

## Community Involvement in Elementary School Management in Scheduled Tribe-concentrated Area

### A Case Study of the Aspirational District Ri Bhoi, Meghalaya

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#### Abstract

*The study presents the community involvement in elementary schools in a Scheduled Tribe-concentrated area in an aspirational district (Ri Bhoi) of Meghalaya. The data was collected through a schedule for community members covering provisions of the Right to Education (RTE) Act and focus group discussions held with the stakeholders. The sample of data sources for gathering information was the community members from schools. The quantitative data was analysed and expressed in percentages and statistical figures. The qualitative data was collected through open-ended data items. The study on the community involvement in their children's education and the facilities to which they were entitled, concluded with positive and motivating trends in elementary schools. However, proper sensitisation of the community members is needed, so that they may strictly adhere to the provisions of the Act, concerning their involvement in school management.*

#### INTRODUCTION

The Government of India (GOI) enacted the RTE Act, 2009, which recognised the community as an important stakeholder in its children's education and vested it with some powers. As per the provisions of the

Act, the first step was the formation of the School Management Committee (SMC). However, the constitution of SMCs was plagued with several issues, namely, lack of awareness and clarity around roles, lack of funds, absence of competence and training

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to prepare the School Development Plans (SDPs), and most importantly, lack of autonomy and ability to question school authorities.

The SMCs were primarily composed of parents, teachers, head teachers and local authorities. The Act stipulated that the SMCs should monitor the working of schools, utilise the grants received from all sources, and prepare and recommend the annual and three-year School Development Plans (SDPs). The details of the issues and concerns related to the RTE Act, 2009 are available on the website ([www.mhrd.gov.in/www.moe.gov.in](http://www.mhrd.gov.in/www.moe.gov.in)) in the public domain. In addition, Singh et. al. (2022) in their research study concluded that the community, through SMC members, should be involved in implementing various academic and non-academic programmes in the elementary schools.

Additionally, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 illustrated the importance of SMCs, School Complexes Management Committee (SCMC) and the involvement of the community in nurturing the culture of planning, both short-term and long-term ones, for the school, including human resources, learning resources, physical resources and infrastructure, improvement initiatives, financial resources and educational outcomes.

Hence, there was a need to conduct a study on community involvement in elementary school management.

Keeping in view the special initiatives proposed by the Government of India for the Scheduled Tribes (STs)-concentrated area, and more specifically, the aspirational district, a study was executed in the Ri Bhoi District of Meghalaya State.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study was designed to assess the community involvement in elementary school management in the ST area. A study is exploratory, having an in-depth empirical approach at the grassroots level. The objective of the study was to assess the community involvement in elementary school management based on the specific parameters as suggested under the RTE Act, 2009 and NEP 2020.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was a descriptive research and set out to assess the community involvement in the functioning of elementary school management. A convenient sampling procedure under the non-probability sampling method was applied to select 25 schools from all nine clusters of the Bhoirymbong Block, Ri Bhoi District. The data were collected from the community members belonging to these schools with the administrative support of the Meghalaya Government in December 2019. There were 50 respondents for data collection (community members comprising 25 local authorities and 25 parents as members of SMCs). The quantitative and qualitative data

were obtained, and the same were subjected to the mixed method of data analysis for drawing inferences using simple statistical approach as suggested by Czaja and Blair (2005), Jick (1979), and others. In addition, the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organised and held with the community members.

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The data were collected on general information about the respondents and specific information about their involvement in the functioning of schools, namely, specific measures taken up for children belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) or disadvantaged groups; designing School Development Plans; development of infrastructure for schools; generating awareness about provisions of the RTE Act, 2009; monitoring activities of schools; ensuring proper functioning by monitoring the academic activities; mapping of children; preventing discrimination; facilitating the submission of reports to the concerned authorities; teachers' recruitment process; teachers' training process; teachers' monitoring process; academic planning process; sports and other activities; non-academic activities; financial activities; and grievance redressal mechanism. The data presentation and analysis thereof are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

## **General Information about the Community**

Table 1 presents the general profile of the community members, such as gender, social category, present position held, member of the body, awareness about the School Management Committee (SMC)/ School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC), and awareness about the procedure of the formation of the SMC/SDMC. It is evident from Table 1 that the sample of SMC members was constituted by 72 per cent male members and 28 per cent female members respectively. By social category, a sample of members was comprised of 4 per cent SC, 92 per cent ST and 4 per cent general categories, respectively. All members held various available positions in the SMC. However, members belonging to other categories either as parents of the child or elected members of the local body had 76 per cent share in the study sample. The members in the sample were represented as either members of SMC (86 per cent) Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (8 per cent) or others (6 per cent). All SMC members were fully aware of the SMC, except only one parent member. As far as awareness about the procedure for the formation of SMC was concerned, the members responded that the formation of the SMC was done through methods of election (16 per cent), selection (60 per cent), nomination (22 per cent) and others (2 per cent), respectively.

