A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON RTE RULES AND THEIR ROLE

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Abstract:

Right to free and compulsory Education to Children Act 2009 has provided specific guidelines for the development of SMC in schools. A School Management Committee is required to be constituted for all Government and Govt. added schools as per section21 of RTE Act. The SMC Comprises parents, local authority and school teachers. Monitoring of School functioning, supervise the utilization of grants and preparing and recommend School Development Plan (SDP) are the major roles and responsibilities of SMC as envisioned in RTE Act. It is essential that Community members and parents should be aware of the roles of the SMC and the process of its formation. The quality of SMC directly depend on the level and quality of participation of parents therefore, it is necessary that parents should be sensitized with respect to the provision of RTE Act, the roles and responsibilities of SMC. At present implementation of SMC facing many glitches and challenges like lack of clarity on policy guidelines, low community awareness and inadequate capacity building etc. In addition to describing these challenges this study highlights the evidence on functioning of SMC in Madhya Pradesh and their awareness on RTE rules, roles and responsibilities.

Key Words: SMC, RTE& Community Participation.

Introduction:

State specific rules for the formation and structure of the SMC under RTE has been notified in Madhya Pradesh on 26 March 2011 under powers conferred by sub-section (1) and (2) of section 38 of The Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and further amended on 20th July 2011. School Management Committees are constituted as per section 21 of the RTE Act in all Government Primary - Upper primary and government added schools of Madhya Pradesh. At Present there are 83890 SMCs in Primary Schools and 30341SMCs in Upper primary schools are functional across the state. The School Management Committee in Primary Schools has 18 members committee while in Upper primary it has 16 Members. Out of them minimum three fourth members are from mothers and fathers or guardians of the children enrolled in the school. Two members are elected representatives. Fifty percent of positions are reserved for women in the committee. The Head teacher or the senior most teachers and senior most female teacher of the school are also the members of the committee. The Head Teacher or the senior most Teacher act as ex-office member Secretary of the committee. The tenure of a SMC is decided as 2 years. Right to free and compulsory Education to Children Act 2009 Guideline mentions specific functions to be performed by SMCs, such as:

- ✓ Ensuring 100% enrolment of children in the age group of 6-14 years.
- ✓ Monitoring of school activities and its working.
- ✓ Preparation and recommend School Development Plan (SDP).
- ✓ Monitoring academic progress of the children.
- ✓ Monitoring teachers' and students' attendance.
- ✓ Monitoring Mid-day Meal.
- ✓ Supervision/monitoring of finance, management, academic progress, distribution of entitlements and other functions.
- ✓ Keeping proper accounts of the fund available and its utilization.
- ✓ Co-coordinating with the local authority, generating funds from other sources for development of schools.

Since the enactment of the Act and formation of SMCs they are performing their roles in their respective school and now it is almost more than 7 years are completed to their performance. But due to lack of knowledge, lack of proper information, lack of clarity on policy guidelines, low literacy level of presidents and members, low community participation and inadequate capacity building they are even struggling to perform their roles effectively. Due to low literacy and lack of awareness there is a lot of ambiguity is appeared in understanding their role and they found them self in enormous kind of apathy. This kind of situation adversely affects the School functioning and Educational quality of School and its children. It needs that SMCs should sensitize with respect to the provisions of RTE Act, the roles and responsibilities of the SMC.

Rational of the Study:

School Management Committees are established in each Govt. Primary school of Madhya Pradesh to extend support in school management and academic activities of the school. However the implementation of

