

7th National Stocktaking Convention
on the
Status of Implementation of the RTE Act, 2009
In the last week of March, 2017

Dear Friends,

RTE Forum is cordially inviting you for the 7th National Stocktaking Convention in the last week of March, 2017. Date and Venue of the Convention will be communicated you, soon.

As you know, RTE Forum as a civil society coalition has been continuously organizing stocktaking gathering every year along with the Annual Status Report of RTE implementation, since 2011, with the participation of different states and concerned people from different walks of life. Forum is mobilizing common People, NGOs, elected Representatives, Govt officials, Teachers' Associations, Educationists and different Mass Organizations in the 19 States through the state Forums and trying hard to make RTE Act, 2009 a reality. Forum has envisioned for strengthening of Public System of Education in the country to ensure free, compulsory & equitable, quality education for all children barring their cast, creed, ethnicity, religion and economic status.

Unfortunately, Seven Years have passed since the enactment of the RTE Act, 2009 and the objective of universal right to education for children remains a distant dream. Though, certain initiatives have been taken by the government for the implementation of the Act, but these initiatives proved insufficient to bring all children to schools and complete elementary education up to eighth standard. Govt. Statistics shows that the enrollment has been increased after the enactment of RTE Act, but according to census 2011, 8.4 Crore, children have never attended school while MHRD claimed in 2013 that 6 million children are out of school. Ground situation is glaring as 40% children are dropping out before completing class eight and millions of children still working as child laborer. The issue of Safety and security of children, especially, girls belonging to marginalized sections of the society across the country has surfaced time and again despite legal provisioning and statutory grievance redressal mechanisms. Despite the pitiable situation, there is *no road- map or time-frame* now to determine the future of the Act as well as the intention of the government.

Resources are another area of concerns which is making public education system ineffective. After the recommendation made by Kothari Commission (1966), since 50 years, country is waiting for allocation at least 6% from GDP on education, which is less than 4% at present. Political parties have agreed in their election manifestos but always abdicating from their promises after elections. Country saw massive cuts in the overall spending on education in recent years, while 65% funds are coming from CESS which was intended to providing additional support to education funding.

The recent UN call to universalize education till higher secondary levels means that *the scope of the Act has to be extended* to bring children below six and above fourteen within its ambit. However, this will not be possible if spending on education is not increased.

The proposed draft input of New Education Policy has also failed to discuss the gaps, barriers and pathways for making legal right to education fulfilled through the complete implementation of RTE Act. Despite, there are many proposals in the draft which can dilute the spirit of legal entitlement. Withdrawal of no detention, rationalization of school merger (closure), relaxation in norms for private schools, review of language policy, promotion of pro-profit low cost private schools as well as high fee charging commercial schools etc. are few among the prominent challenges posing threat to RTE Act and public system of education.

In light of the above stated circumstances, we are organizing our **7th National Stocktaking Convention** in the last week of **March, 2017** at **New Delhi**.

Kindly block your time and confirm participation.

Ambarish Rai
Convener, RTE Forum

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Regards!
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