**Table 1**  
**Profile of Community Members on Key Parameters of General Information**

| Key Parameters of<br>General Information                  | SMC Members        |         |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|
|                                                           | Local<br>Authority | Parents | Total |
| A. Gender                                                 |                    |         |       |
| 1. Male                                                   | 24                 | 12      | 36    |
| 2. Female                                                 | 01                 | 13      | 14    |
| B. Social Category                                        |                    |         |       |
| 1. SC                                                     | 01                 | 01      | 02    |
| 2. ST                                                     | 23                 | 23      | 46    |
| 3. General                                                | 01                 | 01      | 02    |
| C. Present Position Held                                  |                    |         |       |
| 1. SMC/SDMC President                                     | 6                  | 1       | 07    |
| 2. SMC/SDMC Convenor                                      | 1                  | 0       | 01    |
| 3. SMC/SDMC Teacher Member                                | 0                  | 3       | 03    |
| 4. Ex-officio Member                                      | 1                  | 0       | 01    |
| 5. Others                                                 | 17                 | 21      | 38    |
| a. Parent/Guardian of Child                               |                    |         |       |
| b. Elected Member of Local<br>Authority                   |                    |         |       |
| c. Teacher of the school                                  |                    |         |       |
| d. Local educationist                                     |                    |         |       |
| D. Member of Body                                         |                    |         |       |
| 1. SMC/SDMC                                               | 21                 | 22      | 43    |
| 2. PTA                                                    | 01                 | 03      | 04    |
| 3. Others                                                 | 03                 | 0       | 03    |
| E. Awareness about SMC/SDMC                               | 25                 | 24      | 49    |
| F. Awareness about the procedure of formation of SMC/SDMC |                    |         |       |
| 1. Election                                               | 04                 | 04      | 08    |
| 2. Selection                                              | 14                 | 16      | 30    |
| 3. Nomination                                             | 06                 | 05      | 11    |
| 4. Others (Specify)                                       | 01                 | 0       | 01    |

## **Specific Information on the Involvement of Community Members**

### ***Measure(s) Taken for Children Belonging to EWS or Disadvantaged Groups***

The specific measure(s) taken up by the community members for children belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) or Socio-economically Disadvantaged Group (SEDG) in the schools focused on admitting such children. A total of 36 per cent of members had responded to the measures for EWS and disadvantaged groups. In this regard, the community members informed that there was no denial of admission to children belonging to such groups, including children who dropped out of schools. Some members (parents) could not give a specific reply due to the lack of awareness. The members also organised an awareness programme on free and compulsory education in the rural area.

### ***Involvement in Designing School Development Plans (SDPs)***

Community involvement in designing SDPs was reported at 58 per cent only. As far as the nature of their involvement was concerned, the community members had responded on the issues related to designing and developing the SDPs. They were also providing ideas to develop the school building, kitchen shed, toilet, etc., with playground facilities, and were

working to bring school infrastructure in good condition, and raising an agenda to get financial assistance for school repair.

### ***Involvement in the Development of School Infrastructure***

Nearly 80 per cent of the community members reported their involvement in repairing the school buildings, bamboo fencing and furniture (such as benches, desks, chairs and tables). In addition, infrastructure for additional classrooms built with bamboo was a common practice. The members planned the SDPs to fulfil the school requirement within the terms and conditions fixed by the confines of the concerned authorities. The members sought and explored financial help from various available resources, namely, local area development funds or so, including contributing funds, and generating funds and grants for the school infrastructure.

