

**ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AT ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL LEVEL: A RESEARCH STUDY**

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Abstract

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) has been one of the most important goals since independence of India. For achieving this goal, efforts have been initiated with regard to a number of programmes/schemes at national and state level as well. India, undoubtedly, has been striving hard during the last few years to universalize elementary education, after implementation of SSA in the country, and that of RTE Act, 2009, besides emphasis on many aspects of elementary education. Expected role of SMS is being emphasized in this direction. It has been observed that majority of members of SMCs are not aware about their role and responsibilities, therefore, the proper training programmes of SMCs are required to be organized so that they can play their active role in the qualitative improvement of elementary schools to achieve the goal of UEE. In order to ascertain whether SMCs are doing the needful in terms of the assigned role and functions, researches are required to be undertaken so that the overall evaluation results of the performance of SMCs can be placed before the Educational Authorities, Administrators of School system and District level functionaries. With this background, the authors conducted an evaluative study to know the role and functions of SMCs in Anantnag district of Kashmir Division.

Keywords: School Management Committees, Elementary Education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

INTRODUCTION

Education is the very basic requirement for any country's growth and development as it is not only essential from the point of view of economic development of a nation but also performs the role of key factor in character building, social outlook, personality development, ability to go along with the ongoing pace of development, training in good citizenship of its masses and many other similar functions. Therefore, masses have to be provided facilities upto at least minimum required level of education i.e. elementary. Hence, Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is of utmost importance. In the context of our country, the achievement of goal of UEE has always been on the priority agenda since independence but the same has been

confronted with multi-facet barriers from different backgrounds and the directions in the context of required provision of universal access, enrollment and retention. Besides these essential conditions, the issue of achievement involving minimum learning outcomes has almost remained unaddressed. In order to achieve the goal of UEE, a number of schemes and programmes were launched in the country including the DPEP, SSA, and RTE-2009 being the latest concern of Government of India. In all of these initiatives, community participation has been emphasized time and again. Without community participation, education, particularly school education, cannot be universalized and therefore, under the DPEP, Village Education Committees were constituted as these were considered of greater significance in the context of UEE. Thereafter, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was implemented in our country followed by RTE Act, 2009 and in the Gazette notification of RTE Act, 2009, and under different provisions, there had also been indicated provision of SMCs to be constituted for each elementary school for monitoring of day to day functioning of school system.

Now the main pertinent issue arises with regard to effective functioning of such SMCs so as to ensure smooth functioning of elementary schools and solutions of day to day problems/difficulties faced by schools system. It pointed out towards need of research study in this context. Therefore, it inspired the authors to undertake the research study in order to know the role and functions of SMCs at elementary school level.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Elementary education serves as strong foundation for further education and also one of the means of the personality development of its individual. Therefore, various programs have been launched in our country from time to time like Operation black board DPEP, SSA to achieve the cherished goal of universalization of elementary education. The school management committees were constituted under SSA in order to ensure proper functioning of elementary schools. But role and performance of the same was not up to the mark as indicated by various research studies. For instance, Tyagi's study (1999) indicated that members of village education committee did not attend meetings regularly and did not take part in school activities. Government of Karnataka (2004) in Collaboration with Azim Premji foundation found that 2% of the schools of Karnataka didn't have any School Development and Management Committee. The monitoring mechanism seemed to be ineffective. Mor (2008) also points out that VECs members don't attend the meeting. In case of those who attend it was just to make a proxy.

Nayak (2009) found that it was not satisfactory working style of School Management Committees in Orissa.

The aforesaid studies indicate towards required initiatives and steps for qualitative improvement in the working of SMCs. For further qualitative improvement in on going role and functions of any academic body, local authorities regarding their responsibilities of monitoring and supervision of school system, research efforts are required from time to time so that the overall working and performance, such bodies in the light of expected roles and functioning thereof can be ascertained. The present work was an efforts in this directions so as to know the extent of role and functions performed by SMCs at elementary school level in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir State as there had been vary scanty research efforts in this direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the formulation/composition of School Management Committees in Anantnag district of Kashmir Division.
2. To study the role and functions performed by School Management Committees in Anantnag district.
3. To give suggestions for qualitative improvement in functioning of School Management Committees.

DELIMITATIONS

- (i) The present investigation was confined to only Anantnag district of Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir State.
- (ii) The study was delimited to only 20 Government elementary schools of Anantnag district.
- (iii) The study was confined to only 100 SMC members of these sample schools.

METHOD

Descriptive Survey Method was used.

