ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN THE FUNCTIONING OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN RAI BLOCK OF SONIPAT DISTRICT IN HARYANA

DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION BY THE SCHOLAR

This is to certify that the M.Phil. Dissertation being submitted by the scholar **Ms. Rashmi Mishra** on the topic entitled '**Role of Community Leadership in the Functioning of Elementary Schools: An Exploratory Study in Rai Block of Sonipat District in Haryana'** has been completed under the guidance of **Prof. Rashmi Diwan**. It is declared that the present study has not been submitted or previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Association ship or Fellowship to this or any other University.

(RASHMI MISHRA)

CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that Dissertation entitled '**Role of Community Leadership in the Functioning of Elementary Schools: An Exploratory Study in Rai Block of Sonipat District in Haryana'** is the work undertaken by Ms. Rashmi Mishra under my supervision and guidance as part of her M.Phil. Degree. To the best of my knowledge, this is the original work conducted by her and the dissertation may be sent for evaluation.

PROF. RASHMI DIWAN

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ABBREVIATIONS

CL	**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**
CP	**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**
FGD	**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**
GOI	**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**
MDM	**MID DAY MEAL**
NEP	**NEW EDUCATION POLICY**
NGO	**NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**
PPP	**PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**
PTA	**PARENT TEACHER MEETING**
PTR	**PUPIL TEACHER RATIO**
PRI	**PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS**
PLC	**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY**
RTE	**RIGHT TO EDUCATION**
SMC	**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
SDP	**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**
UEE	**UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**
UNESCO	**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**
VEC	**VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

The chapter gives reflection and in-depth understanding about the overall research related to community leadership and its role in the school function. The first section is about the interpretative understanding of school-community linkages, community and community leadership and its role in school functions. Apart from this one significant part of the section is policy perspective and functional aspects of community leadership in the elementary schools i.e. the role of School Management committees (SMCs). The other section i.e. Profile of the state gives a brief introduction about the demography of the Rai Block selected for the present study. As the community is contextualized in diverse settings, the varied factors like culture, caste, and regional aspects would help in exploration of community leadership practices in the Rai Block of Sonipat, Haryana.

1.1 School Community Interrelationship: The Broader Perspective

In any society, community plays a crucial role in social cohesion and democratic decision making. A community is a collection of individuals who share a common geographical location, caste, sex, or religion. Culture, language, custom, legislation, geography, class, and race are some of the elements that can be used to describe a community. Involvement can be defined in a variety of ways depending on the situation, and different levels of participation are defined as participation in real decision-making at all stages, attendance at meetings, and services, among other things. Gamage (1993) identifies community participation in school based governance as the altered form of formal governance that identifies school as the primary unit of improvement which is stimulated by the redistribution of decision making. Mark Bray (2000) defines a community as having at least some of the following characteristics: *a network of common interests and concerns; a symbolic or physical base; extension beyond the tightly circumscribed household; and something that sets it apart from other comparable groupings.* Community Participation in education aids in the identification of concerns and problems in the classroom. School is a component of the community, and the community supports schools in providing high-quality

education to all students in order to help the society flourish. Community interventions can help schools by sending esteemed members of the community, such as religious leaders or tribal chiefs, to present in classes about community history, traditions, customs, and culture, which have long been celebrated in the area. Therefore by providing long-term answers to local challenges, schools can contribute to community activities. McDonough and Wheeler (1998) detailed the Social Forestry, Education, and Participation pilot project (SFEP) in Thailand as one example. School is an important cultural institution in every society with the special purpose to contribute to the education of the next generation. Empirical research within educational contexts has served to reinforce the importance of school leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Strong and firm leadership is a key variable, generally referring to school leaders who exhibit a range of qualities (MacBeath and Moos, 2004). Heneveld and Craig (1996) recognized parent and community support as one of the key factors to determine school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. They identify five categories of parent and community support that are relevant to the region: (1) children come to school prepared to learn; (2) the community provides financial and material support to the school; (3) communication between the school, parents, and community is frequent; (4) the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and (5) community members and parents assist with instruction.

In the backdrop of the same, participation and strong leadership becomes a tool that is used to perpetuate social equality, equal opportunity and development to all. An effective leadership can improve school functioning by cultivating transparency, information flow and a culture of mutual respect. It also leads towards school development by sharing vision, related processes, and outcomes. Community involvement in school management can offer significant contributions for decreasing mistrust and distance between people and schools. Different social and institutional contexts of educational systems have different effects on community participation outcomes, particularly in terms of roles and responsibilities, levels of participation, representation of community members in the school management body, and the number of community members in the school management body. In a nutshell, community leadership entails the engagement and participation of all stakeholders in order to mobilise resources and provide shared benefits to the community's most vulnerable members. As a result, community leadership can be described as the active

participation of every stakeholder in a community, regardless of the context. It is one of the most cardinal components of an empowered community. In relation to an empowered community, school education becomes a central notion along with a leadership approach. Community leadership leads to community participation and enhancement of the quality of education in particular. Community members evolved through practice rather than prescription within a given structure and mechanism of the school system and community leadership gives a true meaning to the vision of Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009 vis-a-vis to School Management Committees (SMCs) also.

Holmes and Wyne (1989), as cited by Dickens (2014) P. 18-21, have identified four major functions of schooling. These are (i) distributive functions (ii) the provisions of basic skills 9iii) the custodial functions (iv) basic discipline of knowledge. The most important is the school providing the mechanism for social distribution which comes from the community. They also suggest that educators must moderately transform the recognition structure of the typical school or classroom. The transformation should generate more forms of collective achievements and recognition for pupils and teachers.

1.2 Community, Community Participation, Community Leadership and the School: The Conceptual Understanding

Communities and members of a community can be characterised by shared traits such as culture, language, custom, law, geography, class, and race. It can be homogenous or heterogeneous. Members of the community share a sense of communal attachment to the occupied location. Finally, the community has some authority and responsibility on a local level. In the educational aspect, the role of community is vital because any educational set up cannot function in isolation. As schools are basic units of society therefore they are bound to be influenced by the social patterns and actions like caste, religion, class etc. In this light communities play a very significant role. Durkheim (1893), Redfield (1955), and MacIver (1937) are some of the early sociologists who made significant contributions to the development of community knowledge.

The concept of community has highlighted the features by using typologies or dichotomizing pre-industrial and industrial rural and urban primary and secondary communities etc. Sociologists like Durkheim (1893) and Cooley (1890) have

characterised the community; as little, distinctive, harmonious, homogeneous and self-sufficient in comparison to other groups. These traits which define communities are simplistic, but do not show the nature and extent of diversity in different types of communities which may be found in our real life. There have been several criticisms for using terms homogeneous, harmonious and self- contained social groups for the community as it represents conservation ideology. In the actual status, the community is certainly not homogeneous in the truest sense. The attributes described in the preceding typologies should be interpreted as degrees instead of absolute categories. Therefore communities may have some common characteristics to define but that is totally dependent upon the locality and the context to give a real meaning to any community.

On the other, Community leadership may help in improved school governance and management through capacity enhancement and promoting active engagement of all stakeholders including teachers, students, community, and concerned government duty bearers and ensure non- discriminatory, inclusive, violence-free, and joyful learning environment for all students through effective child participation and child protection approaches. According to Mark Creyton, (2002) a community leader must have collaboration, practical vision and values in action.

Often community leaders are considered as an agent of change who takes care of everyone's needs and interests. But can a leader always work on the line of interest and needs? What if those needs and interests are not desirable and adaptive to a certain context? In the diverse settings there will always be someone overpowering the others. Can he be stated as a leader? In such situations the conflict of power politics must be negotiated with wisdom. Is power politics always bad? So a leader must understand authority and power capture and be careful while exercising the same. For example in the state of Haryana, there are many dominant and influential communities like Jaats, Brahmins and Yadavs. They are profound in numbers and so they are present in the school system also. So if a leader is from another community will he\ she always listens to those who are dominant? The present research attempts to answer these questions.

The idea or the concept of leadership must be reflected back and there is a need to redesign its meaning. It should be contextual and locally based. Mark Creyton, (2002) suggests "*Perhaps the greatest challenge of redefinition is to move our concepts away from public figures and recognise leadership at all levels*. The research argues that any

individual who has the capacity of making networks and strategies for the good of others can be a leader. A leader must always question and reflect back his\her own decisions and question "will it work?" Leaders must be pragmatic and practical and comprehend the intricacy of the concerns, disputes, and obstacles which exist in our communities. This should be done with a visionary approach situating himself\herself in a real life context? A leader must weigh the consequences of his\her own actions in a particular social setting. Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organisation.

Box- 1

Leadership and Culture

Edgar Schein writes that "Neither culture nor leadership, when one examines each closely, can really be understood by itself. In fact, one could argue that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture. If one wishes to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers and administrators work within them."

Derived from: Organisational Culture and Leadership, 1997 p 5.

Leading the idea of close affinity between culture and leadership, Duignan and Machpherson, (1990, p.3.) elaborates that educative leadership must not focus upon the traditional aspect of leadership rather it should come from the origin of the particular organisation i.e. rooted in the "culture". They quote Greenfield, 1985) to support their understanding i.e. "we do not see organisation as a natural phenomenon instead we see them as a culture consists of people, values, interpretation of their situations".

Community leadership in school education is significant for a variety of reasons. It aids in the identification of local educational challenges and the development of strategies to overcome roadblocks that restrict access and retention while also compromising quality. People's participation in the form of community leadership guarantees that a given location has the needed degree of educational development and delivery, as well as giving community development a boost. Therefore it has become an essential

component to consider which is actually desirable in terms of educational achievement especially in elementary education which imparts a foundational ground for basic education. There have been constant efforts in India to increase community leadership which includes essential forms of community involvement in general, such as community service, volunteerism, and educational efforts that promote involvement in particular. These efforts further add to community leadership which shapes roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder i.e. school principals, teachers, parents, administrators and management committee. In this regard, decentralization is proposed as a key strategy for giving a thrust to community involvement in the education system. Supporting participation by all, Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) argues "*for the development of responsive, participatory, and responsible educational governance and management systems*". It emphasizes the importance of education system governance in terms of efficiency, accountability, productivity and collaboration. The collaboration comes from the active participation of leaders from the communities.

According to Dr. S. Radha Krishnan, *"Education should be man making and society making".* This quote summarizes that education can be a tool through which man and societies are made. It also suggests that societies and human beings are linked through education. Therefore schools and communities being a part of the societies are also interconnected. In the backdrop of the same, New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) aims for universal access and quality education for holistic development of children in a school. This holistic development cannot be obtained individually and in isolation. It requires quality teaching learning resources, innovative classroom practices and involvement of communities. There is no doubt that community engagement through participation can give a way to cooperation and collaborations between community and schools. Involvement of communities can be a challenging task as it has a complex structure. Communities and community leaders can make this involvement uncomplicated and unchallenging. According to the study "State of School Management Committees" (TISS, 2019) (P.2) through a proactive plan of action and necessary constructive discussion with all stakeholders, the SMC seeks to invigorate the educational system. Its major roles or functions are to support the quality of teaching, proper development and utilization of funds that are provided by the government, implementation of different schemes devised by the state as well as the central

government, to create awareness regarding health among the children, to provide sanitation facilities, to develop school infrastructure and so on.

Individuals and communities are involved in decisions that influence their lives as part of community leadership. People don't always want to be part of decision-making, but it's especially vital for universal education. Therefore it is critical to investigate the gravity of involvement of communities within the socio-political sphere where individual exercises their fundamental rights. The Right to education, 2009 (RTE 2009) mandated as a fundamental right and provided involvement of communities in a policy format. Before that many other educational policies e.g. National policy on Education (1986), PRI (1978) etc. have recommended community involvement in education.

In recent decades India has made significant progress on access to schooling and enrolment rates in education as 80 % of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported. However, strengthening and better functioning of local actors and stakeholders (Parents, community members, teachers etc.) have become prime concerns of the educational reform agenda for establishing effective local linkages in education. It is now widely recognized that effective local collaborations have considerable impacts on access to education as well as the enrolment, retention and learning experiences of children in school. In this context, the present study provides an overview of the changing pattern of educational administration, community leadership and participation in the Rai Block of Sonipat in Haryana. Considering that education is dynamically interrelated to every aspect of social, political and economic development, the impact of community leadership and participation on the elementary school systems takes the central theme of the study.

Hence, it is appropriate to study community leadership and their role in context-specific needs and requirements. Communities can empower local people to bring specific changes in education and it provides a platform for them. Apart from the above-mentioned issues, the wide range of financial and social capital accessible to the power elite in rural areas, gives their members heavy influence in economic and political decision making. It also impacts the functionality and dynamics of any community. Therefore, the study further explores the role of the power elite in rural areas. Community leadership has been vital when it comes to educational progress and *'shared decision making at every stage',* including identification of problems, planning, and implementation, and evaluation. An attempt has been made to examine the extent to

which grassroots level functionaries and local bodies like Panchayats and Village Education Committees (VEC) are able to get involved in decision making processes and give meaning to the concept of community leadership. VEC is the living link between the local community and primary as well as secondary education of the children of the local community.

1.2.1 Establishing a Connect between School and Community Leadership

The school and communities share a unique relationship in terms of functionality. Communities can be considered as a small niche where schools flourish to give new heights to the vision of inclusiveness, development and educational goals of India. This inter-relationship between community and Schools produces meaningful collaborations which would be contextual and leading in nature.

Figure -1
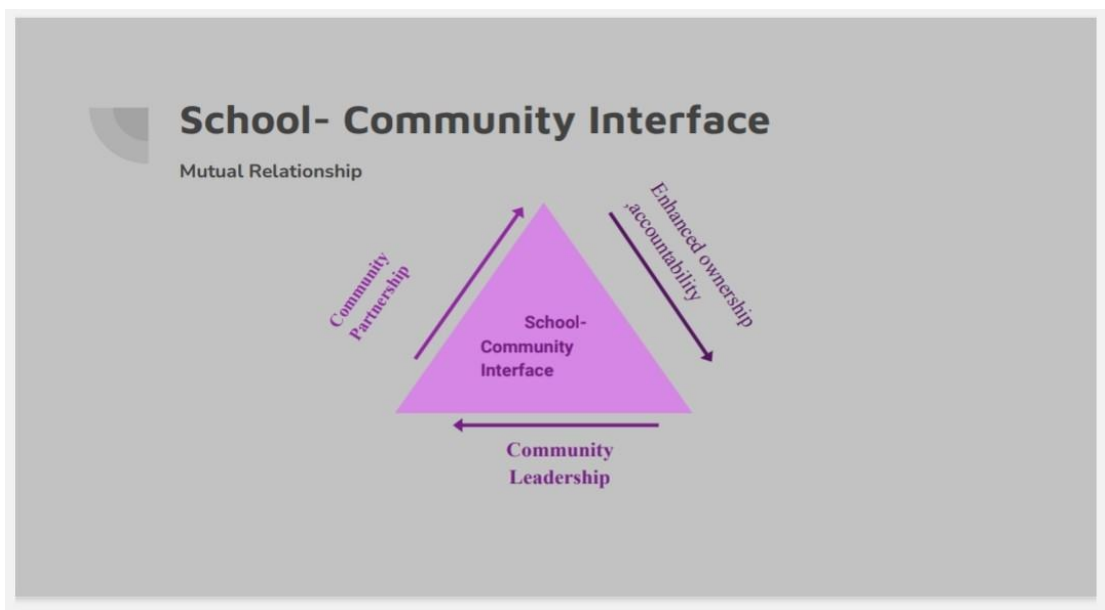
Source*: Derived from the overall perspective obtained from the literature review by the researcher*

Figure 1 shows this relationship between school and community interface by integrating community leadership and community participation for enhanced ownership. In public education, community engagement refers to the school system where parents and community people are actively involved in school reform efforts. The community members are able enough to argue for what they believe, stick with their concerns until they are addressed, and engage, if possible, in implementing solutions further. It is a two way process where both parties are mutually engaged to

resolve the challenges and seek each other's support whenever needed. This socially contextualised community-School relationship can be understood from the biological phenomenon called 'Mutualism" where two species are interdependent and benefit each other. The community's key role is to be a friend of the school system and to solve school management issues and challenges from the community's perspective. This engagement becomes the need of the hour. For example, the recent Covid-19 Pandemic has forced the school shut and expulsion of more than 168 million children globally.

According to a report of UNESCO, (2021) at least one-third of students were unable to pursue remote learning due to a lack of connectivity and gadgets. In such a crisis and challenging situation communities may give impetus to a dismantled school system. This can be done when insider knowledge is combined with outside resources and assistance in deep community school ties. One can ask this question: why do we need such collaboration when these two entities are already provided with unique identities and patterns to function individually? "Schools and communities can work together in unison to benefit children and families". (Jehl, Jeanne; Blank, Martin, McCloud, Barbara, 2001). This unison creates a shared space for the school and communities to work together. It also gives them an understanding of resolving the challenges and coming up with suitable solutions. This relationship becomes more significant when Indian education policies and related governance has been talking about inclusive and democratic societies where everyone is responsible for a change. In this context, school and its learning process must resonate and radiate in concerned communities. Similarly communities too try to become a guiding source for the schools so that the existing gaps of misunderstanding, poor collaboration and misinformation can be bridged through cooperation. So one can ask these questions: How do we achieve cooperation between schools and communities? Is it so easy to share space too when each entity i.e. school and community has their own hierarchical structures? Active engagement of communities and their mutual participation through effective leadership could be an answer to this question. Community participation and leadership can pave the way for the innovative approach towards the development of schools and its fruitful functional aspect.

The term "participation" can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the context. Shaeffer (1994), as cited by Uemmura, (1997) (P. 11-13) clarifies different degrees or levels of participation, and provides seven possible definitions of the term, including:

- Involvement through the mere use of a service (such as enrolling children in school or using a primary health care facility);

- Involvement through the contribution (or extraction) of money, materials, and labour;

- Involvement through 'attendance' (e.g. at parents' meetings at school), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;

- Involvement through consultation on a particular issue;

- Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;

- Participation as implementers of delegated powers;

- Participation "in real decision making at every stage," including identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Govinda and Diwan, (2003) found that community is obviously not a homogenous notion. According to them "It is either various communities unequally and differently placed within a society, or various groups in a community unequally placed". In the book *"Community participation and Empowerment in Primary Education"* they perceive community participation as context specific to bring certain desired change in the society. Giving emphasis on community leaders quote "It *is the involvement of parents and community leaders as partners in supporting educational activities that contribute to improvement in their own lives"*. As in the case of community participation, it has to be perceived as a context specific expression based on the degree of involvement of people to bring certain systemic changes with the basic objective of ushering development and improvement in the quality of life of the participants. When we talk about the community participation in primary education, again it is the involvement of parents and community leaders as partners in supporting educational activities that contribute to improvement in their own lives.

Campfens (1997) identifies key Factors for Effective Participation which is an open and democratic environment, decentralized policy with greater emphasis on local

initiative, reform in public administration in which creation of collective decision-making structures at various levels that extend from the micro to macro levels and link participatory activities with policy frameworks is the most important one.

Figure-2
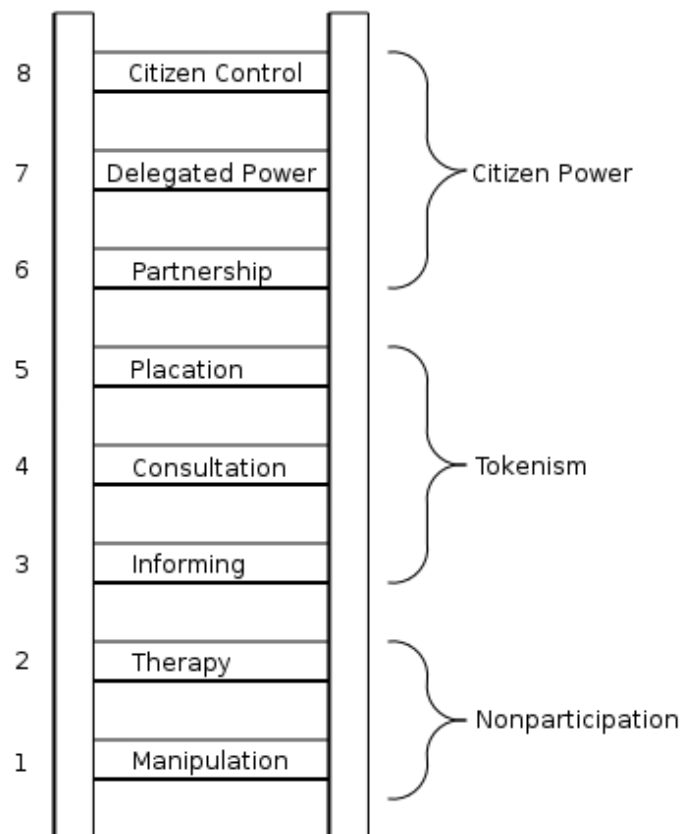
Derived From: Arnstein, S. (1969) 'A ladder of citizen participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35.4: 216–224

School can be considered of as a network of roles and positions. A system is a collection of interconnected and interdependent parts in which a change in one part causes a relative change in other parts, or the parts are physically tied to each other in such a way that a change in one part affects the others. From a functionalist standpoint, education can be viewed as a system, or a collection of interconnected subsystems that work together to make a whole. The school is indeed a social organisation within itself, as well as one that may be managed in the context of relationships and its place in society. School as an organisation has goals, structure

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and functions and these become more specific depending on the need and interest of the given communities and are constantly negotiated for the broader objectives. The subsystem of communities and families may have "informal unstated goals'' that differ from the "formal goals" of schools (Ballantine 1997).

School constitutes a socialization system of great importance. It has the formal responsibility of imparting knowledge in those disciplines which are most central to adult functioning in the society. As Talcott Parsons says, the elementary school is the primary social environment in the latency phase of child development and the secondary school serves in this capacity during the adolescent phase. External factors have a significant impact on a school's structure and culture, which is partly determined by the logic of teaching and learning situations. People who join this organisation carry their expectations and preconceptions about their own rights and responsibilities with them. As a result, kids arrive at school with diverse perspectives toward their educational experience, depending on their family, neighbourhood, class, and ethnic background. Every society has its own sub-systems which together help a society to fulfil its commitments and obligations towards its citizens. School is a major sub-system of every society. It reflects the ideals and promises to further refine its understanding and processes. Four key characteristics were identified as being significant in the growth of schools as learning organisations. These were: the existence of inclusive collaborative structures; effective communication channels; integrated professional development programs; and, learning-focused leadership. To be relevant, schools must become learning organisations where the "rate of learning within the organization must be equal to, or greater than, the rate of change in the external environment" (Garratt, 1987, cited in Stoll and Fink). These are compelling reasons for schools to be organisations that learn: "organizations that have a sense of direction and a firm fix on current reality through scanning their contexts; who plan effectively, efficiently and flexibly; organizations in which continuous development and improvement are integral parts of their culture" Silins, H., Zarins, S., & Mulford, B. (1998). What Characteristics and Processes Define a School as a Learning Organisation? Is This a Useful Concept To Apply to Schools?

1.3. Policy Perspectives in Context of Community Leadership in Schools

Policies are a reflection of the goals and aspirations of any organization. They provide a blueprint for future prospects and development in the given sector. In India, in 1976, an amendment to Article 42 of the Constitution was done, making education a Concurrent List item, allowing the Central Government to legislate it in the manner most suited to it. Therefore, overall education has been operated within a policy framework. As discussed in the literature review, it is clear that right from independence, India has strived for exceptional educational goals through several policy measures. From the introduction of several educational policies from 1964 to the National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020), holistic development of education was the main concern. As schools are the secondary socialization agencies, these policies have provided ways to focus on these in multi-dimensional ways. The same has been visualized through formation of Village Education Committees (1986) and Right to Education, 2009. As these educational policies evolved, they widened their purview of spreading education to the masses and started engaging people and the communities for their own warfare. The formation of School Management Committees (SMCs) could be the best example of the said engagement

The Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1973 and 1974 provided for the establishment of democratically elected bodies at the district, sub-district, and panchayat levels. The formation of PRIs has given wings to the community involvement in the school education. The Acts also ensure that women, Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are adequately represented (ST). The Constitution's 11th Schedule entrusts the Panchayat authorities with the role of overseeing "education, including elementary and secondary school, technical training and vocational education, adult and non-formal education, library and cultural activities," among other things. Following the Constitutional Amendment Acts, states are required to set up elected local self-government at the district and sub-district levels in both rural and urban areas, to plan and administer development activities in their respective domains, through legislation. As a result, governments have enacted legislation to establish Panchayat structures as local elected government entities and have begun the process of decentralising governance in areas including as education, health, and infrastructure. The necessity of decentralising education planning and management at all levels, as well as people's engagement in education, was highlighted in the

National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 and the updated Programme of Action (POA) of 1992. State governments have taken initiatives to establish decentralised planning and management structures in accordance with the Policy and Program of Action. Local communities, through appropriate agencies, are expected to become involved in improving the running of schools as part of the decentralisation process. The constitution's commitment and policy suggestions led to the development of the Village Education Committee (VEC) and other participatory structures, as well as their involvement in education. The major breakthrough policy initiatives are as following-

1.3.1 Right to Education

On August 4, 2009, the Indian Parliament passed the Right to Education Act 2009, popularly known as the RTE Act 2009. It explains the importance of free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years in India, as defined by Article 21 (A) of the Indian Constitution. On April 1, 2010, this act took effect, making India one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right for all children. It establishes basic standards for primary schools, forbids unrecognised schools from operating, and opposes donation fees and admissions interviews with children.

