

School Management Committees in Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Elementary education is foundation for strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provision of equal opportunities to all. Various programmes have been initiated and implemented for realization of universalization of elementary education. But the success of any programme is governed by the organizational set up it has. In India, community has always been an integral part of educational organizational set up. Due to participation of communities in the educational set up, it is seen as the functional body in policy initiatives at national as well as international level. This has led to the formation of school monitoring committees, which include parents, teachers and elected members of the local authority as its members. Parents are involved as educators, partners and decision makers with the objective to make teachers and principals more accountable for education delivery which ultimately aims at better learning outcomes of students. The issues of academic and developmental activities of school are managed by these committees. The present paper focuses on organizational set up of elementary schools of Himachal Pradesh, their functions and duties. An overview of roles, functions and duties of school monitoring committees is also included as these are one of the key elements of the organizational set up of elementary schools in Himachal Pradesh.

1. Education in Himachal Pradesh

Education tiers in Himachal Pradesh comprise primary schools, secondary and high schools. Himachal Pradesh is India's first state where every child has to avail elementary education in the state. The state of Himachal Pradesh has one of the best literacy rates in the country. The literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh is increasing with each passing year. Data show that from 31.96 percentages of 1971, the literacy rate has reached to 76.5 percentages as per the census of 2001. According to Census 2011, the literacy rate in HP is 83.78%. It is 90.83% for the male population and 76.60% for the female population. Thus Himachal Pradesh has higher literacy rate than average of whole nation. The mission and educational march is going ahead with the establishment of various educational Institutes of different faculties. The state is also giving incentives for the maintenance of SCs/STs and OBCs group children to increase the enrolment in education. Also Public Private Partnership ventures are encouraged for bettering the scenario of education in the state.

The school education board of Himachal Pradesh is a government body that is responsible for preparing and prescribing the courses for study, text books and conducting board examinations of students of secondary schools in Himachal Pradesh. The board was established in 1969. The schools affiliated to the board are nearly 8000. Board, every year conducts examinations of more than 5, 00,000 examinees with 1650 centers of examination.

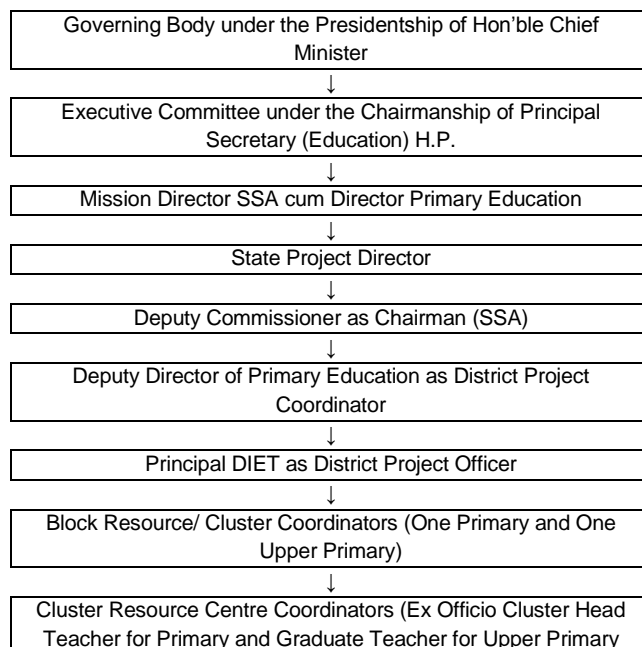
Education in Himachal Pradesh is administered by the Department of Education at all levels. During the period 1998 to 2003, the state government constructed as many as 13,672 concrete rooms that were later converted into class rooms for facilitating education. The Directorate of Primary Education in Himachal Pradesh looks into matters related to elementary

education, placement issues, various education programs, adult education among few other responsibilities that it undertakes.

2. Organizational Set-Up

A distinguished feature of the organizational set-up in Himachal Pradesh is that the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) are the District Project Offices with the Principal of the DIET as the District Project Officer and the faculties taking over the responsibility of different functional areas. Directorate of Elementary Education came in to existence in the year 2005 after restructuring of Primary Education in the State .

The organizational set up of SSA Mission in the State is given below:



nominated by the Principal of the School.



Schools (Primary and Upper Primary)/ School Management Committee / PTA/ Panchayat/ Other Local Body
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3. Functions and Duties

- To Manage the Elementary Education System in Himachal Pradesh.
- To exercise Administrative & Financial control over its various functionaries/offices comprising of District/Block Offices, DIETs and Primary and Upper Primary Schools/Units in the State.
- To implement policies relating to Elementary Education in the State.
- To implement Centrally Sponsored Schemes as well as the state plan & Non-Plan schemes in the field of Elementary Education.
- To manage and control service matters of teaching/non-teaching staff of Elementary Education Department.
- To exercise financial control over privately managed Government aided primary & upper primary schools in the State.

SMC or MTA forms the backbone of the organizational set up of education system. To keep the system erect it is necessary that the functioning of the SMCs should be proper, else whole education system will not be able to function properly. Therefore, SMCs play a major role to regulate academic and developmental activities of the schools by including local authorities, parents with the teachers and parents.

4. School Management Committees

People's involvement and participation at grassroot level is essential for successful implementation of the programme of universalization of elementary education, which is the major goal of SSA. Under SSA, concerted efforts have been made to mobilize the community to promote education, to help in development of educational facilities and to oversee the functioning of schools and EGS/AIE centres in every state. For that, institutions such as, Village Education Committee/School Management and Development Committee/urban slum level education committees/Parents Teacher Associations, etc. have been set up at village or school level in most of the states. Their roles and functions are defined clearly and efforts have been made for effectively involving them and other grass root level structures in the management of elementary education as delineated under the framework of SSA. The SSA framework has been amended in July 2006 to ensure centrality of Panchayats in supervision and monitoring of the Elementary Education/SSA programme through the following arrangements:

- School/Village-wise Committee to be linked with Standing/Sub-Committee of Gram Panchayat to ensure overall supervision of Gram Panchayats.
- All tiers of PRIs to be given role of supervision of elementary education/SSA.

