

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVES, RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION & BACKDROP TO THE STUDY

The first chapter of this research introduces the research and argues its significance in contemporary times. Further, the chapter discusses the research objectives and the key research questions that have guided this study. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the research design and methods adopted by the researcher to conduct this study. Lastly, this chapter provides a brief overview of the thesis chapters and highlights the limitations of the present study.

In modern democracies, citizens' fundamental needs and claims are recognized as fundamental rights. The state supports and protects these rights, allowing individuals to develop their personalities and lead dignified lives. Rights are necessary conditions for the benefit of the

individual and for the welfare of society as a whole. Having an education is considered an essential condition to live a life with dignity. Education is a multiplier right, strengthening respect for other human rights. People's histories, civilizations, attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies are all shaped in significant ways by education. It is widely considered as one of the most effective tools for fighting against poverty, minimizing inequality, and fostering long-term economic expansion.

According to Dr S. Radhakrishnan, education plays a crucial part in overcoming obstacles caused by an individual's flaw. It liberates people from all forms of authority except that of reason. Additionally, according to B.N. Kirpal, education is the single most effective tool for promoting the growth of society. It is a means to live a more fulfilling life in the future and acquire the skills required to effectively contribute to the operation of the contemporary economy and society. In addition to being a catalyst for development and growth, education also serves as a tool for reducing socio-economic inequality. It is widely acknowledged that education empowers people to develop their human personalities fully and enables individuals to transcend conventional inequities of race, religion, class, gender and caste. Therefore, it serves as a tool to enable individuals to climb the socio-economic ladder.

From an economic standpoint, education was seen as a tool that was essential to improving both an individual's and society's quality of life. At the individual level, education can help reduce poverty and homelessness, increase job opportunities, and raise one's standard of living. It is also essential for the nation's economic development to educate the populace about new technology and develop a skilled workforce that would support an industry- and services-based economy. The human capital approach (Robeyns, 2006) or economic-instrumentalist approach to education (Menashy, 2013) makes a case for education's extrinsic benefits, such as increasing individual earning potential and a country's overall gross domestic product (GDP) by educating citizens who can support the growth of the economy. Because it maximizes each person's economic contribution to society, the human capital framework views education as a crucial component of growth and development (Menashy, 2013). On the other hand, a market-based approach treats education more like a service and removes it from the government's purview or mandate. As a result, other institutions can provide education for a fee using resources from the corporate sector and local and global civil society.

Despite its advantages, education as a human right became widespread after World War II. Then, scholars and activists pressed for the declaration of education as a fundamental human

right. This demand was justifiable since, under the Social Contract idea, the State was founded to protect the people's natural rights, including their right to life, liberty, and property (Boucher & Kelly, 1994). Additionally, it is believed that education has a significant role in preserving the right to a life of dignity (Mohini Jain Vs State of Karnataka and Ors).

National governments, regional and international organizations are committed to supporting the right to education to attain development goals. However, although the significance of education is widely acknowledged, different stakeholders do so for various reasons.

After the end of the World War II, scholars and policy-makers have given education their undivided attention at national and international levels. The case for declaring education a distinct human right was made based on its benefits on human dignity and the advancements achieved toward realizing other human rights. As a result, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other fundamental United Nations Conventions on Human Rights have given voice to the idea that education is a fundamental human right on a global scale. Given that various international agreements recognize it as a human right necessary for an individual's empowerment and national development as well as the development of society as a whole (United Nations, 1949; UNESCO, 1960; Eide, 2001), the state parties have a moral duty to ensure that children have access to it. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966, and international rights-based initiatives like Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have all further reaffirmed education as a fundamental human right. In these declarations and agreements (UNESCO, 2000; UNDP, 2014) issues like age, gender, ethnicity, disability, economic constraints, and others that occasionally represent obstacles to access to education, have been addressed. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1949), elementary school education should be free and compulsory for all children. This idea has since been reiterated in various conventions and treaties, such as Goal 4 of the UNDP Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for quality education for everyone and, more particularly, "ensures that all girls and boys finish free primary and secondary schooling by 2030".