Main Features of Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009

- Free and compulsory education to all children of India in the 6 to 14 age group.

- No child shall be held back, expelled or required to pass a board examination until the completion of elementary education.

- If a child above 6 years of age has not been admitted in any school or could not complete his or her elementary education, then he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. However, if a case may be where a child is directly admitted in the class appropriate to his or her age, then, in order to be at par with others, he or she shall have a right to receive special training within such time limits as may be prescribed. Provided further that a child so admitted to elementary education shall be entitled to free education till the completion of elementary education even after 14 years.

- Proof of age for admission: For the purpose of admission to elementary education, the age of a child shall be determined on the basis of the birth certificate issued in accordance with the Provisions of Birth. Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1856, or on the basis of such other document as may be prescribed. No child shall be denied admission in a school for lack of age proof

- A child who completes elementary education shall be awarded a certificate.

- Calls need to be taken for a fixed student–teacher ratio.

- Twenty-five per cent reservations for economically disadvantaged communities in admission to Class I in all private schools should be done.

- Improvement in the quality of education is important.

- School teachers will need an adequate professional degree within five years or else will lose their job.

- School infrastructure (where there is a problem) needs to be improved every 3 years, else recognition will be cancelled.

- Financial burden will be shared between the state and the central government.

1.3.2 New Education Policy (2020) and Community Leadership

The NEP 2020 has a transformative vision of education policy. It is a comprehensive policy that underscores the multi-disciplinary role of communities in school education. It encourages efforts to involve community and alumni in volunteer efforts for enhancing learning. It advocates fostering conscious understanding of roles and responsibilities, as well as community engagement, in order to reduce student exclusion based on language and disability. This will encourage students to learn more about India's rich culture, knowledge system, and tradition, as well as to raise awareness of human values such as empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, inclusion, and equity, all of which will foster respect for diversity.

For these objectives to be really meaningful it is required that they must be implemented on the ground by the policy makers. A study of Evaluation and Impact of RTE in Haryana (2021) quotes rightly "The RTE Act should be there. But, there

should be honesty and transparency in implementation of the Act. Genuine and honest Identification of the poor/ EWS is most important for making the policy purposeful."

1.4 Community Leadership in Elementary Schools

The emerging perspective of community Leadership is inclined towards strong synthesis between participatory structures of communities and schools. Rusell, (2009) advocates for the adoption of the Human-Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to development treats social problems as the results of socio-economic exclusion and focuses on the structural mechanisms that prevent citizens from accessing their entitlements (Oxfam America, 2001; Mitlin & Patel, 2005). The HTBA provides a base to the new phenomenon of community Leadership in schools. In India, The creation of various grassroots level structures such as Village Education Committees (VEC), School Management Committees (SMC), Mother Teacher Associations (MTA), Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Mothers Associations, and Women Motivator Groups (WMG) has translated community participation into reality. Together these amounts to increased citizen participation for the school functioning, improved school facilities, equal distribution of resources, retention and enhanced learning levels of students. At community and school levels concerns persist regarding the extent to which issues of equity are addressed and the extent to which capacity is enhanced beyond those who directly participate in school governance. Therefore the collaborative and synthetic version of school and community governance helps in building a inclusive space for all stakeholders. In this context the different forms of community leadership can be understood as tool to perpetuate the greater role of community members as decision makers in the school community. With the help of recommendations given by these policies from time to time gradually the priority transitioned from community engagement to community stewardship and leadership development. The community was expected to take a substantial involvement in quality improvement and school improvement.

1.4.1 Forms of Community Leadership

Organisation of Village Education Committee

As an earliest form of community mobilisation Village Education Committee (VEC) is a regulatory body to ensure community participation in smooth functioning of the school. VECs have been formed as part of the decentralised management structures

envisaged under District Primary Education Program (DPEP).An Example A typical VEC in Haryana is constituted according to explicit guidelines. For example, the village education will be constituted by the following 12 members:

1. Three members nominated by Gram Panchayat of which at least one member should be from a scheduled caste and one should be female.

2. Head teacher of the primary school who will act as secretary of the village education committee. If the community has more than one primary school, then the senior head teacher will act as secretary of VEC.

3. One woman teacher is deputed by the head teacher (if the community has more than one school then the lady teacher will be nominated by Secretary VEC from amongst the female staff of other schools.

4. One female member was nominated by Mahila Mandal of the village.

5. A female multipurpose health worker.

6. An Anganwadi worker of the village nurse.

7. Two members nominated by PTA.

8. A member of an NGO or a social worker, deputed by Block Education Officer.

9. The Gram Sachiv or the Gram Savika. Of these 12 members at least 6 members should be females. The duration of VEC is 2 years which can be increased if required. This committee would choose the President and the Vice-President from within its members.

School Management Committees (SMCs)

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) mandated the formation of School Management Committees (SMC) in every government-funded school. The basic motive of the formation of the SMCs was to have community involvement in the school functioning, involvement of parents in particular. These communities play an active role in the School Development Plan (SDP). The cornerstone SDP is holistic and integrated development of school with a visionary approach. In RTE 2009, clause 21 provides for the framing of SMCs with specific guidelines in terms of its composition and role. The RTE recommends the following composition for SMC, taking into account community diversity and the requirement

to ensure adequate representation of all groups: 75 % of parents/guardians, 50 % of should be women. This female representation is an essential step in addressing gender inequities in education and paying special attention to the specific requirements of girls. Women's self-help organisations have had a visible impact in rural areas that have encouraged women to take leadership roles in the SMC. As a result, the SMC's President or Vice President should be a woman. The representation of disadvantaged groups within the community should be proportionate to their population in the village. The Act mandates-

(1) 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:

(2) Provided that at least 3/4thof members of such Committee shall be parents or guardians

(3) Provided further that proportionate representation shall be given to parents or guardians of the children belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections.

(4) Provided also that 50% of members of such Committee shall be women.

(5) The School Management Committee shall perform the following functions, namely:

  (a) Monitor the working of the school;

  (b) Prepare and recommend school development plan;

  (c) Monitor the utilisation of the grants received from the appropriate Government or local authority or any other source; and

  (d) Perform other such functions as may be prescribed:

(6) Provided that the School Management Committee constituted under sub-section (1) in respect of a school established and administered by minority whether based on religion or language; and all other aided schools as defined in sub-section (ii) of clause (n) of section 2 shall perform advisory function only.

New Education Policy 2020 and SMCs

For the constitution of SMC every state has a specific guideline which ensures representation of every stakeholder i.e. teachers, parents and local people. NEP 2020 argues that "improved governance of the schooling system by devolving all finer decisions, to Principals, teachers, and other stakeholders within each group of schools". It strongly endorses the idea of the school complex/cluster, wherever possible. The aim of the school complex/cluster will be greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in the cluster and School Complex Management Committees (rather than simply School Management Committees) for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders. Building such larger communities of schools, school leaders, teachers, students, supporting staff, parents, and local citizens would energise and empower the schooling system, and in a resource-efficient manner. Therefore NEP 2020 extends the idea of SMC from RTE 2009 towards School management complexes. The present research will try to look into the above discussed roles and responsibilities of the SMCs in the government schools.

1.4.2. SMCs in the State of Haryana

The State of Haryana has formed the SMCs according to the guideline mandated in the RTE act 2009. The Haryana Elementary Education Department has directed its officers and Heads of all the Government Schools to ensure that the meeting of the School Management Committee (SMC) is convened every month without fail. The state government gazette notified on 3rd June 2011 states that SMCs are committees formed under RTE act 2009 subsection of (1) of section 21.

Composition of the School Management Committees

Box-2

Strength of students	Members
001-300	12
301-500	16
501 and above	20

75% of the strength of the SMC shall be from amongst parents of children whose wards are studying in the schools. Any dispute should be reported to the BEO or DEO.

- The remaining 25% of strength will be from the following- a. One third members shall be from the elected members of municipality or gram panchayats b. One third members amongst the teachers from the school. C. one third from amongst local educationists as decided by the parents.

- 50% should be women, at least one member from the SC OR OBCs community

- Chairperson or vice chairperson of the SMCs shall be elected from amongst the parents and head of the school shall be ex-officio member convener.

- SMCs shall meet at least once in a month and minutes of the meetings should be properly recorded.

Functions of the School Management Committees

SMCs functions are specified in the clause (a) to (d) of subsection (2) of 21.

1. Communicate in a simple and creative manner with the locals
2. Monitor teachers are not burdened
3. Keep a check over students enrolment and attendance
4. Monitor the norms and standard of school
5. If any deviation from the right of child given in act bring it to the notice of local authorities
6. Prepare School development plan
7. Monitor the school infrastructure and facilities

Current Status of SMCs in Haryana

Recently in July 2021 Government of Haryana has ordered for the social audit (2019-20) of 14 thousands of government schools. It has also directed the Department of education to constitute new SMCs and check what progress has been made so far. Due to Covid-19 SMCs were not constituted in the year 2019-20 and the process was delayed.

1. It was instructed to all the associated authorities (district education officers, District Elementary Education Officers, District Project Coordinators, Block Education Officers, Block Elementary Education Officers and heads of all the government schools) to ensure that the meeting of the SMC is convened on the last Saturday of every month and in case it is a holiday on that day, it should be convened on the last Friday.

2. As per a circular issued by the department, District Elementary Education Officers could affect changes in the timing of the meeting of the SMCs if they deemed it proper. The meeting of SMCs could be convened at any time, if need arises.

3. The quarterly meeting of the general body should be convened on the last Saturday of the month of July, October, January and April and it should be ensured that all the parents of the students should take part in these meetings.

4. The Member Secretary should forward written information about the meeting and its agenda four days before convening it. If decisions are not taken unanimously, it would be taken by majority vote in the meeting of the SMCs and the proceedings of every meeting would be recorded.

5. The matter discussed in the meeting and the decisions taken would also be recorded in the proceeding register. The Head of the school would be held responsible if the meeting of SMC is not held in his or her school.

1.5 The Context of the Study

The study has central focus on understanding how community leadership work as an agent of change in bringing significant grassroots change in the school arena? Going beyond this, it also analyses what are some of the best practices and major interventions used to improve and engage communities through SMCs, and how have they helped to overcome issues related to school day-to-day functions? In this light, the present study explores the role of community leadership in school functioning in the state of Haryana. It attempts to investigate how social-political conditions of areas affect communities from delivering their best. Further it establishes a link between effective functioning of the schools and involvement of communities through SMCs which ensures timely contribution for educational development. Therefore, the present study evaluates the existing involvement of community leaders in SMCs in the functional aspect of the schools across the two government schools in the Rai Block, Sonipat district of Haryana

1.6 Statement of the Problem

The study proposes to explore whether community leadership exists in actual practice or not? If yes then who are the leaders and what is their role in the school functioning? Whether the idea of local leadership is functional or really required in

schools or not? Further the community-school relationship and community leadership in India is still unexplored so the research helps to identify research gaps in terms of existing mechanisms, programmes and policies related to community leadership in the chosen area of study and what kind of crucial role it is playing in school functioning through the SMCs in elementary education. Last but not least *the question will remain significant whether community leadership leads to empowerment of disempowered or already empowered groups.*

1.7 The Present Study

The present study contextualised in the Rai Block of Sonipat in Haryana attempts to study the role of community leadership in the functioning of elementary schools and the nature of interventions taking place within the schools. Further it also aims to explore the nature of contributions by School Management Committees (SMCs), their capacity building provisions and involvement of community leaders in different schools. In order to understand the who are the community leaders and what is their composition, background, status and role in schools irrespective of caste, class and power issues etc. to support school, the study also examines the diverse socio-political structure of the given area.

1.8 Operational Definitions

The study visualizes the entire arena of community leadership by taking base of definitional aspects of community and community leadership. These operational definitions imply the detailed explanations of the terms used in the research tools and data collection.

Community

Govinda and Diwan, (2003) found that community is obviously not a homogenous notion. It is either various communities unequally and differently placed within a society, or various groups in a community unequally placed.

Community Participation

Gamage (1993) identifies community participation in school based governance as the altered form of formal governance that identifies school as the primary unit of improvement which is stimulated by the redistribution of decision making.

Shaeffer (1994), "Participation in community is about "real decision making at every stage," It includes identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Community Leaders

According to Mark Creyton, (2002) a community leader must have collaboration, practical vision and values in action. "Schools and communities can work together in unison to benefit children and families". (Jehl,Jeanne; Blank, Martin J.; McCloud, Barbara, 2001).

Community Leadership

Mark Creyton, (2002) suggests Often "community leaders are considered as an agent of change who takes care of everyone's needs and interests'.

Duignan and Machpherson, (1990, p.3.) elaborates that "educative leadership must not focus upon the traditional aspect of leadership rather it should come from the origin of the particular organization i.e. rooted in the "culture".

School as an Organisation

"Organizations that have a sense of direction and a firm fix on current reality through scanning their contexts; that plan effectively, efficiently and flexibly; organizations in which continuous development and improvement are integral parts of their culture"

2. Profile of the Selected Area for the Study

This section presents a brief profile about the demography of the state of Haryana. In particular, it focuses on the Rai Block selected for the present study.

Figure- 3
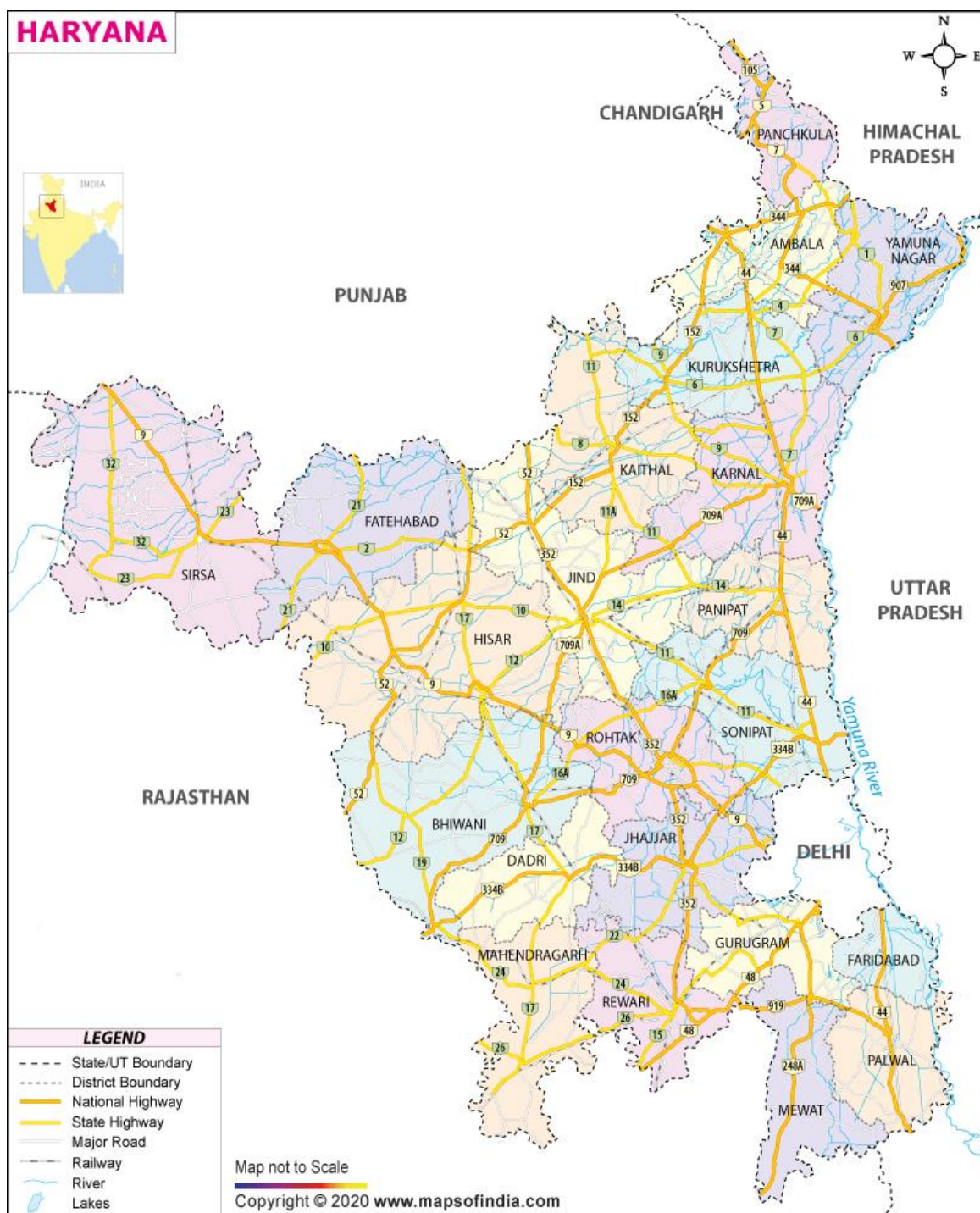
Haryana is a state in India located in the northern-part of the country. It was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on a linguistic basis. It is

ranked 21st in terms of area, with less than 1.4% (44,212 km^2 or 17,070 sq mi) of India's land area. The state capital is Chandigarh and the most populous city is Faridabad, which is a part of the National Capital Region. The city of Gurgaon is among India's largest financial and technology hubs. Haryana can be divided into five natural topographic divisions which provide a suitable framework upon which a systematic study of landform environment may be founded.

2.1 Demography of the State of Haryana: As per figures of 2011 Census:

Table-1

Area	**44,212 Sq. Km**
Actual Population	**25,351,462**
Population(Male)	**13,494,734**
Population(Female)	**11,856,728**
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	**3,380,721**
Male Population (0-6 Age)	**1,843,109**
Female Population (0-6 Age)	**1,537,612**
Total Sex Ratio	**877**
Child Sex Ratio (0-6)	**834**
% ST population	**0.0%**
% of SC population	**20.1%**
% Muslim Population	**7%**
Density	**573 per sq. km**
Literacy Rate	**75.55 %**
Literacy rate Male	**84%**
Literacy Rate Female	**65.9%**
Administrative divisions	**6**
District	**22**
Subdivision	**72**
Revenue tehsil	**93**
Sub tehsil	**50**
Cities and Town	**154**

Exploring key Performance Indicators of School Education at Elementary Level (U-DISE)

Table-2

School and Facilities (2017-18)	23189
Number of Schools	62.1%
Proportion of Government Schools to total schools	1.32
Ratio of primary school sections to upper primary schools	180213
Number of Classrooms	
Student classroom Ratio (SCR)	22
% of schools with one classroom for every teacher	53.9%
% of schools comply with the 10 RTE parameter	20.2%
Enrolment	39,52,391
Enrolment Elementary Classes (Grade 1-8)	.82
Ratio of Girls to boys in enrolment at elementary classes	23.2%
Proportion of enrolment of SC children to total enrolment at elementary	7.3%
Proportion of enrolment of Muslim children tot total enrolment at Elementary	
Teachers (2017-18)	2,29,761
Number of Teachers	59.0%
Proportion of female teachers to total teachers	331
Number of schools with single teacher	
Teacher Pupil Ratio (PTR)	17
Percentage of teachers who do not have professional qualification	4.1%
% of schools without teachers as per the prerequisite RTE norm	11.9%
Outcome	
Gross enrolment Ratio at elementary level	100.3
Net enrolment Ratio at elementary level	87.3%
Transition Rate, Primary to Upper primary Level	99.8%
Retention Rate at elementary level	100.0%

2.2 Glimpse of Community Profile of Rai Block, Sonipat

Rai is a large village located in Sonipat Tehsil of Sonipat district, Haryana with a total 1119 families residing. The Rai village has a population of 5278 of which 2853 are males while 2425 are females as per Population Census 2011. As per constitution of India and Panchayati Raj Act, Rai village is administrated by Sarpanch (Head of Village) who is elected representative of the village. Currently, it has been converted into Municipal Corporation.

2.2.1 Community Profile

In Rai village out of total population, 1736 were engaged in work activities. 77.36 % of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 22.64 % were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 1736 workers engaged in Main Work, 100 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 60 were Agricultural labourers. There are almost 400-500 industries and migrants are mainly from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. They belong to different castes like SC, ST, General and OBCs.

Profile of Rai Block

Table-3

Particulars	Total	Male	Female
Total No. of Houses	1,119	-	-
Population	5,278	2,853	2,425
Child (0-6)	775	430	345
Schedule Caste	622	336	286
Scheduled Tribe	0	0	0
Literacy	80.01 %	86.67 %	72.26 %
Total Worker	1736	1460	276
Marginal worker	393	269	124

2.3 The Proposed Site of the Present Study: Reason for Selecting the Rai Block, Kundali

Rai block, considered as village is located in Sonipat Tehsil of Sonipat district, Haryana with a total 1119 families residing. It comes under Kundli region which is an industrial belt of Haryana. The area is inhabited by migrant workers mainly from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan etc. and their children's are mostly enrolled in government schools. The census data of 2011 shows that it has a mix of population consisting of all the castes, General, OBCs and SCs. A few tribes who have migrated from the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are considered as 'general category' in the state. As per the constitution of India and Panchayati Raj Act, Rai village is administrated by Sarpanch (Head of the Village) who is elected representative of village. However currently it has been converted into a Municipal Corporation.

Based on the above discussed profile of Rai Block, it is essential to note the reason for its selection as a proposed research site. First and foremost reason was its location. Sonipat district is only 50 km from the National capital and has many travel options. The other one is the study was aiming for some rural urban mix population to understand power and caste factor in the communities and dispensation of leadership roles as one of its objectives. Delhi could be one of the choices but primarily the government schools are situated in urban areas. Apart from this the state of Haryana has active School management Committees (SMCs) in Government schools. The study of SMCs is a significant part of the present research hence it was important to select schools with functional SMCs. In terms of literacy Sonipat stands at 8th place in the state. The literacy rate in 2011 is 79.1 % whereas it was 72.8 p% during the 2001 Census. The literacy rate amongst Male population which was 83.1 % during 2001 has increased to 87.2 per cent. Literacy rate of the Kundli region is 79.81 % higher than the state average of 75.55 %. Similarly, Rai village has a higher literacy rate compared to Haryana. In 2011, the literacy rate of Rai village was 80.01 % compared to 75.55 % of Haryana. The literacy rate has also shown an increase amongst the female population. This educational development as well as reason cited above justify it as a research area and also provide scope for meaningful studies on community leadership practises.

CHAPTER - 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is based on the review of related literature which mainly focuses upon the role of community leadership, community participation and concept of leadership in the school arena. Therefore the chapter has been conceptualised upon two different sections i.e. Theme Based Review of the Related Literature and critical analysis and reflection under which research gaps have been captured to understand the overall perspective of community readership, its role in the school function and role of SMCs in schools. As community is contextualised in diverse settings, the plethora of International as well as national studies would help in understanding the varied factors like culture, caste, religion and regional aspects which impacts dynamics of community leadership.

2.1 Theme Based Review of the Related Literature

Two major social institutions are the community and the school. Both community and school are organically linked, as school cannot be viewed as a separate entity from the society in which it exists. However, because India's modern formal education system did not develop from its social system, there has been a lack of integration between two which can be seen in the form of conflicts or exclusion of specific groups from the school system. Therefore, the interaction between the school and the recipient society becomes critical in analysing the Indian education system's difficulties and their interpersonal relationship which give shape to community-school interface and role of communities into the school arena. The description of the variables of interest (society, community, leadership, caste, gender, people participation, power elite etc.) in the context of the literature review allows us to understand the theorised relationships. Review of related literature helps in understanding what is known about given variables and their mutual relationship. It explains the major research problems which are essential to defend the rationale of research. The numerous research studies contribute to a larger framework that rotates around community leadership and its significance in school education. To understand the context based analysis about the

communities and leadership per say a thematic review of literature has been done from national as well as international studies. This has also been supported by the theoretical framework to give a broad spectrum to the entire research i.e. community leadership and its role in the school functioning.

Significance of Community

Before we understand the community- school interface it is essential to understand Krishna Kumar (2010) who indicates that education is a Janus-faced area of social action which means it carries two different contrasting aspects or meanings. On the one hand, education does open up the possibility of social relationship reform. On the other hand, plays a preservationist role. It allows society to self-replicate and on the contrary also tries to preserve the old characteristics. Practically speaking, this integrationist premise leads directly from the question of "why" people get involved in their communities to the specific question of "how" people get involved and, from a functionalist perspective, what features of their experiences best allow them to meet their goals (Snyder & Cantor, 1998). To understand the same it is important to understand the structural aspects of a community through its own experience. Such structural aspects are present in the case of community involvement which may encompass the types of activities that people engage in and time or context in which they are living. The community involvement of citizens encourages them to become participants of the activities which impact their lives. Education and school education became the prime importance; this urge to participate further converted into a change maker and become a leader for the overall good of the society.

