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A STUDY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE IN THE TRIBAL AREAS OF ODISHA

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ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to study the functioning of School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in the tribal areas of Odisha. The concentrated District was Koraput which is one of the tribal Districts of Odisha. In order to get information rich data eight Blocks have been selected from the concerned District. The data was collected by using semi-structured interview schedule from the SMDC members. The close ended responses were analysed by using percentage analysis and open-ended questions were analysed through thick description. The major findings of the study reveals that the present study reflects that just more than one third of the schools (37 %) had formed the SMDC within stipulated time. None of the functionaries other than teacher members knew about the formation date of SMDC in their respective schools. It is found that the percentage of participation of male is higher than the female in the SMDC meetings. It was concluded that except teacher members the percentage of attendance of other SMDC members is very low in all sample schools of Koraput district.

KEYWORDS: SMDC, VEC, RMSA, Decentralization, SMC.

INTRODUCTION

Decentralisation implies diffusion of powers into the hands of community. Decentralisation in education system has been implemented in all the phases of education with the purpose of quality improvement, transparency, to give autonomy and to fix accountability. To shift the concentrated powers to community for better control, management and development at the grass effect of decentralisation of education on the wholesome development of the school and student achievement.

The present study is confined to study the role of School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) in the universalization of Secondary Education in the tribal district of Odisha. The major objectives of the present study are:

1. To study if proper procedure has been adopted for the formation and composition of SMDCs in accordance to the guidelines for community mobilization under RMSA.
2. To study the functioning of SMDCs in terms of time gap between SMDC meetings; agendas of SMDC meetings and attendance of SMDC members in the meetings.

Review of Related Literature

The studies related to composition and formation of SMDCs is revealed by various researchers. **Lal (1997)** in his study on "Community participation through Village Education Committee (VEC) in primary education in selected blocks of Sitamarhi district in Bihar" highlighted that the VECs in the District were formed through general meetings in the village having active participation of the school heads and village leaders. Adequate representation of women, schedule castes, schedule tribes and minority were not there in these meetings. Even the Block Education Officers (BEOs) and district officials remained absent in the formation of VECs. The participants in the meeting were mostly of upper caste people and members of the VECs were also from the same category. **Bhattacharya (2001)** studied on functioning of village education committees in selected VECs in Ghunucha cluster of Morigaon district of Assam. It was found that all the sample VECs were uniform and constituted according to the Government guidelines. All the VECs under study were formed in public meetings conducted by CRC coordinators or the Head masters of primary schools of the villages. **Ramachandran (2004)** in her book, "Gender and Social Equity in Primary Education: Hierarchies of Access", highlighted that the less number of VECs took initiatives in organising functions and National days in their respective schools. Out of total 12 VEC members of the school, children of only 2 members were studying in the school and the children of others were in the private schools. Most of the members of the VECs were from the upper class and upper caste dominant group. **Jalan & Panda (2010)** pursued a study on VECs of six rural Districts of West Bengal to examine the demographic and educational qualifications of the VEC members. It concluded with the findings that only 30% of the VEC members were female and more than 70% of them belonged to majority community. Out of that 38% were from general category and 46% belonged to SCs. **Kernel (2012)** conducted a study entitled, "To study the functioning of SMCs in Golaghat District of Assam". The study revealed the positive aspects of SMCs. Such as the SMCs were formed as per the Government guidelines, regular meetings were conducted and even training programmes were



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organised to make the members of SMCs aware regarding their responsibilities in the meetings. **Tripathi & Bajpai (2012)** conducted a study on the structure and demographic profile of members of the Village Education Committees in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Twenty VECs have been selected from one Block as sample for the study from Rambai District of Uttar Pradesh. The major findings were:

- The regulations prepared by these VECs made it compulsory to include at least one female member among the three guardian members. It was clear that in each VEC of the Block there was one nominated member. In a Gram panchayat two female members nominated. It was found that most of the female members were either having no idea about the school developmental activities or having less awareness on it as compared to the male counterparts.
- Category wise representation was not there as per the guidelines of formation of VECs. In one VEC representation of SCs/STs were not there.

