MEETING OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH AND 27TH JUNE 2018

The meeting started with the welcome address by National Convener Mr. Ambarish Rai. He mentioned the need to address issues hindering the implementation of the RTE Act. He emphasized the need for upward and downward expansion of the RTE Act. He also mentioned the new Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan which merges Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. He said it was essential for RTE Forum to understand whether this scheme will help in achieving universalisation of education or dilute all that has been achieved and develop a firm position on this.

Session I: New Developments in School Education: Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and its implications on RTE

Speaker: Prof. Poonam Batra, Delhi University
Moderator: Dr. Niranjan Aradhya, National Law School University, Bangalore

After his welcome address, National Convener Ambarish Rai handed over the proceedings to Dr. Niranjan Aradhya who chaired the First Session, “New Developments in School Education”. The focus of this session was analyzing the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan that has been recently introduced.

The speaker for this session was Prof. Poonam Batra from Delhi University.

Details of Deliberations by Prof. Poonam Batra:

Sharing her views on Samagra Shiksha Scheme, Prof. Poonam Batra said that the Government of India has put forth this Scheme without any proper public discussion. We all have to understand that in which direction the Right to Education Act is being pushed today. The official document related to Samagra Siksha Scheme does make some promises, but we have to examine that to what extent these promises will actually be realized on the ground.

Prof. Batra further said that there are talks of integrating three different schemes under Samagra Shiksha Scheme. The first one is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The second such scheme is Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). And the third one is Teachers’ Education. First of all, it is imperative to know that the ‘Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teachers’ Education’ is the oldest scheme among these three. It was launched in 1987 under the 7th Five – Year Plan. At that time, it was promised to establish Institutes of Advanced Studies. The agenda behind this was not to improve pre – service teachers’ education. Reason, the pre – service teachers’ education was been a central component of the government’s policies.

Talking about the Chattopadhyay Commission’s Report (1985) on teachers’ education, Prof. Batra said that it was one of the best reports on teachers’ education that country has ever seen. The tittle of that report – ‘Teacher and Society’ – itself was very promising and self – explanatory. The important enunciations of that report, said Prof. Batra, was neither fully incorporated in the Education Policy, 1986 nor was it wholly included in the ‘Centrally Sponsored Scheme of
Teachers’ Education’ (1987). Even though, the ‘Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teachers’ Education’ was an important step in the field of Education.

Prof. Batra said that another important step, particularly in the field of elementary education, was establishment of District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in every district. However, it took a very long time to make 500 plus DIETs of the country operationalized. Even today we can say that this task is still incomplete. It was a laudable step only because till then there was no system of training for the teachers of elementary level in the country. The Radhakrishnan Commission had clearly said that there should be a provision of training for the teachers of secondary level in the universities. The Commission was also of the view that there was no need of training for the teachers of primary level. “We had a very long history of neglect for the teachers of primary level,” said Prof. Batra.

She said that the third important step towards education was establishment of State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) at state level to coordinate DIETs and colleges of teachers’ education offering courses of B.Ed.

Talking about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Prof. Batra said that this scheme came into existence only when it was felt that there was no further need of World Bank’s help to carry out the burden of children education and we are capable enough to take it forward on our own shoulder. It came after the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). This Abhiyan, in fact, was based on the structure of DPEP itself.

Proceeding further, Prof. Batra expressed that the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), which talked about enhancing secondary education, came into existence in 2010. Though SSA was about universalization of elementary education, the RMSA doesn’t talk about universalization of secondary education.

Pointing about the document of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Prof. Batra said that it talks about the integration of SSA, RMSA and teachers’ education. It claims that the integration of these three schemes will enable a better coordination and efficient delivery of services in education sector. Now the pertinent question is, underlined Prof. Batra, whether this Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan institutionalizes the education starting from class I upto XII or not.

Referring to the Right to Education (RTE) Act, Prof. Batra said that RTE is not a project or scheme. Instead, it’s legislation. And National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), at national level and State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), at state level, are the agencies which are supposed to monitor the RTE. Though Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is meant to be the implementing agency of RTE, it’s not an institution.

On the contrary, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, said Prof. Batra, cleverly claims to institutionalize overall educational apparatus. Still, we are not sure whether these claims will actually realize or not. We have already seen clashes between various agencies within the system of the State which are involved in the field of education. Besides, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan is talking about the extending the RTE. In other words, it is claiming to take the RTE beyond the secondary level on the one hand and before the primary level on the other. It’s also talking about equitable inclusive quality education. Indeed, this kind of rhetoric sounds good, but what’s the reality?
Besides, said Prof. Batra, the document of Samagra Siksha Abhiyan also talks about the synergy of curriculums at different levels. But we know that there is no unanimity among educationists and academicians on this point considering the physical, cultural and economic diversity in the country. Therefore, a proper planning, vision & roadmap is needed. “I don’t see any such roadmap. There is no such roadmap inside this document,” observed Prof. Batra.

