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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) IN HARYANA: POLICY, PRACTICE AND OUTCOMES (2025)**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) guarantees free and compulsory elementary education for children aged 6–14 years across India. Haryana operationalized the Act through the Haryana Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011, and a series of subsequent administrative circulars and digital workflows. This paper examines Haryana's implementation architecture legal provisions, administrative processes (notably the UJJWAL portal for Section 12(1)(c) admissions), financing and reimbursements under Section 12(2), recent trends in enrolment and school infrastructure, compliance and litigation, and persistent gaps. Using publicly available government documents, UDISE+ statistical publications, and reputable news reports (2022–2025), we synthesize evidence and propose a ten-point reform agenda aimed at improving access, equity, quality, and fiscal sustainability of RTE in Haryana.*

**Keywords:** RTE, Section 12(1)(c), UJJWAL Portal, EWS/DG, Per-Child Expenditure, Reimbursement, UDISE+, Elementary Education, Samagra Shiksha.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The RTE Act, 2009, enshrines the right to free and compulsory elementary education for every child aged 6–14 years. Haryana notified its state rules in June 2011, delineating standards for schools, neighbourhood norms, recognition, teacher qualifications, and the modalities for the 25% reservation for children from EWS/DG in private unaided schools at entry level. Over the past decade, Haryana's policy stance has evolved from relying on state-specific Rule 134-A (under the Haryana School Education Rules, 2003) to full alignment with the central RTE framework, particularly for Section 12(1)(c) admissions and Section 12(2) reimbursements. This paper presents a structured review of the state's current policy instruments and on-ground practice, highlights emerging issues such as declining enrolment in some government schools, and draws out practical recommendations to improve implementation fidelity and learning outcomes.

**2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**2.1 Central Law:** The RTE Act, 2009 provides the overarching legal mandate. Key provisions include: neighbourhood school access; prohibition of screening and capitation; and a 25% reservation at entry level in private unaided schools for EWS/DG children (Section 12(1)(c)), with reimbursement to schools up to the state's per-child expenditure or the school's fee, whichever is lower (Section 12(2)).

**2.2 Haryana State Rules (2011):** The Haryana Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011 operationalize the Act in the state. Among other matters, the rules set (a) recognition and infrastructure standards (e.g., all-weather buildings, barrier-free access), (b) processes for academic authority and SMCs, and (c) per-child expenditure determination and reimbursement modalities to implement Section 12(2).

**2.3 Shift from Rule 134-A to RTE:** Haryana previously admitted EWS children to private schools through Rule 134-A of the Haryana School Education Rules, 2003. From 2022 onward, the state moved to the RTE-aligned mechanism (Section 12(1)(c)), while clearing legacy obligations for cohorts admitted under Rule 134-A. This alignment clarified the reimbursement basis and reduced litigation over unfunded mandates.

**2.4 Recent Administrative Circulars and Digitalization:** From 2024–2025, Haryana has issued annual circulars and user manuals guiding admissions under RTE Section 12(1)(c) through the UJJWAL online portal, specifying timelines for applications, lotteries, waiting lists, and document verification. Age norms at entry levels have been reiterated in line with NEP-2020.

**3. ADMINISTRATIVE ARCHITECTURE: THE UJJWAL PORTAL AND ADMISSION WORKFLOW**

**3.1 Portal Functions:** The UJJWAL portal centralizes key tasks: school seat declaration (25% quota), applicant registration for EWS/DG categories, neighbourhood mapping, randomized allotment/lottery, and generation of admission orders. It also serves as a transaction log for reimbursements, thereby improving auditability.

**3.2 Annual Timelines (Illustrative, AY 2025–26):** Seat declaration by recognized private schools; publication of neighbourhood seats on the portal. Online application window (mid-April) for EWS/DG parents/guardians. - System-generated lottery; publication of first merit list and subsequent waiting-list rounds within 2–3 weeks.

Physical verification at allotted schools and admission completion by stipulated cut-off dates. Post-admission data lock for reimbursement claims.

**3.3 Eligibility and Documentation:** Applicants must satisfy both category requirements (EWS or DG as prescribed) and neighbourhood distance norms. Documentary proofs typically include income certificate, residence proof, birth certificate/age proof, and any specific DG category certificate.

**3.4 Grievance Redressal:** District education offices host helplines; the portal allows ticketing for technical issues, while statutory RTE grievance processes remain available for rights violations.

#### **4. FINANCING RTE IN HARYANA: PER-CHILD EXPENDITURE AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

**4.1 Statutory Basis:** Under Section 12(2), private unaided schools admitting EWS/DG children against the 25% quota receive reimbursements up to the state's notified per-child expenditure (PCE) or the school's fee, whichever is lower, subject to due verification.

**4.2 State Practice:** Haryana issues portal-based instructions opening reimbursement claim windows; it has also sanctioned arrears for prior academic years (including legacy Rule 134-A cohorts) and specified submission deadlines to clear backlogs. Stakeholder dialogues reveal recurrent concerns from private schools over reimbursement timeliness and adequacy relative to actual costs, with occasional state directives to consolidate and validate claims to prevent duplication or fraud.

**4.3 Transparency Opportunities:** Publishing the annual PCE calculation and reimbursement rate cards district-wise; releasing dashboards on claims submitted, approved, paid, and pending; and time-bound grievance disposal could strengthen trust and participation of private schools.

#### **5. ACCESS AND EQUITY: COVERAGE, TARGETING, AND INCLUSION**

**5.1 Quota Utilization:** The 25% entry-level reservation is intended to expand access for EWS/DG children to recognized private unaided schools within neighbourhoods. Haryana's move to a unified, lottery-based digital process is a positive step toward reducing discretion and ensuring equitable allocation of seats.

