Tapasya Pratishthan

2018-19 Campaign Report

Mumbai, Pune & Thane

Distribution of sugar after successfully filling 1st form in one center at Pune

Table of Contents	Page No

Executive Summary

Who are we:

Tapasya Pratishthan (TP) is a non-profit organization working in the domain of education. Through its key project- Eklavya TP is committed for the implementation of Section 12.1.C of the Right to Education Act which provides the opportunity of getting free education in Unaided and non-minority private schools to children from disadvantaged and weaker sections of society, from entry level to class 8. Tapasya Pratishthan started its work in year 2017 at Mumbai, Pune and Thane, in collaboration with a Delhi based organization, Indus Action.

Why we started working in Mumbai, Pune & Thane:

We initiated our work in Mumbai, Pune & Thane for admissions in academic year 2018-19 because these three districts comprise of almost 32% of the total seats of Maharashtra and 55% of seats in these districts were unfilled in 2017-18. (Total available seats in academic year 2017-18 in Mumbai, Pune & Thane were 40,742 out of which only 18,564 i.e. 45 % were filled.)

What is the value or social importance of Article 12.1.c under RTE Act in Maharashtra:

Government of Maharashtra reimburses roughly Rs. 17 k per child per year to these schools. In budgetary terms for the state of Maharashtra alone, this is a 170 crore per year policy in its initial stages and when working in full capacity, is a more than 1000 crore per year policy if we counts all the seats upto class 8th.

What are the challenges in the implementation of the Act:

Out of 1, 20,223 seats available in 2017-18 in Maharashtra, less than 50% were filled. It is observed that the reasons behind this huge gap are mainly:

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of access to technology among the poor and needy families.
- Lack of streamline admission process
- Apathetic attitude of some schools
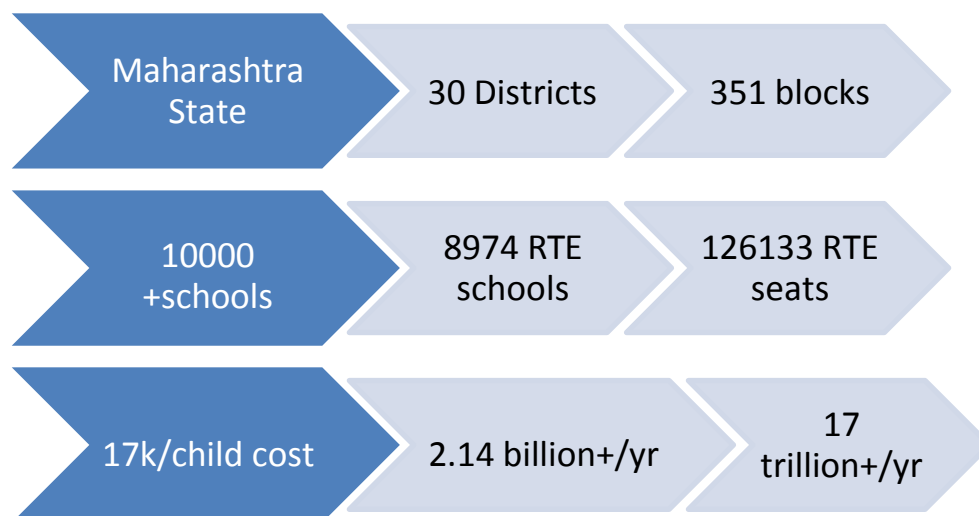- Challenges in implementing the policy

*** The challenges were gathered from our helpline & campaign volunteers from direct one-to-one conversation.

What is the strategy adopted to address the challenges by Tapasya Pratishthan this year?

i.   **Campaigning and help desks:** We used various modes of campaigning like distribution of pamphlets, door-to-door campaigning, posters, training aanganwadi karyakartas, media campaigning and community meetings. More than 50 college going students volunteered for the campaign. We collaborated with 15 NGOs from Mumbai, Pune & Thane with an

objective of working together for a larger goal. We were able to do awareness generation & run 19 helpdesks with the help of these organizations.

