the teachers.

Methodology- Why public hearings?

The campaign was conducted in 9 states- Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Jharkhand. The campaign was a dipstick research cum a mini awareness drive through participation of the people.

Dipstick research is a consumer behaviour tool conducted in the form of an informal poll that asks open-ended questions to solicit opinions or information, especially on a single issue. The most prominent example of a dipstick survey is an exit poll. In this case, the dipstick poll was conducted with the people of villages to check their awareness of RTE Act, its various provisions and on MDG as a concept. It was conducted in the form of public hearings where children, men, women, teachers and Gram Panchayat members took part and answered the questions asked by BBA activists.

Public hearings are a traditional mode of information gathering where villagers come together at a common place to submit their problems to the authorities who chair such hearings. It facilitates a dialogue between both parties – to understand people's opinions, discuss their problems/doubts if any so that the authorities can provide the necessary information and address their grievances simultaneously. It is a mode in which information can be gathered as well as disseminated. It also provides the opportunity to understand the pulse of the public about a particular matter. Also, they are an ideal means to bring to light any discrimination between communities, addressing such problems immediately and generate awareness about a programme/process to everyone at a single platform. It is also a means of transparent and immediate social audit on a particular matter, by the people. It is for this reason that public hearings on education were conducted in 125 places across 42 districts of 9 states to understand the awareness of RTE and its provisions among people.

The Jury for the Public Hearings consisted of:

- Panchayat Members
- Child Welfare Committee members
- Members of judiciary
- Sub-Divisional Magistrates
- Academicians from Universities
- Teachers
- Members of SCPCRs
- Police officers
- Human Rights activists

A simple questionnaire was designed to a) check awareness regarding education being a fundamental right, b) awareness of RTE, c) availability of education and its various components and d) whether they had ever heard of 'MDG' and MDG 2. The questionnaire was only to capture the awareness level among the people present and not to conduct a research. An interesting thing is that many of the provisions of RTE like no fee to be charged, free textbooks to be made available, are as such that the Government was implementing them through its Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. The availability of these provisions has also been gathered which would show the access of education among the people. Teachers were also asked a separate set of questions regarding their view on education in the villages.

The public hearings were a forum for people to vent their views openly and demand the authorities for providing proper education to all children. The public hearings were held between the Teacher's Day in India, 5th September to International Literacy Day, 8th September 2010 across the country. A jury of 4-5 people was appointed which overviewed the entire hearing process and facilitated it. They were from among teachers, Panchayat members, police, members of judiciary, members of Child Welfare Committee (CWCs), etc. In most of the places, even the teachers were not aware of RTE Act or what it means for the children. Many had said that nobody had ever approached them to increase their awareness about the RTE Act and its provisions.

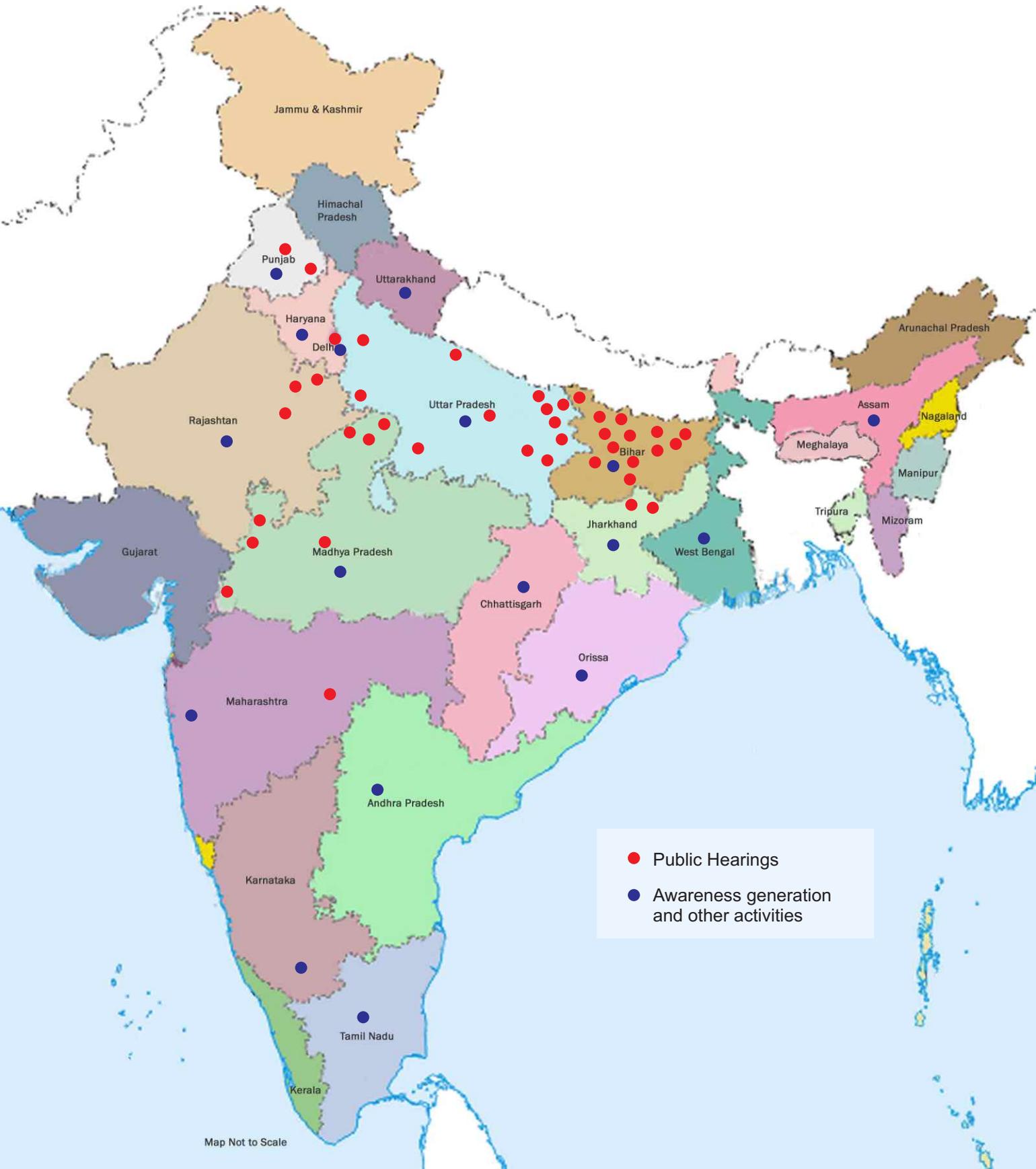
Limitations of the public hearings:

- These are public hearings and not a research study and must be understood as such.
- Data from Punjab, Maharashtra and Haryana are not representative of the entire state. Since these hearings were only a part of the pilot study, during the main elaborate study, these will be corrected.
- Since these were public hearings where children from all schools in the village were present, we could record some parameters only in terms of number of children present though the same with regards to number of schools would have been more appropriate.

Where were the Public Hearings conducted?

Public hearings were conducted in 9 states- mainly in the Hindi speaking belt. Each of the states that were chosen represented a certain challenge. Bihar is the biggest source of trafficking of children. The fact that it is a flood prone area with minor or major floods occurring every year, the matter is only worsened. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state and is backward in terms of access of education. The infrastructure of the state for schools is undeveloped. Public hearings were conducted in the fertile region where agriculture thrives but people are left wanting for basic education and health facilities. Jharkhand is a volatile area with the threat of Maoists looming large. Public hearings were conducted in the mica mining region of Giridih and Koderma districts besides other districts. Rajasthan is a state with gender discrimination and has a problem of access because the distance between one village and another is large. Punjab and Maharashtra are two of the wealthiest states among the states chosen. On the one hand, Delhi is well known for its higher education, but knowing the state of primary education among the slum dwellers of Delhi is also essential. This would show the presence of education among the migrant population of the city. Hence only the hard to reach children have been chosen. As per Census 2001, Madhya Pradesh has the one of largest number of children who are out of school and is one of the largest states, hence essential to capture. Haryana scores low on several basic development indicators and hence it is essential to measure awareness of so important a measure as education.