According to word bank (1999), Communities can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race. Participation can be defined as the active involvement of anyone in the matters which concerns them most. It can be civic or political engagements. Therefore Kumar (2019), (p 1295) explains community participation as a way of taking responsibilities and identifying problems for the greater good of the society. In more conceptual terms, there are geographical, cultural, and school (or functional) communities. According to Nishimura (2017), a geographical community is a grouping of people who live within a given geographic region. A cultural community is a network of individuals' common norms and practises and originates from similar cultural,

linguistic, and/or religious backgrounds. Finally, the term "school community" consists of a collection of people who come together to collaborate for the purpose of school authorities, independently of their geographical area or diverse culture. The socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of its members may or may not be reflected in the school community.

Globally community participation has a historical context e.g., According to Nishimura (2017), in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), for instance, community-based providers and faith-based organisations supported educational provisions even before independence, until the 1960s and 1970s when the governments in the region exerted their own influence on educational development. During the period, some countries in the region declared primary education fee-free, resulting in a dramatic increase in the public education expenditure.

Report of "Save the children" (2013) also emphasises the importance of community participation in school education. Community-based approaches to educational development have the potential to enhance ownership, accountability, and efficiency. Community involvement in education facilitates the identification of community-specific education issues and informs the development of strategies to remove barriers to access and quality in education within a given community (Shilpi Sharma et. al.2014). Taniguchi and Hirakawa (2016) postulated an indirect positive relationship between community involvement and pupil academic outcomes in rural Malawi, based on an improved school management. Bruns et al. (2012) found that the combination of school autonomy, students' learning assessment, and accountability to parents and other stakeholders resulted in improved student learning performance.

Driving Forces of Community Participation although central government plays the primary role in providing public education, community plays a complementary role to the government in fragile states that suffer from political turmoil and stagnant economy. El Salvador's Community Managed Schools Program (EDUCO) is a typical example. The EDUCO Program devolved power to recruit and retain teachers to school management committees that consisted of parents and community members when the governments had not recovered administrative functions in the post-conflict situation. In Maasai communities in Kenya, where public education has recently spread and became popular, parents and community members are hiring teachers on

behalf of the government, which froze teacher deployment due to financial constraints. The high demand for alternative education also promotes community participation in school management. In Afghanistan, for instance, teachers and community members offered home schooling for girls who had been excluded from public schooling under the Taliban regime.

Community-School Interface

In the context of India, open education can be conceptualised within the democratic space of rights-based education. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) quotes "children have the right to be heard and express their opinion". The school and the community, independently, become the site for a child's expression and thought processes. The structural aspect of society gives meaning to community school interrelationships. Williams (1994), as cited by Fitzsimons (2017) recognised three community-education linking models. The first, known as Traditional Community Based Education, is based on local social standards, with the government playing a minor role. Education is a local process in which older generations share skills with younger members of the community that they feel are valuable and relevant. Communities are passive beneficiaries in the second paradigm, Government Provided Education, when the government accepts responsibility for providing, regulating, and standardising education. A collaborative model is the third option. Communities in this area are supportive of government-sponsored education. India's education system is now the most similar to the second model, but it is seeking to be closer to the third.

The community is one of the foundations of modern society (Putnam, 2001). It is a theoretical, or physical, space that binds individuals together and is inextricably linked with Sander &; Putnam, 2010. According to them social capital relates to "social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trust to which those networks give rise. No democracy, and indeed no society, can be healthy without at least a modicum of this resource" (p. 9). The importance of community as an important concept, and context, is well established (Rogers, 2003; Wilkinson, 1991) (as cited by Lamm, Carter, & Lindsey, A. B. (2017). A high-performing school requires broad-based community support and support that comes from communities that are well informed and well engaged in the educational processes that go on in the school" (Ubben, Hughes, &; Norris, 2011, p 302). Kladifko, R. E. (2013) asserts that the numerous

external and internal entities in their school community must be known and understood by school leaders. Collaborations are fundamental for school performance, with a focus on communication and interaction with a variety of community leaders and experts.

Community development is one of the most productive ways to improve the lives and livelihoods of individuals within a community (Syme & Ritterman, 2009). Community leaders have been shown to be an effective mechanism to support and enable community development in the past (Kirk & Schutte, 2004). Community leadership can be an effective approach towards achievement of equality in the educational context. There have been attempts to explain the reasons for the differential performance of community participation in different contexts. According to Dunne et al (2007), community participation in schooling works well in the rare instances where there is a good understanding and relation between schools, communities and local educational authorities, operating within a stable social context with a history of community mobilisation and a genuine commitment to community decision-making. Given the heterogeneity that prevails in Indian society, as well as the inequalities in demand for schooling among various social groups, this essay seeks to investigate whether certain civic engagement in education can lead to expected benefits. Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project in India (1993) supports strengthening of community participation. The state authorities have initiated administrative action to (a) expand membership to include scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, and female members, (b) assign responsibility for the distribution of scholarships, and (c) assign responsibility for school construction and rehabilitation.

Paliwal and Mahajan (2005) analyses the essential aspects and outcomes of Janshala, a Government of India-UN programme in Jharkhand, India, which highlights the importance of community participation in education. According to her, though community participation is not a panacea for overcoming all barriers, the Janshala experience in Jharkhand, shows that active community participation has aided in identifying community-specific educational issues and formulating effective strategies to address those barriers by mobilising resources within the community.

Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, (2014) decipher different models of community -school interaction. In the Full-Service Community School (FSCS) model, they emphasise

that community and parental engagement replace the more traditional ideas of service provision and parental involvement. The new relationship between parent and school shifts power away from providers and regards families not just as recipients of services but as key players whose leadership qualities are to be cultivated. They quote Williams, (2010) as "School administrators provide active support for parents and community members to take on leadership roles and work at cultivating leadership skills among parents and community members".

Major Case studies from the Other Countries (International studies on Community Participation in Schools

According to Melvin Allena Jabar (2010), different practices are going on in Japanese elementary and junior high schools for the improvement of quality education such as partnerships between teachers and parents and among parents through parental involvement. Japanese schools provide great involvement of parents in the school. It provides information about school norms and policies, children's work. Japanese schools also provide parental participation as volunteers. For example, parents gather for cooking classes, recycling activities and story tellers. Schools in Japan also provide seminars for parents to improve their own efficacy in educating and rearing their children. In elementary school, parents are provided to attend skills training on various areas such as ironing, sewing, cooling, reading etc. it also provides a seminar on proper use of mobile phones and the internet etc. it makes parents be aware of how such technologies can negatively affect their children. Parents play a pivotal role in parent teacher associations as decision makers in Japanese schools. Parents have more power than teachers to make decisions about the affairs of the association. Parents are initiated PTA activities and not by the teachers. Parents have also decided the disbursements of funds. PTA meetings are also called by PTA officers from various schools to discuss matters which are needed to school children. Apart from those types, there are two other important roles of parents as partners of teachers and other parents. There are open and available communication channels between teachers and parents in Japanese schools. Teachers visit to his/her students" homes to talk with the parents about school concerns, the child's talents and abilities, and the child's safety. The teacher also uses another communication channel to convey messages to parents about school events and student's performance. The other role of parents is partners of

other parents. It is used to convey information to parents regarding school-related matters over the phone. Schools are also provided a network-type directory to parents containing children's names, their corresponding contact numbers, and chain/order of communication. There is also a children association which is a community-based group consisting of school children and parents. It is another platform where parents can interact and exchange ideas pertaining to their children's education. Children associations are also involved in garbage recycling and camping activities organised by parents.

Tanka Nath Sharma (2008) reviewed international practices of community participation in school education. Based on this reviewed community participation of some countries are presented in the following section. In Denmark, Parents have played a huge role in the running of schools. In 1990, Boards of school governors were created for the role of parents which is to strengthen decision making in the school governance. Five – seven members are in each board among parents, including two members from school and two from students. The boards are responsible for developing guidelines for school's activities, approving the school budget and making the curriculum. Danish parents are very responsible for their children's schooling. In England, the governance of schooling provided power or greater autonomy of decision-making by schools. 9-20 members are in the governing body in each school which are elected by parents and staff members and the governing body nominated additional community governors. The main role of the board of governors is to provide direction for school governance, ensure accountability, participate in decision making, control of the school budget for purchase of books, equipment, stationary and other goods and services. The governing boards also play a core role for new appointments of teachers and staff members.

Kumar (2019) has done extensive study on community participation in schools at International level. As cited in his study in Finland, the New Basic Education Act of 1999 provides a significant role of co-operation of parents for school education development. Schools have the right to design their own curricula based on the National Framework of Core Curriculum with the help of parent-teacher meetings, parents" meetings, discussion events and one-to-one discussions between individual teachers and parents. In Spain, there are two parents associations: Spanish

Confederation of Parent Associations (CEAPA) and National Catholic Confederation of Parents (CONCAPA) which take part in the management of schools. In Austria, since the 1980s a schools autonomy scheme was introduced. The main role of this scheme was to enhance the involvement of parents. A board is constituted by a representative of parents and students in each class by voting. Since 2000, boards and other community representatives have controlled the management of schools. In Brazil, the school board has the authority and responsibility of school management under the decentralised framework of education. At present, the principal has no authority utilising the resources of the school without the approval of the board. The teachers, students, and parents are the members of the school board.

In Nepal, new provision for the SMC in the 7thAmendment has wide implications in the implementation of educational programs and plans for enhancement of quality education. The School Management Committee has a significant involvement in improving the management efficiency, efficiency related to planning, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation of the schools. There is a legal process for electing four representatives from guardians or parents including one female member in the management committee. Nepal has another community involvement which is the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The main role of PTA is to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning, advice, the school about fees structure and communicate the parent and community about the educational programs of the school.

According to Nancy Kendall (2007), a number of states of South Africa (Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) have adopted fee-free or fee-reduced basic education. A wider group of stakeholders, including sub-national government personnel, teachers, and principals, parents, and occasionally students are involved in the construction of frameworks for improvement of quality education. Parental and community involvement in schools has been affected quality in a number of ways such as providing an oversight of school budgeting and teacher attendance and performance; managing student attendance and homework; providing resources (labour, money, etc.) for school building, teacher hiring, and other school infrastructure and services; and advocating at local and national levels for changes that may improve educational access, retention, and completion. According to D. T. Gamage (1993), In the USA, Annual Conference of State Governors, education

reform was made in 1986. Two broad strategies emerged, school site based governance and choice. Site-based management was a plan for improving school governance. It proposed two key strategies for achieving this goal. a) The transfer of power to make decisions regarding budget, staffing, and instruction, from the central/regional offices to the individual schools. b) Participation of all stakeholders such as administrators and staff, teachers, parents, and the local community in decision making at the individual school level. Different strategies were adopted by each state to improve the education system.

Box-3

Major International Initiatives of Community Participation in School Education

- **Chad:** Basic Education Project (Education V)
- **Ghana:** Community Secondary Schools Construction Project
- **Malawi:** Primary Education Project
- **Tanzania:** Human Resources Development Pilot Project
- **Bolivia:** Education Reform Project
- **Dominican Republic:** Primary Education Development Project
- **EDUCO:** Basic Education Modernization Project in El Salvador
- **Honduras:** Basic Education Project

Community Leadership

Communities are complex places that are composed of layers of cultures with different members and groups. This complexity demands community leadership from many different individuals and groups in order to create safe, stable, and relational environments (Whatley, Popa, & Kliewer, 2012). These community leaders emerge and establish themselves from many different places and in many different ways. For example, according to Johns and Kimbrough (1986), community leaders are the top executives from major organisations, institutions, civic groups, government, and businesses. As an original leading scholar in the field of community leadership, Hunter (1953, 1968) identified community leaders as "men of power" who are the decision makers of important community concerns such as social issues, economics, and politics. While examining the extent to which local leadership and strategic vision are important in promoting higher levels of satisfaction, belonging, cohesion and

participation across single tier councils in England Hunter, J.(2012) concluded that effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership were all identified as prerequisites for the creation of sustainable communities.

Based on the above analysis, community leaders are supposed to well versed with few basic skills like-

- Self-development

- Team development

- Strategic thinking and acting

- Ethical practice and civic-mindedness

- Innovation

Similarly, Biddle (1979) described community leaders as the politicians, members of powerful families in the community, and heads of large organisations and businesses. They are considered effectors of influence in society and are responsible for establishing regulations, activities, and other communal issues. Conversely, there are other community leaders who do not influence from the top down as a result of their elite socioeconomic status or positions but rather influence at a grassroots level through influence within their neighbourhoods, cultural groups, or other more localised associations (McKnight & Block, 2012). In India a very good example can be taken from the experiments in the state of Kerala by involving leaders from the communities for educational development. Community participation in education under the People Planning Campaign (PPC) has worked by mobilising people for school education and given wings to the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) in 1980-90 in Kerala. However, the PPC suffered with its own leadership challenges in terms of dominant functioning of Gram Sabha etc. After the enactment of the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009, School management Committees became significant. SMC works towards revitalising the school system through its positive plan of action and a needful constructive dialogue with other stakeholders. Its major roles or functions are to support the quality of teaching, proper development and utilisation of funds that are provided by the government, implementation of different schemes devised by the state as well as the central government, to create awareness regarding health among the children, to provide sanitation facilities, to develop school

infrastructure and so on. Niranjan Aradhya, V. P. and Jha, (2013) reported that SMC members did not have any awareness regarding preparation of the School Development Plan (SDP). The School building was full of seepages, and the boundary wall is broken or penetrable in the majority of the schools. Most schools didn't have playgrounds. Gandhi, V and Yadav, N. (2013) found that there was a significant difference in awareness of male and female primary school teachers working in a government school towards preparation of School Development Plan (SDP). Female SMC members were more aware rather than male SMC members. Yusuf (1995) found that school management committee (SMC) members were ignorant about their duties and responsibilities in preparation of the School Development Plan (SDP) in respect to RTE Act, 2009. Nyaundi, A. M. (2012) found that SMC members of public primary schools of keumbu division were very much conscious regarding preparation of the School Development Plan (SDP) every year. SMCs take care of the School Development Plan (SDP) and school development plan (SDP) provides the basis for school improvement and should reflect the school's philosophy and vision. In the school context, strategic leadership takes a central place. The concept of how you do something is as important as what you do for successful strategic change, (Davies and Davies, 2006). Eacott (2008) sees strategic leadership moving through five stages i.e. envisioning, engaging, articulating, implementing and monitoring. Therefore strategic leadership leads towards strategically focused schools.

Schweigert, (2007) explains three fundamental factors for learning to lead in communities and proposes a schema for community leadership in education. First, community leadership is portrayed as citizens acting authoritatively on behalf of the common good. Second, the unique dynamics of community engagement create environments that demand leadership and, as a result, set the stage for learning to lead. Third, because leadership is based on the authority and power of followers, leadership development must focus solely on the social contexts, mechanisms, and needs that necessarily entail and facilitate authoritative action: access to power, legitimacy through support and accountability, effective community processes, and public work in public spaces.

The community leaders help list the priorities and actions for the next period of time. The SDP drives the next school self-review and demonstrates to the community that

the school is working to achieve the best possible outcomes for its students. Also important are information sharing within the community and between community and school, collaboration and coordination among actors within the community and administrative institutions, critical thinking abilities of community members for analysing government policy and their own needs to initiate action, attitudes of trust and mutual respect among people over school management, untiring efforts to improve, and a spirit of voluntary contribution (Nishimura, 2014). Hickmen (2012) by citing the work of Sorenson and Hickmans (2002) define the concept of invisible leadership which proposes a collective form of leadership that occurs when individuals without regard for recognition or visibility are motivated enough to take action by a passionate commitment to achieve a common goal that is greater than the individual self-interest. Davies and Davies (2004) talked about strategic leadership in the school context. Eacott (2008) see's strategic leadership moving through five stages envisioning, engaging, articulating, implementing and monitoring.

Leadership Challenges

One of the challenges for leaders within communities has been that some do not have any sort of formal authority associated with positional power (O'Brien & Hassinger, 1992). Rather, "they must rely on networks and influence, with relationships developed through extensive interactions with community residents usually representing many different points of views or "interests"(Pigg, 1999, p. 196), Lamm, K. W., Carter, H. S., Lamm, A. J., & Lindsey, A. B. (2017).while proposing a Community Leadership: A Theory-Based Model extensively studies the role of community leaders. They quote works of different author and described that effective community leaders have been characterised as change agents (Schein,1995); individuals with the ability to mobilise others (Javidan & Dstmalchian, 1993), create conditions (McGrath, 1964), and take the initiative (Winter, 1978). Additionally, community leaders tend to share other characteristics. Specifically, effective leaders tend to have a sense of service (e.g. Craig & Gustafson, 1998; Van Wart, 2003) and accountability (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Leaders have also been found to be highly participative and have been shown to take on a symbolic role for the group. In attempt to understand factors that prevent communities from being involved in formal education, Shaeffer (1994) found that the degree of community participation is particularly low in socially and economically marginal regions. This is because such

regions tend to have the following elements: (a) a lack of appreciation of the overall objectives of education; (b) a mismatch between what parents expect of education and what the school is seen as providing; (c) the belief that education is essentially the task of the State; (d) the length of time required to realise the benefits of better schooling; and (e) ignorance of the structure, functions, and constraints of the school.

Within a community structure the issue, and creation of awareness, have been found to be paramount (Pigg, 1999). Leaders must have a purpose (Pigg, 1999). For example, community leaders have been found to innovate and challenge existing processes (e.g. Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Through the process of identifying a purpose, effective leaders have been found to make decisions (e.g. Luthans & Lockwood, 1984) and define their goals (e.g. Bass, 1981; House, 1977; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, &; Fetter, 1990). In an effort to explain the conflicts and power struggle, Jehl, Jeanne; Blank, Martin J. McCloud, Barbara (2001) decode that when collaborators fail to admit the legitimacy of both forms of leadership, one based on qualifications and experience and the other mutual trust, and relationship . Differences in the responsibilities and aspirations of leaders can cause friction. When partners are unwilling to take the time to build connections, trust, and appreciation for one another; when school personnel misjudge the people's capacity, misunderstandings in school-community relationships are most likely to occur. A case study cited in the article Education and Community Building: Connecting Two Worlds, (2001) believes that accurate sharing of information is necessary to build a good relationship with communities. It quotes "accountability begins with sharing information openly and in a format that is meaningful to community members".

After a leader has established their purpose and goal, a subsequent step associated with spreading interest has been communication. An ability to disseminate information within a community has been identified as a critical set of activities (e.g. Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Metcalfe, 1984). Effective leaders have been shown to employ numerous, and appropriate communication strategies (e.g. Jacobs, 1983). For example, leaders have been shown to use their ability to network and interface with other members of the community as a means to create awareness (Senge, 1995). An intended outcome associated with the communication process has been to motivate others within the community (e.g. Kouzes & Posner, 2002). An

informed, interested, and motivated community has been found to be critical in a leader's ability to fulfil their purpose (Pigg, 1999). In India, one can see new form of leadershi at the grassroots level in hierarchical social, political and administrative structures. Thus it imposes certain limitations in defining the exact role of a community leader. This can be quite deceptive in terms of giving equal chances to every community member. However "democratic decentralisation" has weakened the local power capture and showed a way for effective leadership opportunities from every corner.

Leadership is generally characterised as the capacity to establish, articulate, and disseminate a common vision. Though having a purpose and a passion for it is important, societies tend to look for practical visionaries. Ideas may be grand, innovative, and magnificent, but are they reasonable? Is it capable of acting on them? Leaders must be realistic and understand the depth of the problems, conflicts, and challenges which exist in our communities. The work is monotonous and repetitive at times, with an emphasis on dialogue and consensus development, communication, and community education. This is not always the most heroic type of visionary, yet a key learning from the last century is that totalising answers, simple solutions and utopian projects rarely work and often lead to far worse situations. Unachievable visions often disempower and disillusion those who work toward them. If we are to create sustainable and just communities, it is time to consider values in our actions. Values will need to inform our visions and how we reach them. In the economic rationalist and efficiency driven approaches of the past twenty years we have seen a focus on instrumentalism, i.e. the ends justify the means. The central code of values has been money. Decisions have focused on outcomes devoid of a life code of values. Life values are those which preserve or support our fundamental quality of life through providing the basic necessities, supportive communities, sustainable environment and appropriate living and learning conditions (McMurtry & Sumner, 2000). The first stage in this process is deciding what we value, what are our principles, what are we unwilling to sacrifice. Central to these considerations will be issues around focus on developing social capacity, capacity of the individual, group and the community. Traditional approaches to leadership have often focused on the needs of the community rather than on the capacity of the community to solve those problems. This has led to a costly service-oriented environment, creating clients out of

citizens and setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy of social exclusion and client neighbourhoods. People can act on their own behalf, but they may need support, time, resources and assistance along the way.

Community Leadership in Practice

There are substantial advantages to expanding citizen participation by using a bottom-up approach. "People as Change makers," a working paper by Oxfam India illustrates the possibilities to be achieved from the same source. Involvement of the community not only promotes in not only does it makes people more aware, but it also creates a "robust" community. Developing community leadership begins with recognizing that both the practice of leadership and the situation in which it occurs need to be understood. We consider leadership as a collective relational phenomenon. This collective relational phenomenon is also 'cultured', that is, it is a phenomenon that grows out of, and is a product of its setting. It is what we call socio-cultural leadership. This contrasts with notions of charismatic leadership invested in heroic individuals and ones usually in dominant hierarchical positions in a community or organisational system (Yukl, 2002, p. 431). Community leadership development offers an opportunity to build leadership capacity in communities of difference who are seeking effective integration. It points to the need for developing leadership capacity that is grounded in and emerges from particular cultural settings, and works with the creative energy of two principles that would appear to pull apart i.e. incorporation and diversity.

The vast literature suggests that community and cultural leaders more often exert leadership based on their collective sense for social change and common good. Community involvement is one of the basic components through the Mothers club, parent teachers association, integrated basic services, and the village department committees to monitor the presence of a child in schools. It helps in reducing the educational disparities such as drop-outs, gender inequalities which have a substantial influence on the quality of life within a community. Bhatty (1998) explains that community participation which gives way to community leadership is considered as the single most effective means of improving the functioning of schools, with the education of children seen as the joint responsibility of home and school (Govinda & Varghese, 1993). Village Education Committees (VECs) have been set up in the majority of states as the interface between the school and the community. Pailwar and Mahajan, (2005) investigated the effectiveness of Janshala programmes in Jharkhand by throwing light

to crucial aspects and the role of community participation in education and supporting its importance by reviewing the basic framework and outcome. It also looks into the importance of education for sustainable development. The Program has been implemented in 12 blocks of Giridih district and eight blocks of Deogarh district in Jharkhand. The aim of such an initiative is to encourage people to make decisions themselves, to become agents, rather than being treated as 'target groups' or passive recipients of benefits. Such interventions can bring grassroots changes as targeted under different policy documents in the context of education. Its findings indicate that Janshala in its endeavour to enhance capacity for community participation in effective school management has been a very successful experiment. By basing the program initiatives on the concept of a demand responsive approach, it has been able to address very significantly key issues like improving the motivation and self-esteem of the parents, teachers and other community members. Sensitising them and transforming their attitudes towards education the program has been able to overcome social, cultural and economic barriers that adversely affect the enrolment, attendance and performance of school-age children, especially the girl children.

To give impetus to quality education through community involvement, Right to education Act, 2009 has mandated the formation of School Management Committees (SMCs) across all the Government schools of India. The SMC must have three-quarters (75%) of its representatives be parents or guardians. There ought to be a 50/50 split between males and women in this category. Local authorities can make up approximately one-fourth (25%) of the total. 1/3 of the population consists of school educators, while 1/3 of the population is made up of academicians and students. The States can adapt this as per the local context and requirement of the state. The important aspect is that it recognizes the power relations that exist in a community and its heterogeneous nature by ensuring 50 % representation of women and also giving importance to the representation of the weaker sections in proportion to their population.

There are several issues and related concerns in communities and community participation. A report published by Oxfam India (2015) on SMCs pointed to a valid concern. It indicates that because of the vast cultural and socioeconomic disparities between schools and the community, where the former generally earn more than the children's parents, Teachers have a sense of moral superiority when they teach. This superiority issue creates a communication gap between teachers and parents which

ultimately hampers the community engagement. Research by Ramachandran, (2001) and Govinda & Diwan, 2003) stipulates that school functioning has improved significantly in places where communities have been involved actively. There are a number of examples of how communities can and have been involved in schooling in India.

The report by the Oxfam India "School Management Committees: Bringing in Accountability in Schools and Overall Education - Learning from the field" (2015) (p.2) contended to bring SMCs beyond schools and establish it into the community itself. Many examples have been given from the different states where SMCs have been brought to the public encounter. This has a very different experience for the community members as well as policy framers. These initiatives have brought significant changes at the grass root level. Lokmitra in Uttar Pradesh has influenced the political leaders and other policy framers through the Abhibhavak Manch from where they have proponents their demands. According to the study many of Lokmitra's specific suggestions for the proper reconstitution of SMCs, such as the provision of quorum, admission of children at the end of the session, active participation of NGOs in the operating of SMCs, and the display of the identities of selected candidates, have been adopted by the U.P. State Government in 2013. Similar has been the case with the Sikshasandhan and Chale Chalo in Odisha and LEADS in Jharkhand.