ii. **Helpline:** We reached out to 14000 unique families through our helpline for supporting them at multiple stages. We supported them in solving difficulties in form filling, preparation of documents and offices to visit for the same, connecting them with concerned government official in case of grievances etc. Existing government mechanism for information sharing about school allotment is a system generated SMS and updates on the portal. Majority of the parents can't understand the English SMS or unable to access the online portal. We helped families overcome technological and language based barriers by providing info in local languages by our Shikshan-mitras.

iii. **Technological support to Government:** We supported in providing design level suggestions on MIS, and also proposed logic on lottery, neighborhood distance measurement etc. We prepared a series of five tutorial videos for RTE portal on school & student registration and online application process on Government request. Through helpline and help desks, we had identified the challenges faced by parents in filling forms. We updated the government about those challenges and suggested possible solutions.
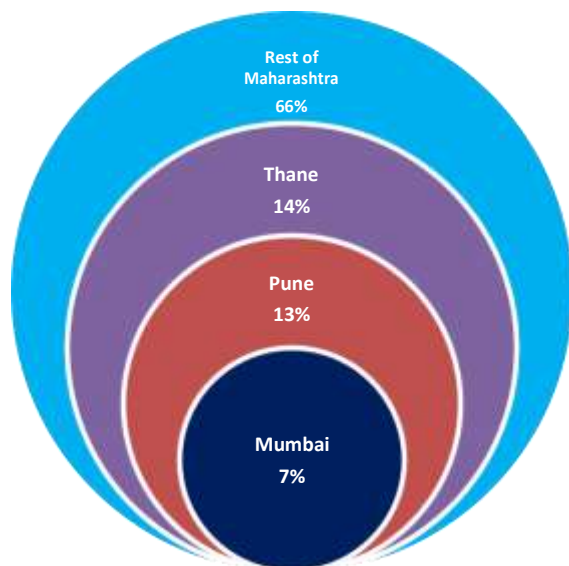
Maharashtra State	30 Districts	351 blocks
10000 +schools	8974 RTE schools	126133 RTE seats
17k/child cost	2.14 billion+/yr	17 trillion+/yr

A report on the work done by Tapasya Pratishthan and Indus Action Initiatives for the application cycle-2018.

1. Introduction:

Tapasya Pratishthan and Indus Action (IA) are working towards the implementation of Section 12.1.C of The Right to Education Act, 2009. IA commenced full time work in Maharashtra with the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for the academic year 2017-18. Since then, based on data backed need analysis and the active support provided of the School Education and Sports Department (SESD) of the Government of Maharashtra, Tapasya Pratishthan and IA have expanded the ground operations to the districts of Thane and Mumbai along with Pune. It entered in to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Primary Education, Maharashtra State (DPEMS) to work together on the effective implementation of the provision in Maharashtra. This report seeks to update the government on the work done by Tapasya Pratishthans and IA for the application cycle in 2018, delineate the areas of improvement and chart out the plan of action for the forthcoming year.

Following is the graphical representation of status of unfilled seats in Maharashtra and specifically Mumbai, Pune and Thane.
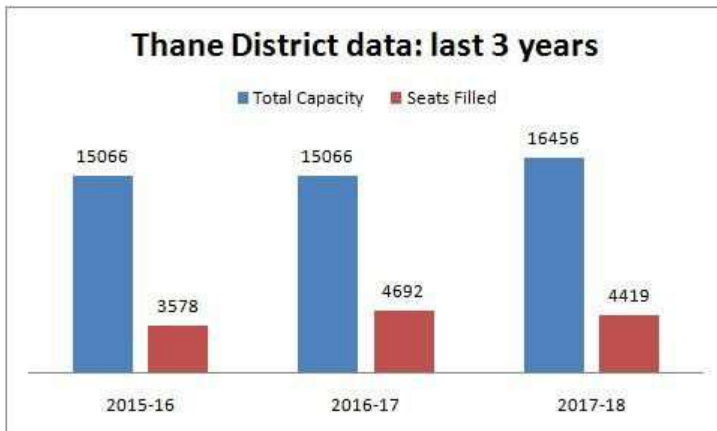
After studying the data, it was found that Thane, Mumbai and Pune comprised of almost 34% of the total seats in Maharashtra in 2017-18.

Rest of Maharashtra 66%
Thane 14%
Pune 13%
Mumbai 7%

Mumbai, Pune & Thane seats filled rate

Total Seats 40742

Filled seats 18564

Unfilled seats 22178

Total available seats filled in academic year 2017-18 in Mumbai, Pune & Thane were 40,742 out of which only 18,564 i.e. 45 % were filled.