Campaigns



Map Not to Scale



Public Hearings

- **UTTAR PRADESH**

Ambedkar Nagar
Hamirpur
Sonbhadra
Kushi Nagar
Lakhimpur Kheri
Balua
Mahrajganj
Gorakhpur
Gorakhpur
Meerut
Devaria
Agra
Sant Kabir Nagar

- **HARYANA**

Yamuna Nagar
Faridabad

- **BIHAR**

Bhojpur
Sitamarhi
Saharsa
Patna
Buxar
Madhepura
Araria
Vaishali
Supaul
Nawada

- **MAHARASTRA**

Parbhani

- **RAJASTHAN**

Jaipur
Dausa
Alwar

- **MADHYA PRADESH**

Mandsaur
Ratlam
Bhind
Gwalior
Morena
Jhabua
Bhopal

- **JHARKHAND**

Kodarma
Giridih

- **DELHI**

- **PUNJAB**

Jalandhar



Total people participated: 30,240

Children: 15,522

Adults: 14,718 (Adults include parents, Panchayat members and teachers)

Panchayat members: 1020

Teachers: 979

State-wise participation of people

STATES	NUMBER OF PUBLIC HEARINGS	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Bihar	28	7340
Delhi	6	899
Haryana	2	275
Jharkhand	9	1974
Madhya Pradesh (MP)	13	3102
Maharashtra	1	250
Punjab	2	325
Rajasthan	30	6781
Uttar Pradesh (UP)	34	9294
Total	125	30240

Note:

More public hearings in Punjab and Haryana could not be conducted due to the after effect of the floods. Data from some other parts of Maharashtra was not received in time for analysis and compilation. Since the number of public hearings was low in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana, the figures in are not representative of these states; they represent only the region in which they were done.

AWARENESS INDICATORS

- Only one in 6 people present are aware that the law, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act exists.
 - In Bihar one in 5 people are aware of RTE Act.
 - The migrant population living in slums in Delhi has the least awareness of 1%
- Awareness of Millennium Development Goals is a meager 289 people or 1%
- There is less than 10% awareness of School Management Committee (SMC) and Village Education Committee (VEC) among the people. SMC is responsible for school development plan, VEC is the link between school and community

- Less than 3% people are aware of the existence of National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) or State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), these are the authorities whom they should approach in case of any complaints regarding access and to education
- SCPCRs are formed only in MP and Delhi among the 9 states where Public Hearings were held.
- In the 6 months since the RTE Act has been notified, Model Rules for RTE that detail the state procedures for implementation of the RTE Act have been formed only in MP and Delhi, among the 9 states of public hearings.

ACCESS INDICATORS

- Free Education is available only to a third of the children all over the 9 states
 - Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh are more or less in line with this average with Jharkhand clocking a slightly higher 37%
- One in 5 children is charged fee during admission.
 - The figure stands at 28% for Bihar.
 - More than ½ the children in Haryana and more than a third of the children in Jharkhand are charged fee during admission
- Fee is also charged for uniform, transfer certificate and issuing marks list in almost all the states
- Less than one in six reported of admission without age proof document; only 13% are aware that age proof document is not required for admission
 - Bihar has a better ratio with 1 in 4 people reporting admission without age proof document and more than 20% awareness of this fact.
 - Punjab and Haryana score better too, with Haryana showing 60% incidence and awareness levels (but the figures do not represent the entire states).
- Textbooks are available, notebooks aren't- while 60% children receive textbooks only 10% receive notebooks from schools
 - Punjab has a skew of 100% textbooks and no notebooks at all. (but the figures do not represent the entire state).
 - Delhi and Madhya Pradesh are the only places where 40% and 26% children reported availability of notebooks
- Less than a fourth of the children receive free school uniform; just over one tenth receive free bag
 - About ½ the children in Bihar and Delhi and 1/3rd in MP and less than a third in UP receive free school uniforms
 - Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jharkhand and Maharashtra don't receive free bag or free school uniform
- A major case regarding the possibility of a school uniform scam came to light due to the public hearing in MP

QUALITY INDICATORS

- There is 1 teacher for 39 pupils at the aggregate national level. This is a little higher than the 1 teacher in 32 pupils according to the District Information System of Education (DISE) statistics of 2008-2009.
 - Jharkhand has an alarming figure of 1 teacher for 70 students
 - At 1 teacher for 18 students, Madhya Pradesh needs commendation

HYGIENE INDICATORS

- Less than 60% of children have access to drinking water
 - Less than a third of the children in Haryana and just about $\frac{1}{2}$ the children in UP have access to drinking water
- Only third of the children reported having separate toilets for boys and girls.
- In several places toilets are present but are kept locked because outsiders use them at their will. Children demanded that boundary walls be built to prevent entry of outsiders into the school.

FACILITIES INDICATORS

- 60% of the children receive mid-day meal
 - 8 out of 10 children in MP and 7 out of 10 in Rajasthan receive mid-day meal
 - Jharkhand has a low 25% access to mid-day meal
- Questions were raised about mid-day meal quality and range in all the states. Only *khichdi* (a boiled mixture of rice and lentils) is available everyday, while menu boards are only for display
- Less than a third of the children have access to playground; separate sports items for girls and boys was reported by just over a tenth of the children
 - Delhi and Jharkhand have a dismal 2% and 1% children having access to sports equipment
- Paucity of classrooms was also a major concern among the children



Learnings from the Public Hearings

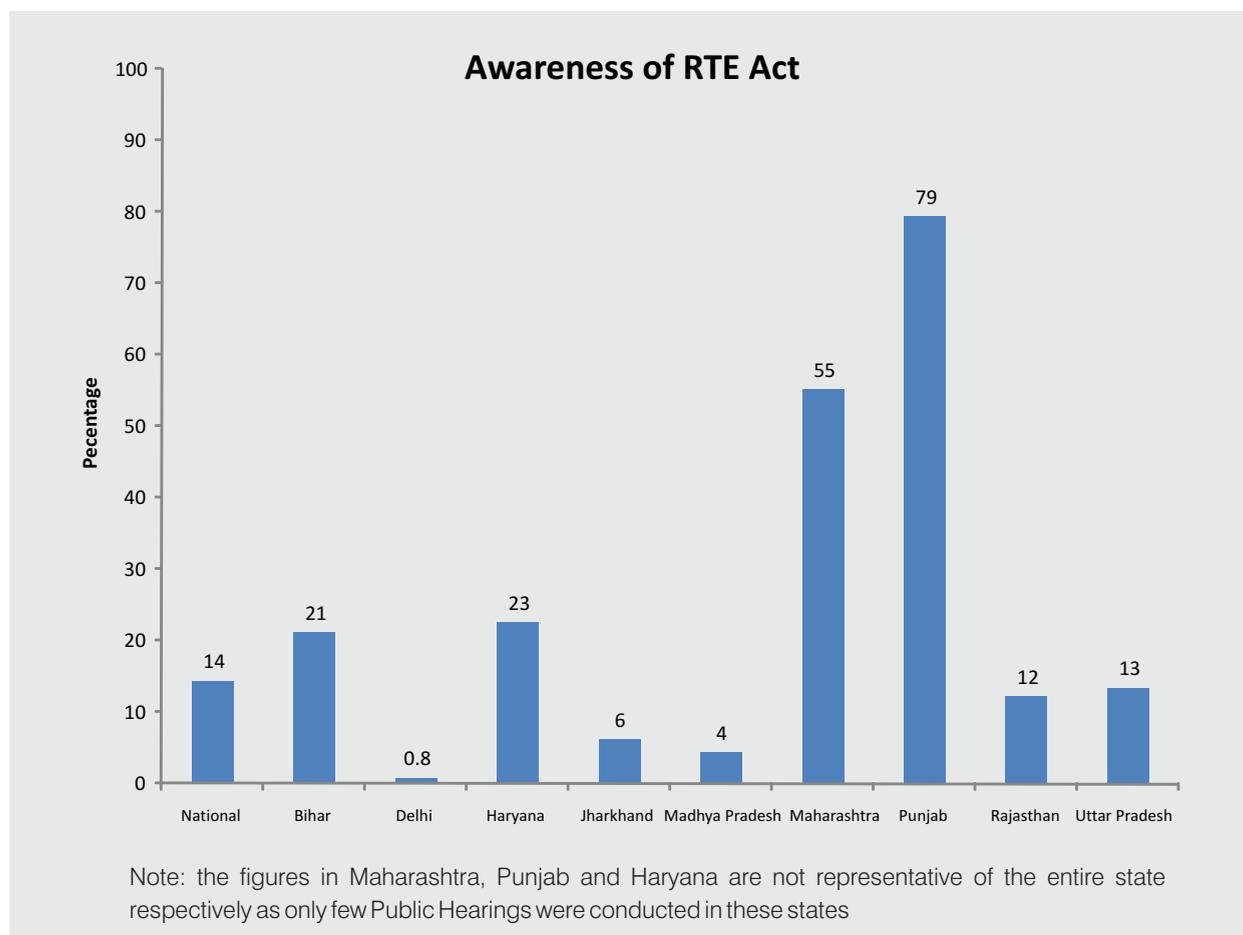
An interesting picture emerges from the findings at the public hearings. The awareness of RTE is a low 14%, awareness of MDG is almost negligible, about 289 of the 30,240 people had even heard of something called as MDGs. Mid-day meal is available to 60% of the children and liked by only a third of the children.

