

Quality Education and Management of Public Schools in Bihar (India)

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Abstract

Before 1970s most of the schools in Bihar were run by the community. After takeover of all these community run schools by the state government between 1976 and 1981, community school relationship gradually became very poor. It was later realized that universal school education is impossible without reestablishing organic linkage between community and schools and efforts were made to revive the linkage through formation of School Management Committee (SMC) in all public and government aided schools. In this paper authors have tried to look into the changing pattern of SMCs since its inception and impact of SMCs in fomenting relationship between schools and community in Bihar.

Keywords: School Management Committee (SMC), Village Education Committee (VEC), Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti (VSS), Private School and Public School

1. Introduction

Bihar is one of the poorest states in India. It is third most populous state of the country and almost 46 percent of its population is less than 18 years. It is amongst the lowest ranking states in terms of Human Development Indicators (HDI). Despite its many challenges, there has been progress in development in Bihar in recent years. Bihar's performance in Net Enrolment Ratio has reached 93.77% at the primary level and 87.63% at upper primary level. Enrolment figure is still low at secondary and senior secondary levels. Common children living in villages and small towns who constitute nearly ninety percent of Bihar's population generally study in public schools (government run schools). The extremely poor quality of education is available to them. It appears that basic reason for such a dismal state of public system of schooling in the state is the apathy of local communities towards these schools. It is noteworthy that before 1970s most of the schools in Bihar were established and managed by the people. These schools were taken over by the government between 1976 and 1981. There after increasing bureaucratic interference led to the growing alienation of parents and community from the schools. With the launch of Bihar Education Project Council (BPEC) in 1988, it was observed that community has almost alienated from public schools and realization came to the fore that the huge task of universalization of elementary education cannot be achieved without active involvement of community in management of these schools. The Village Education Committee (VEC) was formed in 1988 for better management of schools by the community. The VEC was reorganized in 1991 & 1992. After enactment of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Acts in 1992, local self bodies got statutory status. The local bodies were assigned constitutional role of ensuring the participation of local communities and institutions in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programs including those in education. As a result VEC was replaced by Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti (VSS) in 2000. After implementation of RTE Act 2009, VSS was reorganized as per provisions of this Act. VEC was a village based organization which was later replaced by VSS which is a school based organization. Time and again changes were brought in these organizations in order to consolidate community and school linkage for quality education through better management of schools.

2. A Brief Profile of Bihar

According to Census 2011, Bihar has a population of 104 million, making it the third most populous state in India. Almost 88.7 per cent of Bihar's population resides in rural areas. Bihar has a child population of 19.13 million in the 0-6 years age group, the second highest child population among all Indian states and accounting for 12 per cent of the total child population of India in this age group. Almost 46 per cent of Bihar's population is aged less than 18 years. Bihar is one of the poorest states in India with nearly 33.7 per cent of the population living in poverty. The agricultural sector is the mainstay of the state's economy with 90 per cent of the population dependent on it; however its contribution to the state's Gross State Domestic Product is only 20 per cent. Poor infrastructure is a major bottleneck in terms of development. Challenges of equity are huge in the state due to a caste-ridden society, feudalistic societal structure and complex social stratification. According to UNDP data Bihar is amongst the lowest ranking states in terms of Human Development Indicators (HDI).

The HDI (consumption based) value for Bihar has increased from 0.292 for the year 1999-2000 to 0.455 for the year 2014-15 as against the national average of 0.609 (List of Indian States and Union Territories by Human Development Index). Despite its many challenges, there has been progress in development in Bihar in recent years. The percentage share of social services in total expenditure has grown from 33.44 per cent to 35.31 per cent, almost at par with national average of 35.62 per cent. Improved governance over the past seven-eight years has led to better health care services, greater emphasis on education, better management of social sector programs and a reduction in crime and corruption (State Information/UNICEF)

