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### Girls' Right to Education in India: Bridging the Gap Between Intention and Implementation

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## What is the RTE?

- Established under the Indian Parliament in 2009 to encourage greater integration of females and underprivileged populations into schools
- “An act to provide for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years old” (1)

## Why is the RTE important?

In countries, such as India, where girls are expected to conform to cultural norms by taking over domestic duties at a young age, girls’ equal access to education and completion of studies are endangered. The RTE aims to bridge the gap between India’s diverse populations to allow for social mobility and independence in adulthood.



Image 1: Indian Schoolgirls (2)

## Methodology

- Human Rights Watch report on Indian girls’ broad failure to complete schooling
- Where is there a gap in the RTE? In state enforcement? Can this be traced back to the language employed in the RTE?
- Conducted close readings of the UDHR, CEDAW, RTE and subsequent amendments for gender inclusivity and the implications of their language

# Education in India: Strides or Setbacks?

## A Feminist Reading of India’s Right to Education Act

PRESENTER: Caroline Sandleitner

“the **right to education** is **enshrined** in a number of international... legally binding instruments. States parties, therefore, have an **obligation to respect, protect and fulfil** the right to education... in national legal systems” –CEDAW, Rec. No. 36

Girls: Aged 15-18

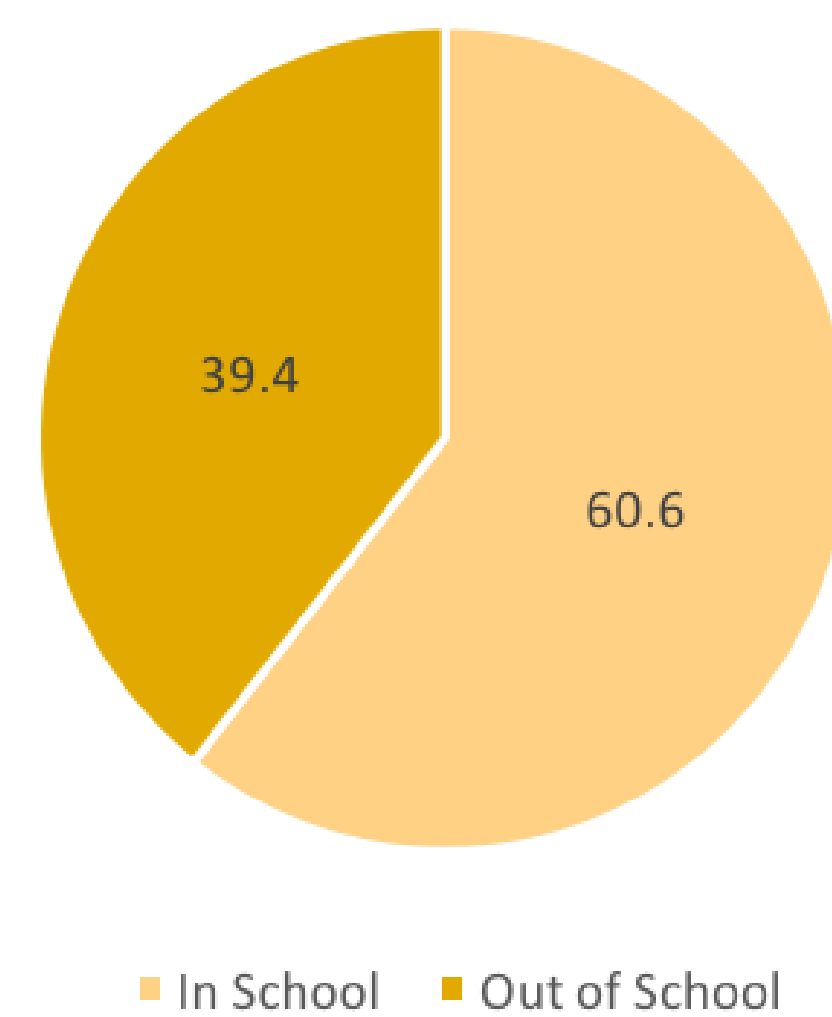


Figure 1. Girls Aged 15-18 in school vs. out of school (represented as percentages) (3)