In Thane district, average percentage of vacant seats in last three years is 73. Since the gap between available seats and filled seats is big in these districts, we decided to work in Mumbai and Thane along with Pune in 2018-19.
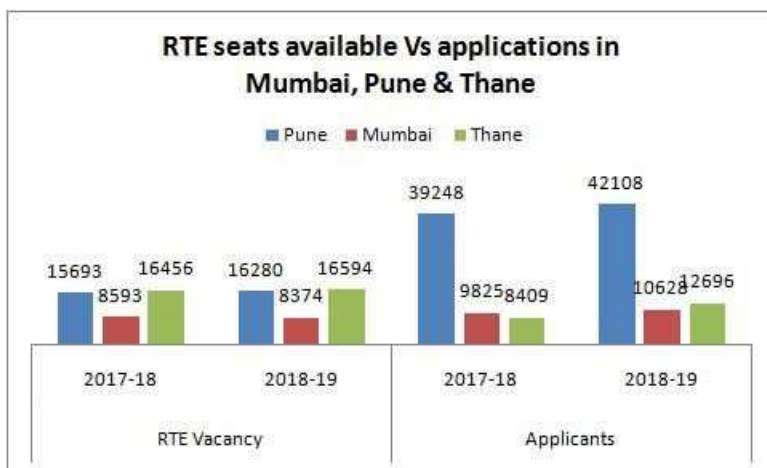

Application cycle for admissions in academic year 2018-19 started on Feb 10, 2018 and went on till March 11, 2018. We started full time active work out of Thane from 10th December, 2017. In a short span, we tried our best to do ground level campaigning in Mumbai, Pune & Thane by reaching out to eligible beneficiaries, establishing application filling desk & helpline.

2. **Section 12(1)(c) in Mumbai, Pune & Thane:**

(i) Status of RTE in Thane, Mumbai and Pune district in 2018:

Following graph shows a comparative status of eligible schools, vacant seats and applications in 2017 and 2018 in Mumbai, Pune and Thane:

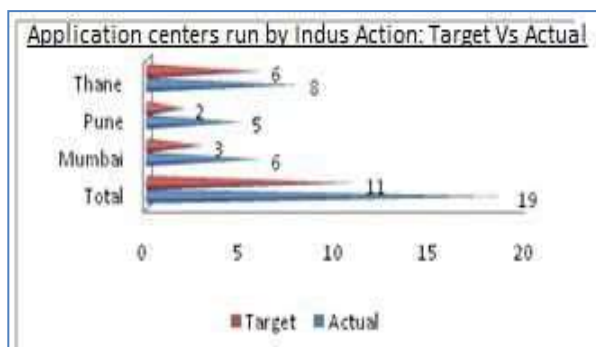Source:https://student.maharashtra.gov.in/adm_portal/Users/rteindex

It is clear from the graph that number of eligible schools, number of vacancies (except Mumbai) and number of applications in Mumbai, Pune and Thane has increased in 2018 as compared to 2017. In case of Mumbai, though the number of eligible schools increased, the number of vacancies decreased.

The number of admissions after the first round of lottery where children were allotted schools within 1 km of their neighborhood in these districts stands at 2080 in Mumbai, 7543 in Pune and 3875 in Thane.

The figures show that there is a large scope for awareness in districts like Thane where we can see the uneven level of awareness among the beneficiaries. For example, Navi-Mumbai Municipal Corporation which has 16.25% schools of Thane District has received; around 30% (3808) of total applications while Mirabhayandar Block despite having 14.68% (42) schools of Thane District, received only 0.33% of total applications.
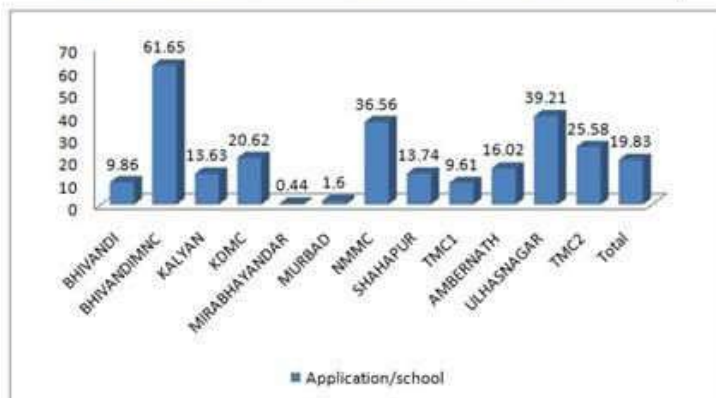
(ii) Ecosystem