SMC faces several challenges such as lack of knowledge on policy guidelines, poor level of Community engagement, lack of coordination between School authorities and Committee and restricted financial decentralization. In addition to describing above challenges this study will try to highlight the evidence of functioning of SMC and awareness of SMC members and President towards RTE rules and their Role as well as the policy landscape across the state. Vaijayanthi, Aradhya et al. (2004) assessed the awareness among SDMC members on the objectives, powers and duties and their participation and stated that illiterate members were as effective as literate members. There was ambiguity on perception of SDMC Study covered 460 schools from eight blocks. Vinayak, V. (2004) studied the role of Village Education Committee (VEC) in school management with objective to assess the functioning of VEC vis-a-vis their role, frequency of VEC meetings, members' attendance and, participation level of members in the meeting, understand mutual relationship between the VEC and the head-teacher in Sixteen VECs each from randomly selected three districts using the criteria of geographical representation and low female literacy under DPEP in Uttaranchal. It was found that VEC was functional in all villages and 72% of them organized meetings every month. Members were aware of their roles and responsibilities. Parents and the VEC members recognized the role of VEC. Central Square Foundation, New Delhi (2016) presented a report on empowering communities, enhancing education - strengthening school management committees in India, with the support of 10 NGOs. Based on their intervention in the field of community participation and different context to provide school oversight the report critically examined the gap between policy intent and on the ground implementation of SMC and presents a way to policy makers, mid-level government functionaries and various stake holders to take necessary action.

Objectives of the Study:
✓ To Study the awareness of SMC towards RTE rules, their Role and Responsibilities.

Sampling:
This study has been conducted in a total 81 Govt. Primary Schools of Gwalior, Shivpuri, Guna, Shajapur, Ratlam, Dewas, Indore, Dhār and Jhabua district of 3 divisions (Gwalior, Ujjain, Indore) of Madhya Pradesh by taking 9 primary Schools from each district. The selected Govt. Primary schools were situated in Urban, Sami Urban and Rural areas & Similarly SC, ST, and General population concentration areas of Madhya Pradesh. Proportional Random sampling was used to select the Divisions, Districts has been selected through Stratified sample technique and Govt. Primary schools were selected through Random sampling technique.

Methodology and Tools used for the Study:
The investigator used Descriptive Survey method to understand the different aspect of awareness on RTE Rules and role of SMC. Interview schedule was developed for President, Member of SMC, Teacher and Headmaster of Govt. Primary School.SMC Meetings were observed through observation schedule and Focus group discussion with president and members of SMC was conducted in all 81 Govt. Primary Schools to get a clear representation of the awareness of the SMC.SMC President, Head Master, 5 SMC members and one Teacher from each school were selected for capturing information, total 81 Presidents, 405 SMC members, 81 Head Master and 81 Teacher, were administered through the tools. 81 SMC meetings were observed and 81 focus group discussions were also conducted.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:
The collected data was systematically analyzed by using percentage method. The analysis and discussion has been presented below:

Table 1: Awareness of the Presidents about School Management Committee
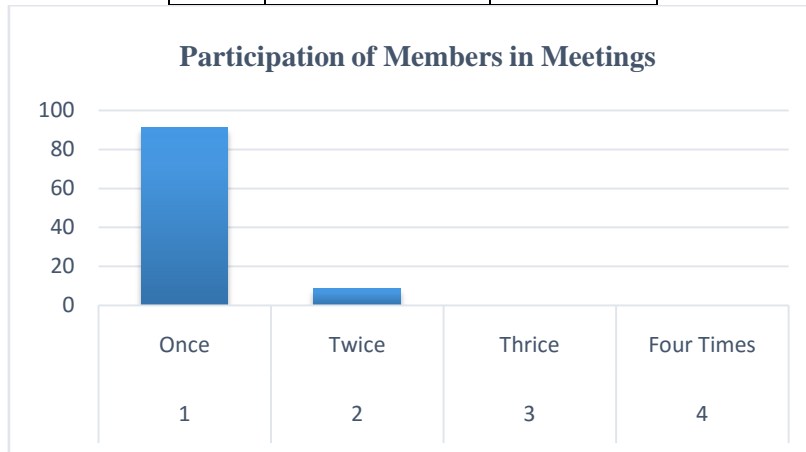
No	Particulars	Response
1	Yes	79.01
2	No	20.99
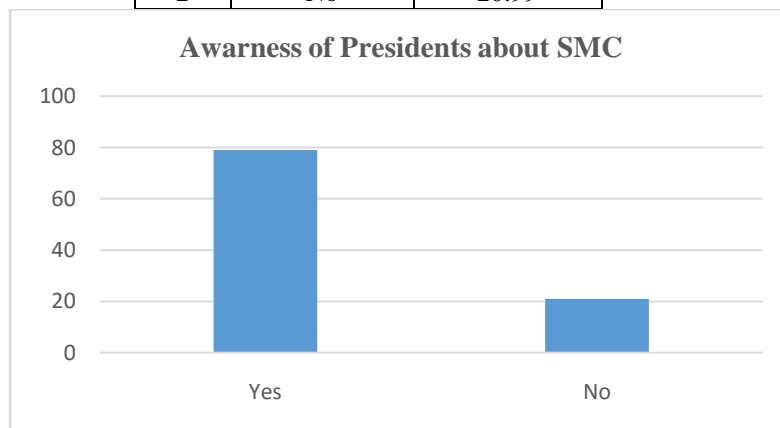
It can be concluded thatmore than half the presidents of studied SMCs have awareness and knowledge about SMC according to RTE Act.

