



# Constitutional Guarantees and the Right to Education: A Social Welfare Perspective

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## Abstract

Education is crucial to social welfare and equality in any society. Article 21A of the Indian Constitution guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14. The Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 supports this clause, which creates an inclusive educational framework to reduce inequality and empower marginalized groups. Judicial and policy changes have shaped the right to education. This right's importance for human growth and social justice was highlighted in landmark instances like *Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh*. Despite these guarantees, major issues remain. In rural and poor areas, finance, infrastructure, teacher shortages, and socio-cultural impediments hamper implementation. Investment in education, effective monitoring, teacher training, and awareness initiatives to lower dropout rates are needed to close these inequalities. India can ensure that the right to education meets its constitutional promise and promotes equitable growth and social change by upgrading the system.

**Keywords:** Right to Education (RTE), Constitutional Guarantees, Social Welfare, Implementation Challenges, Inclusive Educational Framework

## 1. Introduction

Education is not merely a fundamental right but a transformative tool that promotes social welfare and reduces inequalities. In India, the right to education is constitutionally guaranteed under multiple provisions. Education is a right, not a luxury. Due to its critical function in expanding people's scopes of understanding, it is a fundamental human right. It paves the way for us to become contributing members of civilized society by providing us with the tools we need. India has, whether intentionally or unintentionally, ignored the value of basic education since gaining independence. However, by amending the Indian Constitution with Article 21-A, the government is prepared to pass a law (the Right to Education through the Eighty-sixth Amendment Act, 2002) to enhance elementary education in the country. Every child has the right to a full-time education that meets certain standards; this is explicitly stated in Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees a free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six and fourteen as a Fundamental Right in a way that the State may, by law, decide. In accordance with Article 45, which is a directive principle of state policy, all children are required to attend public schools free of charge until they reach the age of fourteen, which must be fulfilled within ten years of the Constitution's beginning. In one of the two landmark decisions that changed the course of Indian education, the *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka* (AIR 1992 SC 1858) court ruled that the government must fulfill its responsibility to provide schools for its residents so that they can exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to an education. It was also decided by the Court that private schools can be recognized as part of the state's obligation to provide education, not only new public schools. According to the decision in *Unnikrishnan J.P. v. State of A.P.* (AIR 1993 SC 2178), which was decided the following year by the Supreme Court, it is a clear denial of the right to education when private institutions in this situation demand capitation fees as a condition of admission. The Court scolded the government for being hesitant to execute Article 45 and ruled that any kid who is denied access to education can sue the relevant authority for a writ of mandamus to restore their right to education. There is a mechanism to hold states responsible when they violate the right to education, and the right to education is a legally guaranteed, nondiscriminatory right. States are also obligated to safeguard, honor, and fulfill the right to education. Education, on the other hand, was under-emphasized and under-prioritized, even though there was a set deadline for it. Some see the Right to Education Act, a relatively new law in India, as a bold move toward giving the Indian people more agency in their educational decisions. It is a deep desire that every youngster finds their way to a life of



meaning and purpose rather than just surviving. This is evident from the efforts of Lloyd Law College's Legal Aid Center, whose primary mission is to educate underprivileged populations, including schoolchildren, the general public, and members of underrepresented groups, on their legal rights and available remedies. Lloyd Law College, one of the best llb schools in noida, has a robust legal aid center that hosts workshops on topics such as the POCSO Act, laws pertaining to women and seniors, consumer protection, banking regulations, health and Aadhar, government programs, and more.