It can be seen in fix-x that we have run more numbers of application centers than it was planned before in Pune, Mumbai and Thane has increased in 2018. There are multiple reasons behind this increase which also support us while working in these districts. Since the admission process is online in Maharashtra, data and other information related to the process is easily accessible for parents. All related information is available in the portal making the entire process transparent.

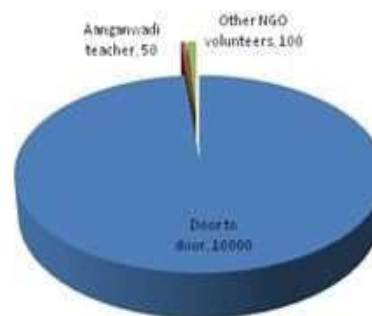Application centers run by Indus Action: Target Vs Actual

Awareness among beneficiaries is increasing in these districts because of awareness drives undertaken by the Government and various organizations working on this issue. There are many organizations and individuals working in the domain of education as well as other social issues in these districts creating larger scope for mobilizing volunteers. Similarly, the presence of several multinational and national firms also increases the possibility of mobilizing financial capital for supporting the program. In addition to all this, the most encouraging aspect of the Pune, Mumbai and Thane ecosystem is a supportive bureaucracy willing to engage and partner with us in achieving its objectives. The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the

Benefeciaries & others reached out by IA

Applications recieved per schools in each blocks of Thane District

Government and IA created an enabling environment for us to work on this issue in these districts.

(iii)Scope: Considering the increasing number of eligible schools and seats, along with awareness drive, helpline and application desks there is a scope for a systematic training program of Aaganwadi Karyakartas across these districts for wider outreach and awareness of the provision as well as the school readiness program of IA. The learning of our team this year will definitely help in the expansion of good practice to two new districts in the coming year.

3. **The work done by Tapasya Pratishthan and Indus Action during the application cycle-2018**

Tapasya Pratishthan and Indus Action commenced its operations in Mumbai, Pune & Thane this year just 2 months before the application opened up. We worked with our full capacity to reach maximum beneficiaries within given time period
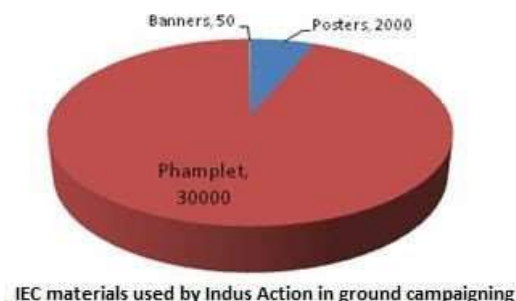
During the 4 weeks of the application cycle, the following work was carried out:

i. **Operations of application centers**: As per the MoU, it was planned that we will run 11 application centers in Mumbai (3), Pune (2) and Thane (6) respectively. With the help of like-minded NGOs and student volunteers, we were able to run total 19 centers instead of 11 across Mumbai (6), Pune (5) & Thane (8). Total applications filled through these centers were 863.

> *The number of applications filled through our centers could have been increased by displaying the address and contact details of these centers on portal, along with the existing ones.*

ii. **Spreading Awareness**: We used various modes of campaigning like distribution of 30000 phamphlets, door-to-door campaigning , training 50 aanganwadi karyakartas, media campaigning and community meetings. More than 50

IEC materials used by Indus Action in ground campaigning

college going students volunteered for the campaign. We also collaborated with 15 like-minded NGOs with an objective of reaching out to maximum people.

iii. **Helpline**: We reached out to 14000 unique families.