The children of President, Secretary and of other members were not studying in the Government Schools where they were the members; in fact, they sent their children to the private schools. It shows that they were not interested in the school development. **Laldintluangi (2017)** the study revealed that there was lack of unanimity in the formation of SMCs, the norms were not followed by the SMCs as formulated for their better structural development. The SMCs were formed for the namesake but the members were not aware about its formation, reformation and some members were also there who did not know whether still they are the members of SMCs. Some people were there who were the members of the committee but their children were not studying in the school. Non participation of the SMC members in school development plan was another major issue in the unsystematic running of SMCs. The studies related to attendance of SMDC members in the SMDC meetings reveals that **Menon's (1999)** study on "Functioning of Village Education Committees (VECs): A study of selected VECs in Haryana" reveals that the relationship between school and community were not yet established in Haryana. Women participation in these meetings was very less in number. The Village Construction Committee (VCC) emerged as an active body for the overall development of the school and its surroundings. **Tyagi (1999)** found that right kind of persons who deserve to be in the VECs hardly got opportunity in it rather the powerful persons wanted to see themselves or their proxies as the VEC members. **Narayana and Chandrakant (2000)** highlights that the participation of women and other members of reserved categories in the meetings were very rare. **Sinha (2008)** revealed that larger number of people belonging to STs and OBCs participated in the selection of VEC members. In most of the meetings the presences of women members were less than the male members. It was concluded with the issue that women members were not actively involved in the school developmental activities as compared to the male members.

Statement of the Problem

Decentralisation has become a global trend for the effective management of our education system. This process of decentralisation aims to reduce govt. size, reorganise delivery, expand private initiatives and create new partnership. Decentralisation has massive effect on policy, planning, management and overall administration of education system.

In order to make the functioning of RMSA smooth, decentralization is inevitable. Unlike other organizations and committees like SMC, VEC at the Elementary level, SMDC have been constituted at the Secondary level by RMSA to fulfil the targets of decentralization of education. The Govt. of Odisha has initiated for the establishment of SMDC in all the Secondary Schools On 22nd January, 2011.

Most of the research findings on decentralized management of school education in India were conducted at elementary school level. The participation of community members at secondary school level accelerated by creating SMDC under RMSA in 2009-10. Further, the educational status of people in tribal areas is not satisfactory in comparison to other non-tribal districts of Odisha. Keeping in view the purpose and need of the study, the investigator framed the present study such as “A Study on the Functioning of SMDCs in the Tribal Areas of Odisha”.

The present study is keenly devoted to answer the following questions. Such as:

1. What are the procedures followed in the formation of SMDC?
2. How do the SMDCs function with regard to?
 - (i) The time gaps
 - (ii) Agendas of the SMDC meetings
 - (iii) Attendance of the SMDC members in the meetings



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Methods

Design

To accomplish the study, the convergent parallel method under Mixed Method Approach as suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2004) was followed. Different databases were compared to see their convergence and differences.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The present study concentrates on the fully tribal Districts of Odisha. Henceforth, six Districts have been selected as the population of the study. Out of that Koraput District have been selected as sample of the study. On the basis of literacy index of the district, four blocks of high and four blocks of low literacy rate were selected by adopting disproportionate stratified random sampling. Further, 15 schools were selected from high literacy sampled blocks as well as 15 schools were selected from low literacy sampled blocks by adopting convenient sampling technique of non-probability sampling methods. Hence, 30 schools in total have been selected from 8 sampled blocks of Koraput districts for the present study. As the design of the study is mixed i.e., quantitative and qualitative, the investigator preferred to non-probability sampling techniques to select sampling units that reflect the characteristics of the phenomena of the interest. More specifically incidental sampling was used to consider representation of the SMDC members such as parent representative, Panchayati Raj Institute (PRI), Village Education Committee (VEC), Self Help Group (SHG) and DPC/DEO nominee. From each SMDC of the sampled schools, the researcher has purposively selected these members of SMDC.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed by the researcher to obtain data on the present study. The schedule consisted of 37 open ended and closed ended questions regarding the composition and formation of SMDCs, functioning of SMDCs with reference to time gap within the meetings, preparation of agendas and attendance of the SMDC members along with other issues discussed in the meetings.

