

A Comparative Study of Social Dynamics and School Management in Educationally Backward Blocks and Non-Educationally Backward Blocks of Rajasthan

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Extended Summary

The study seeks to unearth the underlying social dynamics prevalent in two educationally distinct blocks of Rajasthan, through the lens of the School Management Committees (SMCs) present in the chosen schools. It focuses on explaining the broader idea of managing schools within their social constructs, and relies on comprehensive ethnographic fieldwork that accounts for the multiplicity of stakeholders that constitute such committees.

School Management Committees play a crucial role in ensuring equity and access to basic elementary education. They evolve based on the interactions of their various constituent stakeholders, who define the nature of the school infrastructure, its enrolment patterns, distribution of compensatory funds, teacher qualifications, and the social composition of the committees.

The study is divided into six chapters, starting out with an introduction of the study area, followed by a review of the literature in the field, research methodology, a profile analysis of the selected field, analysis of the data, and concluding with the findings of the study.

The study provides a trajectory of schools evolution in a global as well as national context, through a look at various academic theories and legal frameworks that underwrite the idea of school management. The study outlines the multiplicity of stakeholders in the area, and how they come together to constitute a SMC. The study traces the origins of school management to a centralised system where the management is carried out on the authority of an external officer, and grounded in classical public administration theories of scientific management, functionalism, and bureaucratic theory. These theories prioritise organisational structure and standardised procedures, which, in turn, set common management targets applicable to all schools. Under this system, periodic school inspections are considered the most effective means of assessing structural functioning and managing the schools, which act as recipients of directions and authority from a centralising structure above. In contrast, the modern ideas of school management, based on the principle of equifinality, are decentralised by nature, where the schools have greater autonomy in determining their needs and structures. Such an approach is characterised by flexibility, and sees problem-solving as an opportunity to attain better self-management practices rather than remain as passive implementers.

The chapter then moves on to identifying the evolution of school management through an analysis of rights and legal measures, such as the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments, the Right to Education (RTE), 2009, and the insertion of Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, which obligates the state to guarantee free and compulsory education to all children from the ages of six to fourteen. However, given the limitations that exist in its effective implementation as well as the reach of judicial and legal measures, SMCs are seen as alternative avenues for parents and guardians to assert their rights to compensate for the deficit that arises. Furthermore, given the ambit of the Act is to empower students from marginalised and disadvantaged sections, and the growing prevalence for private school enrolment, SMCs play a pivotal role in the implementation of Constitutional ideals that rely on a functional state-provided education system. They oversee operational dynamics, manage school finances, ensure judicious allocation of scarce funds, and aid in infrastructure development, monitoring and evaluation, and fostering a supportive educational environment, all the while seeking to bring about transparency and accountability in the system.

The role of administrative leaders in ensuring smooth operationalisation between the school governance and the societal structure is widely acknowledged, more so in remote areas that necessitates tailored approaches to management, along with involving the spectrum of stakeholders. Community participation is an ongoing, organic process, and learning from best practices is essential. Stakeholder partnerships, based on data, can address school needs, celebrate successes and tackle challenges effectively. In such scenarios, good leadership capabilities can help minimise challenges and orient school management in a purposeful direction. At the local level, Gram Panchayats and Municipal leaders help in decentralised administration, and enhance connection between communities and primary schools in collaboration with the Panchayati Raj institutions. At the same time, the study acknowledges the lack of any universal solution to the needs of school management and instead emphasises area-specific approaches to achieve common objectives, overcome compartmentalisation, and improve efficiency.

In terms of the underlying rationale of the study that focuses on SMCs, the author presents the challenges of government schools lacking behind their private counterparts in terms of educational quality and the potential of SMCs to oversee them to improve curriculum and teaching methods, their engagement with local self-governance mechanisms such as the panchayats, ensuring that the transformative potential of Information Communication Technology (ICT) can reach the grassroots, enhancing understanding of the role of technology, fostering learning and cooperation opportunities, and adopting a holistic approach to unlock educational potential.

The second chapter of the study focuses on analysing and assessing the review of literature on school management, by reflecting on the ideas and themes present in government reports, articles, books, theses and the like to present the idea along four broad themes - a global perspective of community participation in school management, the Indian context of policy perspectives, exploring the institutional dynamics that are present within SMCs, and lastly, analysing the committees within their situational context of Rajasthan.

The third chapter outlines the rationale and objectives of the study in order to lend a structured approach to the challenges at hand. It lays out the site for the ethnographic research within two blocks of the Jhalawar district in Rajasthan - Bakani which is an Educationally Backward Block (EBB), and Khanpur which is designated as a non-Educationally Backward Block (non-EBB). In the former, twelve (12) Scheduled Caste (SC) habitations were investigated, while the latter saw fourteen (14) habitations being studied. The author undertook a mixed methods' approach, employing a descriptive research design that was a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including school profiling, observations, questionnaires, interviews and surveys. Overall, it focused on unearthing data through purposive and stratified random sampling, with seven (7) schools being chosen from each block for the purpose of the study. Apart from the usual stakeholders of SMCs such as school heads and principals, faculty, staff, students and members of the wider social community, information was also gathered from government functionaries such as Block Education Officers (BLOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs), with mechanisms for feedback being incorporated extensively into the research design. The primary data sources comprised of surveys, structured questionnaires, focused group discussions, checklists, household surveys, and developed case studies, while secondary sources included examination of State Panchayat Acts, review of training modules under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), as well as gathering information on relevant policies, rules, regulations, and school management roles.

Some of the central research questions that the study sought to address included determining the impact and composition of SC and non-SC communities across both blocks, attitudes of SMC members towards students from these communities, and how it impacts their education, extent to which the SMC members determine and implement relevant government schemes, analysing the management in terms of adherence to inclusivity, determining whether different social compositions lead to differential access to educational resources, infrastructural levels prevalent in the schools, level of technological penetration in school education, educational qualifications and upskilling of the teachers, and gender representations and their impact on school education. While the nature of the study necessitated a broad spectrum of research objectives, some of the core ideas concerned assessing the impact and composition of social categories

in EBB and non-EBB schools, studying the functioning of SMC members and, in particular, the attitudes of headmasters towards the students, seeing the degree of involvement of SMC members in formulating and implementing the School Development Plans (SDPs) in collaboration with relevant government authorities, analysing the functioning through the lens of inclusivity, and evaluating the content, methodology and training programmes in terms of their patterns of social inclusion.

Following this, the subsequent chapter deals with laying out the details of the field on the table. Dr. Sedwal presents a comprehensive overview of the profile of the Rajasthan state, in terms of its physical, geographical, social and economic profile, with a deep dive into the particular educational landscape of the state. Among several parameters that are resented, the author highlights the literacy trends in the state, with a particular emphasis being laid on the large gap between male and female literacy, which remains one of the largest in the country, indicating a low gender parity index. Though the state's Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of twenty-nine (29) is only slightly higher than the national average of twenty-six (26), indicating a slightly worse ratio than the overall average; the state still has a significant number of vacant seats in the higher education sector. The overall access to quality infrastructure is limited, as seen in the lower number of schools having libraries (65%), electricity connections (16%), and medical facilities (38%). By bringing forth such discrepancies, the study highlights the magnitude of the tasks that confront the SMCs in seeking to reform and overhaul the system at the elementary level of education.

From here, the focus shifts to presenting a brief profile of the Jhalawar district in the state, which contains both the blocks under consideration for the study, as well as the functioning of various government initiatives such as the SSA, RTE, and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in the state. This section further details the idea of how EBBs came to be as a means of achieving better governance in education based on the twin concerns of a low Female Literacy Rate (FLR) and a higher gender gap in literacy. To address these concerns, a number of bodies such as SMC, Village Education Committees, Parent Teacher Associations and others were constituted in order to meet the common objectives outlined under the SSA. From here, the focus shifts to uncovering the intricate relationship between social dynamics and school management, with a focus on ensuring quality education for all children. In Jhalawar, the study identified a total of fourteen (14) government primary schools (GPS) in both blocks for the purposes of analysis, evenly spread across both EBB and non-EBB areas, each having seven (7) GPS.

The study specifically targeted habitations in the district with a significant SC population, which comprised 128 out of a total 1586 habitations. In the Bakani Block, which had a total of forty-one (41) panchayats, twelve (12) were SC concentrated, while the same for Khanpur was fourteen (14) concentrations drawn from thirty-eight (38) panchayats. SMC, under various guises, were found to be constituted in almost all areas, with the final narrowing down of the list taking only those schools which had SMCs for consideration. These committees were found to be involved in supervision of civil works, mid-day meals, monitoring enrolment and attendance of children, and mobilising resources for school supplies and furniture. Through regular visits, it was determined that the SMCs had an overall positive impact on enrolment and attendance, though the same argument cannot be extended to a national level without proper on-site determination. Also, the study, to better comprehend the impact of social dynamics on school operations, considered the impact of social components such as caste, gender, ethnicity and religion, in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding on the subject matter.

Therefore, in the fifth chapter, the study analysed the findings across five key areas of educational infrastructure, including basic facilities, sanitation and digital infrastructure; enrollment; distribution of District Compensatory Fund (DCF); teacher qualifications; and teacher appointments and gender representation. The schools under Bakani EBB included GPS Sanvalpura, GPS Sawakho, GPS Devdungari, GPS Mokham Pura, GPS Barkhedi, GPS Laxmipura Badbad and GPS Banskheri. In parallel, the schools considered in the Khanpur non-EBB included GPS Ummedpura, GPS Potukhedi, GPS Thokariya, GPS Khuntkheri, GPS Kunged, GPS Anghora and GPS Jagdishpura. These schools were further chosen as they depicted a range of establishment years, from GPS Potukhedi in 1961, to GPS Saakho in 2013, thereby depicting changes brought into existence over an extended period. There existed many commonalities as well as differences

in the schools in the two blocks, as per the study. While the Bakani block boasted a greater number of classrooms, those in Khanpur had a higher percentage of classrooms in a good condition, showing that mere quantity over quality does not present a complete picture. Similarly, Khanpur exhibited a higher number of schools with playgrounds, but the schools were devoid of rainwater harvesting systems, though schools in both blocks were equipped with libraries and offered similar drinking water access. Electricity was present across the board, but without any access to regenerative systems such as solar panels. Only GPS Banskheri was represented on the Subcommittee for Learner Welfare and School Environment, while GPS Pothukhedi was the sole representative on the Sub-committee for Community Participation, depicting their individualistic focus on overall student welfare and community participation respectively. The role of SMCs and multiple stakeholders under such circumstances cannot be underestimated. While parents' involvement is constant, those by other stakeholders like teachers and government officials vary.

The study points to the crucial role played by school staff, particularly the headmasters, in maintaining records of SMC meetings and fostering close-knit ties with the community members. This brings about accountability, transparency and aids future planning. While all SMCs received funding and assistance from the school administration, non-governmental organisations and/or the government, the lack of adequate funding and proper cooperation from the side of the parents continued to be persistent hurdles. Despite these challenges, SMCs continued to play a pivotal role in identifying school needs, overseeing construction projects, ensuring enrolment, and monitoring student attendance and performance.

In the context of *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* guidelines, proper school sanitation facilities play a key role in promoting cleanliness and hygienic practices in schools, and both blocks display a good level of access to these practices in their respective schools. The presence of adequate washrooms, classrooms, drinking water facilities, handwashing amenities and libraries is commendable, though with the scope for improvement across parameters such as better furnishings, improved library accessibility, and exploring alternative sources of energy generation. The overall picture though trends in a positive manner. There are appropriate and separate urinals for boys and girls, comfortable classrooms for academic activities, access to drinking water, handwashing facilities, libraries, electricity, dedicated rooms for headmaster/headmistress, and accessible playgrounds for extracurricular activities. However, there are also other infrastructural facilities that could be improved such as lack of adequate furniture, solar panels, rainwater harvesting techniques, and necessary healthcare and medical checkups.

In terms of digital infrastructure, schools receive digital literacy and problem-solving skills, and adaptation to diverse learning styles and needs, so as to help bridge the digital divide. Only two schools, GPS Mokham Pura and GPS Laxmipura Badbad have access to the internet, while the rest have no access to digital tools such as laptop, desktop, projector, printer and digi board. The dearth of digital facilities across the board is a matter of serious concern in both blocks, and calls for a concerted investment in digital infrastructure. As regards the enrollment patterns, the study delves into the social composition of the students in the schools, with a detailed look at the enrollment numbers by social categories. The revealing pattern is that across both blocks, minority students outnumber the rest in enrollment numbers, followed by the general category and then the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) students. The SC enrollment is a reflection of the social reality, where Bakani block, with 10.49% of its population being SCs has seen 17.16% of enrollment from SCs, while the same for Khanpur is 16.20% of the population and 22.83% of the enrollment. The study further depicts that while the schools might perform admirably when it comes to admitting students from reserved and disadvantaged sections of the society, getting the benefits of development to accrue to them is another task altogether. GPS Umedpura in Khanpur block, with less than a fifth of enrollments from reserved categories (10 out of 52 total), is able to garner greater access to resources, hinting at unequal distribution as a lived reality on the ground.

While distribution of the District Compensatory Funds (DCF), which aims to allocate resources and funds to historically backward areas of over socio-economic progress, it is seen that only a limited number of primary and upper primary students benefited from the free textbooks provided under this initiative. The low utilisation numbers point to a lack of awareness and distribution challenges, both key areas where

the SMCs can enter the fray. As regards the educational qualifications of teachers, the study addresses a sobering reality on the ground, with just a singular school having a teacher in each block with a Bachelors in Education (B.Ed.) degree, with others having only diplomas and/or certificates in Basic Teacher Training. None possessed a specialised degree such as Bachelors in Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) or a Master's in Education (M.Ed.) degree, in addition to the lack of teachers pursuing professional courses to improve their teaching capabilities. This points to a lack of opportunities for upskilling, as well as the lack of incentives to do so, denoting a serious lack of attention to quality teaching in the government schools surveyed. As pertains to the gender representation of the teachers, most displayed a fairly balanced approach in Bakani block, pointing to attempts to achieve an inclusive teaching style. The situation bore reflection in the Khanpur block as well, with the exception of GPS Khuntkheri and GPS Anghora, where no female teachers were represented among the appointments made in general mode.

The final chapter presents a set of policy recommendations to address the imperfections that were witnessed during the course of the ethnographic study. It brings together the findings of the study under a common roof, and draws conclusions based on the data presented in the preceding pages. It reveals different social structures across the EBB and non-EBB schools, with the former depicting a higher percentage of OBC enrollment, whereas the latter showed higher SC and Scheduled Tribes (STs) enrollment, thereby necessitating different approaches to school management that need to be undertaken by the SMCs. The role of headmasters as crucial links in the functioning of SMCs and fostering deep links with the community was a marker of the schools in both blocks, highlighting an inclusive approach to education. The formulation and implementation of SDPs was another standout in the schools, demonstrating the influence of strong and committed decision-makers, which flowed over in the context of ensuring representation of minority and reserved category students in the schools. This chapter links the data gathered from the ground with the national and global policies on sustainable development and accessible education, prominently stated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and its various components. The idea of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its emphasis on increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) brings the study to a full circle, as it sets out with an analysis of the policy-making in the context of elementary education at the outset.

The study is a typical depiction of the lived reality of managing schools through the aegis of SMCs. It represents a deep commitment to unearthing complex social dynamics in Rajasthan, through an in-depth look at EBB and non-EBB schools in a comparative perspective. Drawing from multiple literature sources, the study reflects the nuances of working of the committees through the lens of various stakeholders involved, with a rounded analysis of the multiple dimensions of school management.

The study offers an exclusive take by moving the locus away from theoretical explanations of school management to bringing empirical evidence back into the framework of discussion. It deserves plaudits for explaining complex social dynamics in a lucid and comprehensible manner, and for making the same accessible to a large set of readers. By attempting to present the data in a disaggregated manner, the author has succeeded in presenting the idea of school management in a new light, dotted with a collection of analytical tools and intricate research methodology and design.

Since the idea of school management is a constantly evolving field, expanding on the particularities of SMCs beyond the five dimensions presented in the study necessitates a follow-up study of the same actors at a later period. In addition, future endeavours can seek to shed more light on the unique characteristics of SC students in greater detail. It fulfills the requirements to act as an essential tool for researchers, teachers, policy-makers and the general public.

Chapter I

Introduction

Schools can be seen as microcosms of society, encompassing a wide range of elements, including religion, caste, culture, language, and more. The diverse nature of stakeholders presents unique challenges and opportunities, making the pursuit of sustainable, equitable, and high-quality education a complex endeavour. To address these challenges, both authorities i.e., educational administrators right from state to block and cluster levels, and practitioners are exploring possible ways to provide best education to every child in a location/area. While the civil society members advocate for the active involvement of School Management Committees (SMCs).

The Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 mandated the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs) with specific provisions. This Act grants SMCs administrative authority to oversee school operations, undertake financial management, and other tasks. In addition, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is in-charge of monitoring the execution of this educational right.

Evolution of School Management Committees

The traditional system of school management envisaged a centralised system where all the management of school is controlled by an external centralising officer. In this the management of the school is carried out as per the authority of the external officer. It is grounded in classical public administration theories like scientific management and bureaucratic theory. These theories primarily emphasise organisational structure and standardised procedures, which are intended to achieve management goals applicable to all schools. Consequently, periodic school inspections are considered the most effective means of assessing structural functioning and managing schools.

Functionalism theory regards schools as instruments for achieving educational policy objectives, perceiving them as passive entities reliant on external control. In this view, schools receive directives from external authorities without possessing power or accountability. Furthermore, bureaucratic theory places a strong emphasis on supervising and controlling schools. Consequently, there's a potential ecological phenomenon: the more external authority is exerted, the greater the dependence of school members on central external authority.

Contrary to the traditional system, the modern system of school management envisages a decentralised system where the school management tasks are set according to the needs and characteristics of the individual schools and, therefore, the members of the schools have greater autonomy in the functioning of the school. The modern approach is based on the equifinality – a modern management theory, which assumes there may be different ways to achieve the same goals. Flexibility is the hallmark of this approach, placing significant importance on granting schools autonomy in their administrative affairs, tailored to their specific circumstances. The central principle of this approach recognises that school management and teaching activities can present challenges, which schools should be adequately empowered to address promptly and efficiently. To achieve this, schools should be entrusted with greater authority and responsibilities, enabling them to operate more effectively. This approach focuses on problem solving and not avoiding problems. In other words, it entails discovery of problems in school itself and solving effectively thus promoting teaching and learning activities. It visualises schools as a self-managing system with considerable autonomy to develop

teaching objectives, management strategies, and accomplish goals according to their own condition. It wants to transform schools from a passive implementing system to a self-managing system.

In India the benefits of community participation were identified from the 1980s onwards. The National Policy on Education in 1986 emphasised the crucial role of the community in ensuring the effective operation of schools. In 1992, the Programme of Action (POA) introduced an institutional form of community involvement, envisioning the establishment of a 'Village Education Committee (VEC).' This committee, consisting of up to 15 members representing parents, panchayats, women cooperatives, diverse castes, communities, and local development functionaries, was tasked with overseeing the management of all educational programmes at the village level.

In 2002, India took a significant step by incorporating a rights-based approach into its constitutional framework. This involved a crucial amendment to the fundamental rights section, including Article 21A, which obligates the state to guarantee free and compulsory education for children aged six to fourteen. Legal avenues, such as recourse through High Courts and the Supreme Court, were established to support this mandate. However, the actual implementation of this constitutional provision has faced challenges, impeding parent's ability to effectively enforce this right through the judicial system.

The potential of School Management Committees (SMCs) emerges as an alternative avenue for parents to assert their rights, potentially compensating for the deficit in legal empowerment. However, despite the duration of Article 21A, judicial enforcement remains inadequate. Supreme Court judgments regarding Article 21A extend beyond child education, with private schools challenging state-imposed restrictions, such as the mandatory reservation of 25 per cent of seats for economically disadvantaged students. Other cases involve the rights of children, particularly their right to education, especially when mothers are jailed.

The target demographic for the right to education, as outlined in the Right to Education Act, primarily comprises children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. However, a noteworthy trend is the overwhelming preference of financially stable families for private education, indicating a growing reliance on private institutions. This preference extends beyond elite private schools to include the rise of low-cost and often low-quality private schools. Consequently, families with financial means appear increasingly detached from relying on a functional state-provided education system.