**5.2 Category Definitions and Age Norms:** Annual guidelines specify eligible sub-groups under EWS/DG and class-wise age eligibility aligned to NEP-2020. Clear, state-wide communication campaigns at the start of the cycle remain essential to maximize awareness among eligible families.

**5.3 Barriers and Leakage Risks:** Potential barriers include: documentation hurdles (income certificates, disability proofs), digital access constraints for low-income families, off-portal screening by schools, and post-allotment denial or pressure to pay fees for uniforms/books. Haryana's portalization and stronger verification protocols mitigate though do not eliminate these risks.

#### **6. OUTCOMES AND TRENDS: WHAT DO RECENT DATA INDICATE?**

**6.1 Interpreting UDISE+ Post-2022:** National UDISE+ shifted methodologies from 2022–23 onward (introduction of student-wise records and alignment with NEP categories). Comparability with earlier series is therefore limited. For Haryana, policymakers should triangulate UDISE+ with PGI-2.0, state administrative records and independent household surveys to form a robust picture of access, enrolment, and retention.

**6.2 Enrolment Patterns and Government School Viability:** Media analyses in 2025 highlighted declining enrolment in some government primary schools in Haryana, including extreme cases of very low or zero student strength in a small RTE subset of schools. Such trends underscore the need for rationalization (merger/ transport solutions) under RTE neighbourhood norms while protecting access for remote habitations.

**6.3 PTR, Infrastructure, and Inclusion:** State and national reports suggest persistent intra-district disparities in PTR, teacher subject availability at upper primary, and infrastructure. Targeted investments under Samagra Shiksha and school complexes can address these bottlenecks, complemented by transparent school report cards and social audits.

**6.4 Learning Outcomes:** While this paper focuses on access and compliance, sustained improvements depend on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) and teacher support. Haryana should link RTE access gains with outcomes under NIPUN-Bharat, periodic learning assessments, and classroom observation feedback loops.

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## 7. COMPLIANCE, LITIGATION, AND JURISPRUDENCE

High Court directions in the region (including matters before the Punjab & Haryana High Court) have emphasized strict adherence to the 25% EWS/DG mandate and questioned state rules or practices that dilute Section 12(1)(c). Within Haryana, litigation historically centred on reimbursement delays (legacy Rule 134-A) and admission denials. The state's shift to RTE-compliant modalities and portalization has reduced ambiguity; continued vigilance especially timely payments and enforcement against screening is necessary to sustain compliance.

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

**8.1 Reimbursement Timeliness and Adequacy:** Delays undermine private school participation; annual PCE disclosures and predictable, quarterly disbursements can help.

**8.2 Data Transparency:** Limited public reporting on seat declaration, lottery outcomes, admissions completed, and reimbursements paid by district impedes accountability.

**8.3 Awareness and Last-Mile Support:** Eligible families may miss application windows due to information or digital access gaps; block-level facilitation centres and mobile outreach are needed.

**8.4 School Rationalization:** Very low-enrolment government schools challenge cost-effectiveness; rationalization must align with RTE neighbourhood and transport provisions to avoid exclusion. Inclusive Education Services: Children with disabilities need stronger support resource rooms, itinerant teachers, assistive devices, and barrier-free upgrades.

**8.5 Learning Focus:** Access gains must be coupled with FLN, multi-grade pedagogy support, and teacher professional development.

**8.6 Monitoring and Grievance Redressal:** Proactive inspections against screening/fee demands and time-bound resolution of parent complaints remain critical.

## 9. A TEN-POINT REFORM AGENDA FOR HARYANA

**9.1 Publish an Annual RTE Implementation Dashboard:** Seats declared, applications, allotments, admissions, and reimbursements district- and school-wise, updated monthly.

**9.2 Notify Per-Child Expenditure (PCE) and Payment Calendars:** Publicly release PCE computation and commit to quarterly reimbursements with auto-status tracking on the portal.

**9.3 Strengthen Neighbourhood Planning:** Use GIS mapping to ensure every habitation has either a neighbourhood school within RTE limits or assured transport facilities.

**9.4 Rationalize Low-Enrolment Schools with Safeguards:** Merge where appropriate, but provide guaranteed transport/escorts and monitor attendance post-merger.

**9.5 Deepen Last-Mile Facilitation:** Set up camp-mode application help desks, partner with CSOs for community outreach, and deploy school complexes as support hubs. Enhance Inclusion: Expand resource teachers, early screening, and individualized education plans for CwDs; ensure barrier-free infrastructure.

**9.6 Guard Against Hidden Costs:** Standardize free provision of textbooks, uniforms, and learning materials for EWS/DG children; empower SMCs to flag violations.

**9.7 Link Access to Learning:** Embed FLN benchmarks and classroom formative assessments in school quality reviews; resource libraries and reading programmes.

**9.8 Capacity Building:** Train school leaders on RTE obligations, financial reporting for claims, and inclusive practices; refresh district officials on due-process and grievance norms.

**9.9 Independent Reviews:** Commission annual third-party audits of admissions and reimbursements; publicly disclose findings and corrective actions.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Haryana has made notable progress in aligning state practice with the central RTE framework particularly through the UJJWAL portal and clearer reimbursement modalities. Yet, the state faces a dual challenge: ensuring that every eligible child can effectively access the 25% quota in private schools without barriers, and revitalizing government schools experiencing enrolment decline. A transparent, data-driven approach linking

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access, financing, inclusion, and learning can consolidate the gains of the past decade and move Haryana toward universal, high-quality elementary education.

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