

## DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KARNATAKA

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### **Abstract:**

There is a saying in Sanskrit, “Yatha Lokaaha, Tathaa Shikshana Kramaaha”- i.e. ‘As the people are, so is the education system’. If the scheduled casteis indifferent towards its teacher, its school and education system, it has no reason to expect its children to get good education. If people want their children to be educated properly, they should be willing and ready to put in their own efforts towards the all-round development of the education system, beginning with their immediate neighbourhood. Keeping in view the crucial importance of scheduled caste involvement for the popularizing and promoting (especially in reference to universalization and development of primary education), the present study was carried by delimiting its scope to the role of School development and management committee in development of primary education in karnataka in terms of enrolment and phenomenon of dropout. It also studies the overall contribution of village education development committees for organizing educational and cultural activities in primary schools; identifying the problems being faced by the school and suggest ways and means to improve the situation; strengthening the different types of programmes viz. Non Formal Education and Anganwadies. The findings of the study indicated that there is a need to strengthen scheduled caste in improving the school system and achieving the set goal of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Scheduled caste involvement in the

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long run will prove a very effective measure not only in achieving the target of universalisation of primary education by making it relevant and related to the life but also by further encouraging the Scheduled caste o make constant and consistent efforts to bring quality in the field of primary education so that its very foundation could contribute further to bring about excellence in various fields of education.

### Introduction:

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is a Constitutional obligation the Indian Constitution states that “the state shall Endeavour to Provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.” ‘Education for all’ is the slogan of all the countries. But financial constraints aggravated by population explosion, poverty and illiteracy of masses, large rural habitation, and apathy of parents towards school, hilly and tribal areas and failure to promote adequate work ethics are among the major stumbling blocks in making elementary education free and compulsory in the Indian context. Very recently in India, education has been made a Fundamental Right (86<sup>th</sup> Amendment). But merely making education a Fundamental Right will not serve its purpose unless efforts are made for improving the performance of the school system through a Scheduled caste -owned approach and by ensuring quality primary education. Further, education as a Fundamental Right will remain a shallow Fundamental Right of the children (just for the sake of legislative provision) unless and until certain conditions are fulfilled and the role and responsibility is fulfilled by the school, parents and Scheduled caste at large. Now, even after six decades of Independence we have been able to achieve only about 70 per cent literacy. It seems impossible to improve quality of education without the active involvement of the Scheduled caste in general and parents in particular. For achieving Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE), after the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), now the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has come into existence. Its guidelines were formulated in 2001 by a centrally sponsored scheme seeking to operationalise the National Policy on Education (NPE)-Pogramme of Action (POA) strategies of achieving the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) by transforming, toning and accelerating the primary education system. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a home grown idea that intends to achieve the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in a contextual manner with

emphasis on participation and capacity building. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has focused on Decentralization; Quality education; Universalisation of elementary education without any social or gender bias; and Community participation and ownership. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) can not be successful unless and until community participation is ensured and therefore, formation of the school development and management committee (SDMC) under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is also one of the important concerns and positive steps towards the success of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) and improving quality of education. School development and management committee have come into existence in Karnataka in 2002 after the launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the state. The major purpose of setting up of these committees is to bring about a partnership between the school and the community and to achieve the objectives laid down by the National Policy on Education-1986. School development and management committee (SDMC) look after the educational requirements in the village and also its qualitative and quantitative development at the primary school level.

#### **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. (SDMC):**

Under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Bills, panchayats will be formed for a village or a group of villages. The panchayats will have elected representatives. Besides, each panchayat may constitute a school development and management committee. (SDMC) which would be responsible for administration of the delegated programmes in the field of education at the village level. The State Government may consider entrusting the following functions to the school development and management committee

- 1 Generation and sustenance of awareness among the village — Scheduled caste ensuring participation of all segments of population; ·
- 2 Developing teacher/instructor and Scheduled caste partnership to oversee and manage the effective and regular functioning of the schools and centers.

It is also proposed to vest Village Education Development Committees with the appropriate statutory authority and necessary financial and administrative authority in view of their critical role (Programme of Action - 1992). The transfer of primary education to Panchayat Raj Bodies will help in ensuring community participation in a more meaningful way. It is necessary that

Panchayat Raj Bodies function as decentralized democratic institutions. There is also a need for ensuring cordial relations between the administration and people's representatives. Panchayats may provide an institutional framework for Scheduled caste participation.

