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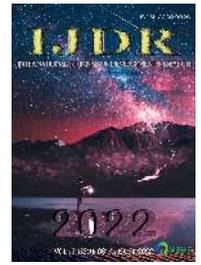
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION AND DISADVANTAGED GROUP PARENTS UNDER RESERVATION OF 25% SEATS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The Right to Education Act considers free and compulsory education for age bracket 6-14 years for every child as a fundamental right as well as Private Schools earmark 25 percent seats for children belonging to Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Group. "12 (1) (c) clause of Right to Education Act, 2009 states a school belongs to specified category and an unaided school not receiving any kind of aid or grants to meet its expenses from the appropriate government or the local authority shall admit in class I, to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion." Various reports have shown that despite the governments' directives, policy is not implementing properly and parents of children belonging to EWS and DG Parents facing numerous problems and challenges. So, it is paramount to study the perception of parents of children of EWS and DG category as well as challenges and problems faced by parents of children belong to EWS and DG category. This is a qualitative research. Data was collected through survey method. In the present study, four private schools got DDA (Delhi Development Authority) Land were randomly chosen from the list of schools. Sample comprises 100 EWS and DG parents (25 EWS and DG parents in each school) of these four schools. Semi-structured Interview Schedule for EWS and DG parents was conducted to critically study various aspects. Data was analyzed qualitatively using narrative analysis. The study concluded EWS and DG parents stated that they are happy with their child's admission in private school but they find it hard to bear the extra additional expenses which are regular feature of these schools. Income limit should be raised. EWS and DG parents find academic standards of school are high and their children are facing content and language difficulty. This policy is giving an opportunity to different sections of society to integrate.

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INTRODUCTION

The Right to Education Act is a powerful, positive and fantastic tool to unite India, where every child, irrespective of his/her background, has access to school where friendly relationships across the barriers of caste, creed and economic background are built. In Indian Education, April 1, 2010 was a historic day as it provided as well as remarked for implementation for Right to Education Act. The Act considers education as a fundamental right. Free and Compulsory education for age bracket 6-14 years for every child as a fundamental right as well as Private Schools earmark 25 percent seats for children belonging to Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Group. "12 (1) (c) clause of Right to Education Act, 2009 states a school belongs to specified category and an unaided school not receiving any kind of aid or grants to meet its expenses from the appropriate government or

the local authority shall admit in class I, to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group in the neighbourhood and provide free and compulsory elementary education till its completion. Provided further that where a school imparts pre-school education, the provision shall apply for admission to such pre-school education. The school shall be reimbursed expenditure so incurred by it to the extent of per child expenditure incurred by the state or the actual amount charged from the child, whichever is less, in such a manner as may be prescribed. Provided that such reimbursement shall not exceed per child expenditure incurred by a school established, owned or controlled by the appropriate government or a local authority. Provided further that where such school is already under obligation to provide free education to a specified number of children on account of it having

received any land, building, equipment or other facilities, either free of cost or at a concessional rate, such school shall not be entitled for reimbursement to the extent of such obligation (The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009).” For 2019-20, academic session, categories were modified. Children with Disabilities were removed from DG category and was made separate category. 22% seats were reserved for EWS (annual income less than one lakh rupees)/DG category (SC/ST/ OBC non-creamy layer/orphan and transgender and all the children living with or affected by HIV) shall be made through computer lottery system at the entry level classes (pre-school/ nursery, pre-primary/ kg and class -1).3% seats within the 25% reserved seats under EWS/DG (as per section 12 (1) (c) of RTE Act, 2009) at the entry level classes (pre-school/ nursery, pre-primary/kg and class 1) are reserved for admission under children with Disabilities Category as defined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. RPWD Act, 2016 defines, “ Person with Disability means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others”. The eligible age limits for admission in the entry level classes (pre-school/ nursery, pre- primary/ kg and class -1) are as follow:-

Class	Age limit as on 31.03
Pre-school/ Nursery	3-5 years
Pre-primary/Kg	4-6 years
Class 1	5-7 years

Clause 12 (1) (c) imposes a legal and moral imperative upon private unaided schools to reserve 25 percent seats at entry level class for children from Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Categories. The rationale behind this clause is to ensure that all stakeholders in society along with the states share the responsibility of achieving the right to free and compulsory elementary education. The recent policy formulation National Education Policy, 2020 also emphasis /aims to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education (including vocational education) for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group. Various reports have shown that despite the governments' directives, policy is not implementing properly and parents of children belonging to EWS and DG category facing numerous problems and challenges. So, it is paramount to study the perception of parents of children of EWS and DG category as well as challenges and problems faced by parents of children belong to EWS and DG category.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

RESEARCH QUESTION

- What are the problems faced by Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Group parents?