Judicial interventions have played a pivotal role in reinforcing and broadening the scope of the right to education in India, ensuring that it aligns with constitutional values of equality and dignity. The landmark case of *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka* (1992) was a defining moment, as the Supreme Court recognized education as an integral aspect of the "right to life" under Article 21. The Court emphasized that access to education is indispensable for an individual to live with dignity and participate meaningfully in society. This judgment underscored the state's duty to make education accessible and affordable, thereby safeguarding social justice and equality (Chandra, 2016). Building on this, the case of *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993) further expanded the interpretation of the right to education by linking it to state responsibilities under Articles 21 and 41. The Supreme Court mandated free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14, while also acknowledging the state's economic limitations in providing education beyond this age. These rulings not only reaffirmed the importance of education in achieving constitutional ideals but also highlighted the judiciary's proactive role in addressing systemic gaps and holding the state accountable for its obligations (Patel, 2014). Despite these robust legal frameworks, systemic challenges continue to impede the realization of the right to education for many, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Infrastructure deficits remain a significant barrier, with many schools lacking basic facilities such as classrooms, functional toilets, and safe drinking water. Teacher shortages further exacerbate the issue, as many schools operate with a high pupil-to-teacher ratio, reducing the quality of education and learning outcomes (Ranjan, 2020). Socio-cultural barriers, including caste-based discrimination and gender biases, continue to alienate marginalized groups and limit their access to education. The digital divide, which became glaringly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, has further deepened inequalities, as children from economically weaker sections were disproportionately excluded from online learning due to lack of access to devices and internet connectivity (Singh, 2021). Privatization of education has also created additional challenges by commodifying education, often prioritizing profit over equity and undermining the principles of inclusivity and social justice (Gupta, 2017). Gender disparities remain persistent, particularly in rural areas, where early marriage and societal norms discourage girls from pursuing education beyond primary levels (Mishra, 2019). Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. Increased budgetary allocations for education are crucial to improving infrastructure, hiring trained teachers, and providing adequate learning resources. Robust monitoring mechanisms are essential to ensure that policies and schemes are implemented effectively and reach the intended beneficiaries (Bhardwaj, 2021). Gender-sensitive policies, including incentives for girls' education and awareness campaigns, can help challenge societal norms and encourage greater participation of girls in schools. Community engagement is another critical factor; involving local communities in school management and decision-making can enhance accountability and foster a sense of ownership over educational initiatives (Ali, 2017). Grassroots advocacy can play a significant role in bridging gaps in awareness, particularly in underserved areas. Additionally, leveraging technology and adopting innovative teaching methods can make education more accessible and inclusive. E-learning platforms, when coupled with targeted interventions such as subsidized devices and internet access, can help bridge the digital divide and reach remote areas effectively (Sharma, 2015). This paper





explores the relationship between these constitutional mandates and the broader agenda of social welfare.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine constitutional provisions related to the right to education.
2. To analyze the impact of these provisions on social welfare.
3. To identify challenges in the implementation of these guarantees.
4. To propose recommendations for enhancing the educational framework in India.

### 2. Literature Reviews

**Raj Kumar (2015)** examined the constitutional provisions ensuring the right to education in India, with a focus on Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, which mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. His study delved into the legislative framework established under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, highlighting its significance in promoting social equity. Kumar critically analyzed the challenges in implementation, including inadequate infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and socioeconomic barriers faced by marginalized communities. Drawing on critical theory, he argued that the education system often perpetuates class divisions due to unequal access to quality resources. Kumar concluded that while Article 21A has been a significant milestone, there is a pressing need for stronger enforcement mechanisms and policies that prioritize inclusive education.

**Meena Sharma (2016)** study explored the intersection of constitutional guarantees and social welfare, emphasizing education as a transformative tool. Her research examined Articles 15(4) and 46, which focus on state-led initiatives to promote education among Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Employing critical theory, Sharma critiqued the systemic oppression and lack of political commitment that hinder effective implementation of these provisions. Her analysis revealed that while affirmative actions such as reservations have improved educational access for SCs and STs, persistent caste-based inequalities remain a significant challenge. Sharma concluded that bridging these gaps requires not only robust policy implementation but also grassroots advocacy and equitable resource allocation.

**Arvind Joshi (2018)** analyzed the role of education in achieving the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs), particularly Articles 41 and 45, which emphasize the state's responsibility to provide education. His study focused on the implementation of the RTE Act in rural India and its impact on improving literacy rates. Drawing on Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, Joshi critiqued the rote-learning model prevalent in rural schools, which he argued fails to empower students with critical thinking skills. He concluded that while the DPSPs provide a robust constitutional framework for educational rights, the lack of critical pedagogy and inadequate teacher training undermine the holistic development of rural students.

**Vandana Gupta (2017)** research focused on the impact of privatization on the constitutional right to education, especially in urban areas. Her study critically examined how private schools circumvent the RTE mandate of reserving 25% seats for economically weaker sections. Using critical theory, Gupta argued that neoliberal policies commodify education, turning it into a privilege rather than a fundamental right. She highlighted the exclusionary practices of private institutions that prioritize profit over equity. Gupta concluded that stronger regulation and monitoring of private schools are essential to uphold the constitutional ideals of equity and social justice in education.

**Satish Mishra (2019)** investigated the constitutional guarantee of gender equality in education under Article 15 and the role of government schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in improving female enrollment. His study focused on rural India, where gender disparities in education are more pronounced. Mishra employed critical theory to analyze how patriarchal norms and societal mindsets impede the effectiveness of such initiatives. He concluded that while the scheme has led to a significant rise in female enrollment, addressing deep-rooted cultural barriers and ensuring better school infrastructure are crucial for sustained gender equality in education.