Box-4

Examples of Community Participation in School Education

- **Lokmitra in Uttar Pradesh** – Formation of SMC Federations Marg and Abhibhawak Manch

- **Sikshasandhan and Chale Chalo in Odisha** - Strengthening of SMCs.

- **LEADS in Jharkhand** - Formation and Strengthening of Federations of SMCs.

Based on the above cases studies and experiences following best practices can be adopted for the practical implementation of the SMCs.

- Providing training to the SMC members residential and non-residential both

- Teachers and children's must be motivated to mobilise parents

- During the meetings of the Federations, common issues across different schools in a Block are brought forward, and the members try to address these issues in a

- participative and democratic manner

- SMC, Teachers and Gram Sabha members jointly formulated School development through a participatory and democratic process.

However, study also pointed few challenges which are worth considering-

- Superiority complex of teachers and authorities giving less importance to the suggestions of parents

- Disinterested parents for the meetings

- Poor training mechanism

- Default process of formulation of SDP

- Dominant attitude of department officials and inactive SMC members

The study concluded that one of the most important lessons learnt is that bringing the reigns of the School Management Committees into the hands of the direct stakeholders (parents), as set out in the RTE Act, ensures the effective functioning of schools.

In a study on the awareness of the school management committee on RTE rules and their role, Srivastva, (2018) found the following as a challenge to the function of the SMCs (p.47).

- Lack of information and lack of coordination among the teachers and SMC are also found as disturbing element which affects SMCs functioning

- SMC has a mandate to conduct its regular meetings at least one at every month, 91.36% SMC members participate in the SMC meetings only once in a month. This means their appearance in the meeting is not frequent and regular. SMCs do their efforts for enrolment of children in school and maximum 38.27% SMCs interact with the parents to ensure their wards to enrol.

As an active element of decentralisation, the SMC (and the local community as a whole) are an essential component of the accountability chain. It offers you a realistic

way in for the community to keep a watch on and oversee the functioning of the college As a result, it's essential that the SMCs are strengthened in order to accomplish the role that is expected of them so that they can actively engage in the advancement of the system for delivering education. Dnyadeo and Bawane (2020), (p.77) explains "To facilitate massive mobilisation and solicit active participation, SCMCs, as a microcosm of the society, can collaborate with the larger community and go a long way." In a study " Community Participation in School Education" Sharma(2014), (p.28) Suggests following to improve the overall functional aspect of SMCs Participative and shared Decision Making, involvement of Mothers Groups and committee collaborations. In most states, evidence is found that VECs are involved in a variety of activities ranging from KALAJATHA (cultural programs for awareness generation of the importance of education of children, about different educational programs, and different schemes available for incentives etc.), VEC fairs, parental counselling, and community events for parental motivation. In some states, VECs are responsible for mobilising and utilising funds available from the government as well as from other sources.

Beyond this the NEP, 2020 has clearly mentioned that children must be brought back to schools through alternative and innovative education centres which will be put in place in cooperation with civil society to ensure that children of migrant labourers, and other children who are dropping out of school due to various circumstances are brought back into mainstream education.

Factors Impacting the Communities and Community Leadership in India

Caste System

The description of caste identified by (Risley, 1908) cited by (Hutton, 1963) describe it as "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community". Chaudhary (2013) quotes the definition of caste as an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank of social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions (Velassery, 2005). Every society is stratified in the Indian system. Stratification or classification of Indian Hindu society is based on the caste system. The caste system appears to be the most significant feature of Indian society. Eminent sociologist Ghurye's Caste and Race in India (1969), found Caste as hierarchical.

Theoretically, Brahmins occupy the top position and Shudras occupy the bottom. The castes can be graded and arranged into a hierarchy on the basis of their social precedence. The hierarchy present in the caste system is reflected through the division of labour in society. Srinivas (1962) defined caste as "a hereditary, endogamous group which is usually localised, It has a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among other things by the concept of purity and pollution and generally maximum commensality, i.e., inter-dining occurs between castes". This definition described the ideal form of caste system. According to (Velassery, 2005) cited by (Deshpande, 2010) "a society is characterised by such a system if it is divided into a large number of hereditarily specialised groups, which are hierarchically superposed and mutually opposed. It does not tolerate the principle of rising in the status of groups' mixture and of changing occupation".

Caste plays an important role in access to these educational institutions. Primary state Education, even though deemed to be universal, is still ruled by the caste system. This social stratification is detrimental to the advancement of millions of Dalit and lowers caste children. This idea that education is a leveller in relation to caste is a very innocent idea. If social inequalities are entrenched in a society and are institutionalised in some of its most powerful formations, then our expectations from education will need to be backed by very sustained effort from the community itself and it can be done through strong leadership roles.

In India, where the caste system and class hierarchies are prominent, educational initiatives are expected to be partly successful in mounting the social-economic standing of the disadvantaged groups without a significant reallocation in material assets. With empirical evidence collected in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, Jeffrey et al.(2004) argues that in vastly unequal societies with limited job opportunities, the schooling strategies of suppressed groups may not follow an upward trajectory towards increasing participation in school education. The study conducted by Mahi Pal (2004) cited by (Mishra, 2006) on the basis of his empirical investigation in Haryana highlights that caste system still exercises a stronghold on Haryana's Panchayat institutions making a mockery of decentralised governance. Dalit women representatives of Panchyats still face opposition from Members of the Panchyat and village people belonging to higher

caste, who hampers their activities. It is really shocking as well as a matter of shame that even in the 21st century and in an era that boasts of postmodernism, egalitarianism.

Chaudhry, (2013) (pp.56-63) emphasises that the interaction between caste and politics has given rise to three developments. The first one refers to the emergence of dominant elites from different castes but shares a secular outlook and homogeneous values. Secondly, several castes emerged to give the caste system a secular organisational form. The third refers to the emergence of several factions along with elites groups that have got politically organised. The system of factions is such that it divides not only political groups but also social groups. It thus facilitates the process of cross-cutting identification (Kumar, 2005).

These studies show that caste is a dominant factor in our society and plays a crucial role in the functional aspects. It is well established that social and institutional practices frame and reproduce systemic power inequalities based on gender, class, caste, and other location characteristics (Beteille, 2008).Therefore the research attempts to find out whether these studies and caste descriptions fit in the role of community leadership or not? Does caste play a role in inside school and its functions and who brings it into the community?

Power Elite

The power-elite theory of C. Wright Mills (1956) says the power elite is composed of government, influential people, business entities etc. which together constitute a ruling class that controls society and works for its own interests, not for the interests of the citizens. Another philosopher Foucault challenges the idea that power is wielded by people or groups by way of 'episodic' or 'sovereign' acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive. 'Power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' so in this sense it is neither an agency nor a structure (Foucault 1998: 63). Instead it is a kind of 'metapower' or 'regime of truth' that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation. In the context of community participation, the theory of Foucault defines the unseen and constant presence of power elites in the rural areas. By application of the above theory, research will see how the given concept of power impacts educational development and leadership aspects in the community vis-a-vis community also.

2.2 Critical Analysis and Reflection

The study of vast literature taken from international as well as national studies has pressed on the need of involvement of communities in the school and in its functional aspect. It has been found that Community involvement in education is important for many reasons. It aims to recognize local education dilemmas and devise plans to address hurdles that restrict access and retention, as well as diminish quality (Sharma, 2004).

Globally also it has been found that interventions by community can bring significant changes in the schools and overall society. Reisch, (2003) explains the models of community interventions by showing work of many scholars who identified eight models of community intervention: neighbourhood and grassroots community organising; organising in functional communities and within existing service agencies; political and social action; community-based social and economic development; social planning; program development and community liaison; coalition work; and social movement work. There might be some challenges in the functioning of the communities as they are always situated in the specific context and they may need some different treatment from each other. Goals, targets, key constituents, scope of concern, and appointed practitioner responsibilities and duties are all distinct (Weil and Gamble, 2005; Hardcastle, Wenocur, and Powers, 1997).

In Indian context, community involvement in schools has been mandated legally by the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009) and formation of SMCs came into existence. SMCs have opened the way for the engagement of communities with the school and it was ensured they participate regularly and keep an eye over the functioning of the schools. Through literature reviews it was undertaken SMCs formed the basis of school when it comes to those who are really going to be impacted by the actions, policies and programmes of the schools. Botes and Rensburg (2000) quote an Indian villager as stating, "They (the developers) arrived already knowing everything. They come here and look around, but they see only what is not here" (p.42) (cited in Sharma, 2004). In India, at present, there are about 1.5 million schools at elementary level (catering to age group 6-14), it shows we need more emphasis on civic engagement at the elementary level of schooling. Further it forms the basic unit of the school education. Chugh, (2021) insists on the idea of 'open school' and

writes "Open education (i.e. open government in the field of education) is an innovative approach to educational planning and citizen involvement resting on the principles of transparency, accountability and citizen engagement" (Poisson, 2019). The above discussed research papers throw light on the essential role of community participation to ensure a democratic process at the grass-roots level so that participatory mechanisms can be evolved for efficient decision making. In the context of the same, these studies also elaborate that community ownership and commitment helps in making any programmes more substantial so that an inclusive environment can be generated for the entire community. In the educational aspect, the role of community is vital because any educational set up cannot function in isolation. As schools are basic units of society therefore they are bound to be influenced by the social patterns and actions like caste, religion, class etc. In this light communities play a very significant role. While analysing Janshala initiative, the author has mentioned it very clearly that the modality of the community managed school was simple in the sense that community did things such as establishing the school in a location as agreed by the people, building a house for classroom purpose as per their financial situation, hiring and firing teacher and getting their salaries on time.

However there are many challenges and concerns when it comes to functionality and productivity of the SMCs. Thapa, (2012) undertook a study to find out how functional are the SMCs in India and pointed out some major issues like high level of unawareness, non-development of the School Development Plan (SDP) and lack of information in local people about formation of SMCs. These issues will also be considered and reviewed in the present study and will make an attempt to understand what kind of issues and concerns are involved in the functioning of SMCs in schools of Kundli, Haryana? Is there any different practice that has been undergoing or it is only for the formality?

When it comes to Community Leadership (CL) literature from the different studies confirmed that the practice of leadership by the communities has a major impact on the schools. Hodge and Johnson, (1976) are of the opinion that "Leadership is fundamentally the ability to form and mould the attitudes and behaviour of other individuals, whether informal or formal situation and that management relates to the formal task of decision and command." It makes the difference by suggesting best practices as a tool to bring grass root changes in the schools. It was revealed in a study

done by Tshitangoni and Francis, (2015) in South Africa that traditional leaders were successful in incorporating communities in decisions that were made and other problems that were crucial to them in the areas under their jurisdiction. Even elected representatives agreed to their opinion. Eden, (2015) explored the shift from school leadership to community leadership by three case studies done in the schools of Israel. He concluded "They redefined their role from organisational leaders to community leaders who attempted to change the hegemonic forces in society. By doing so, they assumed the role of transformative intellectuals who formed a counter hegemonic philosophy (Gramsci, 2009)".

Indian studies also revealed that leadership practises amongst the communities can bring effective changes by making the decision making process more democratic and shared. These reviews present different concepts and significance of communities and leadership which occurred in a specific context. Nevertheless, they have ramifications for all the stakeholders who act as social agents and want to bring desired changes.

Based on the related literature review, these areas have been identified for the present research:-

- **Communities at Large:** Communities especially in villages operate within the close purview of society with many operational factors like caste, class, power elite etc. The community has significance as a family, which acts as a primary socialising agency. Community leadership ensures redistribution of resources with maximisation of deconcentration of power to synchronise social energy,

- **Elementary Education:** Education is considered as a secondary socialisation agent after the family. As elementary education has been a foundation of school education it is necessary to look at how the community is playing a role in school functioning.

- **Community Leadership in Education:** It aids in the ability to identify local education issues and to develop strategies to resolve barriers that impede access and retention and compromise quality in regard to primary education. In this context the role and responsibilities of SMCs become vital.

The above identified areas also provide reflections about the existing research gaps in the proposed research. In India there have been a number of studies related to community participation but studies related to community leadership in school

functioning are few in elementary education. In the time of Covid-19 pandemic, communities with their own leaders can help in mobilising all the members irrespective of caste, class and gender. Therefore the study make an effort to fill these research gaps and bring out new perspectives in the field of community leadership and their role in school functioning.

2.3   Emerging Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. Major theories related to various themes of community and community leadership on which literature review is based have been identified. The chapter examines which theory would suit the given research best to find out the role of community leadership in the school Functioning's.

Functionalist Perspective

The functionalist perspective of sociology focuses upon each aspect of society which is interdependent and contributes to society's stability and functioning as a whole. Community, being a part of any society, cannot work in isolation and must strive towards bringing balance and stability within the social system. Hence, community participation and leadership become vital in visualising the same. Hebert Spencer (1820–1903), who saw similarities between society and the human body; he argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, the various parts of society work together to keep society functioning (Spencer 1898). The parts of society that Spencer referred to were the social institutions, or patterns of beliefs and behaviours focused on meeting social needs, such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy.

Contingency Theory

The contingency leadership theory, sometimes called situational theory, focuses on the context of a leader. These theories look at the situational effects of the success or failure of a leader. A leader's effectiveness is directly determined by the situational context. In community also, understanding of a situation is required for timely action and remedy of a problem.

Conflict Perspective

The Conflict perspective refers to the inequalities that exist in all societies globally. According to the Conflict paradigm, every society is plagued by inequality based on social differences among the dominant group and all of the other groups in society. Conflict theory examines any social phenomenon through the lens that there is a natural human instinct towards conflict. According to Karl Marx (1867) it is an unavoidable aspect of human nature and helps explain why things are the way they are. Communities too have shared conflicts in terms of caste, class, religion etc. and ultimately these conflicts impact educational development.

Social Capital Framework

Social capital theory suggests that interpersonal relations create value for individuals as they provide resources which can be used for achieving desired outcomes. Social capital is defined by the OECD as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups". In this definition, one can think of networks as real-world links between groups or individuals. Bryk and Schneider (2002) conceptualise social capital as relational trust and argue that it operates as a school improvement in four ways- Organisational change, Relational trust improves, Clear understanding about roles and responsibilities in school, High moral standards. Research on school districts also suggests that social capital is an important resource when it comes to policy implementation (Spillane and Thompson, 1998).

As the present study analyses and attempts to understand the role of community leadership in school functioning at elementary level, the above discussed theories are related and can be taken as a base for understanding the role of community leadership in the functioning of elementary schools; however the social capital framework would be well suited in the given context. Humans are unable to collaborate without social capital. This is because social capital refers to the common values, customs, trust, and sense of togetherness that allow people to interact with one another. Without social capital, our society, economy, institutions, and political system would not exist.

Community is a knitted system and involvement of people in the educational process can help in acquiring the desired outcome i.e. quality of education. However research will look into the other aspects related to access to information and influence through social networks. It also confers private benefits on individuals and in some cases can be used by individuals or groups to exclude others and reinforce dominance or

privilege. The present study will look for the aspects like caste privileges and power dynamics in the chosen area. In the view of social capital theory community leadership is not a task which has to be completed within the stipulated time span rather it is a "value" which promotes engagement and collaboration in the society. Therefore the study will explore the role of community leadership by taking consideration of the major concepts of social capital framework.

CHAPTER - 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present chapter throws light upon the methodology and design for the present study. It includes techniques, objectives, research questions and tools like interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as well as samples taken for the study to examine the role of community leadership in the functioning of elementary schools. It also consists of the ethical considerations and the research limitations associated with the study.

3.1   Research Objective

● To study the role of Community Leadership in the functioning of Elementary Schools and the nature of interventions taking place.

● To explore the nature of contributions by School Management Committees (SMCs), capacity building provisions and involvement of community leaders in different schools.

● To understand the functioning of Community leadership in the context of power and caste operations in promoting participation of all in elementary schools.

3.2   Research Questions

1. How does the community leadership work as an agent of change in bringing significant grassroots change in the school arena?

2. Who are the community leaders and what are their composition, background, status and role in schools irrespective of caste, class and power issues etc. to support school functioning?

3. What are some of the best practices and major interventions used to improve and engage communities through SMCs, and how have they helped to overcome issues related to school day-to-day functions?

3.3   Research Design

The present research, qualitative in nature, is a field study of two schools in the Rai block of Sonipat district of Haryana. The present research provides details about the

nature of community leadership, its composition and the role and participation of community leaders in the functioning of elementary schools. Research tools like observation, semi structured interviews and questionnaires have been used to gather a research database. The Case study\ Profile used for data collection explores the traits of leaders in the community who play an active role in the functioning of elementary schools. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) further enriches the experiences and help in generating genuine data and findings from the fields. With inductive research, (theory is generated from the collected data), the study tends to be **exploratory** in terms of its approach. The present research which is qualitative in nature has an interpretive paradigm which helps in the understanding of the role of community leaders in the schools. This paradigm is founded on the concept that social reality is neither solitary nor objective, but rather is influenced by human experiences and social context (ontology), and hence is best investigated in its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its diverse participants (epistemology). Since communities have diverse settings and the role of leadership in a community may differ. Hence community leaders may get influenced by the social reality which is integrated within the context and is impossible to isolate from the social environments. The interpretive paradigm gives a philosophical base to the overall research concept.

3.4 Field of Study

The study contextualised in the Rai Block of Sonipat District in Haryana portrays the larger picture of role of community leadership in the school functioning by taking in to considerations the significant "actors" e.g. principal, teachers, parents, sarpanch, PRI members, state authorities etc. These "actors" are placed within the schools or outside the school i.e. from the communities. Therefore school and community at large are the two main units taken for the study. Based on the thoughts and perceptions of these actors or entities, analysis can be arrayed on a continuum from the micro (school) to macro (community) levels.

3.5 Sources of Data

The main source of data for the present study is primary in nature. The information has been collected through the research tools (FGD and Interviews) to elicit the original responses and views of the participants. The data is also drawn from

secondary sources including international and national reports, research findings and books related to community participations, leadership, and community leadership.

3.6 Identification of Sample and Case

As research investigates in to the role of different stakeholders (considered as community leaders) in the elementary school functioning, the samples have been identified on the individual basis and cases have been drawn from the same by looking at the 'specific' community leadership attributes. The identified samples were collection of individuals i.e. Principals, Elementary Teachers, Parents, SMC members and Sarpanch who are connected to a common attribute i.e. community leadership. In the context of population the total population of Haryana is 25,351,462. But research has been conducted on the 'target population' i.e. Rai Block of Kundli region which has a population of 5278 which is a subset of the larger population.

3.6.1 Sample

The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1993). Questions of sampling arise directly out of the issue of defining the population on which the research focuses. For the proposed study two government schools (as shown in the given table) from the Rai block of Sonipat district in Haryana have been selected.

Table-4

S. No.	Name of the Schools
1.	Government Senior Secondary Schools (GSSS) Kundli
2.	Government Primary School, Bazidpur Saboli

The sample of the study consisted of both male and female teachers, members of SMCs (parents and panchayat head) and school principals. Apart from this the sample can also be taken from outside the school in case any exceptional leadership practices are found in relation to school functioning. Purposive sampling from non-probability sampling has been used for the research because the sample has been drawn from the

smaller population. To draw a purposive sample, participants from their sampling frame have been selected. The study begins with specific characteristics in the centre which aims to examine and then it seeks out the research participants who cover that full range of characteristics. In this context, the present research intends to explore the role of community leadership in the schools functioning and "leadership" is the main characteristics expected from all the participants. Purposive sampling assists in getting the most out of a limited population of interest and generating new research findings. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to collect qualitative responses, culminating in more precise study results and better perspectives.

3.6.2 Presentation of Sample

Table-5

Name Of the Schools	Research Tools	Male Teachers	Principal	Female Teachers	Parents	Members SMC	Sarpanch	Total
GSSS Kundali	I Interview	5	11	5	4	17	1	22
	FGD	5		5	4	7	-	21
Government Primary School Bazidpur Saboli	Interview	5	1	5	4	17	1	21
	FGD	5	-	5	4	7	-	21
Total Sample Size=85								

3.7 Tools of Data collections

Observation

Observation is a social research tool which is primarily used to study the phenomenon, social actors, objects or organization with an aim to encode or decode the behaviour or patterns associated with them. It is a way in which a researcher conducts study in a natural setting. For the given study, non-participant observation technique has been utilized to observe the schools and community leadership practices. It has been done indirectly rather than actively participating in a group. This method is used to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon by immersing oneself in the community or social structure in question while remaining detached from the behaviours being observed.

Interview Schedule

Interview is a research tool which provides wider scope for the answers of the unexplored questions. It is a way through which a researcher tries to find out beliefs and way of thinking of an individual. An interviewee and an interviewer are engaged in a research interview. The interviewer coordinates the conversation and asks questions, while the interviewee responds to the questions. When in-depth insight on people's opinions, attitudes, experiences, and feelings is needed, interviews are an important technique. The interviewer is an integral part of the investigation (Jacob, 1988). However, the interview may have some inaccuracies. As mentioned by Patterson (1968), the interview is thus not such a measurement device which gives very accurate results.

Generally there are three types of Interview. This can be discussed as following-

1. **Unstructured interviews:** These are interviews that take place with few, if any, interview questions. They often progress in the manner a normal conversation would, however it concerns the research topic under review. The researcher is expected to probe participants in order to obtain the most rich and in-depth information possible.

2. **Semi Structured interviews:** These are interviews that use an interview protocol to help guide the researcher through the interview process. While this can incorporate conversational aspects, it is mostly a guided conversation between the researcher and participant. It does maintain some structure (hence the name semi structured), but it also provides the researcher with the ability to probe the participant for additional details.

3. **Structured interviews:** These are interviews that strictly adhere to the use of an interview protocol to guide the researcher. It is a more rigid interview style, in that only the questions on the interview protocol are asked.

For the present study **Unstructured Interview** has been done and participants' responses were captured and leading questions and answers were also recorded. Research has focused on the role of communities in the light of 'leadership' therefore unstructured interviews provided in-depth understanding about the perceptions of participants. It allowed researchers to go deeper in the research and focus more on exploring particular participant traits of leadership.

Focus Group Discussion

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas. In focus group discussion participants are free to talk with other group members; unlike other research methods it encourages discussions with other participants. It generally involves group interviewing in which a small group of usually 8 to 12 people. It is led by a moderator (interviewer) in a loosely structured discussion of various topics of interest.

According to Krueger, (2002) Participant responses were triggered by a stimulus--a question asked by the moderator or a comment from another participant. It examines the context by finding the triggering stimulus and then interprets the comment in light of that environment. The response is interpreted in light of the preceding discussion and also by the tone and intensity of the oral comment. Mishra, (2016) A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. According to Gundumogula, (2021) "Focus groups assist in the emergence of new dimensions and insights about one's research since the participants collectively own and provide far more and more diverse perspectives on the selected topic than the researcher could envision on their own".

In the present research Focus group discussion has been conducted in the group of 8-10 participants (which includes teachers, parents and members of SMCs) in the government schools of Rai village, Kundli, Haryana. This helped to comprehend the role as well as meaning of leadership and importance of community in the school

functions. In a nutshell, FGD has given a wider framework in which the present research can be visualized to get the answer of 'unexplored questions' related to the role of community leadership in the school functioning.

3.8 Pilot Study

A good research study with relevant experimental design and correct performance is necessary to produce desired outcomes. Prior to carrying out the primary procedure, it is necessary to assess its feasibility. A pilot study is a scaled-down version of a full-scale study or a test run conducted in advance of the full study. This is also known as a 'feasibility' study. It can also refer to the pre-testing of research tools such as questionnaires or interviews Schedules. (Polit, et al., and Baker in Nursing Standard, 2002:33-44; Van, Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001.) Hence, pilot research (also known as the full study or large-scale main trial) can be very useful in this situation. The pilot study for the present research has been done in the three government schools of Rai Block Kundli, Sonipat.

1. Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS) Kundli

2. Government Primary School, Bazidpur Saboli

3. Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS) Akbarpur Barota

Due to administrative issues and lack of cooperation from the school authorities the study was not feasible in the GSSS, Akbarpur Barota. The other two schools named Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS) Kundli and Government Primary School, Bazidpur Saboli were found to be cooperative and feasible places for carrying out research.

During the pilot study, interesting facts emerged regarding community leadership and its role in the school functioning. SMCs were active and involvement of communities and its stakeholders like parents, teachers, NGOs etc. were quite prevalent in the schools. However in terms of actual practice and policy implementation the scenario was different. The pilot study was carried out to assess the practical aspect of the research and also to get specification about the research objectives. The major aim with which it was conducted was to look into whether the selected area is feasible for the data collection or not. Therefore the pilot testing has paved the way for further research with a wide scope of getting genuine and rich data from the field study.

3.9 Procedure of Data Collection

The interviews and FGD were administered directly in the two government schools of Rai Blocks after pilot testing and with any required alterations in the research tools. The views and thoughts of a total of 85 selected samples were collected for the data analysis by conduction face to face interaction and discussion.

