

Awareness Level of School Management Development Committee Members regarding their Roles and Responsibilities

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Abstract

The paper examines the effectiveness of School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) by focusing on assessing the awareness level of SMDC members regarding their roles and responsibilities. By employing a descriptive survey method through a questionnaire, information was gathered from secondary schools which were purposively chosen. An interview was also conducted with the chairpersons of SMDCs, who is the head of the school. The study revealed that most of the members of SMDC are not aware about their role for the development of secondary education as prescribed by Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). Some members are also not aware about its meetings and most members are not oriented about their roles and responsibilities. Research also revealed that the awareness level of chairpersons of SMDCs is more than that of the other members. Orientation and capacity building programmes of all the members of SMDC by the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) authority, is seen as an essential requirement in addition to prescribing a minimum educational standard for the members.

INTRODUCTION

Education can play a vital role in improving the socio-economic

conditions of any nation. It empowers citizens with analytic abilities, that lead to better confidence, and fortifies

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one with a power, springing out of one's competencies. Education not only improves textbook learning, but also aids the growth of knowledge, values, skills and basic capacities to prepare an individual for lifelong learning. The National Knowledge Commission Report (2009) has rightly mentioned, 'Decentralization of the management of schools, is the most effective instrument for ensuring accountability, improving the day to day functioning of the school and allowing for flexible responses to local requirements'. Since the Independence of our country, the Government of India has been striving hard to involve the community more and more in the system of administration and the process of development. The establishment of Community Development Blocks in the First Five Year Plan, and the creation of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRI) at *Gram Panchayat*, Block and District levels were the initial attempts to ensure community involvement, especially in development and administration. The government enacted the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 to confer constitutional status to the *Panchayati Raj* institution and thereby made it mandatory to involve communities in the process of development and administration.

Community participation is a process of activities comprising people's involvement in decision making and contribution to the development effort, sharing equitably

the benefits therefrom. The goal of community participation in education is to universalize education and its access, getting all children enrolled and making the system retain all students, and to improve the quality of education. Community participation increases the mobilization of financial, human and material resources to make the educational system efficient and to adapt education to the needs, problems, aspirations and interests of all sections of population, especially the weaker section.

Community mobilisation and close involvement of community members in the implementation of secondary education is extremely critical, as it fosters the 'bottom-up approach' not only in effective planning and implementation of interventions in the schools but also in effective monitoring, evaluation and ownership of the government programmes by the community. Active participation of the community also ensures transparency, accountability and helps in leveraging the cumulative knowledge of the community for better functioning of schools. Field level researches by Ed.CIL (2002), Babulal (2012), Okendu (2012), Nzoka and Orodho (2014), Rout (2014) have shown that school functioning has improved significantly in places where communities have been involved actively.

In line with the above, the integrated programme of the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA) assigns special

importance to decentralised planning and implementation with active involvement of community members, teachers, parents, local bodies including *Panchayati Raj* Institutions, municipal bodies, and other stakeholders in the management of secondary education through the establishment of multi-member School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs). The RMSA framework provides that every secondary school will constitute an SMDC at the school level. SMDCs are made to take necessary steps for the overall growth and development of the school, leading to conducive educational environment for academic excellence.

In the pre colonial period, the facilities for mass education were available in madrasa, tols and *pathshalas* which were maintained locally by landlords and parents. With the onset of the colonial rule during the regime of Lord Rippon (1882), the local self-government was born and local bodies were developed as an instrument of political and popular education. The Hunter Commission Report (1882) states that, 'planning, management, maintenance, administration of primary schools should rest in local self bodies'. The Royal Decentralization Commission (1909) also emphasises the need to increase the power of local bodies in education.

In the post Independence period, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)—the highest policy

making body, set up a committee under the chairmanship of B.G. Kher on the relationship between the state government and local administration on primary education (1951).

