



# A STUDY ON AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL REFERRING RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT (RTE ACT) 2009

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**Abstract:** The present study attempts to study the awareness and participation of the members of SMC in different school activities by referring RTE Act, 2009 guidelines. Two blocks of Ganjam district named Bellagantha and Bhanjanagar were selected as accessible population and a sample of sixty-five members of SMCs was drawn by using random sampling for collecting the data. The investigator used descriptive survey method for this study. Data were analyzed by using quantitative approach and simple percentage analysis. The objectives were to study the awareness and participation of SMC members in school activities referring RTE Act, 2009. The main findings were that that the SMC members participate and take role in managing funds and preparing school development plan. All of the SMC members agreed that they should work for the protection of the rights of the children. Members also viewed that they organize and attend PTA/MTA meeting for the upliftment of their children. The study disclosed that most of the members work for the beautification of the school environment. It was also revealed that the members take parts in executing the mid-day meal program.

**Index Terms** - SMC members, awareness, participation, school activities and RTE Act

## INTRODUCTION

Education is key to national progress and individual upliftment. As it helps the individual in his/her analytical abilities, decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, building wisdom and confidence with bringing economic stability, it was recognized as a fundamental right in India in 2002 vide Article 21A of the Indian Constitution for the children in the age group of 6-14 years. Elementary education teaches basic competencies like literacy and numeracy, brings awareness about their surrounding in develops fundamental life skills within them. Therefore, elementary education is considered as the

foundation on which the entire the structure of education is built up. If a single brick of the foundation remains weak, the entire structure will be collapsed. In order to strengthen the elementary education, a number of steps were taken. Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) became national concern to achieve which, various initiatives like Non-Formal Education, Operation Blackboard, Minimum Level of Learning, DPEP, Mid-Day Meal, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) were launched and implemented. Later on, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 was passed by the Indian Parliament in 2009 and came into effect from 1 April, 2010. The RTE is the first central legislation in the landscape of Indian elementary education that puts the responsibility of enrolment, attendance and completion of elementary education of 8 years for the age group of 6 to 14 years on the government (Mondal, 2015). This act is a detailed and comprehensive piece of legislation which includes provisions related to school teachers and specific divisions of duties and responsibilities of different stakeholders. The sole focus was on the community as it plays a very significant role in taking the responsibility to educate the children. As education of children is the joint responsibility of home and school, efforts were made to improve the participation of the community in schools. Here, one can also observe a distinct shift from having informal parent teacher associations (PTAs) to the creation of formal School Management Committees (Rout, 2013).

The School Management Committee (SMC) under RTE (2009) ensures accountability in government schools. The Act envisions the SMC as a decentralized governance model which empowers them to keep track and monitor functioning of the schools and oversee that the school grants are used effectively (Kandipalli & Grace, 2021). Local authorities, parents or guardians of the students, the administrators and instructors of the school together form SMC. They have been given the authority to look over the functioning of the school and utilization of the grants. Collaboration with parents and other key local stakeholders, teachers are now actively involved in the governance of schools or school complexes, by being included as members of School Management Committees or School Complex Management Committee (Dnyandeo & Bawane, 2020). The School Management Committees have been given the authority to observe the working of schools and utilization of their grants.

#### **The functions of School Management Committee-**

- Supervising the activities of the school for its smooth functioning.
- Looking into the welfare of the teachers and employees of the school.
- Developing both short-term and long-term plans for the improvement of the school.
- Making appointment of teachers and non-teaching staff.
- Exercising financial powers beyond those delegated to the principal within the budgetary provisions of the school.
- Guiding the principal in school management.
- Ensuring no financial irregularity is committed and no irregular procedure with regard to admission/examinations is adopted.
- Reviewing the budget of the school presented by the principal and forward the same to Society/Trust/Company for approval.
- Ensuring the safety and security of children and staff of the school and give directions for improvement
- Looking into the grievances of the teachers and staff in connection with their service conditions and pay etc. and dispose such grievances in accordance with applicable rules.
- Approving fees and charges for the working of the school
- Looking into the grievances of the staff and deal with these appropriately