Stage	Total beneficiaries reached out by IA calling bank	
	Categoric Parameters	**Total**
Before application window was opened	Families contacted	3634
	Calls made to these families	7148
	Families which could not be contacted on first call	1925
	Familes contacted on first call	1709
	calls made as second follow up	1925
Nudge calls for application filing	Familes Nudged to apply	1402
	calls made as follow ups to nudge for applying	2646
Post Lottery calls to lottery winners	Lottery Winner to nudge for admission	11000
	Families contacted for nudging	3492
	Families identified as admitted from govt data	4221
	Nudge calls made	5902
	Admissions taken out of nudge calls	7400

We called the families on multiple stages throughout the admission process i.e. before the applications were opened, after the lottery and during admissions. After all lottery rounds, concerned government officers in Mumbai and Thane provided the contact numbers of parents to us and we called them to inform about the school allocation. We also supported parents solve other difficulties like confusions in form filling, preparation of documents and offices to visit for the same, connecting them with concerned government official in case of grievances etc.

Displaying the helpline number on RTE portal can ensure our reach to more needy beneficiaries and increased admissions.

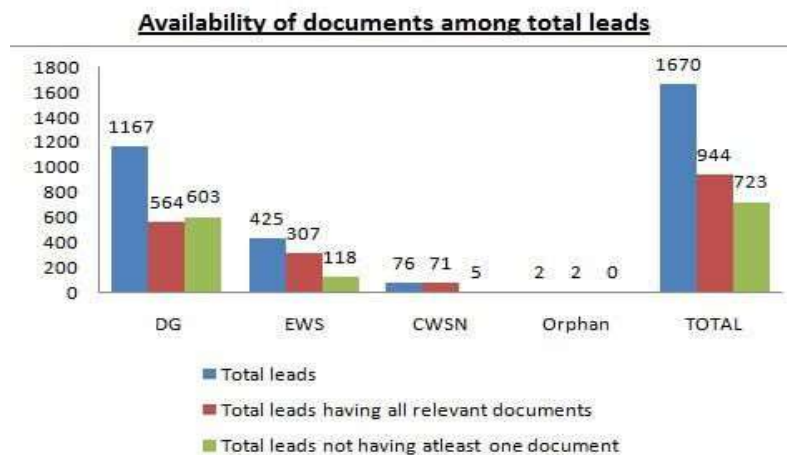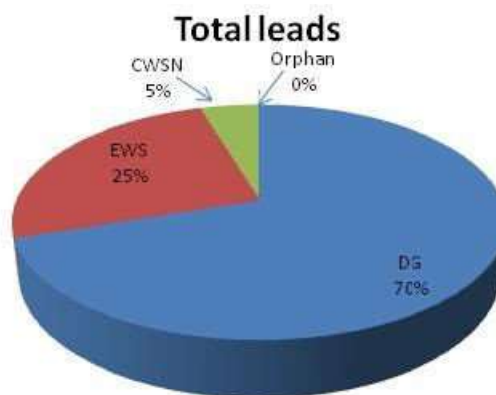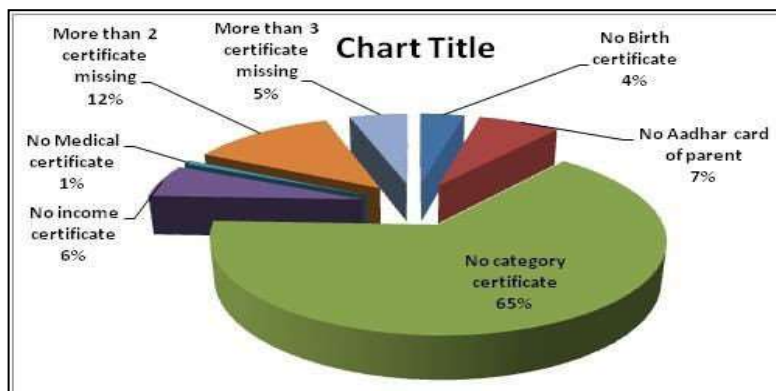**Table 1. Category Total leads having all relevant documents & total leads not having at least one document**

Availability of documents among total leads

Table 2: Category distribution of eligible & not eligible leads.