Since the introduction of the right-based approach, education has come to be respected as a human right and valued as a separate entity. In favour of creating inclusive educational systems

that promote the human rights of every student, the rights-based approach disregards the economic benefits of education. Instead, the rights-based perspective contends that the state must ensure that every person has access to education (Klees & Thapliyal, 2007; Craissati et al., 2007; Dale, 2000). This approach offers distinctly diverse perspectives on the objectives of education and the individuals who ought to be involved in its delivery.

Despite the popularity of the rights-based approach to education, it is subject to criticism. Although governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations frequently refer to the right to education, it has come under fire for being merely rhetorical and making idealistic claims without identifying who is responsible for upholding these rights and how they should be realized (Robeyns, 2006). In addition, the funding and budgetary issues on the part of the State in the implementation of the right to education have been a significant concern (Walsh, 2003). There also needs to be more clarity surrounding rights-based discourse and how it applies to improving the quality of education. The vagueness of the rights-based discourse has helped states, organizations, and individuals push multiple viewpoints on ideal education. In addition, international actors deliberately use rhetoric based on rights to push specific ideologies and programs regarding educational policy (Tomasevski, 2006, 2008; Robeyns, 2006; Lindahl, 2006).

Nevertheless, the right-based-approach has been reaffirmed in several international and regional conventions and treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Articles 10 and 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)³¹ are those with particular relevance to the universalization of elementary education (CRC). At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, 155 nations, including India, committed to ensuring that every person had access to primary education by 2000. Furthermore, according to the Dakar Framework of Action, adopted at the 2000 Dakar Conference in Senegal, every child, adolescent, and adult should receive an education by 2015.

As a result, several states worldwide have ratified and signed the treaties and conventions, and incorporated the right to education in their legal framework and national constitutions, development plans, and programmes. These conventions and treaties also became India's best chance at realizing the constitutional goal of education for all. Moreover, India is a party to

important international human rights treaties and the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Children, which subject the central and state governments of India to enforce legislation guaranteeing the right to education and also set up the administrative and legal structures required to ensure its proper implementation of the legislation guaranteeing education as a fundamental right of people.

Post-independence, the constitution makers made education a moral obligation of the state by including it in Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Subsequently, in response to a protracted struggle, the Indian government passed the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act 2009) in August 2009, which went into effect in April 2010. Following this, in 2002, Article 21-A was added to the Indian Constitution. The Act established primary education as a fundamental right for children between 6 and 14 years old.

The right to life protected by Article 21 of the Constitution includes several essential rights, including children's right to an education. To formulate policy regarding the responsibility of the State to provide education, the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV of the Indian Constitution and the standards of international law distinguish between two levels of education, namely primary and secondary education and higher education. According to the 1966 International Covenant of Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, all children are required to receive free primary education and equal access to higher education is guaranteed depending on each student's ability. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights also highlighted such a distinction. "The State should endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the start of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children till they finish the age of fourteen years," states Article 45 of the Indian Constitution.

The Supreme Court's three-judge panel initially decided in the *Mohini Jain* case that the right to education at all levels is indivisible from other fundamental freedoms. It noted that the State has a constitutional obligation to offer educational institutions for its people at all levels. The public must benefit the most from the operation of the educational institutions. In *Unnikrishnan v. State of A.P.*, the Supreme Court's Five Judges Bench overturned the standard established in *Mohini Jain's* case about the scope of the right to education. Most of the bench in the *Unnikrishnan* case believed that the Directive Principles should be used to determine the right's content. As a result, they understood it to mean that (a) every child and citizen of this country has a right to free education up until the age of fourteen, and (b) after that, their right to education is limited by the State's economic capacity and level of development.

Regarding the aforementioned argument (a), the Supreme Court unequivocally acknowledged it as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The Court noted that the fundamental components of the right to life are a dignified life and a human personality. The right to a dignified life would be denied by elementary and secondary education absence or rejection. The State can only take away the citizen's right to education if it follows the legal process.