School Management Committees (SMCs) in India serve as pivotal entities responsible for overseeing and improving the operational dynamics of educational institutions. Comprising parents, community representatives, and teachers, these committees offer a diverse range of perspectives in decision-making processes. One of their primary functions involves managing school finances, ensuring judicious allocation of funds towards essential resources, infrastructure development, and learning materials. Additionally, SMCs actively engage in monitoring and evaluating school activities, collaborating with educators to enhance overall performance. Facilitating parental involvement, these committees create a bridge between the school and the community, fostering a supportive educational environment. Their role extends to resource mobilisation, whereby they play a key part in gathering community resources for school development projects. Moreover, SMCs contribute to the effective implementation of education policies, promoting transparency and accountability within the education system. Grounded in the local context, these committees ensure that educational strategies align with community needs, making them integral to the holistic development of the education landscape in India.

SMCs consist of parents, teachers, and community members who chose the Chairman and Deputy Chairman among them. The committee plays a pivotal role in making decisions regarding policies, budgets, and school development. They form the governing body responsible for school management, emphasising the significance of community participation in fostering comprehensive growth in the educational environment. This approach promotes community engagement and holds schools accountable for their performance. (For details, refer to Annexure - I)

Administrative leaders play a pivotal role in achieving a school's mission and vision, particularly by focusing on the involvement of parents and the community. The changing socio-economic landscape directly or

indirectly impacts a school's functioning, whether it's located in urban, semi-urban, or rural areas. Each context requires a tailored approach for school processes and engaging stakeholders.

For instance, a remote rural school, often a small institution with limited staff, heavily relies on the coordination of parents and the community. They become crucial supporters and monitors of students and teachers' progress. In such cases, a leader acts as a bridge between parents and the community to tackle any challenges. A critical area in this situation is to cater towards multi-grade teaching skills, which can be facilitated with parental involvement.

In cases where parents and the community have low literacy levels, leadership faces even greater challenges. However, this doesn't imply a lack of demand for education; rather, it highlights the importance of improving the student's home environment. A combined effort from parents and the community can positively impact the school's functioning. Assessments can identify service delivery gaps in management and pedagogy.

Two forums, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMCs), serve as platforms for discussing various issues related to student achievement, attendance, discipline, safety, and disparities among diverse student groups. Sustainability can be achieved by appointing a Coordinator on an honorary basis, someone with teaching experience or community leadership. Continuous communication and strong bonds among stakeholders are crucial. In some cases, parents and the community can contribute financially or in kind to school development as needed. Coordination among stakeholders can address issues like student safety during their commute. Active participation from the PTA and SMC members can enhance academic delivery.

While some parents and community members may have negative schooling experiences or lack literacy and management skills, efforts should be made to engage them in school activities. Community participation in education is an ongoing, organic process, and learning from best practices is essential. Maintaining records of collaborative activities among stakeholders is valuable for school development. Stakeholder partnerships, based on data, can address current school needs, celebrate successes, tackle challenges, and identify effective strategies for school improvement. Community participation plays a vital role in overcoming resource and capacity limitations in learning materials and human resources.

The Present Study

The Government of India under the 86th Amendment Act, 2002 inserted Article 21A, granting every child aged 6 to 14 the fundamental right to free and compulsory education. Every child deserves primary schooling with a free and compulsory quality education to bring about a positive economic and cultural development (Khan, 2006). The 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts of 1992 paved the way for the establishment of local governments to decentralise developmental administration. This constitutional obligation assigns Gram Panchayats and Municipalities the responsibility of optimising limited educational resources through community participation in managing schools, particularly when there are at least two schools in a panchayat. Additionally, many states have implemented various strategies to enhance the connection between communities and primary schools in collaboration with Panchayati Raj.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

Keeping the constitutional provisions on RTE Act 2009 that legitimises the right to quality education of every child with a mandate of constituting School Management Committee to support and empower school heads to bring school-based change at the grassroots forms a foundation to the present study. The study primarily focuses on critical aspects within the educational context and the role of SMCs. It acknowledges the absence of a universal solution, emphasising the need for area-specific approaches. The study addresses challenges stemming from the diversity among stakeholders and emphasises the importance of uniting them towards common objectives for effective policy implementation. Additionally, it highlights the

significance of teamwork in school functionality and the need to overcome compartmentalisation among administrative departments for improved efficiency. Lastly, the study explores the intricate relationship between access, equity, and the quality of education in relation to an individual's socio-economic status.

Rationale for taking up the Present Study

A critical examination of the Right to Education Act reveals a fundamental critique centred on its limited emphasis on educational quality. The majority of its provisions concentrate on child enrollment and minimum school infrastructure standards, neglecting critical aspects, such as content, teacher performance, and student outcomes. This becomes particularly pertinent as government schools, despite facing similar infrastructural challenges, significantly lag behind private schools in terms of educational quality.

The potential contribution of School Management Committees (SMCs) to improving educational quality, particularly by overseeing curriculum and teaching methods, is hindered by the insufficient empowerment provided by both the Right to Education Act and the model rules. Many states replicate model rules without granting additional authorities to SMCs or creating specific, locally adapted regulations for implementation.

Engagement with local self-governance systems, such as panchayats, is deemed crucial for SMC effectiveness. However, the lack of clarity in allocating responsibilities under the Right to Education Act, coupled with state rules offering insufficient guidance, impedes effective functioning. Moreover, the absence of a dedicated government body for monitoring and assessing SMC performance hinders both accessibility and accountability.

Thus, navigating the landscape of School Management Committees (SMCs) reveals persistent challenges, particularly with parents who often grapple with socio-economic disadvantages. The established power dynamics between teachers and parents underscore the imperative for a more inclusive and equitable approach within the education system.

Simultaneously, the transformative impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools on education, propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, is undeniable. The shift from traditional classrooms to virtual platforms accessible through various devices has become integral to the teaching-learning process and teacher training. However, despite this paradigm shift, there is a discernible gap in research examining the effective utilisation of technology in education.

To address these issues a need was felt to not only deepen our understanding of how technology can enhance education but also to comprehensively integrate these tools into the educational framework. This integration should be accompanied by concerted efforts to raise awareness among parents and stakeholders, enlightening them about the potential of technology to foster connectivity and learning opportunities anytime, anywhere. Only through such a holistic approach can we unlock the true empowerment potential within the education system.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This chapter focuses on analysing and assessing the secondary sources on school management, by reflecting on the ideas and themes present in government reports, articles and books. The subsequent literature review meticulously is divided into four themes:

- Community Participation in School Management: A Global Perspective
- Policy Perspectives on Community Participation in Indian Context
- Exploring Institutional Dynamics within School Management Committees (SMCs)
- SMCs in the Context of Rajasthan

Community Participation in School Management: A Global Perspective

According to Robert V. Antonucci (1995), the school committees play vital roles in several key areas: They establish educational policy objectives for district schools, aligning with legal requirements and the broader state educational framework (Quoted in Somoeun and Komariah, 2014). They collaborate with the superintendent to develop disciplinary policies for students. Furthermore, they delegate major school functions to the principal and other staff members, conduct public hearings on the annual budget proposal, review and approve education programme budgets, determine school expenditures, and adopt professional development plans for principals, teachers, and other professionals. It's important to emphasise that these committees cannot unilaterally create rules; they must involve the community, teachers, and parents in the policy formulation process.

Clune and White (1988) and Jerome G. Delaney (1997) argued for School Based Management (SBM), which may take on various names but essentially involves decentralisation and autonomy in decision-making regarding curriculum, construction, maintenance, teacher recruitment, compensation, and textbook selection.

Murphy and Beck (1998:14) stated that a “central feature of SMC is the site council or school committee”. While the school committee varies in composition and responsibilities; most writers agree that it is within a school committee that school stakeholders, such as parents, principals of the schools, parents, teachers, students and community members do participate in decision making. The School Management Committee represents a type of community involvement in school affairs, adhering to regulatory guidelines and operating on a voluntary membership basis. Similarly, the School Site Council or School Committee also embodies community engagement in school governance, following regulations and featuring elected, yet voluntary, members.

Garia (2002) confirmed that communities have historically participated in supporting school construction and organising cultural events and local festivals. Srivastava (1999) also confirmed resource support for such activities. These research findings suggest that increasing community participation can enhance educational access, equity, and quality, though the impact may vary.

Grauwe (2005), as cited in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2005:4), argues that SMC has several recurring benefits. It promotes democracy by empowering teachers and parents to participate in crucial educational decisions. This ensures that education isn't solely controlled by a select few but is

influenced by those who encounter daily educational challenges, resulting in more practical solutions. Additionally, involving teachers and parents in decision-making holds schools accountable for their actions, potentially enhancing school effectiveness. Encouraging active participation in the daily operations of schools can motivate both teachers and parents to be part of the decision-making process. Anton (2005) studied international experiences and found that school-based management committees are a successful means of providing quality education and efficient administration

Jennifer's (2006) study in Southern Ethiopia revealed that community participation in education is a complex concept, as reported by teachers, students, parents, and education administrators. The empirical findings from Yasuyuki's (1999) study on El Salvador's EDUCO Program align with the perspective that decentralising the education system, delegating school administration and teacher management, and increasing community participation are beneficial. Priyanka, Sangeeta, and Venkatesh's (2008) research demonstrated that structured awareness campaigns had a positive impact in three Indian states.

Chen (2011) examined the key aspects of school-based management practices in Indonesia and their impact on education quality. Using a conceptual framework of an accountability system for public service delivery, the paper explored the relationships among Indonesian parents, school committees, schools, and government education supervisory bodies based on three principles: participation and voice, autonomy, and accountability. Using data from a nationally representative survey involving approximately 400 public primary schools in Indonesia, the paper revealed that parental participation and input in school management were notably low in Indonesia. School committees, while having a role in community relations and administrative aspects of school management, still had limited influence. In contrast, school principals and teachers enjoyed greater empowerment in asserting professional control over schools. The accountability system within Indonesia's school system appeared weak, characterised by insufficient information flow to parents and relatively low parental awareness of the importance of holding schools accountable. The existing accountability structure primarily emphasised top-down supervision and monitoring by government supervisory bodies. The findings indicated that despite the limited scope of school-based management in Indonesia, it had begun to assist schools in making sound decisions regarding resource allocation and the hiring of additional non-civil servant teachers. Additionally, it fostered an environment conducive to learning, including improved teacher attendance rates. These aspects were found to have significantly positive effects on student learning outcomes.

UNESCO (2005) defined SMCs as central to measures of centralisation and decentralisation in education, emphasising democratic decision-making involving teachers and parents. Grauwe (2005) further emphasised the democratic nature of SMCs, highlighting their role in holding schools accountable and increasing the effectiveness of education by involving those who face daily challenges in the decision-making processes.

The nomenclature may be different but UNESCO (2005) defines SMC as the assessment of centralisation and decentralisation, focusing on determining where critical decisions are made in various areas, including core curriculum, school construction, school location, school maintenance, teacher compensation, teacher recruitment, and textbook selection.

As quoted in Somoeun, M., & Komariah, A. (2014) even though there are different ideas relating to the roles of the school committee, Triton Regional School in Massachusetts, USA (2013) and Foxborough Public School (2008) list out the common roles and responsibilities of these committees at the school level. They have a common idea concerning roles and responsibilities of the school committee at school level. In their opinion the school committee has five major roles and responsibilities as appende below:

1. **Policy making:** The school committee is responsible for development and implementation of the school policy.
2. **Appraisal:** It is responsible for ensuring evaluation of the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
3. **Provision of financial resources:** The school committee also adopts a budget and allocates to the different departments as deemed necessary for the effective functioning of the schools.
4. **Public relations:** The school committee also acts as a medium through which the citizens are given

the necessary information about the schools and, at the same time, the demands and feedback of the citizens are channelised back to the school staff.

5. **Educational planning and evaluation:** It also ensures that the objectives of the education are set that promote the continual improvement of the educational programmes.

Nwangwa and Omotere (2013) conducted a study focusing on the School Management Team (comprising Principals, Deputy Principals, and Heads of Departments) to explore their evolving roles in adapting to changes within Nigerian schools. This research aimed to understand how these team members were adapting to the ongoing educational changes in Nigerian schools. Given the dynamic nature of the educational system in Nigeria, school managers were not only expected to comprehend these changes but also effectively manage them. The study delved into the concept of change within the Nigerian educational system and highlighted some common challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in implementing new educational policies. Empirical research was carried out in four randomly selected schools in Abia State. A questionnaire was utilised to collect data from SMT members regarding the difficulties they encountered while implementing educational policies. The research findings uncovered that present school managers often struggled to meet the new managerial demands arising from the evolving educational landscape. The study recommended the retraining of School Management Teams to equip them with the necessary skills to fulfill their managerial roles effectively and contribute to achieving the nation's educational objectives.

Fitriah et al. (2013) investigated parental participation in the context of education decentralisation with regard to the changing situation in which the Indonesian government provides sufficient funds for school operational costs. Employing a qualitative approach, the research team collected data through document analyses, questionnaires, and interviews involving stakeholders from two public primary schools in Depok, Indonesia. The study revealed that before the initiation of the Free School Programme, parental participation primarily revolved around financial contributions and related matters. However, with the introduction of free education, parental involvement in school budgeting markedly decreased. Parents were no longer actively engaged in planning budget allocations, and both parents and school committees found their influence in decision-making greatly reduced. Even the roles of school committees were limited to endorsing the school budget without substantial input.

The Church of North India report (2018) stated that SMC must be constituted within six months of the appointed date and reconstituted every two years. SMC shall be composed of 75 per cent parents or guardians of children, out of which 50 per cent should be women. Proportionate presentations should be given to children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. The remaining 25 per cent shall be from amongst the elected members of the local authority, school teachers, and educationists. The maximum number of members for any government-aided school shall not be more than 15 whereas for unaided schools, it is 21. The total number of members of the committee varies from one school to another.

The spirit behind the formation of SMC is to involve all stakeholders, especially parents in the management of the school, who are considered primary stakeholders along with the students. Community participation is one critical factor that ensures the success of SMCs. Active community participation delivers more positive results compared to inactive community participation. Sharma, (2008) agreed that without the active involvement of the community in school management, quality improvement is not possible since education is the major concern of the community and their participation is essential. It has rich untapped resources beneficial for students and can relate and communicate to the community in all their diversity.

Policy Perspectives on Community Participation in Indian Context

Kantha and Narain (2003) conducted an examination of community mobilisation dynamics in Bihar state, focusing on the nature, extent, and conditions of community participation in various programmes and projects related to elementary education. Their review drew from several studies conducted in the region. In their initial study, they identified a fundamental issue with Village Education Committees (VECs) where members were often nominated by block education officers, and the Mukhia presided over the VEC. Training

efforts for VECs, as part of the Bihar Education Project (BEP), were found to be largely ineffective. Influential individuals within the village community often secured positions for themselves or their favourites.

In a subsequent study cited by Kantha and Narain, only two out of 20 VECs were found to be active and functional. The remaining VECs were either “dormant” or only functional when prompted. Interestingly, VECs in semi-urban settings and those with members from non-agrarian backgrounds or with higher education tended to perform better, in contrast to VECs where chairpersons and most members were landless wage labourers. The State Programme for Elementary Education Development (SPEED, 1998) showed some positive signs of community participation. This programme covered eight blocks in five districts of Bihar. Unlike the four-day training programme under BEP, SPEED extended the training period to up to 20 days in a given panchayat. Consequently, people began to engage in discussions on education-related issues. Women also actively contributed to the cause of education, exemplified by substantial public contributions, such as over one lakh rupees in Noorsarai block of Nalanda district.

Kantha and Narain also highlighted the indifferent or non-cooperative attitude of educational administrators as a major hindrance to the success or partial success of different community participation programmes. They emphasised the pivotal role of teachers in community participation and noted that non-adherence to VEC recommendations by district-level officials hindered community mobilisation efforts. The authors found that in areas where VECs were active and robust, improvements in teacher attendance and children’s enrollment rates were observed.

As mentioned in Kumar (2016) ‘Yirang (2007) in his study entitled “Impact of SSA on community participation in school management at primary level in the district of lower Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh” observed the insufficient community participation in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) despite its foundational necessity for success.

In the study by Jones, Lyytikainen, Mukherjee, and Reddy in 2007, the focus was on Village Education Committees (VECs) and Mother Committees (MCs) in Andhra Pradesh. The committees were observed to have increased public participation and contributed to some improvements in service quality. However, the study also identified certain deficiencies and obstacles, such as illiteracy, socio-economic disparities, and a lack of skills and resources among community members.

Awasthi and Patel’s 2008 study, conducted in four districts of Gujarat State, found that all sample schools had adhered to the norms outlined in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) framework when forming their committees, representing all community groups leading to a more inclusive and participative environment in the school functioning. The study highlighted the global trend of involving professionals in traditional public practices to achieve desired results, including in the education sector. Their research noted that while School Management Committees (SMCs) are well-established in private schools, community participation remains weak even when SMCs are formed. However, community participation is satisfactory in small government schools with established SMCs. They recommended that policymakers outline planning frameworks for SMCs and create awareness among parents and the community to enhance participation and ensure accountability and transparency, ultimately improving school efficiency.

In Sharma’s 2008 study on “Structures and Mechanisms of Community Participation in School Management,” the focus was on recognising the essential role of community involvement in enhancing educational quality. The government of Nepal made a significant decision to transfer school management authority to the community as part of a reform initiative to improve schools. However, this move faced opposition from the teaching force, a key component of the community. The author aimed to discuss the significance and importance of shifting management responsibilities to the community, considering both theoretical and practical aspects. Additionally, the study highlighted the benefits and prerequisites based on an analysis of international practices.

Prabakar and Rao (2011) conducted a study on school-based management, which included an analysis of the planning framework and community participation. A sample of 188 secondary schools – about 34 per cent of the population – was selected through a stratified sampling technique. The study’s findings indicated

that the planning framework in public schools was deficient, whereas it was well-established in privately-run schools. However, even though private schools had a structured planning framework in place, neither parents nor community members were actively engaged in the process.

Kernel Teron (2012) found that SMCs in Golaghat District of Assam followed guidelines, held regular meetings, and received training. Thus, the study was conducted to know the status of the awareness of the SMCs about their roles and functions and also to fill the gaps in the available research on community participation in elementary education.

The Oxfam India report (2015) states the integral role of community participation in implementing the RTE Act, 2009, emphasising the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs) in every school. Empowering parents through elected SMCs is crucial for school improvement, necessitating training and support for SMC members and the broader community. Despite the RTE Act's focus on SMCs, there has been a significant decline in local community involvement, leading to a disconnect between communities and schools, resulting in an overall decline in the schooling process. Efforts have been initiated by various education organisations nationwide to mobilise communities on education and RTE Act issues. Section 21 of the RTE Act mandates SMCs for all government, government-aided, and special category schools. Citizen participation is highlighted for its role in raising public awareness, fostering ownership of government policies, ensuring transparency and accountability, and empowering marginalised communities. SMCs, envisioned as a progression from Village Education Committees (VECs), aim to address issues of domination by officials, teachers, and elite groups.

However, field visits revealed widespread violations of SMC guidelines, with members often unaware of their roles and decisions made in fictitious meetings. Selection processes for SMC members were reported to occur without parental knowledge, often orchestrated by headmasters or teachers. This lack of awareness among parent members about their participation and decision-making further challenges the intended role of SMCs in promoting community engagement and calls for a re-evaluation of their implementation.

Prakash, M (2016), in his study, stated that School Management Committees (SMCs) play a critical role by emphasising on the significance of informed and empowered parental participation. Efforts to make parents aware of SMCs and educate them about their active role are crucial, considering potential resistance from educators and bureaucrats. NGOs have commendably contributed to this initiative, but the primary responsibility lies with the state to implement laws and translate citizens' rights into reality.

The failure to effectively implement provisions of the Right to Education Act regarding SMCs emphasises the need for proactive state intervention. The state's obligation to facilitate access to justice and empower citizens is crucial, particularly in the context of constitutionally guaranteed socio-economic rights, such as the right to education. Education's pivotal role among rights necessitates a balanced approach.

