



**ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMCS)
OF GOVERNMENT MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT KULLU OF HIMACHAL
PRADESH: A CASE STUDY.**

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Abstract

The study is an attempt to understand the structure of the SMC, process of formation of the SMC, level of awareness and participation of the SMC members in school activities vis-à-vis the roles and functions envisaged in the RTE Act, 2009. The RTE Act, 2009 has come into force with effect from 1st April, 2010 in our country which is a landmark in the history of education. The said Act assigns immense importance to School Management Committees as a part of decentralized structure to ensure the effective and regular functioning of the schools and education center, and one in which the parents will have a preponderance. Essential provisions regarding constitution and functions of SMCs have been given in section 21 and 22 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. This paper mainly aims at looking into the roles and functions of the School Management Committees of government middle schools. In this paper author studied the awareness level of Heads of elementary school, Chairman of SMC and SMC members, parents and teachers about their role & function in the school education as per RTE-2009 provisions in district Kullu in Himachal Pradesh. Local bodies and SMC have been given higher responsibilities and functions as cent per cent enrolment, enrolment of out of school children, retention till completion of elementary education, monitoring of school activities and preparation of school development plan. The study focuses on the functioning of SMCs constituted under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and an effort for understanding and documenting the roles and functions of the SMCs of government managed upper primary schools in Himachal Pradesh.

Key words: *Community Participation, RTE, Elementary Education, SMC, SDP*



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Introduction

Education without the active participation of the community is considered a one-sided activity. It becomes an activity of supply model not that of the demand model. Education, through a social activity, has significant economic implications. Therefore, the economic growth of a country, to a large extent, depends on the growth of its educational system, which

in turn depends on the degree of participation of the community. Community participation thus assumes critical importance in delivering relevant education. Management of education implies the management of educational goals, programmes and projects. The most significant component of management is the pillar paradigm of educational governance. Managing education includes managing work, motivation and commitment, creativity and innovativeness, competence and confidence. These four components form the major pillars of good personnel management. Community participation in educational management no doubt leads to stakeholders' participation in decision-making and management of schooling activities at the school level. It makes educational management much more democratic and contextual, besides tapping local knowledge and resources for good governance. Towards improving community participation in educational management, the efforts made by governments and voluntary agencies have been quite remarkable in India. Without community involvement it would be difficult to improve equity, equality and quality of education.

Constitution of School Management Committees in Himachal Pradesh

Under Section 21 of "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009" (35/2009), the Government of Himachal Pradesh vide its notification No. EDN-C-F (10)-7/2010 dated 6th March, 2010 has issued orders regarding composition and functions of School Management Committees in all Government Primary and Middle schools and Government aided & unaided schools affiliated to Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education Dharmshala (HPBOSE).

Roles and Functions of the SMC as envisaged under the RTE Act, 2009

The RTE Act, 2009 has come into force with effect from 1st April, 2010 in our country which is a landmark in the history of education. The said Act assigns immense importance to School Management Committees as a part of decentralized structure to ensure the effective and regular functioning of the schools and education center, and one in which the parents will have a preponderance. Essential provisions regarding constitution and functions of SMCs have been given in section 21 and 22 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

Section 21

1. A school, other than a school specified in sub-clause (IV) of clause (n) of section 2, shall constitute a School Management Committee consisting of the elected representatives of local authority, parents or guardians of children admitted in such school and teachers:

Provided that at least three-fourth of members of such committee shall be parents or guardians:

Provided further that proportionate representation shall be given to parents or guardians of children belonging to disadvantaged group and weaker section;

Provided that fifty percent of members of such committee shall be women.

2. The School Management Committee shall perform the following functions, namely:-
 - a) Monitoring the working of the school;
 - b) Preparing and recommend school development plan;
 - c) Monitoring the utilization of the grants received from the appropriate Government or local authority or any source; and
 - d) Performing such other functions as may be prescribed.

Section 22

1. Every School Management Committee constituted under sub-section (1) of section 21 shall prepare a School Development Plan in such a manner as may be prescribed.
2. The School Development Plan so prepared under sub-section (1) shall be the basis for the plans and grants to be made by the appropriate Government or local authority as the case may be.

It is obvious that majority of SMC members are the parents/guardians of those children who are studying in the school. Chairperson of the SMC shall also be a parent /guardian. Bank account of SMC is maintained by joint signature of chairperson and member secretary (Headmaster). Representation of the socially backward parents and elected representatives of *Gram Panchayat* in SMC shall play important role for effective development of a school. SMC has many functions as enrolment, retention, completion of elementary education with quality for all children residing in catchment area of school and preparation of school development plan. As per responsibility given in The RTE Act it is mandatory and important to aware SMC members regarding the roles and functions through orientations/trainings. Unless the members of the SMC (Chairperson, member secretary, local representative and other members) are aware of the main provisions of RTE, objectives, composition and their role and functions, they cannot contribute for effective development of a school and to achieve objectives of RTE provisions regarding SMC.

When community and local bodies are empowered to function for the development of Elementary Education, much improvement could be seen in academic and non- academic areas. They are the ones who can assist the problems faced by schools. So, several studies have been conducted on community involvement in the management of elementary schools.