Therefore, Article 21A was introduced as part of the 86th Constitutional Amendment on December 12, 2002, to establish the right to education as a fundamental right. On April 1, 2010, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 became law. All children between the ages of six and fourteen are entitled to free and required education under the provisions of the Act. The provision of free and required education is now a legally binding obligation for the federal government and the states. The evolution of the notion that education is a fundamental human right in India demonstrates how far-reaching the idea has become from the historical context in which it first surfaced (discussed in detail in chapter three). From focusing solely on the universalization of education, it has expanded to include both the accessibility and the availability of educational possibilities.

The key provisions of the RTE Act 2009 are discussed here. Every kid between the ages of 6 and 14 has the legal right to free, obligatory education in a local school until they have completed their elementary education. No child shall be required to pay any fee, charge, or expense for this reason that may prohibit him or her from pursuing and finishing elementary school. If a child above the age of six has never attended school or, if entered, was unable to complete their elementary education, they must be admitted to a class that is appropriate for their age. Within three years of the start of this Act, the appropriate government and local authority shall build a school in the designated area, if one still needs to do so, to carry out the terms of this Act. Funding for implementing this Act's provisions shall be provided concurrently by the Central and State Governments. This Act is also crucial in making secondary and higher education accessible to all children. The Act also includes special measures for vulnerable populations, such as child labourers, migrant children, children with special needs, or people who are less fortunate due to social, cultural, linguistic, geographic, or other disadvantages.

The passing of the Right to Education Act is a significant move made by the Indian government since it moves the nation closer to accomplishing the goals and mission of the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA). As a result, elementary education is now a fundamental right of children belonging to the age group of 6 to 14 years. However, this is only halfway through the journey since the real challenge lies in implementing the Act at the grassroots level.

Due to the inclusion of education on the concurrent list in India, each state has created its own set of laws and policies to implement the RTE Act. For example, Gujarat passed the RTE legislation in 2012, which details the plan to implement the RTE Act 2009 in the state.

1.1 EDUCATION SECTION IN GUJARAT: AN OVERVIEW

According to Gujarat Government (GoG) figures, the state has approximately 11.48 million pupils and approximately 0.4 million teachers. There are roughly 54,444 schools in the state, with 13,639 being elementary schools. About 28,096 are upper primary schools, followed by 4,822 secondary schools and 7,887 higher secondary schools. For implementing the RTE Act 2009, Gujarat notified model rules for RTE implementation in 2012. To provide free and compulsory elementary education Gujarat has introduced programmes like Shalapraveshotsav, Kanyakelavni Rathayatra, Vidhyadeep Vima Yojana, Vidhya Sahayak bharti, classroom construction, computer-assisted learning, separate sanitation for girls, in order to realize the goal of universal primary education and fully implement the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009. These programmes seek to provide high-quality education while obtaining 100% enrollment and lowering the dropout rate. According to data from the Government of Gujarat, a total of 45023 educational institutions were providing elementary education in the State in 2020–21, down from 45315 in 2019–20. In 2020–21, 84.65 lakh students were enrolled in these schools, down from 86.14 lakh the year before. It is good to see how the elementary level (Std. I–V) retention rate is increasing while the dropout rate is dropping. From 22.30 per cent in 1999-2000 to 1.37 per cent in 2019-20, the dropout rate for the elementary division has significantly fallen. 3.39 per cent of students in grades I through VIII dropped out of school in 2019–20. In contrast, there are now 12709 institutions offering secondary and higher secondary education, up from 12445 in 2019–20. The number of pupils has declined from 28.67 lakhs in the 2019–20 school year to 28.43 lakhs in the 2020–21 school year. For implementing clause 12 (c) of the RTE Act 2009, which provides 25% reservation to special category children in private unaided schools, the state government reimburses the charge up to a maximum of Rs. 13,000. An additional Rs. 3000 is given to the kids each year, including their uniforms, schoolbag, footwear, and other study materials.