Over all enrolment of children in Bihar at primary level was 16.120 million in 2013-14, increasing from 13.9 million in 2009-10. The total enrolment at upper primary level has also increased from 4.13 million in 2009-10 to 6.54 million in 2013-14, implying an annual growth rate of 12.0 percent. As a whole, the total enrolment, taking both primary and upper primary levels, rose to 22.66 million in 2013-14 from 18.035 million in 2009-10, with an annual growth rate of 6.0 percent. Additionally, the total enrolment for SC and ST students during this period has also grown at the rate of 8.1 and 16.0 percent respectively (Economic Survey 2015-16, Govt. of Bihar p.xxv). According to NUEPA statistics 2014-15, Bihar's performance in Net Enrolment Ratio has reached 93.77% at the primary level, 87.63% at upper primary level (from last year's 79.06%), 42.08% at secondary level and 19.06% at higher secondary level. The gap between the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at all levels of school education is still very wide in India. Data from 1.52 million schools spread over 680 districts shows that GER at primary level has been over 100 per cent (100.08%), over 90% at upper primary level, 76.64% at secondary level and 54.21% at higher secondary level. On the other hand, NER at primary level is 87.41%, at upper primary level it is 72.48%, 48.46% at secondary level and 32.68% at higher secondary level.

3. Schooling of Deprived Children in Private Schools

After 1990s privatization is gradually becoming dominant mode of economy. There is no denial that private sector has emerged as a big player in the field of school and higher education both. Participation of private schools is increasing fast in the schooling system of the country. Realizing this fact a provision was made under Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 that recognized private schools will be required to provide free and compulsory education to the children from disadvantaged group and weaker section up to 25 percent of the class strength of grade I or pre-school, whichever is the starting point. The government will reimburse the school amount equivalent to what the government spends on educating children in its own school. The above provision of RTE 2009 makes us believe that the welfare state has lost its faith in ensuring the right to education to all the children through public system of schooling and also makes us believe that the welfare state has lost its controlling authority over so called private schools run by societies and trusts that receive many concessions from the state as they are not supposed to be profit making institutions and are committed to serve the children in consonance with the norms set by the state. None of these so called private schools are run as companies even then they have become den of children from the affluent and rich class who can afford to spend hefty amount as capitation and education fees.

Enrolment in recognized private schools ranges from 60% to 10% in various states of India. Kerala and Puducherry have highest percentage of enrolment in private schools whereas enrolment in Bihar, Tripura and West Bengal is less than 10 percent. According to data obtained from Department of Education, Government of Bihar 2677, 4306, 7389 and 19290 children were enrolled in private schools under 25% quota in 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 respectively. Although school wise enrolment data is not available for Bihar but it has been reported by a Hindi daily that out of 308 recognized schools only 114 schools admitted students under the provision of RTE Act 2009 (Prabhat Khabar, Patna, 26 March 2016, p.16). As per information received from the Department of Education, Govt. of Bihar it was found that an amount of Rs.99,32,556 was paid to private schools for deprived children admitted under 25% quota under RTE Act in 2011-12 at the rate of Rs.3077 per child. Likewise an amount of Rs. 3,12,05,808 was paid to private schools in 2012-13 at the rate of Rs.4142 per child. In the year 2013-14 an amount of Rs. 6,19,57,692 was paid to private schools at the rate of Rs. 4311 per child. In 2014-15 an amount of Rs.14,90,22,300 was paid to private schools at the rate of Rs. 4350/child. A month's fee paid for a child in a recognized private school is more than the amount paid by the state government for a year. These schools do not appear to be willing to admit children from disadvantaged and weaker sections as per provisions of RTE Act 2009. Enrolment of 25% children from disadvantaged and weaker sections will not serve any purpose until their inclusion is ensured and inclusion cannot be possible if they are admitted unwillingly by the private schools.

It has also been reported by the above Hindi daily that some private schools in Bihar get reimbursement of fund by the government without admitting children under RTE provision through some fraudulent measures (Prabhat Khabar, Patna, 26 March 2016 p.16). It has also been reported that state government has failed in remitting funds to the private schools which admitted children from weaker and deprived children of the society under RTE Act and provided education. Shamael Ahmad, president of Private School and Children Welfare Association, said that the private schools in Patna did not receive funds from the government in the past two years. According to him around 100 private schools in Patna are registered under the RTE Act. But in the past five years, the district education officer inspected only 30 per cent of the schools. He received many complaints from the heads of the schools about not getting funds from the government. This delay is unacceptable to the private schools following all RTE norms honestly. They felt that the government should also focus on education and take it seriously. (The Telegraph, Patna, 29 March, 2016). From the above discussion it appears that many private schools received funds by the Government of Bihar without educating children under RTE in some fraudulent ways and many other private schools which admitted and provided education to the children as per RTE norms were not remitted funds by the Government of Bihar in time.