Table 2: Participation of Members in Meetings

No	Particulars	Response
1	Once	91.36
2	Twice	8.64
3	Thrice	-
4	Four Times	-

Majority of SMCs Members participates in meeting usually once in a month, only a few participate twice in a month.
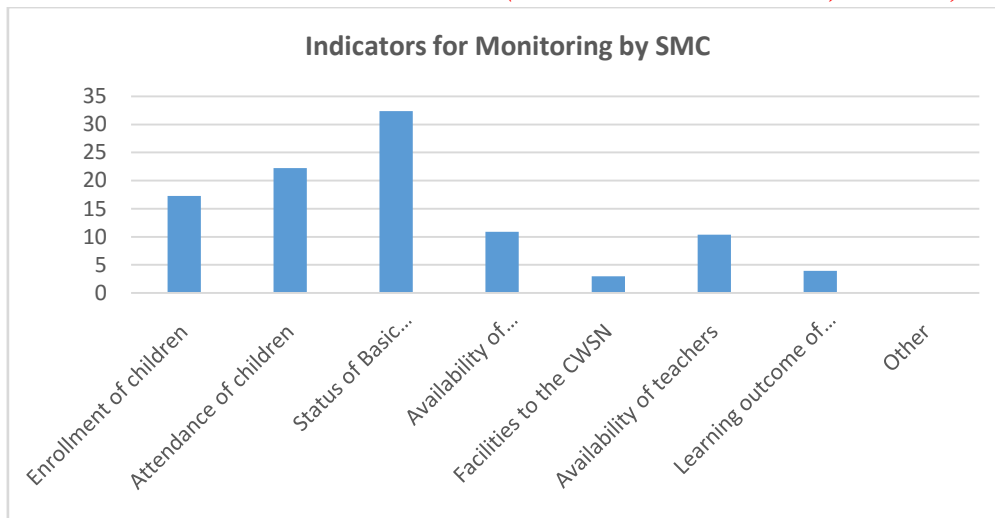
Table 3: Knowledge about role of SMC

No	Particulars	Response
1	Monitoring of Teaching Learning	85.19
2	Work for the Development of School	79.01
3	Solve the problems of children	50.62
4	Assistance in School operation	56.79
5	Other	-
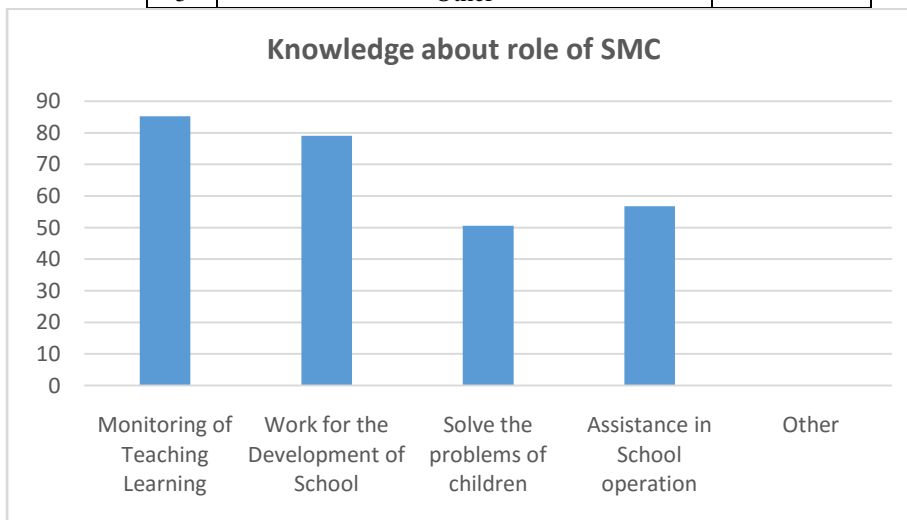
According to the majority of SMC presidents, arrangement and monitoring of teaching learning activities is the major role of SMC. Similarly, more than the half also mentioned about working for improvement of school and assistance in school operation as a key role of SMC.

