



A study of role of SMC as mentioned in Right to Education Act, 2009 among Municipal Corporation Primary Schools of Delhi.

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Abstract

The present article is an attempt to study the role of SMC members in the implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009. The study is descriptive survey. The data was collected from SMC members of Municipal Corporation Schools of Delhi. A questionnaire comprising of closed ended and open ended questions was prepared for studying the role of SMC members in the implementation of RTE Act. The data collected was systematically tabulated and was analysed qualitatively. The findings of the study show that the provision of SMC is not functional in the investigated schools. There is lack of awareness among teachers, parents and SMC members regarding functioning of SMC.

Indian Education system has seen changes in recent times. From perceiving education from the eyes of policy makers, administrators to including the community by way of decentralised decision making which will help in achieving the educational goals. Similar views are reflected in the Right to Education Act of 2009, and the Act has ensured a wider role of community participation in school management. The role of community in education system is immensely valuable. It can lead to greater advantages, in terms of improved school functioning, decrease in dropout rates, and a positive attitude of parents towards the school. Therefore, the community participation can contribute in strengthening the education system on the whole. In actual sense, to achieve the goals of education, the power of the community should be amassed in the right direction and the provision of Right to Education Act, should be made a people's movement.

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, makes education a fundamental right of every child. RTE Act, 2009 is the first Central legislation on school education which is applicable all over India (except Jammu and Kashmir). It is a 'historic' legislation of our country. Before this amendment, free and compulsory education was included in Article 45 of the list of 'Directive principles of the State

Policy’ in the Constitution of India, which states that “*The State shall endeavor to provide, within the period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education of all the children until they complete the age of fourteen years.*”

The enforcement of Article 21-A and the RTE Act represented a momentous step forward in our country’s struggle for universalising elementary education. The Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2009 provides a justiciable legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Community plays an important role in education system.

The Right to Education Act provides various opportunities to community members for participation. School Management Committee (SMC) is a form of community interaction and involvement in school functioning. The idea behind the formulation of SMC is to involve communities to take an active role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of developmental programmes for the school. It creates a feeling of ownership among the primary stake holders (parents) and helps in building the partnership and networking between the school and community.

SMC plays an important role in accomplishing the goals of RTE Act. It helps in mobilising public awareness as well as building a strong sense of ownership of government policies and programmes. The basic idea behind the SMC is to increase the say of community stakeholders in the functioning of the school. As per the Act, the SMC will work towards enhancing parents community participation in the school functioning and provide mechanisms for more effective management at school level. It also provides a platform where community and school pool resources for better management of the school.

Table 1: Details of SMC members (Total 7 members)

Chairman	Local MLA/MLC
Govt. official	DEO, SDEO,BDO
Member Secretary	Principal
Member	Teacher
Member	Local person/parent
Member	Educationist
Member	SC/ST person

The essential functions of SMC enlisted in RTE Act, 2009 are given below:-

Section 21

1. “A school other than the school specified in sub clause (IV) of clause (n) of Section -2, shall constitute a school management committee consisting of elected representative of local authority, parents or guardian of children admitted in such schools and teachers. At least three- fourth of the members of such committee shall be parents or guardians; further fifty per cent of the members

of shall be women. It will also include members amongst the local educationists or children in the school. Teachers are also a part of the SMC.

2. “The school management committee shall perform following function namely;
 - a) Monitor the working of school
 - b) Prepare and recommend school development plan
 - c) Monitor the utilisation of grant received from the appropriate government.
 - d) Perform such other function as may be prescribed.
 - e) Ensures regularity and punctuality of teachers.
 - f) Monitors that teachers are not over burdened by non- academic work.
 - g) Ensures enrolment, attendance and retention of all the children from neighbourhood in the school.
 - h) Monitor the maintenance of norms and standards of the school specified in the schedule.
 - i) Identifies the needs and make special provision for the children admitted under RTE Act and children with special needs.
 - j) Monitors the identification and enrolment facilities.
 - k) Monitor implementation of mid-day meal.”

Section-22

1. Every SMC 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 plan and grants to be made by appropriate government.

The meeting is said to be held at least once a month and minutes and decisions of the meetings should be properly recorded.

The school development plan shall contain the following details:-

- Estimates class wise enrolment every year.
- Physical requirement of additional infrastructure and equipment, calculated with reference to the norms and standards.
- Financial requirements, when necessary.
- Year wise detail of required additional financial resources for training facilities of children taking admission in accordance to age specific classes.