Administrative levels in India are involved in implementing the Right to Education Act, but bodies like the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights lack sufficient resources and legal powers. The judiciary, with binding decision potential, can address shortcomings in SMC conceptual frameworks and implementation. Rights advocacy groups can engage with courts to highlight deficiencies, but the judiciary must recognise the importance of socio-economic rights for this to be effective. Court decisions can catalyse changes that enhance parental roles in SMCs, reducing the need for external assistance.

The State Level School Management Convention in Uttar Pradesh, organised by the NGO coalition "SCORE," serves as a notable example of SMC potential. Such events provide platforms for members to share experiences, voice concerns, and collectively advocate for improvements, compensating for parents' limited means to claim rights. Supporting initiatives like these are crucial to preventing the right to education from remaining only on paper without effective agency and the ability to pressurise the state.

Kumar's (2016) study conducted in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh sheds light on the multifaceted challenges faced by School Management Committees (SMCs) in the region, encompassing issues related to the quality of education, capacity development, community participation, weak linkages with local bodies, and infrastructural limitations. These challenges resonate with broader literature emphasising the critical role

of SMCs in effective educational governance. The recommendations put forth by Kumar align with existing research, which highlights the importance of prolonged SMC terms i.e. comprehensive election processes, role clarification, and incentives for active participation. The study also supports initiatives like promoting convergence, facilitating school visits, empowering SMCs in managing essential programmes like the Mid-day Meal scheme, involving the community, providing teacher training, conducting regular supervision, and addressing infrastructure gaps.

According to the NCE report (2017), the mainstreaming of children into education is significantly facilitated by the pivotal role of School Management Committees (SMCs) across diverse states. Meghalaya's SMC members actively participate in encouraging parental involvement for improved school attendance, contrasting with West Bengal's approach where committee members collaborate with Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) workers to gather essential information about children and take responsive measures. In Gujarat, SMC members focus on motivating tribal communities to enhance overall school attendance.

In terms of school management, Meghalaya's SMC members exhibit effective practices through regular inspections and active engagement in school administration. They extend their impact by distributing essential teaching and learning materials, funding various necessities like books, uniforms, shoes, furniture, water coolers, and stationery items through village contributions.

Enrollment initiatives are notably active in Uttar Pradesh, particularly in Sonbhadra and Meerut districts, where SMCs play a crucial role in motivating parents, contributing to increased enrollment, and ensuring student regularity. Special initiatives like the 'School Chalo Abhiyan' drive further enhance enrollment efforts.

Infrastructure development initiatives in Punjab focus on safe transportation and proper sanitation, including separate toilets for boys and girls. Meghalaya's SMCs actively engage in cleaning drives, footpath construction, school compound leveling, sanitation awareness campaigns, and annual school sports events. These diverse efforts collectively highlight the comprehensive and impactful role of SMCs in advancing education and enhancing overall school conditions.

Rout and Sharma's 2018 study explored school management committees and the Right to Education Act, 2009. They highlighted the pivotal role of community participation in planning, implementing, and monitoring universal elementary education interventions. They stressed that SMCs, as a microcosm of society, can collaborate effectively with the broader community to achieve substantial progress in this endeavour.

The Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (2018) conducted a study highlighting the introduction of the "Swamya" module by the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) for School Management Committee (SMC) training. This module comprehensively covers aspects, such as the RTE, current education status, community involvement, School Development Plans (SDPs), grant utilisation, and account keeping. Both residential and non-residential community training sessions were organised, with a notable participant turnout, aiming to fortify SMCs through block-level non-residential training. JEPC's initiatives also encompass monthly SMC meetings, village Aam Sabhas every three months, and up-to-date account keeping at the block level. Special events like Bal Mela and VEC Sammelan were orchestrated to enhance women's participation, complemented by awareness campaigns through hoardings and posters. A significant development occurred during a state-level consultation in June 2015, where the Human Resource Development Department announced new guidelines, entrusting SMCs with sole responsibility for school management, Mid-Day Meals (MDM), student attendance, and timely class conduct.

While the "Swamya" module effectively addresses key areas, challenges persist in the cascade training method and the 'one size fits all' approach. The state's training approach lacks inclusivity and sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of SMC members. Acknowledging the diverse group undergoing training, a nuanced, inclusive, and hands-on training strategy is crucial for holistic capacity development. The quality of training should be inseparable from its inclusivity, emphasising intuitive methods like pictorial descriptions and role plays for enhanced understanding. The training process should focus on internalisation, breaking power barriers, and fostering a critical understanding of SMC powers and functions.

Mishra S and Rout S (2020) conducted a study on state of School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in Secondary Education in the tribal district of Koraput, Odisha. The findings revealed that more than 50 per cent of schools failed to establish SDMCs within the stipulated period following the issuance of letters by the Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha. A lack of awareness regarding the formation date of SMDCs was notable among functionaries other than teacher members. This ignorance was attributed to changes in membership, often caused by their children graduating from the school. Some members were found to represent both the School Management Committees (SMCs) and SMDCs simultaneously.

The scenario was particularly evident in upgraded High Schools, where members exhibited a higher interest in SMCs and confusion about SMDC formation. While SMC memberships generally adhered to guidelines, instances were noted where membership aligned with convenience rather than adherence to guidelines. Some schools featured parent members without current students, and PRI members who were not actively serving at the time of investigation.

Interviews with members identified common reasons for low attendance in SMDC meetings, including engagement in domestic work, lack of information about meetings, time constraints due to work hours, and inadequate awareness of roles and responsibilities. Further probing revealed specific causes for low attendance among different member-categories. Parent-members faced challenges due to unstable economic capacity, while women from SC/ST communities struggled with weak articulation power. Illiteracy or low education qualification also emerged as factors contributing to low attendance in regular SMDC meetings.

Exploring Institutional Dynamics within School Management Committees (SMCs)

Pramila Menon's survey in 1999 of the two districts in Haryana discovered that Village Education Committees (VECs) were established in accordance with the State Government's specified norms, with a particular emphasis on fulfilling women's membership requirements.

According to Ed. CIL (2002), Okendu (2012), and Rout (2014), the SMCs are found to be helpful in improving the overall performance of children. Furthermore, they have played a crucial role in increasing school enrollment rates and raising the standard of education.

Mehralizadeh et al. (2003) observed a gap in the performance of Village Education Committees and School Management and Development Committees in Karnataka's Dharwad district, with members often unaware of their roles. However, they emphasised that SMCs need time to establish themselves effectively, and trial-and-error methods can be applied during this period.

Bazik (2005), in his research entitled "Role and Functioning of School Committees in Improving Elementary Education - A Study of Mayurbhanj District in Orissa", suggested active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for more effective SMCs.

According to Banerjee et.al. (2010) the Village School Committee (VSC) in general has been identified as a potent institution for enhancing transparency and accountability in school management. However, the dynamics of Bihar's VSC differ due to its electoral process. Conducting secret ballot elections for VSC membership elevates its political significance, potentially raising awareness and political consciousness within the local community. Yet, the introduction of a democratic institution faces challenges in Bihar, where caste plays a pivotal role. Despite detailed norms governing VSC constitution, including specific reservations, the study emphasises the need for stronger links between VSC and the community to foster collective action. The study suggests that the current relationship between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and VSC is largely nominal, calling for a more embedded VSC in the local governance structure to ensure coordinated efforts and a shared understanding of education issues at the village level.

In Jharkhand, LEADS (Life Education and Development Support) and Multiple Action Research Group (MARG), operating in Odisha, respectively, demonstrate impactful initiatives in enhancing School Management Committees (SMCs). LEADS, established in 2005, takes a comprehensive approach to support SMCs, mirroring the successful Lokmitra model in Uttar Pradesh. SMC federations, in collaboration with community-based organisations, exert pressure on government institutions for effective implementation of the RTE Act. Despite initial challenges, LEADS' capacity-building efforts with SMCs lead to cooperative and actively engaged committees, contributing significantly to school improvement.

Similarly, MARG focuses on improving education for Muslim children in Cuttack, Odisha, addressing community mindset, poverty, and school quality. Collaborating with partner organisation BIRD, MARG conducts training for SMC members, emphasising the legal provisions of the RTE Act. The focus on legal empowerment aligns with MARG's commitment to stakeholder rights, ensuring SMCs are well-informed and empowered to address educational challenges. District-level interface meetings further facilitate collaboration between SMC members and education officials, fostering dialogue and issue resolution. These initiatives collectively underscore the crucial role of SMCs in advocating for and implementing positive changes in the education landscape.

Tripathi and Bajpai (2012) conducted research on Village Education Committees (VECs) in Uttar Pradesh and found that these committees did not align with the spirit of the Act. Members were often unaware of their duties, and there was a lack of reorganisation of these committees. The existing committees were not newly constituted, leading to a complete disengagement from school affairs, which hindered effective school functioning.

Mishra and Gartia's (2013) research focused on the administration of elementary education in Odisha and the role of School Management Committees (SMCs). It delved into how SMCs function in enhancing education quality. Their research revealed a disconnect between what was envisioned in the Act and its actual implementation. It also emphasised that SMC members recognised the need for training to effectively fulfill their roles.

According to Ayeni and Ibukun (2013), the School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) is a process that involves the delegation of power and authority to significant stakeholders. Their role is to carry out statutory responsibilities related to the administration, monitoring, evaluation, and review of education policy matters. This process aims to promote sustainable, goal-oriented governance and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities. Its ultimate goal is to achieve predefined standards and ensure quality learning outcomes in schools. Ayeni et al. also emphasised that decentralising decision-making in educational policy matters upholds democratic principles, encourages community participation, promotes equity, and integrates diverse local interests, and needs into school management

Despite the Right to Education Act stipulating parental role in SMCs, a significant number lack any parent members, with a 2013 study indicating that 40 per cent of SMCs in India fall into this category. Surveys in Delhi reveal widespread parental unawareness of SMCs, with challenges in inclusiveness, especially for women from marginalised groups. State attempts to empower SMC members, mainly parents, through training programmes often face poor implementation. Despite supportive laws, the state shows limited interest in strengthening these units, contributing to the lack of effective SMCs.

While some regions, like Himachal Pradesh, exhibit promising reports of effective parent involvement in SMCs, success is contingent on pre-existing community involvement in policy issues. This emphasises the challenging cycle in areas with low community participation, requiring proactive state facilitation for parents to effectively engage in SMCs and the rights implementation process.

Sadananda and Chandrasekhar's research in Karnataka revealed that all government schools had School Development Monitoring Committees, each consisting of nine members from parents and the community, including women and disadvantaged groups, as per government guidelines. Yet, when it came to meeting

frequency, the study revealed that not all members actively participated, with no meetings held in the past six months in some schools. Additionally, around ten per cent of schools had not maintained any records of their meetings.

School Management Committees (SMCs) assume various roles and responsibilities, with a focus on promoting gender equality and inclusive education at every school, ultimately aiming to increase the enrollment rates of both boys and girls. However, challenges arise when it comes to decentralising power. School principals often resist the idea of relinquishing greater control to the community, and some teachers perceive community participation as a threat (Yamada S., 2014). Furthermore, the frequency and attendance of SMC meetings vary significantly. While some committees meet monthly, others convene only once in three months. The overall frequency and attendance rates of these meetings are low. Some members are unaware of the meetings, while others cannot attend due to long distances or occupational constraints.

Verma and Singh's (2014) foundational study in Punjab acknowledges the scarcity of research on VECs in the region, laying the groundwork for subsequent investigations. The study underlines key dimensions, starting with a consensus on the imperative to develop effective monitoring and evaluation tools, ensuring the quality functioning of VECs and assessing their impact on educational outcomes in villages. The crucial involvement of Village Education Committees (VECs) in education programmes, emphasising the need for enhanced integration into initiatives dedicated to nurturing language, literacy, and educational skills among school-age children is highlighted. Additionally, the focus is laid on the need for VECs to provide support to families with young children, addressing educational needs, and considering broader socio-economic factors. Emphasising awareness-building within communities, collaborative efforts with teachers, active participation in enrollment and attendance campaigns, and community involvement, the study collectively offers insights and recommendations for the enhancement of education in rural areas.

In general, many schools and SMCs face financial constraints that limit their ability to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. According to Yamada, S. (2014), SMCs play a vital role in decentralising administrative and financial responsibilities to the local community, empowering them in decision-making. Khan (2006) emphasised that SMCs maximise both physical and human resources, fostering holistic school development through commitment and consensus. Often, schools require additional funding to enhance and deliver quality education, which the state or government may not always fully provide.

Dwivedi and Naithani (2015) argue that School Management Committees (SMCs) have been granted the authority to oversee school operations and entrusted with financial responsibilities. They emphasise the significance of community involvement in this context. To ensure that an SMC functions effectively, it is essential for the community to take a leading role in ensuring transparency and accountability within the SMC. Additionally, SMC members must fully comprehend their responsibilities to facilitate efficient operation.

The Oxfam report (2015) highlights Uttar Pradesh's regional initiatives to enhance School Management Committees (SMCs), emphasising Lokmitra's pivotal role. Despite challenges, Lokmitra facilitates SMC meetings, fosters parental engagement, and provides ongoing support for school improvement. The formation of Parent Associations at different administrative levels strengthens the collective voice of SMCs, contributing to parental advocacy. Challenges persist, including socio-economic differences and geographical barriers. While positive changes in schools have improved teacher-parent relations, there's a need for sustained efforts. Lokmitra's hope for a statewide movement hasn't fully materialised, with Federations remaining project-specific, lacking broader state or community-level adoption. Geographical constraints also hinder state-level advocacy in Raebareli.

Kumar (2016) conducted a case study on the roles and functioning of the School Management Committees of government middle schools in district Kullu of Himachal Pradesh. He found that SMC's have been given higher responsibilities and functions as enrolment, enrolment of out of children, retention till completion of elementary education, monitoring of school activities and preparation of school development plans.

As per Matthey (2016), there is a persistent knowledge gap between teachers and parents regarding School Management Committees (SMCs), even when these committees are established. Conflicts of interest may hinder information exchange, necessitating external efforts from the state or NGOs to bridge awareness gaps.

Parvaiz et al. (2016) examined SMC impact in Jhang district and noted that decisions made by school councils were not always effectively implemented.

In Kumar's 2016 examination of school management committees in government middle schools in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, it was observed that SMCs were entrusted with significant responsibilities, including achieving 100 per cent enrollment, addressing enrollment challenges, ensuring student retention until completing elementary education, monitoring school activities, and crafting school development plans.

As per Matthey (2016), there is noticeable correlation between the political influence of teachers and the sub-optimal learning outcomes of their students, as highlighted by research from Kingdon and Teal. Specifically, students taught by unionised teachers exhibit lower achievement levels compared to those taught by non-unionised teachers.

The proposed remedy in the 2005 Bill, aimed at breaking the political stronghold of government school teachers, by increasing parents' involvement. Empowering School Management Committees (SMCs), primarily composed of parents of students taught by these teachers, could have provided parents with the authority to impose sanctions on underperforming teachers, presenting a potent tool for accountability.

While the concept of SMCs having the ability to impose sanctions holds merit, the absence of additional safeguards to maintain a balanced distribution of power led to the removal of these potentially powerful measures in the later bill that resulted in the Right to Education Act of 2009. Political pressure from the influential "teachers lobby" is considered a significant factor in this alteration.

The need is for future efforts to focus on reintroducing such rights to SMCs, complemented by well-defined procedural safeguards. It is crucial to recognise that parents of children in government schools, often lacking formal education themselves, can effectively and responsibly exercise these powers with proper guidance and training. Breaking the political stronghold of teachers through SMC empowerment holds the potential to enhance accountability in the education system. Therefore, there's a call for ongoing efforts to reintroduce and refine such measures for a more effective and accountable educational landscape.

Laldintluangi's (2017) study identifies significant challenges in the structure and operation of School Management Committees (SMCs) in Lunglei. Notably, there exists a lack of consistency in SMC structures, as rules and regulations are not consistently adhered to during formation, leading to members unaware of their continued membership and overall disengagement. Tenure analysis indicates infrequent reconstitution, violating the mandated two-year requirement, and some SMC members have children not attending the relevant schools, highlighting a potential misalignment between personal interests and the committee's responsibilities. The inclination of many SMC members to enroll their children in private English-medium schools suggests a prevailing distrust in government schools' capacity to provide quality education and the perceived importance of English fluency for better job opportunities.

Further, the selection bias favouring high-income parents for guardian members raises concerns about neglecting issues faced by lower-income families in SMC meetings. Additionally, a lack of awareness about the SMC constitution, revealed through more appointments than elections, and varying levels of insight among SMC officials underscore the need for proper orientation and training. The study emphasises the challenge of ensuring quality education and overall school development through SMCs, pointing to non-participation in School Development Plans, and weak linkages with Village Education Committees and local bodies as notable concerns. In conclusion, Laldintluangi's findings advocate for a thorough reassessment of SMC structures, improved engagement strategies, and enhanced adherence to regulations to advance education quality and overall school development.

In Sethi and Muddgal's 2017 study, they sought to examine the roles of School Management Committee (SMC) members in implementing the Right to Education Act, 2009. This study adopted a descriptive survey approach and collected data from SMC members of Municipal Corporation Schools in Delhi. The RTE Act encourages parental and broader community involvement in school monitoring and decision-making. It mandates that SMCs consist of at least 75 per cent parents of children attending the school, with 50 per cent of them being female members. SMCs are vested with the authority to monitor school performance, formulate school development plans, and fulfil other functions as prescribed by state governments. During the study, the investigator discovered that most teachers and parents were unaware of the functioning of SMCs in their schools. Furthermore, school principals mentioned that SMC members did not actively participate in meetings, which often led to inconclusive outcomes.

The NCE India report (2017), conducting a regional analysis across five states, revealed a notable awareness among teachers and school administration regarding the significance and role of School Management Committees (SMCs). However, a disparity emerged, as head teachers exhibited a clear understanding of SMC roles, while SMC members lacked specific awareness of their responsibilities. In West Bengal, the emphasis was on school management and development, whereas in Gujarat, SMC roles included overseeing child enrollment, attendance, mid-day meal management, teacher regularity, infrastructure, uniform, and sanitation. Meghalaya highlighted additional responsibilities, such as maintaining meeting minutes, managing funds, and ensuring quality education. SMC members in group discussions discussed their role in awareness campaigns, parent meetings, home visits, and improving the girl child ratio in schools. Another notable aspect that emerges is the inconsistent frequency of School Management Committee (SMC) meetings. Respondents reported instances where they were uninformed about meetings, and the school administration conducted meetings without their presence. Furthermore, there is variability in training patterns across states, with West Bengal scoring the least. Section 22 mandates that every SMC should formulate a School Development Plan (SDP); however, upon inquiry, it was discovered that numerous schools not only failed to prepare SDPs but were also unaware of the existence of such plans.

School Management Committees (SMCs) are effective in most developing countries, and highly recommended. The influence of the environment and administrative situation can be unpredictable and various complexities can generate pressure and conflicts. Each situation requires examination and subsequent treatment in a systematic way. The SMCs make the education process dynamic. Quality education, a prerequisite to socio-culture and national development comes with proper management of the education processes. SMC removes mistrust and distance between people and schools by nurturing transparency of information and a culture of mutual respect and jointly pursuing improvement of school by sharing vision, process, and result (Nishimura, 2017). Nishimura (2017), in the context of community participation, highlighted its role in bridging the financial gap left by the government. As a practical step, a savings bank account is opened in the name of the respective SMDC for each school at a nearby branch of a nationalised bank.

Meher and Patel (2018) conducted research in Jharsuguda district in Odisha, finding that School Management Committees (SMCs) play diverse roles in enhancing elementary schools. They oversee scholastic and non-scholastic activities, monitor programmes like mid-day meals and health initiatives, and actively promote universal enrollment by educating students and parents on the importance of quality education. SMCs also track student attendance, combat dropout rates, and bridge the gap between schools and parents. The absence of separate toilets for girls is linked to higher dropout rates among female students (Oduwaiye & Bakwai, 2017).

The study of Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (2018) in Jharkhand based SMCs brings to light a partial alignment between School Management Committees (SMCs) and teachers in addressing school issues and devising strategies. However, conflict arises in schools with active SMC members, particularly concerning Mid-Day Meal (MDM) management. SMC involvement is viewed as intrusive due to an alleged nexus between Village Education Committee (VEC) members and teachers.