The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report (1957) recommended the establishment of an interconnected three-tier organisational structure of democratic decentralization in education at the village, block and district level. Balwant Rai Mehta was also of the opinion that the *Panchayat Samitis* at the block level should have the responsibility of maintaining primary school. The Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) also suggested two ways for inducing peoples' participation in local decision making of education. These are: (i) administrative decentralization, and (ii) bringing it under the control of the local bodies for effective implementation of developmental programmes. The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) reviewed the report of National Policy on Education (1986) and emphasised the decentralization of educational management at all levels. The Programme of Action, 1992 (PoA) stressed on social mobilization to universalize literacy and basic education. For ensuring quality education, it also stressed on the establishment of the Village Education Committee (VEC) and empowerment of the grassroots implementing agencies. In 1993, the special committee of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) formulated a framework for the decentralization

of educational management under the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRI) framework and took the process of decentralization from the district to the block and village level. The National Policy on Education (NPE 1986, 1992) and the constitutional revival of the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments) created a context for reforming the school system by empowering the community to locally generate and implement institutional practices to support the school. The NPE (1986)

and PoA (1992) recommended not only promoting the participation of the community in primary education but also a movement towards empowering the local community to take major management decisions in this regard. Various educational programmes in India implemented community participation in education like the *Shiksha Karmi* Project (SKP)¹, *Lok Jumbish*², *Janshala*³, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)⁴ and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA)⁵.

According to Ed.CIL (2002), Babulal (2012), Okendu (2012), Nzoka

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- 1 SKP—The *Shiksha Karmi* Project is being implemented in Rajasthan since 1987 with assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socio-economically backward villages in Rajasthan with primary attention being given to girls. It also promotes community involvement in primary education and was to appoint a local teacher known as shiksha karmi who could reach every child of locality.
 - 2 *Lok Jumbish*—It means 'Peoples' Movement for Education', which was initiated in Rajasthan in 1992 with assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). It aimed at providing access to primary education to all children upto 14 years of age, pursuing the goal of equity in education by enrolling and retaining all the children in the school. Gender equity and empowerment of women were the main goals of this project. The Village Education Committee, Core Teams and Women's Group were actively involved in this project.
 - 3 *Janshala*—This programme was a joint venture of the Government of India and five United Nations agencies that is UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and ILO (International Labour Organization) to provide support to make primary education accessible and effective to all categories of primary school age children. Community participation in school management and development was one of the major strategies adopted under this programme, especially to ensure universalisation of primary education. The programme covered Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
 - 4 DPEP—The centrally-sponsored scheme of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in 1994 as a major initiative to revitalise the primary education system. The DPEP adopts a holistic approach to universalise access, retention and improve learning achievement and to reduce disparities among social groups. It emphasises on decentralised management, community mobilisation and district specific planning.
 - 5 SSA—The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* is an Indian government programme aimed at the universalisation of elementary education 'in a time bound manner', as mandated by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India, and aims to provide free and compulsory education to children between the ages of 6–14 by 2010. One of the distinct features of the SSA is the effective involvement of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Village Education Committees (VECs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), MTAs and community members in education.

and Orodho (2014), Rout (2014), the School Management Committees help in improving retention and achievement level of all children, in effective management of schools, to achieve universal enrolment and upliftment of the standard of secondary level. According to Pandey (2008) and Vasanta (2009), teachers, including the chairperson of SMDC are more aware about their duties and responsibilities than parents and other members of SMDC, and in rural areas, the awareness level of the SMDC members is very low than in the urban areas. According to Yousuf (1995) and Parajuli (2007), the School Management Committee (SMC)⁶ members were ignorant about their duties and responsibilities; the member secretaries also did not take steps for organising SMDC Meetings. Karia (2009), Nyandro, Mapfamo and Makoni (2013) observed that due to lack of course on management and orientation among the SMDC members, they were not aware about the management of funds, preparation of budget, decision making and raising funds. From the above review, it is found that the SMDC is less aware about its role as prescribed by the *RMSA*. The Government of Karnataka in 2004 found that literacy does not affect the effectiveness of the school management committee. A study by Nzoka and Orodho (2014)

found that the students' academic performance was not realised due to the lack of managerial skills in the school managers—the reason being an absence of training.