Data Collection

The researcher went to the District Education Officer (DEO) of Koraput District to obtain permission for smooth collection of information rich data. Therefore, the researcher visited the all the sampled secondary schools of Koraput personally.

Techniques of Data Analysis

For the present study the researcher utilized both the percentage analysis and content analysis techniques to analyse the data. The closed ended questions were analysed by percentage analysis method and the open-ended questions were analysed with content analysis method by thick description.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After the analysis of relevant data, the researcher came with the following findings regarding the formation, composition and functioning of SMDCs.

Procedure for the formation of SMDCs

Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha issued a letter Vide No. 412/SME/VIII-A SME(SCH) 4/11 Dated 22/01/2011 for the formation of School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) for all Govt./ Aided High Schools by 31st March, 2011.

The present study reflects that just more than one third of the schools (37 %) had formed the SMDC within stipulated time i.e., on or before 31st March, 2011. 63 % of the schools had not formed SMDC within the issuance date of letter by Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha. This had been cross verified by the investigator from the SMDC meeting register of the sampled schools. Around 77 % of the Heads of the schools and 54 % of teachers were able to spell out the year of formation of SMDC in their schools. None of the functionaries other than teacher members knew about the formation date of SMDC in their respective schools. The important reason of their ignorance is the change of membership from time to time due to the passing out of their children from the concerned school. Few members were also there who used to represent both in the SMC of that school and in the SMDC respectively. This is the scenario of Upgraded High Schools where these members were more interested in the functioning of SMCs and remained confused with the formation of SMDCs.

The guidelines have been issued to all the Secondary Schools for the proper formation of SMDCs. In the guidelines, the eligibility for the membership and the procedures to be followed in the formation of SMDCs has been given. In more than 85% of the schools the members of SMDCs were as per the guidelines of RMSA. But the remaining schools formed SMDCs according to their



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convenience and availability of members in their area. Even few schools were found with such parent members whose children were no more in the school and the PRI members were not the current working members of the time. Even some of the schools did not have 17 members in the list of SMDC which shows the casual attitude of the Head of the school towards the functioning of SMDC. When they were asked about the causes behind this one of the Head of the told,

“It is very easy to formulate the policies but very difficult to implement these in the tribal pockets where maximum parents are either illiterate or less educated. Hence, we include those members in SMDC list who are little aware regarding the role and functions of school....”.

When asked about incomplete list of SMDC one of the senior most teachers of a school said,

“We are planning to renew the list of SMDC members very soon. SMDC is there in the school for the namesake. Hence we don't focus on it....”.

It is mentioned in the guidelines in the formation of SMDC that there should be Sub-committees in the SMDCs to decentralize the activities in the school. But none of the sample schools had constituted the sub-committee within the SMDC. When it was asked to the Heads of the schools, whether they had received any letter from the office of DEO to form any sub-committees within the SMDC, cent percent of the Heads of the schools replied that they had not received any letter or instruction to form sub-committee within the SMDC. In fact, they were not aware about its composition and rationale as specified in the RMSA frameworks, Govt. of India.

One of the Head in charge of the schools said,

“I don't know about the formation of Sub-committee. Can you please give me any guideline regarding the formation of all these sub-committee....”

This implies the ignorance of the SMDC members on the formation guidelines issued by RMSA.

The findings are in the tune of the research studies conducted by (Lal, 1997; Bhattacharya, 2001). Kernel (2012) revealed the positive aspects of the functioning of SMCs like they were formed as per the Government guidelines, regular meetings were conducted and even training programmes were organised to make the members of SMCs aware regarding their responsibilities in the meetings. This is contradictory to the findings of the present study.

Procedure for composition of SMDCs

The suggested composition of the SMDC consist maximum of 17 members including the Chairman and Secretary. This also includes nine elected members, out of which four representatives from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), three representatives from teachers of the school, one representative from VEC of the villages to which the school concerned caters and one representative from woman groups i.e., SHGs. The Head and Senior most Assistant teacher of the school concerned and two members of Panchayat Raj Institution are ex-officio members of the SMDC. Additionally, four more representatives are nominated to the committee, out of which three are experts each from Science, Humanities and Art/Craft/Culture background nominated by DPC, one is Education Officer from Education Department nominated by DEO.