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The vision of RTE 2009 is to provide free and compulsory education to the students between the age group of 6 to 14 years by taking quality education into consideration regardless of their status and circumstances. To achieve this vision, the endeavour of the government, administrators, teachers, stakeholders along with the SMC members feels essential. RTE has clearly stated the functions of SMCs which definitely demonstrate how significant the role of it is in the school education. So, for the SMCs, to work with utmost integrity and earnestness to achieve the vision of RTE, firstly, they should be aware about the provisions defined by RTE. 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 (Kumar, 2016). Further, Ramakrishnarao & Indira (2021) explored that awareness on Right to Education among School Management Committees members is average. They also found that School Management Committee Chairpersons and members of School Management Committees differed significantly in their awareness about Right to Education act and SMC Chairpersons are more aware about Right to Education act and its implementation in Elementary schools. So, it seems that SMC is to play a crucial role in the management of elementary education and also, they do cast a positive impact on quality of education (Laldintluangi, 2016). Therefore, an attempt has been made to identify the awareness level of the SMC members and their participation in school activities.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The present study intends to investigate whether the SMC member have adequate awareness about their duties and responsibilities and how they participate in various kind of school activities referring to RTE Act, 2009.

### **Operational Definition:**

#### **Awareness:**

This refers to the awareness among the SMC members regarding their roles and duties mentioned in RTE Act. This will include the dimensions like annual census of the children, enrolment in the school, bringing the dropouts to the school, mid-day meal, co-curricular activities, beautification of the school environment and examination work etc. in the elementary schools.

#### **Participation:**

This denotes to the active engagement of the members of SMC in various school activities like bringing the drop outs to the school, mid-day meal, co-curricular activities, construction & repairing of the school, allocating funds, enrolment of the children and examination work etc.

#### **RTE Act:**

it refers to the right of children to free and compulsory education act, 2009 which ensures free and compulsory elementary education to the students between the age group of 6 to 14 years. For implementing this, it has certain provisions describing the role of various wings in the field of elementary education including the functions of SMC.

#### **School management committee**

In this study, it indicates to the committee created for the efficient operation of the elementary schools as per the provisions of RTE Act 2009. The SMCs consist of representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of students, the head masters and teachers of the elementary schools. Three-fourths of SMC members must be parents or guardians and half must be women. This study will take the SMCs of the elementary schools of two blocks of Ganjam district, Odisha.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: -**

The objectives of the present study are-

1. To study the awareness among SMC members regarding school activities referring RTE Act, 2009.
2. To study the members' participation in the school activities referring RTE Act, 2009.

**DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY-**

The present study has the following delimitations: -

- The study was confined to the awareness of RTE Act among the members of SMC and their participation in the school activities only.
- The study was delimited to Two blocks of Ganjam district i.e. Bhanjanagar and Bellaguntha only.
- The study was delimited to self-developed questionnaire only.
- The study was confined to the elementary schools only.

**METHODOLOGY**

In the present study, descriptive survey method design was used. The researcher personally visited to the schools for data collection, met the SMC members and administered the self-developed questionnaire.

**POPULATION AND SAMPLE: -**

The SMC members of the elementary schools of two blocks i.e. Bhanjanagar and Bellaguntha, Ganjam district came under accessible population. The researcher adopted random sampling method in order to draw six elementary schools from the two blocks of Ganjam district. 65 SMC members were randomly selected as the sample for the present study.

**TOOL: -**

The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire for the present study.

**STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

After the collection of all the requisite data about the awareness and participation of the SMC members, simple percentage analysis technique was used to analyze and interpret the data.

