

**Role of School Management and Development Committees in promotion of
Secondary Education with special reference to National Education Policy-
2020: Issues and Challenges**

Shruti

Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Central University of Haryana

Email- mahimalhotra29@gmail.com

Parmod Kumar

Professor & Head, Department of Teacher Education, Central University of Haryana

Email- pk Yadav@cuh.ac.in

Abstract

In the modern era, education is the most powerful tool for achieving the goal of holistic development and high-quality education is essential for economical & societal development of any country. The education system of India is divided into four major categories namely pre-primary, elementary, secondary, and higher education. Thus, secondary school education is the most crucial stage of learning and development. It prepares a strong foundation for higher education and also for the world of work. A number of programmes have been implemented for the improvement of secondary school education since independence in India. In this context, very recently, National Education Policy-2020 has been announced by the Government of India for achieving the major goal- education for all and quality education by introducing new structure of school education and improve the enrollment upto 50% at Secondary stage by 2030. So, the present paper is a genuine attempt to study the role of School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in promotion of Secondary Education with special reference to NEP-2020 and highlight some important issues and challenges in promoting secondary school education with special reference to the main provisions of National Education Policy-2020 such as the implementation of new 5+3+3+4 curriculum and pedagogy design (including foundation, preparatory, middle and secondary stage); reduce the dropout rate at all levels; multilingualism; skill development & vocational education; improving school complexes and accreditation of school education. Hence, there should be high level awareness and orientation programmes among all the stakeholders are very important to implement the policy in letter and spirit and for achieving the goal of universal high-quality secondary education.

Keywords: Secondary School Education, National Education Policy-2020, Issues and Challenges

Introduction

A well-defined and futuristic education policy is essential for development of any country and it promotes social and economic advancement. Broadly speaking, the progress of a country hinges upon its education system and the character of its people. Any country enriched with a very sound education system, will produce good citizens, great scientists, scholars, administrators, and good leadership. Therefore, education plays a role of paramount importance in the all-around development of the individual as well as the

country. Several programmes have been implemented by the Central and State Governments since the Independence of India to improve the standard and the quality of secondary education. Recently, the National Educational Policy (NEP-2020) after prolonged deliberation and consultation among academicians, policymakers and stakeholders from various social, regional, cultural educational and linguistic backgrounds. The vision of the NEP-2020 is to develop “An education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower”.

“As is the school, so is the nation” is rightly said since a country is shaped in her classrooms. So, the improvement in school education is very much required as it is the secondary stage of our education system. It brings about holistic development of the children, and overall prepare them good citizen and human being. Educational governance in India has increasingly moved toward decentralization in order to enhance community participation, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. The creation of School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) under RMSA was aimed at democratizing school administration and ensuring that local stakeholders contribute actively to institutional development. Achieving full human potential, creating a just and equitable society, and advancing national development all depend critically on high-quality education. Regardless of social or economic background, all students in India needed to have fair access to high-quality education through the country’s educational system (Verma, 2025). India has embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which aims to guarantee inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education and encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone and nation designs their educational institutions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). With this third modification to the education policy, the Indian Government is going to change the way we learn after thirty-four years.

Need and Significant of the study

The School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) were designed to promote grassroots involvement in school management. However, members often perceive their position as advisory rather than functional. The Principals usually associate SMDCs with supervisory roles, whereas community representatives and parents tend to consider themselves symbolic contributors. A study was conducted by Yousuf (1995) on ‘Role of Community Participation in Compulsory Primary Education in Bangladesh’ observed that school management committee members were not aware of their responsibilities and duties. There was lack of initiative by secretary to solve this problem also. Dayaram (2011) in ‘School management committees and the Right to Education Act 2009’ proposed that to establish an educational institution, community participation has been considered as a vital part since ages. Karia (2009), Nyandro, Mapfamo & Makoni (2013) observed that “due to lack of course on management and orientation among the SMDC members, they were not aware about the management of funds, preparation of budget, decision making and raising funds” and found that the SMDC members have less aware about its role as prescribed by the RMSA.

So, the present paper is a genuine attempt to study the role of School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in promotion of Secondary Education with special reference to National Education Policy-2020 and highlight some important issues and challenges in promoting secondary school education with special reference to the main provisions of National Education Policy-2020 such as the implementation of new 5+3+3+4 curriculum and pedagogy design (including foundation, preparatory, middle and secondary stage); reduce the dropout rate at all levels; multilingualism; vocational & skill development; improvement of School complexes.