Fee is charged from 21% of the children. On the other hand, 74% of the children attend school.

One important caveat is for the states of Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra, where the public hearings are not a representative of the entire state but represent the region that they were conducted in. Hence the data for these states must not be projected to the entire state but read individually and interpreted accordingly.

Only 14% of the 30,240 people that participated in the Public Hearings were aware that Education was now a legal right made available under the Right to Education Act 2009. What is alarming is that at many places, the Panchayat members are also not aware of it.

I) Awareness of RTE Act reveals a rare urban rural continuum rather than the urban rural divide





The figures come as a shock. The lack of awareness about RTE Act is not restricted to the rural areas, but is prevalent in the urban areas also. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that the public hearings were conducted in the hardest to reach communities.

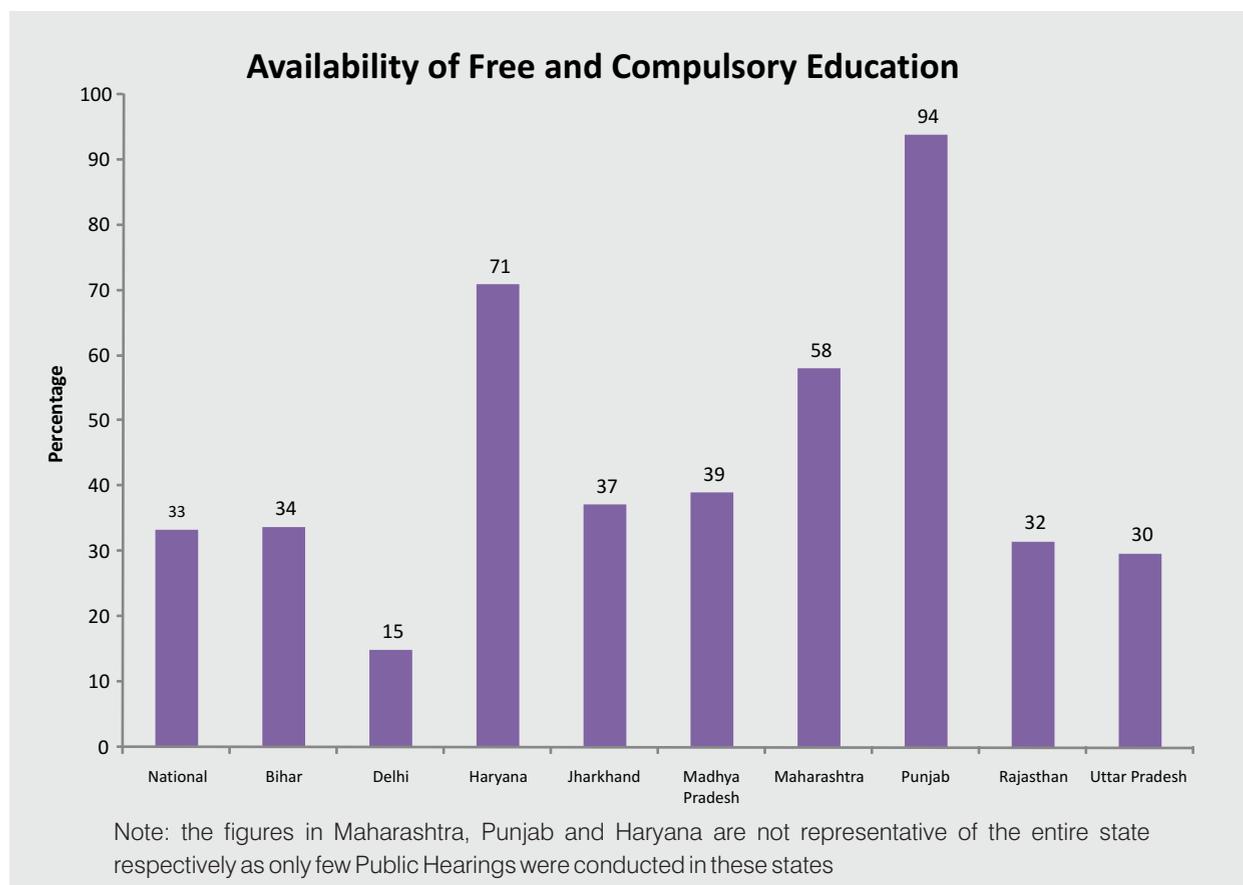
In Delhi for example, places where public hearings were conducted are teeming with migrant labour living in appalling conditions with no proper roads, no drinking water and in some places, no electricity. The poor are a neglected lot. In fact, these figures indirectly point out that urban poor are at no advantage than the rural poor, due to their urban dwelling. When it comes to access to education there seems to be an urban-rural continuum rather than a urban-rural divide.

Awareness effect

One positive aberration that was observed in RTE awareness was in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. The teachers, Panchayat members and even children were aware of RTE Act. This was due to the extensive awareness of RTE Act by Mukti Caravan (liberation caravan). They also came up with questions regarding access to officials like SCPCR. This only shows that there is interest among people towards education and this interest can be quenched through widespread awareness by the government.

Only about one third of the people said that they were availing free and compulsory education. The question here was whether they were being charge any tuition fee. So while one third are accessing free education in terms of no tuition fee paid, they might be paying for other facilities like text book, stationery etc.

II. Free education is far from being a reality

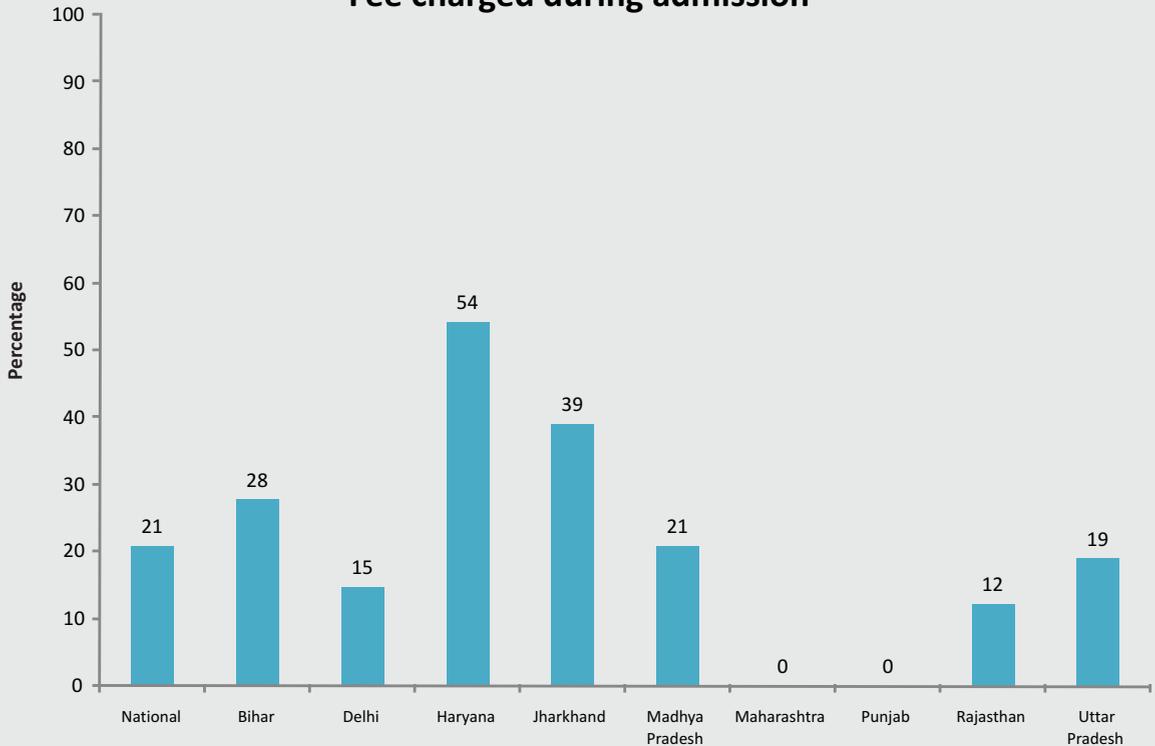


Delhi had the most disappointing situation with regards to RTE among all the 9 states where the public hearings were held. 3 of the 6 places where public hearings were conducted did not even have schools, one of them did not have electricity. The hearings were conducted in the slum settlements of the most vulnerable people- either migrant people from other states like Bihar, Jharkhand etc. or homeless people.