As mentioned earlier, private schools are generally unwilling to admit deprived children under RTE provision. The probable reason is that in spite of the fact that these institutions are not supposed to be profit making organizations as they are being run by societies or trusts. The management of private schools are generally oblivious of their social responsibilities but enjoy various concessions provided by the state for being non profit making educational institutions. Forced enrolment of 25% children from disadvantaged and weaker sections in private schools will not serve any purpose. Children belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections admitted in private schools are tagged as RTE children and are victim of overt or covert discriminations. Children in private schools come from well to do families and create such an environment which is not conducive for learning of children from disadvantaged and weaker sections admitted under RTE provision whose education expenditure is borne by the state. Education expenditure borne by the state is generally much less than the education fees charged by private schools. The poor and socially deprived children admitted under RTE provision do not fit in to the cultural pattern of private schools. Learning environment in a private school is deliberately created in a way that children have to purchase costly stationery and other items. Children admitted under RTE provision cannot cope with consumer oriented learning environment. Nurturing environment of excessive competition among children is another feature of private school culture. Excessive competitions among the children lead to excessive pressure on children, especially on those children who belong to deprived and weaker sections.

Hence, a welfare state like ours needs to empower it self to the extent that it can provide free quality education to all children in state run public schools. It is essential for those children who are unable to afford education in private schools. If we look into the children's in achievement government and private schools separately, it is also a fact that fall in learning levels appears to come mostly from government schools. According to ASER 2014, between 2006 and 2010, the percentage of children who could read a Std. 2 level text in Std. 5 in government schools fell slightly from 51.4% to 50.7%. Private schools posted learning gains during this period with the percentage of readers rising from 60.8% to 64.2%. However, after 2010, learning levels in government schools plummeted to a low of 41.1% in 2013, recovering slightly to 42.2% in 2014, while those in private schools remained more or less steady – 63.3% in 2013 and 62.5% in 2014. Even parents who can afford education fees somehow are shifting their children from government to private schools because the latter provide better learning outcomes. A good number of parents do it at the cost of normal living conditions. The right to life under Article 21 and the dignity of an individual cannot be assured unless it is accompanied by the right to education. The State Government is under an obligation to make endeavour to provide educational facilities at all levels to its citizens. It is a patent denial of citizen's right to education if the state fails to make public provisions for free quality education for all children without exception. State is also duty bound to ensure that private schools running by societies or trusts do not sell education as commodities and extort money from the parents willing to send their children in such neighbourhood schools.

Prior to the 86th Constitutional Amendment and insertion of Article 21A in the Constitution, the right to elementary education was not overtly recognized as a fundamental right. However, prior to the implementation of Right to Education Act 2009 the decision of Mohini Jain case was significant for holding that the right to education be an implied fundamental right, as an integral part of the right to life. This decision has been relied on by the Indian Courts in subsequent decisions to guarantee other socio-economic rights, including the right to health, water and food. The significance of this case is also in the court's holding that private educational institutions act as agents of the State in carrying out the latter's duty to fulfil the right to education. Private schools therefore have duties alongside the government in delivering educational services in accordance with constitutional rights. As a result, because the State has an obligation to ensure equal access to higher education, private institutions have the same obligation. This does not necessarily mean that private institutions must provide free higher education, but that they must ensure that higher education is equally accessible and that there is no unfair discrimination. (Mohini Jain vs state of Karnataka & others, 1992 AIR 1858 Supreme Court of India, 30 July 1992)

4. Management of Public Schools

Government school system in India caters to the common children living in villages and small towns who constitute more than three-fourth of India's total population of 1.21 billion in 2011. The statistics is higher in Bihar. The extremely poor quality of education is available to them. One of the main reasons, for such a dismal state of our public system of schools is that the local communities have not been able to assert themselves and effect desirable changes. Some provisions of the RTE Act 2009 like provision for better infrastructure, improved Pupil Teacher Ratio and the enhanced role of School Management Committee (SMC), if utilized properly, have the potential of revitalizing the almost defunct government schools that cater to the common people in the country. These provisions can be realized through concerted civil society interventions and constructive engagement with the governments at the centre and the state levels.