Girls: Out of School

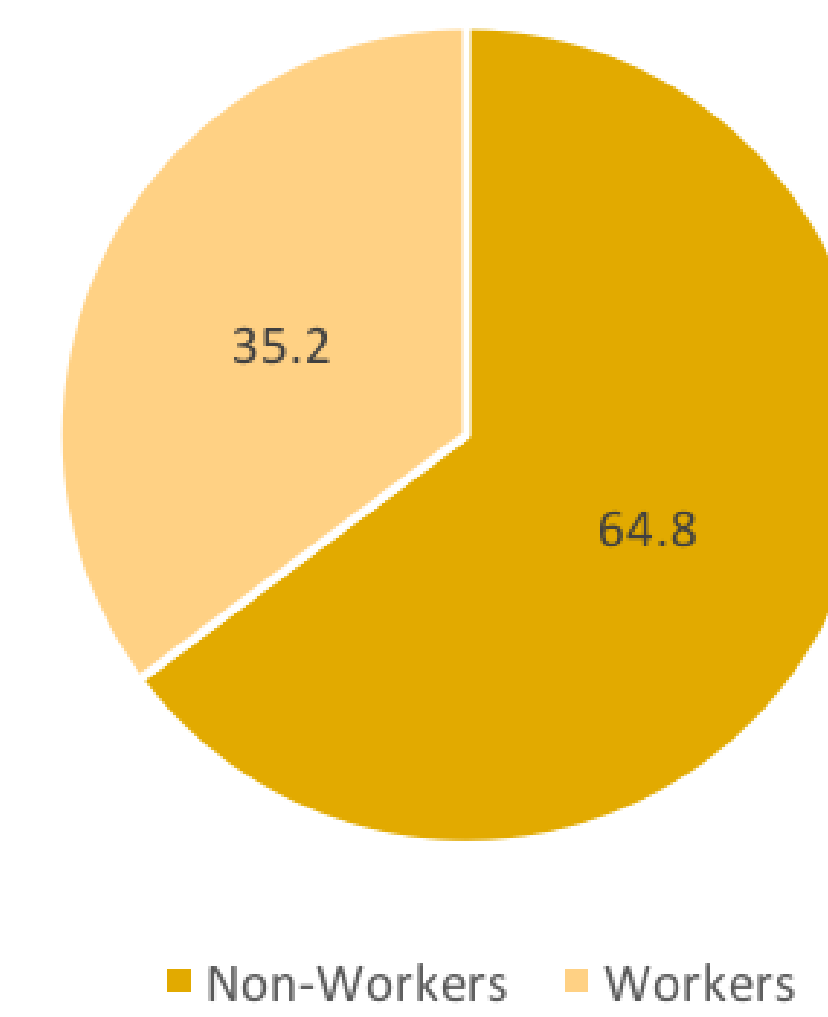


Figure 2. Girls Aged 15-18 non-workers vs. workers (represented as percentages) (3)

Boys: Aged 15-18

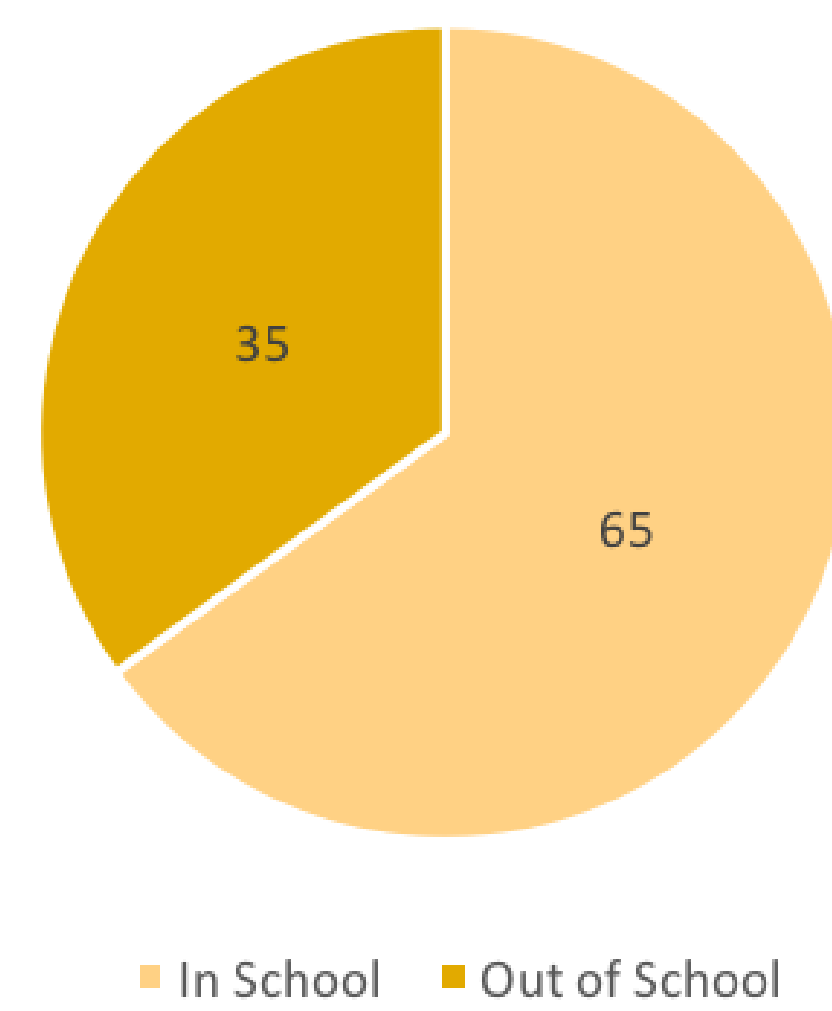


Figure 3. Boys Aged 15-18 in school vs. out of school (represented as percentages) (3)

