

138 residential school-places Andhra-Pradesh Oct 2010

With 50,000 kids in school, Andhra takes RTE lead

Akshaya Mukul, TNN, Oct 25, 2010, 01.13am IST
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NEW DELHI: Even as the Centre is yet to firm up its view about screening of children for admission in residential schools, [Andhra Pradesh](#) has successfully given admission to 50,000 children in 600 state government-run residential schools without any entrance test and following the [Right to Education Act](#) in letter and spirit.

Andhra residential schools, which have been consistently producing good results, have even given reservation higher than 25% stipulated under the RTE Act.

"Till date, we were conducting state-level entrance test as getting into these schools is considered prestigious. But once the RTE Act was introduced, we decided to implement it," said Sambasiva Rao, secretary, secondary education, Andhra Pradesh. The Act prohibits screening of any kind — be it of children or parents — and stipulates that admission be conducted through a draw of lots.

While the HRD ministry has come up with a formula on screening in non-residential schools, no decision has been taken on the residential ones. Many reputed residential schools have approached the ministry seeking guidance about next year's admission without resorting to screening of any kind, including test.

How did the Andhra Pradesh government implement no-screening in residential schools? According to Rao, since there are 20 to 30 residential schools in each district, the state government just asked people to apply. "We received a large number of applications. Lottery was taken out by senior district officials in front of select parents who were, in turn, chosen through draw of lots," he explained.

As for reservation, Rao said there were three kinds of residential schools in the state — open, tribal welfare and social welfare schools. "All three have given around 50% reservation, which is double than what RTE Act stipulates," he said.

Though Rao admitted that in the absence of screening, these residential schools would not have got talented children, he felt it would be made up through remedial courses for children. "We expect that in a year's time, these children will improve," he said.

In case of non-residential schools, the ministry has decided that while 25% reservation to children of economically weaker sections will be given without any screening and on the basis of random selection through draw of lots, for the remaining 75%, there will be a rational system of categorisation.

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