Even after 6 years of implementation of RTE Act 2009 ensuring quality elementary education to all its children is a distant dream. All those states where community involvement is poor, implementation of RTE Act is also poor. Under the RTE Act 2009, School Management Committee (SMC) is constituted by parents. SMC is a powerful tool in the hands of the community for achieving goals of RTE. 'Over the years, an almost complete disappearance of this space for the local community in managing schools, has significantly contributed towards the decline in the school system. Under the RTE Act 2009, there is an attempt to restore this legitimate space, to the community' (AIF & LAMP, 2011 p.9). This is an opportunity, we must not lose. As a matter of priority, the essential components of a good school need to be understood, especially by the parents. Thus, understanding the child learning processes, teacher child relationships, role of the school management, issues that schools face and role of SMC in taking schools out of this present mess, etc, are some crucial issues. In this context, skills to engage with schools at the local level as well as at the level of the system, acquire great significance for parents. A sustained dialogue that facilitates learning and meaningful action on the part of parents has to continue.

A continuous support and handholding of the SMC and the local community rather than one or two training programs thus, becomes imperative.

5. School Management in Bihar Since 1990s

Since the early 1990s School Based Management (SBM) has gained increasing popularity as a strategy for improving responsiveness and accountability in the delivery of education services. As a form of decentralization, the School Based Management (SBM) approach involves the transfer of decision making authority over school operations. The involvement of community members in school functioning has been institutionalized under the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009. Under the RTE, School Management Committee (SMC) is required to be constituted in every government owned/run elementary school in the country. It is primarily consisted of parents/guardians of the children. SMC is empowered with the responsibility of monitoring school functioning and managing its finances.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts created a paradigm shift in governance paving the way for the participation of local communities and institutions in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programs including those in education. These amendments led to the statutory status to local self governments. These Amendment Acts identified 29 subjects to be transferred to local self governments which also included school education. The institutionalized statutory space provided by the 73rd and the 74th amendment acts make mechanisms like Community Based Monitoring (CBM) key factors in facilitating movement from “top-down” methods to participatory processes for local engagement in effective governance of government schools. A large number of non-governmental elementary and secondary schools were running in Bihar before 1970s. These schools were managed by their own management committees. In 1976 these primary schools were taken over by the government (retrospectively from 1971) and in 1981 these secondary schools were taken over by the government. After the take-over, they came under the management of the government. The Acts by which these schools were taken over also contained provisions for their management. Subsequently, various changes were made in these Acts, through notifications.

A major development so far as the primary schools are concerned was the enactment in 2000 of a legislation setting up Vidyalaya Shiksha Samitis (VSS) for the management of these schools. A VSS was consisted of following members:

- a) Nine Guardians of school children elected by the Aam Sabha
- b) Three Non-guardian members elected by the Aam Sabha
- c) Two Nominated members by the Mukhiya of the village panchayat/chairman of the notified area committee/municipality/corporation
- d) Headmaster/ head teacher to the school, ex-officio member

Thus VSS was constituted of 12 members elected by the Aam Sabha (General Body) of local self government (Panchayat/Municipal Corporation) and 2 members nominated by the head of the local self government. In Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti Act 2000, the relation between samiti and panchayat is not explicit. The relationship has been explained in a single sentence mentioning that Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti will function in the general directions of sukh-suvidha-samiti constituted under section 25 (1) (iii) of Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1993. This Panchayat Raj Act came into force as a result of 73 constitutional amendment 1993 which provided Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) statutory status. The function of sukh-suvidha-samiti regarding primary education is not at all mentioned in the act. The panchayat election as per provisions of 1993 Act was conducted in 2001 after a gap of 22 years.

Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti (VSS) constituted as per VSS 2000 Act could hardly ensure the participation of the community in school management, administration, supervision and control. Most of the committees constituted under this act did not follow the wide democratic process and members were elected in a small meeting of few people of the feeder area of the school in connivance with local education officer and school headmaster. In fact in many cases some of the members of the committee were quite ignorant of their being the member of the committee and a large number of members never attended any meeting of the committee and obviously not aware of their role.

Bihar Government constituted Common School System Commission (CSSC) in 2006 with a mission to implement Common School System in Bihar for imparting school education of comparable quality in all schools of the state. No other state has taken any such initiative in India so far. The CSSC submitted its report in 2007. The CSSC went into the structure and functions of existing School Management Committee (VSS 2000) and felt that existing SMC needed to be restructured taking following considerations into account.

