

# Functioning of School Management Committee in Rural Elementary School: A Case Study

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**Abstract:** This paper intends to explore the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in rural elementary schools pertaining to the different variables under investigation, e.g. enrollment, utilization of allotted funds and development of infrastructures. Balikhand Primary School situated at Purusottampur Grampanchayat, Simulia Block, Balasore District was selected for case study. The paper highlights the functioning of SMC in this school and reveals many facts pertaining to the different areas under study that have important implications for the major stakeholders of Elementary Education. The study revealed that the SMC discharged its role actively for achieving universal enrollment by checking the attendance and absenteeism of the learners. It also showed interest in developing the infrastructures by communicating the authorities regarding different avenues of infrastructures and the SMC had utilized the allotted funds in proper means so as to develop the system.

**Keywords:** School Management Committee, Rural Elementary School, Universal Enrollment

## 1. BACKDROP

Elementary Education is the cornerstone of our country. This is the first stage of compulsory Education in which the Indian government lays prior emphasis for providing education up to the age of fourteen years. The fast changing nature of society has also vehemently influenced the schooling system. For enhancement of quality education, there is the voice of various committees, commissions, agencies and schemes implementing in all government and private elementary schools. These committees are Village Education Committee (VEC), Parent

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Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC). Among these committees, SMC is one of the important committee working in elementary school system. SMC has very crucial role in actualizing the goals of Right to Education Act-2009 (RTE). It has a very good nick to transform the existing system of education, characterized by multiple demand of globalization, the defective system of functionaries and different stake holders. SMC works towards revitalizing a well-functioning school system through its positive plan of action and a needful constructive dialogue with other stake holders. Its major roles or functions are to develop the quality of teaching, proper utilization of fund that are provided by the Government, implementation of different schemes devised by the State as well as Central Government, to create awareness regarding health among the children, to provide sanitation facilities, to develop school infrastructure etc. Mishra (1989) revealed that parent teacher associations should be activated to maintain discipline of the school. Sachchidananda (1989) found that the dropout at the elementary stage was heavy and increased over the years, the various factors responsible for the poor performance of elementary education are low enrolment, high dropout, poverty of rural families, lack of the teachers' commitment to their duties, lack of effective supervision and rampant corruption in the supervisory cadres. Sarma, et.al (1991) found that seventy one percent of teachers considered guardians' lack of co-operation as serious problems of primary education, sixty four percent teachers and headmasters considered irregularity in attendance of learners as a major problem. Yadav (1991) found that teachers fault for not meeting their parents for discussing their difficulties. Mohapatra (1991) revealed that teachers didn't bother to keep contact with the guardians. Sarma (1992) found that parents' unawareness of the importance of education is the cause of non-enrolment and non-retention and guardian's non-cooperation or unawareness in the context of the teacher guardian relationship was another problem for non-enrollment.

By going through these literatures, the investigators were very much anxious to know the role played by SMCs that operate in rural areas of Odisha. Because problems of non-enrolment and non-retention of children, lack of learning readiness, dropout and lack of proper environment and infrastructures are the major obstructs of elementary education in rural areas of the State. Hence, the investigators conducted the study on "Functioning of SMC in Rural Elementary School".

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To study the role of School Management Committee in rural elementary school in different areas of Elementary Education like enrollment and

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attendance, utilization of allotted funds and extension/development of physical infrastructure.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The investigators have adopted case study method to study the functioning of school management committee towards achieving the quality of education in rural elementary school.

### **4. THE CASE AND KEY INFORMANTS WITHIN THE CASE**

Balikhand Primary School situated at Purusottampur Grampanchayat, Simulia Block, Balasore District is considered as the case for the study. All the SMC members, the headmaster and the students of the School were taken into consideration for collection of relevant data.

### **5. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED**

The tools of the present study were: Interview schedule for SMC members, Interview schedule for headmaster, focus group discussion for students and documentary analysis; developed by the investigators to elicit views/ opinions from the target groups to know the smooth functioning of SMC in rural elementary school and their participation with the School. Interview schedules prepared for the Headmaster and SMC members were developed to collect data about four dimensions viz. Students' Enrolment, Attendance of students, Teaching learning process and Infrastructure of school.