**FINDINGS**

- Annual census of the children

As far as the census of school going children is concerned 56% of SMC members gave their opinion that they conduct annual census of the children within the age group of 6 to 14 belonging to their locality where as 20% of them did not agree with it and 24% of them were ignorant of it.

- Encourage to enrol and retain in the school:

69% of SMC members agreed that they encourage the children to enroll in the school, 28% of the members did not agree that they encourage it and 3% of them did not know about it. 75% of SMC members said that they encourage the students not to quite the school and retain till the completion, 1% of members denied that they encourage the students for their retention in the school and 24% of the members had no idea about it.

- Bringing the dropouts to the school:

Referring to the questionnaire, it can be clearly said that 72% of SMC members take sensitive steps to bring the dropout children back to the school where as 4% of the members stated that they did not do any effort to bring the dropouts to the school and 20% of the members did not know about it.

- Motivating the students to be regular:

It is proved that 86% of the members take steps to make the students attend the school regularly and 14% of the members denied that they influence the students to be regular. All of the SMC members (100%) agreed that they should work for the protection of the rights of the children.

- Beautification of School environment and hygiene:

Regarding the beautification of the school environment, 89% of the SMC members stated that they work for it and 2% of the members do not do any kind of work for the decoration and 9% of the members have no idea about it.

While 92% of SMC members agreed that they work for planting trees and gardening in the school campus to enhance its beauty, 8% of the members confirmed that they do not help the school in this regard.

According to the collected data, 78% of SMC members monitor and actively participate in the health and hygiene programs in the school whereas 22% of them keep themselves away from this kind of activities.

- Mid-day meal:

Most of the members (94%) were of the opinion that they play active role in the smooth functioning of mid-day meal program in the school. Only 6% of the total members declared that they do not intervene in the program.

- Organising co-curricular activities:

With regard to the organization of co-curricular activities in the school, 90% of SMC members responded that they assist in organizing educational fests, inter-school competitions, sports and exhibition but 10% of them were of the view that they do not help in this matter.

- Examination Work:

46% of the members viewed that they cooperate the teachers in conducting various examinations in the school but 54% of the members said that they do not involve in the examination system. 60% of the SMC members stated that they are conscious in reporting the results to the parents and 40% of them were ignorant of it.

- Providing Uniforms and text-books

Referring to the collected data, it is shown that 95% of the SMC members help in distributing text books, uniforms and study materials to the students and others (5%) disagreed with this.

- Construction and Repairing:

The researcher found that 87% of SMC members take steps for constructing and repairing the school building but 13% of them responded that they do not assist in it. Regarding availability of minimum facilities in the school, 73% of SMC members assist in providing drinking water, repairing toilet, benches for students, kitchen etc. in the school but 27% of members were of the opinion that they do not interfere in this matter.

- Funds:

The collected data throws light on the fact that 95% of SMC members actively participate in managing funds for the development of the school but 5% of them are not aware of it. Again, it was found out that 37% of SMC members do not scrutinize the accounts of collected funds whereas 63% of members favored it.

- Organising PTA/MTA meeting:

60% of SMC members viewed that they organize and attend PTA/MTA meeting for the betterment of their children but 10% of them are not interested in taking part in it and 30% of them couldn't arrive at any conclusion.

- Training of SMC members:

Most of the SMC members (96%) said that there should be a provision of training for them. Very few members (4%) were undecided regarding this matter.

- Decision in the meeting:

69% of the SMC members agreed that no decision regarding school development plan is taken without their



approval. With this, the members responded that their decisions are implemented in the management of the school. 21% of members denied that the decision is taken with their approval.

## MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY—

The investigator found out the major findings after the analysis of data.