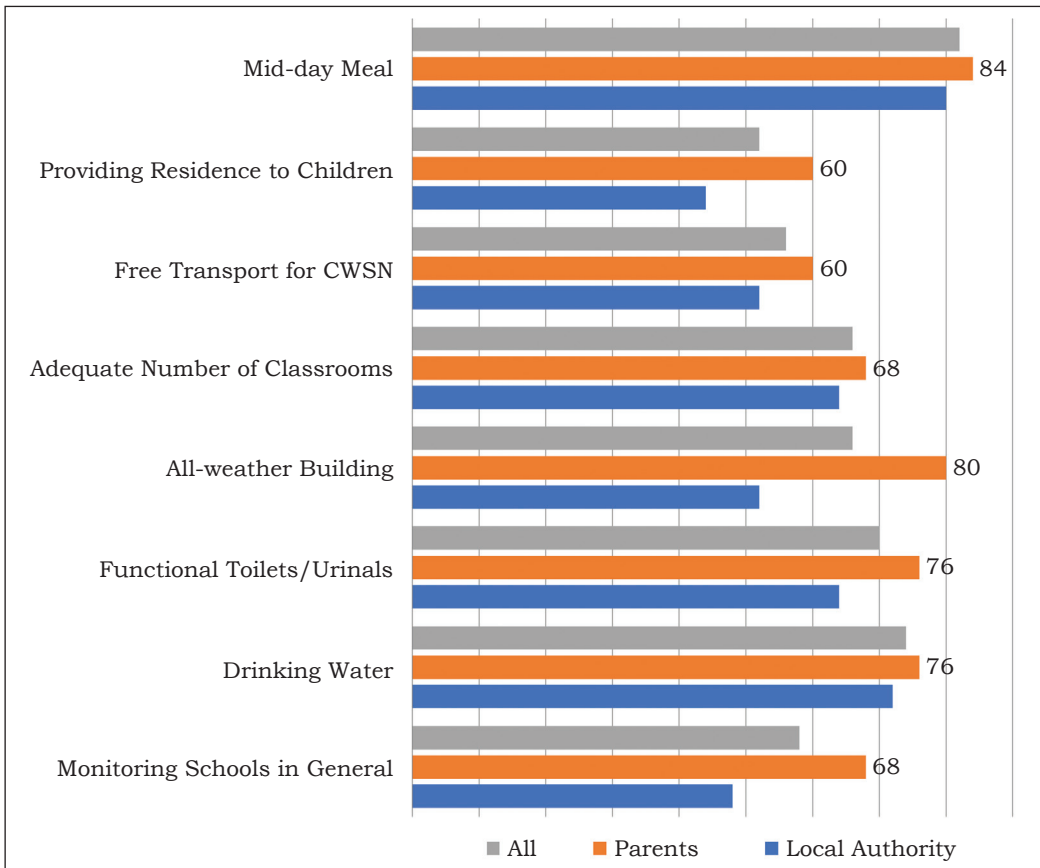
### ***Involvement in Generating Awareness about Provisions of RTE Act, 2009***

As regards the involvement of SMC members in generating community awareness about provisions of the RTE Act, 2009, it was on the lower side. Empirically, 36 per cent of members had responded in favour of their involvement with the mass community on familiarity with the provisions of the said Act.

### ***Involvement in Monitoring Activities***

The information on the involvement of the community in monitoring activities of schools included monitoring of schools in general, the drinking water facility, functional toilets/urinals, all-weather building, adequate number of classrooms, free transportation for children with disabilities, providing residential facility to children, and mid-day meal were collected. Figure 1 provides input on the percentage distribution

of the responding members on their involvement in the monitoring activities. It is evident that the members' concentration on the monitoring activities were confined maximum to the mid-day meal (84 per cent), next in line was the all-weather building (80 per cent), followed by the functional toilets/urinals (76 per cent) and other activities. The details of the response to the monitoring activity are summarised in the subsequent paragraphs.



*Figure 1: Percentage distribution of responding members on involvement in monitoring activities of schools*