### **6. PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION**

The investigators had personally collected all the data relating to the present study "Functioning of SMC in Rural Elementary School." The investigators collected data from all the SMC members of the school by the help of interview schedule. Similarly, they collected data from one headmaster and conducted one focus group discussion (FGD) with students in the school with the help of interview schedule and FGD guidelines respectively.

### **7. TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS**

In this study, the investigators collected the data through Interview with the Headmaster and SMC Members and Focus group discussion with the students, and transcribed the data into written text. Data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis technique of thick description from various sources.

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## 8. RESULTS

The results pertaining to functioning of SMC in rural elementary school, with reference to universal enrollment, utilization of allotted funds and extension/development of physical infrastructure are presented as follows:

### 8.1 The Case: Balikhand Primary School

**Location:** The school is situated in Purusottampur Grampanchayat, Simulia Block in Balasore district.

Table 1 depicts that out of 135 students; class-I consisting of 35, 33 number of students constitute class-II, class-III consists of 26, 21 students constitute for class-IV and class-V consists of 20 students.

Table 2 shows that there are only three teachers for five classes.

**Table 1:** Class wise Enrollment Strength of Students

Class	Class-I	Class-II	Class-III	Class-IV	Class-V	Total
<b>No. of Students</b>	35	33	26	21	20	135

**Table 2:** Strength of Teachers

Name of Teachers	Age	Sex	Educational and Professional Qualifications	Teaching Experience	Position/designation
Shaini Jena	25	Female	+3 (Arts) and Diploma in Elementary Education	Six years	In-Charge, Headmaster
Mamata Shial	27	Female	+3( Arts), Diploma in Elementary Education	Eight years	Assistant teacher
Markanda Sethi	35	Male	+2 Diploma in Elementary Education	Three years	Assistant teacher

## 9. STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)

In Balikhand Primary School, the SMC was established in the year 2010. The SMC consists of 13 members. One advisor (Headmaster), one teacher representative, Ward member, one NGO member/health worker, one student representative, one cultural association member/ educationist and other community members belonging to this committee. Name of the persons holding different posts in the SMC are: Shaini Jena (Advisor), Markanda Sethi (Teacher representative), Ramesh Chandra Barik (Chairperson), Anima Rani Mishra (Ward member), Rambhamani Shial (Health worker), Jyoti Prakash

Dhupal (Student representative), Jayanta Mishra (Educationist), Rebati Sutar (SMC member), Sukanti Sethi (SMC member), Karuna Kar Sahoo (SMC member), Sabita Behera (SMC member), Gitanjali Shial (SMC member), Anita Sahoo (SMC member).

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## 10. ENROLMENT

Cent percent (100%) of the SMC members expressed that all the children in the age group of 6-14 have been enrolled in the school particularly from that locality. Further; queries from the students during focus group discussion revealed that community members and teachers were regularly monitoring/tracking the attendance in the school and subsequently communicating with parents of the child. Furthermore, there is hike of enrolment percent from previous year and cent percent (100%) of SMC members responded that enrolment ratio has been increased from previous year i.e. ten to fifteen students were added to the previous year strength of all classes.

**Table 3**

	Year	Class-I	Class-II	Class-III	Class-IV	Class-V	Total
<b>No. of Students</b>	2014	35	33	26	21	20	135
	2013	32	30	24	19	18	123

### 10.1 Attendance

Cent percent (100%) of the SMC members expressed that they are familiar with students' strength of the school and further, information regarding monitoring of regular attendance of students in class. About sixty percent (60%) of SMC members reported that they have monitored attendance of students in a class. They take steps for the students those were not regularly attending the classes; by conversation with parents, interaction with concerned students and neighbours. Similarly, very less number (40%) of SMC members remarked that they couldn't monitor regular attendance of students in class because they had no time to spend for monitoring regular attendance of students in class. Therefore they had handed over the responsibilities to the chairperson to monitor regular attendance of students in class.

Further, regarding information about causes of students' absence; Cent percent (100%) of SMC members expressed that they tried to know the causes of students' absence. In this connection, one SMC member stated that "Students are not coming to school because of domestic responsibilities and

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helping the parents in their household work”. Another SMC member stated that “some students are not coming to school because of their personal problems”. However, interaction with students during focus group discussion reflected that SMC members and teachers were vigilant over the students’ absenteeism.