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present paper are as follow

- To study the perception of parents of Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Group category.
- To study the problems and challenges faced by Economically Weaker Section and Disadvantaged Group parents in admission process, teaching-learning process, evaluation and other (co-curricular activities etc.) processes.

TERMS USED

- **ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION:** - "Child belonging to Economically Weaker Section" means a child belonging to those parent or guardian having annual income less than one lakh rupees. In the present paper, "EWS" is used for "Economically Weaker Section".

- **DISADVANTAGED GROUP:** - By notification, the appropriate government has specified, child belonging to the scheduled caste as well as the scheduled tribe is considered to be "child belonging to disadvantaged group". Also a child who belongs to the socially and educationally backward class is also considered as a disadvantaged group. As notified by the government, the child belongs to such group which having disadvantage with respect to gender or such other factors like linguistic, cultural, geographical, social etc. means "child belonging to disadvantaged group". In the present paper, "DG" is used for "Disadvantaged Group".
- **APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT:** - The central government is an appropriate government in case of a school established, owned, managed or controlled by the central government. In case, the school established is administered by the administrator of the union territory, "having no legislature", the appropriate government is central government. In case of a school established, managed, owned or controlled by a union territory "having legislature", the appropriate government is the "government of that Union Territory". If a school is established, managed, controlled or owned by a state, the appropriate government is "the state government."
- **SPECIFIED CATEGORY:** - By notification, appropriate government has specified the "Specified Category School". Specified Category Schools means a school having a distinct character in relation to a school. Schools such as Sainik School, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya are known as specified category.
- **LAND ALLOTTED SCHOOLS:-** Schools on account of receiving land, equipments, building and any other such facilities from the government either at a concessional rate or free of cost are obliged to provide free and compulsory education. Such Schools are obliged to impart education to a specified number of children as they were already got land under obligation.

This is a qualitative research. Data was collected through survey method.

SAMPLE: In the present study, four private schools got DDA (Delhi Development Authority) Land were randomly chosen from the list of schools. Sample comprises 100 EWS and DG PARENTS (25 EWS and DG parents in each school) of these four schools.

Table 1. Sample of The Study

SAMPLE	SCHOOL 1	SCHOOL 2	SCHOOL 3	Total
EWS and DG	25	25	25	25
Parents				
Total				100

RESEARCH TOOLS

INTERVIEW

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE for EWS and DG parents was conducted to critically study various aspects.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Data was analyzed qualitatively using narrative analysis.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was confined to only class IV and V.
- The study was delimited to private schools located in Delhi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EWS and DG parents felt that when they tried for admission, then because of money they had to face problems. They say to submit income certificate every year. School authorities again and again say

to make child's name written in any other school. In terms of documents, office related problems were faced. It was stated that money related problem was faced as had to buy copies, books, dress etc. Problems were faced in terms of arranging documents. It was stated problem is faced in transportation as it is very expensive and school people don't take any responsibility as well.

Majority EWS and DG parents stated that in this whole procedure, they have taken help from friends and neighbours for filling up form, information, complete guidance, documents and for advice/opinion. It was stated that for verification of income certificate, they take some money to get verification done. Many respondents stated that procedure of making income certificate is not smooth. EWS and DG parents stated that their children don't get opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities and events. It was stated that for activities, all material is given from home. Financial burden has also increased. EWS and DG parents stated that arranging things & giving to child is problematic. It was suggested that charges should not be there or should be very nominal. It was stated that all children should get equal chance. Majority EWS and DG parents stated that their children go very less in school's picnic, trips etc. Schools do demand fund for it but they don't send in paid. It was stated that paid 500-1800 ₹. It was stated that don't send in expensive ones as financial problem is there. It was stated that for tuitions, they are spending 501-1000 ₹ p.m. and 301-500 ₹ p.m. on child's another activity. All EWS and DG parents stated that their child's school's dress, books are not given by school. All EWS and DG parents expressed that they pay for it. They pay same money and don't get discount. Majority EWS and DG parents stated that they have not tried to say about this in the school. Majority EWS and DG parents mentioned that 1001-1500 ₹ (one pair) for dress 3001 - 4000₹ for books. For smart board also, 500-1000 ₹ have given. EWS and DG parents stated that school has demanded the fund from them for activities like dance competitions (annual day function, activities, competition olympiad) etc. It was also stated that school has not demanded any fund. They pay 180 ₹ each for Olympiad, 300₹ for costumes, 60 ₹ for Olympiad, 2200 ₹ for overnight camp etc.