- i) An overwhelming majority of the members of these committees should be the parents of the children studying in these schools; for, they have the highest stake in the effective functioning of these schools;
- ii) The school management committee should have mostly elected members and only two or three nominated members. The elected representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions should nominate the few nominated members of the committee;
- iii) 50 per cent of the members of the committee should be women. Either the chairperson or the secretary of the committee should be a woman. Similarly gender parity should be observed in electing the reserve category members of the committee;
- iv) It should be obligatory for the committee to have representatives of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, extremely backward classes and other backward classes;
- v) Almost all the elected and nominated members of the committee should come from the Poshak Kshetra (feeder area) of the school;
- vi) There should be a clear-cut provision for defining and delineating the Poshak Kshetra;

- vii) President and Secretary of the committee should be only from amongst the elected members and they should be elected democratically by the total membership of the committee by a simple majority;
- viii) There should be well-defined linkages between the management committee and the Panchayati Raj Institution in the area in which the school is located;
- ix) To bring a measure of stability to the committee, the provision regarding the removal of the chairperson or the secretary should be made more stringent. A two-thirds rather than a simple majority of the committee should be required for the removal of either of these two office bearers; and
- x) The provisions regarding the dissolution of the management committee should be spelt out clearly and in greater detail.' (Report of the CSSC 2007, chapter 8, pp. 102-103)

The Commission also recommended two bills for management of schools for consideration by the Bihar Legislature. The first bill, Bihar Primary and Middle School Education Committee Bill, 2007 is meant for constituting school education committee in the primary and middle schools of Bihar and the second bill, Bihar Secondary Education Committee Bill, 2007 for constituting school education committee in the secondary schools of Bihar. The preamble of the education committee bills says that these bills are meant for universalization of school education and also for ensuring the participation of people in management, improvement, administration, supervision and control of schools. The above mentioned bills on school management recommended by the Bihar CSSC could not be considered by the state legislature so far. In fact the report of Bihar CSSC could not be implemented so far.

Implementation of RTE Act in April, 2010 necessitated the establishment of School Management Committee (SMC) for elementary schools as per provisions of section 21 of RTE 2009. As a result, Bihar Prarambhik Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti (Bihar Elementary Education Committee) Act 2011 was passed for ensuring people's participation in the management, control and supervision of the elementary schools of the state. New Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti will be consisted of 14 members- 2 ex officio and 12 parents. The head of the school and member of the local self body (gram panchayat or Nagar Nikay ward) in which school is located are ex officio members. Seats will be reserved for SC/ST, extremely backward classes, backward classes and women. The VSS Act 2011 was amended in 2013. The number of members in amended VSS was increased from 14 to 17. In place of 12 parents, 9 mothers of various categories of children (BC-2, EBC-2, SC/ST-2, General-2 & Physically Challenged-1) will be elected. Heads of village organization of 'Jivika' and Mahila Samooh of Mahila Samakhya, two student representatives (a boy from Bal Sansad & a girl from Meena Manch) and the highest donor to the school from the local community will also be the members in VSS 2013.

The new VSS is aimed at providing better representation of parents from different socially deprived groups in the school management. In order to strengthen the role of stakeholders in school management, provision has been made for electing parent representatives by the parents of all children studying in the school under the supervision of state election authority. There is representation from students also in the new VSS. The representation of children in the VSS will further help in the democratic process of decision making. The local self government is also represented by the elected ward member of the Panchayat/Nagar Nikay ward in which the school is situated. In VSS Act 2011 had an ambitious scheme for panchayat like elections by State Election Commission, which never materialized, and subsequently a small seven member ad hoc SMC was constituted. Nearly six months after three year deadline of implementation of RTE Act, VSS Act 2011 was further amended in 2013 which has a provision for 17-member SMC.

Although VSS (as per VSS Act 2013) has been said to be constituted in 93.18% primary/ middle school of the state but in most of these cases proper democratic process was not followed in electing mothers of different social categories of children studying in schools. According to the RTE rules and government orders, all SMCs need to be elected by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) present in the school. The headmaster of the school as per the law needs to call a PTA meeting with prior notice, indicating date, time and venue to all the PTA members and make arrangement for the election of 9 mothers from different social categories as SMC members and the president of SMC. In fact most of the public (government run) and government aided schools in Bihar do not have functional Parents-Teacher Associations. Hence mother members are generally nominated by the school head in connivance with ward member of local self body and or some influential persons of the locality. Most of the mother members are not aware of structure and functions of SMCs. A large number of them are not aware of SMC or their being on SMC as a member. The participation of mother members are generally very low in SMC meetings. DISE flash statistics of 2013-14 shows that 93.37% schools with SMC opened bank account and 65.05% schools constituted SMC and prepared development plan. But members at large do not participate in process of making development plan and have knowledge of financial operation. VSS Act has taken care to guarantee representation of various social groups in the SMC but these representations do not guarantee inclusion. (Kaul, 2001).