- Most of the SMC members agreed that there should be a School Management Committee for effective management of the school.
- Most of the SMC members declared that there should be a provision of training for them.
- The study illuminated that the SMC members participate and take role in managing funds and preparing school development plan.
- All of the SMC members agreed that they should work for the protection of the rights of the children.
- The research says that the SMC members take steps for constructing and repairing the school building.
- The study depicted that the SMC members conduct annual census of the children within the age group of 6 to 14 belonging to their locality.
- More than half of the members encourage the children to enrol and retain in the school, and help in bringing the dropouts to the school.
- The investigator found out that SMC members motivate the students to attend the school regularly.
- The study revealed that less than half of the members do cooperate the teachers in conducting various examinations in the school.
- More than half of SMC members viewed that they organize and attend PTA/MTA meeting for the upliftment of the children.
- The study depicted that most of the members work for the beautification of the school environment. They also engage themselves in tree plantation and gardening.
- Most of the members take crucial role in implementing mid-day meal.

## DISCUSSION

The present study identified the awareness and participation of SMC members in various school activities with taking RTE Act into consideration. The SMC members were found to be aware about their roles and responsibilities for the school and its development. More than half of them take initiatives and influence to the drop outs to return to the school for fulfilling the purpose of universal completion but it was also found that many of them have no idea about it. This gap can be bridged through the orientation organized by the headmasters and other authorities and members may be given opportunities by the school authorities to participate in the school functioning in order to have better understanding (Sehrawat & Roy, 2021). The SMC members are aware about Universalization of Elementary Education and ensure the students' enrolment (Rout, 2014) and retention in the school. But there are members who are not aware about mainstreaming of out-school children. It was also proved that some SMC members are ignorant about the annual census of children between 6 to 14 years belonging to their locality. It is a matter of concern that some members do not encourage the students to enroll though they have the knowledge about their roles in this. On the other hand, it is a matter appreciation that all of the members are conscious that they should work for the protection of the rights of the students which is similar with the result of the study conducted by (Alam, 2022). Most of the members assist in providing safe drinking water, benches for students, TLMs, repairing toilets and kitchen. This finding has similarity with the result of the research undertaken by (Meena Sehrawat & M.M. Roy, 2021).

The researcher found out that the SMC members influence the students to be regular which is in tune with the research studies conducted by (Rout, 2014; Teddy, 2019). Maximum members revealed that while preparing School Development Plan, each decision is taken with their approval. This finding is different from the studies undertaken by (Pati, 2020; Srivastava, 2018) which shows how more than half of the members do not have knowledge about it and do not participate in preparing SDP. This contrast might be due to the

difference in population, locality or training given to the members. So better coordination between school authority and SMC is needed to be developed in all aspects (Srivastava, 2018). It was also revealed that most of the members engage themselves in managing funds for the development of the school and take steps to enhance the beauty of the school environment. This is contrasted with the study of Alam, 2022. Most of the members work for the smooth functioning of mid-day meal which is similar to the research study conducted by (Srivastava, 2018; Alam, 2022).

This study was a step to reveal the awareness and participation of SMC members in various kinds of school activities by referring RTE act, 2009. This study is confined to elementary school level, two blocks and self-developed questionnaire. Researches can be conducted at secondary and higher secondary school level. Studies can be extended to district, state and national level. Studies can be enlarged to awareness level of teachers, head masters, parents and CRCCs. Sample size can be increased to get more reliable data. A comparative study can be undertaken to differentiate the awareness level between male & female SMC members, between private & government schools and between SMC members of rural & urban area.

The present study explores the awareness and participation of the SMC members in various kinds of school activities. RTE Act, 2009 is the premise to Universalization of Elementary Education and SMC members should ensure to fulfil the vision. They are the integral part of a school system, so authorities should include the members in each activity of the school and should encourage them to do the same. Authorities of elementary education should focus on continuous feedback and monitoring of the participation of the members in school activities. This study will guide the administrators to motivate the SMC members to engage themselves in the school activities under RTE Act, 2009. The study establishes valid and reliable data which will be helpful in organizing more orientation and training programs to train the members so that they will include themselves in transformative activities of the school wholeheartedly.

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