This divergence may be attributed to teachers' perceptions of SMC capacities. Teachers often see SMCs as lacking the ability to handle financial aspects like budgeting, fund allocation, and crafting School Development Plans (SDPs). This perception contributes to a sense of overburdening, especially in schools with teacher shortages, where educators must balance academic and administrative duties alongside SMC functions.

Furthermore, a noticeable discomfort emerges in the working relationship between male SMC members and female head teachers. SMC members express skepticism about the capability of female teachers to manage tasks requiring frequent travel to the district office, oversight of construction, and other perceived 'heavy and difficult' duties.

Baral, R., Sahu, N., and Meher, V. (2019) conducted a study whose findings revealed that the majority of parents and teachers agreed that the establishment of School Management Committees at the elementary level was a positive government initiative. Notably, there were significant differences in the attitudes of rural and urban parents toward the implementation of the School Management Committee. Rural parents displayed a more favourable attitude compared to their urban counterparts regarding SMC. Interestingly, there was no discernible difference between male and female teachers in their attitudes toward the School Management Committee's implementation; both groups held equally favourable views.

Rajbongshi, D. (2020) conducted a study in Assam, revealing that only a few surveyed schools had a register book for SMC members to document their activities. The study found minimal involvement of SMC members in enhancing children's learning success, with limited school visits. Notably, SMC members showed little attention to annual child enrollments. Overall, the study suggests dissatisfaction with the roles and functions of SMC in school management and improvement in LP schools. Monthly SMC meetings were often not organised according to rules, and there was variability in the number of parent members, with female participation below the recommended 50 per cent. Monitoring, supervision, and participation in School Development Plans were also lacking among SMC members.

Mishra and Rout's (2021) study proposes valuable recommendations for enhancing School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs). Their emphasis on orientation sessions for school leaders aligns with underscoring the pivotal role of informed leadership in effective school governance. Continuous training for SMDC members reflects the recognised need for ongoing education to ensure awareness of roles and responsibilities, fostering active involvement in school development. The suggestion for Travel Allowance (TA) and Daily Allowance (DA) to incentivise higher-level education officers advocates for financial incentives to increase stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of convenient meeting timings, periodic membership updates, and incentivizing non-teacher members, particularly parents, all resonating with established literature emphasising flexibility, sustainability, and community recognition as integral elements for active and committed committee participation. Lastly, the recommendation to circulate meeting agendas aligns with best practices, promoting transparency and informed discussions during meetings. Overall, these recommendations are in line with established principles of effective educational governance.

In the works of study by Ogunode, N. J., & Musa, A. (2021) and Ogunode, N.J., & Mohammed, Y. D. (2023) they outline the roles and responsibilities of School Management Committees (SMCs). SMCs are established to oversee school operations, including the preparation and review of School Development Plans. They also ensure financial accountability by reviewing grants received from central and state governments. Additionally, SMCs are involved in identifying and implementing projects, and the paper discusses their funding sources.

SMCs in the Context of Rajasthan

A study conducted by Accountability Initiative (2011) on the Paise project in Chaksu block, Rajasthan, revealed disparities between the de-jure system outlined in the RTE Act for School Management Committees (SMCs) and the de-facto scenario. SMCs were often established without general meetings, and executive committee members were selected by the Head Master (HM) without adequate consultation. Despite

official claims of SMC-specific training, the reality involved general training at block and nodal levels, with limited effectiveness and insufficient participation, particularly among women members.

Challenges in SMC functioning included a lack of awareness, limited understanding of roles and responsibilities, and constraints on teachers' workloads. Issues such as difficulty in organising meetings, low member turnout, and teachers having to seek signatures door-to-door were prevalent. This disconnect between norms and practices raises concerns about the evolution of SMCs as effective institutions for community participation in elementary education, underscoring the imperative for capacity development to address the existing gap.

The study underscored the potential of SMCs as guardian institutions in elementary education and prompted crucial questions about their active participation, potential politicalisation, and alignment with RTE Act expectations. The gap between norms and practice emphasised the ongoing need for efforts to enhance the capacity of SMCs, ensuring successful implementation and positive contributions to elementary education in villages.

Additionally, decentralised community mobilisation has positively impacted enrollment, but the inclusion of the most deprived communities, especially Children with Special Needs (CWSN), remains a challenge in the context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Despite highlighting the importance of inclusive education for CWSN, there is a gap in translating these ideas into concrete strategies on the ground. While attention has been given to constructing ramps, the diverse needs of children with various disabilities have not received equal consideration. Teachers lack the necessary training to address the varied needs of CWSN, and the role of resource teachers for CWSN requires further clarification.

According to a study by Save the Children (2013), the significant efforts implemented by Bodh Shiksha Samiti in the slums of Jaipur, Rajasthan, highlight a unique approach to education by fostering a fear-free environment through collaboration between teachers and the community. The continuous dialogue and home visits by teachers contribute to the integration of schools within the community, significantly improving the participation of marginalised groups. However, despite the success of this effort, there is a challenge in formalising and incorporating these lessons into the broader education system.

Case studies on DPEP schools in Rajasthan, reveal that exceptionally motivated Headmasters play a pivotal role in building active linkages with the community and effectively managing teachers. These studies underscore a synergistic relationship between head teachers and the community, demonstrating how mutual support and reinforcement can lead to positive outcomes. Additionally, research on local democracy emphasises the transformative impact of a proactive Headmaster and an active community-based organisation in turning around schools, providing opportunities for parent involvement.

Similar dynamics are observed in Assam, where the Bidya Jyoti initiative engages parents and community members through the Learning Improvement Programme. This platform enables the organisation of extra-curricular activities, remedial classes, and encouragement for children. The involvement of local mothers' groups in managing mid-day meals ensures the provision of hygienic and nutritious food to students.

The Jana Shikshan Adhiniyam serves as a comprehensive policy instrument for decentralisation. Since 2002, the power to manage schools has been devolved to Panchayats, including financial decentralisation under SSA. The Public Education Report prepared by Panchayats is presented to the District Administration, allowing Panchayats to make demands at the district level. The JSA Act outlines the roles of PTAs and Teachers' Associations, expecting them to ensure enrollment, monitor teacher attendance, mobilise local resources for teaching, monitor children's ongoing learning, organise remedial education, and mobilise resources for school-level needs. This legislative framework clarifies the rights and responsibilities of teachers, the community, and parents in delivering quality education.

A study conducted by the Save the Children foundation (2013) states that although there have been enhancements in enrollment due to community mobilisation initiatives and focused programmes, challenges persist in addressing academic aspects, learning outcomes, and effectively monitoring the teaching-learning processes in schools. Case studies indicate that Village Education Committees (VEC),

Mandal Parishad Territorial Committees (MPTCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) lack the capability for academic monitoring or providing support. Parents, often with low literacy levels, face challenges in actively participating in committees. Recognising these limitations, authorities in certain regions have introduced community members, such as Tola Sevaks, to supervise teaching-learning processes.

Low literacy levels among parents hinder their proactive involvement in committees, prompting the government to emphasise the importance of training and capacity development for committee members. However, on-the-ground implementation faces challenges as training programmes often lack alignment with community needs and are typically one-time efforts. Karnataka stands out as an exception, where the SSA, in collaboration with APF (Azim Premji Foundation), supports extensive capacity-building programmes for School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) members under the Namma Shaale initiative. Reports highlight that in many states, Block Resource Centre (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) personnel primarily focus on administrative duties assigned by seniors.

Arora, A. (2014) conducted a comprehensive Needs Assessment of School Management Committees (SMCs) in the Laxmangarh block of Alwar district in Rajasthan. This analytical research paper had a primary focus on examining the awareness and knowledge levels among SMC members. The research design employed for this project was Action Research Design, with a central focus on examining the functioning of SMCs and the extent of member participation in SMC activities. The report calculated the overall level of awareness and participation of SMC members using the weighted contribution factor method, yielding a figure of 40.47 per cent. The research exclusively relied on primary data collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative social research tools. The insights and primary data gathered from this research can potentially benefit IRRAD and other related social organisations' planning interventions in the field of education infrastructure development.

One significant observation is that SMCs require resources to enhance the capacity and awareness of their members, enabling them to assess the needs and requirements for effective learning. The development of guidelines and checklists at different levels (national/state/district) is necessary to provide SMCs with a framework. It's noteworthy that many SMCs lack awareness regarding children's access, participation, and attainment levels in their areas, highlighting the need for coordinated child-related programmes with schools as the central agency. SMCs should act as the apex planning and implementing body to oversee children's well-being and education rights. Sharing school development plans in Gram Sabha (village council meetings) is crucial.

Further, community participation is essential for the smooth operation of schools, relying on active involvement from parents and community members, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, to establish an inclusive education system that addresses "meaningful access." SMCs should contribute to a local-level social audit system. Additionally, media campaigns, including hoardings, posters, print, and electronic media discussions, should engage more people in school functioning. Lastly, financial support from the government is necessary to facilitate the smooth operation of SMCs and the implementation of school development plans, as envisioned by the recent Right to Education Act.

Mbuva (2015) highlights the significance of training SMC members as they have the potential to positively influence both staff and teacher motivation, turning their role into more than just a formality. TISS (2011) reported that in Rajasthan, all SMC members, including children, actively participated in SMC training programmes. But, despite significant initiatives aimed at improving government schools in Rajasthan, the frequency of school committee meetings remains low, and little progress has been made in addressing this issue.

Numerous scholars have conducted comprehensive research on the phenomenon of School Management Committees (SMCs) within the educational landscape of Rajasthan. A particular focus has been placed on the noteworthy success of the Lok Jumbish programme, which serves as a paradigmatic illustration of effective community participation. Sunita Chugh's seminal study in 2021, spanning 1,204 members of

School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs) across 16 districts in Rajasthan, attests to the meticulous adherence to prescribed procedures in the selection of these committees.

An essential observation from the study is that approximately 75 per cent of SMC members acquire nuanced insights into their roles and responsibilities through dedicated training initiatives. These initiatives predominantly include school-based training programmes specifically tailored for SMCs. This scholarly discourse delves into the nuanced nature of SMC training, categorising its diverse types, and critically examines both the inherent challenges and attendant benefits associated with these programmes.

Furthermore, a meticulous analysis is undertaken to determine various training approaches employed across disparate states, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the educational governance landscape. A salient finding from the study is the active participation of SMC members in critical discussions pertaining to the annual budget and the establishment of joint SMC bank accounts. This participatory engagement is particularly notable in nine districts of Rajasthan, namely Bharatpur, Bundi, Churu, Dausa, Dholpur, Hanumangarh, Jaipur, Karauli, and Sawai Madhopur, thereby emphasising the localised efficacy of the SMC framework in fostering educational governance.

Chapter III

Research Methodology

The research sought to investigate the role of School Management Committees, particularly in habitations with significant Scheduled Caste (SC) populations. Additionally, understanding the intricate relationship between social dynamics and school management was also given due significance.

The study was concentrated in two Blocks within the Jhalawar district, Rajasthan: Bakani, categorised as an Educationally Backward Block (EBB), and Khanpur, designated as a non-Educationally Backward Block (non-EBB). In Bakani Block which comprises of 41 panchayats, 12 SC concentrated habitations, and in Khanpur Block, which includes 38 panchayats, 14 habitations were investigated.

A mixed research approach, primarily employing a Descriptive Research Design was incorporated. This design consisted of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including school profiling, observations, and surveys, as the means of data collection. The primary source of information stemmed from questionnaires, forming the cornerstone of the study. The goal was to empirically validate assumed conditions, and this was achieved through the mechanism of questionnaires and interviews. The central objective revolved around providing a comprehensive and accurate representation of the study's participants, entailing a thorough exploration of specific individuals and groups within the targeted population.

Research Questions

1. How does the social composition of SC and non-SC communities in EBB and non-EBB villages relate to and impact school management?
2. What is the attitude of school management members and the headmaster towards SC children in EBB and non-EBB villages, and how does it affect their education?
3. To what extent are school management members involved in developing and implementing the government schemes with the support of educational authorities in EBB and non-EBB villages?
4. How inclusive is the functioning of school management at the village level for the SC population in EBB and non-EBB areas?
5. What is the level of participation of SC members in training programmes for SMCs in EBB and non-EBB villages?
6. Are there any differences in the resources and support provided by educational authorities to schools in EBB and non-EBB villages, and how does this impact school management?
7. What is the essential infrastructure present in the selected government schools, and how do they vary across different schools?
8. What is the status of schools with respect to WASH?
9. How does the enrollment of students from various social categories differ within the selected government schools?
10. What is the level of digital accessibility and technology infrastructure available in the chosen government schools, and how does it impact the learning environment?

11. What is the qualification and expertise of teachers in the selected government schools, and how does it relate to the quality of education provided to students?
12. What is the representation of different genders among both students and teachers in these government schools, and its effect on the educational experience for the students?

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the kind of social composition, its relation and impact on school management in the EBB and non-EBB villages.
- To study the functioning of school management and the attitude of the members of the school management and the headmaster towards the children coming from the SC community in the EBB and non-EBB.
- To study the involvement of the school management in developing the SDP and implementing it with the help of the educational inputs provided by the BEO, DEO, DIET and SIERT in the EBB and non-EBB.
- To study how inclusive is the functioning of the school management at the village level for the SC population in the EBB and non-EBB.
- To evaluate the content and methodology as well as impact of the training programmes for the SMCs and to assess participation rate of the SC members in the training programmes in the EBB and non-EBB villages.

Sampling Method

The research methodology in this study concentrated on data collection through two distinct sampling methods: purposive and stratified random sampling. The district was stratified based on the SC population, resulting in the selection of two blocks, one EBB (Educationally Backward Blocks) and one non-EBB. Further investigation was carried out by in-depth study of one village from each selected block to assess issues related to caste composition in school management. The research examined the social dynamics, particularly the proportion of SC population at various levels, with a primary emphasis on SC children, parents, and teachers. Seven schools from both the selected blocks were selected randomly for data collection.

To gain insights into caste barriers in education, information was gathered from Block Education Officers (BEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs) regarding their monitoring efforts and the organisation of training programmes for school management. Additionally, data was collected from the organisers of training programmes and resource persons, including details on the training modules, participation rates of SC members, workshop locations, encountered problems, and suggestions for modifying training. Feedback on training from participants belonging to other categories was also a key aspect of the research.

Data Collection Method

Primary Data: The research employed a mixed-method approach (both quantitative and qualitative tools) with a particular emphasis on field analysis and the use of questionnaires as the primary sources of information.

- Conducted a survey, selecting two villages for in-depth study based on SC population concentration.
- Use of a structured questionnaire with a list of specific options for a uniform analysis.
- Conducted Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) to capture community members and parents' perceptions regarding VECs/SMDs functioning and to prioritise community challenges in school management.
- Checklists prepared to gather information from education functionaries, including state-level functionaries (SPD, Component In-Charge), district-level functionaries (DPC, Component In-Charge), block-level functionaries (BEOs, BRCs, BRPs), CRC Coordinators, CRPs/Master Trainers, etc.
- Considered the number of clusters in the block, and took up approximately 50 per cent or all if fewer clusters existed, based on SC population representation.

- Focused on the share of SC population in the village and its representation in school management.
- *Household Survey* conducted in two blocks to form the basis for selecting in-depth study villages.
- Developed *case studies* for select schools to illustrate social dynamics impacting school management.

Secondary Data: office records, plan documents, progress reports, etc.

- Examination of documents, such as State Panchayat Acts, policy reforms on educational decentralisation, and school management guidelines.
- Review of training modules and SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) progress reports from districts and states.
- Information on policies, rules, regulations, and school management roles and functions collected from district-level offices.

Chapter IV

Profile of State, District and Selected Blocks

Education plays a crucial role in building human capital. As of the 2011 census, India's literacy rate stands at 74 per cent, yet it has the largest number of illiterate individuals globally, with 282 million people lacking basic literacy skills. The country hosts approximately 1.5 million schools, employing 9.6 million teachers to educate around 260 million students. Government schools account for 70 per cent of these institutions, with the government actively promoting universal education. Unfortunately, the annual dropout rate in India was 14 per cent in the year, exacerbated by the pandemic. The country's gross enrolment ratio is around 99 per cent. Government initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act have worked to address educational disparities, although the increasing privatisation of schools poses challenges. A report from Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) reveals that about 19 per cent of primary school enrolment comes from Scheduled Caste students, while Scheduled Tribe students make up 11 per cent of total enrolment.

State Profile

Rajasthan, India's largest state by area (342,239 sq. km), houses a population of 6.86 crore as per the 2011 census. Known for its vibrant culture and heritage, it boasts a rich Rajput legacy and numerous forts. The state is divided into nine regions, each with its unique history. Alongside its cultural wealth, Rajasthan is home to natural wonders like the Keoladeo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for birdlife, and two national tiger reserves. Rajasthan exhibits diverse climates, with lush greenery in the east, and desert landscapes in the west, attracting visitors from across the world.

Rajasthan consists of 50 districts and 302 blocks, with 186 blocks falling under Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs). To delve into the issue at hand, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of two villages, one from an EBB and the other from a non-EBB, both located in the Jhalawar district of Rajasthan. The objective was to uncover the factors and causes contributing to the mentioned problem by exploring the intricate relationship between social dynamics and school management, with a focus on ensuring quality education for all children. Notably, the selected district of Jhalawar exhibits a literacy rate of 67 per cent, with males at 76 per cent and females at 47 per cent. If one looks at the district in the context of EBBs, Jhalawar district has eight blocks comprising of four EBBs and four non-EBBs as illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Block Details in Jhalawar

Sl. No.	State Name	District Name	Block/Taluk Name	EBB/Non-EBB
1	Rajasthan	Jhalawar	Bakani	EBB
2			Dag	EBB
3			Jhalarapatan	EBB
4			Manoharthana	EBB
5			Aklera	Non-EBB
6			Bhawanimandi	Non-EBB
7			Khanpur	Non-EBB
8			Pirawa Hq Sunel	Non-EBB

Source: Government of India (2023)

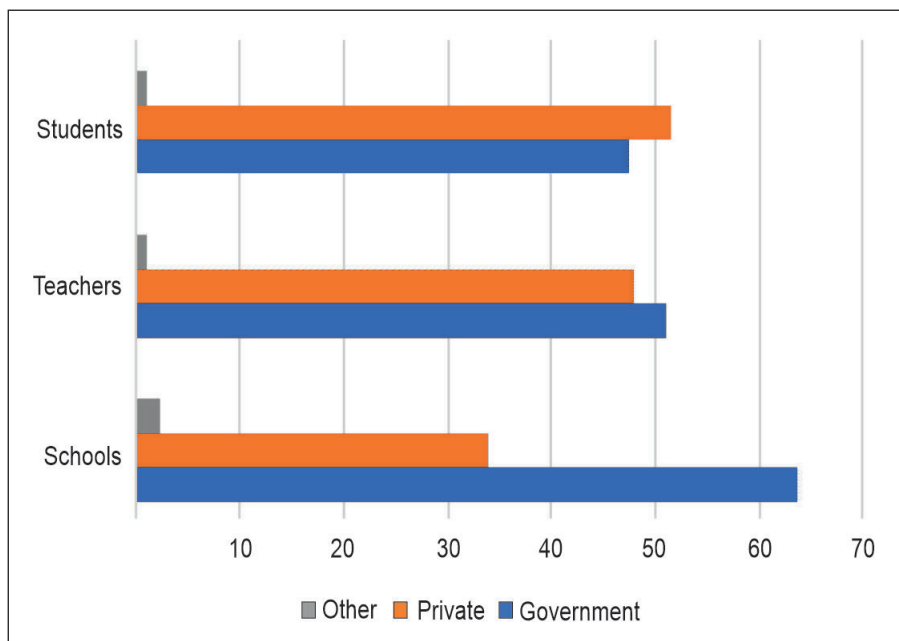
Once considered among the BIMARU states, Rajasthan is gradually progressing. It contributes four per cent to India’s GDP, with a per capita income of US\$1660, ranking 22nd nationally. In terms of health, the state stood at the sixteenth rank in National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog’s health index report for 2019-20, showing improvements in maternal and infant mortality rates. The state’s economy relies on agriculture, industries, and a thriving tourism sector, with valuable mineral resources like zinc, fluorite, and marble. Rajasthan is renowned for providing the marble used in the majestic Taj Mahal and is the largest cement-producing state in India. Areas bordering the NCR region, such as Bhiwadi, are emerging as industrial hubs.