In terms of continuity, added Prof. Batra, this document talks about the continuity of a curriculum that is connected from pre – primary to primary, from primary to elementary, from elementary to secondary and from secondary to higher secondary level. It, in fact, talks about a strand of connection in the curriculum. And what could that strand be? Several questions can come up in this regard. A question of content of education can be raised. It can be said that attempts are being made for continuity in curriculum and that too under an ideological framework, which would play a definitive role. Understandably, there is no talk of ideological framework in this document as such kind of document pretends to be neutral. But we all know that nothing is neutral here perhaps.

Prof. Batra further expressed that this document felt the need of redefining the quality of education. Unfortunately, right from UPA’s rule, ‘learning outcome’ has become the sole indicator of the quality of education. The document of Samagra Siksha Abhiyan takes this notion of ‘learning outcome’ further. It tells in bold letters that there will be a ‘shift from content to competency’. Besides, it also talks about ‘Composite Schools’, which consist of primary level to 12th standard. But practically, the idea of ‘Composite Schools’ will give impetus to the trend of merger of schools. “In a way, the Samagra Siksha Abhiyan is a mechanism of centralization and control by the ruling class,” said Prof. Batra.

In the nutshell, it’s imperative for all of us to deconstruct these claims and arguments of Samagra Siksha Abhiyan and then chalk out our future course of action.

TO DO- State forums to read the document and send in their observations by 22nd July.

Session II: Reporting from Sate Forums

The session was moderated by Mr. Anil Pradhan, Mr. Binod Sinha and Mr. Rakesh Kumar Sinha.

1. Telengana:
After the last NC meet, Telengana State Forum was involved in the following activities:

- Cadre Building process. First Cadre building was conducted with the youth, who were made part of the forum. In 5 districts there are a total of 500 youth volunteers at present.
- The State Forum was restructured and extended the work to five districts of Telengana.
- After visiting 2 day Karnataka state SMC conference, Telengana started strengthening of SMC in 100 schools.
- 2 state consultations were conducted (16-17 networks and NGOs is taking place) and SMC strengthening is focused on 3 districts.
- 2 press meets were organized on RTE by the State Forum.
- Through RTE Forum, members have written 15 articles in Telegu newspapers on Child Protection, RTE, and disability.
The State Forum also participated in 10 debates on television channels as part of RTE Forum.

Future Plans:
- Next month i.e. in July 2018, state level consultation on Child Protection and Child Rights will be held- invitation extended to Ambarish Rai and Niranjan Aradhya. People from Andhra Pradesh would also be called to reactivate the forum in that state.
- In the month of August 2018, SMC Meet and Meeting on SSA 2 will be organized.

2. Bihar:
- SMC federation meeting was conducted in a big manner.
- District level meeting was conducted in Motihari, Gaya and Patna.
- Block level program were done in Bihata.
- In the month of April 2018, for 22 days, a Yatra was organized by visiting villages to find out the RTE compliance scenario by speaking to parents and teachers. With the findings of the Yatra, a meeting was conducted that was attended by Medha Patkar.
- 4 seminars and a public hearing were done. Issues like quality education, school merger, safety and security, SMC etc. were highlighted.
- Last year Nov, state level consultation on safe and secure education was conducted, 11 people from Bihar took training in Cadre building. For 2 years the schools in Bihar haven't been receiving textbooks. This issue was raised.
- Association of organizations have been formed in Patna and in Bihar named Waqt ki Awaz. Different groups have come together with their own programs. They also plan to organize student's meet (bringing together students' wing of different political parties) because they are associated with the forum. Meeting with Education Minister is also planned.

Future plans:
- Since elections are approaching, meeting with political parties are being organized, the State forum have met some of the MLAs and given them the condition of education as it exists in Bihar. The State forum has decided to prepare a citizens charter of demands and publish it.
- There are 9 commissionaires in Bihar and prior to the elections, 1 day educational workshop to be organized and to bring out a status report and a plan related to the facts that come out of these workshops.
- Strong presence in 30 districts and thus mobilise the districts units. Nodal agencies are there in almost all these districts and the plan to be mobilise these nodal agencies before the elections.
- A media conclave on education will also be conducted in the coming months.

Suggestion- Consolidate data and evidences from public hearing and decide on a common advocacy plan. It is suggested to the secretariat to collect all issues from the last one year's public hearing and find out what the status of these issues are.