An attempt has been made here to review some such key studies that inform about the nature and extent of community involvement in the management of elementary education. **Anton (2005)** in his study “Improving the quality of education through School-Based Management: Learning from International Experiences” found that School-Based Management is being increasingly advocated as shortcut to more efficient management and quality improvement in education. **Mehralizadeh Y, Sepace H & Atashfeshan F. Betageri (2003)** in his study of “Role and functioning of VEC and SDMC in Karnataka with special reference of Dharwad District” observed that there is a wide gap between the role performed by the School Betterment Committee (SBC) and Village Education Committee (VEC) members. Role and functions were not known to all the members. However he concluded that there is gestation period of few years, a phase of trial and error experimentation process for the SDMC to gain roots. **Patil (2004)** in his Doctoral Research entitled “Role of Gram Shikshan Samiti (GSS) in Universalization of Primary Education” found that the GSS members participated in enrolment scheme; GSS members promoted education by checking attendance registers of centers after every three months, GSS members also faced some difficulties while conducting the survey; in convincing illiterate persons or due to non-availability of parents. However he has concluded that GSS understands its role in bringing about universalization of Primary Education, but still far very few GSS had actually performed quality work. **Bazik (2005)** in his research entitled “Role and functioning of School Committees in Improving Elementary Education-A study of Mayurbhanj District in Orissa” has observed that school committees work more effectively in areas where PRIs were more active. **Yirang (2007)** In his study entitled “Impact of SSA on community participation in school management at primary level in the District of lower Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh” observed that contribution of the community is not up to the mark as perceived in the mission of SSA; the basic foundation for the achievement of SSA is community participation but the necessary initial step for creation of community awareness of SSA was not followed at right time. **Kernel Teron (2012)** in his study “To study the functioning of SMCs in Golaghat District of Assam” found that SMCs were formed as per guidelines, regular meetings were conducted, training was imparted to SMC members regarding their roles and functions and SMCs are serious about their meetings. Thus the present study was selected to know the status of the awareness level of the SMCs about their roles and functions and also to fill the gaps in the available researches on community participation in elementary education

Statement of the Problem:

The study is stated as “Roles and Functions of School Management Committees (SMCs) of Government Middle Schools in District Kullu of Himachal Pradesh: A Case Study.”

Objectives of the Study

- (i) To study the structure and process of the formation of School Management Committees in Government Middle Schools of Kullu district.
- (ii) To study the roles and functions of the SMC in the school management and improvement.
- (iii) To study the level of awareness among SMC members regarding their roles and functions in managing elementary schools.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The present study is confined only to the roles and functions of School Management Committees constituted vide section 21 of RTE Act, 2009 in Government Middle (upper-primary) schools of District Kullu of Himachal Pradesh. The roles and functioning of primary schools, high schools, senior secondary schools and all private schools in the Kullu district has been kept outside the purview of the present study. Due to time constraint and lack of accessibility to the far flung areas, the study was confined to Heads, Teachers, Chairpersons and SMC members of 10 selected Government middle schools from two educational blocks of District Kullu of Himachal Pradesh.

Methodology

Descriptive survey method of research has been used in the present study. Random sampling technique was used to select two educational blocks out of six educational blocks in district Kullu. In these two blocks there are 83 government middle schools out of which only 10 schools are selected randomly for the present study. Keeping in view the nature of the study two types of tools were prepared by the investigator for data collection:

- 1) Interview schedule for the chairperson of SMC.
- 2) Questionnaires for the headmaster/teachers of the school and members of the SMC and parents.

After finalization of research tools and selection of sample the investigators personally visited these schools for data collection. Detailed field notes have been taken and critical events have been recorded. The primary data have been collected through field visits. The investigator has verified the records available in the schools such as SMC meeting registers, cash books and other records. Data pertaining to the roles and functions of SMC members was collected from head of the school, Chairman of SMC, members of SMCs and

teachers of selected schools. The collected information was subjected to the necessary computation. The information collected through various tools was tabulated item wise and was analysed in terms of frequencies and percentages

Findings, Conclusions and Suggestions

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of analysis and interpretation of data:

Strengths

- In the process of formation of SMCs the female representation is according to the norms of the RTE Act, 2009.
- Most of the elected SMC members are energetic and young.
- Participation of categories like schedule casts, schedule tribes and other backward classes is of satisfactory level and in accordance with the guidelines of the RTE Act, 2009.
- Majority of SMC members are educated.
- The process of formation of SMCs is completely as per norms of the RTE Act, 2009 in all schools and is democratic in nature. The process is completed well in time i.e. in the month of April in every school
- Majority of SMC members are well aware of the post and position held by them in the SMC.
- 40% of the SMC chairpersons are women which show that women are also leading the SMCs and are not lagging in this context.
- Most of the SMC members are rendering their services in managing the elementary schools in the district for quite a long time i.e. since the implementation of the RTE Act, 2009.
- Most of the SMCs members are having small families which give positive reflection in the society.
- Participation level of SMCs in co-curricular activities is very high. SMCs fully support the schools in r/o sports and cultural activities and providing help to any extent in school activities.
- Due to SMCs' support in sports and cultural activities students from some schools have participated in the National games in the year 2013.
- Most of the schools are well equipped with the facilities like toilets, electricity, drinking water, and TLM and sports equipment.
- Drop out of the students in elementary schools of district kullu is nil i.e. retention is hundred percent. This fact shows that SMCs are playing their role effectively in this direction.