Total leads

Inferences from Table 1 & Table 2:
- Out of the **2531** leads contacted, there are still **944 potential eligible beneficiaries** who have **not applied yet** and also **have** all the **relevant documents** readily available.
- These **944 potential beneficiaries** have been **nudged** by **Indus Action** to **apply** for an RTE Section 12(1)(c) seat.
- There are **723 leads** who are **eligible** but **do not** have **at least one** relevant **document** needed for filing an application, **Indus Action** has **guided** these leads about **how** the **specific documents** are to be made and **to apply** once the **documentation** is **complete.**

Table 3. Distribution of unavailable documents:

 Inference from table 3

1. More than 65% of the leads with missing documents are from the DG category

2. There are about 128 leads which have more than 1 document missing

3. As creation of Category certificate and Aadhar card takes time, these 128 leads are less likely to have completed the documentation before the application deadline.

iv.   **Tutorial Video**: We prepared a series of 5 tutorial videos in Marathi for RTE portal. These videos were about school registration (1), student registration (1) and form filling (3). Following are the links of those videos.

a.   Applicant Registration and Login : http://bit.ly/2BvSOGs
b. Child details: http://bit.ly/2o6V7ay
c. Application section: http://bit.ly/2nW9KhK
d. School Selection and Summary: http://bit.ly/2o0rvfE

> *Uploading the tutorial videos on portal can help the parents understand form filling procedure and make the process smoother for them.*

4. Shortcomings Identified in the Online Application Process

The online application portal is quite evolved in Maharashtra, particularly when compared to the existing systems in different states. Not only is it comprehensive, it has adequate systems in place to ensure incorrect details particularly pertaining to age appropriate standard selection and validation of income certificate. The application portal consists of three broad processes namely self registration by eligible schools, followed by application for admissions and ending with the publication of the lottery results.

However, we also observed some frequent technological errors in the process of online form filling process. Following are some of the problems with screenshots:

a. **Difficulties in locating address:** The maps API being used in the application were not working across different locations in initial one week after the application got opened & in the last week before applications were closed. Similarly the red balloon in the map was also not getting placed on the proper location.

b. **Category of child not loading:** Centers reported that many a times while selecting the category of the child, the drop down did not list 'SC and ST' category.
*** Although this issue was resolved after we raised it before NIC & other concerned department*

c. **Submission cannot be confirmed:** Some centers also reported that even after entering all the requisite details, the system throws an exception after clicking on 'Confirm and submit' button.

My dream came true, when my Son got admitted in Thane Police School. Thanks to Indus Action helpline for assisting me throughout the process of admission.
- *Rashid works as helper in Thane.*

d. **Caste certificate id being asked:** The notification by the government had mentioned the certificate id would be required only for income certificate. However, from two locations we received report that the system asked for caste certificate id as well for SC and ST categories.

e. **Certificate ID of CWSN is being asked:** The notification by the government had mentioned the certificate id would be required only for income certificate. However, from one location we received report that the system asked for certificate ID of CWSN child.

f. **Portal was not showing schools for students eligible under Sr. KG. This lead to eliminating thousands of students who fall in the age criteria of Sr. KG. Students from age group of 5 years to 5 year, 7 month & 29 days were excluded as can be seen in the screen shot.**

Helping parents in taking admission & answering their all queries gives me immense satisfaction . I have never got so much blessings from so many people for doing anything till now.
- Bhakti, Volunteer for running calling bank

g. **Captcha not loading:** This issue was flagged by Indus Action last year as well but nevertheless it persists this year too. We do not have the screenshot of this though.

h. **Messages not received but schools got allotted:** Some parents did not receive the SMS for school allotment. Since SMS is the most convenient medium for parents to know about the allotment status, it is important to ensure SMS delivery to all concerned parents. In some cases, though the parents carried the admit card with them, school denied them admission because they were unable to produce SMS. Also we propose that a Marathi or Hindi message can be sent to parents as it will be easier for them to understand.

