



Salient Features of the Right to Education Act, 2009

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Abstract : The Right to Education Act, 2009 fulfilled the national aspiration long nurtured since the British period. Almost 100 years ago, Maharaja of Baroda introduced free education for children in the age group 6-12 in his province. Inspired with Baroda experiment, G K Gokhale tried to force the British government to

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accept the principle of free and compulsory primary education. Gandhi and others tried with the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. They failed but the RTE Act 2009 fulfilled their long cherished dreams.

The Right to Education Act, 2009

Right to education Act, 2009 is vital for India. When the 'Free and compulsory education' was made a 'fundamental right' under article 21A of the constitution in December 2002 through the 86th Amendment it was a very important step and conclusion of a long journey that started from the Charter Act 1813, to the Macaulay's Minute (1835), to Wood Despatch (1854), to Elementary Education Act (1870), to Maharaja Baroda's compulsory Education (1906), to Gopal Krishna Gokhale's Bill (1911), to Hartog Committee (1929), to Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education (1937) and after independence through the Article 45, NPE 1968 and 1986, DPEP (1991), and SSA (2001). The passage of the RTE Act, 2009 was fulfillment of a long cherished dream of so many freedom fighters and the Constitution makers.

When the colonial British left in 1947, India inherited an educational system that had not only limited reach but was also characterized by striking gender and regional disparities. Only one out of three children was going to the primary school. Clearly, providing elementary education to all children was a big challenge at that time and this sentiment was reflected in the Constitution. The Article 45 of the newly framed Constitution stated that "the State shall endeavor to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years".