Role of School Management and Development Committees in promotion of Secondary Education: Issues and Challenges

The School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) were designed to promote grassroots involvement in school management. The decision-making within SMDCs is often influenced by principals, resulting in reduced involvement of parents and community members. Teachers are more engaged in discussions, but the process continues to be dominated by top-down practices. This uneven participation limits inclusivity in governance. NEP-2020 proposed “Revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance to create a new system that aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st-century education. The policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual by developing foundational and higher-order capacities such as critical thinking and problem-solving”. It helps in developing knowledge-based society and quality education to all through which India has been envisaged to be the global knowledge superpower. The policy has given impressive and lofty recommendations to improve the quality of education from ECCE to higher education including vocational, professional, adult, online and digital education. Part-I of the policy deals with School Education and recommended improvisation of the quality of school education by introducing new system of 5+3+3+4 in place of the 10+2+3 structure but there are some important issues and challenges in the implementation of this policy at school level from foundation stage to secondary education in India. Thus, the present paper throws concentrated reflective light on some of the following important issues and challenges in reforming secondary school education with special reference to the main provisions of National Education Policy-2020:

1. Implementation of New 5+3+3+4 Curriculum and Pedagogy Design:

NEP-2020 proposed “New pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 in place of 10+2+3 structure covering the ages 3-18”. The policy proposed the first 05 years for the Foundational Stage; the next 03 years for the Preparatory Stage; the next 03 years for the Middle Stage; and the last 04 years for the Second Stage from class 9 to 12. The Policy proposed commendable new pedagogical & curricular structure of school education but the most important part of the implementation issue of this structure lies in the fact that the existing system of school education calls for a rigorous revamping. For this purpose, firstly, Central and State Governments stand in need of physical and human resources to strengthen the secondary education system. Secondly, the most important issue is the acceptability and implementation of the new structure by all the State Governments in a time-bound manner as the education in

the concurrent list and these state governments will demand huge funds for the implementation of this scheme. The third important issue is the appointment of trained and qualified teachers across the levels from Anganwadi to Secondary education level whereas every state has its policy of appointment and recruitment of different types of teachers. Mahiwal and Kumar (2017) in their study revealed that the major difficulties considered by teachers in SMDCs were the 'shortage of funds in schools to fulfill the needs of the school', 'non-availability of guidelines regarding utilization of school grants', 'lack of serious efforts from the Central and State Government for out of school children and drop outs' and 'no proper monitoring of in-service teacher training programmes' so the role of SMDC is very important in implementation of new school structure to aware the parents as well community members.

2. Reduce Dropout Rate

One of the important goals of the Indian schooling system is to achieve the goal of universal access at all levels since independence and for achieving this goal, several programmes are implemented by Centre and State Governments. Further the policy indicated, "The data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent students from further dropping out, to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in pre-school to secondary level by 2030". For achieving this long-cherished goal, we require sincere efforts to make by all stakeholders to improve the dropout rate at secondary levels by providing sufficient infrastructure, regularly trained teachers, conveyances/hostels, especially for the girl children, to motivate the parents of these dropout children, alternative and innovative education centres for children of migrant labourers and other children who are dropping out of school due to some problems. Further, the quality of Government schools should be improved, proper tracking of dropout children along with their achievement & reasons, appointment of counsellors/social workers, awareness programme for parents of these students specially girls from poor socio-economically disadvantaged groups who are dropout. Innovative ways of learning programmes shall be offered by NIOS and State Open Schools for those learners who are not able to attend the school in physical mode. The most visible contributions of SMDCs relate to infrastructure maintenance and physical facilities. Issues such as improving academic outcomes and providing student support services are rarely prioritized. As a result, the committees' impact on the overall learning environment remains modest.

3. Multiculturalism and Multilingualism:

India is a multicultural and multilingual country and NEP-2020 highlighted the importance of local language and mother tongue. It stated that "It is well understood that young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language/regional language". It is a welcome step but it may again put the mother tongue speaking candidates to disadvantage when they are required to compete with students of English medium students. A uniform policy

is required to be adopted for government and private schools for all languages through innovative and experiential methods with local needs and real-life experiences.

4. Vocational and Skill Education at School Level

The NEP-2020 also proposed vocational and skill education from the 6th standard in place of the senior secondary school stage by “Integrating essential subjects, skills, and capacities in the school curriculum to prepare good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; a sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem-solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity; Fundamental Duties; citizenship skills and values; knowledge of India; environmental awareness including water and resource conservation, sanitation and hygiene; and current affairs and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, States, the country, and the world. Concerted curricular and pedagogical initiatives, including the introduction of contemporary subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), etc. at relevant stages will be undertaken to develop these various important skills in students at all levels. It is recognized that mathematics and mathematical thinking will be very important for India's future and involve artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, etc. All students will participate in a 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 where they intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects may be made available to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available”. It is a truly a commendable move to start the vocational and skill education at grade 6th but the major challenge is how to include all vocational subjects/skills with the core subjects. Another challenge in this initiative pertains to teacher training/orientation about these courses/skills (Chatterjee, Biswas, & Chattopadhyay, 2024).

It is a welcome step for improving the quality of school education, but the most important issue is in the implementation of a new evaluation system with the same spirit. As long as teachers are not properly trained/oriented about the new evaluation system at all levels, it will be difficult to implement the same. To achieve this goal, proper planning, effective implementation strategies, coordination among various functionaries/agencies/bodies, benefices, and adequate funds will be required. Savicks (2017) in his study reveals that SMC/VEC members were not well aware about their role and responsibility, particularly, marginalized individuals and Barnett (2012) in ‘An analysis of community involvement in primary schools in Malawi’ suggested that school-based management has helped to reach to the marginalized group and bring education to the least advantageous group in a way that all stakeholders participation make education reachable at the last corner of the society.