For instance, Badarpur Khadar did not have any access road or electricity. Motiya Khan, a settlement of homeless people also had a problem of lack of electricity. In Usmanpur, North East Delhi- an area for migrant labour, 100-140 children drop out of school every year. The children in this settlement end up working as domestic labour or other units of unorganized sector. A large number of girls there reported dropping out due to burden of household chores. Nimri Colony, another slum settlement fared no better. At least 5 children per class per school drop out every year. A case of multiple enrolment also came to light. Children are enrolled in multiple schools in order to avail of scholarships from all the schools and they then drop-out. In most of these slums, even the basic amenities of electricity, water are lacking, which has an effect on overall well being and thus education of the children

If this is the case in the Capital City of the country, one can find little fault with other places. The apathy of the administration in this regard is in stark contrast to the beautification of the city in the name of the XIX Commonwealth Games. People migrate seeking a better life, but the question arises- are they truly better off?

Fee charged during admission



Note: the figures in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana are not representative of the entire state respectively as only few Public Hearings were conducted in these states

1 out of 5 children are charged fee at the time of admission. While the ratio differs in each state, the point to be noted is that it is still being charged in many of the states. Jharkhand has the highest level with almost 40% of the children being charged admission fee. In fact, a fee of Rs. 50 is charged in several schools in Rajasthan as per the people participating in the hearings. In Madhya Pradesh too, some children complained about fee being taken by the school.

Several other cases of demanding fee for other purposes came to light as well. Children from Alwar, Rajasthan have complained about fee being charged for transfer certificate. A fee of Rs. 500 was also being charged for uniform in Sitamarhi, Bihar. Fee is also being asked in the form of building fee and for receiving marks list. As a result of the public hearings, people started demanding for a return of the money they have paid to the officials.

This constitutes a violation of the RTE Act, and BBA appeals to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) and the respective State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) where formed, to safeguard the provisions of the RTE Act to take effective measures for remediation.

III. Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)

	Teacher Student Ratio
Bihar	43
Delhi	39
Haryana	61
Jharkhand	70
Madhya Pradesh	18
Punjab	26
Rajasthan	40
Uttar Pradesh	36
India	39

At the peripheral level, the PTR is quite in line with the national findings from the DISE Report (2008-09), which gives a ratio of 34 pupils to a teacher. But the findings should be taken with a pinch of salt. These figures do not consider the places where there were no schools. Also this data were sought from the teachers themselves who furnished data of the number of teachers according to the number of vacancies in the school and not the actual teachers in the school. This was revealed in the public hearings. Some of those discrepancies are as follows:

- i) There are schools in Gorakhpur district where there is 1 teacher for 350 children on one hand and 3 teachers for 30 children!
- ii) 200 children are present in Faridabad, with only 2 teachers- this is in Faridabad Municipal Corporation area (i.e. urban centre)
- iii) Drop out after enrolment is high in an area called Nimri Colony of Delhi because teachers are perpetually absent
- iv) Teachers discriminate against the backward castes and don't want to take classes in Ambedkar Nagar, UP.
- v) On an average 2 teachers are present in schools in Rajasthan, but due to Census work currently, usually only one is left behind and he/she has to take care of mid-day meal, handling 5 classes at the same time.

These snippets raise concerns about the quality of education.

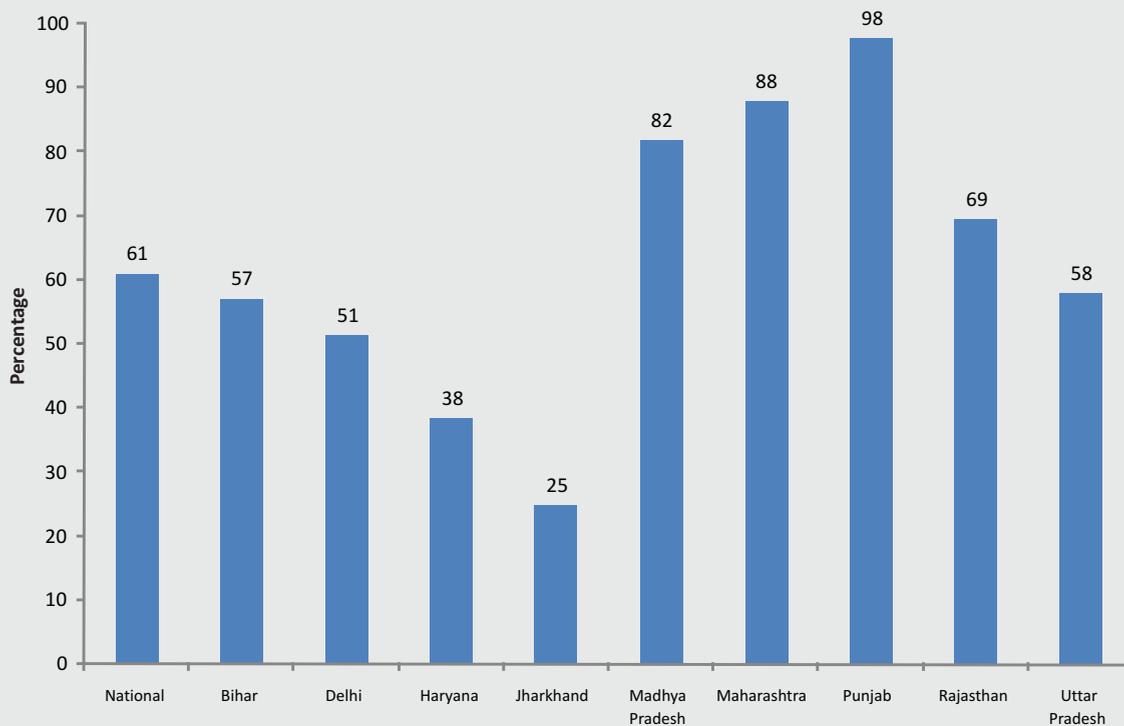
IV. Mid-day meal

Mid-day meal is a vulnerable spot across the country. The largest number of complaints was around mid-day meal. While 60% of the children said that they receive mid-day meal, instances of teachers prompting the children to speak positively about the mid-day-meal came to light in every state. After some probing, a few practices that were revealed are - the menu is displayed on a board but only khichdi is available at all times-this being the case in all the states; the mid-day meal is actually not tasty or good, but the children are so hungry by the time it is given that the taste is lost on them. In some places, mid-day meal is available only 2 days of the week.

There are other problems too with regards to mid-day meal. In some places, due to lack of cook, teachers have to allot time to get the food cooked. Due to this, there is a loss of study time.

Madhya Pradesh has a good reach of mid-day meal in comparison to other states.

Availability of mid day meal



Note: the figures in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana are not representative of the entire state respectively as only few Public Hearings were conducted in these states

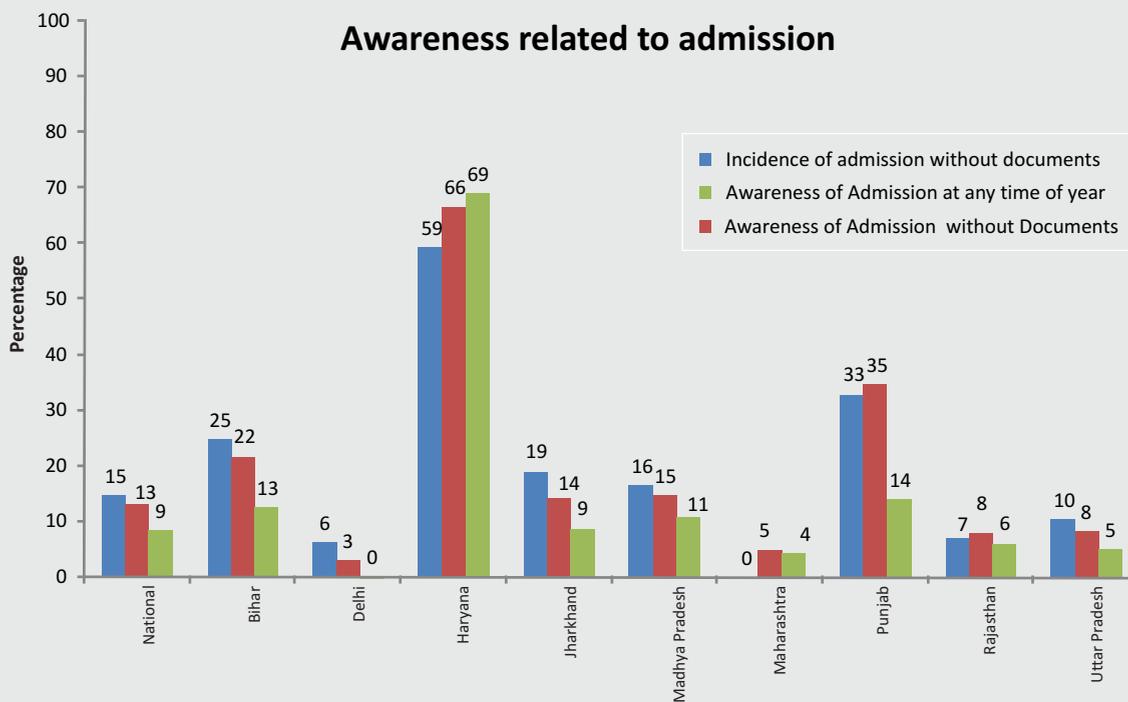
In Faridabad, Haryana, a different case that came to fore was that of a Government school which is run more or less by the community. Though it is a government school, the land is under dispute and hence Government cannot invest in it. But the community got together to ensure that it provides all the facilities that a Government school ought to have. Parents came together and decided to arrange for mid-day meal for their children. They approached a local religious organization and requested them to bear the costs who readily agreed. This is the only place among all the places of Public Hearings where the children are genuinely happy with their mid-day lunch.