The comparison between the RMSA frameworks, MHRD, Govt. of India with the suggested composition of the SMDC by the Department of School and Mass Education, Govt. of Odisha highlights that state composition of the SMDC members is very close to central composition of the SMDC members except two minor changes. As the central composition suggest one teacher related to mathematics and one member from Audit and Accounts Department. While the state composition of the SMDC includes one teacher from the background of Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics at graduation level in place of one teacher member related to Mathematics of central composition of the SMDC. Secondly, one member from Audit and Account Department is not represented in the state composition of the SMDC. The possible reason may be that the district Audit and Account Department cannot spare persons to attend the monthly meeting of the SMDC because of shortage of man power.

It is concluded from the analysis that in case of elected members 32% belongs to male and 21% belongs to female. In nominated category 18% are male and only 6% are female. It is 17% male and 6% female in Ex-officio category. It is found that the percentage of male is higher than the female in the SMDC. But the participation of the female members in the SMDCs of the high literate blocks were found to be more as compared with the low literate blocks.



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As the head of the schools are the chairmen as well as initiator of the SMDC meeting in the school. It is very pertinent to know their perception about existing composition of the SMDC. One of the Heads described that we are trying to follow all formality in constitution and composition of SMDC. But it is very difficult to follow the guideline for the composition of SMDC in such a tribal area. He described that:

...The guideline for the composition of SMDC members is not suitable in such a tribal school. We are bound to select the members as per the guideline but the selected members are not coming to the meeting regularly. Most of the parent members are uneducated and they are not willing to come to the meeting...

One of the Head of the schools narrated that:

...This system rarely fits to the schools located in remote tribal areas. Members from parent representatives and disadvantaged groups have not been attending meeting. Even if they are coming occasionally, they are just sitting in meeting as mere listeners. Their absence as well as passiveness does not promote team spirit work which is essential in the functioning of SMDC. The accountability will be attained more efficiently when all members work as a team towards the development of the school than when all managerial activities are done by me and my staff alone. The existing composition of SMDC does not permit to include the people who had contributed land and money for the establishment of the school...

The findings of the study are in parallel with the studies conducted by (Chandrakant, 2000; Jalan and Panda, 2010; Bajpai, 2012; Laldintluangi, 2017) which confirmed that there was less representation of women in the SMDCs and there was lack of unanimity in the formation of SMCs, the norms were not followed by the SMCs as formulated for their better structural development.

Time gap between the SMDC meetings

In the academic session 2011-12, only 57 % of the sample schools (17 out of 30) had conducted SMDC meeting. Only 3% of the schools had conducted meeting above six times in the session 2011-12 while 53% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times in the same session. In the academic session 2012-13, 70 % of the sample schools (21 out of 30) had conducted SMDC meeting. Only 27% of the sample schools had conducted meeting above six times in the year while 43% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times. In the academic session 2013-14, 93 % of the sample schools (28 out of 30) had conducted SMDC meeting. But only 23% of the sample schools had conducted meeting above six times in the year while 70% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times. In the academic session 2014-15, 97 % of the sample schools (29 out of 30) had conducted SMDC meeting. But only 27% of the sample schools had conducted meeting above six times in the year while 70% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times. In the academic session 2015-16, 100 % of the sample schools (had conducted SMDC meeting. But only 37% of the sample schools had conducted meeting above six times in the year while 63% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times. In the academic session 2016-17, 100 % of the sample schools had conducted SMDC meeting. But only 43% of the sample schools had conducted meeting above six times in the year while 57% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting below six times.

The year wise frequencies of the SMDC meeting had been given in table.