### **Composition of school development and management committee in Karnataka**

The Village Education Development Committee normally comprises eight members. The Karnataka State Government in its guidelines for setting up school development and management committee suggested the following composition:

1. Head of the primary school in the village will act as Member Secretary of The committee;
2. Two members nominated by Gram Panchayat (at least one member from Scheduled Caste preferable a woman);
3. Two parents of children to be nominated by Parent Teacher Association. (At least one member from a Scheduled Caste preferable a woman);
4. Sarapanch (President),
5. Retired Teacher/ Ex-Serviceman
6. Social worker

### **Functions of school development and management committee**

In its guidelines, the Karnataka State Government has stated that the functions of school development and management committee (SDMC) will be as follows:

1. To motivate and attract the out-of-school children in the age group 6-14  
And their parents for school education;
2. To motivate the children engaged in labour, their parents and employees to send them to school;

3. To undertake the construction work such as additional classroom, Sanitation Block repair etc with community participation;
4. To consider new plans for raising the educational level and betterment of the school;
5. To prepare progress reports;
6. To look after the school building; and
7. To provide the basic facilities in the schools such as water, electricity, Furniture, black-boards etc.

### **Rationale of the Study:**

Since Independence, efforts have been made for the achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Over the years there has been a very impressive expansion in the provision of educational facilities and enrolment. However, the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), which was envisaged in the Constitution of India to be achieved by 1960, is still an elusive goal and much ground is yet to be covered. Also the dropout rates continue to be significant, retention of children in schools is low and wastage is considerable and level of achievement of students is not up to the mark.

Government of India has adopted and launched many innovations to check the different problems of primary education and to accelerate the process of achieving the goal of Universalisation of Primary Education. Besides, in a landmark decision in the Golden Jubilee Year of Independence, the Government of India decided to make elementary education a Fundamental Right for children in the age groups of 6-14 years and this was also recommended in the 86th Amendment of the Indian Constitution. Simultaneously an explicit provision would be made in the constitution to make it a Fundamental Duty of every parent to provide opportunities for elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

It is a well-known fact that the primary education forms the foundation for further Education. In order to make the primary education broad based and effective, there is a need for participation and mobilization of the Scheduled caste. In spite of the importance of community involvement for improving school effectiveness, it has not received the attention which it deserves particularly

when the country has not been able to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). On the basis of the above discussion and keeping in view the importance of Scheduled caste participation in primary education, the present investigation has been undertaken to study the role of Village Education Development Committees in the development of Primary Education in Karnataka

### **Objectives:**

To study the role of school development and management committee (SDMC) in the development of primary education with regard to: Enrolment; and The Phenomenon of dropouts.

To study the overall contribution of Village Education Development Committees in Karnataka with regard to; organization of Educational and Co-curricular activities in primary schools; provide infrastructural facilities and other inputs in schools; identify problems being faced by the school and to suggest ways and means to improve the situation; and strengthen the different types of programmes viz. Non Formal Education/Alternative Schooling and Anganwadies.

To obtain suggestions from members of school development and management committee for effective functioning of VEDCs in the development of primary Education at village level.

### **Methodology:**

In order to achieve objectives of the present investigation, the descriptive survey method was undertaken. The methodological details like sample, tool and procedure of data collection are given below.

### **Sample:**

In the first phase, out of 31 districts of Karnataka, one selected. That district was chitradurga. Thereafter, two blocks were randomly selected from the same district. In the second phase, twenty Village Education Development Committees (ten VEDCs each from two blocks) were also selected randomly for the sample of the present study. Thereafter, for the selection of members of Village Education Development Committees, all the head teachers were selected



from these 20 Village Education Development Committees and four members each from each Village Education Development Committee were selected on purposive basis. Thus, finally 100 members (20 head teachers 80 other members of Village Education Development Committees) of these 20 Village Education Development Committees constituted the sample of the present study.

**Tool:**

For collecting the required data, an interview schedule was used for members of Village education development committees by the investigator. Before preparing The final list of items of interview schedule, a pilot survey was also conducted by The investigator.

**Collection of Data:**

First of all, the purpose of the research study was explained to the respondents (who were members of VEDCs) and an attempt was made by the investigator to establish rapport with those members of Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs) so as to obtain correct and complete information from them. Thereafter, keeping in view the objectives of the study, the interview schedule was administered to each respondent (VEDC member) and his responses were recorded on a separate sheet.