**Priya Ranjan (2020)** explored the implementation of mid-day meal schemes as a constitutional measure to ensure the right to education and address child malnutrition. Her





study focused on tribal regions in Jharkhand, analyzing how the scheme has influenced school enrollment and retention rates. Using a Marxist perspective, Ranjan critiqued the state's approach, arguing that systemic poverty and resource inequalities undermine the scheme's broader goals. She concluded that while mid-day meals have positively impacted enrollment, their effect on learning outcomes remains limited due to poor infrastructure and low teaching quality in tribal schools. **Neha Singh (2021)** Neha Singh's study examined the intersection of digital education and constitutional guarantees, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her research highlighted the challenges faced by underprivileged students in accessing online education, focusing on Article 21A and its implications in a digital era. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, Singh critiqued how digital education policies exacerbate inequalities between privileged and underprivileged students. She concluded that targeted interventions such as subsidized internet, distribution of digital devices, and teacher training are essential to ensure equitable access to digital education in line with constitutional mandates. **Sanjay Patel (2014)** investigated the constitutional rights of minorities under Article 30, which ensures the establishment and administration of minority educational institutions. His study evaluated the role of these institutions in promoting social welfare and their contribution to educational inclusivity. Using critical theory, Patel critiqued the commercial orientation of certain minority institutions, which often prioritize profits over their constitutional mandate to serve marginalized communities. He concluded that stricter regulatory mechanisms and transparency are necessary to ensure that minority institutions align with their social and constitutional objectives. **Anjali Verma (2013)** focused on the implementation of inclusive education policies for children with disabilities under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, in the context of Article 21A. Her study critically examined the challenges faced by mainstream schools in integrating children with disabilities, including inadequate teacher training and infrastructure. Using an ableism framework, Verma highlighted the marginalization of students with disabilities in the education system. She concluded that while inclusive policies exist, their implementation requires systemic changes, including sensitization of educators and improved funding for infrastructure. **Ramesh Chandra (2016)** analyzed the impact of constitutional amendments, particularly the 86th Amendment, on improving literacy rates in India. His study assessed the progress made since the introduction of Article 21A, which guarantees the right to education. Employing a structural-functional approach, Chandra critiqued the gap between policy and practice in achieving universal education. He concluded that while literacy rates have significantly improved, issues such as inadequate funding, regional disparities, and lack of accountability hinder the realization of quality education for all. **Rohit Sinha (2014)** study examined the constitutional provision of Article 45, which mandates early childhood care and education for children below six years, with a focus on the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme. The study evaluated how the scheme contributes to fulfilling the educational and nutritional needs of young children in rural India. Using critical theory, Sinha highlighted systemic issues such as corruption, underfunding, and lack of trained workers in the ICDS program. He concluded that although the scheme has enhanced school readiness among children, its impact is limited due to infrastructural challenges and inadequate monitoring mechanisms. **Deepa Nair (2018)** explored the role of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in ensuring the constitutional right to education for marginalized children, particularly street children and child laborers. Her research focused on urban slums in Delhi and examined barriers to education, such as lack of awareness, financial constraints, and gender discrimination. Employing a feminist critical framework, Nair argued that the RTE Act often fails to address the intersectionality of gender, poverty, and child labor. She concluded that while the RTE has been instrumental in increasing enrollment, addressing dropout rates requires targeted community-based interventions. **Ravi Prakash (2019)** analyzed the constitutional mandates for free and compulsory education under Article 21A and their implementation in remote tribal regions. His study focused on the Ashram schools