- *Monitoring of school in general:* The members used to monitor the punctuality of the teachers and smooth functioning of the schools, including monitoring regularity of the teachers' and students' attendance, performance of children, surrounding of the schools, tree plantation, awareness of disaster, cleanliness, school discipline, school development plan, classroom facilities, availability of chalk and duster, window pane, doors, etc. Repairing of school was done during the winter break and labourers were paid by the SMC. Members are involved quarterly in the monitoring of the schools. The SMC visited the school during school hours to check the attendance of teachers and to see the discipline among students.
- *Drinking water:* The members tried to discuss the issue of safe drinking water with the panchayat for the schools. Members are also involved in monitoring the drinking water supply in the school once a week, smooth flow of drinking water twice a month, water-related hardware, etc. In some schools, safe drinking water was not available on the school premises and members approached the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) to provide safe drinking water to the schools. Members took an interest in repair work for the drinking water supply pipeline. For tap water supply, members negotiated with the local *darbaar*.
- *Functional toilets/urinals:* The members were monitoring the cleanliness of the toilets/urinals. At several points of time, members had found non-functional toilets/urinals for boys, girls and school staff. So, they were involved in repairing the non-functional toilets/urinals and reported such issues to the concerned local authorities for necessary action.
- *All-weather building:* The members had tried to find other alternative buildings in case the school building is not safe in a particular season. They reported that the school buildings were not in a good condition in many cases; they had tried to ensure a safe, neat and clean school compound. They were involved in building additional classrooms with public support for the schools, especially, for the pre-primary classes. The members also ensured that there should be no water leakage from the rooftops of the school buildings, and they took precautionary measures accordingly with the concerned authorities.
- *Adequate number of classrooms:* While inspecting the classrooms for safety measures, the members reported inadequate number of classrooms in schools. To overcome this inadequacy, the rooms were divided using wooden/plywood partitioning. People were



satisfied with this arrangement since no alternative was available in this regard.

- *Transport for Children with Special Needs (CWSN):* It was informed that there were no CWSN currently in the schools covered in the study. However, the issue has been reported to the government to make provisions for such children.
- *Residential facility to children:* The members informed that residential facility to the children would not be useful since school children normally belong to the nearby rural area.
- *Mid-day meal:* The members were keen and vigilant in monitoring the quality of raw materials for the mid-day meals and looked after the preparation and distribution of the mid-day meal to the children either on a daily

or weekly basis. This distribution of meals was ensured as per the Mid-day Meal guidelines.

**Involvement in Ensuring Proper Functioning by Monitoring Activities**

Table 2 demonstrates community involvement in ensuring proper functioning by monitoring activities, such as pupils’ regularity and punctuality in attending school, teachers’ regularity and punctuality in attending school, completion of the curriculum within the specified school days and achieving quality of learning for all children by the monitoring activities.

It is evident from Table 2 that the members had responded in most of the academic nature of functioning by monitoring the activities, and they had responded 100 per cent in case of pupils’ and teachers’ regularity

**Table 2**  
**Members’ Involvement in Ensuring Proper Functioning by Monitoring School Activities**

| <b>Ensuring Proper Functioning by Monitoring Activities</b> | <b>Response of SMC Members as</b> |                |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|                                                             | <i>Local Authority</i>            | <i>Parents</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Pupils’ regularity and punctuality in attending school      | 23<br>(23)                        | 25<br>(25)     | 48<br>(48)   |
| Teachers’ regularity and punctuality in attending school    | 23<br>(23)                        | 25<br>(25)     | 48<br>(48)   |
| Completion of curriculum within the specified school days   | 22<br>(23)                        | 25<br>(25)     | 47<br>(48)   |
| Achieving quality of learning for all children              | 17<br>(19)                        | 21<br>(25)     | 38<br>(44)   |

*Figures in parentheses show the total recorded responses on schedule*



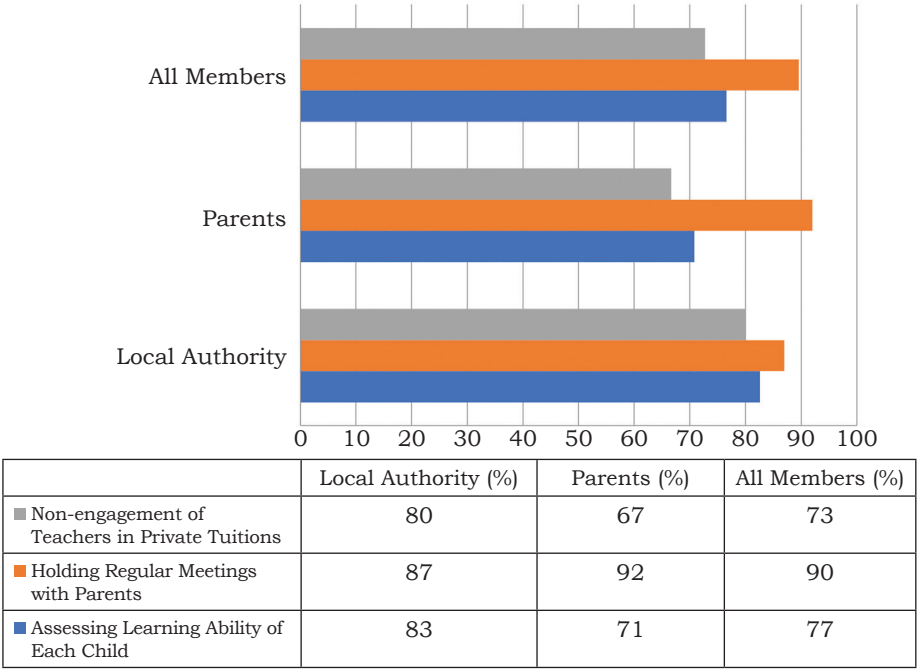
and punctuality followed by the completion of curriculum within the specified school days (98 per cent). The responding members had reported about their active participation in the children’s school programmes. The members were satisfied with the year-wise progress of the children. They gave details about their active cooperation with teachers, and subsequently parents’ and parents’ teacher associations in achieving the targets of quality of learning.

