

School Management Committee in Elementary Schools of Imphal West District: A Brief Review

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Abstract:

Background: When the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) mandated the formation of School Management Committees (SMC) in every government-funded schools, it was primarily aimed at encouraging the community, especially parents to ensure a more people and children-friendly school environment and also to ensure that all government-funded schools can and will deliver quality education to school children irrespective of gender, socio-cultural and socio-economic background. However, this plan has often been in the limelight for all the wrong reason. With the Government of Manipur also trying its best to correct the shortcomings and revamping the SMCs in the state, the paper is an attempt to critically but briefly look into the working of SMCs in the state with 10 schools in Imphal West district of Manipur taken as a case study.

Materials and Methods: Primary data for the paper was collected through in-situ field visits, casual interview of parents, teachers and government officials in the schools, homes and relevant government offices. Secondary data was collected through relevant research papers, documents and records from government offices.

Results: It was found that many of the SDPs had by the schools are often repetitive, lacks result-oriented plans and are sometimes not relevant. As such, more careful and strategic planning is required so as to ensure maximum output with minimum investment.

Conclusion: SMCs in Imphal West district of Manipur per se and of the state of Manipur in general are definitely on the road to a much more successful future as compared to 5 years ago. With the Government of Manipur also trying to minimise the shortcomings of SMCs in the state and more people becoming more aware and informed, especially after the advent of the internet and internet-capable mobile phones coupled with a freer flow of information, SMCs in the state have come a long way.

Key Word: School management, environment, improvement, quality

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I. Introduction

On any given school day, over 1 billion children around the world head to class. More children and adolescents today are enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education than ever before. Yet, for many of them, schooling does not lead to learning.

A lack of trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, makeshift classes and poor sanitation facilities make learning difficult for many children. Others come to school too hungry, sick or exhausted from work or household tasks to benefit from their lessons. The consequences are grave: An estimated 617 million children and adolescents around the world are unable to reach minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics – even though two thirds of them are in school.

This learning crisis is the greatest global challenge to preparing children and adolescents for life, work and active citizenship.

Children and adolescents are excluded from education for many reasons. Poverty remains one of the most obstinate barriers, with children from the poorest households almost five times more likely to be out of primary school than those from the richest. Children with disabilities and from ethnic minorities are also more likely to be left behind.

For girls in some parts of the world, education opportunities can be especially limited. Only 66 per cent of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. Harmful gender norms can have severe effects for boys, too. Location also keeps children from school. Children from rural areas are more than twice more likely to be out of primary school than their urban peers. In conflict zones, 27 million children are out of school.

Without skills for lifelong learning, children face greater barriers to earning potential and employment later in life. They are more likely to suffer adverse health outcomes and less likely to participate in the decisions that affect them – threatening their ability to build a better future for themselves and their communities.

When the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) mandated the formation of School Management Committees (SMC) in every government-funded schools, it was primarily aimed at encouraging the community, especially parents as numerous studies conducted have shown that the parental involvement is directly linked to the learning outcomes of students and as a whole, to the betterment of the school (Klein and Ballantine, 1999; Nord, 1997; Schneider and Coleman, 1993; Chen & Chandler, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Zellman & Waterman, 1998, Petridou and Karagiorgi, 2018). As per the Act, School Management Committee should be formed and reorganized once in 2 years in all government schools except unaided institutions. The SMC representatives should be elected from a General Body Meeting inclusive of all parents. It should comprise of elected representatives from local self-government, elected representatives of the parents and teacher representatives and even civil society organisations.

Guidelines for formation of School Management Committeeⁱ

1. The SMC shall be constituted in every school, except unaided schools, within its jurisdiction, within six months of the commencement of the Act and reconstituted every 2 years.
2. A primary school consists of 27 members committee from which 24 members shall be from the mother / father or guardian of the children enrolled in the school. One member will be the elected representative one member may be the nominee of the Mahila Samaikyias of the village concerned.
3. The Head Master or the in charge of the school shall be ex-officio member /convenor of the committee.
4. A school, other than a school specified in sub-clause (iv) of clause (n) of section 2, shall constitute a School Management Committee consisting of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of children admitted in such school and teachers.
5. Three-fourth of members of such Committee shall be parents or guardians, proportionate representation shall be given to the parents or guardians of children belonging to disadvantaged group and weaker section fifty percent of Members of such Committee shall be women shall perform the following functions.
6. Monitors the working of the school.
7. Prepares and recommend school development plan.
8. Monitors the utilization of the grants received performs such other functions as may be prescribed.
9. Every School Management Committee, constituted under sub section (1) of section 21, shall prepare a School Development Plan.
10. Maintain regularity and punctuality of teachers in attending school.
11. No teacher shall engage himself in private tuition of private teaching activity.
12. SMC shall identify children requiring special training and organize such trainings.
13. School Management Committees may involve Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in mobilization and identification of Out-of-School children (see Right To Education Act rule) Chairperson of the SMC shall maintain a list of the children belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections.