Education Landscape in Rajasthan

Rajasthan’s literacy rate stands at 66 per cent (2011 census), with male literacy at 79 per cent and female literacy at 52 per cent. The state boasts of 107,376 schools, accommodating 17,857,457 students, supported by 755,673 teachers. Government schools make up 64 per cent of the total, and the state houses the highest number of universities in the country, including Kota, a favoured destination for IIT aspirants. While the gross enrolment ratio for 2019-20 was lower than the national average (23per cent vs. 27 per cent), it’s noteworthy that female enrolment surpassed male enrolment, demonstrating progress in a traditionally patriarchal society. Rajasthan ranked second in NITI Aayog’s school education quality index, and third in the National Achievement Survey (NAS), trailing only Kerala and Punjab.

However, concerning issues persist. Female literacy remains one of the lowest in the country, and the gender parity index for higher education is below the national average. Rajasthan’s pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is higher than the ideal at 29, compared to the national average of 26. Reports indicate a significant number of vacant higher education seats. Despite having 50 universities, only two make it to the top 100 in the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF), highlighting a need to balance quantity with quality. Infrastructure in state schools reflects 97 per cent providing separate girls’ toilets, 65 per cent having libraries, and 16 per cent lacking electricity connections, mainly in government schools. While only 38 per cent of schools offer some form of medical facilities, raising concerns about children’s safety.

Figure 4.1: Total Number of Schools, Teachers and Schools in the State (%)



Source: UDISE+ Data, Government of India (2022)

District Profile – Jhalawar

Jhalawar is the name of both the district and its headquarters. The name Jhalawar comes from ‘land of Jhalas’ believed to be the clan of the brave Chauhan Rajput warriors. It has witnessed a number of historical events, some of them still unexplored. The region attracts many scholars of archeology and history who try to unearth the region’s rich valiant past. The British, in 1838, separated Jhalawar state from the Kota state and gave it to Jhala Madan Singh, the first ruler of Jhalawar. The town is also famous for Jhalrapatan temple located in the suburb of the town.

The district is located in the south-east corner of Rajasthan at the edge of Malwa plateau. It is surrounded by Madhya Pradesh from two sides. The district consists of fertile plains having black soil. There are also many rivers which drain through the area namely Kali Sindh, Ijad Ahu, Parvan, Chavli, etc. The Aravalli hills, which are the most ancient folded mountain range in India, crosses the region, roughly dividing the plains of Hadoti from the Malwa plateau. These hills and the surrounding areas were once thickly forested and teemed with wildlife. The oldest folded mountain Aravalli runs through the region.

The population of the district is 1411129 with males about 725143 and females numbering 685986. Majority of people resides in the rural areas totaling about 84 per cent. The total literacy of the district is about 52 per cent. Out of which 64 per cent and 39 per cent of males and females respectively are literate. The total number of schools in the district are 2283 as illustrated in Table 4.2. It can be deciphered that the maximum number of schools are under the Department of Education amounting to 946 local body and private aided schools.

Table 4.2: Number of Schools in the District by Management

S. No.	School Management	PS (I-V)	UPS (I-VIII)	HSS (I-XII)	UPS (VI-VIII)	HSS (VI-XII)	SS (I-X)	SS (VI-X)	SS (IX-X)	HSS (IX-XII)	Total
1.	Department of Education	16	598	282	4	5	37	3	0	1	946
2.	Tribal Welfare Department	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
3.	Local body	745	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	747
4.	Private Unaided (Recognised)	48	280	63	1	0	96	0	1	0	489
5.	Social Welfare Department	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
6.	Kendriya Vidyalaya/Central School	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7.	Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
8.	Madarsa recognised by Wakf Board/ Madarsa Board	47	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52
9.	Overall	856	885	346	5	8	133	3	1	1	2238

Source: UDISE+ Data, Government of India (2022)

According to 2011 Census, area-wise Rajasthan is the largest state in India followed by Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Rajasthan is rich in culture and heritage due to which it is an attractive place for the people around the world. In spite of its rich inheritance, Rajasthan had been substantially backward in the educational sphere. Thus, considered as a BIMARU state in the famous PROBE Report, one often wonders for the reasons for its educational backwardness, which needs exploration.

The Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 has played a significant role in getting children to the schools across the nation. In Rajasthan too, the RTE has made an impetus by fostering major responsibilities on the School Management Committee (SMC) and other educational institutions working at the grassroots level to make it a reality. On the same lines, the Government of India has identified the Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where concerted efforts are made to make education for all - a reality.

The Ministry of Education is implementing various schemes in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), such as Model Schools, construction of Girls hostel, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs), etc. These EBBs blocks have been identified by following methodology: initially a list of 3073 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) was drawn up in connection with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This was arrived at on the basis of twin criteria of Female Literacy Rate (FLR) being below the national average of 46.13 per cent and Gender Gap in Literacy being above the national average of 21.59 per cent. Both these criteria had been earmarked by the Office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner (RGI). Subsequently, this list was expanded to include 406 more blocks, out of which, 404 blocks were having rural FLR of less than 45 per cent, irrespective of the Gender Gap. Besides, one SC concentration block from West Bengal with SC Rural FLR on 19.81 per cent and one ST concentration block in Odisha with ST rural FLR of 9.47 per cent were also included, taking the total number of EBBs to 3479.

The onus of reaching the goal of universalising education though lies majorly with the government yet the community as a major stakeholder can be a key player in realisation of this goal. The decentralisation of education is a move to involve communities for which various institutions are created to develop and monitor the functioning of schools. The clear roles are defined for all such institutions namely Village Education Committee (VEC), School Management Committee (SMC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and many more. Since the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA), the members from SMC have benefitted from various training and capacity development programmes.

Within the context outlined earlier, this study aims to investigate the influence of the School Management Committee's (SMC) composition concerning caste dynamics in school management. Rajasthan, as per the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976, has 59 Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the state, comprising 17 per cent of the population, and 13 per cent Scheduled Tribes (STs). Census data from 2011 indicates an overall literacy rate of 67 per cent in the state, with male literacy at 81 per cent, and female literacy at 52.12 per cent.

Furthermore, this study specifically targeted habitations in the district with a significant population of Scheduled Castes (SCs). The district comprises a total of 1,586 habitations, out of which, 128 are concentrated with SC populations. These SC-concentrated habitations are situated in the Blocks of Manoharthana, Dag, Khanpur, Jhalrapatan, Pirawa, and Bakani. Among these Blocks, two are designated as non-Educationally Backward Blocks (non-EBB), namely Khanpur and Pirawa, while the remaining four fall under the category of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB), including Manoharthana, Dag, Jhalrapatan, and Bakani. For the purposes of this study, Bakani Block (EBB) and the Khanpur Block (non-EBB) were selected.

In the Bakani Block, there are a total of 41 panchayats, whereas in the Khanpur Block, there are 38 panchayats. Within these Blocks, SC-concentrated habitations are as follows: Khanpur has 14 such habitations, and Bakani has 12. Table 4.4 provides the names of the Panchayats along with the number of SC-concentrated habitations in the two selected Blocks.

Table 4.3: Number of SC-Concentrated Habitations in Selected Blocks

Sl. No.	Block	Panchayat	Total Habitations	Number of SC- Concentrated Habitations
1	Bakani	Ratlai	2	1
		Agariya	12	2
		BorkheriGoojran	15	1
		Umriya	6	1
		Bans KheriLodhan	9	1
		Reejhon	7	1
		Jheekariya	10	1
		Devri	12	1
		Barbar	6	1
		Barkhera Kalan	6	1
		Kheriya	5	1
2		Khanpur	Karanwas	5
	GadarwadaDoondi		6	2
	Mori		6	1
	Jolpa		7	2
	Bagher		6	1
	Sojpur		6	1
	Bishan Kheri		4	1
	Maraita		7	1
	Piplaj		7	1
	Baisar		4	2
	Leemi		7	1

Source: Census 2011.

School level committees have been created in almost all the states, they are known by different names: Village Education Committee, School Management Committee, School Development and Management Committee, Parent-Teacher Association, Academic Monitoring Committee, etc. However, the RTE Act does not include school level planning. They are involved mainly in supervision of civil works, mid-day meals, monitoring enrolment and attendance of children, and mobilising resources for school supplies and furniture. The SMCs play a crucial role as it has a positive impact on the enrolment and attendance of children. It also monitors the availability of school infrastructure and facilities and leads to a significant improvement based on the

continuous analysis through regular visits. Parents and special focused groups are encouraged by the SMCs to send their children to school. But this is not always the outcome of all the SMCs across the nation.

It is important to explore the relationship between school management and local level to comprehend the impact of social dynamics on school operations. In Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), the issues are notably intricate due to the social composition encompassing caste, gender, ethnicity, and religion. Therefore, an examination of school management in EBBs is essential to assess its influence on the regional literacy rate. Identifying areas requiring awareness and capacity development to enhance school functionality is imperative. Furthermore, it's essential to contextualise the school authorities regarding their social proximity to SC population students.

The objective of the study is to illustrate how social composition influences school management and to explore the impact of caste in forming School Management Committees (SMCs). It aims to analyse the dominant influence within SMCs, taking caste awareness and dominance into account, and investigate the factors influencing SMC decisions, with a specific emphasis on whether Scheduled Caste (SC) groups feel empowered and content with their participation in the SMC.

Given these considerations, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of school management in the context of existing social dynamics and evaluate the extent to which its intended goals have been achieved. Additionally, it will assess the role of individuals in the School Development Plan group and their connections with the Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) and Block Resource Centre (BRC) regarding educational support.

Chapter V

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The School Management Committees (SMCs) play the prominent role in ensuring effective school management as the key management structure and stakeholders. For assessing their effectiveness, a comprehensive analysis of two selected blocks in Rajasthan, namely Bakani and Khanpur undertaken for the study, are analysed and compared under the following five key areas:

1. Educational Infrastructure
 - Basic Facilities and Sanitation Infrastructure
 - Digital Infrastructure
2. Enrolment
3. Distribution of District Compensatory Fund (DCF)
4. Teacher Qualification
5. Teacher Appointments and Gender Representation

Each key aspect is examined separately based on the data gathered as explained in Chapter 4. Following this, a comparative analysis is conducted to help us gain insight into the distinctions between an educationally backward block (Bakani) and a non-educationally backward block (Khanpur).

Educational Infrastructure

The study encompasses the careful selection of seven government schools in both Bakani and Khanpur, taking into account their classification as rural or urban institutions. Furthermore, the inclusion of schools with varying establishment years provided a glimpse into the historical evolution of educational infrastructure within the region. Table 5.1 presents a comprehensive summary of government primary schools in Bakani and Khanpur blocks respectively, offering information about their founding years, building status, and the existence of School Management Committees. This table offers valuable insights into the distribution and characteristics of current government schools in the area.

Table 5.1: Selected Schools in Blocks

Sl. No.	Bakani (EBB)		Khanpur (Non-EBB)	
	Name of the School	Year of Establishment	Name of the School	Year of Establishment
1.	G.P.S., Sanvalpura	2005	G.P.S., Ummedpura	1999
2.	G.P.S., Sawakho	2013	G.P.S., Potukhedi	1961
3.	G.P.S., Devdungari	1962	G.P.S., Thikariya	1999
4.	G.P.S., Mokham Pura	2004	G.P.S., Khuntkheri	1999
5.	G.P.S., Barkhedi	1995	G.P.S., Kunged	1993
6.	G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	1995	G.P.S., Anghora	1998
7.	G.P.S., Banskheri	1995	G.P.S., Jagdishpura	1995

Source: UDISE + Data and Shaala Darpan

Each school's existence of the School Management Committee (SMC) is highlighted. An SMC is essential in school governance and administration, increasing community engagement in school management. The presence of numerous government schools in both Bakani and Khanpur reflect the government's dedication to delivering education to the local community. The range of establishment years also highlights the region's historical development in this regard. In terms of basic facilities and infrastructure, Bakani and Khanpur schools exhibit variations.

As per UDISE data, Bakani has a total of 16 classrooms, with 12 in good condition, two needing minor repair, and two needing major repair. Additionally, Bakani has nine other rooms, libraries available in all schools, some schools equipped with a separate room for the Headmaster (HM), drinking water available in all schools, rainwater harvesting not universally present, a playground in some schools, furniture not available in all schools, electricity accessible in all schools, and no solar panels. Medical checkup facilities are available in some Bakani schools. On the other hand, Khanpur has 15 classrooms, with nine in good condition, three needing minor repair, and three needing major repair. Khanpur has three other rooms, libraries available in all schools, separate room for the Headmaster in some schools, drinking water available and functional in all schools, no rainwater harvesting universally, playgrounds available in all schools, furniture in one school, electricity in all schools, and no solar panels. Medical checkup facilities are not available in any Khanpur school.

There are both commonalities and distinctions between the schools in Bakani and Khanpur blocks in terms of their facilities and infrastructure:

- Bakani block boasts of a greater number of classrooms, whereas Khanpur block has a higher percentage of classrooms in good condition.
- Both blocks are equipped with libraries and offer similar access to drinking water.
- Khanpur block has a higher number of schools with playgrounds but rainwater harvesting systems were not available.
- Electricity is accessible in all schools in both blocks, but none of the schools has solar panels.
- While medical checkup facilities are available in some Bakani block schools, but no school in Khanpur block offers this service.

Every school's SMC demonstrates unique characteristics that contribute to comprehensive decision-making within the educational context. There is a lack of uniformity in the presence of sub-committees, with notable distinctions. For example, G.P.S., Banskheri is the only school represented on the Sub-committee for Learner Welfare and the School Environment, highlighting their focus on student well-being and the overall school environment. Similarly, G.P.S., Potukhedi stands as the sole school represented on the Community Participation Sub-committee, indicating their particular emphasis on community involvement.

The SMCs serve as critical units in fostering community engagement and overseeing the school administration. The participation of various stakeholders promotes a sense of responsibility, accountability, and openness in decision-making processes, which, in turn, aids the educational system.

The data analysis establishes the diverse methods employed by different schools to select School Management Committee (SMC) members, highlighting their unique approaches to ensure effective governance. While parent's involvement is consistent, representation of other stakeholders like teachers and government officials varies. The involvement of parents varies, in some instances, parents would leave the SMC when their children left the school, while in others, they continued their involvement.

It's crucial to understand that the composition of SMCs is an ongoing process, and the schedules for appointments vary across different schools. It was observed that monthly/bimonthly SMC meetings were prevalent in all the schools, indicating their commitment to continuous communication for informed decision-making.

The analysis further highlights the responsibility of school staff, particularly headmasters, in maintaining records of SMC meetings. In one instance, the PTA head handles record-keeping, which displays the collaborative school governance. Various purposes for maintaining written records have been identified, including accountability, transparency, and future planning. All the schools had a range of reasons, from meeting requirements set by higher authorities to aiding in setting agendas and referencing prior discussions.

The challenges observed by SMCs revolved around lack of funding and inadequate cooperation from parents with regard to taking responsibility for their child's attendance. All SMCs received external assistance from school administration, NGOs, or the Government, indicating a commitment to enhancing school management efficiency and learning outcomes through external support.

In conclusion, SMCs play a pivotal role in tasks like identifying school needs, overseeing construction projects, ensuring enrollment, and monitoring student attendance and performance. The generally positive ratings across different aspects reveal their dedication to effective school management and providing an optimal environment for student growth and development.

Inferences from the field regarding School Management Committee (SMC) meetings provide valuable insights into the content and discussions held during these sessions. These observations allow for a summary of the topics addressed and the areas covered in SMC meetings.

On December 3, 2022, a Saturday, Mr. X presided over a regular SMC meeting where all participants, including the village community, engaged in a discussion on "The rise of education in Rajasthan." Participants with a support base were requested to complete tasks promptly, addressing essential activities and the issue of students attending school irregularly. Strategies to encourage regular school attendance were considered. The meeting was productive, and concluded on a positive note. In closing, the headmaster expressed gratitude to everyone for their attendance and participation. (From a school in Khanpur)

On January 21, 2023, at RPV Aamjhar Kalan, a Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) took place. During this meeting, the report cards for the first and second grades were presented, and this was done in the presence of all the students and teachers who were in attendance. Information regarding the students' performance levels and strategies to enhance the learning of those, who were struggling, was shared with the parents. Furthermore, parents were given detailed information about the Midday Meal (MDM) programme. (From a school in Bakani)

On March 21, 2023, the tenth meeting of the session 2022-23 was organised at the local school, with participation from SMC members and school staff. During the meeting, several key points were discussed and unanimously approved.

- *A discussion concerning the upcoming annual examination (SA3) took place, with an emphasis on parents encouraging their children to study at home to perform well in the examination.*
- *The annual board examination for the 5th grade, scheduled for April, was deliberated upon. Parents were urged to ensure that their children arrive at the examination centre on time.*
- *The RKSMBK (Rajasthan Ke Shiksha Me Badhte Kadam i.e., Steps to Increase Education in Rajasthan) APP was discussed, focusing on re-evaluating the work and uploading the OCR of students who were absent during the second and first assessments. It was decided that students who were absent from these assessments would need to re-take them online.*

- Irregular student attendance was a topic of concern during the meeting. SMC members, along with guardians, addressed this issue, explaining the importance of regular school attendance and encouraging students to attend regularly.
- The utilisation of funds in the SNA (Student Nutrition and Activities) was discussed, and it was confirmed that the money and various items in the Sana Rashi fund were used effectively.

Basic Facilities and Sanitation Infrastructure

Basic facilities and sanitation infrastructure in schools is vital for students' health and well-being. Clean and functional toilets and handwashing stations promote hygiene and reduce the spread of diseases. They ensure students' comfort and dignity, which can positively impact attendance and concentration, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education. It also addresses gender equity, as separate and functional toilets for girls ensure their privacy and dignity, encouraging them to attend school regularly. Moreover, in the context of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, proper school sanitation facilities play a role in promoting cleanliness and hygiene practices, which can extend to the wider community, creating a healthier and more sustainable India.

Tables 5.2 (a) and 5.2 (b) provide details about the essential amenities and infrastructure available at selected government schools in Bakani and Khanpur respectively. These highlight various facilities and components crucial for creating a conducive learning environment and ensuring the well-being of students.

Table 5.2 (a): Basic Facilities and Sanitation Infrastructure, Bakani

Name of the School	Total (Excluding CWSN)		Functional		Urinal		Handwash Near Toilet	Handwash Facility for Meal
	B	G	B	G	B	G	For All	For All
G.P.S., Sanvalpura	1	1	1	1	2	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Sawakho	1	1	1	1	2	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Devdungari	1	1	1	1	1	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Mokham Pura	1	1	1	1	1	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Barkhedi	1	1	1	1	1	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	1	1	1	1	1	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Banskheri	1	1	1	1	1	1	Yes	Yes

Source: Shaala Darpan B - Boys and G - Girls

The data for each school in Bakani block has all the facilities related to hygiene except functional CWSN-friendly toilets as illustrated in Table 5.2 (a).

Table 5.2 (b): Basic Facilities and Sanitation Infrastructure, Khanpur

Name of the School	Total (Excluding CWSN)		Functional		Functional CWSN-Friendly		Urinal		Handwash Near Toilet	Handwash Facility for Meal
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	For All	For All
G.P.S., Umedpura	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Potukhedi	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Thikariya	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Khuntkheri	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Kunged	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Anghora	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	Yes	Yes
G.P.S., Jagdishpura	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	Yes	Yes

Source: Shaala Darpan B - Boys and G - Girls

The data for each school in Khanpur block has all the facilities related to hygiene except functional CWSN-friendly toilets as illustrated in Table 5.2 (b).

Nonetheless, the data, as presented in Table 5.3 (a) and Table 5.3 (b), underscore the efforts made by schools to provide students with basic infrastructure and services. The presence of an adequate number of restrooms, classrooms, drinking water facilities, handwashing amenities, and libraries is commendable, even though certain areas could benefit from improvement. By addressing these areas, schools in the Khanpur district can create a more stimulating and inclusive learning environment for their students.