Constraints/ Weaknesses

- Most of the SMC members are not aware about the procedure adopted during the elections for SMCs
- SMC members are not aware about the purpose behind the formation of School Management committees.
- Some of the SMC members are not even aware that they are the members of the executive committee i.e. they don't know the difference between SMC members and the executive committee members.
- School Management Committees are not aware of accountability of executive committee.
- One of the major constraint or weakness of SMC is that its role in the preparation of School Development Plan (SDP) is negligible. Very few SMC members know about their active involvement in the making of such plan.
- Paucity of funds with the SMCs further adds to the inactive role of SMCs in the school development.
- Lack of support from the administrative authorities frustrates the committee members.
- Non-availability of teachers in some schools is a matter of grave concern since it is adversely affecting the study of the students.
- Non-availability of the playgrounds in most of the schools is also a matter of concern so far as sports facilities are concerned.
- SMC members from agrarian class find it difficult to spare time for SMC meetings and for other activities of SMC in other related activities.
- Although there is appropriate representation for the women but their role is just attending the SMC meetings and they are not actively participating in the discussion of agendas or other activities.
- Since SMC members have no academic expertise hence they cannot help the teachers in improving teaching learning processes in the schools.
- One of the major weaknesses is that the participation of PRI/ local bodies in the development and improvement of school is not as per the guidelines of the RTE Act, 2009.
- Also the one year duration of SMC in the schools of Himachal Pradesh is one of the major weaknesses.
- There is lack of management skills in SMC members or lack of planning tools to help the school development planning better.

Challenges

- Quality of education and overall development of schools is one of the main challenges before the School Management committees.
- Capacity building of the SMC members is also one of the main challenges.
- Non-participation of SMC members in making School development plan and execution thereof is not as expected in the RTE Act, 2009.
- Functional linkages of committees with PRIs/ Local bodies are very weak.
- Improvement of teaching learning processes in the schools on the part of the SMCs is also weak.
- Legal provisioning for community participation is weak.
- Enrolment trend in Government upper primary schools shows continuous drop which is one of the major challenge before the SMCs.
- Himachal Pradesh being the hilly state, therefore non-availability of the proper land for construction of school buildings/playgrounds etc. is also one of the major challenges before the schools in particular and SMCs in general.

Suggestion for further improvement/strengthening of SMCs

The findings of the present study reflects various types of results which enable the school system to encourage the participation level of SMC members in their functioning and also strengthening the participation of community members in the smooth functioning of the schools of Himachal Pradesh. Some more suggestions for further studies are as under.

- The duration of the SMC in the state of Himachal Pradesh is one year and in this short duration of time, no system can aware any SMC member completely aware about their roles and responsibilities as an effective executive member of the school management committee.
- Although there is a process of election for framing or constituting the SMCs but in some schools this process does not happen in case of members for the executive committee. Here the election is only held for the office of president only. So election process should be adopted for electing every member.
- Roles and responsibilities should be made clear to all the SMC members.
- Some incentives should be given to the committee members for encouraging their effective participation, first in the trainings of SMC and then in the management of elementary education.
- There should be effective convergence and collaboration with other SMCs at block and district level.

- There should be visits for the SMCs to other schools where the SMCs are doing exceptionally good so that they can learn from their experiences.
- Management of the Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme should be given completely to the school management committees so that this scheme may be effectively implemented by reducing the burden of the teachers.
- The construction work of school buildings, toilets, boundary walls and playgrounds etc. should also be given the SMCs in order to spare the teachers completely for the teaching and learning activities.
- More grants and funds should be sanctioned as there are various activities at the school level.
- For more involvement of the community in general and School Management Committee in particular frequent supervision and inspection of schools should be done.
- Teachers should be given training in order to encourage the community participation in the school affairs.
- More people should be involved in proper functioning of the school through media campaigns, poster campaigns and discussions through electronic and print media.
- School management committees should focus on tracking every child's progress and continuously monitor the school development.
- SMC members should drive a wedge between attending meetings and the quality of outcomes in the school.
- The study underlines the urgency to further improve the school infrastructure. Attention should be given to both infrastructural facilities as well as towards the staff availability.
- The SMC members should be provided some financial incentives or rewards. These rewards and incentives can be helpful in providing positive motivation to SMC members and can boost the morale of these members and develop a feeling of belongingness among them.
- The headmaster of the school who is also member secretary of the SMC is already overburdened with the curricular and co-curricular activities of the school. The present study recommends that as the burden on the headmaster is too much there is a dire need to make him less burdened by providing him helping hand.
- Since as per guidelines periodic trainings are an important component of capacity building of SMC members hence such trainings are very important for increasing the awareness of the members on procedures followed for formations, nominations and functions of SMCs

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