School Management Committee should be formed with the following composition:

Sl. No	Designation	Position	Election Process
1	Chairperson	Student's Parent or Guardian	Elected from Parents or Guardian
2	Vice-Chairperson	Student's Parent or Guardian	Elected from parents
3	Member convener	HM	Automatic
4	Elected Members	Parents or Guardians	Will be elected from parent membersby

			majority from each class by show of hand / voice vote / secret ballot
5	Ex-Officio Members	Teacher, Ward Member/Councillor/ Corporator, Anganwadi Teacher, Multi-Purpose Health Worker – Female (ANM), President Mahila Samakhya	Automatic
6	Co-opted Members	Eminent educationist / philanthropist / Office Bearer of NGO/Voluntary Organization, an Alumni or such other supported of the school	Co-opted by the elected Parent/Guardian members

Number of members in the Committeeⁱⁱ

1. In a school with students below 750, total members can be 16 apart from the convener and joint convener.
2. In a school with more than 750 students, total members can be 20 apart from convener and joint convener.
3. 75% of the members in the committee should be the parents of the students or guardian in the absence of parents. Also, it should include- members of Mother-Parent -Teacher Association, parents of selected students, parents or guardians of- students belonging to the weaker section of the society, students eligible for special consideration. Enough representation be given to the parents representing back ward sections and depressed category.
4. The rest of the 25% of the members should be from the sections given below:
 - a) Ward or division member of local self govt from the location of the school
 - b) A teacher selected from the school by them
 - c) An educational expert from the place, selected by the parents
 - d) School leader

Key Functionsⁱⁱⁱ

1. Making School Development Plan (SDP) as per the RTE guidelines/norms.
2. Management of school.
3. Supervising and supporting implementation of SDP.
4. Supervision/monitoring of finance, management, academic progress, distribution of entitlements & other functions.
5. Ensuring accountability and transparency in the system through the social audit mechanism.
6. Keeping proper accounts of the fund available and sharing its deployment and utilization with the 'Grama Sabha'.
7. Creating and maintaining an educational database.
8. Coordinating with the local authority, generating funds from other sources for development of schools.
9. Monitoring academic progress of the children.
10. Instituting social audit mechanism and processes to bring transparency in the system and ensure universal participation.

Preparation of School Development Plan^{iv}

1. In 2 months after the formation of School Management Committee, a School Development Plan should be prepared.
2. It should be a 3-year plan comprising 3 separate annual sub plans.
3. It should have the details given below–
 - a) Estimate of class wise admission for each year.
 - b) Basic amenities including building, laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc.
 - c) The preparation of master plan should include the future needs of the school, student friendly, eco-friendly construction –concepts etc. An expert’s opinion or service can be availed of.
 - d) Physical needs of the basic resources and instruments, mainly laboratory, information and communication technology, library, sports and games be prepared.
 - e) Expenses for special coaching facilities for the late admission students, separate evaluation of needs of each section on age basis, free text books, uniform, travel concessions, free accommodation etc and any more needs to be satisfied under this Act including above said part (d) related financial needs.
 - f) As per the calculations done according to the law stated in this list, total number of teachers needed for classes 1-5 and 6-8, each subject teacher, part time teachers, head master etc. School Development Plan should be counter signed by the School Management Committee chairperson or vice-chairperson and convener. Within one month after the approval of the committee, it should be submitted to the Assistant Educational Officer and Centre for Local Authorities.

II. Material And Methods

Standard social science methodology of data collection was employed for the purpose of the research paper wherein both primary and secondary data were collected.

Study Design: Primary data for the paper was collected through in-situ field visits, casual interview of parents, teachers and government officials in the schools, homes and relevant government offices.

Secondary data was collected through relevant research papers, documents and records from government offices

Study Location: Imphal West district of Manipur, India was selected as the area of study. The district has 3 (three) Blocks:

1. Haorang Block
2. IMC Block
3. Wangoi Block

Out of 630 schools (Lower Primary, Upper Primary, High School and Higher Secondary), 10 government schools were strategically selected for the purpose of the research paper. These are:

1. Moirangkhom Junior High School
2. Patrigue Junior High School
3. Pishum Upper Primary School
4. Singjamei Satra Vidyalaya Upper Primary School
5. Waikhom Leikai Upper Primary School
6. Khondram Shellungba Upper Primary School
7. Gurukul Hijam Dewan High School
8. Khunthoknganbi Upper Primary School
9. Lajengningthou Junior High School
10. Sinam Upper Primary School

Study Duration: August 2020 to January 2021.