Table 5.3 (a): Infrastructure Facilities in Bakani

School Name	Total Class-rooms	In Good Condition	Needs Minor Repair	Needs Major Repair	Other Rooms	Library Availability	Separate Room for HM	Drinking Water Available	Drinking Water Functional	Rain Water Harvesting	Play-ground Available	Furniture Available	Electricity Available	Solar Panel	Medical Checkups
G.P.S., Sanvalpura	3	3	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	Yes
G.P.S., Sawakho	2	2	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Devdungari	2	2	0	0	1	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Mokham Pura	2	0	2	0	2	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	0	Yes	No	Yes
G.P.S., Barkhedi	2	0	0	2	2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	3	3	0	0	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	Yes
G.P.S., Banskheri	2	2	0	0	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	No

Source: Shaala Darpan

The school-wise details in Bakani Block are analysed in this section. G.P.S., Sanvalpura has a number of good infrastructure and amenities, including working restrooms, drinking water, power, and a playground. These amenities support the wellbeing of students while offering enough of room for learning. A library is also provided, but frequent medical exams are essential for keeping track on students' health and wellbeing. The school may improve its entire infrastructure and give its pupils a better all-encompassing learning environment by solving these problems. It may enhance its facilities and give its pupils a better educational experience by concentrating on these factors.

G.P.S., Sawakho offers good infrastructure and amenities, including clean restrooms, running water, power, two well-kept classrooms, a separate room for the headmaster and headmistress, sinks for washing hands, and a library. The shortage of resources restricts students' opportunities for physical activity and leisure, encourage environmentally-friendly behaviour, and lessen the school's environmental effect. The health of students must be closely monitored in order to ensure early diagnosis and treatment of any health disorders by organising medical checkups.

G.P.S., Devdungari includes a number of useful amenities, such as working restrooms, drinking water, power, two well-kept classrooms, a library, handwashing stations, and a playground. These facilities offer pupils opportunity for learning as well as good sanitation and cleanliness. These amenities are crucial for preserving a favourable learning environment and advancing environmentally-friendly behaviours. The school's reliance on traditional energy sources can be reduced by the installations of solar panel.

G.P.S., Mokham Pura's facilities and infrastructure have both advantages and disadvantages. The school features functioning restrooms for boys and girls, as well as access to power and functional drinking water. However, there are a number of issues the school must deal with, including the need for library space and the need to maintain classroom furniture. Libraries are essential for encouraging reading habits, cultivating a love of learning and raising academic achievement among students. Another restriction is the lack of a playground, which affects pupils' well-being and ability to engage in physical activity. Students who use handwashing stations at meal-times and close to restrooms are more likely to practice excellent hygiene. Regular medical checkups are a good way to keep an eye on the health and well-being of students.

G.P.S., Barkhedi features a number of useful amenities, such as a playground, functional drinking water facility and power, and separate restrooms for boys and girls. These characteristics help to maintain a clean learning environment for pupils. However, there are still certain things that may be done better, such substantial repairs in two classrooms, a shortage of furniture, a lack of a library, and a lack of medical examinations. These problems may have a substantial effect on the standard of instruction given, as well as on students' comfort and focus in class. Establishing a library may encourage a love of reading and aid in academic development, while ensuring that students have regular medical checkups is essential to gauging their health and well-being.

G.P.S. Laxmipura Badbad includes a number of useful amenities, such as working restrooms, drinking water, electricity, classrooms with adequate air conditioning, a library, handwashing stations, a playground, and a separate area for the headmaster and headmistress along with medical checkups. These facilities give students access to literature and materials as well as basic sanitation and cleanliness. However, a major disadvantage is the lack of furniture availability as well as solar panel and rainwater harvesting equipment. Addressing these problems can contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and enriching learning environment. These problems might have a detrimental influence on students' comfort and attention during class.

G.P.S. Banskheri provides several valuable amenities, including functional restrooms, drinking water, electricity, two well-maintained classrooms, a library, handwashing stations, a playground, and a dedicated room for the headmaster and headmistress. These facilities offer students access to resources, proper sanitation, and good hygiene.

However, two key issues need attention: the absence of furniture, affecting students' comfort and attentiveness in class, and the lack of rainwater collection and health screenings. Regular medical check-ups

ensure students' health and well-being, while rainwater harvesting promotes sustainability and reduces the school's environmental impact. Although the school lacks a solar panel system, it promotes inclusion. Addressing these issues is crucial to enhancing the overall infrastructure of the school and providing students with a more comprehensive learning environment.

The selected schools maintain separate, well-functioning restrooms for boys and girls, as well as facilities with both urinals and handwashing stations nearby. Most schools have two to three classrooms, requiring minimal maintenance. Some schools have additional rooms for various purposes. Libraries are present in most schools, except for G.P.S., Sawakho. Drinking water facilities are available in all schools, but rainwater harvesting equipment is lacking. Playgrounds exist in all schools, but play equipment is limited. Electricity is accessible, but there are no solar panels. Around 43 per cent schools conduct medical examinations, indicating room for improvement in child health and well-being.

While the selected schools offer functional amenities, the scope for enhancement exists in areas, such as better furnishing, improved library accessibility, and exploring alternative energy sources like solar panels. Thorough evaluations and improvements in these aspects can lead to better learning environments and overall school development.

Table 5.3 (b): Infrastructure Facilities in Khanpur

School Name	Total Class-rooms	In Good Condition	Needs Minor Repair	Needs Major Repair	Other Rooms	Library Availability	Separate Room for HM	Drinking Water Available	Drinking Water Functional	Rain Water Harvesting	Play-ground Available	Furniture Available	Electricity Available	Solar Panel	Medical Checkups
G.P.S., Umedpura	2	1	1	0	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Potukhedi	3	1	1	1	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Thikariya	2	1	1	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Khuntkheri	2	0	0	2	0	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Kunged	2	2	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	No
G.P.S., Anghora	2	2	0	0	1	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	0	Yes	No	Yes
G.P.S., Jagdishpura	2	2	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (But not functioning)	Yes	8	Yes	No	No

Source: Shaala Darpan

The data for each school in Khanpur block has been separately examined, as illustrated in Table 5.2 (b). G.P.S. Umedpura has adequate bathroom facilities, handwashing facilities, and running water, which are all positives. The absence of rainwater harvesting, on the other hand, might be remedied for water conservation. In G.P.S. Potukhedi, the presence of practical amenities and a library is advantageous. Priority should be given to ensuring adequate upkeep of classrooms in need of repairs. GPS Thikariya has the provision of separate rooms as well as a working library is impressive. Rainwater harvesting demonstrates environmental stewardship.

In G.P.S. Khoontkheri it was observed that the repairs to classrooms should be prioritised. Adequate furnishings and working water facilities are encouraging. G.P.S. Kunged the availability of separate rooms,

functional water amenities, and rainwater harvesting are all advantages. Addressing small repairs in classrooms would improve the learning environment. In G. P. S. Anghora the availability of solar panels, functional handwashing facilities, and distinct rooms reflect the school's dedication to holistic development. G.P.S. Jagdishpura overall had adequate amenities except for medical checkups that aren't working should be prioritised.

The gathered data provides a foundation for drawing insightful conclusions. Notably,

1. **Toilets/Restrooms:** The schools offer appropriate and separate urinals for both males and girls. This is essential for upholding proper hygiene and encouraging a clean atmosphere on the school grounds. For the health and well-being of the students, having functioning and well-maintained restrooms is crucial, as it guarantees that they have access to sanitary facilities all during the school day.
2. **Classrooms:** The major learning areas for pupils are these classrooms, which offer a comfortable setting for academic activity. To successfully accommodate all students and give them suitable study places, there must be an adequate number of classrooms.
3. **Access to Drinking Water:** The schools make sure that children have access to drinking water, which is essential for their health and well-being. To keep the pupils hydrated and preserve their general health during the school day, functional and accessible drinking water must be made available.
4. **Handwashing Facilities:** The availability of handwashing facilities near the restrooms and at meal-times demonstrates the school's commitment to encouraging pupils to practice good hygiene. Handwashing is an important practice that promotes a healthier environment for the entire school community by preventing the spread of diseases and illnesses.
5. **The Library Accessibility:** The presence of a library fosters a culture of reading, and highlights the value of education outside of the classroom. Students have access to a variety of books and materials through the library, advancing their knowledge and academic development.
6. **Access to Electricity:** The schools have electricity, which is necessary for fostering a positive learning environment. Electricity makes it possible for the school to have enough lighting, employ audiovisual aids, and run technological equipment that facilitates teaching and learning.
7. **Dedicated Area for HM:** The school's dedication to provide suitable administrative facilities is demonstrated by the existence of a separate room for the headmaster or headmistress. For the headmaster or headmistress to properly manage administrative chores and communicate with employees and pupils, they need a separate location.
8. **Playground Accessibility:** Despite the absence of a playground at the school, it is crucial to take into account the value of outside areas for relaxation and physical activity. Giving pupils access to a playground may help with their overall development by giving them opportunity for physical activity, sports, and social contacts.
9. **Furniture/Equipment Accessibility:** The lack of available furniture is an issue that requires to be addressed. Desks and chairs, among other pieces of appropriate furniture, are crucial for students' comfort and for fostering a positive learning atmosphere. When students can sit comfortably in class, it helps them concentrate and participate more actively.
10. **Solar Panel and Rainwater Harvesting:** The school lack solar panels or rainwater collecting equipment. Installing solar panels may help with sustainable energy use, while rainwater gathering can aid with water conservation and lessen reliance on outside water sources.
11. **Healthcare/Medical Checkups:** Although the school does not routinely perform medical examinations, it is important to take into account pupils' well-being. Regular health exams may aid in identifying and addressing any health issues that students may be experiencing, safeguarding their well-being and enabling early intervention if necessary.

Variations are evident in the provision of facilities, such as toilets, urinals, and hand-wash amenities. The data includes information on the total number of toilets, their functionality, CWSN-friendliness, urinals, proximity of hand-wash facilities to toilets, and hand-wash facilities for meals. Notably, none of the schools in the block has designated CWSN-friendly toilets. However, all schools do provide hand-wash facilities near toilets and for meals, which is a positive aspect. Some schools in both blocks have a limited number of functional toilets, potentially causing inconvenience. Both blocks share the limitation of lacking CWSN-friendly toilets, highlighting a gap in addressing special needs. It is essential to engage in adequate infrastructure planning to ensure there are sufficient and functional toilet facilities, particularly for CWSN.

Furthermore, an overview of the transcripts from SMC meetings, outlining the discussed topics and areas covered in this section, and the inferences from the field regarding School Management Committee (SMC) meetings provide valuable insights into the content and discussions held during these sessions. These observations allow for a summary of the topics addressed and the areas covered in SMC meetings.

On March 21, 2023, a Tuesday: At the local school RPV Banskhedhi, an SMC meeting was conducted, with Mr. X presiding over it. Several significant matters were addressed during the meeting:

- *A crucial topic of discussion revolved around the installation of a water tank within the school complex to alleviate the ongoing water crisis. All the members reached a unanimous decision to coordinate with the Gram Panchayat to carry out this project.*
- *Mr. Banwari Lal, a member, provided assurance that the project would indeed be executed through the Gram Panchayat.*
- *The issue of children's irregular attendance at school was also discussed. The seasonal factor of crop harvesting affecting students' punctuality in attending school was acknowledged.*
- *The meeting concluded with a sense of agreement and purpose, focusing on addressing these important concerns*

On January 21, 2023, a Saturday: At the local school RV Banskhedhi, an SMC meeting was conducted. The meeting was presided over by Mr. X. During the meeting, the utilisation of CSG funds was discussed, with a particular focus on the need to paint the school complex, which tends to lose its paint during the rainy season. Additionally, the meeting addressed the procurement of sports equipment, hygiene materials, and, notably, medical supplies. Furthermore, there was a discussion about improving the regularity of the children attending school. In conclusion, the headmaster expressed his gratitude for the productive meeting.

On December 20, 2023, a Monday, in the local village RPV Banskhedhi, Mr. X led an SMC meeting where the headmaster informed participants about COVID-19 dry diet measures. Plans for food grains distribution in March 2022 were discussed, along with unanimous approval of the recent school painting project, which revitalised the school's appearance. An inspection of the Midday Meal programme was conducted to assess arrangements' quality, and the headmaster expressed gratitude before conclusion of the meeting.

Digital Infrastructure

Digital facilities in schools are crucial for preparing students for the modern world. They provide access to a wealth of educational resources, enhancing learning experiences. Technology fosters digital literacy and problem-solving skills, critical for future careers. It also adapts to diverse learning styles and special needs. Furthermore, it connects students to a global community, promoting cultural awareness and collaboration. Digital tools simplify administrative tasks, making school management more efficient. However, it's essential to bridge the digital divide to ensure all students have equal access. In summary, digital facilities in schools are integral for 21st-century education, fostering skills, knowledge, and adaptability needed in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Tables 5.4 (a) and 5.4 (b) provide detailed information about the digital facilities available in Bakani and Khanpur block respectively, shedding light on the availability of digital infrastructure. This aspect is critical to mention due to the use of ICT during the COVID pandemic.

Table 5.4 (a): Digital Facilities Available in Bakni

Name of the School	ICT Lab	Internet	DTH
G.P.S., Sanvalpura	No	No	No
G.P.S., Sawakho	No	No	No
G.P.S., Devdungari	No	No	No
G.P.S., Mokham Pura	No	Yes	No
G.P.S., Barkhedi	No	No	No
G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	No	Yes	No
G.P.S., Banskheri	No	No	No

Source: Shaala Darpan

Table 5.4 (a) indicates that there are no operational digital facilities at the chosen schools of Bakani block namely – laptop, projector, tablet, desktop, printer, digital board, etc. highlighting a lack of digital infrastructure and technological connectivity. This lack of technology integration may limit students' access to digital learning materials and affect the learning outcomes. As digital tools and resources aid the learning process and keep schools updated with modern practices, their absence may have an influence on the quality of education.

To provide equal access to technology for all students, investments in digital infrastructure and technology are required. As digital facilities are lacking in certain institutions, students may not be exposed to as much technology, which might possibly affect their growth.

- Only two schools - G.P.S., Mokham Pura, G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad - have internet access.
- The dearth of digital facilities across the board in the schools raises questions about the availability of technology-based learning materials and tools.
- The establishment of digital facilities in the schools would be advantageous since it would improve student learning and encourage digital literacy.
- The data as a whole show that there is a sizable disparity in digital amenities amongst the chosen institutions. Access to technology and online resources may be made better, which might benefit these institutions' general growth and educational standards

The absence of adequate digital resources in the selected schools underscores the crucial need for educational authorities and policymakers to prioritise investments in digital infrastructure. This will not only promote digital literacy but also equip students for the increasingly technology-driven world. By providing essential digital tools like ICT labs, laptops, projectors, internet access, tablets, DTH services, desktops, printers, and digital boards, these institutions can bridge the digital divide and elevate educational standards.

Table 5.4 (b): Digital Facilities Available in Khanpur

Name of the School	ICT Lab	Internet	DTH
G.P.S., Ummedpura	No	Yes	No
G.P.S., Potukhedi	No	No	No
G.P.S., Thikariya	No	No	No
G.P.S., Khuntkheri	No	No	No
G.P.S., Kunged	No	No	No
G.P.S., Anghora	No	No	No
G.P.S., Jagdishpura	No	No	No

Source: Shaala Darpan

The absence of effective digital facilities like ICT laboratories, laptop computers, projectors, internet access, tablets, DTH, desktop computers, printers, or digital boards raises concerns regarding the availability of technology-based instructional materials and resources for both students and instructors. Schools with insufficient digital resources may struggle to provide a well-rounded education that meets the expectations of the modern society/ digital era.

Overall, both Bakani and Khanpur schools lack various digital facilities, with limited internet access in a few schools. The lack of technological integration may have an impact on educational quality and students' readiness for a digitally sophisticated environment. To overcome the digital divide between schools, educational authorities and governments should prioritise investments in digital infrastructure. Setting up effective digital facilities, such as ICT laboratories, laptops, projectors, and internet access, may improve students' learning experiences and encourage digital literacy. Addressing the technology gap can help schools keep current with technological changes and contribute to overall educational growth.

The result shows the need for strategic investments in order to promote technology integration and offer students with access to digital resources. Closing the digital gap can improve learning results and prepare pupils for a technologically driven future. Digital literacy is a key ability for pupils to traverse numerous aspects of life in today's technology driven society. Schools without digital infrastructure may miss out on new teaching techniques and digital learning materials, thereby harming pupils' overall future preparation.

Enrolment

Inclusive classrooms play a crucial role in shaping a just and equitable society. It provides an environment where diversity is celebrated, breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. Similarly, inclusive education promotes empathy, tolerance, and respect among students, fostering social harmony and reducing discrimination. It prepares all students for the real world, where they'll interact with people from various backgrounds. This exposure enriches perspectives, stimulates critical thinking, and promotes creativity. Therefore, inclusive classrooms are not only essential for individual growth, self-esteem, and academic success but also for building a more united and compassionate society, making them an integral component of a progressive education system.

Tables 5.5 (a) and 5.5 (b) offer a comprehensive breakdown of the student enrollment in different government schools of Bakani and Khanpur respectively, based on various socio-economic categories, including General, OBC (Other Backward Classes), SC (Scheduled Caste), ST (Scheduled Tribe), and Minority groups. The data is further divided into male and female students, providing a thorough analysis of student enrollment patterns, highlighting the social diversity within the student population and underscoring the importance of equitable access to education for all social groups.

Table 5.5 (a): Enrollment by Social Category in Bakani

Sl. No.	Name of the School	General		OBC		SC		ST		Minority		Total
		G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G		
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G		
1.	G.P.S., Sanvalpura	0	0	3	3	3	4	1	2	7	8	31
2.	G.P.S., Sawakho	0	0	5	4	16	13	0	0	30	21	89
3.	G.P.S., Devdungari	2	3	20	30	2	3	0	0	0	0	60
4.	G.P.S., Mokham Pura	0	0	5	3	1	3	0	0	6	5	23
5.	G.P.S., Barkhedi	0	0	24	14	1	2	0	0	25	16	82
6.	G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	0	0	16	11	0	0	0	0	12	8	47
7.	G.P.S., Banskheri	4	3	6	13	13	14	0	0	23	29	105

Source: Shaala Darpan

According to the statistics (Table 5.3), G.P.S. Sawakho and G.P.S. Banskheri had a larger enrolment of SC pupils, with 29 and 27 students, respectively. On the other side, certain schools, such as G.P.S. Laxmipura Badbad, did not have any SC pupils but a lot of OBC students. As there were no children from SC and ST community living in that village. This enables the stakeholders to distinguish between schools with a larger percentage of SC children and those with no or low representation.

Table 5.5 (b): Enrollment by Social Category in Khanpur

Sl. No.	Name of the School	General		OBC		SC		ST		Minority		Total
		G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G		
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G		
1.	G.P.S., Ummedpura	0	0	15	11	6	4	9	7	0	0	52
2.	G.P.S., Potukhedi	0	0	14	13	7	14	2	5	22	33	110
3.	G.P.S., Thikariya	0	0	6	2	17	13	1	1	24	16	80
4.	G.P.S., Khuntkheri	0	0	1	0	5	8	4	5	10	11	44
5.	G.P.S., Kunged	0	0	7	4	0	0	3	0	6	1	21
6.	G.P.S., Anghora	0	0	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
7.	G.P.S., Jagdishpura	4	6	0	0	3	2	0	0	4	7	26

Source: Shaala Darpan

Tables 5.5 (a) and (b) provide a detailed breakdown of student enrollment in government primary schools, categorised by various social groups, including General, Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Minority. It further breaks down enrollment figures by gender within each of these social categories.

- **Monitoring SC Representation:** By examining the enrollment numbers for SC students, we can assess the representation of this social group in each school. Schools with a higher proportion of SC students can be seen as inclusive and diverse, while those with a lower proportion, may require focused attention.
- **Identifying Discrepancies:** Schools with lower SC student enrollment may signal disparities in educational access. Addressing these disparities is essential to ensure equal opportunities for all socio-economic groups.