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), established in December 1986, is the principal administrative organization responsible for managing the state's primary education programme. Under the federal government's sponsorship, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), currently known as Samgra Shiksha Abhiyan, was introduced in the state in 2002 to achieve the goal of universal primary education. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) is a residential dormitory for SC, ST, OBC, Minority, and other caste girls, ages 10 to 16, who have not attended school or have dropped out as part of the national government's initiative to improve girls' educational opportunities. There are currently 26650 females enrolled in 245 (165 Central Government + 80 Gujarat Government) KGBVs operating in Gujarat.

Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT) also plays a significant role in educational research and training at the elementary school level. Also, it plays a significant role at the secondary education level and is envisioned for curriculum reforms. It is done to ensure the quality of education provided in schools. Additionally, the state frequently holds Gunotsav in the schools to raise the standard of instruction there. Gunotsav is an accountability framework for the quality of primary education, which considers the student's academic performance, extracurricular activities, resource use, and community involvement. The State Department of Education began this initiative in November 2009, intending to evaluate the current state of elementary education and grade school instructors accordingly. Gunotsav is an exceptional illustration of a state initiative because it is carried out with the support of all state agencies and aims to increase the "quality" components of the Department of Education.

2. MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

While the primary objective of the study is to analyze and assess the process of implementation of the RTE Act in Gujarat, the study furthermore aims to conduct in-depth analyses of the following:

1. The conceptual and historical evolution of India's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act 2009).
2. The theoretical framework of the RTE Act 2009 in the context of the A-4 model.

3. The administrative framework for implementing the RTE Act 2009 in Gujarat in the context of good governance.
4. The process of RTE Act implementation in Gujarat in the context of a participatory framework and analyze the role of various actors in the administrative framework.
5. The impact of the RTE Act on the enrollment and dropout rates in Gujarat.

3. KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The idea of having a "Right to Education" (RTE) is closely associated with the rights-based approach, which became prevalent in the decades following the end of the World War II, and the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). So, is the RTE as recent as that, or has it existed over an extended period? It is essential, both in the international and the Indian context, to have a thorough knowledge of its development. As a result, the third chapter of this thesis will attempt to study its evolution by attempting to answer the following research question:

"How has RTE conceptually evolved nationally and globally?"

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act 2009), which the Indian government passed in response to a protracted battle, entered into force in April 2010 and brought India closer to achieving the objectives and mission of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA). Since the right to education idea includes making education available, accessible, adaptable, and appropriate, it is crucial to understand the Act's contents and thoroughly research its main components. Thus, the third chapter of the thesis will focus on the following question:

"What are the objectives and key provisions of the RTE Act in India?"

The effectiveness of any policy, scheme, or programme depends on its grassroots implementation. Therefore, ensuring that the administrative framework and implementation process adhere to sound administration and governance standards for effective implementation is essential. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the administrative framework and implementation process for RTE Act 2009 in Gujarat complies with the overarching aims and

objectives outlined in the original policy statement and that all actors, agencies and stakeholders perform their duties efficiently. In this light, the fourth chapter of the thesis will examine the following questions:

"What is the administrative framework for implementing the RTE Act in Gujarat?"

"To what extent and in what ways does the administrative framework for implementing the RTE Act in Gujarat conform to the prevalent criteria of good governance and effective policy implementation?"

The participatory policy framework improves government decision-making, increases social capital, lessens public mistrust of the government, and ultimately strengthens democracy. In addition, the Act's overall implementation can benefit significantly from the contributions of the various individuals and organizations participating in the process. In this context, the thesis' fifth chapter attempts to respond to the following question:

"How participatory is the overall implementation process of the RTE Act in Gujarat?"

The Right to Education aims to ensure that every child between 6 and 14 years receives free and mandatory education. This delivery of instruction occurs in institutions such as schools. Children must enrol in schools in order to obtain a formal education. Furthermore, once enrolled, children must complete their elementary education without dropping out. Thus, children's enrollment and dropout rates are essential to the RTE Act. The right to education can only be realized by ensuring that children enrol and do not drop out in the middle of the school year. In this light, the sixth chapter of the thesis attempts to answer the following question:

"How has RTE Act affected the enrolment rate, retention rate and dropout rate in the state in aggregate terms as well as in relation to community, gender and sub-regional variables?"