Frequencies of the SMDC meeting year wise

Academic Year -	Frequencies of the SMDC meeting year wise		
	1-4 Times	5-8 Times	9-12 Times
2011-12	11 (37)	6 (20)	-
2012-13	9 (30)	11 (37)	1 (3)
2013-14	16 (53)	12 (40)	-
2014-15	16 (53)	12 (40)	1 (3)
2015-16	14 (47)	13 (43)	3 (10)
2016-17	13 (43)	13 (43)	4 (13)

(Figures within parenthesis indicates %)



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- The above table reflects that in the year 2011-12, 37% of the sample schools had conducted the SMDC meeting ranging 1 to 4 times. Only 20% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. There was no school conducted the meeting ranging 9 to 12 times in the year 2011-12.
- In the year 2012-13, 30% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 1 to 4 times and 37% of the schools conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. Only 3% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting ranging 9 to 12 times in the year 2012-13.
- In the year 2013-14, 53% of the sample schools had conducted the SMDC meeting ranging 1 to 4 times. Only 40% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. There was no school conducted the meeting ranging 9 to 12 times in the year 2013-14.
- In the year 2014-15, 53% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 1 to 4 times and 40% of the schools conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. Only 3% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting ranging 9 to 12 times in the year 2014-15.
- In the year 2015-16, 47% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 1 to 4 times and 43% of the schools conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. Only 10% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting ranging 9 to 12 times in the year 2015-16.
- In the year 2016-17, 33% of the schools had conducted the meeting ranging 1 to 4 times and 43% of the schools conducted the meeting ranging 5 to 8 times. Only 14% of the schools had conducted SMDC meeting ranging 9 to 12 times.

It may be concluded from table data that very few schools had conducted monthly SMDC meeting as per the mandate of RMSA framework. Further probing to the Heads of the schools about the cause of irregularity of monthly SMDC meeting highlighted that frequency of the SMDC meetings depends on the allocation of the budget under annual RMSA grant or any non-recurring budget for new construction etc. Some of the specific observations of the Heads of the school regarding frequency of the SMDC meetings as follow:

...I am over burdened with other official works, therefore I usually call meeting after getting Rs. 50,000/- annual RMSA grant to discuss about its expenditure head wise and to select in-charge to procure the materials or goods from the market. This year we have not received the annual grant yet. But one SMDC meeting was held to sort out the problems relating to boundary wall...

One of the Head of the school during the communication was discussing regarding the attendance of DEO nominee and the DPC nominee. In the process the head master said,

...The name of the DEO nominee is there in the list but he never attended the meeting. We have never seen him in our school. Even nominated members of DPC don't come to attend meeting. Everytime they said, they can't come by spending from their pocket as they don't get any TA...

Another head of the school remarked as follows:

...It is not possible to held monthly SMDC meeting because of multiple causes. Parents members and SHG members are not willing to come to the meeting because of their domestic work. It is not fair to call all these members to attend monthly SMDC meeting with personal expenses. There is no provision to give any honorarium and TA to the DPC and DEO nominee members...

The above statements clearly indicates that most of the Heads of the school have preconceived mindset that meeting depends on allotment of the fund. Secondly, there was not budget to meet hospitality expenditure of the monthly meeting as well as absence of budget towards honorarium and TA of the DPC and DEO nominee.

Regarding the frequency of the SMDC meeting, it was found that meetings were held only on requirement basis. Most of the school deviated from the norms i.e., the SMDC must meet at least once in a month to look after various problems and issues of the school.

But the findings of the present study have partially similar results regarding the time gap between the meetings in relation to the study of Kernel (2012) which shows the regular meetings were conducted.



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Agendas of the SMDC meetings