V. Admission possible without proof of identity

One of the major problems during admission into school had been lack of proof of identity among a large majority of people. But admission in a school had always needed proof of identity. This was one of the grounds on which admission was refused and parents have been reluctant to admit their children in school despite being willing to educate their children. But this has now been corrected by the RTE Act though it had actually been initiated under the SSA programme in many states. Similarly, the RTE Act has the provision of allowing admission through out the year. States are also free to have different provisions which they can mention in their model rules. Apart from Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, no other state among the ones where the campaign was conducted, has formulated their Model Rules yet.

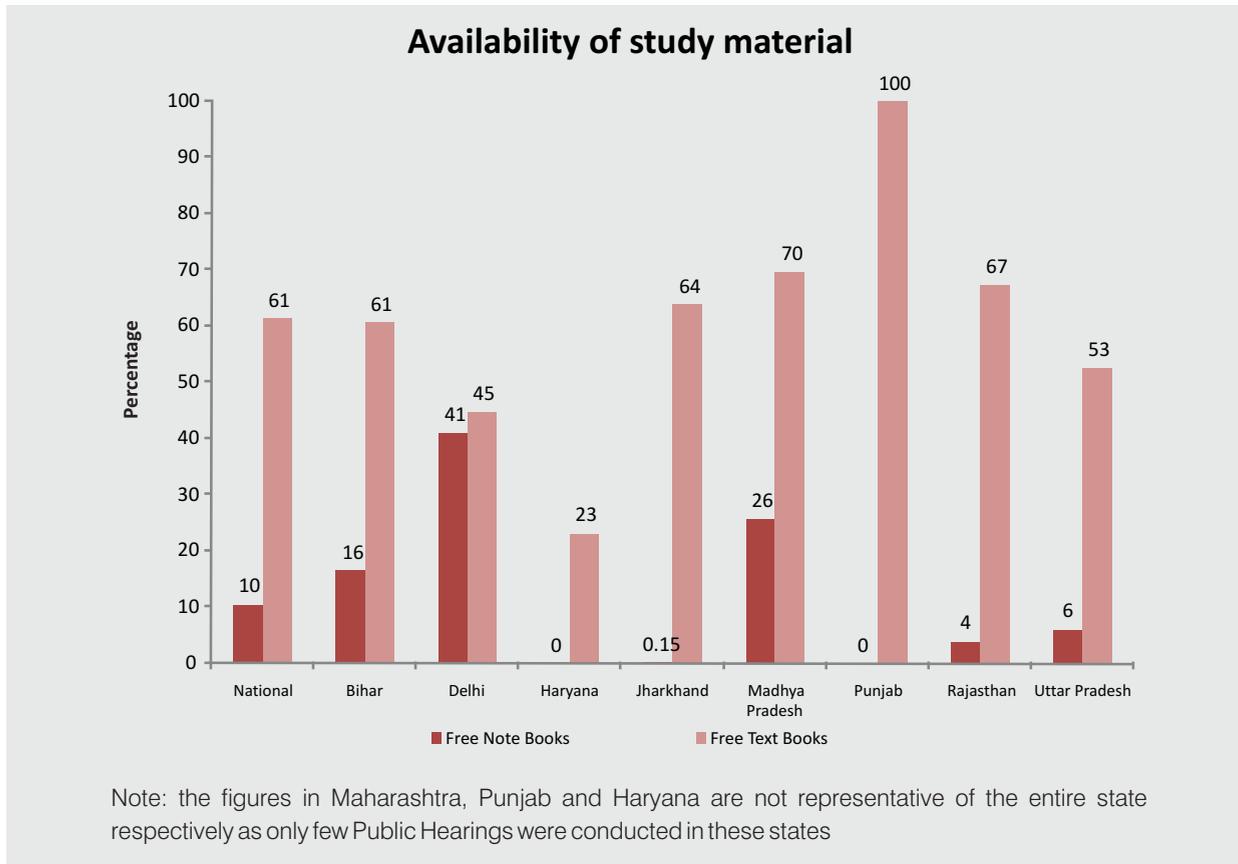
Only 15% of the people participating in the public hearing agreed that admission actually happens without the need for age proof. A little less than this are aware that admissions are possible without age proof documents. What is heartening is that Bihar, and Jharkhand which are considered backward have an awareness that is higher than the national level. Madhya Pradesh too has a higher awareness level than the National level.

When it come to awareness regarding possibility of admission at any time of the year, again Bihar, and MP score higher than the national level awareness with Jharkhand equaling the national average. Though the figures are not representative of the entire state, the fact that the level of awareness is high in Haryana and Punjab on all three parameters is encouraging.



Note: the figures in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana are not representative of the entire state respectively as only few Public Hearings were conducted in these states

VI Children receive textbooks but not notebooks from the school

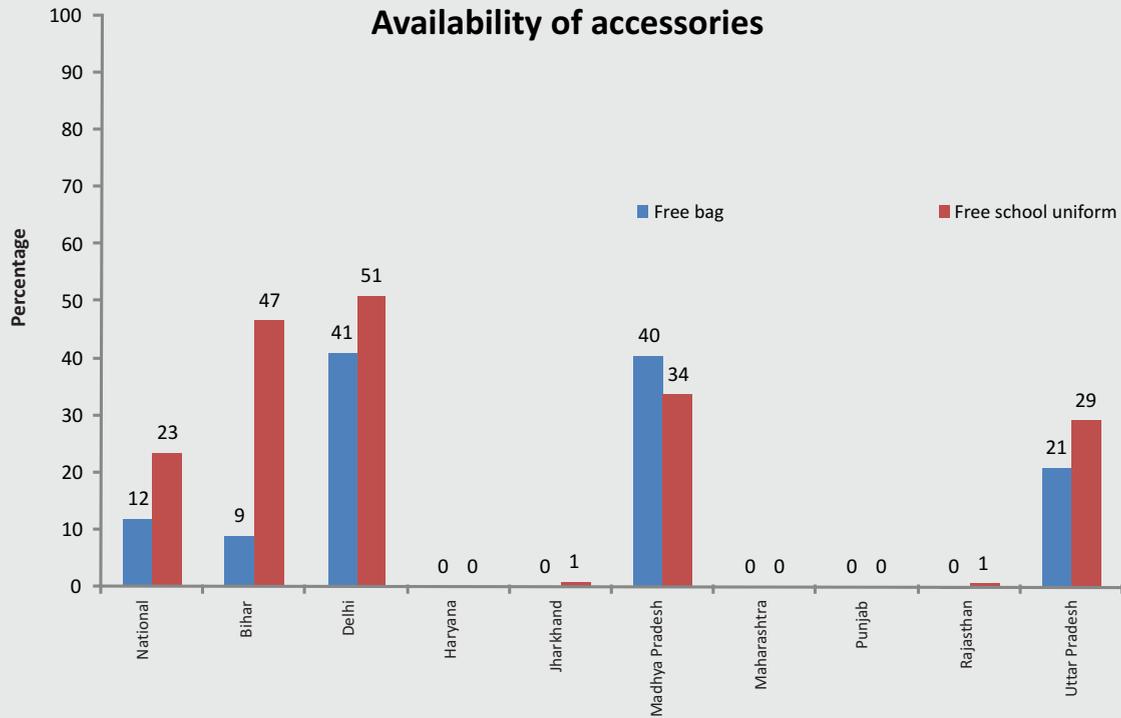


There is a stark difference in the availability of textbooks and notebooks across the states with the only exception being Delhi. Even so, not every child has access to textbooks. In Punjab, there is no availability of notebooks at all in Jalandhar region. All the states need to make corrective measures to provide textbooks and notebooks free of cost to the children. The situation needs a strong redressal in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh because of the dismal rates of providing notebooks to the children.