SAMPLE

For drawing the sample of the present study, multi-stage simple random technique was used. Firstly, one district i.e. Anantnag, was selected on lottery method basis. At the second stage, 20 Government elementary schools from sample district were selected on random basis. At the third stage, 100 members of School Management Committees (who were available) of 20 sample schools of Anantnag district of Kashmir Division constituted the sample.

TOOL USED

(i) **‘Non-Directive Interview schedule’** was used to study the formulation/composition of School Management Committees and role & functions performed by members of School Management Committees in Anantnag district.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

The frequencies and percentages were calculated for purpose of drawing results and conclusion.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Process of Formulation and Composition of School Management Committees

In 50% schools, School Management Committees were formed in 2015 and had 7-10 SMCs members. Majority of the members of SMCs were male belonging to General Category. Only 27% of SMCs members were post- graduates and in only 45% schools, monthly meetings of School Management Committees were held but majority of the members were not aware about the structure of composition of SMCs.

2. Role and Functions performed by School Management Committees at Elementary School level

As per the records available in schools, majority of the members of School Management Committees attended meetings and most of them had shown concern regarding improvement of educational standard of pupils particularly in the context of reduction in drop-out rate, regular attendance, improvement in school results besides improvement in infrastructural facilities- construction of additional classrooms, boundary wall, drinking water facility, kitchen shed, and

toilets. Majority of members had been participating in educational and cultural programmes of schools. But majority of members had not at all received any training as members of SMCs.

In the light of above given findings, based on the available records of SMCs in schools and also views expressed by the members of SMCs, there can be inferred some very positive aspects of the role and functioning of SMCs and active participation of members of SMCs but the researchers/authors had gone into the depth in order to come out with real picture/scenario in this context by different cross checks and field observations. There was gloomy picture of the state of affairs/plight related to condition of SMCs other than that depicted by SMC Members. In reality, it was observed that almost all members of SMCs were neither aware about the role, purpose and functions of SMCs nor of their expected roles and responsibilities. Same was the case with regard to awareness related to structure and composition of SMCs. Moreover, most of the members of SMCs (95%) had not at all undergone the training programmes organized for SMCs members, majority of them had not at all been participating in monthly meetings of SMCs in schools, what to talk of their active participation in different activities related to schools and devolvement of school plans. Attendance of SMCs members, who were from the native villages wherein schools were located, were quite often got marked through their signatures obtained in attendance register after SMC meetings by the School functionaries. The role and responsibilities of SMC members as well as those of SMCs, in the context of their role performance and functions, were, to a great extent, merely on papers and very far from the ground realities.

3. Remedial Measures for further improvement in the existing programme and activities of SSA in the light of findings

- Firstly, in all schools, School Management Committee should be constituted as per SSA norms and guidelines.
- In the beginning itself, all the members of SMCs should be provided orientation and training so as to make them aware about structure and composition of SMCs, objectives of SMCs and their expected roles and responsibilities so that they can play their effective role as a member.
- It should be made mandatory for all the members of School Management Committee to attend meetings regularly.

- Keeping in view the norms of SMCs, if possible, preference should be given to those villagers to become members who are residing in the surrounding areas of schools so as to ensure their active participation and involvement in school activities.
- Timely release of school grants should be ensured so that timely and full utilization can be there.
- Working of SMCs should be without any political interference.
- Awareness regarding information and communication technology should be developed among the teachers as well as members of SMCs.
- Female participation should be encouraged in the meeting of SMCs.
- Female ratio in SMCs should also be increased as per SSA norms.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This investigation has its implications for qualitative improvements for effective functioning of School Management Committees in the context of Universalization of Elementary Education as per Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Right to Education Act, 2009 as well. Role and functions of School Management Committees can be effectively provided there is active involvement of its members who are expected to work in close coordination and cooperation with district and school level functionaries. Thus, there is an immediate need to give orientation and training to all the members of SMCs to develop their awareness regarding the objectives and functioning of SMCs and make them capable of performing their effective role as members. There is also a need of timely supervision of SMCs by District and Block level educational authorities besides meetings with villagers and community for their active participation in promotion of qualitative education in elementary schools.

Conclusion

For ensuring the qualitative functioning of any educational scheme/programme, there is a need to review the concerned scheme or programme from time to time. The present investigation was carried out from the point of view of ascertaining role and functioning of SMCs of elementary schools. This investigation categorically reveals that the very expected role and functioning of these committees has not been upto the desired extent. Therefore, its call for serious thinking on the part of educational authorities at national, state and local level regarding orientation of members of these committees as well as community members as a whole so as to

make them conscious about their role and responsibilities for achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education.

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