3. Jharkhand
- There has been 3 meetings of the RTE State forum since the last NC meeting,
• State campaign on SDG 4 was conducted,
• State conference on quality education was organized with the Teachers Association-recommendations from these conferences were printed and handed over to the Education Minister, Principal Secretary, State Program Director, SCPCR Chair etc.
• Schools and RTE compliance is regularly monitored. Focus of School Development Plan and SMC. As a result of advocacy the state has allocated larger budget of nearly 7 crore rupees for SMC strengthening. In 600 schools, SDP was made with participation from the community.
• WASH in schools is being promoted, along with UNICEF in a particular block which became of ODF area. Govt. was pushed and now the govt. has issued a letter that they will use the 14th Finance Committee fund to install handwashing stations in schools and anganwadi centres. 1000 schools have already been installed. Campaign for handwashing was also organised.
• The issue of scrapping of the No Detention Provision was discussed in the state level consultation and a memorandum has been submitted to the ministry but no response from them was received.
• Boston Consultancy Group had suggested the closure of nearly 14000 schools. Forum protested against this move and only 4609 primary school have been closed. Teachers of these schools have been transferred.
• At all policy level discussion, JRTF is called for the proceedings and their views are welcomed.
• Teacher recruitment is major issue and after much work, 16000 primary school teachers and 1800 high school teachers have been deployed.
• There is very poor implementation of Section 12-1c of the RTE Act.

Future plans:

• Preparation of vision document that will be shared with political parties before general elections.
• State level meetings would be conducted where SDG 4 would be discussed.
• 1200 schools will be developed as model schools and a report of it would be submitted to the education department.
• In the coming months, the forum to focus on Pre-primary education.

To do- The State Forum to share the list of the 4600 schools that has been closed down

Suggestions:

After the completion of the presentation, National Convener Ambarish Rai mentioned that the work of the forum is different from the activities that are being taken up by the Jharkhand state forum. Especially with regard to creation of model schools, National Convener said that this will end by creating layers in the system and making such model schools will dilute the ethos of universal and equitable education that we are advocating. He also suggested looking closely into
the teacher appointments and find out whether the teacher appointment is on a permanent or contractual basis.

4. Assam

Mr. Mukut Lochan from Assam started his presentation by informing that there has been very less activity of the forum for nearly 1-1.5 years but in the last four months they have started working, taking small steps at a time.

- A Study was initiated by ActionAid that was conducted by the forum- it was a comparative study between government schools and private schools. The findings were interesting and he will share the report later,
- A Walk for education (10 kms) was organized in the month of January. The impact of this was good.

Future Plans: An urgent meeting would be called to discuss SSA 2 and PIL to be filed in Guwahati/ Patna or Kolkata

Suggestion: National Convener Ambarish Rai mentioned that strengthening of the forum in Assam is very important as North East is very crucial for us. In this regard, Mr. Mukut Lochan can discuss and coordinate with Ms Alka Singh, Save the Children. Ambarish Rai suggested that a state consultation should be organized in the state.

5. Gujarat

Ms. Parul Seth from Gujarat RTE Forum started her presentation by giving a brief on the status of education and the work of the State Forum in the state as follows:

- Budget analysis is done by the state forum regularly.
- SMCs are working fine but only in areas where there is an organization involved.
- Privatisation is increasing.
- Quality of Education in govt. schools is very poor.
- Poor infrastructure specially in rural areas,
- Teacher appointment is not as per RTE norms,
- With regard to 25% reservations for economically weak students, questions were raised within the forum because it is sort of promoting privatisation.
- Quality of teachers’ education is also a big question.
- Child Rights audit was conducted by the forum where children also participated. Education and protection are the two areas under which the children collected the data in their respective villages.
- Gujarat Bal Manch to be strengthened in the coming years especially in the context of the elections.
- Regular advocacy with SCPCR is done for child protection policy to be incorporated in each school.
Future plans:

- Bring out a status report on education and protection and advocacy will be based on finding. Gujarat has been divided into South Gujarat, North Gujarat, Central Gujarat and Saurashtra Kutch and programs to be conducted in these areas and also at the regional level.
- PIL to be submitted in 3 months’ time in Ahmedabad based on the findings of baseline from a school and anganwadi.
- A big march will be organized before the 2019 General Elections.

Mujaheed (Gujarat State Forum) -

- With regard to No Detention Provision, a meeting was held with the education minister to retain the no detention clause. But they replied saying that they would take examination in class 5 and 8.
- Advocacy for inclusion of pre-primary was done.
- Open meeting with SMCs were conducted in 4 Zillas.
- Schools with less than 80 students will be merged. Low cost private school are increasing in number. 2 PIL were initiated on this

6. Delhi-
- SMC Elections were conducted
- Press conference was held

Future Plan – Focus on community mobilisation

7. West Bengal-
RTE Forum wasn't active, only since December it is being revived. Henceforth, regular monthly meetings are being organized.

- In May meeting was conducted with the SCPCR, the chairperson is active to apprise them of what is going on. SCPCR comprise of celebrities in WB.
- SCERT is not active, instead a parallel body- Expert Committee on Education is in charge of making textbooks. SCERT is not playing any role.
- No SMCs have been formed in WB and after fourth meeting with SCPCR they were convinced about the importance of SMC. Thus evidence building is also important, thus baseline is being conducted in 500 schools on the status of the SMCs so that a short report can be given to the SCPCR who can in turn submit this to the education department.
- Most schools are govt. aided and these schools are taking money for admissions.
- Dropout rate is high.
• Education is one area where the State Govt. is not allowing any NGO to work together with the State Edu. Dept.
• Private low cost English medium schools are increasing in number.
• Advocacy for NDP for govt. will scrap the provision, very difficult to make them understand.