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

India faces dire poverty, poor governance, unequal access to education, and a legal system that moves at a languid pace. India has 121 crore people, and most live in rural areas, according to the 2011 Census. 37.7 crore people reside in urban areas, whereas 83.3 crore people dwell in rural areas. Most rural residents lack basic amenities and are eagerly awaiting growth and reform. In this light, education is crucial in liberating this enormous population from the chains

of ignorance, poverty, and unemployment. Many government programmes and initiatives to attain the goals of universal education have been tried in the past, but they have all failed, according to the constitutional history of India.

Thus, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act 2009) is a crucial step in this direction since the prior legislation did not use the language of rights. Hence, it is essential to examine whether the linguistic change, together with a discourse shift based on human rights, has a positive effect on the educational outcomes in the country.

Under the RTE Act 2009, all children between the ages of 6 and 14 are entitled to free and compulsory education from the Indian government. The RTE Act 2009, according to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, is founded on the conviction that promoting inclusive elementary education for all people is the only way to uphold the values and principles of equality, social justice, and democracy and to build a just and compassionate society. The problems of inequality, illiteracy, and unemployment in the nation can also be addressed by RTE Act 2009. It may also improve a nation's low ranking on the Human Development Index. Thus, with its bold objectives, the RTE Act 2009 represents a significant step in addressing the problems of access and equity in education.

Furthermore, the implementation of the right to education has been hampered by a combination of ambiguous policy language and political cultures and institutions that have not yet embraced economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights and rights-based approaches to development as a whole in addition to wide variations in the scope or definition of what constitutes the right to education. Thus, the RTE Act 2009 implementation process, essential for the nation's efforts to combat issues like illiteracy, unemployment, social inequality, and poverty and ensure inclusive economic growth, becomes a crucial area of research from both a policy and academic perspective.

An appropriate administrative structure and process must be implemented to guarantee that the implementation process is consistent with the spirit of the Act, given the tremendous amount of money and workforce dedicated to the Act, along with the sound legislation. It is well-known that policy can only be successful if its implementation corresponds to the goals of those who adopted it. Policy implementation is a complex process that involves several actors and stakeholders at various levels of the hierarchy. The policy implementers shape the policy's outcomes after the policy-makers have crafted it. There is a gap in the policy process as the

policies are being formulated at one level by a particular set of actors and implemented at a different level by new actors. This phenomenon is crucial in determining the overall implementation process and achieving the desired outputs. The entire bureaucracy at different hierarchical levels gets involved in the implementation process, unlike the legislative part, which is the prerogative of a few. Apart from bureaucracy, other actors like interest groups and political parties also get involved. Interest groups and political parties play an active role when the government implements policies. At the implementation stage, the policies could be abandoned, implemented or even modified by the government to meet the demands of the interested parties (Smith, 1973).

Hence, examining the necessary institutions, organizations, and processes that can help achieve the more general philosophical aims and the desirable anticipated policy outputs is necessary for the sustainable execution of any policy. Any shortcomings here could raise the likelihood that the overall policy will fail. Failure to implement a policy properly could adversely affect the nation's overall planning and growth strategy. As a result, periodic studies should be carried out to examine the implementation process at various phases.

In the context of the RTE Act 2009, the bureaucracy plays a crucial part in achieving its objectives because the bureaucratic institutions are in charge of putting the Act into practice. At all levels—top, middle, and bottom—many actors are involved in this process, each with a unique set of tasks, responsibilities, and interests. The RTE Act's 2009 implementation process is both crucial and challenging.

In the context of Gujarat, very few empirical studies focussing on the various aspects of implementing the RTE Act 2009 have been conducted. Therefore, it becomes vital to study whether the structure, machinery, institutions and process set up for implementing RTE in Gujarat are consistent with the underlying philosophy of the Act. It is an established fact that policies can succeed only if the implementation bears a relationship to the intentions of the policy adopters (Sapru, 2012). Studies have shown that the general perception in India is that our welfare rights embedded in the statutes and constitution lack a robust implementation, monitoring and enforcement system (Aiyar, 2012 and 2013; Panagariya, 2013). As a result, many policies set out in the past by the government have failed to achieve the desired outputs due to the lack of proper implementation machinery. Implementation, therefore, is a crucial part of the overall policy process.