The states have been instructed to initiate suitable action in this regard. SSA provides for training/capacity building of

members of Village Education Committees, School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations, etc. The norms provide for training of four persons in a village plus two persons per school for two days in a year preferably women at the rate of Rs. 30 per day per person.

Community ownership is a major strategy central to SSA programme. States have been working in this direction for the last few years. But it is not known how efficiently and effectively such institutions are functioning and to what extent they have achieved the objectives for which they were created.

A School Management Committee (SMC) has a very important role in realising the goals of Right to Education.

The RTE Act requires a School Management Committee to be set up in every school other than the unaided private schools. Through its positive action and a practical planning the SMC can work towards ensuring a well functioning school system.

5. Who Should Be A Part Of The SMC?

The School Management Committee should consist of the following members:

- Parents or guardians of the children studying in the school
- Teachers
- Elected representatives of the local authority

6. Composition of the SMC

Following is the composition of a School Management Committee:

- Three fourth (75%) members of the SMC from the parents/ guardians. Out of these 50% must be women. Depending on the percentage of children from the weaker section and disadvantaged groups in schools, their parents will be represented in the SMC.
- Rest one fourth (25%) will be as: (1/3rd local authorities; 1/3rd school teachers; 1/3rd academicians/students)

7. Participation of Women in SMC

The RTE Act very clearly designates 50% place for mothers among the elected members. The positive impact of women's participation is clearly visible at the grassroots levels, in their participation in Panchayats and Self Help Groups. It is also desired to encourage women to take leadership of the SMC. Therefore, it will be desirable that least one woman should be selected at the level of President or vice President of the SMC as per the local situation.

8. Key Functions of SMC

- Making School Development Plan (SDP) as per the RTE guidelines/norms
- Management of school
- 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 all members
 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
10. Monitors the receipts and expenditure of the school
 11. Monitors the identification and enrolment of and facilities for education of children with disabilities, and ensures their participation in, and completion of elementary education
 12. The school management committee prepares a school development plan at least three months before the end of the financial year
 13. The school development plan is a three year plan comprising three year sub plans
 14. The school development plan is signed by the chairperson or the Vice- chairperson and member secretary of the school management committee and submits to the authorities concerned before the end of the financial year in which it is to be prepared.

9. School Development Plan by SMC

To prepare the School Development Plan, ensure the following below:

- Estimates of class wise enrolment for each year
- Number of additional teachers required including head teachers, sub teachers and part time teachers
- Requirement of additional infrastructure such as class rooms, equipments etc.
- Financial requirement to meet the above and to meet requirement of special training needs and free text books and uniforms.
- The SDP should be signed by the Chairperson/ Vice-Chairperson and Convenor of the Committee shall be submitted to the local authority before the end of the financial period in which it is to be prepared.

10. Role and functions of School Management Committee

1. A school management committee exists in every school, other than unaided school, within its jurisdiction and reconstituted in every two years
2. SMC consists of 15 members out of which 11 are among parents, guardian of children; provided that 50 % of members are women. 4 members are Ward member including Head Master of school.
3. SMC meets once in a month and minutes is recorded and made available to the public.
4. SMC monitors the functioning of school, prepares and recommends School Development Plan.
5. Monitors the utilization of grants received from State Government or local authority
6. Ensures the enrolment and continued attendance of all the children from the neighbourhood.
7. Brings to the notice of the local authorities any deviation from the rights of the child, in particular mental and physical harassment of children, denial of admission, and timely provision of free entitlement.
8. Where a child above of six years has not been admitted in any school, for his/her age appropriate learning level, identifies the needs, prepares a plan, and monitors the implementation of the special training.
9. Monitors the implementation of the Mid Day Meal programme in the school and ensures its enrichment

11. Perception of teachers and parent

Interviews with the teacher, parents and local authorities conducted in districts of Himachal Pradesh have revealed that the reality is far away. There is a huge difference between the policy formulation and policy implementation. Mostly parents are unaware of the school management committees. Very few who are member of the school management committee are unaware of their roles and duties for efficient functioning. They are unaware of how the fund is generated and where it is utilized. Most parents, even if they are the members, are not ready to participate actively in the meetings. They are insisted by teachers or other members to attend meetings if they held, as the members of the committee do not meet to plan for development. Being member of the SMCs most of times turn out to be a political issue rather than for the development of the schools. The teachers are also inadequate in number which worsens the condition. The unawareness about the policy and unavailability of resource is impeding the functioning of the committees. These are ultimately affecting the academic and developmental activities of school which is the responsibility of these committees.

12. Conclusion

Through school management committees Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has put an effort to effectively involve the Panchayati Raj institutions in the management of elementary schools. This has provided the opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education, a partnership between central-state and the local government, an opportunity for states to develop their own vision of elementary institutions. It is an example of decentralizing the education system, making it more effective and to encourage participation of parents in the process of decision making. This has interlinked the school and the community to work in mutually responsive manner. But this interlinking will be fruitful only if there is proper coordination and implementation. Parents should be made aware of the roles they have. The local authorities instead of thinking about their political benefits should take steps to improve the conditions in the schools. The coordination and collaboration can only bring the desired results of improved academic and developmental activities of the schools.

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