In the present study, an attempt is made to investigate the awareness of the members of the SMDC about their roles in the school management system at the secondary level as laid by the *RMSA*. The ten schools for the study are drawn from the district of Cuttack from Odisha through purposive sampling. By employing a survey method, data was collected through questionnaire and interview schedule developed for the purpose. The tools are validated through expert opinion and pilot technique. The tools are individually administered on the participants to collect data.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The vision of secondary education is to make quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group 14 to 18 years. Community mobilization and close involvement of its members to provide secondary education is extremely critical as it fosters the 'bottom-up approach' not only in effective planning and implementation of intervention in the schools but also in effective monitoring, evaluation and ownership

⁶ SMC—As per Sections 21(1) and 21(2) of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, all government and government-aided schools shall constitute a School Management Committee (SMC) of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents and guardians of children admitted in such schools, and teachers at the elementary level.

of the government programme by the community. Though there have been major recommendations made by the government and also by different agencies to bring qualitative improvement in the school education through certain mechanisms, school education presents a gloomy picture in Odisha. In most of the cases, it is observed that schools lack even the basic infrastructure. This has led to many questions, as to whether there is lack of political will in bringing about quality education in the schools or if the SMDCs have failed to play their role. Since SMDCs have the role of liaison among the school systems, community and district level education bodies, it is important to study whether the members are aware about their role and responsibilities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To analyse the awareness of the members of the SMDC about their roles and responsibilities in the school management system at the secondary level as laid by the *RMSA*

RESEARCH QUESTION

Are the members of SMDC aware of their roles and responsibilities as laid down in the guidelines of the *RMSA*?

METHOD

The present study made use of the descriptive survey method. The survey method was used for studying the awareness level of the School Management and Development Committee in the management of secondary schools.

Population

For the present study, the population consists of all the members of the school management and development committees of government and aided secondary schools of Badamba block of Odisha. In Badamba, there are 30 secondary schools and in each school there is an SMDC.

Sample

Ten school management and development committees working in ten different secondary schools were purposively selected as the sample for the study and 60 participants were consulted to gather information. Among them, there are ten school heads, twenty teachers, and thirty members from the community.

Tools

The present study used four tools for the purpose of collection of data.

- Questionnaire for School Management and Development Committee members—that is, teachers and parents/community members
- Questionnaire for the chairpersons of SMDC
- Interview schedule for chairpersons
- School information schedule

All the tools were prepared keeping in mind the objectives in consultation with the experts. The draft tools thus developed were sent to four experts for content validation. After receiving suggestions from the experts, the final tools were prepared.

Ambiguous items were deleted, the sentences were made simple, and the language was tuned to convey the meaning very clearly.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

Permission from the concerned authority was taken by briefing them on the purpose of the study. The tools were administered individually by visiting all the sample schools. Prior appointment was obtained from the members in order to collect information in a controlled condition.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For assessing the awareness level of the different stakeholders, the study covered several components. An analysis of the awareness levels of the chairpersons, teachers and community members of the SMDC regarding their role as identified through the questionnaire is given below.

Table 1 shows the awareness level of the chairpersons of SMDCs about their role and responsibilities as per *RMSA*. From the table, it

is understood that the maximum number of chairpersons are aware about their roles and responsibilities but there is a need to work towards bringing awareness among all the chairpersons in all the areas.

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of teacher members’ awareness about SMDC and their various roles as per *RMSA*. This table shows that 30 per cent teachers do not know about their role in SMDC.

Table 3 shows that about 93.33 per cent of parents/community members do not record the proceedings and discussions of the SMDC meeting. Maximum members do not list out the needs, do not participate in meetings, or check teachers’ attendance. They donot take part in budget preparation or monitor indiscipline among learners, etc. The overall response on the awareness level of parents/community members about their roles and responsibilities is very low.

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with chairpersons, teachers and parent/community members to gather

Table 1
Awareness Level of Chairpersons regarding their Role in SMDC

S.No.	Area of Awareness	Total Members			
		Aware		Not Aware	
		Number	%	Number	%
1.	Guidelines of the RMSA	6	60	4	40
2.	Enrolment of the weaker section	7	70	3	30
3.	School development plan	10	100	0	0
4.	Prescribed duty	8	80	2	20

Table 2
Awareness Level of Teachers regarding their Role in SMDC

S.No.	Area of Awareness	Total Members			
		Aware		Not Aware	
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Guidelines of RMSA	14	70	6	30
2.	Preparation of minutes	14	70	6	30
3.	Preparation of agenda	14	70	6	30
4.	Implementation of CCE	14	70	6	30
5.	Maintenance of cumulative record	14	70	6	30
6.	Addressing disable children	14	70	6	30