Table 4: Indicators for Monitoring by SMC

No	Particulars	Response
1	Enrollment of children	17.28
2	Attendance of children	22.22
3	Status of Basic Infrastructure	32.35
4	Availability of Educational resources to the children	10.86
5	Facilities to the CWSN	2.96
6	Availability of teachers	10.37
7	Learning outcome of children	3.95
8	Other	-

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Availability and status of basic infrastructure, enrolment and attendance of children and availability of educational resources and teachers, were the priority areas of monitoring by SMCs.

Table 5: Monitoring of Attendance of Children

No	Particulars	Total
1	Daily	-
2	Once in a week	17.28
3	Once in a month	70.37
4	On the day of meeting	12.35
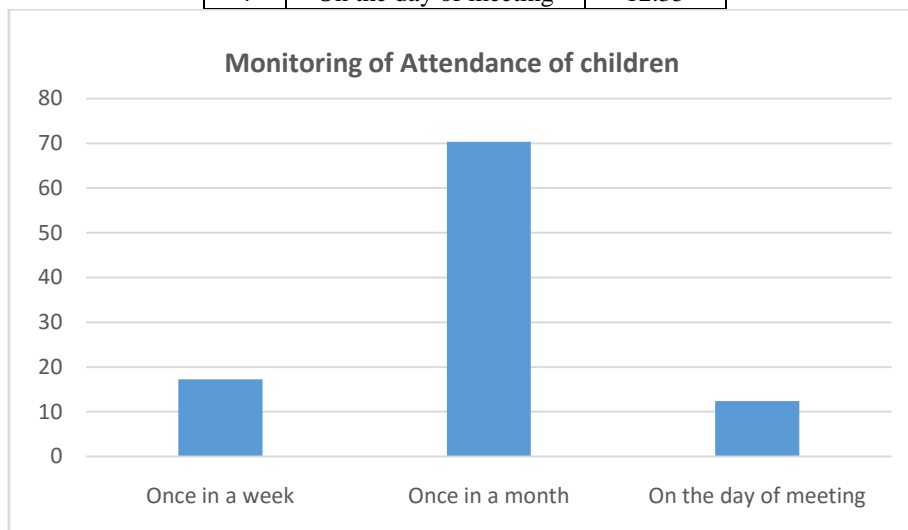
SMC performs monitoring of academic progress and school functioning, 70.37% SMCs monitors attendance of children once in a month, while in some areas 17.28 % SMCs monitors once in a week.

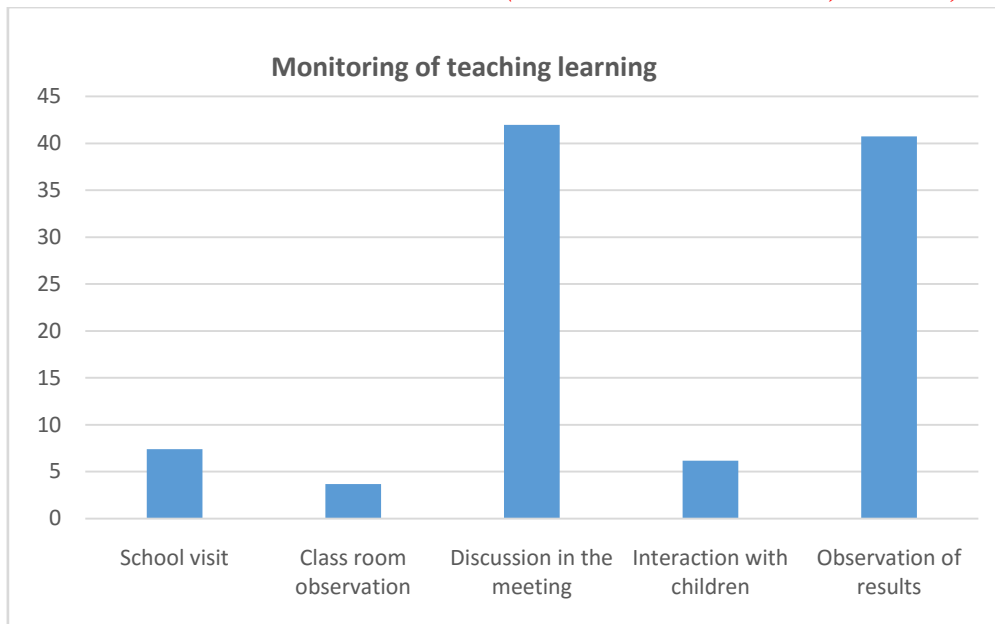**Table 6: Monitoring of Facilities in school**