Taking into account the role of SMCs in ensuring quality education to the children in public and government aided schools, they appear to be non performer. These committees have failed in establishing organic relationship between schools and community in order to ensure fundamental right of quality elementary education to all the children. Attitude of the state bureaucracy controlling school administration towards SMCs is not encouraging. They are suspicious of the crucial role given to the SMC under RTE Act 2009. Teachers are also not comfortable with SMCs, as they fail to understand the role of community in helping the school to realize its full potential. "There is a lack of creative bonding between teachers and members of SMCs in most places, or sometimes, an unholy alliance leading to a misuse of public money. There are reports of records of SMC meetings being created artificially or being forged. This would be possible only when there is apathy or ignorance on the part of members and local community or undue influence wielded by some members or head teachers." (RTE Forum, 2014).

In a message sent to the participants of First State Level SMC convention held on 20 November 2012 in Lucknow, Vinod Raina, the well known educationist & social activist said “The Right to Education Act seeks a tripartite partnership between the government, local authority and the community through the SMCs. As per provision of RTE Act , 75% of people in the SMCs must be parents of children in a school. This is because who else would be more concerned about the proper functioning of a school than the parent who send their precious children there. The challenge is to make this tripartite partnership functional. That would require proper awareness, information and a spirit of cooperation between these three agencies... It is our duty to work for the rights of our children so that their and the future of our country is bright. Wish the very best to this convention.”

6. Conclusion

Before 1970s most of the elementary and secondary schools in Bihar were run by the community. These schools were managed by their own management committees. By 1981 all these schools were turned into public institutions and put under the management of the government. As a result these schools were gradually alienated from the community. Realization came to the fore in late 1980s that the huge task of universalization of elementary education cannot be achieved without active involvement of community in management of these schools. Hence the Village Education Committee (VEC) was formed in 1988 for better management of schools by the community. Subsequently the place of VEC was taken by Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti (VSS) which is a school based organization. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments paved the way for the participation of local communities and institutions in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programs including those in education. For greater participation of community in schools, VSS Act was passed in 2000. Most of the members of this School Management Committee (VSS) were to be elected by local self government (Gram Panchayat/Nagar Nikay). The Bihar Common School System Commission 2006- 07 went into the structure and functions of existing School Management Committee (VSS 2000) and felt that existing SMC needed to be restructured. The Commission recommended two VSS bills, one for elementary and other for secondary schools of Bihar. These bills could not be passed by the state legislature. Implementation of RTE Act in April, 2010 necessitated the establishment of School Management Committee (SMC) for elementary schools as per provisions of section 21 of RTE 2009. As a result, Bihar Prarambhik Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti (Bihar Elementary Education Committee) Act 2011 was passed for ensuring people's participation in the management, control and supervision of the elementary schools of the state. The new SMC is aimed at providing better representation of parents from different socially deprived groups in the school management. In order to strengthen the role of stakeholders in school management, provision has been made for electing parent representatives by the parents of all children studying in the school under the supervision of state election authority. In VSS Act 2011 had an ambitious scheme for panchayat like elections by State Election Commission, which never materialized, and subsequently a small seven member ad hoc SMC was constituted. Nearly six months after three year deadline of implementation of RTE Act , VSS Act 2011 was further amended in 2013 which has a provision for 17-member SMC. As per DISE data SMCs (as per VSS Act 2013) has been constituted in most of the elementary (primary and middle) schools of Bihar without following democratic process in electing mother members of different social categories. A large number of them are not aware of SMC or their being on SMC as a member. The participation of mother members are generally very low in SMC meetings. DISE flash statistics of 2013-14 shows that 93.37% schools with SMC opened bank account and 65.05 % schools constituted SMC and prepared development plan. But members at large do not participate in process of making development plan and have no knowledge of financial operation at school level. Finally it appears that the SMC is unable to play effective role in ensuring organic linkage between schools and community in Bihar.

Notes

1. In Bihar, School Management Committee is named as *Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti* (School Education Committee)
2. *Prarambhik Vidyalaya Siksha Samiti Adhiniyam* (Elementary School Education Committee Act) is an act pertaining to School Management Committee of elementary schools of Bihar

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