Sample size: 10 schools.

III. Result

The State of Manipur made a watershed, capturing even the national headlines by becoming one of the first States in India to notify the RTE Rules along with Sikkim, Orissa and Arunachal Pradesh. The State Government's decision is highly laudable and praiseworthy, that, it resolved to be 'an early bird', in its endeavour to guarantee Right to Education as a Fundamental Right under the Article 21A (86th Amendment) of the Indian Constitution, that reads as "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine". However, if one takes even a slight cursory analysis on the State's Notification of RTE Rules in the midst of the actual scenario and messy condition of Manipur's education sector, it would neither be out of reason nor out of justification, that the State of Manipur is being merely 'an early bird just to catch more fat worms' (Apam & Asung, 2011).

As per the Secretariat: Education Department (School Section), Government of Manipur order NO.30/19/09/SE(S), dated the 14th June, 2011, the composition of the SMC should be:

- Member of District Council of the area in which the school is located shall be the Chairman/Chairperson of the SMC.
- The Headmaster (or senior most Teachers, in absence of Headmaster) shall be the Member Secretary.
- Other Members of the Committee shall be as per Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Guidelines.
- The Bank account of the Committee shall be operated jointly by the Headmaster and Executive Director of DRDA concerned.

This order, however, does not appear feasible. The impracticability lies in the simple fact that the district Councillor is required to officiate as Chairman/Chairperson all the SMCs falling under his/ her area in order to fulfil the responsibilities and duties such as convening SMC meeting at least once a month, monitor the working of the school, prepare and recommend School Development Plan, monitor the utilisation of the grants received, monitor the enrolment and continued attendance of all the children from the neighbourhood in the school, monitor the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal, prepare an account of receipts and expenditure of the school to be made available even for audit, etc. Given other official duties and responsibilities of a district Councillor, this is indeed a tall order for one person to effectively execute. As revealed during interactions with parents, this multi-tasking has been one of the main reasons behind the very ineffective functioning of SMCs in Manipur.

Are stakeholders, especially parents aware of SMC and its functioning?

Recognising the challenges faced due to a highly centralised and multi-tasking nature of the composition of SMCs in Imphal West, the Government of Manipur reviewed its policy accordingly and relieved district Councillors of the requirement to be Chairperson of SMCs by making it possible for Headmasters/ Headmistress to head the SMCs for each school instead. This has led to marked improvements in the efficacy of SMCs in the district. Notwithstanding this development, the study reveals that many parents and students are still left out of the loop and are unaware of what an SMC is all about or who are the members of the SMCs. This has led to rampant lack of transparency and accountability in the functioning of SMCs while at the same time leading to massive lack of stakeholders' participations in the whole process of the execution of the mandates of SMCs. Table 1 clearly indicate this:

Table: 1

Sl. No.	Name of School	Is there SMC in the school	Number of Respondent for each school	Who are the Respondents	Are the Respondents Aware of SMC and its Workings	For those who are aware, how do they come to know about it?
1	Moirangkhom Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	65% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
2	Patrigue Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians	70% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15%

School Management Committee in Elementary Schools of Imphal West District: A Brief Review

				and students		2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
3	Pishum Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	40% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
4	Singjamei Satra Vidyalaya Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	70% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
5	Waikhom Leikai Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	75% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
6	Khondram Shellungba Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	50% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
7	Gurukul Hijam Dewan High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	85% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
8	Khunthoknganbi Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	78% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
9	Laijengningthou Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	90% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%
10	Sinam Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	90% have no idea	1. Print & Electronic Media: 15% 2. Government Sources: 5% 3. School Authorities: 20% 4. Friends and Acquaintances: 60%

Source: Personal Field Visit and Casual Interactions

Transparency of SMCs in Carrying out and Implementing the Mandates of the RTE?