EWS and DG parents stated that they do feel that in Private schools level of Education is very high and to reach to that level their children are facing problems. Children face language difficulty and content level difficulty. Children are not able to speak and catch quickly. Many respondents stated that children are facing problem in English and as other all subjects are also in English, so face problem in other subjects as well. EWS and DG parents also asserted that if anything is not understood by children, teacher should tell them and give more attention. It was also mentioned that teacher should focus on the way to create interest, focus, discipline and concentration of the child. EWS and DG parents stated that method adopted by teacher or smart board and another technology because of the usage of this they do feel that to them or to their children any difficulties have to be faced. It was stated that through the medium of TV, activities and smart board children should be taught so that children can catch up quickly and understand well. Teachers should give equal attention. Majority EWS and DG parents mentioned that they don't have computer at home. All EWS and DG parents stated that to them for doing their child's school work or to take any important information of school need of computer is felt. Many respondents stated that, teachers put homework, assignments, lessons, projects, sample papers etc. and they take it out from café. It cost around 200-250 ₹ per month. Also, they don't know how to run computer. So, they are not able to support. It was mentioned that work gets missed and it impact child performance. It will be more problematic in senior classes. EWS and DG parents stated that if children's work is not completed, grades get deducted and children get scolded. It was stated by majority of respondents that it is not done on time because of lack of access and resources. Mostly EWS and DG parents mentioned that evaluation procedure adopted by school seems fine. EWS and DG parents also stated it is good. Few stated that they never paid attention on it. It was stated this seems burden that who will teach to child and who will not? Also, from where child will do? That is why have to put child's

tuition. It was stated it is burden on child and on parents. If parents don't get engaged with child, so, it cannot be done.

It was stated that after getting admission in private school there is change in their child's demands. Child does stubbornness and demand for things, after seeing things here. They demand fancy items, food, stationary, bags, fancy lunch, bottles, chips, chocolates etc. Majority EWS and DG parents expressed that they are happy with their child's admission in private school. But situation is getting worst because of financial condition. Few stated that child is happy but feels that their friends are up/rich. It was stated that their children are feeling that other children are bringing things but they are not able to. They develop inferiority complex. They also expressed that their children also demand money to take participation in school activities and programmes. Many respondents stated that they don't talk much to N.EWS parents as it is felt weird that they don't get to know that respondents are not paying fees. Majority EWS and DG parents asserted that they do feel in their child after getting admission in private school growth and development have happened. It was mentioned repeatedly that in studies and activities, children have become good. It was also stated that child's way of talking has also improved. Their confidence and mannerism have also increased. They have become diligent. Their behaviour and English have also improved. It was repeatedly mentioned that children from different Categories in the class are collectively living together. It was stated that backward people are getting good environment as well as they do get chance to get learn. Majority EWS and DG parents stated that they do feel that in reality integration is happening. This policy is quite helpful to those sections of societies for whom it is meant as it is really helping them to get good education in good schools. This policy is also leading to good future and opportunities. It was stated to this policy it should be continued and keep going in every state, school and place. It was stated repeatedly by majority of respondents that they are satisfied with the policy but they want to see changes. Charges should not be there for books, dress, conveyance, costumes, activities etc. Also, transparency should be there in admission procedure. Genuine people should get it. It was stated that income-criteria i.e., limit of income should be increased. It was suggested that responsible person should be available to deal with EWS and DG parents. Also, seats which are vacant that should be filled completely as many students are not getting number. It was also stated that distance criteria also need to be reframed and income certificate procedure should be simple and better. Policy should be implemented properly. Proper verification should be done. It was also suggested that conduct meetings, orientations etc in mix language i.e., Hindi and English. In English, it is not at all understood.

CONCLUSION

EWS and DG parents stated that they are happy with their child's admission in private school but they find it hard to bear the extra additional expenses which are regular feature of these schools. This included the expense incurred on co-curricular activities, class excursions, trips etc. Income limit should be raised. Also, procedure of making income certificate should be made smooth. They also felt that their children don't get opportunity in co-curricular activities and other events. EWS and DG parents find academic standards of school are high and their children are facing problem. Children face content and language difficulty. Major barrier is English language and because of difficulty of English language, children are also not able to understand anything. They also felt that doing computer and computer related work is problematic and they lag behind. EWS and DG children after seeing in the school make demand for things. EWS and DG parents suggested to reframe distance criteria, transparent admission process, limit of income should be increased and Hindi should also be used. Other expenses should not be there or should be very less. This policy is giving an opportunity to different sections of society to integrate. Effective implementation of clause 12 (1) (c) for all school children would lead to better educational experience as well as social inclusion. To make our school system more inclusive as well as equitable, clause 12 (1) (c) is a purposeful endeavor. One can

clearly depict clause 12 (1) (c) of the RTE Act has implications not only for schools but for society at large as well.

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