i. Other than this, speed of the portal (News published in Times of India on 13th feb, 2018) was a serious concern especially in first and last week of the process.
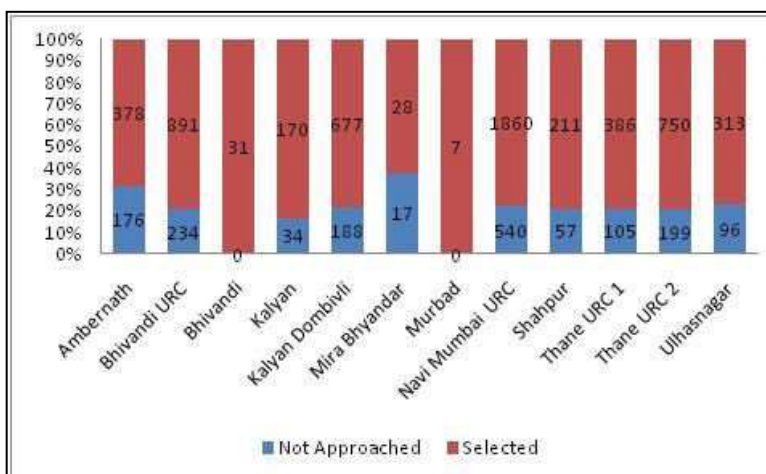
Apart from the issues related to online portal and technological part associated with it, a few more problems are listed as below:

a. Lack of school monitoring mechanism: As you can see the chart, 28.86% of selected seats were shown as 'Not approached' that needs to be cross verified. There is lack of such mechanism to cross verify.

b. **Grievance Redressal**: Though there has been no official confirmation on this, it has been brought to our notice that seats on which grievance redressal is sought are not blocked from being a part of subsequent lotteries. This means by the time a grievance is redressed, the seat in question is allotted to a different child through subsequent lottery processes, thereby making the redressal process redundant. It must be noted here that as per State RTE rules every grievance must be redressed within 8 days

c. **Inclusion of School Uniforms and Books:** A government order dated 27/6/2014 clearly mandates that children admitted under section 12(1)(c) must not be charged for books or uniforms. This order is not enforced. Costs associated with books and uniforms could well be a major deterrent for parents to send their wards to private schools wherein beyond these there are several other recurring costs. Parents not being able to afford these costs directly results in the social exclusion of EWS children within classrooms.

d. **Challenges in availability of documents:** During admission form filling process, we found that 65% parents of our contact who were not having atleast one document faced challenges in getting documents like Income certificate (Tehsil office were

charging money for this & later on were closed) & Aadhar card (All aadhar card centers were closed due to some state level issues)

We started its work before the process of school registration began and played an active role during the entire process. We made tutorial videos on how to do school & student registration and how to fill form for RTE portal. However, we struggled a lot in getting access to the data pertaining to school registration process which lead to delay in completing the school registration video. Moreover, none of the videos was uploaded on the RTE portal to do the best of its purpose. Similarly the helpline number of IA and address of help-desks run by us were not published on the portal.

5. Support Network for Project Eklavya in Thane, Mumbai & Pune:

Mumbai, Pune & Thane has a vibrant civil society and it has been an advantage for us more so because of the strong networks that we have in these districts. So far we have the support of the following organizations:

1. Pune Municipal Corporation
2. Bombay Municipal Corporation
3. Thane Municipal Corporation
4. Zilla Parishad, Thane
5. Surajya, Pune
6. Samidha, Pune
7. Deepak Foundation, Pune
8. Action for the Rights of the Child, Pune
9. Nascom, Pune
10. Akanksha Foundation, Pune
11. Thane Matdata Jagran Abhiyaan, Thane
12. Supervashi, Thane
13. Rajshri Peoples Forum, Thane
14. Maulana Azad Vikas Manch, Mumbai
15. Antarang Foundation, Mumbai
16. Bharat Manav Adhikar Organization, Mumbai
17. Many individuals from Mumbai, Pune & Thane.

Tapasya Pratishthan
@TAPASYAforU

Project Eklavya Campaign 2017-18: Sharing of report with Mr. Vinod Tawde, Honourable Education Minister of Maharashtra
#AseAction #VinodTawde #IndusAction

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6. **Conclusion**:

The data available in the public domain & our recent experience of working in academic year 2018-19 makes it clear that there is strong need for strategic intervention for awareness in those areas where still lots of beneficiaries are not aware. There is significant scope for improvement in specific areas in Thane, Mumbai & Pune as well. The working model of Tapasya Pratishthan is such that it works in close collaboration with government bodies. Over the next couple of years we intend to expand our scope of work across Maharashtra for which the support of the government is indispensable. It is hoped that the Government of Maharashtra would see merit in the work done by Tapasya Pratishthan and IA in this report and support us in expanding to two more districts of Maharashtra.

Glimpse of our ground campaign across Mumbai, Pune & Thane