No	Particulars	Total
1	Regular school visit	-
2	Discussion with teachers	59.26
3	Discussion with children	20.99
4	Self-observation	19.75

Monitoring of Facilities and infrastructures is a major work to do by SMC, More than half SMCs prefer to discuss with teacher, while rest of them discussed with children and use self-observation to monitor the facilities..

Table 7: Monitoring of teaching learning

No	Particulars	Total
1	School visit	7.41
2	Class room observation	3.70
3	Discussion in the meeting	41.98
4	Interaction with children	6.17
5	Observation of results	40.74

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41.97% SMCs monitor the teaching learning by discussing about it in the monthly meeting, while 40.74% SMCs observe the results to monitor teaching learning. The percentage of class room observation to monitor teaching learning was found to be less.

Table 8: Preparation of School Development Plan

No	Particulars	Response
1	Yes	38.27
2	No	41.97
3	No Idea	19.76
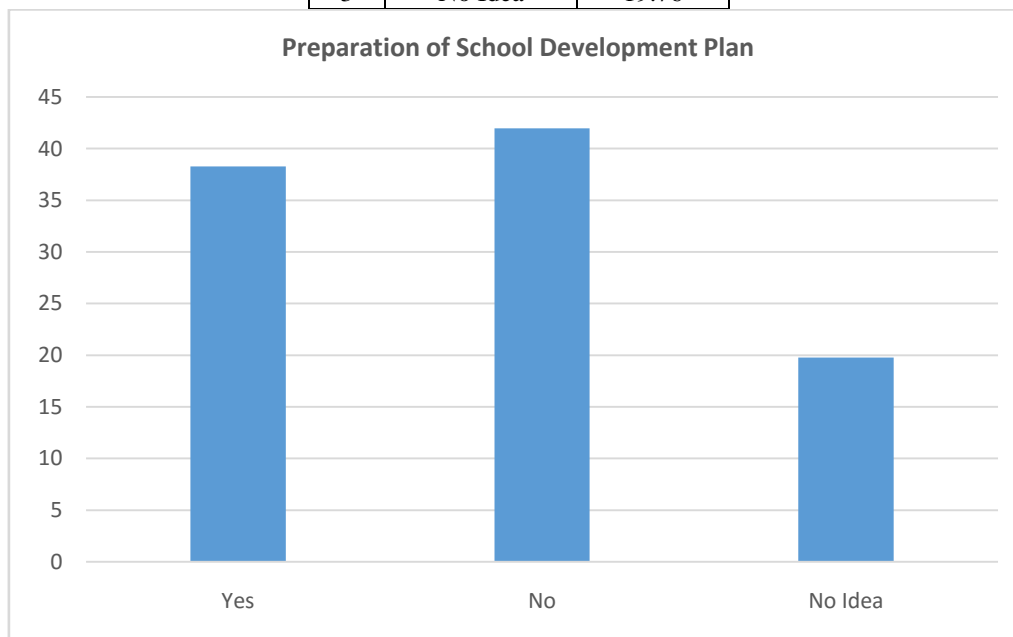
Section 22 (1) of RTE Act and state rule for RTE 13 (1) specify that SMC shall prepare a school development plan at least three months before the end of the financial year. The study found that only 38.27, less than half SMCs have knowledge about SDP and they provide their support whereas 41.97 did not prepare and 19.76 have no idea about it.