Figure 2 points to the members’ involvement in ensuring proper functioning by monitoring the activities, such as assessing the learning abilities of each child, holding regular meetings with parents/guardians, and non-engagement of

teachers in private tuitions. Based on Figure 2, it is worth mentioning that holding regular meetings with the parents and apprising them about the regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child had maximum priorities among members followed by assessing learning ability of each child and accordingly supplementing additional instructions, if any, to cater to the needs of an individual learner.

***Involvement in Academic Activities in General***

The involvement in academic activities, in general, had a very poor response from the responding



*Figure 2: Members’ involvement in ensuring proper functioning by monitoring the school activities*

members, and the same was reported 36 per cent, 32 per cent and 34 per cent for member-local authority, member-parents, and all members respectively. The members also provided the details of their involvement in academic activities, such as conducting sports activities, holding meetings on SDPs, cleanliness in the school premises, lesson plans for teaching, etc.

### ***Involvement in Mapping of Children***

The involvement in the mapping of children in the catchment area of the school and maintaining records of such children were not found very popular among the members as responded by 32 per cent, 36 per cent and 34 per cent members of the local authority, parents and all members, respectively. The responding members provided the details of their involvement in the mapping of children. In this regard, members visited the nearby remote areas to bring back the dropout children in the schools. They also went through the records of the progress reports of the children. The members were involved, whenever they had the time, to watch the participation of the children in games or other activities in the schools.

### ***Involvement in Preventing Discrimination***

The data on the prevention of discrimination in schools were collected. The responding members were involved sufficiently in the prevention of discrimination and

promoting inclusion; and nearly 58 per cent of the members indicated their involvement in this issue of academic nature with 60 per cent members belonging to the local authority and 56 per cent parents. The responding members reported that all children were free to join schools without discrimination. They ensured that discrimination against children was not allowed and it was completely prohibited in schools. In addition, discussions were held from time to time to prevent discrimination among children and parents during the parent-teacher meetings.

### ***Involvement in Facilitating the Submission of Reports to Concerned Authorities***

As per the statutory provisions, the function of SMC shall be to facilitate the submission of reports to the concerned authorities on the action taken. Forty eight per cent members responded to this, along with details of their understanding of the issue. They stated that they were taking utmost care and giving appropriate, instructions to teachers for preparing administrative and financial reports in time, and the same were submitted to the appropriate authorities. The SMCs were instructed to submit the utilisation certificates appropriately, concerning the grants received by the concerned authorities/government. However, the members had been requesting additional funds for school buildings, teaching-learning materials, etc., from time to time.

### ***Involvement in Teachers' Recruitment Process***

The members were requested to provide inputs on their involvement in the recruitment of teachers. Parents and the members belonging to the local authorities had responded equally, that was, 72 per cent. The members had also given mixed views on the recruitment process, such as:

1. The SMC was not involved in teachers' recruitment.
2. The Education Department recruits teachers.
3. The SMC appointed and supported the additional teachers.
4. Teachers' recruitment was done jointly by the SMC and the Education Department.

### ***Involvement in Teachers' Training Process***

The members' involvement in the training of teachers was also explored. Nearly 68 per cent of the members responded and provided brief details—the SMC had deputed the teachers for training programmes and encouraged teachers to complete the teachers' training programme on Diploma in Elementary Education when such opportunities arose, since this teachers' training programme had been a mandatory requirement for teachers as per the RTE Act, 2009.