**Findings:**

The findings of the study have been presented under six sections. The section-I, II and III deals with the findings based on perception of head teachers of Village Education Development Committees. Whereas Section-IV, V and VI present the findings based on perception of other members of Village Education Development Committees.

### Section-I

**Findings based on perception of head teachers regarding the role of Village Education Development Committees in the enhancement of primary education with regard to enrolment and the phenomenon of dropouts.**

Majority (75 per cent) of the head teachers had indicated that there was no child in the village in this age group who was not enrolled whereas some (25 per cent) head teachers indicated that about 1 per cent children were none enrolled in this age group. Majority (70 per cent) of the head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were not holding any enrolment drives in their village school whereas some (30 per cent) head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were holding enrolment drives such as door to door campaigning and holding meetings with villagers to increase enrolment in their village school. Almost all head teachers indicated that the rate of potential dropouts in primary schools was about 5 per cent. All the head teachers indicated that the rate of dropout in primary schools was about 1 per cent and the main causes of dropout in primary schools were casual attitude of parents, illiteracy of parents and students engagement in household chores. Majority (80 per cent) of head teachers viewed that they had contacted the dropouts and persuaded them to attend the school again and persuaded to parents to send their children in school again whereas a very few (20 per cent) head teachers viewed that no efforts were made by them in minimizing the dropout in primary school.

### Section-II

**Findings based on perception of head teachers regarding contribution of Village Education Development Committees in the enhancement of primary education at village level.**

Majority (75 per cent) of the head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were not organizing any educational activities in their village schools whereas some (25 per cent) head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were organizing educational activities such as exhibitions, essay competitions, debate, quiz competition and General Knowledge Test in their village school. Most (80 per cent) of the head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were not organizing any co-



curricular activities in their village schools whereas a few (20 per cent) head teachers indicated that Village Education Development Committees were organizing co-curricular activities such as annual sports, inter school sports, inter school cultural activities and panchayat tournaments in their village school. Most (90 per cent) of head teachers indicated that there was no contribution of their Village Education Development Committees with regard to furniture for teachers, teaching-learning material, plantation in the school, maintenance of existing infrastructure and overall beautification of school complex whereas a few (10 percent) head teachers indicated that their Village Education Development Committees had constructed classrooms/ school building; provided drinking water; toilet facilities, play ground and land for their school. Almost all the head teachers had indicated that preparation/distribution of Mid-Day Meal, lack of teaching-learning material, shortage of teachers and indiscipline among students were the major problems in their schools but a few (10 per cent) head teachers indicated that their Village Education Development Committees had helped in solving the problems pertaining to preparation/distribution of Mid-Day Meal and also supplied utensils to school and construction of classrooms in their village schools. All the head teachers indicated that there was no contribution of their Village Education Development Committees in strengthening different types of programmes like Non Formal Education/ Alternative Schooling and Anganwadiesm at the village level.

### Section-III

#### **Findings based on suggestions of head teachers for effective functioning of Village Education Development Committees.**

Only those persons should be nominated as members of Village Education Development Committee(s) who are at least matriculate. An adequate environment-building exercise should be carried out prior to setting up of Village Education Development Committee(s) so that committed and dedicated persons come forward to become member of Village Education Development Committees. It should be mandatory for all the members to attend the meetings of Village Education Development Committee(s) regularly. Village Education Development Committee should also take care of Centers of Non Formal Education/ Alternative Schooling, Anganwadies at village level. All the members of Village Education Development Committee(s)

should be given training regarding their expected role as a member of Village Education Development Committee. Serious efforts should be made by all the members of Village Education Development Committee(s) to enroll the non-enrolled children in school, to bring the dropouts back to school, to ensure that all the enrolled children of age group 6-14 stay in school till they complete the desired level of education. There should be sharing of responsibility between members of Village Education Development Committee and school staff for the qualitative improvement in the day to day functioning of school. For effective functioning of Village Education Development Committee(s), adequate funds should be allocated to Village Education Development Committee(s) so that the committees can provide, necessary infrastructural facilities in schools including equipment, furniture, teaching-learning material, drinking water, sanitary facilities, play ground etc. Scheduled caste leaders should extend their help and co-operation to the Village Education Development Committees and the schools for better functioning and co-ordination.