Boys: Out of School

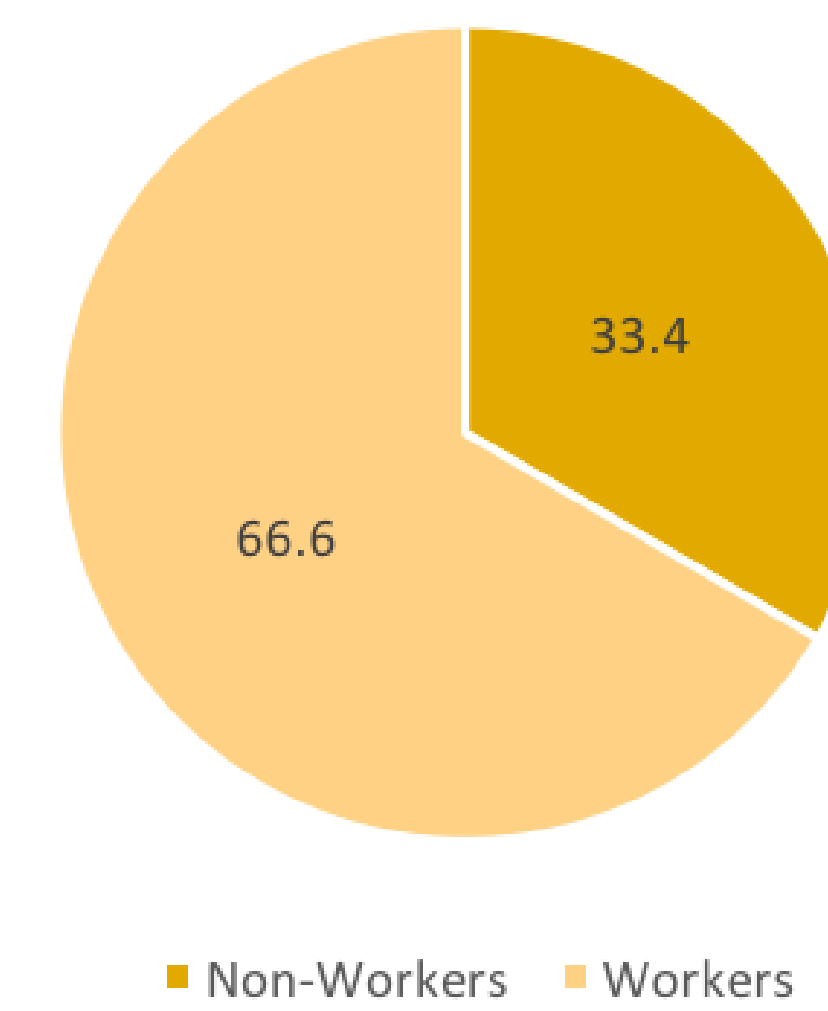


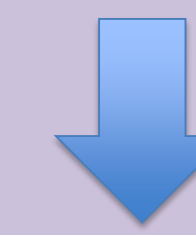
Figure 4. Boys Aged 15-18 non-workers vs. workers (represented as percentages) (3)

## REFERENCES

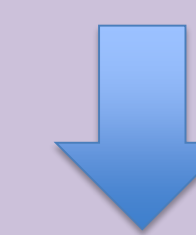
- 1) The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. No. 35. 2009. Pg. 1. <http://righttoeducation.in/sites/default/files/Right%20of%20Children%20to%20Free%20and%20Compulsory%20Education%20Act%202009%20%28English%29.pdf>
- 2) Subramanian, Samanth. “Why More and More Girls Are Going to School in India.” The National. The National, October 29, 2015. <https://www.thenational.ae/world/why-more-and-more-girls-are-going-to-school-in-india-1.1824>.
- 3) National Colloquium Report: Vocational & Life Skills Training of Out-of-School Adolescent Girls in the age group 5-18 years. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. 2017. Pg.1 <https://ncpcr.gov.in/showfile.php?lang=1&level=1&&sublinkid=1357&lid=1558>

## Flow of International Guidelines for Education

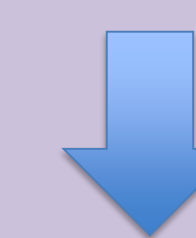
Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)



Indian Right to Education Act (2009)



CEDAW Recommendation No.36 (2017)

## Key Considerations

- Avoiding unintentional imposition of Western ideology and standards
- Balancing the statistics on education and Indian culture with the language in the RTE
- Ensuring that cultural accounts and statistics are accurate and reputable

## Findings

- Girls up to the age of 18 are not including in the RTE provisions
- Attempts to take feminist approach through acknowledgement of need for education
- Utilizes gender inclusive language (‘he’ and ‘she’)
- The RTE does not specifically address discrimination based on religion, sex, gender, creed, race, disability, or economic background
- While the act places emphasis on providing mid-day meals and having proportional representation on ruling boards, it fails to address underlying social issues such as early marriage and early pregnancy.