### ***Involvement in the Academic Planning Process***

Building an academic plan is an essential step in preparing for a

successful return to studies after the academic year. The data on seeking information from the members about their involvement in academic plans revealed, that 66 per cent of members, comprising 68 per cent local authorities and 64 per cent parents had responded about their involvement in the academic planning process in schools. Their contributions to academic planning extended to the development of the academic calendar and monitoring thereof in the schools. On the other hand, several members responded that they were not involved in academic planning in the schools. Some members informed that teachers should prepare the academic calendar as well as lesson plans, and SMC would monitor these plans, accordingly.

### ***Involvement in Sports and Other Activities***

Sports activities in schools are also a part of education and are termed as physical education. In this regard, schools need to build or improve the facilities for sports utilities and playing grounds. The members were, therefore, asked about their involvement in sports and other activities. Nearly 66 per cent of the members responded about their involvement in sports activities and expressed their views on the nature of their involvement, especially in organising sports activities during the school week or annual sports meet. In addition, the members were

involved in other activities, such as instituting and distributing awards to children based on their merit in the final examinations for encouraging them to keep up the excellence in their studies.

### **Involvement in Non-academic Activities**

The data on non-academic activities were collected. The members responded about their involvement in such non-academic activities, which are presented in Table 3. As can be

seen in Table 3, 94 per cent of the members were involved in ensuring the enrolment and continued attendance of all children from the neighbourhood, and implementation of the Mid-day Meal, followed by the involvement of 87 per cent of the members in bringing to the notice of the local authority any deviation from the rights of the children, in particular, the mental and physical harassment of children, denial of admission and timely provision of free entitlement.

**Table 3**  
**Members' Involvement in Non-academic Activities (in Per Cent)**

| <b>Involvement in<br/>Non-academic Activities</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Per cent Response of Members as</b> |                       |                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b><i>Local<br/>Authority</i></b>      | <b><i>Parents</i></b> | <b><i>Total</i></b> |
| Monitoring of over-burdening of teachers in non-academic works (other than for election, census and disaster management)                                                                                         | 71                                     | 64                    | 67                  |
| Monitor the identification and enrolment of, and facilities for learning for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), and ensure their participation and completion of elementary education                           | 68                                     | 75                    | 75                  |
| Ensure the enrolment and continued attendance of all children from the neighbourhood in the school                                                                                                               | 92                                     | 96                    | 94                  |
| Bring to the notice of the local authority any deviation from the rights of the child, in particular, mental and physical harassment of children, denial of admission, and timely provision of free entitlements | 86                                     | 84                    | 87                  |
| Implementation of the Mid-day Meal in the school as per norms                                                                                                                                                    | 91                                     | 96                    | 94                  |

### ***Involvement in Financial Activities***

Financial management in schools should ensure that the SMC would be able to manage the budget and inform about the decisions to the competent authorities. It is, therefore, gleaned from the members regarding their involvement in financial activities on certain crucial aspects, such as whether they know about the source of funds, engage in planning and budgeting for the SDPs, deploy the funds for intended purpose through a transparent and accountable procedure, monitor fund utilisation, and submission of audited accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the school.

Figure 3 presents the involvement of the members in per cent as a response to the financial activities on the above crucial aspects. It is evident from the figure that members' involvement had been least, when it comes to their engagements in planning and budgeting for the SDP (40 per cent), whereas it had been maximum in submission of the audited accounts of receipts and expenditures (88 per cent). The members provided details about their involvement in the financial activities as described below:

#### ***1. Knowledge about sources of funds:***

Members reported that they knew about the sources of funds for the schools, namely, the MLA, Member of District Council (MDC) and sponsoring body, contributions from the public and government grants, donations from SMC members, trusts, committees, etc.

- 2. Engaged in Planning and Budgeting for SDPs:*** While discussing the budget, it was observed that in some cases members even had special committees to discuss the funds for SDPs. The SMCs were engaged in SDPs and infrastructural requirements for onward submission to the government for action.
- 3. Deployment of funds for intended purpose through transparent and accountable procedure:*** Members were utilising school funds for the purpose it was being sanctioned, namely, for minor repair work and payment of honorarium to the additional teachers.
- 4. Monitoring of Fund Utilisation:*** The fund utilisation register was being maintained, and details of the utilised funds were recorded in the register. This fund utilisation activity was being monitored and inspected by the SMC in the schools.