School uniforms - a serious case of wrongdoing

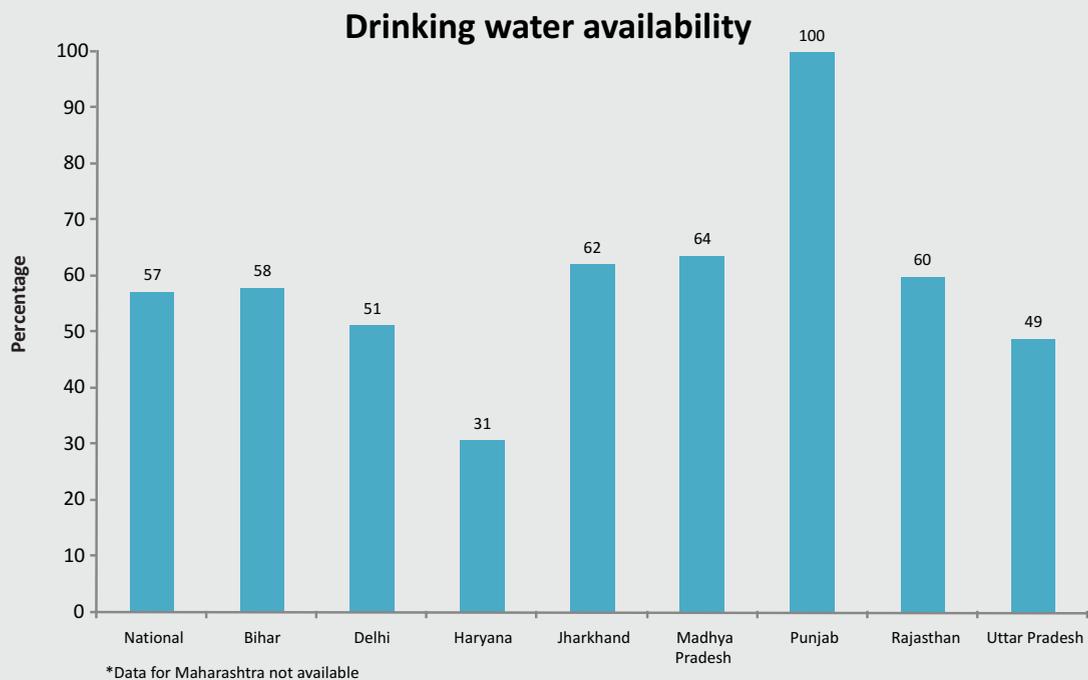
A serious case of misappropriation on school uniform came to surface during the public hearing in Madhya Pradesh. All the children raised their voice strongly that their school uniform was spoilt after a single wash. This was a common complaint in all the places where the public hearings were held. Upon investigating as to who the contractor for the stitching of school uniforms was, a shocking revelation was that he was the Education Minister's brother, in Burhanpur. Every district had to source their school uniforms from him even though the material used was of an inferior quality. Children suggested that the older uniforms were better than the newer ones and demanded a change in the dress.

This is a matter of great dismay because corruption has seeped into matters that relate to children and that too from vulnerable families. The fact that money is being swindled in the name of schemes also creates loss of credibility. This matter should be dealt with in a strict manner such that it doesn't occur again.



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VII. For want of drinking water



Note: the figures in Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana are not representative of the entire state respectively as only few Public Hearings were conducted in these states

Just over ½ the children have access to drinking water in their schools. In many places, the hand pumps are in need of repair. In some places drinking water is present for the teachers but not for the children.

Drinking water is the most important necessity for any child and its availability is of utmost importance. Provision of drinking water must be done on a priority basis in all states.

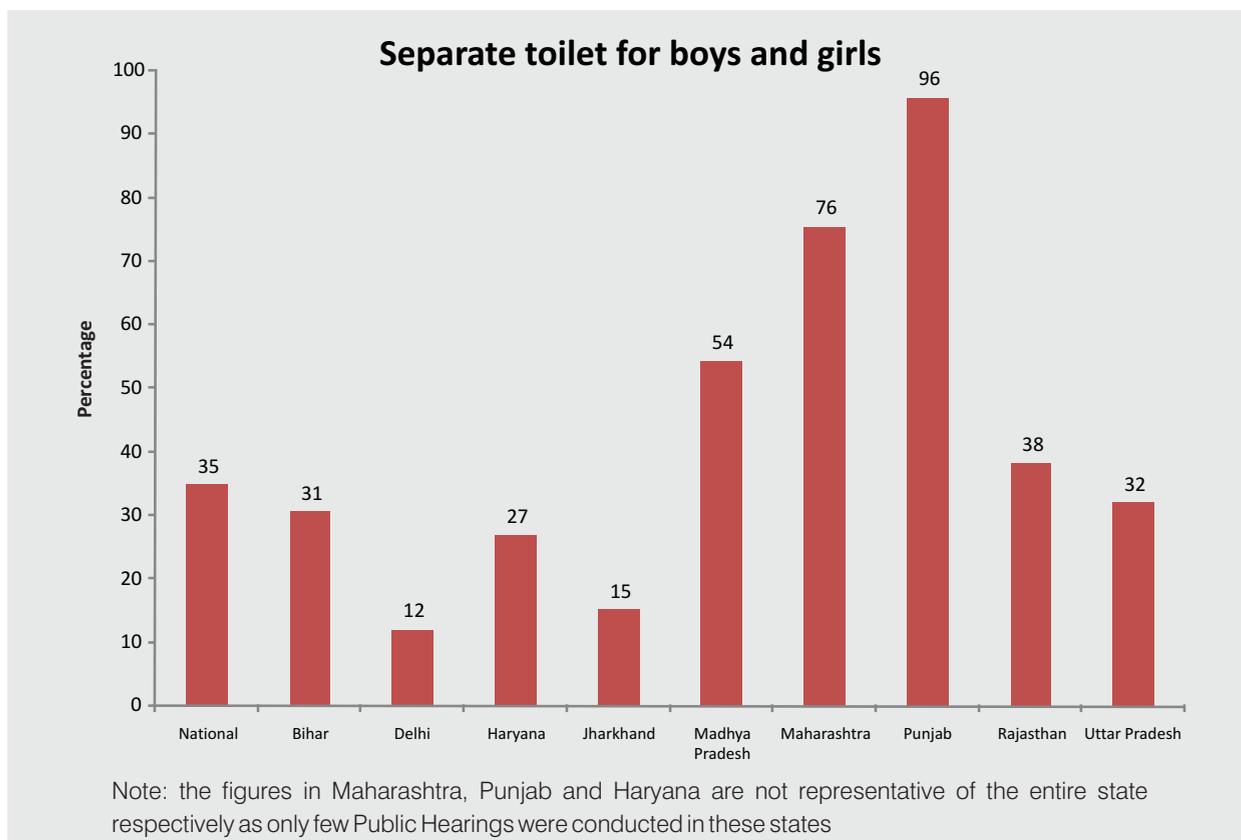
VIII. Toilets are there, but are not functional

Due to civil society efforts the need for separate toilets has been repeatedly emphasized in the past decade. Yet, the fact that only one out of three children has access to toilets comes as a shock. The situation is dismal in Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi. The situation in Madhya Pradesh too is not rosy though the access to toilets is higher there than the states aforementioned.

Some of the shocking details of toilets are as follows:

In Jaggakhedi, Madhya Pradesh, toilets are present but because even the outsiders use it, the teachers keep it locked. Hence there is no access to these toilets. The same is the case in Raebareli and Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. In certain places in Jharkhand there are no separate toilets for boys and girls.