When it comes to transparency issue, it becomes a very sensitive and contentious issue for a researcher to write about. It will be wrong to say that SMCs of the schools under the study lack any transparency as most of the SMCs tried their best to deliver. However, as is often the case in Manipur, corruption and red-tape often results in limiting, restricting and dampening the enthusiasm and effective execution of works by the SMCs. Oftentimes, citing different reasons such as unavailability of funds, delays in the sanctioning of money and other materials for the SDP, etc, SMCs are left in the lurch and therefore unable to carry out any works. What is written on paper is oftentimes unfortunately not the reality. It was observed that the hands of SMCs are often tied and that they are reluctant to tell parents and students of the benefits available under SDPs for fear of being accused of not delivering when nothing comes from the government. At the same time, they are reluctant to complain against the concerned department for fear of covert or overt reprisal from the authorities that can have unintended consequences to their jobs and carries. It is in this dilemma that many SMC members are in, thereby contributing to an inadvertent lack of transparency. Table 2 & 3 succinctly bring out the level of transparency, effectiveness, factors for failure and success of the SMCs in the 10 schools studied. It is to be noted that personal information of respondents is not shown so as to maintain informants' confidentiality and also on the request of the informants themselves.

Table: 2

Sl. No.	Name of School	Is there a SDP for the school?	Number of Respondent for each school	Who are the Respondents?	What activities are carried out/ supposed to be carried out by the SMCs?	Are the works carried out by the SMC transparent and satisfactory?
1	Moirangkholm Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 30% No: 20% Can't say: 50%
2	Patrigue Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 40% No: 20% Can't say: 40%
3	Pishum Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of	Yes: 30% No: 20% Can't say: 50%

School Management Committee in Elementary Schools of Imphal West District: A Brief Review

					master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	
4	Singjamei Satra Vidyalyaya Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 60% No: 20% Can't say: 20%
5	Waikhom Leikai Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 40% No: 10% Can't say: 50%
6	Khondram Shellungba Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 30% No: 20% Can't say: 50%
7	Gurukul Hijam Dewan High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 20% No: 20% Can't say: 60%
8	Khunthoknga nbi Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of	Yes: 60% No: 20% Can't say: 20%

					laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	
9	Laijengningthou Junior High School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 40% No: 20% Can't say: 40%
10	Sinam Upper Primary School	Yes	20	Parents/ Guardians and students	a) Estimate of class-wise admission for each year. b) Renovation of school building and upgradation/ maintenance of laboratory, library, toilets, drinking water, wooden furniture, instruments, playground etc. c) Preparation of master plan for future needs of the school. d) Mid-day meals.	Yes: 60% No: 30% Can't say: 10%

Source: Personal Field Visit and Casual Interactions

Table: 3

Sl. No.	Name of School	Number of Respondent for each school	Factors that prevent a full realisation of SMC goals in the state	Factors responsible for the success of many SMC goals in the state	Recommendations
1	Moirangkhom Junior High School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson. 2. Public participation. 3. Transparency. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration.	1. More active Government intervention. 2. More public participation. 3. More public awareness and sensitisation/ consultation programs on RTE and related legislations.
2	Patrigue Junior High School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Public participation. 2. Transparency. 3. An understanding and accessible district administration. 4. A supportive legislature.	4. More participation and monitoring of works/ activities carried out under SMCs by Civil Society and Community-based organisations.
3	Pishum Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Inclusive SMC members. 3. Public participation. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	5. Capacity building training/ workshop/ orientation programs for SMC and district

School Management Committee in Elementary Schools of Imphal West District: A Brief Review

4	Singjamei Satra Vidyalaya Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Inclusive SMC members. 3. Public participation. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	administration members. 6. Mechanisms to ensure less bureaucratic and financial delays. 7. Mechanisms to minimise political/ 3 rd interferences.
5	Waikhom Leikai Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Public participation. 2. Transparency. 3. An understanding and accessible district administration. 4. A supportive legislature.	8. Regular and constant monitoring. 9. Relevant and result-oriented plans.
6	Khondram Shellungba Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Inclusive SMC members. 3. Public participation. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	
7	Gurukul Hijam Dewan High School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson. 2. Public participation. 3. Transparency. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	
8	Khunthoknganbi Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Public participation. 3. Transparency. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	
9	Laijengningtho Junior High School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Public participation. 3. Transparency. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	
10	Sinam Upper Primary School	20	1. Delays in sanctioning of funds. 2. Political/ 3 rd party interference. 3. Corruption. 4. Lack of adequate funds.	1. Active and energetic SMC Chairperson and members. 2. Public participation. 3. Transparency. 4. An understanding and accessible district administration. 5. A supportive legislature.	

Source: Personal Field Visit and Casual Interactions

From the above, it can be demonstrated that most of the respondents contacted have more or less the same thought on the constraints faced by SMCs; of the effective of SMCs and of the factors for the failures and successes of activities carried out by the SMCs and also of the SMCs themselves in the district studied.