### ***Involvement in Grievance Redressal Mechanism***

The SMCs are given statutory powers with regard to their involvement in grievance redressal in the schools. In this regard, members had responded and details of the response were also recorded. The members' response with regard to their involvement in the grievance redressal mechanism for teachers and others in the schools was reported 40 per cent in the case of parents, followed by the local authorities at 36 per cent.

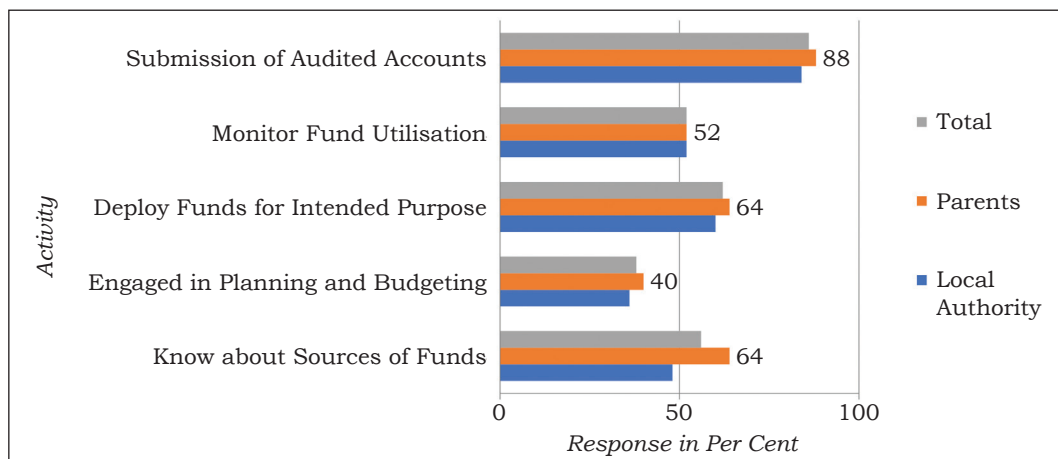


Figure 3: Members' involvement in financial activities

The members informed that they were ensuring the redressal of grievances of teachers and others by holding special meetings to discuss the matters. The members had resolved several such issues with an understanding through the redressal committee of the SMC by inviting the concerned party.

## FINDINGS

Based on the foregoing data presentation and analysis, the following points emerged with regard to the involvement of community members in the aspirational district of Ri Bhoi in Meghalaya:

1. The sample of members comprised 72 per cent male members and 28 per cent female members, respectively. By social category, the sample of members comprised SC, ST and general categories. All members held various available positions in the SMCs. However, members belonging to other categories, that is as parents of

children or elected members of the local body had 76 per cent share in the study sample. The members in the sample were represented as either members of SMC (86 per cent), PTA (8 per cent) or others (6 per cent).

2. Nearly 36 per cent of the members had responded to measures for the children of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups. The details given by the responding members conveyed that there was no denial of admission to such children to the school.
3. The members responded with regard to the issues related to the SDPs, including other aspects, by providing innovative ideas. They were working to bring up the school infrastructure and raising the agenda for financial aid for school repair. Members took an active part during SMC meetings in formulating the SDPs.



4. The members were fully involved in developing school infrastructure, such as repairing school buildings, bamboo fencing, additional classrooms and furniture.
5. On generating community awareness about the RTE Act, the involvement of the members was on the lower side, and more precisely, nearly 36 per cent of the members had responded in favour of their involvement with the mass community.
6. The involvement of the members in monitoring the activities was confined mainly to the Mid-day Meal. Next in line was the all-weather building, followed by functional toilets/urinals.
7. The members responded about their involvement the most in the academic nature of functioning by monitoring the activities, including monitoring the pupils' and teachers' regularity and punctuality, followed by the completion of the curriculum in the school.
8. The members' involvement in holding meetings with the parents and apprising them about the regularity in attendance, ability to learn, progress made in learning and other relevant issues about the child was given maximum priority by the members, followed by assessing the learning ability of each child, and supplementing additional instructions to cater to the needs of a child accordingly.
9. The involvement in academic activities, in general, had received a very poor response from the members concerning the mapping of children in the catchment area of the school and maintaining records of such children. They were going through the school records with regard to the performance of the children.
10. Whenever they had free time, the members were involved in watching the participation of children in games or other activities performed by children in the schools. In some cases, they conducted surveys in the catchment area and visited the school dropouts to bring them back to school.
11. The members were sufficiently involved in the prevention of discrimination and promoting inclusion. They reported that all children were free to join schools without discrimination.
12. The members were involved in preparing administrative and financial reports in time, and the same were submitted to the appropriate authorities. Moreover, the members were involved with the stakeholders of schools in availing funds for schools.
13. The members had given mixed views on the nature of their involvement in the recruitment of teachers. For instance, the SMC was not involved in teachers' recruitment. However, the SMC appointed and supported additional teachers in the schools. In some schools, teacher recruitment was done jointly