Table 9: Understanding on Particulars of SDP

No	Particulars	Response
1	Conge native	
2	Social	18.52
3	Institutional	4.94
4	Physical	6.17
5	No Idea	70.30

Understanding on Particulars of SDP
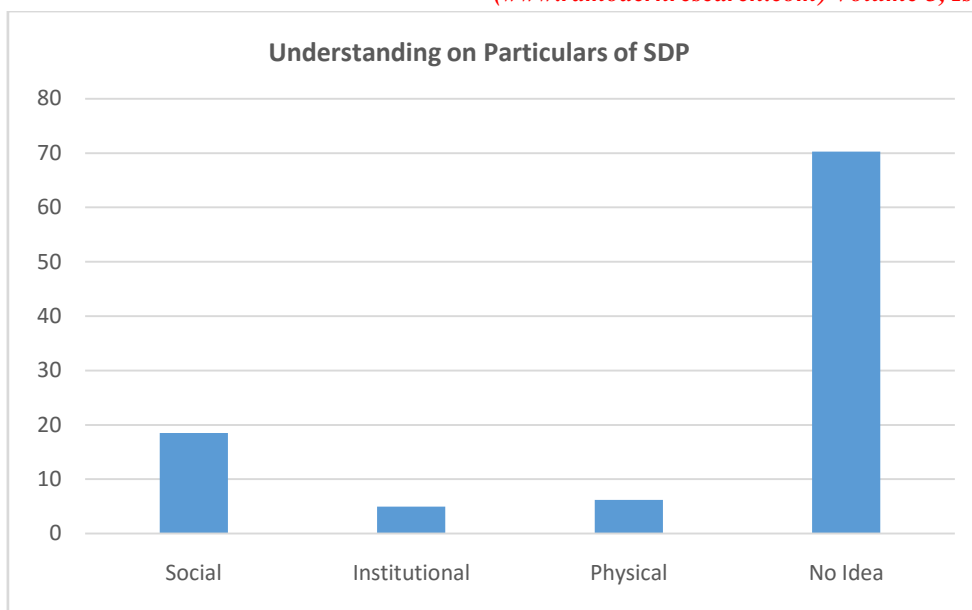
SDP has some specific components like estimates of class wise enrolment, physical requirement of additional infrastructure, subject teachers, additional financial requirements etc. SMCs have lack of understanding on SDP. More than half (70.30%) SMCs have no idea about the content of the plan while 18.52% have some ideas about social component of SDP.
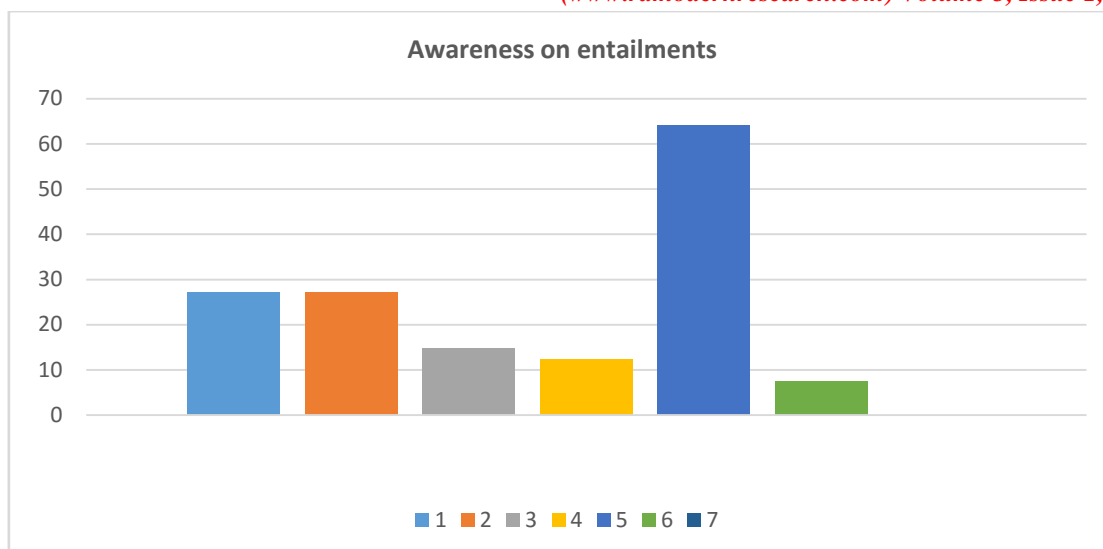
Table 10: Use of Financial Rights