## **11. TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS**

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Cent percent (100%) of SMC members expressed that they asked the children regarding their difficulties in learning. Further, data regarding the headmaster’s invitation to community members to the school revealed that all SMC members viewed that the headmaster invited community members to the school to deliver speech or share experiences. All the SMC members reported that the school organized study or fieldtrip to nearby museum. Similarly cent percent of SMC members opined that the school prepared students for participation in various competitions and exhibitions. All the students detailed that the teachers make efforts to understand their problem; paying individual attentions to all categories of learners, use of various approaches for clarifying doubts during the interaction in the class. The teachers also provide extra time conversation with the students those face problem in classroom.

## **12. INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABILITY**

As high as (80%) of SMC members expressed that they were not satisfied with the infrastructure of the school and very few (20%) of SMC members reported that they were satisfied with the infrastructure of the school. Further investigation during focus group discussion with the students reported that Cent percent (100%) of students, were not satisfied with the existing infrastructure of the school. Further, revealing information regarding various problems of the school; all the SMC members expressed their views that there were many problems arose in the school. The problems like: lack of separated sanitation facilities for boys and girls, lack of sufficient number of classroom, and lack of common rooms. Cent percent (100%) of the SMC members expressed that they had taken measures to extend/develop the existing infrastructure of the school by informing to the higher authorities. Cent percent (100%) of SMC members opined that the school had no separate sanitation facilities for the boys and girls. Similarly, cent percent of students in focus group discussion remarked that the school had no separate sanitation facilities for the boys and girls. Regarding proper water supply facility in the school; cent percent (100%) of both SMC members and the students through focus group discussion expressed their views that school had proper water supply facilities. Cent percent (100%) of SMC members indicated that government provided funds

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to the school. The SMC members reported that they invest money towards the school building, repairing, purchasing of T.L.M and utensils. All the SMC members also opined that they have met their higher authorities and informed the authority in written format for the development of infrastructure system. All the SMC members stated that they assist school in complimenting government efforts in the provision of equipment facilities and funds; they also help the head of the school in developing the school. Similarly, they also co-operate school in dealing with students' disciplinary problem and cent percent (100%) of SMC members opined that they have made efforts to discuss the problems with government officials for immediate action.

### **13. MAJOR FINDINGS**

These major findings related to the Functioning of SMC are as follows:

- (i) All the children between the age group of six to fourteen have been enrolled in the elementary school. Community members and teachers were regularly monitoring the absenteeism of students. All Most all the SMC members try to know the causes of students' absent.
- (ii) All the SMC members asked the children about their difficulties in learning. The headmaster invites community members to the school to deliver speech or sharing of experiences. All the SMC members agreed upon that the school has been preparing students for participation in various competitions and exhibitions.
- (iii) All the SMC members and students were not satisfied with the infrastructure of the school. The SMC members have reported that the school had no separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls. But the school had proper water supply facilities. All the SMC members have taken measures to extend the existing infrastructure of the school.
- (iv) Most of the SMC members expressed that lack of adequate number of teachers was the main hindrance for quality elementary education in the school. The fund provided by Government was properly utilized for the development of the school but that was not sufficient towards to meet the demand of the school. All the SMC members expressed that they have tried to discuss the problems with the government.

### **14. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- (i) SMC members should be well aware about their roles and responsibilities. Community members should take part in the school for smooth running of the school. SMC members should maintain cooperation with community,

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Govt. and other committees for successful attainment of UEE. Hindrances in the way of UEE should be eradicated by the Government.

- (ii) More number training programmes should be provided to the members of SMC in their locality. Meetings of SMC members should be on regular basis. SMC members have to take the responsibility towards regularity of teachers as well as students. Role of SMC in promoting universal Primary Education in rural areas should be extended.
- (iii) Girl students should get more facilities from the schools in order to attract them and to minimize the girl drop outs. Special provision like scholarship should be given to the SC and ST students. Government should provide sufficient number of teachers to the school for making the education process a successful one.

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