by the SMC and the Education Department.

14. The SMC deputed teachers for training programmes as and when opportunities were available, since teachers' training programmes had become mandatory as per law.
15. The members gave their inputs on the monitoring of teachers, but it was mainly confined to the teachers' performance and punctuality on attendance.
16. The extent of members' contribution to academic planning was reported to be limited to the development of the academic calendar and monitoring thereof in the schools. Other than that, the members responded that they were not involved in academic planning. However, members were informed that teachers should prepare the academic calendar as well as lesson plans, and the SMC would monitor the same.
17. Nearly 66 per cent of the members were involved in sports activities and expressed views on the nature of involvement, especially in organising sports activities during the school week or annual sports meet. In addition, the members were involved in distributing awards to the children for their performance in examinations.
18. It is apparent that members were involved in ensuring the enrolment and continued attendance of all children from the neighbourhood, implementation

of the Mid-day Meal, along with bringing to the notice of the local authority any infringement on the rights of a child.

19. The members' involvement had been least with regard to their engagements in planning and budgeting for the SDPs, whereas it had been maximum in submission of the audited accounts of receipts and expenditure.
20. The members informed that they were ensuring the redressal of the grievances of teachers and others by holding special meetings to discuss the matters for the betterment of the schools.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented and analysed, the findings presented in the preceding paragraphs, and focus group discussions held with the stakeholders, the present study converged towards the following conclusions:

1. In many schools, communities are providing additional teaching and non-teaching staff wherever there is a shortage of human resources.
2. The role of members was found to be of utmost importance, especially in encouraging and advising the parents to send their children to the neighbourhood schools, instead of schools located in remote areas, and such a trend was encouraging and serving the mandate of the Right to Education Act.
3. The members were involved in developing school infrastructure.

Additionally, members were involved in inculcating discipline among teachers and children in terms of the regularity in school attendance, Mid-day Meals, etc.

4. The issue of social class and discrimination in school admissions and other activities not observed. Instead, the SMC was found ideal in ensuring provision to disadvantaged groups including the EWS.
5. In the maintenance of quality learning in schools, the members' involvement in ensuring proper functioning by monitoring activities, such as assessing the learning abilities of each child, holding regular meetings with parents, and non-engagement of teachers in private tuitions were found to be of a satisfactory level.
6. The involvement of members was found ideal in financial matters. The SMC members reported that the sources of funds were the MLA, MDC and sponsoring body, contributions from the public and government grants, donations from the SMC members, trusts, committees, etc.
7. The SMCs were engaged in planning school development plans and infrastructural requirements for onward submission to the government for consideration. An active SMC is a boon to properly utilise the funds, which was found prevalent

in the sampled schools, thereby suggesting a very healthy trend.

8. The members were involved in ensuring the enrolment and continued attendance of the children from the neighbourhood and implementation of the Mid-day Meal (MDM) in schools. The members were also active in bringing to the notice of the local authority any infringement on the rights of a child and timely provision of free entitlements. Such a scenario strengthens the notion that planning and execution at the grassroots level bring positive results, and the SMC members of sampled schools were found to be serving the notion significantly.
9. An important aspect where improvement is needed is concerning the proper involvement of all the SMC members in the functioning of schools. In every sampled SMC, it was revealed that selective participation was done by the members. It is, therefore, recommended that the proper involvement of all the SMC members should be strengthened, instead of a few members, who were active and governing forces in various aspects of school functioning.

The conclusions indicated the involvement of the community in their children's education and facilities, for which they received

positive and motivating trends in so that they may strictly adhere the elementary schools. However, to the provisions of the RTE Act, a proper sensitisation of the concerning their involvement in community members is needed, school management.

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