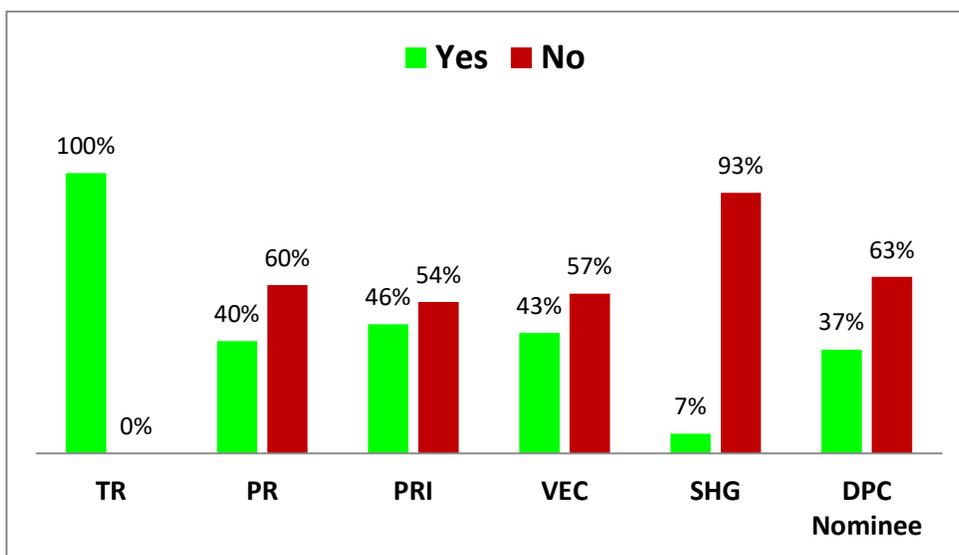
It is mandatory that every SMDC meeting need to be conducted with clear cut agenda i.e. activities or programmes need priority. It is the responsibility of the headmaster as convener of the SMDC to circulate the notice for upcoming meeting by listing out agenda. Interaction with the headmasters and senior most teachers of the sample school confirmed that they used to list out the agenda and communicate the same to other members of the SMDC before conducting meeting. This has been verified by cross checking the SMDC meeting call register of all sampled schools. Along with quantitative data evidence, when interacted with the members other than teachers about their awareness about the agenda of meeting, reflects that very negligible percentage of the parent members (less than 7 %), PRI members (11 %) and the DPC/DEO nominee (less than 18 %) were having beforehand information about the purpose/agenda of the meeting.

Further investigation in this connection concludes that lack of interest; illiteracy among the parent and SHG members and telephonic information about the schedule of meeting were the principal causes of poor level of knowledge about the agenda of meeting among regular meeting attending members of the SMDC. It was found that there was general consensus among regular attending members about the positive repercussion of beforehand information of agenda of meeting.

As per the RMSA framework, the Head of the school is the convener of the SMDC. He/she is supposed to call monthly meeting and also maintains the minutes of the same. When the Heads of the school and the senior most teachers of the school were asked whether they maintain the proceeding of the monthly meetings, around 96 % of the Heads of the school and cent percent of the senior most teachers reported that they had been maintaining the proceedings of the monthly meetings. The responses of the Heads of the school and senior most teachers were cross checked by the investigator from meeting resolution register of the concerned schools.

Attendance of the SMDC members in the meetings

Effective functioning of the SMDC squarely rest on the proactive participation all members in monthly meetings as well as involve themselves to take stock of the activities proposed in the previous meeting and to follow up decisions on some of the issues related to the school. The participation of different categories of members in the SMDC meetings from different blocks is highlighted in the following chart.



that cent percent of the teacher representatives of the SMDC stated that they were attending meeting regularly. 40% of the parent members stated that they were attending the meeting regularly where 60% of the parent members were not attending. 46% of PRI members and 43% of VEC members ensured that they attend the SMDC meeting. Only 7% of the SHG members stated that they attend the meeting but highly 93% of the SHG members were not attending the meeting regularly. Around 37 % of the DPC/DEO nominee of all sample schools of six blocks replied that they were attending the meeting. From the above discussions it can be concluded here that except teacher members the percentage of attendance of other SMDC members is very low in all sample schools of Koraput district.



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One of the PRI members i.e., Sarpanch was asked about her attendance in SMDC meeting & school developmental work, she said that:

...I am one of the members. I hardly attend meetings due to my poor health condition. sometimes I have other works in the locality and Panchayat office. Once I attended a meeting. Then onwards I never attended. So I can't explain regarding the functions / formation of SMDC & about my specific role in the meeting...

Communication with a Head Master revealed information regarding the role of SHG members and VEC members. He said that,

...The SHG members don't attend the meetings regularly as they are busy in their group work along with their household & agricultural work. Sometimes they come & sit as passive listeners on the back of the bench & sign in the resolution. The parents & VEC members are also very inactive in the meetings. Instead of calling them several times, they rarely show interest...

Further query regarding the cause low attendance of members in SMDC meetings other than teacher representatives revealed that there were multiple common as well as unique causes responsible for low attendance of members in the meeting. The causes have been listed category wise in table 4.22.