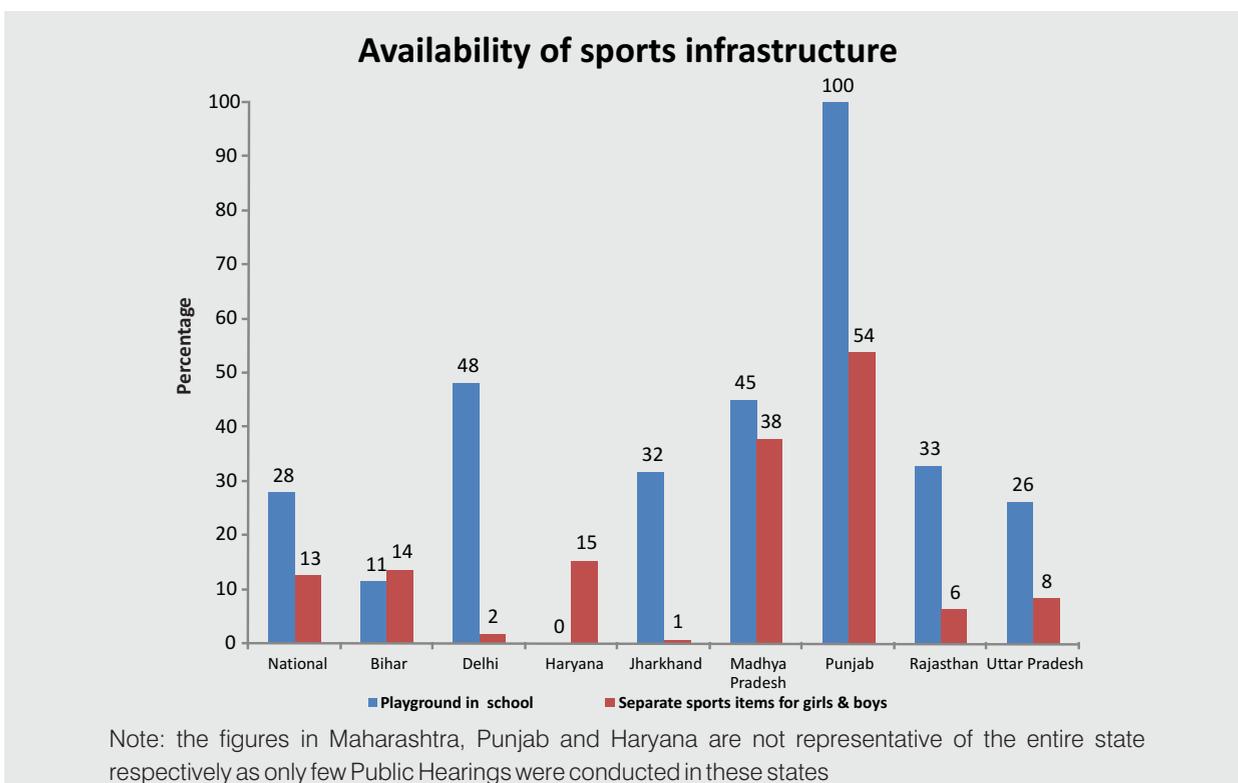
Though boundary wall doesn't exactly sound as a hygiene need, it seems to be the only practical way to keep outsiders out- outsiders who otherwise dirty the toilets. Hence an additional need for boundary wall has come up in most places where toilets are not there. Boundary walls have also been built in some places.



IX. Sports facilities

Sports are an important part of overall development. Since there is a general perception that sports are more important for boys than girls, there is a need to advocate for a change in this perception. Hence this information was also sought during the public hearings.

Though the figures do not represent the entire state, Punjab's reputation of being a sporting state seems to be intact in this chart. This should be seen as an example by the other states. Though, in terms of sporting equipment, only 50% of the children confirmed the presence of separate sports equipment for girls and boys in Punjab. But at the national level, less than a third of the children have access to a playground, leave alone sports equipment. Perhaps providing a proper place to play could be the first step to groom India's hidden sporting talent in the rural hinterland.



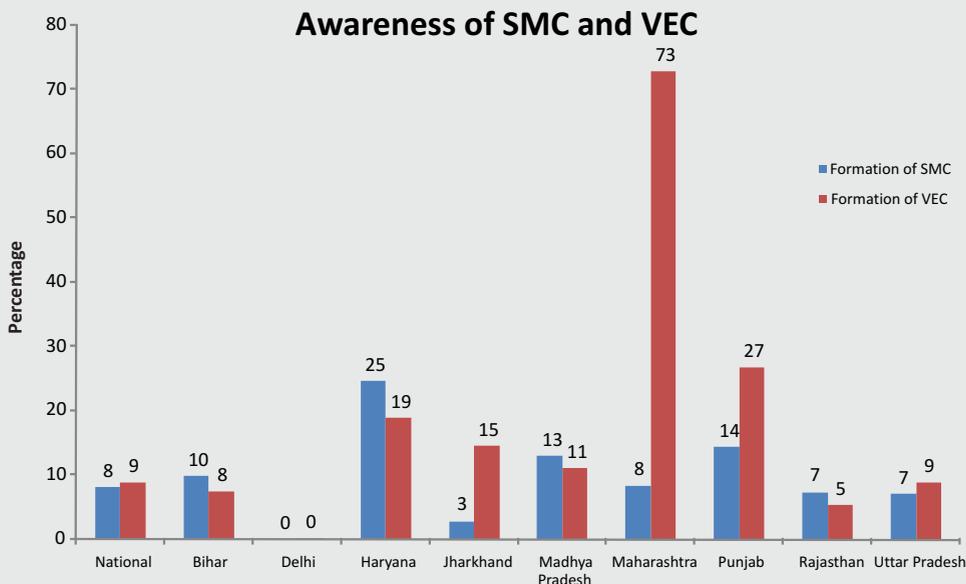
Education at all odds

Education can be a passion for some. 1165 children in a school, 2 toilets among them, classes are taken even on the terrace due to lack of space and there is no playground. Yet there is not a complaint from these children. All they want is more teachers. Even the teachers that are teaching here are very dedicated to their job and classes are conducted regularly. The children utilize the open space in a temple nearby as their playground.

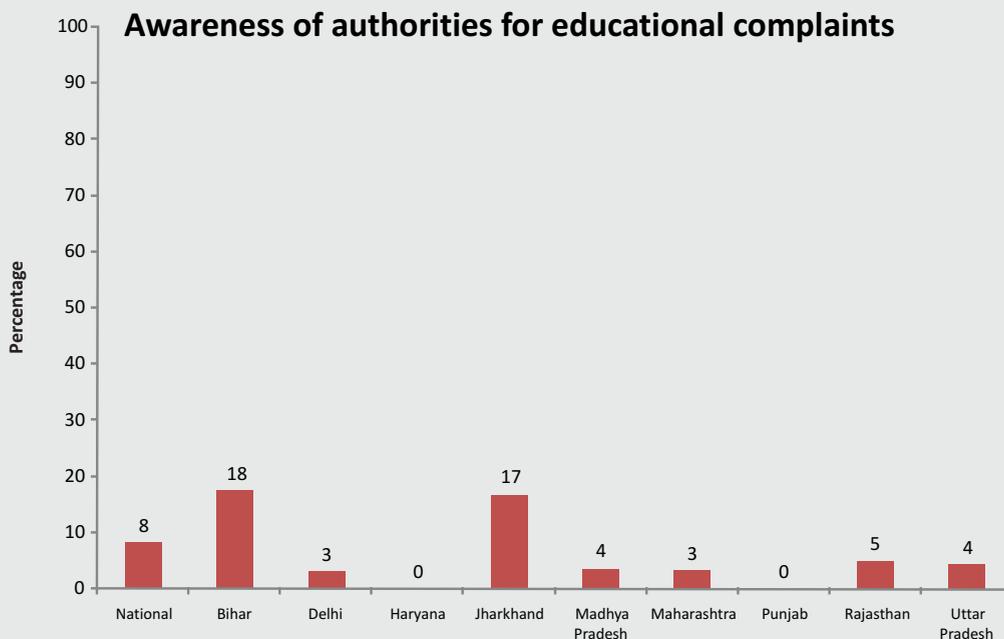
This is truly heartwarming coming from the district that is the most trafficking prone district. Amongst the children rescued by BBA in the past 5 years, the majority of them hail from Sitamarhi. Due to this reason, BBA has been an active force in spreading awareness on education through local activists and through the Mukti Caravan. The fact that this success story is from this district is encouraging, though BBA would not want to discredit the enthusiasm of the children which is a stronger factor for their success.

X. School Management Committee and Village Education Committee

In many states, Village Education Committee is a Panchayat monitored committee which links the school with the community. The School Management Committee is a committee that is mentioned under the RTE Act as the one that would prepare the school development plans among its many other activities. The purpose of this question was to check if the VECs and/or SMCs are functional in the states. There is a need for improving the situation in all the states given the low presence of SMCs and VECs in all the states. This is of utmost importance given that the SMCs have the important task in the management of school. Also necessary is to clarify the difference between SMCs and VECs, if any.