No	Particulars	Response
1	Yes	77.78
2	No	22.22

Use of Financial Rights
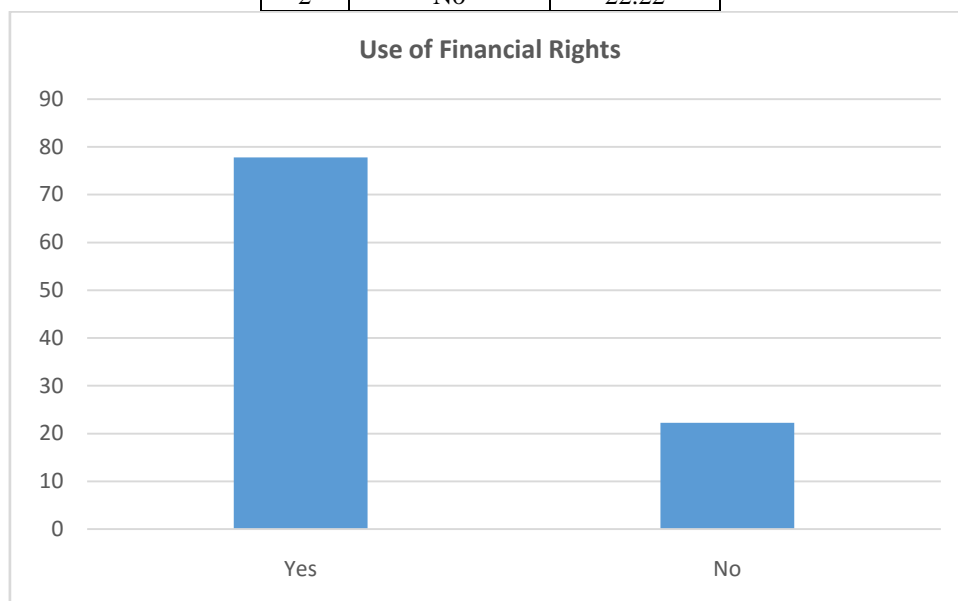
Section 21 (2) (C) stated that SMC should monitor the utilization of the grant received from appropriate government or local authority or any other sources. 77.78%, a majority of SMCs aware about financial rights and involved in practicing financial rights while rest 22.22% SMCs does not have idea to use these rights.

Table 11: Awareness on entailments Provided to the children

No	Particulars	Response
1	Free Uniform	27.16
2	Free text books	27.16
3	Scholarships	14.81
4	Equipment and facilities to the CWSN	12.35
5	Mid-day meal	64.20
6	Bi-cycle	7.41
7	Other	-

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Awareness of SMCs was found to be very less about the benefits Entitlements provide to them. Predominantly more than half knows about Mid-Day Meal, few of them have information about free uniform and free Text Book distribution.

Table 12: Challenges against SMC

No	Particulars	Response
1	Lack of community participation	51.25
2	Lack of Awareness among the parents	25.93
3	Lack of proper information	16.05
4	Inactiveness	-
5	Lack of coordination among the teachers and SMC	6.17
6	Other	-

Socio- political distance between parents and teachers, lack of ownership over government school by community has been found as a major hurdle to execute its work especially in rural and cast centered areas therefore the lack of community participation appear as main challenge for 51.25% SMCs. 25.93 Community members and parents have low levels of awareness Regarding the existence of SMC. Lack of information and lack of coordination among the teachers and SMC are also found as disturbing element which affects SMCs functioning

