

A STUDY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Strong and sustained community participation in the management of schools can not only enhance transparency and accountability in the education system but also promote a sense of ownership and responsibility for positive change. School Management Committee (SMC) plays an important role in providing quality education. They also have their roles and functions defined by the section 21 of the Right to Education Act and when they work for the schools they definitely tackle challenges. The purpose of the present study was to explore their challenges and to provide solutions for the smooth functioning of SMCs? Only 15 SMC members were purposively selected as sample. Focus Group Discussion with SMC's was used as tool for collecting data. The data were qualitatively analyzed. Findings indicated the challenges in terms of SMC formation, No Regular meetings, Preparation of School Development Plan (SDP), Monitoring of Grants and Lack of cooperation from school administration and solutions in terms of election of SMC members through proper process as per Right to Education Act (RTE act) , orientation of School Management Committee members, a week ago intimation with agenda for the meetings, active participation of members through School Development Plan, transparencies in the fund flow mechanism and ensuring democratic decentralization in the educational management through SMCs strengthening for educational development at grass root level.

Keyword: School Management Committee, Right to Education Act, School Development Plan, Community Participation

1. INTRODUCTION

After independence, Article 45 under the Constitution stated that the state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for “free and compulsory education” for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Free and Compulsory Elementary Education was made a fundamental right under Article 21 through 86th Amendment. In translating this into action, The Right to Education (RTE) came into force in India with effect from 1 April 2010. The RTE Act includes the words free and compulsory. ‘Free education’ here denotes that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be legally responsible to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ shows an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age groups. Section 21 under RTE meant for School Management Committees (SMCs) states that parental involvement in children’s education is largely believed to lead to improved learning outcomes. Recognizing this, the Right to Education (RTE) Act mandated parental involvement in schools through School Management Committees. SMC comprises of mostly parents and are responsible for planning and managing the operations of government schools. SMCs are to enhance the accountability of government schools, members of SMCs are required to volunteer their time and effort. These committees are to plan and implement the School Development Plans. Parent involvement is an important aspect of education and without cooperation between the parent and the teacher the child cannot be sufficiently educated. The parent and the teacher each has a special and important role to play in the education of the child. Parent involvement is the active and supportive participation of parents as partner and allies of the teacher in the primary aspects of formal and informal education of their own child. So, a Management Committee is the group of people who are legally responsible for

the overall management and decision making in the group. The Management Committee are responsible for directing and monitoring activities and planning for the future in schools. All government and aided schools across the country should constitute a School Management Committee as per Section 21 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009 that would prepare and recommend School Development Plan and monitor the working of the school and also monitor the utilization of funds received.

An attempt has been made here to review some key studies that informed about the community involvement and challenges they faced. **Yousuf (1995)** in his study entitled “Role of Community Participation in Compulsory Primary Education in Bangladesh” found –School Management Committee (SMC) members were ignorant about their duties and responsibilities; Lack of democratic process in the formation of the committee; SMC and PTA were prevailing without any administrative power; Member Secretaries (Head Masters) did not take necessary steps for proper and regular meeting of the SMCs[8]. **Pailwar, Veena K. and Mahajan, Vandana (2005)** found the involvement of community in educational programs which further indicated that the active involvement of the community has facilitated in identifying community specific education issues and formulating effective strategies to address barriers by mobilizing resources within the community[4]. **Tyagi (1999)** revealed that a Village Education Committee comprising of citizens with experience, such as retired person and ex-servicemen were more effective. The community of one village was so motivated that they had arranged two teachers for their village-based government primary school[7]. **Singh (2001)** found that regular meeting of PTA and SMC strengthen the rapport between the school and the society and ensured better community participation[5]. **Zutshi Bhupender (2003)** showed that training to Village Education Committee had an impact on monitoring level specially monitoring enrolment and teaching and learning in school[9]. **Duggal (2005)** in her study entitled “A Study of the effectiveness of Bhagidari Yojana in Sarvodaya Schools of Delhi” evaluated the functioning of the Vidyalyaya Kalyan Samities (VKSs) found that it is a good scheme of community involvement in the management of secondary schools. The main thrust is to imbibe in the community a feeling of owing the school so that the school can become an integral part of the community. VKS help also in better coordination between different civic bodies. After the functioning of the VKSs, there has been noticeable improvement in the cleanliness in the school and its surroundings and development of infrastructure. Involvement of RWA members, retired government employees, senior citizens, NGOs, parents etc. brought expertise and transparency in the expenditure of funds[1]. **Kumar Manoj (2008-09)** in his study entitled “ a study of the effectiveness of School Management Committee (SMCs) in the management of secondary school of Bihar” revealed that earlier SMC’s were functioning like bodies constituted on the principal of modern management i.e. decentralized they recommended for opening new schools appointment to teachers and other essential work. Now they have become puppet in the hands of either political/ community involvement in education have positive impact on teaching learning process and functioning of school. But due to poor participant in Bihar, the schools lacks basic infrastructure band performs poorly in academic achievement. Ineffectiveness of SMCs in managing schools in Bihar is also responsible of failure of government school and mushrooming of private school, especially unrecognized[3]. **Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010)** found that addressing issues of educational exclusion is closely associated with an increase in awareness among local governing agencies about local educational problems and their effective participation in the day-to-day functioning of schools as well as the decision making processes[2]. **Centre for Education, Innovation and Action Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai (2019)** conducted a study on SMC of four states and found that SMCs across the states differed in terms of constitution, the process of formation and functioning depending on the rules and norms of the State as well as the existing social structure within and around the schools of the State. This resulted in inconsistencies in the experiences, skills, understanding and expertise required by SMC members across various schools through the four states[6].