3.10 Data Analysis

The major aim of the study which is qualitative (exploratory) in nature is to understand the role of community leadership in the functioning of elementary school. The data has been collected and theme wise narrative analysis has been done to interpret the thoughts and perceptions of different stakeholders (Principal, teachers, parents etc.) which form the sample of the study. Analysis of gathered data is the most significant part of any research. It directs the whole research towards meaningful and desired findings according to the set objectives of the research. Marshall and Rossman (1999:150) describe data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is described as messy, ambiguous and time-consuming, but also as a creative and fascinating process. Broadly speaking while it does not proceed in linear fashion, it is the activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorizing data that signifies a search for general statements among categories of data (Schwandt, 2007:6). One may discern, while analysing data, the researcher is essentially expected to stay open and remain unbiased towards unexpected patterns, expressions, and results. The researcher has kept this essential element in mind and therefore provided all justifications with an unbiased perception and observations.

Methods Used for Data Analysis in Qualitative Research

There are several techniques to analyse the data in qualitative research, but in the present research narrative analysis has been used

Narrative Analysis: This method is used to analyse content gathered from various sources such as personal interviews, field observation, and surveys. The majority of times, stories, or opinions shared by people are focused on finding answers to the research questions.

In the context of present study, **Narrative analysis** has reconnoitred the real life experiences and their views about the community and leadership. FGD with SMCs

members provides some interesting and useful insights which are otherwise considered unexplored in general. Therefore it helps in uncovering the underlying ideologies, perceptions and interpretations of everyday experiences as an important member of the community at a large.

The data analysis has been done under various themes by taking into consideration the aims and objective of the study-

- *Notion of Leader and Leadership*

- *Who are the leaders in the given community?*

- *Role of leadership in communities*

- *Unfolding community leadership in school functioning*

- *How are elementary schools going to be impacted by community leadership?*

- *Who are the empowered ones in the community?*

- *Are the communities active or passive in terms of participation?*

- *Functioning of School Management Committees (SMCs)*

- *Community Leadership: Issues and Challenges*

- *Policy Implications*

3.11 Validity and Reliability of Data

In the initial phase of pilot study, research tools were moderated to validate the research questions. After the initial data collection 'respondent validation' has been done to check if they still choose to remain true to their statements, thoughts and perceptions about community leadership. Although the research was at its final stages participants were still able to recognize the results as authentic and, at this stage, may even be able to refine the researcher's understanding. To check the reliability of data, use of comprehensive data, constant testing and comparison of data (by use of tables) has been done on the collected responses. Reliability has been done to ensure credibility, transferability and conformability of the role of community leadership in the functioning of elementary schools in the Rai Block of Sonipat District in Haryana with the identified community leaders from the two schools i.e. Principal, Teachers, SMC members and parents.

3.12 Ethical Aspects of the Research

An ethical consideration in any research study provides value to the outcomes and findings of the research. The current study was also subject to certain ethical issues. Therefore the present research has been carried out by taking full consent of all the participants i.e. school principal, teachers, parents and state authorities. The reason behind taking consent was to reassure participants that their participation in the study is completely voluntary, and that they might leave at any time and for any reason. Their rights, interests, and sensitivities have been safeguard with privacy and confidentiality and recorded responses were used only for the academic purposes.

3.13 Methodological Limitations

- The sample size was purposely taken relatively small. A larger sample size would enhance the reliability of the research.

- The research study has limited access to the data due to time constraints.

- Lack of previous studies on community leadership in the Indian context.

CHAPTER - 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES EMERGED

The present chapter explores the conceptions, ideas and notions related to the community leadership and its role in school functioning. The chapter unfolds the views of different responses collected during the field research in the Government schools located in the Sonipat District, Haryana. Various aspects and views are narrated under the different headings and subheadings. Besides, the chapter makes an effort to understand the role of SMCs by incorporating the views of its members. In nutshell, it underpins the thoughts and understanding of different stakeholders as well as the related functional aspects of community leadership in schools. As respondents belong to different age-groups, gender, religion, caste and families, interesting facts, views and perceptions have emerged from the collected data. So, the chapter recapitulates the same with reference to the selected theme of the research.

4.1 Understanding the Notion of Leader and Leadership

Communities are shaped by the new innovations and best practices that help in equipping the functionality of society with desired changes and reforms. Nowadays, leadership is a core of this functional aspect of society. When an individual adopts a leader's behavior and supervises a group of people, she/he may consider a variety of criteria or principles. These criteria or principles are concerned with beliefs and views about the qualities that leaders should possess and how they should conduct themselves in a leadership role. Furthermore, these qualities of leadership assist them in determining what kind of character and qualities they need to cultivate in order to advance in leadership positions. The respondents (Parents, Teachers, SMC members and Panchayat heads) expressed their views and thoughts about community leadership and leaders which has been taken as a base for the analysis and discussion of the notion of community leadership.

Description of the Participants

Box-5

Associated Organizations	Different Stakeholders
● Schools	● Principal ● Teachers (TGTs) ● Mid-day Meal Workers
School Management Committee (SMC)	● Parents ● Mothers ● State Authority ● School Head ● Nominated Teachers ● Village Head
● Panchayati Raj Institution	● Sarpanch
● Local Communities	● Parents' Associations ● Prominent Personalities ● Local MLAs

The analysis of the notion of community leadership basically revolves around the role of associated stakeholders in the elementary schools. In the backdrop of the same, responses from them have been captured to understand the same. The study has aimed to understand how the said stakeholders play a role in shaping normal leadership to community leadership. The school being the secondary socializing agency after family (Primary socializing agency) becomes a central place of discussion in terms of community supporting the same in a multidimensional way. Ultimately, education is defined as a "socialization in which the community, in addition to the school, serves as a facilitator and collaborator."

In context of the same, the principal of the school expressed her understanding about the meaning of leadership and associated leadership qualities. According to her, one should take *need-based/ issue-based initiatives* which can be disposed of at a time by taking utmost importance to the given concern. She quotes "Leadership is a give-and-

take process" and there must be support for each other in school. While defining an effective leader, she added that leaders are commonly supposed to speak more in comparison to others as part of their responsibilities, such as transmitting information, facilitating group discourse, and so on. Effective leaders, on the other hand, usually aim at bringing out the best in others by enabling people to speak up and express themselves. They must establish an upward emotional spiral in order to provide positive reinforcement to others. Even the Principal herself mentioned a special case where she exhibited special leadership qualities by narrating an incident. She initiated major action for removal of the encroachment comprising shops near the school premises as there should not be any shops or markets within the 100 m radius of the school. Further, it was a concern for the girls coming to the school. She had to face umpteen objections from the shopkeepers as they protested against her. But she interacted with them positively and resolved the issue amicably. Later on, it was decided that during the school timings, there would be no encroachment. This step has resulted in a phenomenal rise in the number of student enrolment, especially girls.

In support of the leadership role, the principal narrated an incident where a girl from the school got selected for the super 100 programme of the state government but parents were not willing to send her for the same. So, she decided to take a psychology teacher's help to convince the parents, and ultimately succeeded in sending the girl for the said programme. Another incident which the principal shared was that some students were not coming in proper uniform, maybe because of financial constraints, so she allowed them to come in any winter clothes as studies are more important than school uniform. She quotes "learning should not be hampered because of school uniforms. However, later on, it was learnt that the students were forced to buy school uniforms from a private entity at much higher prices. This contradiction shows the situation of conflict between a leader and the other stakeholder.

The principal further quoted an example to support the same. Many poor children in her school did not have sweaters as they could not afford; so, as Principal, she took immediate action to mobilize charitable funds by taking the help of NGOs, volunteers, etc. and thus distributing sweaters to each of them. Switching to another example, she gave information about installing a computer system and smart classrooms and by

discussion with SMCs the school has decided to establish a library in the school for the very first time. To have a dialogue mechanism between school authorities and parents, quarterly issue-based meetings and discussions were also organized regularly. Another Principal from the Government Primary School, Saboli was of the opinion that communication is necessary for any leadership process. He said consultation may be a time-taking process but it cannot be over sighted. Therefore, a leader must be communicative. Further, he alerted that everyone has some expectation from you when you are in a chair or position. People expect some relaxation for duties. There can be some powerful influential personalities as well. So, a leader must not show any partiality to anybody and exhibit a sense of determination towards the given task.

Leading the conversation forward, he added there should be no place for brotherhood or discrimination in schools, rather one should do what have been assigned to do. For e.g., it usually happens in government schools that the teachers need some relaxation e.g. they should not be questioned for reporting late to work. Therefore, as a leader and authority of the school, the principal must maintain total impartiality in line with any of the Government's directives and ensure the responsibilities are assigned equally to all. There must be an unbiased approach, and the leader must be rational and balanced while on duty.

During the course of discussion, a former village head elucidated "*Ek hote hain bahar se leader aur ke hote hain system ke andar leader". Sarkari system ke log bhi leaders hi hain..* In general, a leader must be professionally responsible as well as neutral to difficulties and obstacles. Further, she/he must have the ability to learn from others' experiences as well. A SMC member from an NGO explained that a leader is the one who considers everyone equal and has the capacity to bring everyone into the mainstream. He suggests that there should be meetings between school authorities and government representatives on a monthly basis so as to fully understand each and every issue. To check the work of the teachers and all the staff, what kind of session plans do they have? That's why vigilance is extremely important for a leader, especially in the functioning of a school.

The number of respondents from the school and community stated that active community collaboration enables the interchange of larger inputs from diverse sections of a community. This interconnectedness requires patience from the leaders'

side. An underlying premise of this perspective is that, for the leadership to be successful, one must have patience and understanding so that she/he can persuade others. A leader in the community must be an initiative taker, selfless individual, expressive and reliable person. Possessing good social skills and harmony with others, a good listener and attractive personality are important qualities of a leader like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who were duty-bound for the nation.

Being inquired about who is the leader in school, and why? A teacher said the principal is the leader because her overall decision-making quality is excellent. She quotes *"sabki baat sunati hain".* So, for a leader in school patience is important; understanding others' emotions is equally important. The development of trust-building is a supreme requirement for a leader and quality of convincing others which comes with trust and belief. Teachers suggested that problems would be everywhere but being practical is one essential characteristic that a leader must have. According to them the principal is quite peaceful and the overall decision-maker of the school.

Many other Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs) have expressed their views about the notion of leadership. According to them, anyone can be a leader. Post Graduate Teachers (PGTs) are getting selected as Principals so experience is important to become a leader not the qualification. Team leader is the one who is a confident decision-maker, publicly accepted, even if there is a fault, she/he corrects them. So, in their case, the Principal is the leader in school as she discusses everything with them. According to a school teacher, anybody can be a leader and take decisions but a leader must be very sharp and visionary. A leader should never discriminate in terms of caste, class or gender. She/he must have charisma to be followed by the masses.

In the Government school of Kundli, retired army personnel have joined as a TGT (Economics). He set forth his version of a leader and its definition. According to him, lack of discipline is the root cause of degradation of any institution, and a leader must be strong and wise enough to hold discipline at its required level. Therefore, the Principal, with the help of teachers, can motivate students to maintain discipline. While defining the qualities of a leader, he compared a leader with a commander of a troop. *"Ek leader ko hamesha opponents se rubaru hona padta hai. Toh jo unko handle kar le, wahi leader hai ".* He adds further "one change leads to so many changes; so one change is required to bring another revolutionary change. He was of

the opinion that a leader should have courage to leave conventional things and move towards unconventional norms, therefore, vouched for bringing best practices from other fields into the school system.

A group of teachers expressed their views about leadership by indicating that a leader must be hard working, capable enough to encourage others, praise her/his subordinates publicly for the good work, and should be vocal and support the subordinates. On the contrary, a leader may also scold them but not in a public view. Overall, a leader must maintain a cooperative and harmonious environment. She/he must understand the culture and way of working of others, and be responsive enough to provide them quick solutions. A leader should not be a person of sheer anger and hate. In a normal situation, anger should be controlled, and she/he must be accommodative, supportive and punctual so that others may emulate the same. In the school premise distribution of work should be equal and given to all with dignity and decorum. By connecting the dots of leadership traits with the school principal teachers carried forward the discussion to distribution and balance of power. They add that she/he has authoritative power but there must be justice for everyone; there are guidelines for everyone and a leader must value the chair on which she/he is seated. Bringing the gender issues in leadership, one of the teachers said that females can be good leaders and good administrators by quoting "Changes are always important and women can bring required grass root changes. Therefore, women participation is equally important in the community. In the Kundli Area, Tobacco prevention is one example where parents, especially mothers have contributed and collaborated with the state authorities. Together, they came forward to assist the government to prevent tobacco abuse amongst youngsters.

On inquiring about why the principal of their school has been considered as a leader, most of the teachers were of the view that the school Principal is competent, committed, and bold, soft hearted, and possesses empathy for others and discharge duties without favouritism. She is fully aware who is working and who is not. In case of any problem either infrastructure-wise or regarding other issues, she resolves them amicably keeping in view the overall welfare of the school. She conducted frequent meetings by undertaking speedily practical implementation of any decision. In a nutshell the School Principal of GSSS Kundli was found to be highly active and responsive to the day to day functioning of schools. While talking to teachers from other Government schools in

Saboli, Sonipat District, they described qualities of their principal and reasons for considering him as a leader. According to them, the Principal of the school is confident and possesses sound-decision making ability. One of the teachers was proud that after Covid pandemic, the school was the first school to be reopened in the entire state. For them the Principal is a fearless leader and can go to any extent for the benefit of the school. Teachers also asserted that there should be one leader. If everyone becomes a leader then there will be problems, conflict, confusion and communication gaps etc. Under such conditions there will be a lack of cooperation. Experience and practical understanding is of utmost importance for the leaders. Hence, conversation and discussion with the respondents revealed numerous innovative views and quite interesting stories about the leadership and its traits.

As a significant member of the community, parents have their own version of leadership traits. According to one of them, every person who can set an example by her/his actions and motivate others can be a leader. For a community leader in school, understanding of the ground level problems, the background of a child and family and parents' involvement were few paramount concerns expressed by the parents. Few of them diverted the discussion towards the other issues like discrimination of girl child, preference of boys for selecting schools, female feticide, inclusion of sex education in the syllabus etc which need to be taken up seriously. Therefore, it can be assumed that the education system needs a reform through community involvement. This involvement by the community leadership can bring determined decision-makers. These decision makers might give a reality check and feedback. A leader must be selected on the basis of experience. Parents also quoted that this kind of leadership gives a perspective for what community or society is holding and what kind of patterns are developing? So that the schools can recheck their strategies, and new strategies can be adopted and innovative practices may be evolved to have fruitful and rewarding growth. The parents asked questions in between the discussion: who would take such initiatives? Anybody in the community cannot be made in charge of taking leadership roles. In such cases any society needs a charismatic leader who inspires everyone.

4.2 Traits of a Leader

The study made an effort to discern the traits and characteristics of a leader from the community. Through the discussion, many respondents unfolded different views on the basis of which traits of a leader emerged i.e. confident, impartial, patient, keen listener, power to convince others and be disciplined with everyone. Based on the

same, the characteristics of a leader from the community can be described as following-

1. Good listeners who can bring about conclusions, make decisions, and have the power to accept the right one.

2. Ability to lead with constant communication, emotional connection with others, sound mind and punctuality.

3. Ideal personality with self-esteem and respect who is respected by many.

4. Gives advice based on capabilities and experience and must be gender neutral.

5. A vigilant personality who is sharp and visionary.

6. With impartiality and practicality can bring desired changes.

4.2.1 Qualities of a Community Leader: Perceptions and Thoughts of Different Stakeholders

Drawing clues from the leadership traits, the perceptions and thoughts of different stakeholders have helped in concluding the qualities of a community leadership.

Box-6

S. No.	*Leadership Qualities*
1.	Decision-maker
2.	Confident
3.	Assertive towards her/his work
4.	Vigilant
5.	Self-identification (identifying herself/ himself as a part of the group)
6.	Respect for others
7.	Firm believer
8.	Sympathetic towards others
9.	Self-aware and prioritize self-reflection
10.	Encourages strategic thinking, innovation, and action
11.	Ethical and civic-minded

The above explained understandings of the traits give shape to the identification of thought patterns and beliefs about characteristics of a successful leader in a community. Experience and practical understanding is important for the leaders which enable them to manage a team effectively, and provide an equal platform to everyone. Performance, timely feedback to its team, seeking suggestions from everyone and consultative in nature are the prime traits of a leader. According to the respondent, without consultation, there will be no democracy. This is the best way to involve others in the decision-making process and give forum to the shared understanding and ideas. Therefore, a leader who is a quick decision-maker with a sharp memory can lead school on every front. Hence equipped with such traits the school principal is considered as a leader. Based on these traits Figure 4 describes the types of community leadership in the schools.

Figure-4
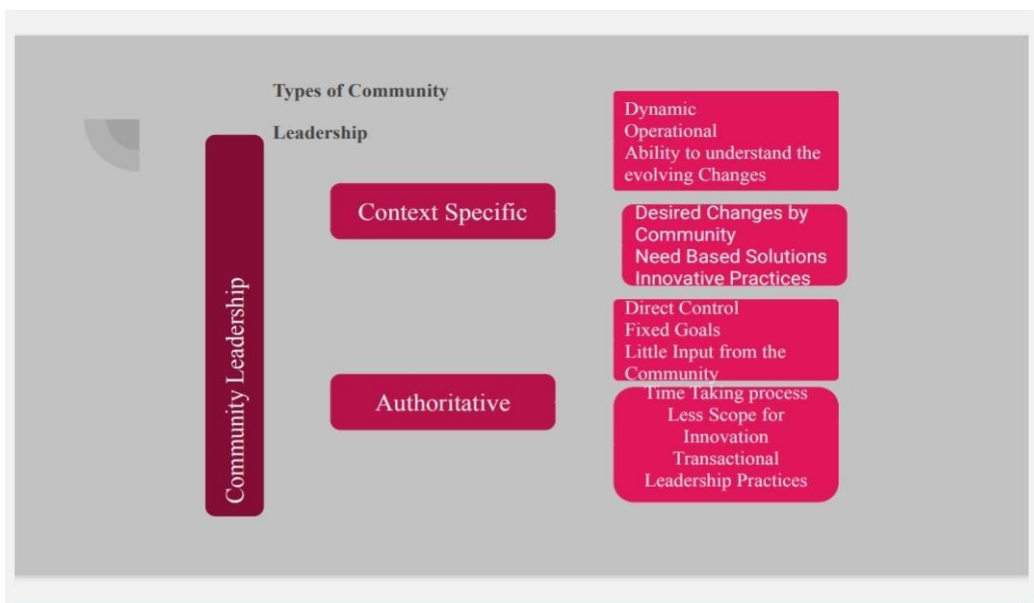
Source: Derived from the understanding of secondary sources by the researcher

Profile of Community Leaders

Based on the traits of a leader, a profile of community leader can give a diverse perspective to the community leadership. People might transcend the boundaries of their surroundings and move into a broader, more appreciative world –' when community members perform the above-mentioned community leadership roles and characteristics. Many respondents were found to be exceptionally versed with the leadership traits. Few of them are as following shown in the table given below-

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Name	Age	Gender	Educational Qualifications	Total Experience	Occupation	Leadership Traits
Ms. Sheela Sherawat	52	Female	M.A. (History)	22	Principal	Confident, Progressive, Honest
Mr. Atul	48	Male	M.A. (Geography)	18	PGT (Geography)	Vocal, Keen Observer, Good Listener
Mr Chand Kishore	56	Male	M.A. (Political Science)	24	Principal	Assertive, Confident, Active, Cooperative
Mr. Ram Asare	42	Male	Intermediate	16	Mid-day Meal Worker, Laborer, Cab Driver	Aware, Hardworking, Activist
Ms. Sunita Devi	46	Female	Matric	22	Water- carrier	Hardworking, Honest, Participative and Vocal
Mr. Mukesh Bajaj	50	Male	M.A., B.Ed.	25	PGT, Math	Active, Duty- bound, Technology- freak, Decisive

Table-6

4.3 Community Leadership in Practical Aspects

Leadership has a variety of definitions and understanding. However, when it comes to the ground realities, it may differ. A Class VIII teacher, Rakesh Yadav, in his interview, summarized the practical aspects and skills to be worn by a leader while acting in the field and within the communities. According to him, "localized, practical and contextual Understanding" is essential to which a leader must always be responsive. He further adds, "Practical understanding implies to or is concerned with everyday items that have been altered or designed for actual use. So, practical leadership is leadership which is relevant to everyday life, geared for implementation, and that one can put into action." According to Savita Jakhar, a Science teacher, "one cannot learn things on their own, so a leader must be proactive in making others capable enough so that even if a leader is absent, the functioning of the system does not stop. She elaborated further to support her point that if the Principal is absent that does not mean the school would stop functioning; so it's the leader's responsibility to make others learn about their way of working. She was interrupted by another teacher in between. He argues why a leader should always show the path to anyone? Can't one capture their way of functioning on a daily basis? *"Bhai agar hum sab school ke prati zimmedar rahen, toh leader ho ya na ho, kya farak padta hai?* Therefore, he brought another point i.e. capturing a leader's action to become a leader. During another round of Interview, the school Principal herself asserted that teamwork and the right approach is important for leadership. Every staff member must be in coherence with the required duties, e.g. "***Koi undisciplined baccha mere class ka nahi hai par mere school ka toh hai".*** This attitude of collaboration is important while working for any system and as a leader. One must take action by herself/himself without expecting to impart our own duties to others.

Ethical Consideration in Community Leadership

Many respondents believed that for practical leadership ethical motives are essential because individuals, who lead, ethically act in accordance with a set of beliefs and ideals that the majority acknowledges as a solid base for the greater good. Authenticity, tolerance, respect, impartiality, integrity, and truthfulness figure among them. Ethical leadership is a choice that must be made consciously. In the study, it was revealed that values and ethical aspects in communities promote welfare mechanisms smoothly.

4.4 Unfolding the Role of Community Leadership in the Elementary Schools

Community leadership is about enabling community members' social capacity to expand the hidden potential and creativity within and often hidden capability of transforming those into initiatives. It is an organic process that occurs in all members of the community and entails dialogical, collaborative decision-making in order to develop positive repercussions of confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and performance. Besides these, the majority of participants believe that for social development 'people-cantered transformation processes' coordinated with a community, further actualize the true development goals in order to improve the quality of lives in the wider community. As a result, the community leadership approach is critical in ensuring that community members are empowered, self-reliant individuals who are in charge of their own destiny. Democratic, transformational, value-driven, participatory, and compassionate are characteristics of leadership approaches that complement community development concepts and practices. However in the schools, community leadership practices often require balanced involvement. During the course of discussion many respondents affirmed that community leadership and local leadership is important but unnecessary intervention by the people from outside can create hurdles in the smooth functioning of schools. A Few respondents express concerns over the involvement of parents or community members in the schools. The teacher narrated an incident where the village Sarpanch of the area has created troubles by pressurizing the school authorities for admissions of his acquaintances without presenting any valid proof. He also questioned how the school could give admission to a child without any documentary proof? The school has to abide by the guidelines issued by the Government of Haryana. They quote "*Kitni bhi training kar lo, kitne bhi leaders paida kar do; ye system aise hi badnaam rahega.*" *Bahut policy issues bhi hain.*Although parents, as significant community members, can be involved in the school mechanism and are capable enough to give fruitful suggestions. Community leadership is a responsibility when it encompasses schools and sometimes parents are not supportive. There are almost 400-500 industries, and migrants are generally from Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan. As they move frequently it becomes very difficult to trace their children once they drop out from the schools and parents did not give any trace of those children's. The students are the mirror of the work of any school and teachers have overall responsibility to retain such children's in the classroom. In this context Parents are an important entity. They must be informed and, in turn, they should also inform the school if the child is learning at an expected pace or not. One teacher has supported this view and said that parents must be made fully aware about

what decisions are being made in the school and should be kept in loop on every front. He further quotes "*Pade-likhe hain ya nahi, issae koi fark nahi padta, mata-pita ko bacche ke baare mein har jankari honi chahiye.*" From the above discussion it can be concluded that Parents work as a watchdog in a community and Parents should not wait for the meeting with teachers to know how their child is studying. Constant communication is important, and the roles of both teacher and parents become significant.

The teacher supports his version by saying, "See, private schools cater to all needs of a child, however, in our school, a child is a bread-earner of his family as well; literacy is a problem, therefore leadership takes central place for parents." Some of them, who have an understanding of the system within the community, can become a leader. Having the ability to understand the minute details of the social strata makes a perfect leader for society. In school functioning, the parents can be involved in the decision-making as duties are always shared.

Principal of the GSSS, Kundli, expressed concerns over the extent of involvement of communities by saying that it is good if the community shares its ideas and suggestions as a part of the society. Constructive suggestions are always welcomed. But the problem is when schools need them and require any feedback, they avert their eyes. To support it she added that the Kundli region is an industrial area; many industrialists enjoy a range of tax benefits. But when school demands anything from society, they won't turn up and they turn up only when it is a question of their personal benefit. One should understand that involvement of communities is not a one-way process. She questioned it by saying why do we always expect school to start first? Just because schools are formal institutions! According to her, the community and society are the first teachers and teachers in schools come later.

It was found that most of the parents were not from the local community. Therefore, they were not in a position to put forth enough suggestions as they really did not know about the entire region. According to the Principal, "we cannot deny the fact that, sometimes, they do give constructive suggestions". For example, during Covid pandemic, they have been constantly involved with schools. It has enhanced the participation of people with the established formal organizations, and made them more aware about their rights and responsibilities. Such involvement gives an opportunity to the people to get to know what roles and responsibilities have been given to them in the society. Regarding involvement of the Village Panchayats in the

school functioning, one of the teachers expressed that they must be associated with schools as they are the grass roots democracy and can prevent any collateral damage coming from the society.