Furthermore, factors like inadequate instruction, dropout rates, a lack of school development plans, inefficient community involvement, and unsuitable implementation tactics by state, district, and cluster authorities impact the delivery of primary education. The RTE Act implementation process in Gujarat involves a complex, lengthy chain from the central government to the school management. Therefore, it is crucial to examine that each chain link has a defined relationship and that each hierarchy level is robust with a proper understanding of all facets of the Act.

According to the Act, each state must establish its model regulations for implementation. In this context, it is essential to investigate the Gujarat implementation model because it may apply to other states in the country dealing with a comparable set of implementation challenges as Gujarat.

Furthermore, the implementation process of the Right to Education Act - which is crucial for our country to combat problems like illiteracy, unemployment, social disparity and poverty and ensure inclusive economic growth – becomes an important area of research from the policy well as academic perspective. Studying this topic also becomes essential since not much research has been conducted that has focussed on the overall implementation of the Right to Education Act in Gujarat. As per the Act, every state is required to lay down model rules for its implementation. Therefore, every state will have a different process and structure to implement the Right to Education Act. It is, therefore, essential to study RTE implementation in Gujarat, draw insights from the ground level where the Act is being implemented, and examine any gaps in the process. In addition, good practices, success stories, and drawbacks in the implementation process need to be researched and highlighted at this stage for more extensive long-term benefits. As argued above, properly implementing RTE is not only a stepping stone to tackling various socio-economic and political problems of the country but is also crucial to the nation's spirit since it is a fundamental right and not just a public policy set out by the government. Lack of research into the state's RTE implementation may result in a poor understanding of the role of public administration and its significance in policy development and providing public services, including RTE implementation.

Furthermore, this study will also advance knowledge of India's primary education policy, the relationship between public education and the state and society, and the administrative structure in light of good governance standards. The research's conclusions and suggestions will also enhance service delivery, increase access to primary education, remove numerous

administrative obstacles, and reduce various bottlenecks. Moreover, the thesis' findings can aid in comprehending India's public policy's varied dynamics. It can aid in understanding the nation's overall process of formulating and enforcing policies at the macro and micro levels.

5. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A comprehensive and exhaustive literature review was undertaken to contextualize the current study and its key research questions in their proper context and to determine the most appropriate research method to address the research problems. Based on the objectives of the study and the insights from the literature reviewed, this research has combined theoretical and empirical perspectives. It is referred to as a mix-method in the parlance of research methodology. Mixed methodologies is a phrase increasingly used in the social sciences to refer to "the category of research in which the researcher blends quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or terminology in a single study" (Jonson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp. 14-26). The mixed method is also popularly referred to as "triangulation." Denzin Norman popularised this phrase. Initially, it was intended as the execution of parallel investigations employing diverse approaches to attain the same objective, to provide supporting evidence for the drawn conclusions. In recent years, it has been used informally as a synonym for Mixed Methods without consideration for any of the conditions inherent in the original notion. As a result, it has lost its original significance. All methods have inherent biases and limitations. Hence, applying a single method to evaluate a given research will produce biased and limited results. Hence, the mixed method has methodological advantages over single methods.

The research study has employed various techniques for collecting and analyzing primary data, including surveys, structured and unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. In addition, several significant international, regional, national, legal and non-legal publications investigating various facets of the Right to Education and its implementation are also examined for primary data collection.

The empirical analysis, which included a survey, focus group discussions, structured and unstructured interviews, and observation, forms the basis of chapters four, five, and six of the study. A survey was carried out in Gujarat schools to collect data on the various facets of the RTE Act's implementation. For drawing the sample, the following method and data were used. There are approximately 54,444 schools in the state, with 13,639 being elementary schools.

About 28,096 are upper primary schools, followed by 4,822 secondary schools and 7,887 higher secondary schools (Government of Gujarat, 2020-21). Based on the data the schools were separated into four zones: Saurashtra, Kutch, Saurashtra Central, and North Gujarat, and were further categorized as government, grant-in-aid and private.