Table 3
Awareness Level of Parents/Community Members regarding their Role in SMDC

Area of Awareness	Total Members			
	Aware		Not Aware	
	Yes	%	No	%
Idea about SMDC	17	56.67	13	43.33
Guidelines of RMSA	17	56.67	13	43.33
Participation in SMDC meeting	16	53.33	14	46.66
SMDC training	10	33.33	20	66.66
Record the proceedings and discussion	02	06.66	28	93.33
List out the needs of school	04	13.33	26	86.66
Enquired and reported on educational deficiencies	09	30	21	70
Observation of teachers' absenteeism	04	13.33	26	86.66
Put point in SMDC meeting	12	40	18	60
Preparation and recommendation of annual budget	09	30	21	70

Observation of indiscipline among students	10	33.33	20	66.66
Bothering about regular opening of school	15	50	15	50

further details regarding their level of awareness about their roles and responsibilities as members of SMDC.

Table 4 reveals that all the members are notified about the SMDC meetings, either through a written note, or telephonically. No prior information on the agenda to be discussed will be informed to the members in the notice.

Table 5 presents the responses of the awareness of the teacher members as given by them. No member is

contributing in budget planning, discussing about attendance, discipline, community mobilisation to overcome barriers in children belonging to the SC, ST, OBC, educationally backward minorities, children with disabilities, to check the law and order situation in and around the school premises, health condition and immunisation of students, equity aspects, etc. This shows that in the real sense, maximum teachers are not aware about their role as an SMDC member.

Table 4

Awareness of Head Teachers about the Organisation of SMDC Meeting

S.No.	Description of Item	Responses
1.	Procedures followed to conduct meeting and to communicate members about meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice about the date, time and venue of SMDC meeting made and sent to SMDC members by peon or students before meeting. • Telephoning the SMDC members about the date, time and venue of meeting

Table 5

Awareness about the Role of Teachers in SMDC

S.No.	Description of Item	Responses
1.	Cooperation with SMDC for their effective functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attend the meetings • Suggest for school development • Cooperate with chairperson of SMDC • Create community awareness • Take part in yearly planning • Convey all the problems related to school • Organise different events of school

To check the awareness level of parents/community members, the investigator ask several open ended questions, and records their responses which are given below.

effective orientation to the SMDC members are not up to the mark. According to the District *RMSA*, in the year 2011, the government provided *RMSA* training to

Table 6
Awareness of Role of Parent/Community Member as SMDC Member

S.No.	Description of Item	Responses
1.	Knowledge and understanding about the role and function of SMDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate in school work • Budget preparation • Different event organisation • Distribution of cycle and uniform • Attend meetings

This table reveals that maximum members are not aware about their actual role as to monitoring the academic and non academic affairs, to check the regularity of teachers and students, do the maintenance and repair work, keep the environment clean, infrastructural development, etc. They only involve themselves in few tasks related to the school, and do not take part in the all round development of the school.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discussion on the Awareness of SMDC Members about their Roles in the School Management System at the Secondary Level

- The study found that the efforts of the state government to provide

secondary school SMDCs for the first time after the formation of SMDCs. No further training was provided. Now in 2016, only 138 standalone secondary schools (VIII–X) shall be provided SMDC training in Odisha, of which in Badamba block, only 5 schools are there in the list according to the *Odisha Madhyamika Shiksha Mission* (O MSM)⁷. No concrete and innovative measures were initiated by the state to build the capacity of all the members and frequently regarding their roles, functioning and powers. Many a times, the training programme at Panchayat or at BRC is more of a symbolic ritual, not the training *per se*. Hardly, one or two

7 O MSM—(Reference No-1503/O MSM(RMSA)/16,Dt-28/07/16) The *Odisha Madhyamik Shiksha Mission* is the nodal agency under the umbrella of the School & Mass Education Department, Govt. of Odisha, registered under the Society Act on 16.02.2010 for the successful implementation of the centrally sponsored scheme [*Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA), Girls Hostel, ICT at School, IEDSS, Vocational Education] and the Model School Scheme throughout the State.

members, usually the president, vice-president and the member secretary are involved in such a training process.