School Management Committees (SMCs): An Indispensable Pillar of Community Engagement

Through a proactive course of action and necessary constructive discussion with all stakeholders, the SMC seeks to rejuvenate the educational system. Its main roles or operations are to support the quality of teaching, proper development and utilization of government funds, implementation of various state and federally devised schemes, creation of health awareness among children, provision of sanitation facilities, development of school infrastructure, and so on. The SMCs have been given a range of 'powers' by the state RTE rule. These powers relate to academic activities such as monitoring classroom practices, completion of course work and non-academic activities like maintaining financial records, developing School Development Plans (SDP), monitoring MDM, community awareness in terms of the provisions of the RTE act, ensuring enrolment and continued attendance of children and so on. While discussing the SMCs Principles of both the schools agreed and supported the fact that SMCs are very much required as these are the backbone of any school and must be strengthened at any cost. As a matter of fact, there is a need to give them extra privilege.

Box- 7

An Example of the Minutes of SMC Meetings

- Discussion over construction of classrooms and allocation of funds
- Irregular transfer of financial assistance to students
- Money distribution for uniform purchase
- Issues of water supply in schools
- Salary issue of MDM workers
- Parents expressed gratitude to school for improvement in child's learning
- Concern over migrant children who could not pay fee for the academic session

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During the course of discussion, it was well established that the members of SMCs are supposed to be professionally trained to lead schools as they have legal power to

approve resolutions and assign responsibilities to others. NGOs (Samarthya, Adarsha Sarswati Shiksha Samiti) impart training to them and, sometimes, SMC members approach the District Magistrate with problems and issues and seek their resolution. This is the way the community is involved in the schools. During Covid pandemic, online meetings were held to discharge these duties in the government schools of Kundli. As a representative of state authority, the Assistant Block Resource Coordinator (ABRC) attended the meetings. He expressed his concern that the lack of training provisions for the members of SMCs can be a disaster. He added that generally NGO members do not come for the meetings as well as for the training also. But one needs to understand the underlying problem; one NGO has to train 15 schools. Therefore, in some schools, they do training while in others, they leave. It was also disrupted owing to the Covid pandemic. Adding another concern, he said nowadays people are distracting and admitting their children in the private schools. This is the responsibility of NGOs to make them aware about the good practices of government schools. A few parents have complained in the meeting that school authorities just leave messages on whatsapp and do not inform them in advance. Many times, it so happens that the messages do not reach them at all because of which they were not able to take leaves from their employers and had to skip the scheduled SMCs meetings.

One teacher argued that parents are illiterate and do not know the importance of SMCs. It is a very powerful body and can change the entire scene of schools; but parents are not aware and do not want to take any action. Covid pandemic has hampered many meetings and things are not in place. She gave an example "If you visit the Government Senior Secondary School at Beeswan Meel, Sonipat District, you will find members who are very active. Once they went directly to the District Magistrate (DM) for their grievances and the Principal had to abide by the directions as per the guidance and direction of the SMC members." SMC holds the power to pass budgets. The Chairman of SMC has all the authority and the Principal is the primary head.

The Government official further revealed that there is a problem with the whole SMC and its empowerment. The School and Principal do not want to make the SMC members more powerful or do not want to tell them that they have so many powers. There is power struggle and power politics. There is one dominant section who always wants to rule over the others. SMC is the entry door for involvement of communities

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into school, and the school itself is closing this door. There is a nexus from school to school. Maximum schools have the same practice. ABRC attended the meeting as a state representative on behalf of BRC (Block Resource Center). He gave perspective on the functioning of government schools by comparing these schools with the private schools.

The literature review indicated that in India, the overall functioning of SMCs is the same but the state-to-state needs differ also the issues and challenges. Conflict between the school staff and parents is common. There is an inbuilt feeling in teachers that since the parents are illiterate; they are not capable of giving suggestions. A need arises to make members of SMC more aware and powerful. There is a need to build confidence in them so that they can directly approach administration and government. SMCs are a reflection of the spirit of democracy which the Constitution and fundamental rights hold for every citizen of India. The same is visualized in the RTE-2010. Lack of information and dearth of reporting are the major factors in the non-functionality of the SMCs. BEO and DEO are also inactive in major cases. Reflection on the best practices of SMCs from other states is needed to ensure the functioning of SMCs in its truest sense.On the above said lines, a Hindi teacher emphasized upon the significance of SMCs and said, "Through SMC, parents get to know what is happening in the school and how school can function to change perspective." *"Jab parents ki ye shanka khatam ho jati hai tab trust develop hota hai aur kamiyon ko batate hai"*. SMCs work as positive reinforcement for schools and the community as well.

Role of a Parent as Community Leader

The appropriate responsibility of parent's is to encourage, assist, and offer access to activities that allow the child to master crucial developmental skills. Because the family is a child's primary social group, the family has the greatest influence on their learning and socialization. As a significant community member parents must encourage and adhere to activity-based learning mutual learning for their child. Indeed, one needs to learn from the other states like Delhi where involvement of parents have solved the problems of teacher shortage, drop-out, and shown excellent school improvement in school functioning. KVS and NVS owned by the Central Government too have active involvement of parents and strict vigilance and timely feedback by them, brought these schools to such higher levels. These are leadership examples by the parents within the school system. During the discussion one of the

parents himself gave an example of "Haryana Abhibhavak Ekta Manch" which is active in the several districts of the state through which parents as community members raise voices for the school improvement.

While discussing the idea of community leadership with parents, numerous other issues and concerns were revealed. One of them said that they face a lot of problems. Many of them work for the MDM as a cook. They put forth that there are plenty of challenges they encounter i.e. financial and mental. Pointing towards administrative and policy issues, they further added that the biggest problem is acquiring the caste certificates; they don't get these certificates in the state, despite the fact that they have been living in the state for so many years (for the past 40-45 years). This leads to their exclusion from several government policies and benefits. At times, it gives a feeling as if they are out of state. Number of times they did not get timely intervention in their issues related to school. One parent said, "*hame anpad samjh ki cheezon ko talne ki koshish hoti hai; hame dabaya jata hai, bataiye kya karein aise mein?* Parents, who work for MDM, complained that they did not get salaries regularly, and there was no fixed schedule of payment. Also, they did not get a chance to attend meetings in the school. They claimed this is also one of the reasons for demotivation, and, as such, do not want to take any initiative as an active member of the community.

Their experience projected a gloomy picture of the role of PRIs as a grass root community organization. They hinted that there is minimal involvement of the Sarpanch and he did not help in providing ration cards to them. In desperation one of them quoted "jab *khana hi nahi hai toh padaye kya*"? Further they stated by displaying a grave mistrust towards state agencies i.e. *"Hame Sarpanch aur kisi bhi sarkar se koi umeed nahi hai"*. Covid-19 has further deteriorated their situation. They were involved in several other works also; and received salary for only a few months that too without any leave.

CASE-1

Haryana Abhibhavak Ekta Manch: A Parents' Association

Abhibhavak Ekta Manch, established in 1997, is an association which gives platform and representation to the voices of parents from different sections. The association is currently active in all the districts of Haryana with total member strength of around 300-400. The major aim of the association is to popularize the "Public School" culture and break the

nexus of costly private schools. Besides this, the association supports parents through dialogue mechanisms and interventions in the problems faced on a regular basis in the Government schools. In the Sonipat region, the association has a separate unit which takes care of the issues and concerns of parents whose children are enrolled in Government schools.

According to the General Secretary of the association, Mr. Kailash Sharma "Public or government schools must thrive in every state to give true meaning to equal opportunity of education for all. Education comes under concurrent list which means that there is a partnership between state government and central government for education policy making and implementation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the state to provide quality education to all, and private schools cannot replace the government schools." Hence, the association keeps a check and balance on the fee hike by the private schools and encourages parents to admit their wards into government schools. Further in the past, it also negotiated with the state authority for the infrastructure, maintenance of the dilapidated school buildings, teacher recruitment and salary and other significant issues which impact the schooling in the government schools. The association is of the view that, if government schools do not have the required infrastructure and quality education, who would send their child to these schools? Similarly, the association is putting constant efforts in popularizing and revitalizing the government school culture.

In the backdrop of the same, the association has taken several measures to represent the parents' issues in front of the government. The association has spread awareness amongst the parents about the educational policy of the state government and informed them that it is not only CBSE or the Ministry of Education which is responsible for the overall school system. The association has been proactively involved in admitting children from the economic weaker section (EWS) in the private schools under the purview of RTE act 2009 and demanded establishment of government-owned Model Sanskrit Schools in greater numbers.

Further, the association has been constantly monitoring and raising its voice against the sanction of lands to the private players for school establishment. These lands come under the green belt park area for the civilians. Through these efforts, the association encourages not only parents but also local people to protect the environment for sustainable development. In nutshell, the **Haryana Abhibhavak Ekta Manch** can be considered as collaborative association of parents and civilians for the enhancement of the school system.

In the government school of Kundli, Parents were well aware of the Omicron virus and very much worried what would happen if the industries would shut down again and they would not get salaries. One of the parents was found to be very vocal towards the rights and issues of the parents and MDM workers, in general, and asked many questions e.g. what are the government rules to release salary, and who is responsible for providing the salaries to them. He was very curious how ministries function. One of them said *"salary satisfaction nahi hai kya leader banaege."* In a nutshell, these grievances point towards the need of a community leader to uplift the union. Also it indicated the contrasts and conflict situation existing within the domain of community in general and schools in specific. Undoubtedly, administrators need to undertake numerous decisions on school budgets, buildings, fundraising, and a variety of other issues. However, when it comes to teaching and learning, the ideal approach to lead is to work with teachers and students in collaboration with families and parents.

Role of a Teacher as Community Leader

Teaching-learning process must be linked with the outside world to encourage contextualized learning. Linking examples from daily life will help the children to visualize the world from the others' perspective. This is the way they will understand the importance of community and will be preparing themselves for the future. Additionally, they will also try to make their own surroundings more resilient towards the undesirable changes and more adaptive to the progressive thoughts and ideas. In the GSSS, Kundli, it was found that teachers encourage students to use language which is familiar to them or in which they are comfortable with. One of the teachers argued that understanding one's own language is very much required for learning and posed a question "what will they do if they do not know how to communicate in good Hindi"? So she motivated them to at least use proper Hindi words. According to her, communication is a skill, and command over language can be mastered for the refinement of this skill. Nevertheless, regional and mother tongues have an impact on communication.

On inquiring about the parameters on which they scale the enhanced school functioning teachers reiterated the importance of infrastructure facilities provided by the school authorities. Improvements in the online classes, high enrolment rates,

improved pass percentage and interactive sessions with the parents on a regular basis are few major achievements which impressed the teacher community of school and gave sanctity to the principal as a leader.

A TGT (Math) narrated his experience of working as a leader 10 years back when, being the senior teacher, he was assigned the duties of Principal in the school. He communicated that so many challenges arise; when anybody acts as an authority. In that case making everyone happy is impossible as everyone has some expectations i.e to get some benefits; some relaxation in comparison to others. But, as a leader, it is difficult to give relaxation to an individual; as a leader, it is of prime importance that one should refrain from doing any sort of partiality. Getting into very specific instances he said, "It happens sometimes, teachers request not to be marked for their absenteeism. When duties are assigned and followed equally; everyone works with a spirit of brotherhood and harmony. He stated that a leader must do what is being asked or supposed to do as the holder of a responsible position.

CASE- 2

Views of a Math Teacher: School and Community Leadership

Mr. Snjeev Sachdeva who is a TGT (Sanskrit) considered Teachers as leaders who are capable of taking self-initiative. He continued "Being a Math teacher, I always check the previous knowledge of a student before the start of any chapter. That helps me identify the gaps in terms of learning and understanding the level of a child". **He quoted *"Bacche jo 6-7 class mey hain, wo dhang se padh bhi nahi pate, math kya seekhenge"?* Ye chinta ka vishya hai.** He also criticizes the policy of age-appropriate admission of children in the classes. They need separate attention, separate teachers to fill the gap of learning. He further suggests parallel learning is important for such students with community involvement. The government must identify the actors from the community itself who can act as leaders. Adding to the same he expounded that the teachers and parents must be motivated from time to time. *Jahan-jahan parents ka involvement hai, wahan community bana de, 3 saal anganwadi ko diya hai, anganwadi ko school se attach kar den.* And the school head must be made an overall watchdog of such a system.

Talking about the transaction of curriculum in the class a TGT (science) elaborated "as far as the classroom is concerned, we get to know what the level of any student is and form the group accordingly". She added that it is always a covert process and a student should not know at which level she or he is. She gave a small example in which groups (A, B, C, D, E) were formed for the science subject within which teaching-learning operated with real life experiences. E.g. she attempted to make them understand the basic concepts of boiling and heat by boiling milk at home and splashing water on it. In a group of 10 students, she could have a check, for example if a child is not able to write, she could consult respective subject teachers (English or Hindi) to give them writing work and focus on them specially. On being inquired about her role as teacher she replied that she interacts with the parents of students on a timely basis and seeks their feedback. Raising a concern she extended the conversation by quoting "In PTM and SMC meetings, parents do not turn up. They are not educated. Teachers have to pressurize them to come and sit in meetings. However, even those who are educated also do not come. Many teachers nodded in agreement that education has nothing to do with awareness." Therefore in the context of parents, Leadership can be evolved, and school and community have an important role to play in that.

The study revealed that due to the online system during Covid pandemic, few teachers were in command of their own teaching process. They used social media like Facebook, whatsapp for communication and showed enthusiasm in approaching the students during the Covid period. This trend was also followed by other teachers of the school. They made an effort to become role models for others. One of them puts forth this as 'motivation' which is the key for any task to be completed and make any individual a leader. Further due to Covid pandemic, students migrated to their native places and were not able to complete the registration process for the new session. So by showing the leadership qualities teachers persuaded them to do so and were able to complete the registration process within the stipulated time-span. These case studies from the schools suggest that involvement of communities is of paramount importance for involving innovative practices for school functioning.

Role of School Principal as a Community Leader

Teachers as well as parents were of the view that the school head or the Principal is the key leader spearheading all change initiatives and efforts. In the schools taken up for the present study, it was found that the consultation mechanism between teacher

and Principal was quite strong. One of the teacher described the capturing complex relationship between school heads and teachers and said sometimes school heads turn adamant about their own decisions and such decision making habit might impact school functioning in a negative way. Also, it leaves no room for incorporation of constructive suggestions from teachers. In general, they support the Principal as leader of the school. It was found that a few teachers were against the involvement of communities in the schools because, at the end, higher authorities would take the decision and would not take any leader in confidence. They are of the view that community members become non-entities when it comes to finalization of decisions because there are fixed patterns, rules and regulations within the schools as well as in the state machinery. According to the respondent, excessive leadership is a hurdle. But leadership reinforces motivation among others to learn from the experiences of active members of the community.

Role of Sarpanch and State Authorities

The present study indicated that PRI as grassroots democracies has an overarching influence over the communities. PRI engagement is perhaps the only existing mechanism to achieve large-scale community participation and reach the marginalized and vulnerable, particularly women, children, and the poor. On the other, the role of state authorities becomes additionally important to give a way for community leadership by providing resources and support mechanism. However in context of the present study the role of Srapanch was found to be minimal in terms of degree of involvement with communities. The testimonies of parents and other community members show that the Sarpanch has been inactive and neutral towards the plights of the poor's. PRIs, in their present democratic and constitutional forms, offer possibilities to catalyse, mobilize and sustain community mobilization.

4.5 Comprehending Community Leadership in the School Functioning

The school is a part of community and community leadership aids in providing equal place to all in the given community.The responses of the sample serve as a foundation for a discussion of how community leadership influences the school process as well as the nature of their relationship. In brief the role of community leadership revolves around the student outcomes and results, achievement in learning, involvement of parents as an agent of change through SMCs and overall infrastructure and

educational development. Of course only student achievement cannot be the sole criteria for successful analysis of the community involvement in the school.

Figure-5

Source: *Derived from reflections of various literature review by the researcher*

Figure 5 shows that community leadership and school is closely related with each other and works in collaboration. The said collaborations led to shared decision making amongst different stakeholders (Parents, Teachers, Principal, SMC and PRI members etc.) in the schools of Rai Block and this involvement at the school-community level further developed innovative practices like regular feedback from the parents, and individual engagement of teachers with students. Intensive interactions and discussions between them have paved way for the vibrant community engagement and resource mobilisation.

The current research suggested that the Principal of the school, teachers, parents, members of the panchayat can bring notable changes in the school within the different capacities. It was found that the role of community leadership heavily depends on the factors like status, composition, background and context of the different stakeholders. E.g. more vigilant parents as a community member can be proven boon to the schools. The overall impact of the school community collaboration was formulation of supportive policy and practices (e.g. During the Covid-19 pandemic teachers of the

schools had been trained to use digital and social media for the interrupted teaching-learning process.)

Taking forward this collaborative approach on a different way the Principal said "if private schools can be multi-dimensional, why not we"? She has suggested that there must be a public-private partnership to impart training to teachers as well as Principals. According to her, Government teachers and Principals are usually bounded by routine work and suffer from lack of facilities. Therefore, it is very important to organize training and sessions on leadership development regularly. The Principal has received training from HIPA (Haryana Institute of Public Administration). But she complained that there is minimal learning in the online studies and residential training programmes are required for better understanding. The school also encouraged teachers to participate in different teaching programmes because teachers must work as a leader to provide a healthy environment to the students. She added further "*Ab woh din chale gaye jab teachers sweaters bunti thi*".On the issue of academic freedom schools provide to teachers to take leadership roles, the principal replied that the system is a chain and there is some systematic procedure for everything. Even in the administration, everyone has to follow the particular authority like BEO, DEO, DM, etc. Similarly, there is an order of everything. That's why; one has to follow what has been said according to the rules and authority. Pressing importance on students' overall growth over any issue the Principal quotes "students are the mirror of the work of any school and teachers have a very crucial role to play". For a leader in school, the interest of school and interest of students should be mutually linked. Parents are an important entity. They must be informed and, in turn, they should also inform the school if the child is not in a good state. Parents must know what decisions are being made, and they must be aware on every front. *Pade-likhe hai ya nahi, issae fark nahi padta; mata- pita ko bacche ke baare me har jankari honi chahiye.*

 A teacher had recommended adaptation of the bottom- up approach for the effective school functioning - from school level to state level. Further, she added that, for better school development and its smooth running, there are lots of requirements. If one has to approach the government, it becomes a time-taking process to fulfill the formalities. There are several administrative hurdles because the scheme or provision will be for all the schools and not just for an individual school. For the composition of SMC, she said that the Panchayat members create political interference and, therefore, should be discouraged from becoming members of SMCs. Only the parents can better tell what is required for the development of their child.

Regarding academic freedom, she said teachers must follow guidelines to complete the syllabus, and, in case, any change is required, they should inform and take me in confidence for the same. However, she asserted that there is complete academic freedom for teachers. She said there is a process of everything and teachers must follow the given instructions. The school works particularly to identify the SC/ST children, vulnerable children and especially to retain the migrant children. But, later on, shedding light on the other side of the story, one of the parents lamented that they were forced to buy school uniforms from a private government shop at much higher prices.

The former panchayat head added that for governance, the school does not need any outsiders; only parents and community members are important for the school functioning improvement. Anybody from the community can be an active member in the school functioning. On the question of leadership and its role in the school functioning he added, *"jab tak instructor nahi milta hai tab tak day-to-day basis pe kaam kar pana bahut mushkil hai."* Therefore Community Leadership is important which comes from better collaboration to ensure timely completion of the tasks.

In brief the role of community leadership in school functioning can be defined as-

Box- 8

Role Of Community Leadership in the School Functioning

- Creating a school with a community interface where a child can feel a sense of belongingness and safety.

- Constant communication with the parents and collaborating effectively with them through SMCs.

- Community leadership is not personality or positional driven, it is about constant reflection and feedback.

- Widening the concept of power sharing with communities by striving towards engagements from decision making to implementations.

- Involving every stakeholder (Parents, Teachers, PRI member, SMC members etc.) rationally in the policy making related to school functioning.

- Community leadership must give equal palace to everyone's voice without discriminating on the basis of caste or class.

4.6 Mapping the Role of Community Leadership in the Elementary Schools

Individual Demeanour and Organizational Culture

Leadership influence is the cornerstone through which anybody can build positive and trustful relationships in any organization or community. The present study revealed that an effective leader evokes followers' passion and conviction in the vision and goals rather than compelling them into action and when power is misused, it can have disastrous consequences. **But who is an effective leader in the schools and community and who holds influence?** These are the major questions which were answered by the participants and visualized through the researcher's observation. In the school, it was found that if the principal is working as a leader, there will definitely be a visible change. The Principal who is as a Leader is honest, communicative and patient enough to listen to their subordinates would definitely be influential. According to the participants it is generally seen that the community leaders gradually become political leaders, so there is a need for leaders who could devote time and be present within the school premises, and who else could be better than the Principal? Who acts as a watchdog for every activity in school? From outside the school premises political authorities like Sarpanch were found to be influential. Taking forward the discussion towards more sensitive issues like caste and power politics Caste has no role to play in the teaching profession. A teacher has only one caste i.e. "Teacher". They said they generally avoid this practice. They never faced it and practiced it. They cook mid-day meals. A few mothers, who are from Bihar, are well aware that in many states, people discriminate on the basis of caste, especially when it comes to cooking food in schools. One of them says, *"Ham unch neech dekhenge toh kaise jiyenge".* So, everyone is equal for them.

The success of networking and collaboration is influenced by power dynamics and power alliances. They assume the shape of authority that is meant to be authentic and universally accepted. This type of power display can be viewed as a positive force. Negative aspects of power, such as an overly bureaucratic structure and dominant voices, on the other hand, can create hindrance in networking efforts and limit their potential as power bases for school reform. According to the findings, a positive interaction between many stakeholders must be fostered.

The Social - Cultural Context

Community Leadership is a creative endeavour that involves everyone in introducing innovations and implementing new ideas. Not only does leadership consider the bottom line, but it also considers the horizon. A good decision implies a goal, a direction, an objective, a vision, a dream, a road, and a reach for a leader. The decision for a larger vision in a community might not be taken in isolation. For the same consideration of socio-political atmosphere is vital in implementation of the decisions. The understanding of vast cultural diversity provides broad understanding of social milieus and it helps in the high performance of the leaders. The present study established this fact that active leaders of the GSSS, Kundli and GPS, Saboli School like the principal and few teachers were well aware of the contextual need of the children as well as the parents who are Migrants. It is not only the social context but the understanding of psycho-emotional status of these Migrants have helped the community leaders from schools in establishing a long lasting bonding of trust, respect and effective interpersonal relationship. Establishment of such collaboration is very much required, until and unless the leaders would not know the communities, they would not be able to exercise the community leadership.

4.7 Catalyst for Community Leadership in Schools

Before the community leaders from schools i.e. Principal and Teachers might start to create a relationship, he or she must first identify the community's uniqueness and comprehend its traits, power-balance components, and traditions. E.g. Migrant children enrolled in schools **regularly** face problems and become submissive in comparison to the local SC or other category children because local students have a different kind of confidence. Bullying is common in such cases. Since parents are mostly labourers, there is an urgent need to focus on them more to make their child aware of such issues., the teacher collectively suggested to the policy makers and said *Aap upar baith ke sare order nikal do; ye toh kabhi janae ki koshish karon ki school kya chahta hai?* Expanding the conversation a parent has added "Have you ever asked them what a student wants? You have disrupted their studies by closing schools for such a long time. Teacher-student bonding has been disrupted; it takes such a long time to rebuild. She quotes "*Discontinuity aa gayi; Education online karwate rahne ka kya fayda hai.*"The present study revealed that the principle was instrumental in

establishing a pleasant atmosphere, cultivating positive working relationships, and establishing a collaborative style of leadership.

Teachers in schools feel that anyone can be a leader if she/he conveys messages logically and rationality not by force, or pressure. Education alone is not important to become a community leader. Illiterates can also contribute as a leader. Therefore, no one can generalize leadership roles. One should be effective enough to become a leader. Panchayat members, normally, are not literate but if they give solid logic, then anyone of them can become a leader. They ought to make others understand with their logic. It is a psychological fact. Anyone who respects public sentiments and draws common inferences from surroundings and is down to earth can become a milestone in community leadership. She supports her statement by saying *"kagazi aur kitabi baten relevant nahi hoti."*

By narrating yet another incident when she got an opportunity to work as a leader, she said that for doing anything special or different, one has to push things to another level. While working as a Principal of school, she facilitated the process of interaction amongst the staff members. There was a water crisis in the school. She approached the local MLA as also the state authorities and the problem was resolved. According to her, in a community societal sphere, there must be a dedication like a family. There should be purity in motives and emotions without any reservations about class, creed, religion and caste. A leader from a community does things without expecting anything in return. Only then, the masses accept anyone as a leader of their community. This also helps in creating a support mechanism for that leader. According to a former Sarpanch of the area, when anybody from the community starts recognizing good deeds of others, then there are high chances of inculcations of those practices in their own lives and cordiality in a community can bring grass root changes.