Findings:
- ✓ The researcher found that 79.01% SMCs are having a knowledge about SMCs.
- ✓ Maximum 85.19% SMCs define their role as monitoring of teaching learning, while according to 79.01 % their major role is working for development of school.
- ✓ Monitoring school functioning is a key component of SMCs role and responsibilities. Highest 32.35% SMCs given priority to monitor availability of Infrastructure in the school, after that 22.22% SMCs look after the attendance of the children. 17.28%SMCs primarily monitors the enrollment of children.
- ✓ Availability of Educational resources to the children is a prime agenda of monitoring only for 10.37% SMCs.
- ✓ SMC has a mandate to conduct its regular meetings at least one at every month, 91.36% SMC members participate in the SMC meetings only once in a month. This means their appearance in the meeting is not frequent and regular.
- ✓ SMCs do their efforts for enrolment of children in school and maximum 38.27% SMCs interact with the parents to ensure their wards to enroll.
- ✓ SMC performs monitoring of academic and school functioning, 70.37% SMCs monitors   attendance of children once in a month, while in some areas 17.28 %SMCs monitors once in a week.
- ✓ Monitoring of facilities is one of the mandate for SMC. 59.26% SMCs discuss with teacher about availability of facilities in the school while other 20.99% SMCs prefer to interact with children and rest 19.25% makes self-Observation for this.
- ✓ It is found that 64.20% SMCs Monitors the Teachers attendance only at the day of SMCs Monthly meeting.
- ✓ Most of the SMCs 41.97% Monitors Teaching learning through discussing about it in the monthly meeting, while 40.74% SMCs observe the results to ensure teaching learning. The percentage of class room observation to ensure teaching learning is very less.

- ✓ With a very low percentage only 38.27% SMCs having a knowledge of School Development plan and extend their support in its development. Further to this, more than half either have no idea about SDP or does not participate to develop the school development plan.
- ✓ The Knowledge and awareness about the content and particulars on preparation of School Development plan is found very low as a majority of SMC members have no idea on this and found in a real apathy.
- ✓ More than half percent SMCs use financial rights given under RTE.
- ✓ SMCs are aware about the entitlements and benefits that are given to the children by government. 64% use this awareness to monitor Mid-Day meal and 27% each monitors Text book and Uniform distribution for children. Very few are have concern about the scholarships and facilities provided to the CWSN.
- ✓ The attendance of women in the SMC Meetings is found quite low. A large no. e.g.79.01% SMCs found only 2-3 female members present in Committees meeting .14.81% have found 4-6 female members present while about 6.17% SMCs have only 1 Female members present in the meetings. This shows lack of awareness towards participation in meetings.
- ✓ Overall attendance was found little satisfactory in the SMC meeting's as it was observed 11-15 participants present in 76.54% SMCs however it was near 6-10 participants in 23.45% SMCs. This appears a need of advocacy among members to motivate them for better participation in the meetings.
- ✓ The status of participation among the women participants was found average in almost all the SMCs.
- ✓ The relation between SMCs and School community remain found cordial in an average in almost all the SMCs.
- ✓ Lack of community awareness and involvement, lack of knowledge among the parents, Socio- political distance between Teacher and parent and lack of coordination are the major challenges that comes before the SMCs to accomplish their role.

Suggestions:
- ✓ SMCs are required hands on support to deal with school related issues, there for they should provide knowledge based trainings at regular interval.
- ✓ Preparation of School Development plan should be a part of Training and its monk practice should be an integral part of Training.
- ✓ SMCs should highly motivate to conduct meetings regularly.
- ✓ Better coordination between school authority and SMC is needed to be developed in all aspects.
- ✓ Role of community and its participation should be more practical and positive in nature. Raising awareness among the community and building personal relationship with the community is utmost necessity for SMCs strengthening.
- ✓ A monitoring mechanism should be developing by state to observe their functioning and provide them onsite support.
- ✓ Best Practices of SMCs should be highlighted on various platforms at District, State and National level to encourage the SMC, parents and community.

Conclusion:
It can be concluded that School Management committees are aware to the rules of RTE and performing their role positively by willing to work for the school. SMCs need to be leveraged with better capacity building efforts that equip them to implement school level decisions. They required Motivational support; knowledge based training and need to mentor to deal with challenges and difficulties which come across to them.

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