Table No. 4.23 Causes of low attendance in the SMDC meeting

Common causes of Low attendance in SMDC meeting among all categories of members		
Engagement in domestic work No information about the meeting Lack of time because of working hours Inadequately informed about the role and responsibilities No formal training		
S. No.	Categories of SMDC members	Specific causes
01	Parent Representatives (PR)	Unstable economic capacity Weak articulation power of woman from SC/ST community Illiteracy/low education qualification
02	Panchayat Raj Institution Members (PRI)	Lack of coordination
03	Village Education Committee (VEC) Members	Non sharing of responsibilities
04	Self Help Group (SHG) Members	Lack of incentives
05	DPC/DEO nominated members	No TA/DA or incentives

Interaction with the members during interview revealed that there are some common causes like engagement in domestic work, no information about the meeting, lack of time because of working hours and inadequately informed about the role and responsibilities, no formal training which resulted low rate of attendance in the regular meeting of the SMDC. Besides that, when investigator further probed to pin point the specific causes of low attendance among different categories of members of the SMDC, it was found that parent members could not attend the regular SMDC meeting of their concerned school because of unstable economic capacity, weak articulation power of woman from SC/ST community and illiteracy/low education qualification.

One of the female parent members from ST community narrated that:

...I am intentionally avoiding to attend the meeting because of my low self-esteem in the presence of teachers, resource persons and other dignified persons of my village. Merely attending the meeting and leaving without any conversation do not allow me to attend the meeting. In fact, I suggested headmaster of the school to send the record to my home for signature if required...



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One of the male parent members informed that:

...I do not know how to participate in the discussion and what to say. Initially I have attended meeting 1/2 times. I found that teachers and other experts are taking all the decisions. Since then, I skipped to attend the meeting...

It is evident from the data that cent percent of the teacher representatives have been attending the SMDC meetings of the school. On the other hand, less than half of the members from other categories were attending the meeting. Further, attendance percentages of the SHG members were found lowest (7 %) among all categories of members of the SMDC other than teacher representatives. Subsequent regarding the causes of low rate attendance among SMDC members confirmed that some causes namely engagement in domestic work, no information about the meeting, lack of time because of working hours and inadequately informed about the role and responsibilities, no formal training and some specific causes like unstable economic capacity, weak articulation power of woman from SC/ST community and illiteracy/low education qualification do not permit for large scale participation of SMDC members.

The findings of the study are in tune with the findings of (Lal,1997; Menon, 1999 and Narayan and Chandrakant, 2000) which reveals the lack of participation of women, SC, ST and Minorities in the meetings of VECs and SMCs. The present study reveals the same regarding the SMDCs.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis of the present study clearly reveals that all the schools had formed SMDC. According to their convenience and availability of the members, the schools formulated the SMDC. None of the schools had formed any sub-committee in SMDC. The State composition of different category of members varies a little from the central guidelines of RMSA. Only 13% of the schools conducted SMDC meetings 9 to 12 times in a year which shows the lack of importance given by the schools on conduct of SMDC meetings regularly.

The findings of the study enforced the researcher to think about some productive suggestions for the better functioning of SMDC.

- (I) All the Heads and senior most teachers of the schools should be given orientation on the guidelines given by the RMSA for the formulation of SMDC.
- (II) All the members of SMDC should be trained from time to time to make them aware regarding their roles and functions in SMDC to ensure their participation in the meetings and the participation in the training programmes should be ensured by the ADEO and BEOs.
- (III) Some TA/DA provisions should be there to ensure participation of DEO/DPC Nominee.
- (IV) Timing for the meeting should be convenient for all the members of SMDC; if necessary, all the members can be consulted for a suitable timing.
- (V) The membership list of the SMDC members should be updated from time to time after passing out of the students from the schools.
- (VI) The participation of the SMDC members except teachers should be encouraged with certain reinforcement. The parent members can be encouraged with the provision of extra attention and extra classes for those children whose parents attend the meetings regularly.
- (VII) The agendas of the SMDC meetings should be circulated beforehand to make the members aware regarding the issues to be discussed. So that these members can come with curiosity and confidence.

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