Parents expressed that a teacher must teach in the class without hesitation and force. Mechanization of teaching is leading nowhere to us. While supporting this, a teacher reaffirms that teaching methods should always be in coherence with the needs and interests of children. She adds, as a teacher, we do not give 100% for the same. Imagine when the stakes are ours; we try to give our best. That's why; there is an urgent need for the participation and collaboration of teachers and parents together for responsible desired educational outcomes and improvement in learning. Suggesting ways to have enhanced interactions, a few parents support that involvement as a teacher should be more than twice in a month as and when a need arises. As of now, it is high time that this engagement must go beyond the Parents-Teacher Meeting (PTM). There must be

rigorous consultative mechanisms to understand each other better to have in-depth planning for everything. Alongside, suggestions must be invited regarding classes, curriculum, teaching-learning process and student's performance, etc.

Many respondents asserted repeatedly that community leaders must prepare a framework by consulting the community members to chalk out the course of action. A leader in school must divide work according to the interest and qualifications of staff. There should not be a fixed position of leader in school. In schools, it is important that there is multi-directional feedback to fill the gap of communication. But, reporting must be done to a single authority. Enquiring about the needs of vulnerable sections in the classroom and strategies adopted for the same, a class teacher asserted that one should not differentiate on the basis of caste or community. She asks a logical question "Imagine, a teacher practicing such discrimination in schools? What would be the learning standards of schools? "*Chahe wo kisi community ke hon, jab bachchon ko aap ek jaisa deal karte ho, ek hi jaise attitude se baat karte ho, tab aap ek jaisa pada payenge*". "*Jab bacche ke intrest ke hisab se uski samasya ka nidan karte ho, sabko ek sath lekar chalte ho.*" However, she expressed concerns about caste discriminations by saying that the area is rural so other schools might have practiced it. But these practices are getting abolished day-by-day. Based on the above discussion the research identified major catalyst in enhancing the role of community leadership in the school functioning-:

Box-9

Major Catalyst in Enhancing the Role of Community Leadership in the School Functioning

1. Identification of community potential and uniqueness
2. Comprehending the balance of power in the given community (e.g. community leadership counterbalance the caste, class or regional differences by maintaining equal social order.)
3. Developing shared belief system
4. Constant communication and feedback mechanism from the receiver's end
5. Distributive Leadership
6. Giving central place to Teacher Leadership
7. Cultivation of collaborative culture and enhancing the participatory style of community leadership
8. Cordial and collective leadership
9. Evolving a framework based on overall need of community

4.8 Impact of Covid-19 on the School Functioning and Community Leadership Practices

Covid puts a heavy toll on the learning level of students and they need to be taught from scratch. Students are required to lay more emphasis on the learning they need to learn again. It's a re-learning for them. In such situations, what kind of output one expects even if there is effective leadership. Others echo the same by saying *"isiliye toh leadership chahiye."*We did the counseling and had a conversation with the mother. Later, she got convinced. Many parents constantly complain that they were not able to send their children to schools daily as they have only a single school dress as such washing and drying every day is not possible. Therefore, they are forced to skip school for at least a day so that the dress is ready. Given these circumstances, a few teachers formed a group to donate money to such children so that they can buy another pair of dresses and come to school. She also sighted an example of a Class XII student who used to take tuition of children from lower classes.

4.9 Challenges and Prospects

4.9.1 Community Leadership and School Functioning

For a school's improvement, leaders are invariably important. Leaders from outside the school system must facilitate facility and system management to the entire school system. The present study revealed that sometimes the state government becomes neutral towards schools. Therefore lack of effective leadership outside the school system is impacting the effective leadership inside the schools. Due to the political environment, school leaders are lacking in the system. Often Principal and Teachers and parents do not perform their duties appropriately as a member of the community. Many impositions like pressure of syllabus completion, administrative work etc. impact the motivational level of teachers.

These challenges are further added by greater emphasis being laid on results; transfer policies, lack of leadership training etc. Principals or teachers do not have any formal training. One of the incidents showed that students must also be given leadership training where students and parents have agitated against the change in the school uniform with high prices. Drop-out issues are there in both rural and urban areas. Cooperation with the Principal, regular parent-teaching meetings are vital. More

vigilance by the parents but unfortunately they just want marks. But decision-making at the higher stage becomes problematic and temporary when the person is not permanent for that particular post. For example, if a post is vacant, and a senior teacher has taken the place of the Principal, she or he may not be having the authority or the hold on others as the Principal does have.

According to a retired teacher of the same school there is a need to sensitize parents, especially in such an industrial belt. One teacher 'howled' in disappointment, *"Ek labor dusara labor taiyar kar raha hai"*. He added that one should understand that the role of parents is very critical; they are the actual 'leaders' and their leadership role is vital. Similarly, teachers must be consulted and involved in policy making as they are well versed with the ground realities of life. So, parents and teachers can bring about miracles to the school system. There is a need to strengthen the leadership qualities of parents and teachers.

Comparing the functioning of government schools with the private one, teachers were of the view that in private schools, parents have access to PTM while in government schools, teachers, generally, do not turn up for the same. The government teachers become lazy because they think, *"Naukri toh permanent hai, toh theek hai, kya karna ha, koi nikaal toh sakta nahi hai!"*

One of the school authorities described that during a drop-out survey, it was found that children are not coming to schools. They just loiter and play around. To attract children to join schools, the Government has offered them plenty of freebies - free education, free ration, free books etc., etc. Unfortunately, the community do not however value the incentives provided. They perceive school as a place for free distribution centres.   What's the result? He prompts a question - Do you think states like Punjab and Haryana where everyone has prosperity, do children still need MDM? He suggested further that in a phased manner such programmes be minimized and eventually eliminated by taking into account the economic status of parents. It was advised that such policies be revised at regular intervals. The current system needs a leader who develops feedback mechanisms which hardly exist in the schools as well as in the community.

According to a retired teacher of the same school, lack of issue-based discussion is a major concern in schools. First of all, there is no schedule for meetings. It should be fixed, and the meetings must be organized at least twice or thrice. Again, there is the

issue of excessive policies. Teacher unions often rebel against the excessive policies as teachers are never taken into consideration in the course of their formulation. Also differences at state and central level policies are problematic. It is suggested that a viable and practical time-line should be given for such issues. He gave suggestions that while giving any order, the government must consider the total strength and staff members of a particular school.

Way Forward

Training in leadership skills for a School Principal is a prerequisite to tread the pathways of a school towards change and improvement. If any systemic or school level change is to be brought in, the suggestions from grassroots level does make a difference. Hence the higher authorities must take representation from teachers who are aware of the ground realities of the school. The policies are formulated at the apex level but a consultation with actual implementers of a decision, for example, teachers, school heads and other practitioners at the institution level needs to be accorded equal importance. The decisions if participatory in nature have long term effects on transforming a school from ordinary to an excellent organization.

The transformative process when coupled with communication and consultations result in the most desired results. The mechanism though may be time consuming but the impact is greater and stronger in making a school effective. So, a school head as a leader must be communicative to draw the best from the community the school caters to since everyone holds expectations from the leader who is holding a chair or position. Therefore, a leader is not expected to show partiality to anybody.

Based on the above discussed practices in schools, issues and prospects in context of community leadership can be summarized as following-

Box-10

Practices	Issues and Challenges	Prospects
Teaching-learning Process	• Pressure of syllabus completion • Administrative work • Less participation in trainings	• More emphasis on reducing the learning gaps • Teaching-oriented schedule • Regular training and capacity building provisions
Community Engagement through SMCs	• Absenteeism of parents • Lack of training of members • Lack of implementation of set standards for SMCs	• Motivation to parents • Training of parents by NGOs • Regular inspection of meetings of SMCs by the state authorities
Community Leadership	• Power struggle • Caste issues • Resource scarcity • Less support from the state authorities	• Equal participation of all • Regular feedback from the community • Timely interventions by the state government • Advocating for changes in public policy and social norms;

The overall data presented in this chapter throws light on the significant issues related to role of community leadership in schools emerged from the expressed views and thoughts of participants. These issues revolve around the individual leadership vs. teamwork, strategies vs. operations and leadership vs. authority etc. Drawing on several case studies gathered during the intensive field work the research suggested that the many stakeholders are struggling with the external and internal conflicts and challenges and managing to disburse responsibilities. This differs for each stakeholder. The pressing issues e.g. engaging community members effectively in the

schools process, functioning of SMCs, role of sarpanch, lack resources, identification of disempowered, satisfaction level of teachers and others stakeholder, providing strategic leadership opens a way for dialogue and discussion. Further it advocates for policy formulation drawing together various stakeholders to develop new solutions; creating a new organization focused on a critical local issue. In this section these above discussed issues are summarized.

4.9.2 Community Leadership: Empowerment of Disempowered or Already Empowered Groups

Empowering others, fosters confidence and the ability to execute shared mission and goals, establishes fundamental trust in an organization, and establishes the secondary level of leadership required when you are unable to make vital decisions. The research has attempted to explore answers to a vital question: who is empowered? Therefore, it is important to ponder whether community leadership leads to empowerment of disempowered or already empowered groups. "Communities" are groupings of individuals who share mutual interests, beliefs, values or identities, whether or not they are directly related. The in-depth exploration of the given research has found that individual community empowerment practices are developed through fulfilling the four pillars of community - mobilization: engagement and collaboration, dissemination of information, local organizational competency, and empowering individuals' expertise. It was observed that if any one of these pillars of empowerment is missing, the desired empowerment is also missing. Overall situation is worrisome when it comes to benefiting the last man in the ladder. Also, there is a varied form of empowerment depending upon the allocated resources, timely interventions and collaborations. Therefore the research asked a very valid question that whether community leadership leads to empowerment of already empowered communities or disempowered?

To understand the above-asked question, one has to look for the deep- entrenched discrimination on the basis of caste, class, religion and even region sometimes. From the field investigation, the fact emerged that when it comes to welfare measures or any innovative practices, authorities or communities themselves are not able to differentiate between individual empowerment and collective empowerment. The meaning of the individualized stage corresponds to people's increased ability to feel powerful enough to make decisions in their lives. The potential of a community to attain jointly set goals

through participation is referred to as collective empowerment. Now, the answer to the question, which we have been asking since the start, lies in the above statement. Can collective empowerment necessarily lead to individual empowerment? In the study, collective empowerment was very evident but individual empowerment was lacking at many places. A number of times, collective empowerment morphed the individual empowerment and labeled as empowerment of disempowered. However, that may differ depending upon the context. Therefore, the present study revealed that measures for collective empowerment in the school system like releasing funds for the mid-day meal, organizing SMC meetings as per the rules, distribution of free textbooks, etc. do not ensure individual empowerment. It is important to understand that there is a very thin line between *Empowerment of Disempowered and Already Empowered Groups.* In the present study, overall community leadership practices were exercised to empower the un-empowered one especially in the school context however it was not prominently visible in the routine functions of the schools. Community leadership has potential to bring empowerment of disempowerment provided it is versed with the true leadership skills.

Box-11

Factors impacting the effectiveness of "Community Leadership" in Schools of Rai Block

- Lack of regularity amongst students (Generally schools have 50 % attendance)
- High Drop-out rate (As students are mostly migrant children)
- Time shortage and pressure of syllabus completion on Teachers
- Lack of parents' support
- Issue of Teachers' satisfaction, e.g. Some teachers had to travel a distance of 80 km which is far from the allocated schools
- Lack of issue-based discussion
- Policy issues and neutral attitude of the state authorities

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CASE- 3

Teacher Leadership in Elementary Schools

"All the leaders come from the community itself. Do you think it is possible to have leaders without community support"? Mr. Manoj Bajaj, a PGT (English) exclaimed in excitement and started the conversation "I used to teach in NVS and posted in Ganganagar, Rajasthan. In the school, students were from tribal communities and used to be cattle herders. We, teachers, helped and inspired them to study and also guided them. These are the qualities one has to develop eternally. No one will come and tell you. Sharing another incident he continued "In the government school of Nangal village, Bhiwani District of Haryana, where I was posted, was a desert area and we planted trees. He said a positive way and decision-making capacity is important for a leader. A leader would never think "*ki kiska naam ja raha hai;" aur mere kaam ko pehachan milegi ya nahi."*

Regarding School he said the school has always provided rewired resources and the Principal is a leader for all. By switching to another issue he added that no one discussed the caste factor ever with him, though Scio-culturally it is there in the schools. It's deep-rooted and would often pop up whenever there is conflict or problem. Rather than saying caste one can say "Groups" is there in every school. This has broadened the concept of caste. He concluded by adding a remark "In Haryana, there are Yadav, Jaat, Brahmans, Baniya, etc. but one needs to understand who cares about caste, those who are insecure about their own responsibilities and duties".

Placing community into the center he discussed that students definitely learn gradually from the community and its members act like it is a teacher to them. By narrating one more incidents in which the students beat a teacher from another community or caste he said "we need to counsel, care and love such children. If you beat them then they will be detached from you. As a mentor, teachers must try to do their best to see that these students study and prosper in their lives. Many times, students do not come to school although they are ready but parents discourage them. The parents and children should be counseled properly.

The case of a teacher discussed above shows that teachers as leaders take a variety of responsibilities and roles to aid school and student success, whether these positions are given formally or shared informally, they assist the school's comprehensive development as a true leader.

CASE-4

Unheard Voices: Stories from the Field

Ram Asare is a 45 years old migrant from the Madhubani district of Bihar. He works as a MDM worker as well as a cab driver for school. While discussing the concept of leaders and their role in the community, he was found to be most vocal and curious about the overall education system and regulation. It was evident from his narrations that he is well versed with his duties and responsibilities and keen towards his rights. He seems to be an 'Invisible Leader' within the school system who has zeal of taking forwards others' issues to the higher authorities. However, lack of regular salary mechanism and uncertainty of employment has impacted his self-confidence and spirit of being a true leader in a community.

Miss Seema sharma, a TGT science is thrilled while narrating an incidence of sexual abuse from her class about three years ago. She goes on adding layers to her stories unfolding with the different emotions. A girl of class 8th has been continuously abused physically and sexually by her father and suffering from a mental and emotional breakdown. As she was not able to concentrate in the class and seemed visibly upset, Miss Seema captured her state of appearance and tried to comprehend the situation. After knowing the entire incidence the teacher decided to apprehend the culprit i.e. Father. With the help of Police and local MLA and NGO finally the girl was rescued. She further added that she too was subjected to mental torture, rape and murder threat from the family member of girl. However, firm on her decision she conquered the situation. The determination of the teacher in the above incident shows that even in such a negative environment she demonstrated the positive attitude, mental strength, and affirmation towards her objectives.

4.9.3 Strategies for Effective Community Leadership in the Elementary Schools

On the basis of data analysis the present research has deducted few strategies for the effective practices of community leadership in schools. Ranging from the understanding the given community to collaborative approaches of development these strategies paves way for the successful synthesis of school and community.

Figure-6

Strategies For Effective Community Leadership in the Elementary School's

Source: *Derived from the observations obtained during the field visit by the researcher*

Figure 6 highlights the synergy between school and community leadership in a multidimensional way. The first important step is to identify the need and context of the community which gives an overall idea about the social and cultural aspects of the community. The same would further help in understanding at what extent community members (Parents, teachers, principal, PRI members, and other significant members) are willing to be a part of any community leadership plan for school functioning. Again it is vital to have a reflection on the assignment of roles to each community member according to their expertise in the given area. Based on the expertise, specific role can be allocated. Identification of resources would help in the formulation of development goals by adopting sustainable practices in context of schools and community. This step wise strategies would ultimately lead to collaborative or integrated approach of development which is a core of community leadership practices.

4.9.4 Conceptual Framework of Community Leadership

Conceptual Framework of Community Leadership summarises the overall research by projecting the interrelationship between community and school functioning in the light of community leadership. The framework supports that close ties between school and community can be brought by leadership practices (involving community through SMCs) and a democratic and inclusive space would be created for all. The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with collective actions establishes the vibrant and functional community. Developing PLC as a mean to improve school functioning is currently a popular practice. It is often described as a practice based professional learning in which different stakeholders from the community reflect and analyse their own actions. It has been adopted by the schools teaching teams at different grades, a school committee, entire district administration, state school departments and national school authorities and ministries across the world. In India also it is popularised through having every imaginable combination of individuals from the community to improve educational practices.

Figure-7

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
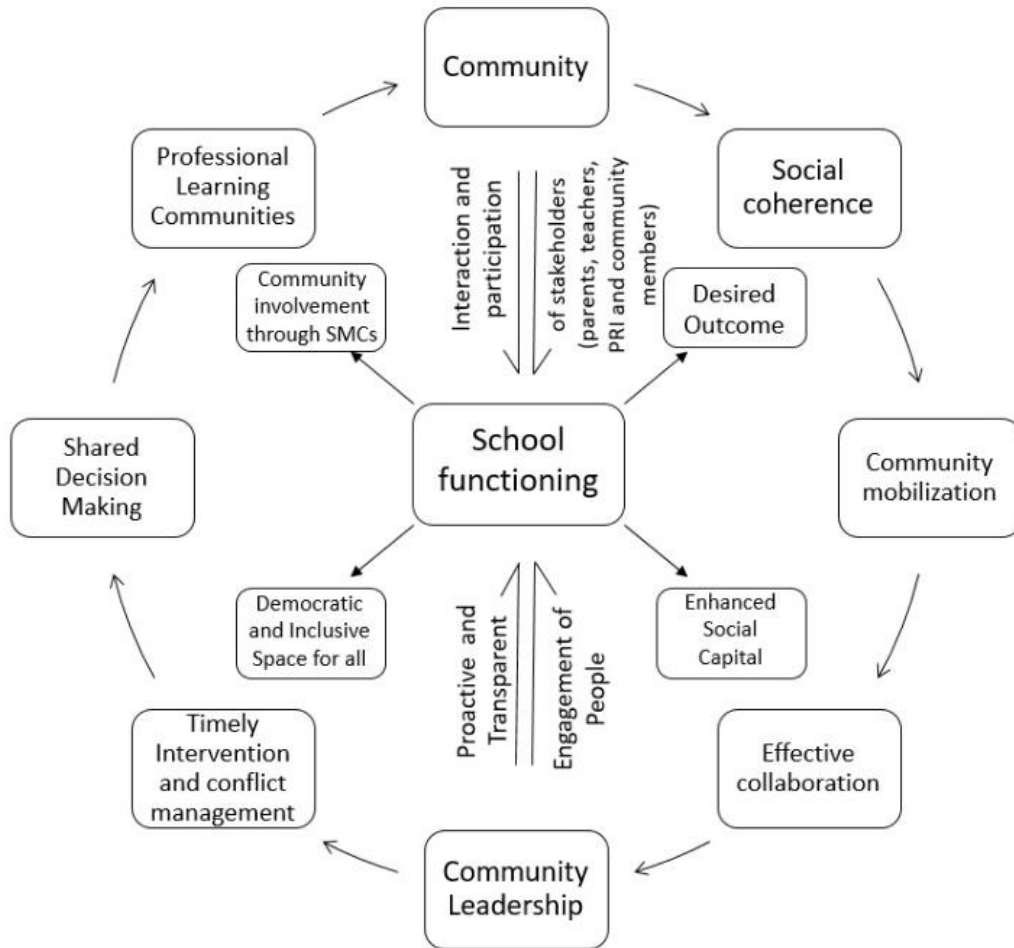
Source: *Conceptualised on the basis of derivation of literature review and field interaction with community members by the researcher*

Figure-7 points out that community, community leadership and school functioning are interrelated and operate holistically by supporting each other. The different stakeholders (Parents, teachers, principal, PRI member, state authorities) get involved with the schools functioning's (through SMCs) and helps in achieving the desired outcomes (in terms of overall school practices), democratic space for all (inclusion of all irrespective of class, caste, gender or region) and enhanced social capital. The enhanced social capital motivated every individual in the community to work in a close collaboration with each other and in the schools it also provides enabling learning conditions to every

child.   The community involvement through community mobilisation and social coherence at the initial phase of its indulgence leads to community leadership. The effective collaboration with the significant members of the community, the community leadership paves the ways for the timely interventions in the adopted educational development plan. These interventions give meaning to shared decision making in its truest sense. By further involving PLCs from the community, the integration of community leadership practices in the school functioning motivates every community member to contribute in order to flourish the schools in every desired aspect. In nutshell, through communication, transparency and a culture of mutual respect, community leadership in school has the ability to reduce mistrust and distance between people and schools as well as to jointly pursue school development by sharing vision and engagements of community members.

CHAPTER – 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with main findings, conclusion, implications of the study and suggestions for further research. The main findings are obtained from the analysis done in the previous chapter. The conclusion was derived and contextualized within the literature review. The section also discusses the policy framework related to community leadership by deriving understanding from National Policy of Education 1964 to New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The introduction of local self-government and community development programmes through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 led to the establishment of participatory structures at the grassroots within the framework of decentralised governance system. The formation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Village Education Committees (VECS), Right to Education Act (2009) and School Management Committees (SMCs) as participatory structures are discussed. Further the limitations and suggestions for the future research would broaden the scope for upcoming studies to understand the role of community leadership in the school functioning.

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Nature of Contributions by School Management Committees (SMCs)

- The school management committees (SMC) were found to be functional in the schools within the framework of specified rules and regulation as articulated in the Right to Education Act (RTE act 2009), with meetings held at an interval under the supervision of school heads. Nominated teachers had a regular presence in the meetings. However the structural and functional relationship between SMCs and school authorities was found to be weak. The activities and discussion were seen to be normal in the meeting. It was not effective in terms of any fruitful discussion. The synthesis between the SMC and school authorities is vital for giving space to community participation in schools.

- Parents are the pillar of the whole concept of community integration in schools through SMC but their involvement was very minimal in terms of providing fruitful feedback. In case there was any suggestion, it was not taken seriously by the school authorities.

- Involvement of Cluster resource Centre (CRC) and Block Resource Centre (BRC) can be proven useful in the context of providing support to the SMCs. The

BRC/CRC function comprises a variety of scholarly, supervisory, managerial, networking, and creative activities in addition to the standard monitoring and supervision. It also entails providing assistance to schools and teachers through teacher training and mentoring for their professional development. These units can also give leadership training to the members of SMCs.

- There were prominent issues and concerns reflecting the capacity of the SMCs members to contribute as a potential entity in the school functioning. Professional training seems to be very important for parents before their appointment as a member of SMC. The vast roles and responsibilities given to parents as significant community members make requirement of training provisions a pressing issue.

- Absenteeism amongst the parents in the meetings of the SMC was very common. It is majorly due to their professional engagements as most of them were daily wage workers and they did not want to leave one day's salary for attending the meeting. The incidence of absenteeism is greater among women as compared to male counter parts because of household responsibilities.

- With respect to the lack of interest and irregular attendance in meetings, it is important to provide incentives for participation in school activities to the SMC members. The regular attendance of parents (especially those who are daily labours and mothers) can be facilitated by the school through timely communication about scheduled meetings and giving an ear to their genuine problems e.g. unavailability of mobile phones etc.

- There must be a fixed criteria for selection of parents as a SMC members. One of the criteria could be considering their active engagement with the school. Second is linked with their participation in capacity building programmes. The States can make formal training provisions for them to enable them to become more active members to lead the schools and make them more vibrant and school heads more proactive.

- There is an urgent need for capacity building provision for SMC members and identification of members before they get elected. Further, role of an NGO should be categorically defined. There must be someone who can supervise the work carried out by SMC members.

- The school- community interaction faced many administrative hurdles. The area is now converted into Municipal Corporation. It does not have any PRI and sarpanch. Further, Haryana has a three layer inspection mechanism in schools i.e. Block, division and district. Still the inspection mechanism is very weak due to administrative lacunas and casual attitude.

- In the schools of Rai Block, School Development Plans (SDP) was missing. Similarly the concept of school complexes was also absent.

5.1.2 Functioning of SMCs: Major Observations

- No training was given to any parent and there were fewer members in the meeting.

- Parents were confused about the SMC, its role and functions.

- Parents talked about many concerns and challenges like issues of fee hike and change in uniforms, irregular money transfer for the same, Lack of classrooms

- Principal interrupted in between that school authority never stopped any child from attending school without a uniform. One member warned them by saying "Private school *main padoge tab pata chalega"*

- Everyone had the opportunity to express themselves and there was no restriction on that. Generally, the activities were carried out according to the school authorities without implementing the suggestions and inputs.

5.1.3 Role of community Leadership in the Functioning of Elementary Schools

- The study reveals that community leadership can aid in school functioning in multidimensional ways by integrating communities and its members. Community leaders with high social skills and reflecting ideals of others can bring grassroots changes. These roles provide for a new gestalt of leadership in the school arena. These roles includes-

  ➢ Development of productive collaboration within the community.

  ➢ Fostering the arrangement of mutually achievable objectives.

  ➢ Assisting the professional growth of community teachers and educators.

➢ Leading change in the use of expert knowledge across school systems in close cooperation with other community principals.

➢ The community leadership demonstrated the value of cooperation and alliances between schools and communities by establishing a common sense of obligation and commitment across key players (State authorities, school principals, teachers, parents and PRI members). It also encouraged communication, understanding, and consensus-building.

