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## Research Article

# ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC) OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION (RTE) ACT 2009 IN SCHOOLS: AWARENESS AND FUNCTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Right to education is a part of right to life and guaranteed through 86th constitutional amendment in 2002. "Right to education act" ensured free and compulsory education from age six (6) to fourteen (14) years. This act put more attention and gave space to the different stakeholders from society. Community participation ensured through school management committees (SMCs) in schools under the right to education act. The school management committees are mandatory in all government and government funded schools. The objectives of SMCs are community contribution to development of schools, Monitor the functioning of school and ensured children's quality education. The SMCs Structure, role and responsibilities are prescribed by central act and state rules. This study tries to analyze the awareness level of parents, teachers and headmasters from sampling schools. It also tries to analyze the function of school management committees in schools. Purposive sampling technique is used to identify the schools. Data collected through self-administered questionnaire by the researcher.

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### INTRODUCTION

India is one of the biggest democratic country in the world. Democracy is practiced at different levels in India, particularly from local self-government to national central government. Schools are important social institutions in our society. Practicing democracy in schools includes communities in the school system. Thus, community participation is developing a mutual relationship between schools and community through which both are benefitted. When communities participate in the school management then the quality of education to their children is ensured. Community participation in schools is not a new concept. Many of our educational reforms mentioned in the committees over the years have emphasized community participation and its need in school development. Particularly the Kothari Commission (1964-1966) has clearly spelt out the need of decentralization of school education and involvement of local bodies in the processes related to school improvement. According to the Commission, the immediate goal was to associate communities with the schools in their locality.

#### Background of the Study

Right to education was earlier a part of the fundamental right, the right to life and guaranteed through 86<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment of the Indian Constitution in 2002. Later in the year 2010, the Indian government enacted the Right to

education act. It ensured free and compulsory education from the age 6 to 14 years. RTE act gives more attention and space to the different stakeholders from the community. Community participation is ensured through school management committees (SMCs) in schools under the right to education act. The school management committees are mandatory in all government and government funded schools. Such participation, especially at the local level through partnerships between schools and communities, to move from highly centralized, standardized and command-driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. (The Dakar Framework Education for All 2000). As per the RTE act, School Management Committee (SMC) should perform the following functions:

- Monitor the working of the school.
- Prepare and recommend school development plan.
- Monitor the utilization of the grants received from the appropriate government or local authority or any other source.
- Perform such functions as may be prescribed.

The above background raises relevant concerns so as if the SMCs are formed in the schools involving the communities, aware of their roles and responsibilities and nature of

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functioning. This study tries to analyse the awareness of SMC members about the RTE act in relation to their role and the nature of functioning in schools.

**Research Method**

This study is descriptive in nature because it explains the awareness and functioning of the SMCs. It describes a process taking place in relation to the schools, education, students and communities at different levels. The main purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present.

**Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling is the sampling technique used in this study. Being a part of a larger study, a small sample of three schools is taken for this study. From each of the schools 10 community members, teachers and headmasters were selected. From the entire state 30 teachers and headmasters were selected from different districts of Tamil Nadu for the study. The questionnaire is a quantitative data collection instrument which was in the local language of the people so as to enhance the data collection.

**Research Tool and Analysis**

Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire by the researchers. Quantitative data was analysed and the demographic variables are described first. The variables are described using simple frequency tables.

**Findings**

- It is found that majority of the SMC members, i.e., 35 % have educated up to higher secondary. Other 66 % of teachers have attained the under graduate and post graduate level.
- It is found that 21.7 % of the respondents work as coolies or labourers and agricultural workers which show that economically they are yet to develop. Rest of the respondents of 68.3 % work as government school teachers. Also the family annual income of majority of the respondents are for nearly 44% which is found to be below the annual income of Rs. 1, 00,000 and for 6% of the respondents were found to be the annual income from rupees 1, 00,000 to 2, 00,000 and the rest of the respondents are teachers. They have their annual income of above Rs. 2, 00,000.
- It is found that 68.3 % of the respondents belong to schedule caste and 25% of the respondents belong to backward and most backward communities.
- 53.3% of the respondents stated that they receive information through headmasters and 13.3% of the respondents had received information through children.
- It is found that 41.7 % of the respondents were elected as SMC member through parents meeting and 20 % of the respondents were nominated by headmasters.
- It is found that 56.7% of the respondents got training from cluster resource centers. 20% of them were trained in schools and 21.7% of respondents were trained from block resource centers.
- 38.3% of the respondents stated that due to domestic works they were not able to participate in the meetings

and 21.7% of the respondents said SMC meetings were not conducted properly in schools.

- 70% of the respondents stated that every month the meetings were conducted in the schools regularly.
- 63.3% of the respondents stated that SMC training programs were conducted by the block resource trainers.
- 38.3% of the respondents stated that 5 to 10 members had participated in SMC meetings. 28.3% of the respondents stated that 16 to 20 members participated. 15 % of the respondents stated that 11 to 15 members participated in the SMC meetings.
- 33.3% of the respondents stated that due to engagement of some other works they were not able to participate in the SMC meeting. 10 % of the respondents stated that date and time was not appropriate for participating in the SMC meetings. 16.7% of the respondents mentioned some other reasons.
- 43.3% of the respondents stated that intimation regarding SMC meetings was received by them through telephone and 38.3% of the respondents stated that intimation was received by them through their children. No written intimation had been sent to SMC members.

**Awareness level of SMC Members**

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	11	18.3
Average	45	75.0
High	4	6.7
Total	60	100.0

It is found that 75% of the respondents have average level of awareness. 11% of the respondents have low level of awareness and 4% of the respondents have high level of awareness.

**Functions of SMCs in Schools**

Level	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	10	16.7
Average	50	83.3
Total	60	100.0

It is found that 83.3% of the respondent stated that functioning of SMC in schools is average level and 10 % of them stated that they are “satisfied” about the functions of SMCs.

**Educational Implications**

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions and recommendations are made,

1. The schools should conduct SMC meetings regularly and to ensure meaningful participation of parents and community.
2. Intimation should be sent in proper way and SMC meetings to be conducted on appropriate date and time.
3. Encourage women leadership and women participation through Self Help Groups(SHG)s.
4. Ensure quality education through monitoring functioning of schools and its teaching learning activities.
5. Conduct awareness building programs for parents and communities through different media.
6. Educational authorities should monitor the functioning of the SMCs in schools.
7. Relationships between schools, communities and local government should be built for better development.

8. Encourage old students and local community for owning the local schools.
9. Conduct schools and community based cultural and sports events for better relationships.

## CONCLUSION

School management committees are one of the best tools for community participation in all government and government funded schools. Where SMCs are engaged meaningfully, there we could see better changes in school development. Schools monitored by the Government alone are not possible, so that there should be decentralized monitoring systems evolved in India through RTE act 2009. We can strengthen the SMCs through mass awareness programs and ensure quality of education to our children.

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