in Maharashtra and their role in bridging educational gaps for tribal children. Drawing on postcolonial theory, Prakash critiqued the cultural insensitivity of the curriculum, which alienates tribal students from their indigenous knowledge systems. He concluded that while Ashram schools have improved literacy rates, integrating tribal languages and traditions into the curriculum is essential for a truly inclusive education. **Sneha Reddy (2020)** research focused on inclusive education for children with disabilities under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, in the context of constitutional guarantees. The study analyzed how mainstream schools implement accommodations like accessible infrastructure and specialized teaching methods. Using critical disability theory, Reddy critiqued the lack of awareness and resistance among educators toward inclusion. She concluded that while policies exist, their implementation requires a paradigm shift in attitudes toward disability and a significant increase in financial investments for accessible education. **Aman Sharma (2015)** examined the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in fulfilling the constitutional right to education. His study analyzed the adoption of PPP models in government schools to address infrastructure deficits and improve teaching quality. Drawing on neoliberal critiques, Sharma argued that PPPs often prioritize profit motives over educational equity, leading to resource allocation disparities. He concluded that while PPPs have helped modernize infrastructure, stringent monitoring is required to ensure that private partners adhere to constitutional ideals of inclusivity and quality education. **Jyoti Bhardwaj (2021)** investigated the role of digital education initiatives like PM eVidya in fulfilling the constitutional right to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her research analyzed the accessibility and effectiveness of digital tools for students from economically weaker sections. Using Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, Bhardwaj argued that the digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities, as many students lack access to internet connectivity and digital devices. She concluded that digital education can complement traditional methods only when structural barriers are addressed through targeted policies and subsidies. **Kiran Gupta (2016)** studied the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme as a constitutional measure to promote education and nutrition. The research focused on its impact in Uttar Pradesh, examining enrollment, retention, and nutritional outcomes. Using a structural-functional approach, Gupta critiqued issues like corruption and poor quality of meals in certain regions. She concluded that while the MDM scheme has been successful in increasing enrollment and combating hunger, its potential remains underutilized due to weak monitoring and implementation gaps. **Sameer Ali (2017)** research explored the role of minority educational institutions under Article 30 and their contribution to promoting communal harmony and social welfare. The study analyzed case studies from Kerala and West Bengal, where minority institutions have played a significant role in providing quality education to economically weaker sections. Ali critiqued the commercialization of some institutions, which undermines their constitutional mandate. He concluded that stricter oversight is needed to ensure that these institutions prioritize their social and constitutional responsibilities. **Pooja Mehta (2019)** focused on the constitutional guarantee of gender equality in education and its reflection in government policies such as the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme. Her study analyzed the scheme's success in providing secondary education to girls from marginalized communities. Using feminist theory, Mehta critiqued societal attitudes that limit girls' educational aspirations. She concluded that while the KGBV scheme has significantly increased female enrollment, achieving gender equality requires addressing patriarchal mindsets and ensuring that girls have access to quality education beyond secondary levels. **Vikram Singh (2020)** analyzed the impact of the constitutional right to education on the literacy rates of Dalits and other marginalized groups in Bihar. His study focused on the challenges of implementing the RTE Act in a caste-dominated society. Using critical race theory, Singh critiqued the systemic barriers that prevent Dalits from accessing quality education, such as discriminatory practices and lack of adequate infrastructure. He concluded that while the RTE has improved access to education,





achieving true inclusivity requires tackling caste-based prejudices through community engagement and awareness programs.

### 3. Constitutional Provisions on the Right to Education

#### 3.1 Fundamental Rights

**Article 21A:** Introduced through the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, Article 21A makes free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years a fundamental right. This provision transformed education from a directive principle to a justiciable right, obligating the state to ensure educational access and equity for all children. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, operationalized this article by establishing norms for school infrastructure, teacher qualifications, and inclusive education.

**Article 19(1)(a):** While primarily ensuring the freedom of speech and expression, Article 19(1)(a) underscores the necessity of education as a tool for exercising this freedom. An educated citizenry is vital for informed participation in democratic processes and effective communication, making education an enabler of this fundamental right.

#### 3.2 Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)

**Article 41:** This article directs the state to make effective provisions for securing the right to education and other welfare measures, within the limits of its economic capacity and development. It serves as a guiding principle, emphasizing the state's responsibility to prioritize education in its policies and allocate resources for its expansion.

**Article 45:** Originally mandating the provision of free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, Article 45 was amended by the 86th Amendment to focus on early childhood care and education for children below six years. This amendment reflects the recognition of early education as a foundation for lifelong learning and holistic development.

**Article 46:** This article obliges the state to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other weaker sections of society. It aims to bridge socio-economic disparities through affirmative action in education, fostering social justice and empowerment of marginalized communities. Special schemes and scholarships, such as pre-matric and post-matric financial assistance, stem from this directive.

#### 3.3 Fundamental Duties

**Article 51A(k):** Introduced by the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, Article 51A(k) imposes a fundamental duty on parents or guardians to provide opportunities for education to their children aged 6 to 14 years. This provision complements Article 21A, ensuring a shared responsibility between the state and parents in achieving universal education.