Future plan:

• To strengthen the forum itself and work closely with NCPCR and SSA.

8. Tamil Nadu-:

• Participated in the process of preparing Child Rights Protection policies in all school. Submitted this to SCPCR chairman.
• Undertook Fact finding on suicide as a result of corporal punishment and submitted report to SCPCR Chairman. Further action was demanded to prevent this.
• 800 schools were to be closed. But after opposition only 33 schools have closed.
• 3.2 lakh students in the state have moved to private schools since the implementation of the RTE- TOI study. 500 new schools recognised.
• Huge vacancy of teachers exists in the schools. Teachers ready to work in Urban schools, rural schools remain vacant.
• EWS- Only 25 days to apply online.

Future Plans:

• 2 day state level consultation on SSA 2 and closure of schools,
• Preparation of citizens charter of demands before 2019 elections,
• State level yatra to be conducted to demand implementation of RTE,
• Prepare proposal for raising funds to strengthen the SMC.

9. Maharashtra-

• 9 districts collected data and report was prepared.
• Some of the Findings of the data:
  a. Child enrollment in class from class 6-8 is less
  b. Special training status was looked into. A financial report that comes out in Maharashtra states that more than 48000 children are out of school and nearly 15000 children are enrolled in special training, but it is not mentioned how many children have completed the training. Study by the forum revealed that only 10% children could complete the special training. Various problems on this.
  c. In urban areas Teacher Pupil ratio is very high.

Report is coming and dissemination of information will happen on 7th July.

10. Himachal Pradesh-
When the state forum consultations started there wasn't a single organization in Himachal Pradesh that focused on education, thus getting people to work for RTE was different. Thus RTE Forum in HP has mostly people who are directly linked to education, school- SMC, TU, BRCC and few child rights NGOs who later moved away due to lack of funds.

Success lies in the fact that people now know about the RTE Forum. But regular meetings are not happening and no structured design of activities. Only specific events are organized and all energy goes into that.

- Whatsapp group has been formed with teachers and in this group common issues are discussed.
- One adhivesan was held which was successful.
- Since Himachal is high on education indicators getting funding for forum activities become difficult. However the reality is not that great.
- Location wise consultation to be held, one in lower Himachal and one in upper Himachal area.
- A successful Adhivesan was held focusing on No Detention and CCE.
- More than 600 single teacher schools have been closed down but these were mostly private schools.
- One of the main issues with regard to implementation of RTE is the training of teachers and training of SMC members along with corruption in appointment and transfer of teachers.

Future Plans:

- Regular meetings of the forum focused on two geographical areas.
- 2 states consultations in the lower and upper Himalayas
- Memorandum to be submitted to Education Minister having the gaps identified in the two consultations.

11. Karnataka-

- They have conducted intensive capacity building of SDMC and Forum representatives from the Panchayat level as per Training of Trainers model.
- Elections in Karnataka were very critical and several activities were undertaken with that purpose like house visits to generate awareness and stickers with demands were handed over. A common slogan had also been decided. A 3 page memorandum was also submitted to all the candidates.
- After the elections, the Education Minister had called the RTE Forum for a discussion.
- They have also conducted a campaign on enrollment in govt. schools. The campaign pointed out at 61 facilities that are available in the govt. schools.
- Research studies have been conducted on the status of RTE Implementation in Karnataka.
- The State Forum has developed comic books for children where they are made aware of their rights.
• In the state, the Urdu schools have not yet received their text books in Urdu.

Future Plans:

• Plan to make the State Forum work as a structured program to be developed
• Explore whether the Forum can go beyond education and take up health, food, nutrition and empowerment into its ambit.

12. Uttar Pradesh

The state forum in Uttar Pradesh working under the banner of SCORE- State Collective on the Right to Education had conducted a survey in 30 districts covering 600 schools and they came up with a Status Report.
- They have steering committee meeting every 6 months
- Teachers’ forum workshop is conducted every month.

Future Plans:

- SCORE plans to have a 3 month intensive campaign before the 2019 General Elections.
- Child Rights week will be celebrated between 8-14th November 2018.

13. Chhattisgarh

• The State Forum in Chhattisgarh conducted a disability audit in 102 schools
• State level stocktaking was conducted
• Safety and security status report was prepared
• Public hearing was done

Future Plans:

- The Annual Active Plan meeting will be conducted in July 2018
- Calendar on yearly activities to be made.

14. Pondicherry

• RTE Status study was conducted in 88 schools, out of which 40 schools were government schools

Future Plans:

- Study on School closure, No detention, vacancy, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.
- To conduct SMC elections as the same is continuing for some time.