- Most of the schools do not conduct the general meeting to select the members for SMDC. It defeats the sole purpose of the RMSA, as meetings are major events of the SMDC to plan and monitor the activities of the school. A similar finding is recorded by Yousuf (1995) where he observed that the SMC members were ignorant about their duties and responsibilities. The member secretaries did not take necessary steps for proper and regular meeting.
- As maximum members of the SMDC have not gone through training, they are not aware about their role and responsibilities in school management. The members blindly follow others and perform their role. This in fact defeats the ideology based on which RMSA has been formed, which envisages that members take decision on their own for the welfare of their school. Similar findings are recorded by Kaaria (2009) and Nyandro, Mapfamo and Makoni (2013) where they observed due to lack of management course and orientation among the SMDC members about their roles and responsibilities, they were not aware about the management of funds, preparation of budget, decision making and raising funds.
- Only date, time and venue of meeting is informed to SMDC members by the chairperson. No agenda of discussion is provided prior to the meeting, because of which the members are not showing any interest to attend the meeting. Some members come for name sake not preparing the issues which have to be discussed in the meeting. Due to which during the time of discussion SMDC is not able to understand the matter and also not able to solve the problem. Sometimes meeting notice is sent by students to respective parents. They sometimes do not inform their parents about the meeting. It is also found that the chairpersons are not aware of conducting meetings properly, and they do not know how to communicate to the members about the meeting. Most of the times, maximum members were absent during the meetings.
- In most of the SMDCs, the awareness level of the chairperson is more than the other members. Due to proper orientation about the roles and responsibilities, the chairperson is aware of his roles and responsibilities. Similar findings are recorded by Vasanta (2009) and Pandey (2008), where they observed that teachers including headmasters are more aware about the duties and responsibilities than parents, and parent members are the least informed and least participative.

In rural areas, the awareness level of the SMDC members is very low. It may be due to lack of basic literacy. In the rural schools, the members are found to be avoiding meetings because their daily wage is getting affected. But in some semi urban schools, the awareness level of the SMDC members is found to be better.

- The study found that many a times, the training programmes are confined to informing the participants about their responsibilities but no information is given about their powers, functions and effective leadership at the school level. The training is neither needed nor useful to improve the day to day functions of the SMDCs. It is more ritualistic and top-down in approach. The study also found that since the parent members are unaware of their powers, many a times the head teacher or the assistant teachers dictate the terms for SMDCs.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the data presented and interpreted in this study, very poor image of the SMDC emerges. But the reality of the functioning of the SMDCs is harsher than the one presented in the study. On the basis of the experiences gained during the data collection and analysis, it is found that the effectiveness of the SMDC is not felt mainly due to the lack of awareness of members

about their role as prescribed by RMSA. The effective functioning of the SMDCs can play a major role in the school improvement programme and Universalisation of Secondary Education. Capability building aspects of such persons (SMDC members/principals/stakeholders) need more attention. The failure of the SMDCs are a sign of the lack of such capability among the persons who have been assigned the task of making the SMDCs successful. The findings of the present study would guide in bringing some changes in the organisation, administration and management of education with the following recommendations, as listed below.

- Training may be provided periodically to the SMDCs to be aware of their role and responsibilities.
- There should be a basic criteria with reference to the level of education, activeness, interest and involvement in the school matter to select each member.
- The involvement of the Non Governmental Organisations in the process of orienting the SMDC members is crucial to make this huge task more achievable and workable.
- The state should come out with a plan to empower all the SMDC members, both elected as well as the members of parents' council, on empowering them about their roles, powers and responsibilities as per the model by-laws.

- Apart from orientations through the top-down mode, from the state to the panchayat level, innovative mediums like street plays, drama, short films, folk media, etc., should be used to enhance awareness.
- It is necessary to orient all Chester Resource Persons (CRPs), Block Resource Persons (BRPs), Block Resource Coordinators (BRCs) and Block Education Officers (BEOs) about the mode by-laws in order to make them aware about the roles, responsibilities and functions of SMDCs and thereby respecting the very philosophy of the decentralised administration
- There is a need to shift from one time training regime to one that is need based, continuous and built into the system.
- Organising awareness classes and continuing literacy sessions for parents at the respective school level since a majority of parents of the children studying in government schools today are either semi-literate or illiterate.

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