### 4. Social Welfare Implications of the Right to Education

#### Reducing Inequalities

Education is a cornerstone for reducing socio-economic disparities and promoting social justice. The constitutional guarantees, including Articles 21A and 46, ensure that marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other weaker sections have access to quality education. By mandating free and compulsory education through the Right to Education Act, 2009, the government addresses barriers such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to schools. Education acts as a powerful equalizer by providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds with the skills and knowledge needed to break the cycle of poverty. Schemes like mid-day meals and free textbooks further support economically weaker families, encouraging school attendance and reducing dropout rates. By fostering inclusivity and representation, these measures aim to build a more equitable society.

#### Empowering Marginalized Groups

The right to education prioritizes the empowerment of historically marginalized groups. Policies such as reservations in educational institutions and financial assistance for SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) ensure equitable representation and opportunities. Article 46 reinforces the need for state support in enhancing the educational and economic prospects of these groups. Special initiatives, such as scholarships, residential schools, and



bridge programs, aim to address gaps in access and performance. These measures enable marginalized individuals to participate meaningfully in social, economic, and political spheres, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-reliance.

### **Enhancing Economic Growth**

Education is a vital driver of economic growth and social welfare. A well-educated population enhances workforce productivity, fosters innovation, and attracts investments. By equipping individuals with skills and knowledge, education contributes to economic development, reduces unemployment, and enhances global competitiveness. The link between education and economic growth is particularly significant in India, where a large youth population presents a demographic dividend. Investments in education yield long-term benefits by creating a skilled labor force capable of driving industrial growth, entrepreneurship, and technological advancements. Moreover, the emphasis on universal education aligns with social welfare objectives by reducing income inequality, improving living standards, and fostering sustainable development.

### **Education and Constitutional Guarantees**

Gains in wealth, health, gender equality, and overall economic growth are just a few of the many advantages that can be gained via education. In 30 OECD nations between 1960 and 2008, for instance, higher levels of education were associated with faster economic growth. Furthermore, a girl's earnings can improve by 10-20% and her chances of not being married at a young age can be reduced for every additional year she stays in school. Worldwide, 59 million elementary-aged children face obstacles including poverty and prejudice that prevent them from attending school. A lot of countries have seen dramatic changes after making access to education a fundamental right. Enrollment rates and gender gaps were both improved by the Right to Education Act, which was passed in India as a result of a constitutional change. The elimination of tuition for displaced children was mandated by Colombia's constitutional guarantee of free education, while in South Africa, rules were enforced by courts to guarantee basic supplies for low-income institutions. The right to education is guaranteed in 83% of constitutions as of 2017. Of these, 68% ensure elementary education, 46% extend to secondary school, and 31% include postsecondary education. With 53% of constitutions promising free primary education and 30% promising free secondary education, monetary obstacles continue to be a major point of emphasis. Nevertheless, just 22% of constitutions guarantee equal educational opportunity for numerous oppressed groups or directly tackle prejudice. In contrast to the 100% of constitutions ratified after the year 2000 that guarantee access to quality education, just 63% of constitutions ratified before 1970 did so. By enacting new laws, broadening the scope of existing ones, and making aspirational provisions enforceable, countries have enhanced education rights. As an example, in 2012 Mexico expanded free public education to secondary schools, while in 2009 Swaziland used a lawsuit to uphold its constitutional mandate for free public elementary and secondary education. A strong basis for inclusive social and economic development has been laid by the efforts to constitutionalize the right to education, which have been essential in eliminating obstacles, guaranteeing equity, and enhancing the quality of education on a global scale.

### **5. Challenges in Implementation**

Despite constitutional mandates and the introduction of the Right to Education Act, 2009, many schools in India continue to struggle with inadequate infrastructure. A significant proportion of schools, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas, lack basic amenities such as classrooms, functional toilets, and safe drinking water. The absence of separate toilets for girls has been a critical factor contributing to higher dropout rates among adolescent girls, especially in rural areas. Poorly maintained school buildings, lack of libraries, and insufficient teaching aids further hinder the learning environment. Addressing these deficits is essential for realizing the constitutional promise of universal education.

While the focus on expanding access to education has led to higher enrollment rates, it has often come at the cost of quality. Teacher shortages, inadequate training, and a lack of





accountability have resulted in poor learning outcomes. Many schools operate with a high pupil-to-teacher ratio, reducing the effectiveness of instruction. Standardized assessments such as the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) repeatedly highlight deficiencies in basic literacy and numeracy skills among students. The gap between curriculum design and its practical implementation further exacerbates these issues, requiring urgent reforms to improve teacher training and pedagogical methods.