Objectives of the study:-

- To study the role of SMC members in the implementation of RTE Act.
- To explore the measures for bridging the gap in implementation of RTE Act.

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was used for the study. Questionnaire comprising of open and closed ended questions related to awareness, participation, involvement, problems and suggestions, was prepared for the SMC members. The questionnaire consisted questions including; participation, involvement of members in SMC meetings, problems faced by SMC members and suggestions given by the SMC member. The data collected through questionnaire was put to content analysis.

Results and Discussions

For the study it was important to understand the socio-economic complexities that influence the functioning of the organisation. Therefore a profile of SMC members of SMC members was attempted to map their sex, age, education and occupation. The findings showed that, majority of the members of SMC, seventy five percent (75%) are male and remaining 15% are female. Although the Act mandates 50% participation of female members, but here the majority of active members are male members.

For the awareness, eight close ended questions are asked from the SMC members to check their awareness towards RTE Act and functioning of SMC. From results it was found that the SMC members are not aware of the RTE Act and its components related to SMC. Only 12% of the members are aware of the RTE Act, remaining 88% are not. On the functioning of SMC, 29% are aware of the objectives of forming SMC, 15% are aware about the composition of SMC and 52% of members are aware of their roles and responsibilities as a member of SMC. Only 15% are aware of the academic progress of the children of the school. School development plan had not been initiated in any of the schools and only 12% of members are aware about it.

Awareness about formation and process of SMC has linkages with participation of the members. It is the awareness that leads to the participation and empowerment of the members, which in turn results in effective functioning. In the study it was found that the members are not aware of the functioning of SMC, which can create hurdle in their participation and process of SMC.

Regarding the frequency of SMC meetings, twenty one percent (21%) of members said that the meetings are held monthly, 33% said it was held bi-monthly, 17% said it was held quarterly and remaining 29% said that it was held on requirement basis. But the intended purposes of SMCs cannot be achieved just by conducting a monthly meeting.

RTE Act mandates SMC meeting to be held every month, more than half of the members agreed that the meeting are held bi-monthly or on requirement basis. Maximum time the messages are given through the parents of the children, which often leads to miscommunications and members are not able to attend the meeting.

Regarding the participation of SMC members, maximum numbers of SMC members (54%) attend the meeting once in three months. Thirteen percent (13%) of members attend meeting monthly and remaining 33% attend the meeting once in six months. It shows that members do not attend the meeting

regularly which can affect the proceedings of the meetings. As said by the principals, irregularity of the members is one of the main problems in the SMC meeting.

Also it was found that maximum numbers of members (51%) do not attend the meeting due to the earning compulsion and 29% due to work at home. Twelve 12% of members do not attend because they do not get opportunity to participate in the meeting. Remaining 9% of the members have health issues and other 9 % do not get proper information about the meetings.

An important thing to be noted is that Fifty nine percent (59%) of members do not know that meetings proceedings are recorded or not. Twenty nine percent (29%) of members said that meetings proceedings are recorded and 12% of members said that meetings proceedings are not recorded. Every school maintains the register of the recordings of the SMC meetings. But members are not aware of this register. Transparency was not maintained with SMC members about the meetings.

It was also found that 62% of the SMC members do not attend any function of the school. Seventeen percent (17%) attend the celebrations at the school and 21% sometimes get involve with the activities related to the school.

Regarding training of SMC members, it was found that only 8% of SMC members have gone through a training related to SMC and its functions. The training was conducted by an NGO, which was on the 'Role of SMC in the functioning of school'. SMC members are told about their roles and responsibilities as a member of SMC and the vital role of SMC in the functioning of the school. The following provisions of RTE Act are also discussed in the training; free education for all the children, enrolment of dropouts, and inclusion of differently abled children in school.

School Development Plan (SDP), is an important component of SMC. No school has formulated SDP. SMC members are not even aware of the SDP and no discussion has been done in the meetings. Every SMC constituted under sub section-1 of section-21 shall prepare a school development plan in such a manner as may be prescribed. The school development plan, so prepared under sub section-1, shall be the basis for plan and grants to be made by appropriate government

The school development plan shall contain the following details:-

- Estimates class wise enrolment every year.
- Physical requirement of additional infrastructure and equipment, calculated with reference to the norms and standards.
- Financial requirements, when necessary.
- Year wise detail of required additional financial resources for training facilities of children taking admission in accordance to age specific classes.