15. Orissa

• The focus of the State Forum is on the status of closure of schools
• Transfer of teachers in the state is not transparent.
• Stocktaking convention to be conducted in August 2018.
Special Session on Petition filed by Dr. Colin Gonsalves

Dr. Colin mentioned that the petition filed by them points out to the number of children who are out of school, teachers vacancies, failure of infrastructure provisions, mapping that is not done, survey that has not been completed, 25% EWS that is not working. In reply to this petition it was said mapping has been completed.

On the question of mapping and survey, Dr. Niranjan Aradhya mentioned that Local Authorities have not maintained records of how many children are not in schools and how many are going to school and so this data is not there. Earlier there was a provision under SSA to do a household survey but under RTE, there is no such provision but local authority has to maintain all records of children up to 14 years- it is mandatory. In 2013, in the high court of Karnataka this question was raised and High Court has taken a suo moto and then they asked the govt. of Karnataka to do household survey so this was court directed.

As pointed out by other states representatives, in other states, local authorities are saying that they have completed the household survey, but the data is not authentic since they did not cover the streets, roads, migrant children etc. Govt. schools have done some kind of survey but private schools haven't done anything as they aren't mandated to do so.

Dr. Niranjan Aradhya again pointed out that there is a provision in the RTE, particularly to maintain the records, but nowhere is it defined how to maintain the records and this is a problem. No systematic household data is present.

Parul Seth from Gujarat RTE Forum pointed out that there is a huge gap in the total number of children who live in the village and the total number of children who are in govt. schools and when this is pointed out the reply is the rest of the children are in private schools but there is no concrete evidence for this statement.

Anjela Taneja from CARE India said that there is no central guideline for out of school children and there is doubt whether a central guideline would work in a country as diverse as India. Reality is each state has its own process of diverse nature and quality of tracking and some of these are questionable. Some states have districts wise data of out of school children, some don't. Some states rely on data from ICDS or anganwadi records and hence no single mechanism.

Dr. Colin further mentioned that this linked to the question of Survey is the number of OOSC Quoting the census 2011 data in the petition it is said approx 3 crore. In reply to the petition it is mentioned that in 2014 a survey was done where the number of OOSC is 6 crore i.e. 60 lakh. It is questionable how the number came down so quickly. Citing eg. of Maharashtra, Hemangi Joshi mentioned that data collected by govt. school teachers and those collected by NGO were largely different. National Convener, Ambarish Rai said that the 2014 survey was done by IMRB- private survey agency. After 2014 there is no study on OOSC. Dr. Colin requested to send any relevant document that criticizes the 2014 report.
Dr. Niranjan Aradhya- States prepare analytic report based on DISE Data. The DISE Data in Karnataka 2012 said there are only 53000 OOSC. High Court of Karnataka took a suo moto case and then they issued a direction to the govt. of Karnataka to conduct a household survey, then the govt. came up with 1,70,000 children. Within next 2 years they again said the number is at 9000. Then SCPCR took challenge and they came up with 2,20,000.

Uttar Pradesh- DISE Data on transition from primary to upper primary gives a dropout figure of 15-20%.

Niranjan- One possibility is to move ahead with writ petition. Take data of one panchayat, as RTE says it is the responsibility of the local authority i.e. panchayat. They conduct survey in the panchayat and this will give clear picture. No need to do this in entire country. If it is done in 18 panchayat then it will be a solid support for the petition, photo evidences of OOSC (with name, age, father and mother's name) should also be given. OOSC is important because it violates section 4, court can even give order to conduct all India house to house survey.

Representative of RTE Forum Delhi mentioned that in Delhi survey was conducted in Delhi slums 30% of the total children covered under the survey were OOSC. Other important issues in the petition:

- Decrease in enrolment of children: Chart shows radical decrease in enrolment of children
- Under spending of funds: Funds released but not spent
- Percentage of schools without infrastructure
- Untrained teachers
- 25% EWS
- Unrecognised schools- roughly 30% of schools are unrecognised

Nalini Juneja spoke about the norms and standards. Govt schools are not following this. The 3 year action agenda of the NITI Aayog had put as a key deliverable that by March 2018, they will modify all input requirements of the RTE Act and convert them into guidelines. Section 20 of the RTE Act says that it can be done by notification by the govt, requiring tabling in the floor of the house. This will entirely dilute the essence of the act.

Closure of low fee private schools are advocating privatisation and against abolition. Closure of govt. schools is alarming under the name of rationalisation. they are merging the schools and calling it consolidation of schools.

Session III: Follow up on last NC Meeting Decisions and Campaign Planning

During this session, moderator, Ms. Anjela Taneja focused on the follow up of the last National Council Meeting discussions. The activities that were decided but could not be conducted will have to be done in this phase itself. During the course of discussions in this session several key decisions were taken (listed out at the end of this document).

Owing to the lack of time, during this session itself there was discussion on campaign and future programme of the RTE Forum.