Insufficient budgetary allocations remain a significant challenge in the effective implementation of the right to education. Although education is a critical area for national development, it has historically received less than the recommended 6% of GDP in budget allocations. Resource constraints affect not only the construction of new schools and the hiring of teachers but also the maintenance and improvement of existing institutions. States with weaker fiscal capacity often struggle to match the financial requirements for implementing centrally sponsored schemes, creating disparities in educational quality across regions.

Deep-rooted socio-cultural barriers, such as gender discrimination, caste-based exclusion, and child labor, continue to impede universal access to education. Girls, particularly from marginalized communities, face multiple layers of disadvantage, including early marriage and household responsibilities that limit their educational opportunities. Caste discrimination in schools, both subtle and overt, alienates students from disadvantaged backgrounds, leading to higher dropout rates. Furthermore, child labor, driven by economic hardships, prevents many children from attending school. Awareness campaigns, community engagement, and targeted interventions are needed to dismantle these barriers and ensure equitable educational access for all.

## 6. Key Judicial Interventions

### 6.1 Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka (1992)

This landmark case brought attention to the accessibility and affordability of education in India. The case arose when Mohini Jain, a student, challenged the Karnataka government's policy of charging exorbitant capitation fees for admission to medical colleges. The Supreme Court, in its judgment, declared education to be a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court reasoned that the "Right to Life" includes the right to live with dignity, and education is an essential component to achieve this dignity. The judgment emphasized that education is indispensable for the exercise of other fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, equality, and the right to livelihood. The verdict underscored that denying education due to financial constraints violates the principles of equality and social justice enshrined in the Constitution. This judgment set the groundwork for future judicial interpretations of the right to education.

### 6.2 Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993)

This case built upon the principles established in Mohini Jain's case. It dealt with the unaffordable cost of professional education and private institutions' practices. The Supreme Court, in this case, provided a detailed framework for the right to education, linking it explicitly to Articles 21 (Right to Life) and 41 (Right to Work, Education, and Public Assistance). The Court ruled that the right to education flows from the right to life and is a necessary precondition for the effective exercise of other rights. It mandated the State to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14, as per Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Beyond this age, the right to education was subject to the State's economic capacity and development.

**Impact:** The decision laid the foundation for legislative action, leading to the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. It also recognized the dual role of the State in regulating education and private institutions' role in providing equitable access to quality education.

### 6.3 Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust v. Union of India (2014)

In this case, the Supreme Court examined the constitutional validity of the Right of Children



to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, especially concerning its applicability to unaided minority institutions. The petitioners challenged the RTE Act, arguing that its provisions violated the rights of minority institutions under Article 30(1) of the Constitution, which guarantees minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The Court upheld the RTE Act as constitutional but exempted minority institutions from its purview. The Court reasoned that imposing the RTE Act's provisions on unaided minority institutions would infringe upon their autonomy and violate Article 30(1). However, the Act's applicability to non-minority and aided institutions remained unaffected. This judgment struck a balance between the State's obligation to ensure universal access to education and the protection of minority rights. It reinforced the principle that the State's role in regulating education must respect constitutional guarantees provided to minorities.

## 7. Recommendations

- Increase funding for education to improve infrastructure, teacher training, and learning resources.
- Establish robust systems to monitor the implementation of policies and address bottlenecks.
- Involve local communities in the management of schools to ensure accountability and inclusivity.
- Promote gender-sensitive policies and campaigns to encourage girls' education.
- Leverage technology to provide quality education to remote and underprivileged areas.

## 8. Conclusion

The constitutional guarantees for the right to education in India have laid a strong foundation for social welfare. However, achieving the full potential of these provisions requires addressing implementation challenges and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. A holistic approach that prioritizes equity, quality, and inclusivity will ensure that education fulfills its transformative role in building a just and equitable society. Education is a powerful tool for social transformation, equality, and empowerment. The constitutional guarantees for the right to education in India highlight its significance as a fundamental human right and a key driver of social welfare. Through provisions like Article 21A, the Right to Education (RTE) Act, and supportive directive principles, India has created a legal framework to ensure universal access to education. These measures aim to bridge socioeconomic gaps, empower marginalized communities, and foster inclusive growth. However, persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, gender disparities, and socioeconomic barriers undermine the effectiveness of these guarantees. To fully realize the transformative potential of education, there is a pressing need for increased funding, community engagement, policy innovation, and robust monitoring mechanisms. By addressing these issues, education can not only fulfill its constitutional promise but also serve as a catalyst for building a more just, equitable, and progressive society.

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