#### Section-IV

**Findings based on perception of members of Village Education Development Committees about the role of Village Education Development Committees in the enhancement of primary education with regard to enrolment and phenomenon of dropout.**

Most (81 per cent) of the members of Village Education Development Committees had indicated that there was no child in the village in this age group who was not enrolled whereas a few (19 per cent) members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that about 1 per cent children were nonenrolled in this age group. Most (81 per cent) of the members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that Village Education Development Committees were not holding any enrolment drives whereas a few (19 per cent) members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that Village Education Development Committees were holding enrolment drives such as door to door campaigning and holding meetings with villagers to increase enrolment in their village school. Almost all members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that the rate of potential dropouts in primary schools was about 5 per cent. All the members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that main causes of potential dropout in primary schools were casual attitude of parents, illiteracy of parents, students' engagement in household chores, negative attitude of parents towards

education of their wards and truancy. All the members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that the rate of dropout in primary schools was about 1 per cent.

### Section-V

#### **Findings based on perception of members of Village Education Development Committees regarding contribution of Village Education Development Committees in the enhancement of primary education at village level.**

Most (84 per cent) of the members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that their Village Education Development Committees were not organizing any educational activities in their village schools. Whereas a few (16 per cent) members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that their Village Education Development Committees were organizing educational activities such as exhibitions, essay competitions, debate, quiz competition and General Knowledge Test in their village school. Most (84 percent) of the members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that their Village Education Development Committees were not organizing any co-curricular activities in their village schools whereas a few (16 per cent) members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that Village Education Development Committees were organizing co-curricular activities such as annual sports, inter school sports, inter school cultural activities and panchayat tournaments in their village school. Most (89 per cent) of members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that there was no contribution of their Village Education Development Committees with regard to furniture for teachers, teaching-learning material, plantation in the school, maintenance of existing infrastructure and overall beautification of school complex whereas a few (11 per cent) members of Village Education Development Committees indicated that their Village Education Development Committees had constructed classrooms/ school building; provided drinking water; toilet facilities, play ground and land for their village school. Almost all members of Village Education Development Committees had indicated that preparation/distribution of Mid-Day Meal, lack of teaching-learning material, shortage of teachers and indiscipline among students were the major problems in their schools but a very few (5 per cent) Village Education Development Committees had helped in solving the problems pertaining to preparation/ distribution of Mid-Day Meal and also supplied utensils to school and construction of class-rooms in their village schools. All the members of Village

Education Development Committees indicated that there was no contribution of their Village Education Development Committees in strengthening different types of programmes like Non Formal Education/ Alternative Schooling

And Anganwadies at village level.

### Section-VI

#### **Findings Based on Suggestions of Members of Village Education Development Committee for Effective Functioning of Village Education Development Committees**

All the members of Village Education Development Committee(s) should be given training regarding their expected role as a member of Village Education Development Committee by the Government. Serious efforts should be made by all the members of Village Education Development Committee(s) to enroll the non-enrolled children in school(s), to bring the drop-outs back to school, to ensure that all the enrolled children of age group 6-14 stay in school till they complete the desired level of education. Adequate funds should be allocated to Village Education Development Committees so that these committees may provide necessary infrastructural facilities in schools including equipment, furniture, teaching learning material, drinking water, sanitary facilities, and play ground etc. There should also be a budget for refreshments during Village Education Development Committee(s) meetings as there exists no provision of any for this purpose. Teachers should pay more attention towards irregular students. The Block Education Officers should visit at least once in a month to keep in touch with Village Education Development Committee(s) so that the problem faced by Village Education Development Committees/ School(s) are tackled in time.

**Implications:**

Any research work can be considered effective only when the fund of knowledge generated through it can be applied to improve the existing practices of education. Therefore, keeping in view the above findings of the present study there is needed to strengthen Village Education Development Committees. In order to ensure effective role of these committees in improving the school system, involvement of the community is required in primary education. The role of Village Education Development Committees assume more importance in the light of recent decision

Making of free and compulsory education which is a Fundamental Right given by our Constitution. Scheduled caste involvement in the long run will prove a very effective measure not only in achieving the target of universalisation of primary education by making it relevant and related to the life but also further encourage the Scheduled caste to make constant and consistent efforts to bring quality in the field of primary education so that its very foundation could contribute further to bring excellence in various fields of education.

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