National Convener, Ambarish Rai mentioned that keeping in mind the elections, it is the right time to push the education to the forefront:
- District and state level gathering and meeting to be conducted followed by preparation of Charter.
- Round table of the political parties with the media and share charter with them and politicians to make their commitments.
- Grassroot level campaign like door to door campaign, leaflet campaign. Jan Samvd can also be organised.

Nalini Juneja suggested that press conference may be conducted that will focus on the real agenda of the NITI Aayog and why they want to shift focus from inputs to outcomes.

**This was followed by a presentation from Video Volunteers**-

Amrita Anand representing Video Volunteers made a presentation on what can be the future course of campaign for the Forum. Their idea is to work with the RTE Forum in pushing the asks of education into the mandate of the 2019 elections by showing the status of education around children's day so that becomes central to our campaign. VV can tap on to their existing resources in the states- they have total of 250 people across the country.

Two ideas that they mentioned during the course of their presentation:

1. Controlled production of video evidences to strengthen the national asks. All their 250 people are trained in making the videos. They want to capture the voices of the teachers and the students in the videos but what they should focus on and highlight to be informed to them by the forum. It is best to focus on 4 issues. They want to catch issues of discrimination and also the access of schools by CSWN.
2. They can also conduct surveys around RTE. What is the data gap that they should fill-something that doesn’t have data or a govt. data that Forum wants to challenge and strengthens the advocacy asks. VV uses the free platform app to do surveys-
3. They don’t have presence in Telengana and Karnataka.

To make the video evidences, VV needs 4-5 points that they will focus on. Hemangi Joshi suggested that school closure and even students who are part of SMC, whether their voices are heard or not. It was decided inputs would be shared by Forum by 15th-20th July

Video Volunteers gave a few inputs about the No detention campaign as well:

- Everyday posts to be made on social media having the common hashtag and the change.org petition
- Follow up video by Dhruv Rathee

**Concluding Remarks**:

In his concluding remarks, National Convener Ambarish Rai mentioned that a lot has to be done to ensure the implementation of the RTE Act in full letter and spirit. Where the focus of the govt. should have been on expanding the Act to include all children from 3-18, they have introduced the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan which may dilute the act. The forum should however remain resilient in its demands.
Education and child rights are important political issues and the election campaign in the three states and the general elections is important. But we will have to work with the govt. at times for the realization of the demands. The essence of our work should be Unity and Struggle.

Summary of Key Decisions of National Council Meeting

SAMAGRA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

There was detailed discussion on the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and several questions were raised regarding the actual intention of the policy and thus it becomes important for the Forum to have a critique on the document after carefully analyzing the document.

- State Forums to give their observations on Samagra Shiksha Abhigyan.
- It is to be sent to the Secretariat- snehal71@gmail.com, srijitapolsc@gmail.com, national.rteforum@gmail.com
- RTE Forum to share transcription of Prof. Poonam Batra’s speech as reference
- Dates by which the State Forums to send their observations: 22th July 2018

OTHER DECISIONS ON DAY 1

1. A Meeting of Tea garden and mine workers in North and North East India was to be organized- Save the Children and Mr. Mukut Lochan to work on this and follow up and let the secretariat know before the next NC meeting.

- Many states during their respective presentations mentioned that they have done public hearings on education. These reports from different state forums are to be collated and accordingly advocacy plan can be formulated. States to share their findings of the public hearings. An idea note/ guideline to be prepared by Secretariat on what exactly the states will share. The guidelines for this are to be prepared by the Secretariat and also a few state forums can contribute to this. Mr. Niranjan Aradhya to be the advisor for this.
- Dissemination of decisions and messaging at state level to be strengthened. Mr. Niranjan Aradhya will prepare recommendations for this.
- Expedite action on pending issues, eg. framing of advocacy on the CSS.

Follow up to last NC meeting

- Fundraising committee is yet to be formed.
- Strategic engagement with teacher associations. Follow up meeting to be held with the TUs on the follow up of the meeting on Safe and Secure Education and overall strategic engagement with Unions.
- Zonal meetings are to be conducted with the purpose of strengthening the state RTE Forums. Another major agenda of the Zonal Meetings would be to identify common issues for future advocacy plan.
  - South India to complete its zonal meeting by end of July. The meeting for the southern zone will be in Hyderabad and the prime responsibility of organizing the meet is with Mr. Murli and Mr. J. Victor.
o In the Eastern Zone, the meeting shall be in Bhubaneswar and the responsibility of organizing the meeting is with Mr. Anil Pradhan.

o In North East, the zonal meeting would be in Guwahati and the responsibility for organizing it is with Mr. Mukut Lochan. The forum in North East needs to be restructured.

