Society & Social Justice · GS - III

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 remains inadequate in promoting an incentive-based system for children's education without generating awareness about the importance of schooling. Analyse.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - III	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

The Right to Education Act, 2009 guarantees free and compulsory elementary education for children aged 6–14 years. However, legal entitlements and material incentives alone cannot ensure meaningful participation. Awareness, parental engagement, school quality, inclusion and community mobilisation are essential for sustained educational outcomes.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, operationalises Article 21A of the Constitution by providing a legal framework for elementary education for children aged 6–14 years.

Body

Limitations of an Incentive-Based Approach

1. Economic Barriers: Poor households may depend on children's labour or caregiving, making school attendance difficult despite free education.

2. Limited Awareness: Parents may not fully recognise the long-term benefits of education, especially where first-generation learners are concerned.

3. Quality Deficits: Teacher shortages, inadequate infrastructure and weak foundational learning can reduce motivation to attend school.

4. Social Exclusion: Gender discrimination, disability-related barriers, caste-based prejudice and language differences may affect participation.

5. Attendance versus Learning: Enrolment incentives cannot independently ensure regular attendance, retention or educational achievement.

Way Forward

Awareness campaigns should engage parents, teachers, local bodies and community leaders. School Management Committees, strengthened under the Act, can encourage community participation and monitor school functioning. Better infrastructure, inclusive classrooms, remedial teaching, transport support where needed and effective implementation of welfare schemes can reduce barriers.

Conclusion

The RTE Act provides an essential legal foundation, but educational success requires more than formal entitlements or incentives. Awareness, quality schooling, social inclusion and community ownership must work together to ensure every child learns and completes elementary education.

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