The Saurashtra and Kutch region includes the districts of Amreli, Bhavnagar, Botad, Dwarka, Gir-Somnath, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Kutch, Morbi, Porbandar, Rajkot, and Surendranagar. Across all of these districts, there are 2900 private unaided schools in urban areas and 2281 private unaided schools in rural areas. In addition, there are 8909 government schools and 885 government-aided schools in rural areas. In urban areas, there are 428 government-aided schools and 1162 government schools.

The districts of Ahmedabad, Kheda, Anand, Panchmahals, Vadodara, Dahod, ChotaUdepur, and Mahisagar comprise the Central Gujarat region. There are 1574 private unaided schools, 1145 government-aided schools, and 9855 government schools in these urban districts. In contrast, there are 2374 private unaided schools, 769 government-aided schools, and 968 government schools in rural areas.

The districts of Aravali, Banaskantha, Gandhinagar, Mahesana, Patan, and Sabarkantha comprise the North Gujarat region. There are 1157 private unaided schools, 1115 government-aided schools, and 7358 government schools in these districts' urban areas. In contrast, there are 818 private unaided schools, 247 government-aided schools, and 401 government schools in rural areas.

Bharuch, Narmada, Navsari, Surat, Tapi, Dang, and Valsad districts comprise the South Gujarat region. These urban districts have 1207 private unaided schools, 560 government-aided schools, and 5784 government schools. Rural areas, on the other hand, have 1523 private unaided schools, 191 government-aided schools, and 533 government schools.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of all schools across four zones in Gujarat, delineating between urban and rural areas within each zone.

Figure: 1

Region	Rural	Urban
Saurashtra & Kutch	12075 (22.17%)	4490 (8.24%)

Central Guj	12874 (23.64%%)	4111 (7.5%)
North Gujarat	9630 (17.68%%)	1466 (2.69%)
South Gujarat	7551 (13.86%%)	2247 (4.12%)
Total	42130 (77.35%)	12314 (22.65%)

Source: Researcher's computation (Data from U-DISE, GOI)

Out of the 13,639 schools providing elementary education, 100 schools were chosen using the standard random method as the sample for this study. It should be noted that the Government and Government Aided schools have been grouped as one category for this study, since the government does not provide funding for primary education. The survey covered school principals and SMC members of 100 schools. In order to comprehend the School Management Committee (SMC) members' roles in Gujarat's implementation of the RTE Act along the lines of the participatory framework, the study surveyed SMCs of these 100 schools. Chapter 5 of the thesis discusses the results of the survey of SMCs.

The accompanying table (Figure 2) provides a classification of the 100 schools included in the sample, across four zones in Gujarat, and further divided in urban and rural areas within each zone.

Figure: 2

Region	Rural (77%)			Urban (23%)		
	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private
Saurashtra & Kutch	22 schools			8		
	16	2	4	2	1	5
North Gujarat	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private
	18 schools			8 schools		
	14	2	2	2	1	4
Central Gujarat	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private
	24 schools			3 schools		

	18	3	3	1	1	1
	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private	Government	Grant-in-Aid	Private
	14 schools			4 schools		
South Gujarat	11	1	2	1	1	2

Source: Researcher's computation (Data from U-DISE, GOI)

In addition, primary enrollment data was gathered, specifically on the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER), Net Enrollment Rate (NER), and Total Enrollment Rate for the years 2012 to 2017 for the primary and upper primary sections, for chapter six, which analyses the effect of the RTE Act 2009 on the variables of region, gender, and caste. Furthermore, the researcher has studied several reports on the Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) from the Government of India and computed data on community (Schedule Castes (SCs), Schedule Tribes (STs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs), sub-region (Four zones of Gujarat - Kutch & Saurashtra, North Gujarat, Central Gujarat, and South Gujarat), and gender-specific data (girl child and boy child). Finally, the analysis of the enrollment data is done concerning the factors mentioned above.