With respect to problems and suggestions given by SMC members, it was found that the major hindrances in the functioning of SMC are:-

- **Lack of awareness of the members:** SMC members said that due to the lack of awareness about the technical issues related to school, they feel alienated in the meetings. Along with that

92% of members have not attended any training related to the role of SMC members. They are not clear of their responsibilities as a SMC member.

- **Irregularity of members:** The members are not regular in the meetings. Fifty four (55%) of members attend meeting once in a three month, 37% of members attend meeting regularly. The data shows that the members are not attending the meetings on regular basis. Earning compulsion is the most given reason by the members for not attending the meetings regularly. Due to the irregularity of members the equal participation is not able to hold in the SMC meetings.
- **Not fruitful discussion:** Due to the irregularity of members, lack of awareness among members, the discussion of SMC meetings is not able to hold properly.
- **Lacks of resources-** The discussions of the meetings are not fruitful and indecisive because of the lack of funds. The school has limited funds in which it has to manage the changes according the needs of the current situations. Inclusion of differently abled children requires more resources for which funds are limited. Regular repairing of the building is not able to done because of the lack of funds.
- **Less organised:** The SMC meetings are not well organised. A particular date and day for the meetings is not fixed and most of the times the meeting is held on a working day, which makes impossible for the working members to attend it. The information of the meeting is often given through parents and students who eventually lead to miscommunication. Most of the times parents forgot to pass the information about the meeting. There should be a channelized procedure for the meetings.
- **Lack of clarity in agenda:** The agenda of the meeting is not clear to the members. The agenda is decided by the school and members are not aware about it. Often it is more like a school meeting with minimal role of the SMC members.

Also, some Suggestions were also given by the SMC members for the smooth functioning of SMC. They are:-

- **Increase in number of members of SMC:** The members of the SMC should be increased and more community members should be involved in the meetings.
- **Proper training:** The members need training to know their roles and responsibilities as members of SMC. The training will help them to understand their importance as a SMC member and they can play an active role in the meetings.
- **More involvement of all the members:** With the training and awareness, it is also important for members to participate in the meeting more prominently.
- **Plan of discussion should be made in advance:** Agenda of the meetings should be decided in advance (other than the emergency cases) so that the members can come prepared for the meeting and contribute with their best efforts.
- **Organised meetings:** The information regarding the meeting should be given in an organised

manner. Dates should be fixed for the meetings, preferably holidays, so that the members can attend meetings.

- **Equal opportunity should be given to all the members:** All the members should be given chance to raise their opinions in the meetings.
- **Involvement of more resourceful persons in the meeting:** SMC should include more resourceful members, who have contacts in the society. They can help in solving the problems at administrative levels.

Conclusion

To encourage parent and broader community participation in school monitoring and decision making the RTE Act makes provisions for school to form School management committee (SMC) with at least 75% of parents of children in school of which fifty percent are females. SMC's are empowered to monitor the performance of schools, prepare school development plans and fulfil other functions prescribed by the state governments. During the study the investigator found that most of the teachers and parents are not aware of the functioning of SMC in their schools. The school principals in their responses mentioned that members did not participate actively in the meetings and meetings are often left indecisive.

SMC members are also not aware of RTE Act, functioning of SMC, their roles and responsibilities as a member of SMC, School development plan. Awareness about formation and process of SMC has linkages with participation of the members. It is the awareness that leads to the participation and empowerment of the members, which in turn results in effective functioning. In the study it was found that the members are not aware of the functioning of SMC, which can create hurdle in their participation and process of SMC.

Regarding participation in SMC, most of the members mentioned that they are not able to attend the meeting due to earning compulsion and work at home. Also they did not get full opportunity to participate in the proceedings of the meeting. They are not aware of the functioning of SMC and mentioned helplessness in contributing in the school matters. No school has formulated SDP. SMC members are not even aware of the SDP and no discussion has been done in the meetings.

The provision of SMC is not functional in the investigated schools. Researches show that communities can have a positive effect on school's functioning. Communities' engagement in school improvement often leads to positive outcomes. It is important to have a comprehensive grievance redressal system that links all levels, from School Management Committees (SMCs) to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Also, School management committees should take it upon themselves to spread awareness about the Act at the community level, in panchayats, so that people are encouraged to send their children to school.

Delimitations of the study

The study is delimited to the MCP Schools of Delhi.

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WEBSOURCES

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www.ncpcr.gov.in

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