**CADRE BUILDING**

**Immediate Follow up**

- Cadre Building Working Group to meet again to discuss next steps, develop ongoing module. Action is dependent on the shape of the campaign.
- State Whatsapp groups to be formed.
- National WA group to be vetted to ensure all participants are part of the same. All state convenors to be made admin of the same.
- Report of the cadre building to be shared to take forward the action plans developed in both workshops.
- Song and Cultural Workshop:
  - Aekta to coordinate with BGVS, Loknath (Vinay, Charu) and Radhika regarding the songs and cultural workshop.
  - Gautam Bandyopadhyay to share campaign plan with Aekta and a clear roadmap to be formed by 31st July regarding the campaign strategy.
  - States to suggest 20 names for the same that can lead to the formation of the cultural wing of the RTE Forum.
- Social media
  - Secretariat to follow up with Satya from Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion about coming up with next steps for social media by the end of July.
  - WhatsApp groups- relook at the members included, especially from U.P where some names are clearly missing. Vetting of whatsapp and google group to make sure everyone is in the group.
  - Share relevant advocacy videos in the WhatsApp groups.

**Pending Workshops**

- Cadre building workshops in pending regions to be undertaken. East (supported by ActionAid), South (supported by Save the Children). A training would also need to be undertaken for the remaining Northern States.

- List of individuals who could be enlisted as cadres to be decided as soon as possible and immediately the cadre building workshops to start.

- Build 500 cadres across the country who can understand the nuances of the RTE, People who are dedicated to the cause should be brought under our umbrella. Thus listing of names of who are the individuals who can be cadres to be prepared by the states after discussion with each other. This is a rigorous and continuous process.
POLICY BRIEFS
Policy briefs are to be prepared and policy positions of the RTE Forum will have to be prepared with regard to the Forum’s important demand. Allocation of responsibilities for writing policy briefs was been done in the previous NC meeting. The same to continue this time as well. First draft of the Briefs will be shared with Anjela Taneja by 31st July.

- Privatisation, Budget, SMC/ PRIs/ Community, inequality: Somya, Malay, Rakesh, Sudatta
- School Closure, RtE Extension, RTE compliance, common school system: Shaheen, Hemangi
- SDG framework, marginalization/ violence/ gender: Chandrakanta, Alka
- Out of school, quality, girls education: Seema
- History of education from Phule. Key Commission report, NDP, NEP: Secretariat
- Following up with authors: Secretariat
- Final edit: Anjela

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
Quarterly e-newspaper to be published the will showcase the activities of the RTE Forum at the National as well as the State levels. Secretariat would be responsible for collating the reports and preparing the document. The State forums to regularly share details of their respective activities

Editorial team as decided:
  i. Anjela Taneja
  ii. Alka Singh
  iii. Somya Dimri
  iv. Ambarish Rai

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION
- RTE Forum will explore possibilities of engagement. Every state to file a PIL on RTE implementation or implead into the HRLN petition- The decision to be taken by the RTE Forum.
- A meeting with lawyers and RTE Forum and State forum representatives to be held in July/ August. The purpose of the meeting will be to focus on the kind of legal intervention to be done and also formulate a response to the reply given on the petition. Date to be decided mutually by Ambarish Rai and Dr. Colin Gonsalves. The proposed venue was Law School, Dwarka

STOCKTAking REPORT 2019
Like every year, next year as well stocktaking report to be made. For this, preparations are to be done
  - Secretariat to share the format/ tool for stocktaking
A tool for data collection was prepared by Maharashtra State Forum and this will be translated and shared by the Secretariat within a week.

It was discussed whether the forum has the bandwidth to have the report based on primary data or should the forum go ahead with secondary data. 3-4 states have the bandwidth for representative sample.

There are scientific ways to make data representative so it is important to decide the parameters and then to put it down on an easy to understand template that is representative. The variations need to be worked out beforehand. Thus a small group is needed to understand the methodology and somebody from Stats background would be helpful. Timeline- 2-3 months.

- A small group for this to be formed- mix of membership.
- Focus on a few parameters of RTE instead of all

Second round of discussion on this would be required. Randeeep, Somya Dimri, Niranjan Aradhya, Anjela Taneja, Sanjeev Rai and Video Volunteers. Ganesh Nigam to be also part of this. More people can volunteer as need. Social cops to be explored for the data analysis aspect of the stocktaking.

CAMPAIGN

a. The details of the Campaign will be discussed in the Zonal Workshops. A recap of the major decisions made in the last two NCs was made, but no time was available to discuss further.

b. Process of restructuring of the RTE Forum website to make it more conducive to advocacy work to be undertaken.