In order to gather primary data for the study, the researcher conducted both structured and unstructured interviews with several actors and stakeholders involved in the state's implementation of the RTE Act 2009, such as parents, teachers, principals, SMC members, members of the civil society, and government functionaries. In addition, during the field visit of programmes like "Gunotsav and Pravesh Utsav," data gathering techniques like interviews and non-participant observation were also employed.

A focus group discussion was conducted with the parents of children who received admission under Section 12 (c) of the Act, which provides a 25% reservation in admission to private unaided schools for special category children. Additionally, the researcher has made observations about implementing RTE rules in the school when visiting them for data collection as a non-participant observer.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study has attempted to examine the implementation of the Act in the state, it has not covered all the aspects related to RTE Act 2009. Moreover, since the thesis focuses mainly on analyzing the administrative framework and structure, other provisions of the RTE Act have not been included in the study.

Further, the study analyzed the district-wise enrollment data in Gujarat until 2017. This is because data after 2017 were not available in the same format. The study is confined to the idea of the Right to Education. The study does not cover the discussion on Rights and Rights in Education.

There are several theoretical models of public policy implementation. The top-down theories of the implementation process include the Van Meter and Van Horn model, the general model of the implementation process, and the political model. The bottom-up theories of implementation include the bureaucratic process model of Lipsky, the backward mapping or bottom-up perspective model, and the model of the structure. Furthermore, the hybrid theories of implementation are the interactions between factor models, the model of decentralization program implementation process, the rational model, the management model, the organization development model, the policy-program-implementation process, the integrative model, and the integrated theory of public policy implementation. This research does not include a discussion on them.

Further, micro-level analysis of the implementation of clause 12 (c) of the Act is not included in the present study.

7. CHAPTERIZATION

This thesis primarily focuses on critically analyzing the administrative framework and process enacted for implementing the Right to Education Act in Gujarat. It has examined in detail the Gujarat RTE Act and its provisions and used primary and secondary data related to education. The thesis is divided into 7 chapters, each discussing in detail various dimensions and aspects of the research.

Chapter 1

The research is introduced, and the thesis's argument for its applicability in the present is made in the first chapter. Then, the study's primary research questions and goals are discussed in this chapter. The chapter also explains the study's methodology and the researcher's research design. Finally, this chapter identifies the present research's shortcomings and summarises the chapters that make up the thesis.

Chapter 2

The second chapter of the thesis reviews the relevant literature available on the research topic in various books, scholarly articles, journals, government gazettes, circulars, reports published by the government or non-government organizations/agencies working in the education sector, and news items in order to gain insight into various aspects of the research area, such as Right to Education, The Right to Education Act 2009, Implementation of Right to Education Act 2009 in India and Gujarat.

Chapter 3

The third chapter of the thesis provides the theoretical underpinning to the concept of the Right to Education. It includes a comprehensive exploration of the conceptual development of the right to education and its historical progression across time at the international and national levels. The chapter looks at the main clauses of the RTE Act of 2009 in India and analyses them further using Katarina Tomasevski's A-4 framework.

Chapter 4

In chapter four of the thesis, which also contains a critical examination of the roles played by the various actors involved in implementing the RTE Act in Gujarat, the significant elements of the administrative framework are described and evaluated. An in-depth analysis of the crucial elements of Gujarat's administrative structure is provided in this chapter, along with theoretical aspects of implementation and administration.

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter of the thesis explores the implementation of the RTE Act 2009 in Gujarat, focusing on the participatory features of the implementation process. It covers a study of the participatory model in public policy and its significance, as well as an analysis of the implementation of the RTE Act of 2009 in Gujarat within a participatory framework.

Chapter 6

The sixth chapter analyses the enrolment and dropout rates of children in primary and upper-primary sections in Gujarat in the post-RTE years. District-wise enrolment figures for years 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 are analyzed. The analysis of Gross Enrollment Rate (GER), Net Enrollment Ratio (NER), and Total Enrollment Rate (TER) is done on the following variables of caste, gender and region.

Chapter 7

The thesis concludes with a chapter that includes recommendations and suggestions for RTE Act implementation in Gujarat. These suggestions may help ensure the Act's effective implementation in the state.