



## Admissions of Poor Children on Priority in New Academic Session | Rajasthan | 15 May 2024

### Why in News?

The Rajasthan government has taken up the **admissions of children from underprivileged sections in private schools** under the [Right to Education \(RTE\) Act 2009](#) on priority for the next academic session.

### Key Points

- According to the sources, over **3.08 lakh children had applied for admissions** to 31,857 private schools in the State.
  - **25% of the seats** in the private schools would **be filled up with** the students belonging to **weaker sections of society**.
- The **Directorate of Elementary Education** has made a provision for RTE admissions to the pre-primary classes and Class 1 in the schools, while fixing the age limit for the two categories.
  - The children from three to four years of age are admitted to pre-primary classes and those between six and seven years are eligible to get admission to Class 1.
- A large number of **private schools** in the State **have expressed concerns** about the admission of students to the pre-primary classes, as the category was added in 2023-24 **without any clear guidelines for payment of fees** by the government for three years until a student is promoted to Class 1.

### Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009

- The Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 provided free and compulsory education to children in 2009 and enforced it as a fundamental right under **Article 21-A**.
- The RTE Act, 2009 aims to provide primary education to all children **aged 6 to 14 years**.
- **Section 12(1)(c)** mandates that **non-minority private unaided schools should reserve at least 25% of seats in entry-level grades for children from economically weaker and disadvantaged backgrounds**.
- It also makes **provisions for a non-admitted child** to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
- It also states about **sharing of financial and other responsibilities** between the Central and State Governments.
  - Education in the Indian constitution is a **concurrent issue** and both centre and states can legislate on the issue.
- It lays down the **norms and standards** related to: Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), Buildings and infrastructure, School-working days, Teacher-working hours.
- It also **provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work**, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- It provides for the **appointment of teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications**.
- It **prohibits**
  - Physical punishment and mental harassment.
  - Screening procedures for admission of children.
  - Capitation fee.
  - Private tuition by teachers.
  - Running of schools without recognition.

- It focuses on making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of **child friendly and child centered learning**.

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## Semal Trees | Rajasthan | 15 May 2024

### Why in News?

**Semal trees** are **disappearing from south Rajasthan**, launching a cascade of adverse consequences for forests and people in the area.

### Key Points

- Large quantities of semal are cut in southern Rajasthan, in places like Bhil and Garasia, and sold in Udaipur.
- The cutting violates many laws, from the **Rajasthan Forest Act, 1953** to the [Forest \(Conservation\) Act 1980](#).
- Semal is an integral species that holds the forest ecosystem together. The rock bees nestle on its branches because the tree's spikes keep its predator, the sloth bears, away.
  - Members of tribal communities consume the tree's reddish root for food during the monsoons. Larvae of the moth ***Bucculatrix crateracma*** feed on its leaves.
  - The [golden-crowned sparrow](#) weaves the lining of its nests with white cotton from its seeds.
  - The **Dysdercus bugs**, the **Indian crested porcupine**, [Hanuman langurs](#), and some other species feast on the nectar in its flowers.
- The **Garasia tribe** in the area also believe they are descended from semal trees. The **Kathodi tribe** use its wood to craft musical instruments while those of the Bhil use it to make utensils.

### Semal trees





- Also known as the **silk cotton tree and Bombax Ceiba**, the Semal tree is a large, **fast-growing tree native to India**.
- It is known for its distinctive, spiky red flowers and its fluffy seed pods, which contain a cotton-like substance that was once used for stuffing pillows and mattresses.
- The tree is prized for its ornamental value and is often grown in parks and gardens.

## Indian Crested Porcupine



- **Scientific Name:** *Hystrix indica*
- **Geographical Range:** It is found throughout **southeast and central Asia** and in parts of the **Middle East**, including such countries as India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Israel, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.
- **Behaviour:**
  - Nocturnal creatures that spend around **7 hours foraging every night**.
  - Live in **natural caves or excavated burrows**.
  - Predators include **large cats, wolves, hyenas, and humans**.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Status:** Least Concern (LC)
  - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule IV