2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The government has brought out guidelines containing procedure of constituting a SMC, its composition and functions. For smooth functioning of SMC there was need of exploration of challenges and suggest solutions. So the present study explored the challenges faced by the SMC members and following title was framed.

3. TITLE OF THE STUDY

A Study of School Management Committee: Challenges and Solutions

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were framed for the study.

- 4.1. To study the challenges faced by the SMC members to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.2. To suggest solutions for effective functioning of SMCs.

5. DELIMITATION

The study was delimited to the SMCs of South Delhi Municipal Corporation schools of district South West 'B' Delhi only.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Sample

There were 131 SMCs of South Delhi Municipal Corporation schools of district South West 'B' Delhi from this population of SMCs only one SMC member per school were purposively selected as sample. So, 15 SMC members were selected.

6.2 Tools and Techniques

Focus Group Discussion with SMC's was used for data collection. This tool was developed to get the in depth information from the members about the constraints and measure for an effective functioning of SMCs in the respective schools.

6.3 Collection of data

Data through focus group discussion were collected by the investigators along with the Cluster Resource Coordinators. All the selected members responded very well and gave their cooperation in the collection of data

7. RESULTS BASED ON FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION(FGD) CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Responses obtained through focus group discussion were collected, analyzed and synthesized. FGD was conducted to seek participant's reactions about the constraints and measures to make effective functioning of SMC in schools. Following responses were compiled, analyzed and summarized.

7.1. Challenges

• SMC formation

It was found that VKS/PTA were as such converted in to SMCs instead of following the procedure of elections as suggested in RTE act. More over discussion revealed that members were either picked or chosen by the principals.

• No Regular meetings

Responses from the members revealed that no regular meetings were organized i.e. bimonthly as per RTE act. Even some of them were informed on that day to go and attend the meetings without any agenda. While some of them who were aware that they are the members of SMC of the schools were never oriented about their roles and responsibilities.

• Preparation of SDP

It was found that majority of them were not even aware of what SDP is.

• Monitoring of Grants

Discussion further revealed that SMCs have no say in any financial matters but few of them reported that they were asked to sign the bills at times.

• Lack of cooperation from school administration

Majority of SMC members shared that their visit was not liked by the schools. But when they visited the schools they observed the cleanliness, sanitation and infrastructure like bulb and fans in the class rooms. Few members shared that they were liked by the principals and they were happy with their cooperation.

7.2. Solutions Suggested by SMC Members for its Effective Functioning

- SMCs should be elected through proper election process as per RTE act.
- Every SMC members should be oriented by the principals and other authorities.
- SMCs should be intimated a week ago with agenda for the bimonthly meetings.
- Ensure active participation of members through SDP.
- Ensure transparencies in the fund flow mechanism and its utilization with consent of members.
- True decentralization will be ensured when SMCs actively participate and monitor the functioning of schools.

8. CONCLUSION

One of the essential components of a good school is to have a functional School Management Committees . Present study explored challenges that SMCs were not formed as suggested in RTE act. Members were either picked or chosen by the principals. No regular meetings were organized and even some of the members attended the meetings without any agenda. While members of SMC were never oriented about their roles and responsibilities. Majority of the members were not even aware of SDP. In order to function smoothly SMCs should be elected through proper election process as per RTE act. Every SMC members should be oriented by the principals and other authorities. SMCs should be intimated a week ago with agenda for the bimonthly meetings. School should ensure active participation of members through SDP along with transparencies in the fund flow mechanism and its utilization. True decentralization will be ensured when SMCs actively participate and monitor the functioning of schools.

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