- **Resource Allocation:** Utilising enrollment statistics can lead to better resource allocation. For instance, directing funding to schools with underrepresented SC children can enhance infrastructure and educational facilities.
- **Inclusive Education Policy:** Policymakers can use this data to formulate policies promoting diversity and equitable opportunities, particularly for SC students.
- **Exploring Other Social Categories:** Analysing enrollment statistics for various social categories offers a comprehensive view of social group representation in government schools. This information can inform policies aimed at reducing disparities and creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment for all students in the district.
- **Enrollment Distribution:** The table provides an overview of student enrollment in government primary schools across different social groups. It includes enrollment data for both boys and girls in each social category.
- **Social Category Distribution:** The social categories encompass General, OBC, SC, ST, and Minority, and the data reflects the number of boys and girls enrolled in each of these categories in each school.
- **Gender Distribution:** The table also highlights the distribution of students' genders within each social category, revealing gender balance or imbalances in enrollment among various social groups.
- **Inter-School Variability:** Enrollment numbers differ across schools, influenced by factors like location, population density, and educational quality.
- **Socio-economic Representation:** The data underscores the accessibility and inclusivity of government primary schools for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Gender Disparity:** The data further sheds light on gender disparities in enrollment within certain socio-economic categories, where the number of boys and girls enrolled may significantly vary in specific schools.

On comparing, it can be observed that in terms of total enrollment, Bakani block surpasses Khanpur block with 437 students compared to 346. Notably, G.P.S., Banskheri leads Bakani block with 105 enrollments, followed by G.P.S., Sawakho with 89. In Khanpur block, G.P.S., Potukhedi takes the lead with 110 students, followed by G.P.S., Thikaria with 80. The lowest enrollments are observed at G.P.S., Mokhampura and Govt. Primary School, Anghora in their respective blocks. Bakani block exhibits a more balanced gender-wise enrollment, favouring girls. Across both blocks, the Minority category holds the highest enrollment, succeeded by General and OBC categories. The lower enrollments of ST and General categories in both blocks are attributed to a higher concentration of SC population. This enrollment data provides valuable insights into educational accessibility, showcasing positive steps toward inclusion for historically marginalised communities, particularly in schools with a significant SC student presence.

However, the lack of SC enrolment in some schools is a serious matter that must be addressed. Such disparities can be attributed to a variety of variables, including school distance, awareness of educational possibilities, and socio-economic obstacles. To close this gap, specific interventions, such as awareness programmes, scholarships, and transportation facilities are needed to guarantee that every kid has an equal opportunity to attend school. Overall, the analysis highlights varying enrollment patterns in the two blocks.

Distribution of District Compensatory Fund (DCF) Benefits

The District Compensatory Fund (DCF) serves as a financial mechanism to address regional disparities and drive development in economically disadvantaged areas within a district or region. Its primary objective is to allocate resources and funds to regions that have historically faced challenges in terms of infrastructure, education, healthcare, and overall socio-economic progress. The DCF is instrumental in narrowing the development gaps and fostering equitable growth, ensuring that no community or region is left behind on the path to advancement.

By offering financial support for a range of developmental projects, the District Compensatory Fund plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life in marginalised areas and promoting inclusive development. Tables 5.6 (a) and 5.6 (b) provide detailed insights into the provisions made through DCF for Bakani and Khanpur blocks, shedding light on the allocation of resources to address specific development needs in these areas.

Table 5.6 (a): Students Received District Compensatory Fund (DCF), Bakani

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Free Textbooks in Primary Schools
1.	G.P.S., Sanvalpura	14
2.	G.P.S., Sawakho	35
3.	G.P.S., Devdungari	60
4.	G.P.S., Mokham Pura	11
5.	G.P.S., Barkhedi	0
6.	G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	32
7.	G.P.S., Banskheri	46

Source: Shaala Darpan

The data in Table 5.6 (a) reveals that only a limited number of primary and upper primary students in the selected schools have benefited from the District Compensatory Fund (DCF). Notably, only a few primary-level students in specific schools received free textbooks. This suggests that the programme may not be effectively reaching its intended recipients, possibly due to eligibility criteria, lack of awareness, distribution challenges, or other factors. The low utilisation of DCF assistance underscores the need for further investigation and improvements in the programme's implementation to ensure eligible students receive the support they require, ultimately benefiting more students.

Table 5.6 (b): Students Received District Compensatory Fund (DCF), Khanpur

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Free Textbooks in Primary Schools
1.	G.P.S., Ummedpura	890
2.	G.P.S., Potukhedi	43
3.	G.P.S., Thikariya	0
4.	G.P.S., Khuntkheri	23
5.	G.P.S., Kunged	0
6.	G.P.S., Anghora	0
7.	G.P.S., Jagdishpura	16

Source: Shaala Darpan

The data in Table 5.6 (b) highlights the varying numbers of primary students receiving DCF benefits in different schools. G.P.S., Ummedpura has 890 recipients, while G.P.S., Potukhedi has 43, Khuntkheri has 23, and Jagdishpura has 16. G.P.S., Thikariya, and G.P.S., Kunged report no students receiving DCF benefits. These benefits aim to support students with educational resources like books, transportation, and uniforms. Factors like students' economic situations and fund distribution efficiency may influence these differences. It's crucial for schools to provide accurate data to ensure fair resource allocation and transparent money distribution, ultimately benefiting qualified students' educational needs.

The use of District Compensatory Fund (DCF) benefits demonstrates the difficulties in efficiently executing programmes aimed at assisting students from low-income families. The uneven distribution of benefits shows that there may be gaps in awareness, execution, or targeting criteria. For DCF to be really effective, schools must reliably identify eligible kids and ensure that they receive the intended benefits. Like in Bakani block, a total of 198 students has received free textbooks. However, there are no students who have received transportation or free uniforms. This suggests that the primary focus of the District Compensatory Fund in this block is on providing educational resources in the form of textbooks. While in Khanpur block, a significantly higher number of students, totaling 972, have received free textbooks. Similar to the Bakani block, there are no students who have received transportation or free uniforms. This points to the importance of ensuring access to educational materials in the Khanpur block as well.

1. **Focus on Education:** Both Bakani and Khanpur blocks prioritise providing free textbooks to students, demonstrating a commitment to improving educational access and resources.
2. **Uniform and Transportation:** Neither block offers free uniforms nor transportation support to students, suggesting that these areas may not be immediate priorities in the allocation of the District Compensatory Fund.
3. **Differential Need:** Khanpur block has a higher number of students receiving free textbooks compared to Bakani, indicating potentially greater educational resource needs in Khanpur.

While both blocks emphasise on educational opportunities through free textbooks, further investigation is needed to determine if uniforms and transportation are less critical needs in these areas or if additional support might be required in these aspects as well.

Inferences from the field regarding School Management Committee (SMC) meetings provide valuable insights into the content and discussions held during these sessions. These observations allow for a summary of the topics addressed and the areas covered in SMC meetings.

On December 3, 2022, in the local village, a Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) was conducted. The event was attended by the vice principal and school administrators, during which the distribution of school uniforms took place. Additionally, report cards were handed out, and the evaluation of the students' performance was conducted. The significance of sending children to school was also a topic of discussion during the meeting.

On December 25, 2022 a School Management Committee (SMC) meeting was convened. During this meeting, it was noted that the attendance of female students had decreased due to parental reluctance, and all the teachers were briefed about this issue. Subsequently, discussions centred around the provision of SFG (School Facility Grant), SMG (School Management Grant), TLM (Teaching Learning Material) and PSE kits, and the procurement of materials for the school's Eco Club. This marked the conclusion of the meeting.

On March 21, 2023, Government Primary School, Sawakho, Aagriya, conducted a meeting as part of the 2022-23 session, chaired by Mr. Y. The meeting was attended by SMC members and school staff, during which several key topics were discussed:

- *The results of the second RKSMBK assessment, released by the Department in December, were a focal point. Parents were informed that report cards for all students should be downloaded from Shala Darpan. During the Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM), the progress and weaknesses of the students in various subjects were explained in detail. Parents were also briefed on the efforts made by the school principal to address students' shortcomings.*
- *A discussion on the free uniform sewing scheme took place. All members present were informed that the department would initiate uniform stitching after the distribution of free uniforms. It was emphasised that the amount provided by the department would be transferred to the students' bank accounts only through Jan Aadhaar authentication, making Aadhaar authentication of the students necessary.*

- During the meeting, all members present were informed that previously, all types of grants received by the school were managed through the SMC. However, 2022-23 session onwards, the funds that the school will receive will be transferred via Public Financial Management Information System (PFMS)'s Single Nodal Account (SNA) account, where bills and transactions would be processed.
- The meeting also addressed the topic of Jan Aadhar updation. It was explained to all members that the state had initiated various schemes, and it was crucial to maintain accurate records of all students in the school. Any discrepancies in these records needed to be rectified. Parents were urged to update their Aadhaar and Jan Aadhaar records for both boys and girls based on the school's records.
- A discussion about attendance was another key point during the meeting. The school expressed concerns about students and their guardians regarding irregular attendance. It was proposed to establish communication with parents and persuade students to maintain regular attendance.

Teacher Qualifications

Teacher qualification is of paramount importance in schools as it directly influences the quality of education. Qualified teachers possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and pedagogical techniques to effectively impart knowledge to students. They can adapt to various learning styles, address individual needs, and create engaging and inclusive classrooms. Moreover, qualified teachers serve as role models, instilling a passion for learning and critical thinking in students. Their expertise contributes to better academic outcomes and prepares students for future challenges. In essence, teacher qualification is a cornerstone of a successful education system, shaping the minds of future generations and driving societal progress.

Tables 5.7 (a) and 5.7 (b) provide detailed information about the professional qualifications of teachers, offering insights into the educational backgrounds and expertise of the educators in the Bakani and Khanpur blocks.

Table 5.7 (a): Teachers with Professional Training in Bakani

Name of the School	Diploma or Certificate in Basic Teachers Training	B.Ed. or Equivalent	Other
G.P.S., Sanvalpura	0	0	1
G.P.S., Sawakho	0	0	0
G.P.S., Devdungari	2	0	0
G.P.S., Mokham Pura	1	0	0
G.P.S., Barkhedhi	0	1	0
G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	2	0	0
G.P.S., Banskheri	1	0	0

Source: Shaala Darpan

The data in Table 5.7 (a) reveals variations in teacher qualifications across the selected schools, with some having teachers holding diplomas or certificates in basic teacher training, while others, lack these qualifications. Notably, only one school has a B.Ed. or equivalent degree among its teachers, and none possess special education, B.El.Ed., or M.Ed. degrees. Additionally, no teachers are currently pursuing relevant professional courses.

This suggests the need for further analysis to assess the impact of these varying qualifications on the quality of education provided and identify potential areas for improvement. Schools could consider offering

opportunities for teachers to undertake relevant professional courses and training to enhance their teaching skills, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. A well-qualified and trained teaching staff is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment and boosting students' academic performance. It's worth noting that administrative challenges in distributing and allocating DCF benefits could affect their effective implementation.

Table 5.7 (b): Teachers with Professional Training in Khanpur

Name of the School	Diploma or Certificate in Basic Teachers Training	B.Ed. or Equivalent	Other
G.P.S., Umedpura	0	1	1
G.P.S., Potukhedi	0	1	0
G.P.S., Thikariya	2	1	0
G.P.S., Khuntkheri	1	0	0
G.P.S., Kunged	0	1	0
G.P.S., Anghora	2	0	0
G.P.S., Jagdishpura	1	1	0

Source: Shaala Darpan

Table 5.7 (b) shows that the qualifications of teachers vary among the chosen schools. Some schools have teachers with diplomas or certificates in basic teachers' training, while others, lack such qualifications. Only one school has a B.Ed. or equivalent degree, while none have teachers with special education, B.El.Ed., or M.Ed. degrees. No relevant professional course is being pursued among the teachers in any of the schools.

Teacher qualification is crucial in determining the degree of competence among the teaching staff. Teachers who are qualified and well-trained are critical to giving a high-quality education. To improve teachers' teaching abilities and efficacy, schools should prioritise professional development options for teachers, such as training seminars and access to higher education degrees.

In both the Bakani and Khanpur blocks, there is a similar distribution of teachers with various professional qualifications. Teachers' professional qualifications in the Bakani and Khanpur blocks reveal the following insights. In examining the educational landscape of Bakani block and Khanpur block, it's evident that the qualifications of teachers play a crucial role. In both blocks, six schools each have educators equipped with a Diploma or Certificate in Basic Teachers' Training, reflecting a commitment to foundational pedagogical skills. Interestingly, Bakani block demonstrates a preference for teachers with a B.Ed. or equivalent qualification in one school, whereas in Khanpur block, this credential is more widespread, present in four schools.

Diversity in teacher qualifications is noticeable, with one school in each block having educators holding various other qualifications. However, when it comes to specialised expertise, none of the schools in either block currently boasts of teachers with a Diploma/Degree in Special Education or a Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.).

In Khanpur block, there's a unique instance where one school stands out for having teachers pursuing relevant professional courses, showcasing a dedication to ongoing professional development. On the contrary, in Bakani block, no schools currently have teachers pursuing such courses.

It's noteworthy that in both blocks, all schools have teachers with no specific professional qualifications, emphasising the prevailing trend. This comprehensive view of teacher qualifications sheds light on the diverse educational landscape in these regions, reflecting both commonalities and distinctions in the preparation and ongoing development of educators.

There are similarities in the distribution of teacher professional qualifications between the Bakani and Khanpur blocks. However, the Khanpur block has a slightly higher number of teachers with B.Ed. or equivalent qualifications, as well as one school with teachers pursuing relevant professional courses. Additionally, while some schools have teachers with basic teachers' training diplomas or certificates, most teachers in both blocks do not possess specialised qualifications.

Further analysis is needed to understand the impact of different qualifications on the quality of education provided and potential areas for improvement. Schools could consider providing opportunities for teachers to pursue relevant professional courses and training to enhance their teaching skills and overall educational outcomes. Ensuring a well-qualified and trained teaching staff is essential for providing a conducive learning environment and improving students' academic performance.

Teacher Appointments and Gender Representation

The status of the nature of appointment and the sex ratio of teachers in schools is a crucial metric for evaluating the educational landscape. It offers a glimpse into the employment conditions of teachers, differentiating between permanent, contract, or temporary appointments, which can influence teacher motivation and commitment. Additionally, examining the sex ratio among educators reveals trends in gender equity within the teaching profession. This information is essential for understanding and addressing gender disparities, and ensuring equal opportunities for both men and women in the field of education. A balanced sex ratio and stable employment conditions for teachers are essential for a thriving and inclusive educational system.

Tables 5.8 (a) and 5.8 (b) offer comprehensive data on the employment status of teachers and the distribution of genders within the teaching staff in Bakani and Khanpur blocks respectively, providing valuable insights into these critical aspects of the education sector.

Table 5.8 (a): Nature of Appointment and Gender of Teachers in Bakani

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Regular Appointment	Gender	
			Male	Female
1.	G.P.S., Sanvalpura	1	1	0
2.	G.P.S., Sawakho	2	2	0
3.	G.P.S., Devdungari	2	2	0
4.	G.P.S., Mokham Pura	1	1	0
5.	G.P.S., Barkhedi	2	1	1
6.	G.P.S., Laxmipura Badbad	2	0	2
7.	G.P.S., Barkhedi	1	1	0

Source: Shaala Darpan

Table 5.8 (a) illustrates that regular teachers are present in all schools, indicating a stable teaching staff with permanent employment. Except at G.P.S., Barkhedi, where one male and one female teacher are reported, the gender distribution of teachers is evenly balanced, with one male and one female teacher in each school. There are no transgender teachers in any of the schools.

A stable and varied teaching workforce is critical for fostering an inclusive learning environment, and these institutions appear to be making strides in this direction. However, elements, such as teacher qualifications, experience, and training are also important in assessing the overall quality of education delivered by these schools.

Table 5.8 (b): Nature of Appointment and Gender of Teachers in Khanpur

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Regular Appointment	Gender	
			Male	Female
1.	G.P.S., Ummedpura			
2.	G.P.S., Potukhedi	2	1	1
3.	G.P.S., Thikariya	2	1	1
4.	G.P.S., Khuntkheri	2	2	0
5.	G.P.S., Kunged	2	1	1
6.	G.P.S., Anghora	2	2	0
7.	G.P.S., Jagdishpura	1	1	0

Source: Shaala Darpan

Table 5.8 (b) presents a comprehensive overview of teacher appointment practices and gender distribution in selected schools. The prevalent preference for regular appointments, aimed at ensuring a consistent and reliable teaching staff, is shared by G.P.S., Potukhedi, G.P.S., Thikariya, G.P.S., Khuntkheri, G.P.S., Kunged, G.P.S., Anghora, and G.P.S., Jagdishpura, emphasising its significance for effective teaching. However, schools with regular appointments often exhibit gender disparities among instructors. While G.P.S., Potukhedi, and G.P.S., Thikariya maintain gender balance, G.P.S., Khuntkheri has an all-male teaching staff, and G.P.S., Kunged, and G.P.S., Jagdishpura uphold a balanced gender distribution. Notably, G.P.S., Anghora exclusively employs female regular teachers. Some positions, particularly part-time and contractual roles, remain vacant, warranting a more nuanced understanding through a detailed assessment of contractual teaching staff, including gender representation. Furthermore, it's essential to consider the inclusion of transgender individuals in the teaching profession to foster diversity and enrichment within the educational environment.

Tables 5.8 (a) and 5.8 (b) illustrate a clear effort by the schools to maintain gender balance among teachers, promoting diversity of perspectives and viewpoints, which benefits students. The absence of data on transgender teachers underscores the necessity for more comprehensive data collection and policies to encourage diversity in the teaching profession.

- The in-depth examination of Khanpur and Bakani blocks reveals the interconnected nature of various factors influencing educational quality, including infrastructure, enrollment, benefits, teacher qualifications, and gender balance.
- Addressing these highlighted issues and seizing opportunities can lead to collaborative efforts to enhance education quality and provide inclusive learning experiences for all students.
- In both blocks, regular appointments are the norm, with no part-time or contract appointments, indicating a preference for stable teaching roles.
- Both blocks exhibit a gender imbalance, with more male teachers than female teachers. G.P.S., Barkhedi in Bakani has equal gender representation, while Khanpur shows a similar pattern.
- Notably, neither block has transgender teachers, highlighting the need for targeted initiatives to promote diversity in the teaching workforce.

In summary, while there are similarities in appointment types and gender ratios in these blocks, the disparities in female teacher representation and the absence of hiring diverse category teachers which delivers better learning outcomes compared to the situations where teachers are hired on merit basis underscore the importance of specific measures to foster a more equitable and diverse teaching workforce in these regions.

Chapter VI

Conclusion and Recommendations

Comparing the two blocks' data on Enrollment by Social Category, Basics Facilities and Infrastructure, Digital Facilities, Students Receiving District Compensatory Fund (DCF), and Teacher Qualifications, we can draw the following comparative vision.

In evaluating the fundamental facilities and infrastructure in Bakani and Khanpur blocks, both regions demonstrate commendable standards. Notably, both blocks achieve a 100 per cent provision for proper toilets, functional handwashing facilities, and available playgrounds. However, a nuanced comparison reveals that Bakani block exhibits a marginal advantage with higher percentages in handwashing near toilets (100 per cent) and functional drinking water (100 per cent), indicating a slightly superior infrastructure in these aspects. Meanwhile, Khanpur block, though strong in overall provision, records slightly lower percentages in handwashing near toilets (86 per cent) and functional drinking water (86 per cent). Both blocks share a commonality in the absence of rainwater harvesting facilities, emphasising potential areas for future development in environmental sustainability. Overall, the data underscores the commitment of both blocks to ensuring essential facilities, with Bakani block showcasing a slight edge in specific aspects of infrastructure provision.

Examining the enrollment distribution across social categories in Bakani and Khanpur blocks reveal distinctive patterns. In Bakani block, the enrollment landscape is characterised by OBC constituting 33.75 per cent, SC at 16.88 per cent, ST at 0.75 per cent, and a significant Minority enrollment of 48.13 per cent. Notably, Bakani block demonstrates a higher proportion of OBC and Minority enrollments. On the other hand, Khanpur block showcases a different profile with OBC accounting for 29.03 per cent, SC at 26.71 per cent, ST at 9.59 per cent, and Minority enrollment at 35.63 per cent. Here, Khanpur block reflects higher percentages of SC and ST enrollments. This nuanced analysis provides insights into the diverse social compositions of student enrollments in these blocks, highlighting the need for tailored educational approaches to address varied demographic factors.