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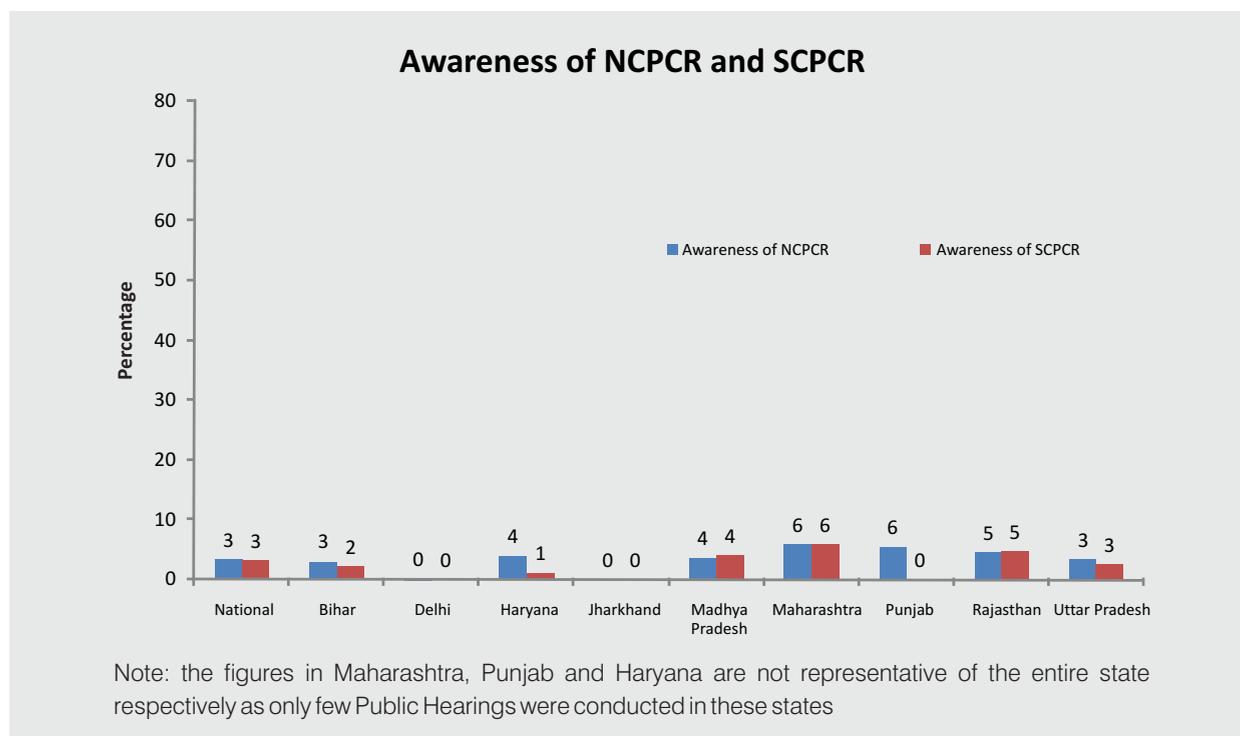


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XI. Missing link between the people and the NCPCR and SCPCR

National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) are the bodies responsible for the monitoring of the children's rights to education at the national and the state level. They are the bodies that people are supposed to approach in case of any complaints on education, especially regarding access to education. However, the awareness of people regarding these bodies is too low for comfort. How would they approach them if awareness were not generated? A meager 3% and 4% people among 30,240 that took part in the public hearings have heard of the NCPCR and SCPCR respectively.

Another important missing link is the practical fact of how will the parent/guardian/student approach the SCPCR which is in the State capital? This is more so given that they are the illiterate victims who don't know how to access justice or even draft a complaint. There has not been addressed in the RTE Act. However, it should ideally be mentioned in the Model Rules. Also, perhaps SMC or VEC could become the focal points for such complaints who will then pursue the matter with the NCPCR and SCPCR.



XII. MDG: Millennium Development Goals confused with Mid-Day Meals

As few as 289 of the people participating in the public hearings were aware of what MDG stands for. In fact in several places, MDG was thought of as being MDM or Mid-day meal!

Awareness about MDG 2

	% Awareness of MDG
Bihar	0.8
Delhi	0.0
Haryana	0.0
Jharkhand	0.6
Madhya Pradesh	0.6
Maharashtra	0.0
Punjab	8.9
Rajasthan	1.4
Uttar Pradesh	0.8
National	1.0

Impact of the Public Hearings

The words of Mrs. Lakshmi Gamadh, Deputy Collector, Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh are enough to sum up the aptness of Public Hearings. She said, "Ever since the Right to Education Act has been made there has been very little awareness among the common man regarding what it is and how it should be used. We need more efforts like the Jan Sunvai (Public Hearings) so that all people are aware of this Act." Seeing the poor level of awareness in her district, she took immediate action and said that 30 minute sessions every week on the RTE Act and its implementation will be held for the Cluster Academic Coordinators (CACs) and teachers in Mandsaur district.

As soon as this news reached the District administration of Ratlam and Gwalior, they decided to take the same measure of 30 minute session every week for CACs and teachers.

Demands for more public hearings have come from various parts of the states where Public Hearings have been done. This is because they have helped bring out matters in the open and resolve them quickly.

In Badarpur Khadar, New Delhi, electric connection was given immediately after the public hearings. This was solely due to the public hearing and the media coverage it garnered.

In terms of media coverage, the public hearings were covered by all leading newspapers in all the states. While the direct reach was to 30,240 people in 9 states, through newspaper coverage, it reached to 14.3 million readers.^[1]

A few recommendations

- 1) RTE Act should be translated into simple vernacular language and widely disseminated
- 2) Involvement of Panchayats must be made mandatory and awareness must be done through Panchayats, schools in public places
- 3) Model Rules should be formulated with the participation of people
- 4) Efforts should b made by Central and State Governments to cover up the deficit in funds.

[1] This is based on the readership figures for the newspapers in which the news were published.

Partner Organisations

- Savera Foundation
- Bharat Kalyan Parishad
- Sangram
- NACDOR
- Adarsh Yuva Manch
- Beghar Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti
- Silver Moon
- Mahila Vikas Charitable Society
- Social Education Voluntary Association
- Samagra Manav Seva Samiti
- Swarg
- Kosi Vikas Manch
- Acharya Ram Murthi Shodh Sansthan
- Kosi Lok Manch
- Kosi Mahila Manch
- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Society
- Akhil Bhartiya Samajotthan Samiti
- Samarpan Mahila Mandal, Madhya Pradesh.
- Madhya Pradesh Shaskiya Prathmik Sangh
- Poorv Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, Madhya Pradesh
- Teachers Union, Mandsaur
- M. P. Ajax Sangh
- Aastha Welfare Society.
- Chambal Yuva Vikas Kender, Morena.
- Baljit Mahila Mandal, Chattarpur.
- M. P. Panchayat Secretary Association.
- Shikshak College M.P.



आन्दोलन के लिए जन सुनवाई

8 से 8 सितम्बर (अन्तराष्ट्रीय साक्षरता दिवस) 2010 के अवसर पर विद्वत् विद्विग्न सज्जनसभार आचार्य श्रीमति आशा बघेर मजदूर सघर्ष समिति (BMSS)

पढ़ना हम सबका हक है!

बढ़ना हम सबका हक है!

बचपन बचाओ आन्दोलन पढ़ाई के लिए जन सुनवाई

सितम्बर से 8 सितम्बर (अन्तराष्ट्रीय साक्षरता दिवस) 2010 के अवसर पर विद्वत् विद्विग्न सज्जनसभार आचार्य श्रीमति आशा बघेर मजदूर सघर्ष समिति (BMSS) की ओ.

01/25/2008

09/06/2010

बचपन बचाओ आन्दोलन के लिए जन सुनवाई

पढ़ाई के लिए जन सुनवाई

पढ़ाई के लिए जन सुनवाई



बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न... शिक्षा के अधिकार को लेकर जनसुनवाई कार्यक्रम संपन्न

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बचपन बचाओ आन्दोलन ने लिए जन सुनवाई का आयोजन



बचपन बचाओ आन्दोलन ने लिए जन सुनवाई का आयोजन... बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न

Public hearing of Education Act gives hope to villagers

Public hearing of Education Act gives hope to villagers... Chetan Chauhan

NEW DELHI: As a bunch of enthusiastic villagers gathered at a courtyard in Badapur Khada on Tuesday evening under a dimly lit shade, not many could believe that the residents of this 250-year-old village still live in the dark ages, literally.



Supreme Court judge M.K. Sharma with Bhadarpur Khadar villagers in east Delhi on Tuesday.

Just 35 km north-east of the Supreme Court, this village still doesn't have electricity connection. What's more, the children of the village don't have a school to go or a dispensary to access healthcare facilities.

ment's tall claims about RTE success are a hogwash, Satyarathi said. The nearest primary school at Badapur Khadar is 4 km away and that too in Uttar Pradesh.

सिंधिया रिट्स नुं सभ्य 'सुटवाष्टी' नाअ 'उे समाग

सिंधिया रिट्स नुं सभ्य 'सुटवाष्टी' नाअ 'उे समाग... बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न

बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न... शिक्षा के अधिकार को लेकर जनसुनवाई कार्यक्रम संपन्न

Why do we have to sit on floors while studying?

Why do we have to sit on floors while studying? Students bombard public representative with questions

Students bombard public representative with questions... Govt school turns into haat

Govt school turns into haat... Students being deprived of place to study

राज एकसप्रे... बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न

शिक्षा का अधिकार क्रांतिकारी कदम

शिक्षा का अधिकार क्रांतिकारी कदम... बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न

बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न... शिक्षा के अधिकार को लेकर जनसुनवाई कार्यक्रम संपन्न

बच्चों ने किए रोचक प्रश्न... शिक्षा के अधिकार को लेकर जनसुनवाई कार्यक्रम संपन्न