Upcoming Parliament Session:

The Monsoon Session of the Parliament will commence from 18th July for 18 days. During this session, the RTE second amendment for scrapping of the no detention policy might be tabled. If the Parliament goes ahead with the amendment, it would be a big step backwards and hence opposition against it to be very powerful:

- An online campaign against the scrapping of No Detention Policy to be relaunched.
- Members of all State Forums and National Forums to use a common hashtag (#) and upload pictures/status on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.
- Video to be made by Video Volunteers highlighting the voices of the teachers, students and parents on 4-5 key issues affecting education. States to share their inputs by 15th July for the video to be ready before Children’s Day.
- Video Volunteers can do a social media push for the petition itself to bring it to the forefront.
- Explore options of doing a follow up video with Dhruv Rathee
Specific Policy Issues

a. The importance of common school system in the present context was discussed. It was decided to have a meeting to discuss the roadmap for this advocacy. This was agreed in past NC meetings and must be prioritized now.

b. Preschool policy expected to be changed by 30th June. ECE Alliance, CECED, RTE Forum, CARE to coordinate for follow up action.

c. Advocacy on upcoming issues before next NC including
   a. NDP, before Parliament session
   b. Niti Aayog agenda of abolition of RTE norms. Engagement strategy to be developed at the earliest.
   c. CACL is trying to revive themselves on the issue of child labour, RTE Forum could join hands with them. Exact modalities of engagement to be explored by the Secretariat with the CACL on the same by the next NC.

OTHERS

- Pool of resource persons to be created- format has been shared and will again be shared by the Secretariat. – 31st July pool of RPs to be created for specific
- Cross regional engagement to be strengthened as discussed in the previous NC. National Convenor/Secretariat to prepare a roadmap.
### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>By When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members to share their views on the SSA 2 Framework to Secretariat which will be shared with Niranjan</td>
<td>Dr Niranjan to prepare critique based on input received</td>
<td>Feedback to be send by 22 July Dr. Niranjan to share his critique by 5th August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript of Dr Batra speech, soft copy of the SSA 2 Framework document to be shared by Secretariat</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>19th July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand RTE Forum to share list of the 4600 schools closed down</td>
<td>Jharkhand RTE Forum</td>
<td>Suggested- 31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow up meeting to be held with the Teachers’ Union</td>
<td>Mukut Lochan and Alka Singh to let secretariat know about next steps</td>
<td>Next NC Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy briefs and policy positions of the Forum to be prepared with regard to the Forum’s important demand.</td>
<td>Page 14</td>
<td>31st July- first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore possibility of consolidation of inputs received via public hearings being held across country</td>
<td>Secretariat to put together CN. Advisor- Niranjan Aradhya Few representatives from State Forums to part of this.</td>
<td>Next NC Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter to be published every quarter. The states to share their inputs with secretariat.</td>
<td>Secretariat &amp; Editorial Committee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Modality for dissemination of decisions and messages to membership at state level</td>
<td>Niranjan to put together note with suggestions for improvement</td>
<td>Next NC Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow up meeting with TUs on SSE, overall strategic engagement</td>
<td>National Convenor</td>
<td>Next NC Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Zone Meeting</td>
<td>Mr Murali and Victor</td>
<td>End July</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Zone Meeting</td>
<td>Anil Pradhan</td>
<td>Suggested- mid August</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE Zone Meeting</td>
<td>Mukut Lochan</td>
<td>Suggested- mid August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadre Building- List of members to be enlisted as Cadres and Pending workshops to be completed asap</td>
<td>State Forums</td>
<td>Suggested- end August</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cadre Building Working Group to meet again to discuss next steps, develop ongoing module. Action is dependent on the shape of the campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested- end August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a press conference on NITI Aayog agenda of abolition of RTE norms- Suggested by Nalini Juneja</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>Suggested- 31st July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat to follow up with Satya from Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion about coming up with next steps for social media</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>31st July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting between lawyers and RTE Forum</td>
<td>National Convenor</td>
<td>July/August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small group to work on tool for data collection of the report</td>
<td>Randee, Somya Dimri, Niranjan Aradhya, Anjela Taneja, Sanjeev Rai, Video Volunteers, Ganesh Nigam</td>
<td>2-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online petition on NDP to be relaunched</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>10th July (done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media advocacy- video by VV on NDP, push the petition. Explore follow up</td>
<td>Not done</td>
<td>Not done</td>
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<tr>
<td>VV needs 4-5 demands that they will focus on for the video to be released on children’s day</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>15th-20th July (done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for workshop for Campaign songs</td>
<td>Aekta Nandwana</td>
<td>31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat to follow up with Satya for Social Media training</td>
<td>Secretariat, CSEI</td>
<td>31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vet Whatsapp group to ensure everyone is on it</td>
<td>Ambarish/Admins of the group</td>
<td>31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat to share format for pool of resource persons and members asked to fill the same.</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convene meeting to strategize for work on CSS</td>
<td>Ambarish Rai</td>
<td>Next NC</td>
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<td>Preschool policy expected to be changed by 30th June.</td>
<td>ECE Alliance, CECED, RTE Forum, CARE to coordinate for follow up action.</td>
<td>Next NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other formats to be shared with membership and to be filled by end July</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>31st July</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Calendar</td>
<td></td>
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<td>b. Mapping sub-state footprint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising committee to be formed (pending from previous NC)</td>
<td>National Convenor</td>
<td>Next NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and roadmap for reaching new states: Haryana, Kerala, Punjab, J&amp;K, MP</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>Next NC</td>
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</tbody>
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