Examining the infrastructure landscape in Bakani and Khanpur blocks provides a nuanced understanding of the varied conditions within these educational environments. Notably, in terms of the District Compensatory Fund (DCF) utilisation, Khanpur block stands out with an impressive 89.36 per cent of students benefiting from free textbooks, highlighting a significant commitment to supporting students economically. In contrast, Bakani block records a lower percentage, with 34.52 per cent of students receiving free textbooks, signaling potential areas for improvement in resource allocation.

The absence of functional digital facilities in both blocks underscores a shared challenge in adapting to modern educational technology. However, when scrutinising specific infrastructure elements, Bakani block emerges as the frontrunner. A substantial 75 per cent of classrooms in Bakani block are in good condition, reflecting a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, all classrooms have separate headmaster rooms, libraries, functional drinking water, and electricity availability, showcasing a comprehensive commitment to the overall infrastructure.

On the other hand, Khanpur block grapples with infrastructure disparities. While 60 per cent of classrooms are in good condition, the lower percentages in libraries, separate headmaster rooms, functional drinking water, and electricity availability at 40 per cent each signal a need for targeted improvements.

Thus, the data illustrates a clear infrastructure advantage for Bakani block, emphasising the need for strategic interventions in Khanpur block to bridge the existing gaps. This detailed analysis informs potential areas for improvement and underscores the importance of tailored approaches to enhance the overall educational experience in both regions.

The data pertaining to teacher qualifications in Khanpur and Bakani blocks reveal a notable contrast in the commitment to ensuring relevant qualifications among educators. In Khanpur block, a substantial 60 per cent of teachers possess qualifications directly relevant to their teaching roles, reflecting a robust dedication to maintaining a high standard of educational expertise. Conversely, Bakani block exhibits a lower percentage, with 30 per cent of teachers holding qualifications deemed directly relevant. This discrepancy underscores the divergent approaches taken by the two blocks in prioritising and achieving a qualified teaching workforce. While Khanpur block demonstrates a strong emphasis on teacher qualifications, Bakani block indicates room for improvement in this critical aspect of educational staffing.

The comparison between Bakani and Khanpur blocks based on the data provided in terms of enrollment by social category, basic amenities and infrastructure, digital facilities, enrollment of students receiving District Compensation Fund (DCF) and teacher qualification reveals important insights.

Educational Aspects

1. **Enrollment by Social Category:** Bakani block shows a high percentage of OBC and Minority enrolment, suggesting strong representation of these groups. In contrast, the Khanpur block exhibits a higher percentage of SC and ST enrolment, indicating a focus on equal access for historically disadvantaged communities.
2. **Basic Amenities and Infrastructure:** Both the blocks have commendable provision of basic amenities like proper toilets, functional hand wash and available playground. However, Bakani block is slightly ahead with higher percentage in hand washing near toilets and functional drinking water, indicating better integrated and hygienic environment for students.
3. **Basic Infrastructure:** Bakani block stands out with better infrastructure conditions, boasting of higher percentage of classrooms in good condition, separate headmaster rooms, availability of functional drinking water and electricity. In contrast, Khanpur block struggles with infrastructure, showing a low percentage in most categories, which need attention and improvement.
4. **Digital Facilities:** None of the blocks currently offers functional digital facilities, which highlights the potential area for growth in both the sectors to keep pace with the modern educational scenario.
5. **Students receiving District Compensatory Fund (DCF):** Khanpur block leads with a significantly higher percentage (89.36 per cent) of students benefiting from free textbooks through the DCF programme as opposed to 34.52 per cent of Bakani block. This reflects Khanpur's proactive approach towards ensuring equal access to educational resources.
6. **Teacher Qualifications:** Khanpur block underlines its commitment to teacher qualification, with 60 per cent of teachers holding relevant certificates. In comparison, Bakani block is 30 per cent behind, which shows Khanpur's emphasis on enhancing the quality of education through qualified teachers.

Bakani block's strengths lie in its provision of facilities, infrastructure, and its representation of OBC and minority enrolment. On the other hand, Khanpur block excels in addressing historical inequalities by enrolling more SC and ST students, students receiving DCF benefits, and maintaining a more qualified teaching force. However, both blocks need to focus on digital integration and infrastructure development to ensure a modern and equitable education system. In conclusion, Khanpur block's proactive approach fosters inclusivity and high-quality education, particularly for historically marginalised groups, while Bakani block, with its strong facilities and infrastructure, has an opportunity to enhance its educational impact through comprehensive reforms.

Educational Dynamics in EBB (Educationally Backward Block) and Non-EBB Villages

The study was conducted with the aim of comprehensively understanding the educational scenario in EBB (Educationally Backward Block) and non-EBB villages. The following objectives guided the study:

1. **Assessment of Social Structure and its impact on School Management:** The analysis revealed different social structures in EBB and non-EBB villages. In EBB villages, a significant percentage of OBC and minority enrollment was noted, while SC and ST enrollment was higher in non-EBB villages. This underscores the important role of social structure in shaping school enrollment and management attitudes.
2. **Study of Attitude of School Management towards SC Students:** The study examined the attitude of school management and headmaster towards SC students. While both blocks showed a dedication to educational development, the Khanpur block demonstrated a more inclusive approach in addressing historical inequalities by focusing on SC and ST enrollment.
3. **Exploration of School Management Involvement in SDP Implementation:** Both the blocks demonstrated commitment in developing the School Development Plan (SDP) and its implementation, guided by academic inputs from various authorities. Khanpur block stands out with its proactive approach, which reflects a deep commitment towards resource allocation and equitable distribution.
4. **Assessment of Inclusiveness in School Management for SC Population:** Inclusiveness of school management was one of the focus areas, which revealed a subtle difference between the two blocks. While Bakani block excelled in infrastructure provision, Khanpur block demonstrated high inclusiveness in terms of teacher qualification and student welfare.
5. **Assessment of Impact of Training Programmes for SMCs:** Evaluation of training programmes for School Management Committees (SMCs) revealed that both the blocks are struggling with the participation rate of SC members. However, the exemplary rate of students receiving free textbooks in Khanpur block highlights the effective utilisation of its training programmes.

In conclusion, the study provides a comprehensive perspective on educational mobility in EBB and non-EBB villages. While Bakani block is successful in infrastructure development, Khanpur block excels in addressing social inequalities, teacher qualification and student welfare. Both the blocks share opportunities for digital integration and infrastructural enhancement. By leveraging each other's strengths, and addressing mutual challenges, Bakani and Khanpur blocks can collaboratively contribute to a more equitable and enhanced learning environment, which will shape the educational landscape for generations to come.

Way Forward

India finds itself at the precipice of a demographic dividend, an opportunity that must be harnessed effectively. The foundation of enlightened minds lies within our schools, making them pivotal in shaping our nation's future. To embark on this transformative journey, all stakeholders must unite to uplift the Indian education system. Addressing deep-rooted issues of discrimination based on caste, class, and gender is not just a moral imperative but a prerequisite for holistic community development. It is through robust educational management that we can provide sustainable and equitable quality education.

The allocation of resources becomes a complex political issue, heavily influenced by the priorities and values of diverse communities. The success of School Management Committees (SMCs) varies widely, underscoring the need for tailored approaches based on local dynamics. While considerable attention has been directed towards rural primary school SMCs, recognising their pivotal role in the learning process, there is a pressing need for more research. This research must focus on understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by disadvantaged groups, including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, the third gender, differently-abled individuals, and children with special needs.

The key takeaway is the imperative need to understand the intricate relationship between inclusion, quality, and the involvement of stakeholders in the educational process. In an era of globalisation and increasing commercialisation of education, the contrast between public and private schools, coupled with the impact of the ICT revolution, has created a dilemma. This dilemma involves the misconception that 'Quality' can be equated with higher spending, raising important questions about the true drivers of educational excellence.

In case of this study, it needs to be accepted that children coming to schools are mostly first-generation learner's guardian having limited understanding of what all the school system can provide to facilitate a better integration of children in the existing setup, the things which can ensure better standards of education for their wards. The nature of school structure generally restrictive, the school administration and parent interaction are within the dynamics of unequal stakeholders with parents expected to fall in line to the schools' instructions or rather directives. The educational institutional structure generally too speaks from the position of power to various constituents of educational setup starting from the boards of education, to the DIETs, the regional or state setup down to the school administration there is limited scope of flexibility, empathy for the other stakeholders and this thing is very much reflected in the interaction of the school setup and parents.

The fact that most these SMCs members themselves have limited exposure to an educational setup, and their imagination and expectation from the school is minimal while the SMCs capacity development, sensitisation and empowerment, training mechanism that are in place may make some positive headway yet it is a tall order of expectation to see these training programmes and the manner in which they are conducted as a routine to be a catalyst link for the transformative change in the nature to SMCs to the question level of expectation.

The need is to have a mechanism that addresses the social baggage with which all the SMCs members come at the table as stakeholders, and secondly, for the SC, ST and EWS members keep in the mind frame a training module that focuses on limited social capital among these communities and have a resource centre that acts as a common pool social capital.

In summary, School Management Committees (SMCs) emerge as pivotal entities within the framework of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aligning seamlessly with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). NEP 2020 serves as a robust framework, acting as a catalyst for fostering inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education. The policy's emphasis on community participation underscores its dedication to local engagement in school governance, harmonising with the global vision of a sustainable future where community participation is key. NEP 2020's commitment to respecting diversity and local context, evident in its approach to curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, further reinforces its alignment with the overarching principles of SDG 4.

SDG 4.1 emphasises foundational literacy and numeracy. NEP's endeavours to bridge educational gaps for marginalised groups and ensure equitable access resonate with the spirit of SDG 4.1, underscoring a commitment to inclusive education that leaves no child behind.

The strategic alignment of NEP 2020 with SDG 4.2 is apparent in its emphasis on school infrastructure and resources, with a noteworthy acknowledgment of the pivotal role played by SMCs in decision-making regarding infrastructure, as they are better positioned to comprehend the priority requirements of the region. This ensures a conducive learning environment, aligning with this vision.

Furthermore, NEP 2020's focus on Teacher Training and Continuous Professional Development reflects a commitment to recognising educator's pivotal role, closely aligning with the global goals of SDG 4. Parents play an integral role as stakeholders in decision-making, indirectly undertaking a constant social audit to assess the effectiveness of these educational strategies.

In addressing gender disparities (SDG 4.5), NEP 2020 encourages inclusive education. Here, the role of SMCs becomes highly important in tracking attendance and addressing absenteeism, reinforcing the policy's commitment. The promotion of mother tongue usage further contributes to an inclusive learning environment, aligning seamlessly with the global vision outlined in SDG 4.5 and enhancing the participation of parents in School Management Committees.

Finally, the pivotal role of SMCs in realising NEP 2020's ambitious enrollment goals for both school and higher education stands paramount. As critical stakeholders, empowered SMCs can significantly contribute to achieving universal Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and a 50 per cent GER in higher education by 2035. In essence, NEP 2020 has effectively propelled the activation of School Management Committees, positioning them as instrumental drivers in realising the overarching vision of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

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Annexure I

School Management Committee (SMC)

According to Section-21 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Child Education Act, 2009 and Rules 3 and 4 of the State Rules, 2011, a School Management Committee (SMC) has been constituted to increase community participation and ownership in schools. The School Management Committee consists of two parts, the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. In the general assembly, the parents/guardians of every student studying in the school, all the teachers, all the public representatives residing in the respective working area and the remaining members are elected/nominated in the executive committee of the committee. All the members of the General Assembly, i.e., the parents of every child and all the public representatives of that area are members of SMC. He has all the responsibilities and powers of the SMC.

Members of the General Assembly

The members of this committee shall be as follows: -

- Parents or guardians of each student / child studying in the school concerned (guardian in case both mother and father are not alive).
- Each teacher / instructor of the school concerned.
- District Head/Pradhan/Sarpanch/Municipal President residing in the working area concerned.
- All Zilla Parishad Members, Municipal Councilors / Panchayat Samiti Members / Ward Panchayat residing in the respective work area.
- Elected/nominated remaining members of the Executive Committee of the Committee who are not included in the above.

General Assembly

All the above-mentioned types of members together will form the General Assembly. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Member Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Committee shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Member Secretary of the General Assembly.

Termination of Membership

The membership of the members of the General Assembly shall automatically terminate in the following circumstances:

- Upon death
- Upon giving resignation letter.
- Elected members are not elected.
- The membership of the student's parent or guardian will automatically terminate upon leaving the school.
- Ex-officio member

General Assembly Meetings

- In the year of General Assembly, three meetings from July to March each year i.e., one meeting in three months shall be mandatory, but, if necessary, the meeting can be convened by the Chairman / Member Secretary at any time.

- The quorum of the general meeting shall be at least 25 per cent of the total number of members of the general meeting.
- Four days' prior notice of meeting and two days' prior notice of urgent meeting must be given.
- In the absence of quorum, the adjourned meeting will be held again after 7 days at the same fixed place and time.
- No quorum shall be required in the adjourned meeting, but the matters to be considered shall be the same as those previously on the agenda.

Executive Committee of School Management Committee

The committee will have a 16-member executive committee for the smooth running of the committee. Out of this minimum three-fourth members shall be from parents or guardians and maximum five members shall be ex officio / nominated other persons. Among the members of the Executive Committee, 50 per cent women, i.e. at least eight women, will be required, whose officers and members will be elected as per Rule 12. The election of parents or guardian members in the executive committee will be done by the general meeting before August 14 after the nomination process is completed at the beginning of each year. The school management committee has a 16-member executive committee to run the functions of the school management committee smoothly, which has the following officers:

Sl. No.	Position	Selection Process
1	President	Elected by the members of the executive committee from among the parents or guardian members by the general meeting of the committee among the 11 members.
2	Vice President	Elected by the members of the executive committee from among the parents or guardian members by the general meeting of the committee among the 11 members.
3	Members (11)	11 members elected by the General Assembly from among the parents or guardian members for the Executive Committee, of which, at least six are women, one Scheduled Caste and one belong to Scheduled Tribe.
4	Ex-officio Member (One)	Ward Panchayat/Councillor of Gram Panchayat/Municipality in the ward in which the school is located.
5	Ex-officio Member Secretary (One)	Principal / Principal Teacher / Lecturer.
6	Elected Teachers	One other female teacher/instructor (if available) elected for the committee by the teachers of the school otherwise male teacher/instructor.
7	Nominated Members (Two)	Two such persons nominated by the Member of the Vidhan Sabha of the school area (at least one of whom is a woman, and one of the parents or guardian members) who is a resident of the ward in which the school is located in the revenue village/urban area for rural areas. Is or is a local school teacher or school child nominated by parents or guardian members of the committee. The first priority in nomination shall be given to the persons nominated by the Member of the Legislative Assembly, but prior to the nomination, written approval of the persons nominated by the Member of the Legislative Assembly shall be required. Second preference in nomination should be given to national / state level award winning teacher resident of school area.
	Total Members	16

Meetings of the Executive Committee of the School Management Committee

- The meeting of the executive committee will be held on the new moon day of every month and if there is a holiday on the new moon day, the meeting will be held on the next working day. This meeting should be called at school premises, chaupal or any convenient place.
 - The Member Secretary will decide the time and place of the committee meeting in consultation with the chairman.
 - The Member Secretary shall send to all members a written notice of the meeting at least four days in advance with a list of items to be considered at the meeting. Urgent meetings can also be called on at least two days' notice.
 - The decision of the District Education Officer shall be final when referred by the Block Education Officer for settlement of disputes relating to the formation/operation of the Vidyalaya Management Committee.
1. To monitor the performance of school activities –
- To provide information about the children's rights of the population living in the vicinity of the school, in general, and creative ways and, at the same time, to inform about the duties of the state government, local authorities, schools, parents, guardians and custodians
 - Regularity and punctuality in school attendance of the teachers appointed in the committee school, regular meetings with parents and guardians and regularity in attendance about the child, equality of learning, progress made in teaching and any other relevant Information. And, will ensure that private tuition or private activities are not engaged in by teachers/teachers.
 - It shall ensure/monitor that teacher are not employed for any non-academic purposes other than duties related to decennial population census, disaster (emergency) relief duties or, as the case may be, duties related to local institutions/bodies or State Legislatures or Parliament elections.
 - It will ensure the enrolment and continuous attendance of all children in the neighbourhood of the school in the age group of 6-14 years.
 - It will monitor the compliance of the values and standards set by the state government for the school.
 - Violation of child rights, especially cases related to physical and mental abuse of children, non-admission, violation of provisions related to provision of free education will be brought to the attention of the local authority.
 - It will formulate the plan while identifying the requirements and will monitor the implementation of the provisions related to the education system made for never-enrolled and drop-out children in the age group of 6-14 years.
 - It will monitor the identification of children with special needs and learning disabilities, enrolment in their schools, provision of facilities for learning and their participation in activities to ensure completion of primary education.
 - It will monitor the implementation of mid-day meal scheme in the school.
 - The school will prepare an annual account of income and expenditure.
 - Bringing qualitative improvement in education by regularly reviewing the educational activities of the school.
 - Ensuring the compliance of the guidelines issued by the State Government/Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or other authorised organisation to ensure physical arrangements in the school, such as playground, boundary wall, classrooms, facilities, furniture and drinking water, etc.

- Checking the health of school children from time to time and organising regular health camps for children.
 - Keeping an eye on the dropout rate from time to time and ensuring the enrolment and stay of all children in the school, arranging for the distribution of free textbooks, teaching materials, school uniforms, etc on time.
 - Conducting joint meetings of parents and teachers from time to time and taking necessary actions for improvement while discussing the reports of achievement level, class work and homework, etc. in those meetings.
 - Various national and regional events organised in the school, distribution of free textbooks, distribution of scholarships, commencement of the school session, participation in various programmes organised in the school after Diwali and winter vacation and all sections of the society. Encourage them to participate in these programmes.
1. Preparing and recommending a development plan for the development of the school -
 - The School Management Committee shall formulate a School Development Plan three months before the end of the financial year in which it is first constituted.
 - The above Vidyalaya Vikas Yojana will be a three-year plan, which will be made by combining three annual plans for the next three years.
 - The school development plan will include detailed information as follows:
 - (a) Estimated class-wise enrolment of each year.
 - (b) Requirement of separate additional teachers, subject teachers and part-time teachers for classes 1 to 5 and classes 6 to 8 for a period of three years on the basis of the values and standards prescribed by the State Government.
 - (c) Requirement of additional physical resources and equipment for a period of three years as per the norms and standards prescribed by the State Government.
 - (d) Yearly additional financial requirements for a period of three years to meet the requirements of (b) and (c) above. In view of these requirements, under the section of the Bill, such children, who are not admitted to school even though they are more than 6 years' old or if admitted, have not completed their primary education, according to their age. Expenditure related to special training required to be at par with other children on admission to class, free textbooks for children, expenditure incurred on providing uniform and necessary for discharge of responsibilities of the school under the provisions of the law.

The school development plan prepared on the above basis should be signed by the President/Vice President and Member Secretary of the Vidyalaya Management Committee and should be submitted to the local authority before the end of the financial year.

2. To monitor the utilisation of grant-in-aid received from the appropriate government or local authority body or any other source –
 - Taking stock of income and expenditure in operational items. If the income in a particular item is less than the desired expenditure, consider taking financial support from parents or guardians and submit the proposal for the amount of financial support to the General Assembly for approval.
 - Supervise all funds and assets of the school and school management committee.
 - Keeping an account of the annual income and expenditure of the school and committee.
 - Development, construction, repair and maintenance of schools, building construction, repair and maintenance of schools under various aided projects conducted under the Department of Elementary

Education, centrally promoted programmes and schemes/programmes conducted with the financial support of the Central Government and the State Government. To carry out construction/development work from the funds provided under the provisions of the teaching and learning equipment school facility grant, TLM grant and other grants, etc.

3. To perform such other acts as may be prescribed –

- The School Management Committee shall perform such other functions/functions as may be prescribed by the competent Government.
- Vidyalaya Prabandhan Samiti swayam ke financial source se per apne level as per requirement of local persons. It may make purely temporary arrangements for the services of teachers/assistants but the burden should not fall on the State Government under any circumstances.

Annexure II

Glimpses from Field Visits



G.P.S., Banskheri, Block Bakani



G.P.S., Ummedpura, Block Khanpur



State of the Infrastructure



Schools of Block Bakani



G.P.S., Savakho, Block Bakani



G.P.S., Devdungari, Block Bakani



G.P.S., Sawakho, Block Bakani



G.P.S., Laxmipura, Block Khanpur



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