● The common beliefs, conventions, trust, and sense of togetherness that allow individuals to engage with one another are referred to as social capital. Any society, economy, institutions, and political and democratic system would not exist without social capital. The study has taken social capital theory as a base to apprehend the existing networks of different stakeholders (Parents, teachers, community members, Sarpanch). It was established through that the theory fits well with the notion of community leadership. The effective role of community leadership in schools functioning gets deeper when individual engagements are better. An example can be taken from the incident when parents and a few teachers were united against the change in the school uniform with high prices. This type of collaboration in the members of the community opens a way for the consciousness and dialogue mechanism to the higher authorities. Therefore, social capital theory proved to be realistic in the context of present study.

● Social capital provides a true connection between school and community. It highlights the social dynamics (the interrelation between the members in society) that is constantly evolving and can be included in the school system which gives a base to school-community relationship. The community to school relationships can simultaneously develop awareness for the need based issues that are common to all and inclusion of marginalized communities into mainstream system of education i.e. placing deprived children's (SCs, STs, Migrants etc.) who belong to vulnerable section of society in to a larger part of formal school system.

● Different stakeholders, especially teachers and school principals, are not able to differentiate between community participation and community leadership. Regular participation in the day to day matter of the school functioning like conducting regular classes and talking to parents has been considered as 'community

participation'. On the other, community leadership has been viewed as a part of disbarment of duties and responsibilities in schools. Teachers connected the classroom practices, completion of administrative work and completion of syllabus as a leadership practice. Hence, to them leadership in general is the same as community leadership. Further giving 'ascribed position of leadership' to one particular person (mostly school Principal) and denial of multidimensional leaders (Parents, MDM worker or any significant community member) in the schools was quite evident. Moreover, when it comes to having initiative in a "targeted population" (As the region belongs to migrant workers, their children have tendency to drop out once they move to a different state) community leadership becomes a daunting task. Therefore it can be assumed that "targeted community leadership" is very different from "general community leadership or participation" in the school context. The leadership task in the targeted population may require rigorous training programmes to teachers and community members and high level of commitment from the state as well as school authorities both.

- It was also found that community leadership gives strength, courage and commitment to parents for sending their children in schools and participate in improving the school environment (enhanced learning levels, teaching practices and improved infrastructure). Further it recognized the local demands and requirements of a community and efforts are being tailored to the contextual conditions.

- A few traits for leadership are essential as described by the respondent. These include high social skills and abilities, as well as the capacity of reflecting the opinions and ideals of others, self-esteem, responsibility, honesty, compassion, truthfulness etc. Nonetheless, the study also identified that few people in the community do have leadership qualities but they do not consider themselves as a leader. Therefore 'extent of exercising leadership' is more important than just being a 'labelled leader' in a community.

- From the communities ascribed and authoritative positions like state authorities, BEO, DEO and Sarpanch were found to be more powerful. Similarly from the schools, Principal was the one who was described as a leader. The leaders within the school system (Principal and Teachers) were found to be active and conscious in comparison to the other leaders of the community e.g. parents and PRIs members. They understand their role and responsibilities and were well versed with the

educational developments. However the study did not find any exceptional leadership practices in the context of school functioning. The leaders from outside the school system like parents, Sarpanch and NGO members require a support system to become active community members.

- Communities and stakeholders were found to be well aware of the notion of leadership but were not able to differentiate between community participation and community leadership. As per their understanding, leadership in general is the same as community leadership. Their understanding of the whole concept of community leadership was quite limited. Many teachers as well as principals found to be confused about involving communities efficiently into the school system.

- Many significant participants especially school principal and teachers acknowledged the fact that it is not essential to accommodate the entire community for the leadership practices within the school and it must be the specific mostly related to "Teacher Community''. The study revealed that a 'Teacher' is the connecting link between parents and the school. They are the real feedback providers. Although they themselves consider 'Principal' as the community leader from the school, Teachers have immense capabilities and qualities to become a community leader. They are the soul of any community- school collaboration yet be specified formally.

- The success of a school with leadership interventions from the community largely depends on the eco system generated around at the local level. The synergy between school and community carve the 'shared democratic space' by providing equal platform to each voice coming from the community.

- The study also revealed that fundamental to community leadership in school context is "situational understanding" by those who act as a leader. This wisdom of understanding provides ways of negotiations between the members of a given area.

- In the state of Haryana, where female sex ratio is lowest in the country, gender wise participation in the community leadership becomes a matter of debate. Many respondents articulated the need for emphasizing on the equal representation and participation of women in the community. According to them females can lead better in the context of community and school e.g. mothers can play an important role for primary classes. It was also evident from the data that there is an urgent

need for the revival of the Mother Teacher Association (MTA) in the schools of the Rai Block to give impetus to community collaborations.

- It is interesting to note that despite policies decisions from time to time and several flagship programmes of central and state government the tendency of "non participation" from the community members is making the leadership dynamics non-functional in the area.

- As communities become more integrated into school functioning, it is becoming all the more critical to comprehend how different notions of community leadership are evolving to give true meaning to democracy and equal participation. Additional local functions like inclusion of PRIs or local bodies may be added which do not conflict with the nationally agreed functions

- The study found that the stakeholders (Principal, Parents, teachers and Sarpanch) lacked specialised community leadership trainings. In the capacity building programmes of the state, community leadership roles are unknown. Therefore teachers of the schools assumed the flagship programmes like "NISHTHA" as a training for community leadership.

- In the school context, the principal was considered to be the leader. Outside the school it is administrative officials who are considered to be leaders for the community. However in the school there were many "emergent leaders" who are yet to be given any sanctioned position as a leader. These leaders include the least recognised members of the schools like MDM members, water carrier and sweeper etc. Few of them are parents whose children are enrolled in the same schools. These unrecognized leaders were found to be most active and vocal for the school development and giving sense to the concept of community leadership within the school premises.

- School closures due to Covid-19 have impacted the school functioning. However, teachers have tried their best to fill the gap of teaching learning and remain associated with the students.

- It is not enough to build a delivery system; accessibility must also entail demand creation. School teachers expressed that there is a need to create a climate that encourages parents to send their children to school. The voices of the children (who are migrants and work as a labourer) and girls (who drop out due to early marriage) must find a space in the given community. Therefore, it is time to initiate

community leadership for those who have the capabilities of taking issues forward for the overall benefit of their own community.

- It was found that many community level interventions were taken up to improve the school functioning. These interventions have given community leadership a social base and support to intervene in the school process. The government school had many sessions on mental health, suicide prevention, depression, bullying and social anxiety by the help of psychologists and NGOs active in the area. It demonstrated the visible impact on active community leadership practices.

- The study pointed towards the need of greater involvement of authorities from district as well community level to support various initiatives like SMCs, engagement of parents in MDM, regular consultation from the community members and formation of parents organisation like Abhibhwak Ekta Manch. It would strengthen the community- school collaborations in its truest sense.

Box-12

Presumption of an Ideal Leader: What Community Expects?

Through engagement toward common goals, community leadership enhanes and foster grassroots ideas that contribute to the betterment of community members. Therefore it brings desired development in any society through associations and close collaborations. Leaders, e.g. school principal, DEO and BEO etc. associated with authoritative work, are supposed to work on expected lines as they have been given a distinct position to serve within rules and regulations framed by the central or state government. Leadership is often perceived as an inborn trait and inherent and the position of a leader within the roles ascribed or defined. There is a conception that a leader must be operating with the ideal values on one side and prompt in providing solutions on the other side. Further the leaders in formal position or authority, there must be some rules and regulations which govern their actions. Truthfulness, honesty, compassion, and fairness are a few values which have been linked to an ideal leader. These leaders are also compared with the role models like Mahatma Gandhi. Can an individual being a leader be apt with the pre-conceived notion of a leader? Or a leader should always act according to the expectations and needs at the given place and context?

While discussing the role of community leaders and their traits, many respondents reaffirm that a leader in a community has to be sensitive towards the needs of each member of the community irrespective of the caste or class distinctions. One example quoted in this study is about mid-day meal workers (some of them are also members of SMCs as a parent) emphasize on constant feedback mechanism and dispositions of their grievances, regularization of their salaries and workload in school. One quotes "Ye MLA bahut acche hain, wo principal bahut acchi hai, Sarpanch bahut kam karte hain, in baten se hame kya? Hame koi nahi puchta madam ji." It shows that a leader has to first uplift those who are in distress (Marginalised communities and vulnerable sections) and comes last in the hierarchical ladder. The expectations of a leader in community, especially in school context, differ from the preconceived notions. The heroism defined and associated with the leader is not significant when it comes to the practical reality and the want of a common member of society.

Hence, there is a strong correlation between the collaborative approaches, innovative practices, ability to engage as a true community leader.

5.1.4 Functioning of Community Leadership in the Context of Power Politics, and Caste Operations in Promoting Participation of All in Elementary Schools.

● The Jaat community being the dominant upper caste, both sociologically and population-wise in the Rai Block of Hrayana, the real power seems to rest with them. However other communities like Brahmins and Yadav's too have influence over the area.

● Very few respondents (majorly parents) agree with the influence of caste factor especially in the context of the school functioning. However power politics was very much present. This power struggle can be seen in meetings of SMC where parents are the least recognized members.

● Similarly, very few respondents (Parents and Teachers) were agree with the influence of caste factor especially in the context of the school functioning. However power politics was visible in terms of principal's domination and teacher's monopoly over parents. E.g. Teachers in the SMCs meetings have been quite dominant and did not gave much attention to the concern of parents

- The study revealed that respondents (Teachers and Parents) expressed their concerns over domination of higher authorities in decision making. Teachers expressed their concern over non-involvement of community members in the formulation of educational policies. Parents were also gave constructive suggestions for involvement of parent community in the decisions making process of the schools. E.g. change in uniforms, teaching –learning process etc.

- In the school system, community leadership also entails the ability to foresee the future. The community leaders can inspire the entire school system by effectively influencing the behaviours, attitudes, and feelings of people who work inside it, and they secure their vision by building effective coordination across the entire system by employing words and examples. However, regardless of how competent a leader is, he or she will confront numerous challenges that must be addressed and conquered in order to flourish. The challenges faced by the principal of GSSS, Rai during Covid-19 were visible in terms of conducting regular classes and tracking each student who is enrolled in the school. It was found that the principal as a leader of the school has surpassed all these challenges by timely action and visionary approach.

5.2 Conclusion

JP Naik (1965) in his book, entitled *Elementary Education in India*, the Unfinished Business, illustrates the importance of the involvement of local bodies in elementary education. He emphasizes that development of mass education by involving parents is necessary to give impetus to elementary education. According to him "It will be necessary to associate the local communities which consist of conscious parents with the elementary schools (P. 47). Many respondents reiterated the fact that a community does not depend solely on community leaders finding solutions to their problems. In general, problem solving heavily depends on consultative mechanisms with every entity that exists in the social arena. This supports the literature review obtained from Manuel London's book "Leadership Development" path to self-insight and professional growth, (2002) "Leaders in community do not always provide solutions, rather they engage with others in the process of learning and allow others to take responsibility." In the same book he quotes Werbel and Henriques, (2009) where they engage readers in the idea of conflict generation between leaders and subordinates. "Leaders and Members of a group might not always agree on what should operate as the framework for developing

credible connections and effective leader-member relationships. "Similar ideas can be implied to the conflict between teacher and principal regarding changing the dress in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. Few teachers expressed their disagreement with the order and denied collection of fees. This agitation by the teachers to principal orders supports the above said concept. Ronald H Humphrey in his book "Effective leadership" (2013), explains the concept of leadership in the context of power and influence "leaders command, control, direct and influence followers to achieve group, organizational or societal goals." Community development is essentially about transformation of the existing system, and social capital is the mechanism for obtaining power and control over valuable resources (Lopez & Stack, 2001). In the context of present study social capital theory proved to be the one explaining the relational aspect between community and schools. The available evidence suggests that an organization's social capital is an important predictor of development and improvement. Social capital can be instrumental in policy implementation in local organizations but to which it is dependent on the organization's human capital (Spillane, Gomez and Mesler (2009). The said idea is true when it comes to having stronger ties between the different stakeholders i.e. parents, teachers, principals and state representatives as a symbol of resourceful human capital. Coburn and Russell (2006) suggests that some aspects of teachers' social networks are perhaps beyond policy interventions. Within this frame of reference, it is also important to note that social ties might improve access to social capital, it does not guarantee that social capital would always mobilise communities in practice or support policy implementation. Negligible presence of parents in School Management Committees (SMCs) can be taken as one of the examples.

Considering the current state of knowledge regarding the dynamics of community leadership based on study literature, one can however contend that there is a need to examine this critical aspect of school education if quality of a school is to be addressed seriously. Leaders are expected to lead the discussions in the meetings, communicate and disseminate information, facilitate group discussion and so forth. However, effective leaders usually try to bring out the best in others by encouraging them to speak and express their opinions. They know that in order to look good they have to make others look good. Therefore practical understanding is one aspect which is required for community leadership. According to Mackay (2006), leadership is often about carrying out changes, so every leader must time and again find ways to bridge the gap between how things need to be articulated in the future. They need to create an upward emotional spiral for providing positive reward to others. The community–school

interaction has emerged as one of the most important aspects in ensuring retention of out-of-school children, especially girls, and restricting children from leaving school before successfully completing the basic education cycle. Robust, long-term community involvement in school governance can improve accountability and transparency in the educational system while also encouraging a sense of ownership, agency, and accountability for positive change. The ability to understand others and collaborate with them toward common goals is aided by a leader's sense of self. Furthermore, it may be argued that community leadership is widely regarded as a dynamic activity that has an impact on societal and organizational development.

Community leadership is not a panacea for improving elementary schools; rather it provides an entry point for analysis of the ways in which imbalances can be excluded, therefore crucial aspects of society like early schooling and education can become inclusive for all. Hence a synergetic government-community partnership is needed to achieve the objective of universalization of elementary education and SDG Goal No 4 i.e. "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

5.3 Implications and Recommendations

5.3.1. Policy Recommendations

Any policy is a vision of a document; however, its success should not be measured until unless it comes to the ground and functions with the realities of society. In the context of the SMCs, the present study found that the said policy has been formulated well with the vision of engagement of community with the school process. However, on ground, there is an urgent need of converting this vision into reality. The picture is more gloomy when it comes to listing those who are the pillars of this vision i.e. Parents. In the Government school of Rai Block, Sonipat, District, Haryana, SMCs are functional in terms of regular meetings and documentation but this functionality is very limited in terms of getting desired outcomes i.e. integrating and assimilations of voices from community. The concern of a teacher from the same school can be well suited to this situation - "Governments make policies but if any change is required, suggestions must come from the people who are going to be impacted by the same". So, the operation of a policy in theory is like floating an idea which is full of ambitions and goals but, in practice, it is not successful until it meets the rational and practical aspects of the context. What is required is to fill the gap between policy and practice.

1. In the context of the SMCs, RTE, 2009 has been formulated well with the vision of engagement of community with the school process. However on ground there is an urgent need of converting this vision into reality.

2. The picture is gloomier when it comes to listening those who are the pillars of this vision i.e. Parents and community members. Regular consultation from the parents is required at the school, block and district level. The special mention and provision to include parents in the policy would lead to fruitful consultative mechanisms.

3. The concern of a teacher can be well suited to this situation "Governments make policies but if any change is required suggestions must come from the people who are going to be impacted by the same". It also connotes that policy formulation in context of community must be contextual and practical.

4. Documenting Training provisions for the leadership (especially in the school context) in the community through policies can revitalize the concept of "Local Leadership" envisioned in the NEP 2020.

5. Functional linkages of the SMC with PRI are quite weak. There is a dire need to establish practice of submitting annual proposals and budgets from SMC to PRIs.

6. In terms of getting desired outcomes i.e. integrating and assimilating voices from the different sections of the community would be requiring rigorous policy implementation with a defined timeline.

7. The NEP 2020 talks about giving impetus to "Local Leadership". The implementation of this goal of policy requires congruence of administration goals at every stage right from the grass root level to the Ministry. What is compelling is to fill the gap between policy and practice.

5.3.2. Educational Recommendations

1. This research will lead to opening up dialogues which can lead to partnership in the community through leadership.

2. It will provide an understanding of the composition, needs, priorities, tensions, strengths and existing networks of communities and how local leaders contribute to the school functioning by resolving the existing problems.

3. It will help to understand the nature of intervention by community leaders and impact of SMC activities on school education, effectiveness of SMC, inputs provided to SMC and school facilities etc.

4. It will facilitate ways to have sensitivity, accountability and representative structures – building effective partnership which strengthens communities.

5. It will also propose a range of formal and informal ways in which people can participate in debate and discussion and create local leadership in schools.

6. The proposed research would lead to understanding of capacity building mechanisms for different members of communities like parents, teachers and Panchayat heads through community leadership.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

1. Globally many research studies have already been done on the role of community leadership in school education. However, during the review of literature it is found that there are very few studies at the national level. Therefore the topic is quite researchable and open to further explorations. It is suggested not to take any generalization out of it.

2. Few related research findings could be applied. Therefore interpretations are based on the researcher's own understanding based on the reference material sighted.

3. Getting genuine data from the community due to its complex structure was also a challenge.

4. Due to the impact of the pandemic many schools were shut and access to educational institutions as well as government offices was very limited. Further it was difficult to gain access to the meetings or the scheduled work by the community members.

5. Due to lack of time relatively fewer studies are taken and analysis is based on the case studies from the field.

6. Number of times it was not possible to get cooperation as power elites are the dominant groups which are difficult to collaborate with.

5.5 Suggestions for the Future Research

1. The present study was limited to two Government Schools of Haryana. It can be carried out in the other schools too.

2. The study can be done at a broader level by taking other states into consideration. A comparative study can also be done to understand the role of community leadership across the different regions in the schools.

3. As communities are contextual in nature and socio-political factors like caste, power, class etc. tend to impact the nature of community leadership and its operational aspects, the same can be studied through a descriptive study.

4. In depth study can be extended to apprehend the involvement of communities in the schools through SMCs and their capacity building provisions for the exercise of leadership

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Role of Community Leadership in the Functioning of Elementary Schools: An Exploratory study in the Rai Block of Sonipat District in Haryana

Basic Information about Rai Block, Sonipat, Haryana

Geographical Information

1. Total Area of the District:
2. Total Population of the District:
3. Total Density of the District:
4. Number of Villages:
5. Total No of Households in District:
6. Total Number of Blocks:
7. Total Area of the Rai Block:
8. Total No of Households in the Block:
9. Total Population of the Rai Block:
10. Total Male Population of the Rai Block:
11. Total Female Population of the Rai Block:
12. Total No of children in the Block:
13. Population below 06 years:
14. Sex Ratio of the Block if any:

Socio-Economic Information

● **Caste Profile-**

○ Total Number of Scheduled castes- Male SC population, female SC population

○ Total number of Scheduled tribes- Male ST Population, female ST population

○ Total Population of the Other Backward Classes- male and female

● **Migrants Profile**

○ Total Number of Migrants in the Block-male, female, Migrant child

● **Employment status**

○ Total number of employed Population, male and female

● **General Information**

○ Total Literacy Rate- Male and female

○ Total No of Village Panchayats in the Block-

 ○ No of female heads elected as a village panchayat so far in the villages of the

Block-

○ Total Number of Schools in the Block-

○ Number of Government Schools-

○ Number of private Schools-

○ Total Number of primary schools-

○ Total number of senior secondary schools-

○ Total Number of Upper primary schools-

○ Total Number of School Going Children's in the Blocks

○ Total Number of Dropouts per Year-

○ Number of children's involved in Bonded Labour if data is available

Profile of the School

○ Name of the school-

○ Year of establishment-

○ Mode of Funding-

○ Total Number of teachers (Primary, and Upper Primary) - Male and female

○ Total Number of students enrolled (Primary, and Upper Primary)-

○ Teacher Pupil Ratio (Primary, and Upper Primary)-

○ Total Number of students belonging to the weaker socio-economic background or Migrant children's

○ Total Number of dropouts recorded so far-

○ Availability of Playground- Available\ Not Available

○ Availability of different laboratories - Science\ Math\ Physics\ ICT etc. - Available\ Not Available

○ Availability of Library- Functional\ non functional

○ Availability of Medical Rooms- Functional\ non functional

APPENDIX - 3

About School Management Committee

1. Total number of members in SMC:

2. Total number of Parents in SMC:

3. Total number of women in SMC:

4. Total number of NGO member in SMC:

5. Total number of teachers in SMC

6. No of the members from the local community

Profile of the members

S. No	Name of the Parent	Belong to which group Migrant\Locals	Highest Qualification	Occupation
i				
ii				
iii				
iv				
v				
vi				

APPENDIX - 4

RESEARCH TOOLS

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Template for Teachers

Q. 1.   In your opinion, who is a leader? Why?

Q. 2.   Who is the leader in actual practice in your village and who takes decisions for the school?

Q3.   Why do you consider him/her a leader? What occupation is she/he in? What qualities, traits, occupation and characteristics he/she possesses?

Q. 4.   What special role does she/he play in the context of schools and community? What kind of changes have you seen in the school after the current leader has taken over?

Q.5.   In your opinion has the school improved and in what parameters has the school shown improvement?

Q. 5   How frequently there is a meeting in your schools and what is your involvement as a teacher? Do you see your voices heard and was there any implementation of your suggestions on the issues of school functioning?

Q. 6.   What outstanding leadership practices/ special measures/ leadership interventions made/ taken up to ensure teacher commitment, student learning, school heads' involvement especially during the time of Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and now in new normal situations?

Focus Group Discussion Template for Village Head\Parents

Q.1.   Do you find any significant involvement of the Village Panchayats in community leadership? In what ways can the panchayat head contribute as a leader?

Q. 2.   What is the social demography of your village?

Q. 3.	As a village head, how have you led the school which has a significant impact on its functioning?

Q. 4.	What kind of challenges do you face while working as a panchayat head or member of SMCs?

Q. 5.	What Initiatives do you take for the betterment of the schools?

Q. 6.	To what extent are you able to help in identifying problems associated with school functioning? In case of any issues, how have you managed the situations?

Q. 7.	In what ways are parents empowered to make decisions for the school and how have they contributed as active members of the community in the schools?

Q. 8.	As a mother and as a significant member of the SMCs, how do you take a lead role for the issues which are vital for the school as well as for children's?

FGD Template for SMC

Q1.	What is the role of SMC? Have you been professionally trained to lead the school?

Q2.	How do you execute your role in the functioning of the school? What new initiatives have you taken in the past two years to improve the school?

Q2.	Who holds powerful influence in the meetings?

Q3.	What kinds of issues have been discussed in the meetings?

Q4.	Who takes the lead role while discussing and taking decisions on the important issues related with the school?

Q5.	Have you ever faced any conflict while taking decisions on issues that matter to the school? How did you overcome the conflicting situations?

Q7.	Is there a complete harmony in taking the school to the next level? Explain in detail.

Q8. How do you identify potential community partners and collaborators who are willing to work as leaders for target groups?

Q9. Is there any external agent who influences school functions, e.g. any influential person in the community, retired teachers, volunteers etc.?

Q10. How often do you participate in the meetings of SMCs?

Q11. Is there any need to fill the gap between 'capacity building provisions' and 'development of leadership' from the communities?

Q12. New Education Policy 2020 talks about School Complex Management Committees (rather than simply School Management Committees) for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, and initiatives by local stakeholders. Do you have any idea about this?

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Name of the School:

Designation:

1. What do you think about a leader coming from the community itself? Do you think leaders capable of taking meaningful decisions?

2. Did you ever get an opportunity to work as a leader in your school? If yes, kindly share your experience in a few words.

3. In what ways does the school provide support and academic freedom to you in taking leadership roles?

4. As a delegated head of the School, how does the principal of your school cooperate with you?

5. Do you think community leadership initiatives are vital for school functioning?

6. How do you support children coming from the vulnerable section of the society? What kind of classroom strategies do you adopt to support them holistically?

7. From RTE Act 2009 to NEP 2020, the Government has been emphasizing collaborations of communities with schools. As a teacher, how is this being taken care by you in the classroom and school?

Interview Schedule for School Principal

1. How do you delegate responsibilities given to you as a leader in school?

2. How do you handle conflict\confusions amongst the members of SMCs?

3. Have you ever taken or supported any need or issue based decision in school as a leader?

4. What kind of academic freedom do you provide to your teachers?

5. What kind of strategy do you adopt to identify issues concerning SC\ST \ migrant children from the community?

6. New Education Policy, 2020 emphasized on building larger communities of schools, school leaders, teachers, parents, and local citizens. Do you think 'local leadership' can empower schools and its overall functioning? How?

7. For effective governance and improvement in school functioning's, NEP 2020 suggests to bring community partnership and leadership in the center. What is your view on it?

8. Do you have any knowledge about "Professional Learning Community''?

Interview schedule for Parents

Q1. How often do you visit school for meetings?

Q2. To what extent do you get involved in school activities?

Q3. What kind of support\interventions do you get from the school teachers\village head for your concerns?

Q4. Does school provide you an opportunity to take a leadership role and intervene in the school function?

Q5. Do you have any suggestions for your school to bring innovative practices of community leadership for effective school functioning?