IV. Discussion

From the information gathered, there are several recommendations that can be put forward. While the list is not exhaustible, let us highlight some more pertinent points:

1. More active Government intervention.

It was found that oftentimes, the government do not give due importance or is oblivious to the constraints, limitations and shortcomings faced by SMCs that requires prompt attention and redressal. As such, it is pertinent for the government is regularly updated on such issues and also for it to intervene more actively in such cases. This is crucial to lend effectiveness, accountability to the SMCs.

2. More public participation.

During the course of the study, it was found that majority of the public are not really aware of the roles, functions, responsibilities or even at times, the existence of a SMC in the schools where their wards are studying. This lack of awareness limits the participation of people in the implementation of works and functioning of the SMCs. As is common knowledge, less public participation in any development works is often the main reason behind the failures of any schemes or programs. As such, public participation is a priority to ensure effectiveness and success to the SMCs and the works they are mandated to carry out.

3. More public awareness and sensitisation/ consultation programs on RTE and related legislations.

In this globalised age where information can be easily accessed, it is unfortunate to find that even though the schools are located mostly in urban and semi-urban areas with free flow of information through print and electronic media, the general public lacks crucial information on RTE Act and other relevant legislations. This lack of awareness often leads to wanton corruption and denial of rights and justice to the people. As such, awareness and sensitisation/ consultation programs on RTE and related legislations can serve to be pivotal in ensuring accountability and transparency towards the effective implementation of RTE and other relevant legislations in the state.

4. More participation and monitoring of works/ activities carried out under SMCs by Civil Society and Community-based organisations.

Participation of civil society and community-based organisations in any government programs is crucial to lend inclusivity, accountability and transparency in implementation of such programs. As such, the government should also encourage the participation of civil society and community-based organisations in monitoring activities to ensure effectiveness and accountability on the part of government agencies and officers. Civil society and community-based organisations, if mobilised and utilised properly can be an effective arm of the government as they have the capacity to reach the public much more than the government in many instances.

5. Capacity building training/ workshop/ orientation programs for SMC members and district administration members.

Capacity building programs such as training, workshop and orientation of SMC members and government officials is crucial to ensure success to the activities of SMCs in the state. It was found that many SMC members along with government officials lack necessary knowledge and skills in matters of effective implementation of development programs while at the same time lacking the requisite skills in building a positive rapport with the people they are supposed to serve.

6. More coordination between the SMCs and relevant government departments.

Oftentimes, it was found that there is little or no coordination, interaction and communication between members of the SMCs and relevant government departments. It is common to see the government adopting as top-down approach in implementing any development programs with complaints of high-handedness and arrogance exhibited by government agencies very common. In the face of such lack of coordination, it is no surprise to find many SMCs not effective nor are they adequately motivated. It is common to find many members of the SMCs not taking their responsibilities seriously and regarding their designation more of a formality rather than seeing it as serious, responsible one.

7. Mechanisms to ensure less bureaucratic and financial delays.

Oftentimes, bureaucratic and financial delays play an important role if rendering the SMCs ineffective and projecting a negative image of SMCs to the people. As such, it is pertinent to ensure a more effective mechanism to ensure less bureaucratic and financial delays as timely execution of works is crucial in building trust and confidence among the people and also among the SMC members.

8. *Mechanisms to minimise political/ 3rd interferences.*

During the course of the study, many of the respondents reported that political or 3rd party interferences seriously undermine the quality of works and limiting the effectiveness of the SMCs. As such, mechanisms to minimise such interferences is a priority.

9. *Regular and constant monitoring.*

It is a known fact that regular and constant monitoring of works carried out is the most effective course of action to ensure success for any development works. It is was found that this is lacking in all of the SMCs investigated. If such can be lacking in an area with good connectivity in terms of transport and communication, it can be safely conjectured that the situation will be much worse in remote areas of the state.

10. *Relevant and result-oriented plans.*

It was found that many of the SDPs had by the schools are often repetitive, lacks result-oriented plans and are sometimes not relevant. As such, more careful and strategic planning is required so as to ensure maximum output with minimum investment.

V. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, SMCs in Imphal West district of Manipur *per se* and of the state of Manipur in general are definitely on the road to a much more successful future as compared to 5 years ago. With the Government of Manipur also trying to minimise the shortcomings of SMCs in the state and more people becoming more aware and informed, especially after the advent of the internet and internet-capable mobile phones coupled with a freer flow of information, SMCs in the state have come a long way.

However, as can be seen from the foregone paragraphs, the full success of SMCs as enshrined in the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) still have a long way to go. More public participation and more accountable government coupled with increased coordination between government agencies and SMCs may perhaps make the road to success shorter and smoother.

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