

## PHD ABSTRACT FOR JMI WEBSITE

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**THESIS TITLE:** DYNAMICS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: ITS IMPACT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EDUCATION OF SCHEDULED CASTE PARENTS UNDER SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

**DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

### **INTRODUCTION:**

There is an urgent need to address quality and inclusion concerns of education of Scheduled Caste (SC) children and strengthen parents' participation in educational intervention. The research aimed to critically assess the nature of SC parents' participation under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), and study factors influencing and the contribution of SC parents' participation towards ensure delivery of quality primary education to SC children. The research covered Govindgarh and Bassi blocks of Jaipur district of Rajasthan, with primary data collection during July-August, 2011. From each block, five rural government upper primary schools were selected, using purposive sampling technique. The research method primarily included interviews, and quantitative analysis was done using frequency distribution and Chi square test ( $X^2$  test or Pearson's chi-square test).

Under the recent Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 the School Management Committees (SMC) provide "invited spaces" for the parents and guardian to participate in school management. As per the Rajasthan Rules for RTE (Rule 3:2), the SMC must consist of: parent / guardian of every child studying in the school; all the teachers working in the school; the person elected from the ward of the local authority in which the school is located; and all other elected members of the local authority residing in the village / ward in which the school is located. The Rajasthan Rules further have provisions for an Executive Committee (EC) to undertake day-to-day management on behalf of the SMC.

### **RESEARCH FINDING 1: EC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT**

The EC was found to be weak on the four capacity dimensions, with teachers emerging as the most active members and SC parents as the most inactive members. *Structural capacity of ECs was found to be low, with 89% cases the EC composition as per rule, the formation process in all ECs being member secretary-centric, and EC meetings regularly held as per norm only in 30% of the cases. The human capacity in ECs was moderate and varied, with, 73.3 % of EC members aware about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), 55% about RTE and 86.4% about SMC existence. Less than 40% however had complete understanding about membership dimensions, selection process of EC members and the totality of EC responsibility. Functional capacity was low, with ECs found more functional in provision of infrastructure and community mobilization, not very active in their monitoring role, and not involved in school development planning. Relational capacity was low, with majority (60%) of EC members reported EC not receiving nor seeking support from other organisations.*

## **RESEARCH FINDING 2: DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF SC PARENTS**

The participation of non- EC SC parents (also referred to as direct participation) was found to be low on the information and monitoring dimension and moderate on the contribution dimension of Participation. *Information dimension* included aspects like awareness about SSA, RTE and SMC, information about child progress and infrastructure; *Contribution dimension* included visiting school, invitation to school and contribution of money; and *Monitoring dimension* included checking mid day quality and checking teacher regularity and punctuality.

## **RESEARCH FINDING 3: DIRECT AND INDIRECT SC PARTICIPATION**

As compared to non-EC SC parents, EC SC parents performed better on all the 3 dimensions of participation. On the two monitoring indicators, EC SC parents fared better than non-EC SC parents, with the former taking more proactive and regular measures to test Mid day meal (MDM) and teacher regularity. In case of teacher regularity, both categories of SC parents resorted more to observation than visiting the school and monitoring the teachers in a more structured manner.

## **RESEARCH FINDING 4: FACTORS INFLUENCING SC PARENT PARTICIPATION**

*Parent readiness* was found to be significantly associated with both the contribution and monitoring dimension of participation. *EC effectiveness* was significantly associated with the monitoring of midday meal; *Teacher readiness* was associated with contribution on money for school function; and *PRI effectiveness* was found to be significantly associated with parents' invitation to school.

## **RESEARCH FINDING 5: CONTRIBUTION OF SC PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The research studied the contribution of Non-EC SC parents' participation to the following outcomes at the level of SC children: Perception of SC parent respondents to discrimination in the school; and Absence status of SC children. As the schools varied only on the parent visit indicator, research tested the significance of the relationship between the parents' visit and the mentioned outcomes. The findings showed that Non-EC SC parents' visits were not found to be significantly associated with any of the outcomes specified by the research.

## **EMERGING LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The research highlights that SC parent participation in general is low and is primarily "instrumental" and "individualised" in nature. It supports the continuum nature of community participation, with SC parents ranking differently on the continuum. It highlights the weakness in the collective model of participation, but also finds potential in it to effectively represent the voice of the marginalised. It demonstrates that different dimensions of community participation can be facilitated by multiple factors, based on the underlined interests of those factors. It warns against premature and unrealistic expectations for community participation, and highlights that for community participation to matter it needs to reach a minimum threshold of scale and quality. The research further provides valuable recommendation for strengthening direct participation of SC parents as SMC members and strengthening EC to facilitate representative participation of SC parents.