5. Improving the School Culture

Kumar (2015) has rightly observed that “Education without the active participation of the community is considered as one-sided activity. It becomes an activity of supply model not that of the demand model”. Education, through a social activity, has significant economic implications. Without a doubt, stakeholder’s involvement in school-level decision-making and administration follows community involvement in educational management. The NEP-2020 also recommended that “Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. Society gave teachers or gurus, what they needed to pass on their knowledge, skills, and ethics optimally to students”. Thus, the teacher is the key player in revamping and reforming the school education from pre-primary to secondary education. It broadly depends upon the quality of teacher training institutions, appointment, professional growth, sincerity and dedication of teachers. Motivated and empowered teachers can improve the existing system of government schools. So, Central and State governments must address the aforesaid issues during the appointment and recruitment of qualified, and well-trained teachers at secondary level and must focus on the continuous professional development of teachers with special reference to the needs and requirements of learners, curriculum and modern society. The innovative modes of teacher training should be adopted for CPD and best teachers should be awarded & promoted. Research studies indicated that the most of the SMDCs members were have not been given to much formal orientation or training programmes about their roles and responsibilities. Without such training programmes, they cannot fully utilize their potential in decision-making and planning. There is an urgent need for structured workshops and clear operational guidelines to enhance their capacity.

Suggestions for further improving role of SMDCs for qualitative improvement of secondary Education

On the basis of the aforesaid discussion, it may be concluded that role of SMDCs is very important in the holistic development and improve the quality of secondary school education. Hence, the suggestions have been given for further improvement of secondary school education:

- SMDCs assume that community members, parents, and local representatives will actively engage in decision-making. However, the descriptive evidence suggests that many members feel unprepared for their responsibilities due to the absence of training or guidance. This results in their participation being symbolic rather than substantive. Without knowledge of school budgets, pedagogical goals, or administrative processes, members cannot challenge or contribute meaningfully to the decisions taken by principals and teachers. This situation raises concerns about whether decentralization is only structural and procedural, without being truly functional. So. there should be proper coordination between SMDCs and the school authority at each and every level as role of community is very constructive and useful. Increasing proper awareness

among the SMDCs members about their role and responsibilities through well designed orientation and training programmes

- Secondly, the dominance of hierarchical culture in schools has significantly adverse effecting the functioning of SMDCs. The tendency of principals and teaching staff to control meetings and minimize community input reflects the deep-rooted bureaucratic mindset in the Indian education system. Even when policies promote inclusivity, entrenched norms often prevent genuine empowerment. This indicates that decentralization cannot succeed merely through structural reforms only as it requires cultural transformation within institutions as well. Teachers and administrators must be sensitized to respect and value community voices of participatory governance is to work effectively. Fostering personal connections with the community are essential to improve the functioning of SMDCs.
- Research studies show that SMDCs are more focused on tangible and visible aspects such as infrastructure development rather than intangible but equally critical areas like academic quality, student motivation, or teacher accountability. This imbalance arises partly because infrastructure improvements are easier to measure and demonstrate, while academic outcomes demand long-term efforts and deeper collaboration. However, if SMDCs are to contribute to educational transformation, they must go beyond building repairs and take an active role in monitoring classroom processes, student learning outcomes, and teacher support systems. Only then can they bridge the gap between policy aspirations and actual student needs (Varghese, Sarup, Anuradha & Sinha, 2025).
- Another critical dimension that emerges is the lack of motivation and recognition for community members. Parents and local representatives often volunteer their time and energy, but their contributions remain unnoticed. This discourages sustained participation.
- Introducing systems of acknowledgment—such as certificates, public appreciation, or recognition at block and district levels—could provide the necessary motivation to sustain their involvement. In addition, incentives such as capacity-building workshops, exposure visits, or knowledge-sharing sessions may encourage members to contribute more actively.
- Reports from NCERT, NITI Aayog, and state governments consistently highlight the gap between policy intent and field-level practice. Decentralization initiatives often face barriers such as inadequate funding, lack of clarity in roles, insufficient accountability frameworks, and the inertia of bureaucratic traditions. Thus, the problems faced by SMDCs are not isolated but part of a larger pattern in Indian education governance.
- The descriptive discussion underscores the urgent need for policy-level interventions. Training modules must be made mandatory, with clear guidelines on the minimum number of meetings, expected outcomes, and modes of participation. State and district authorities should play a proactive role in monitoring committee effectiveness, ensuring

that SMDCs do not become dormant bodies. More importantly, decentralization should not be treated as a one-time reform but as an ongoing process requiring continuous learning, adaptation, and reinforcement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the functioning of SMDCs symbolizes the challenges of participatory governance in India. While the structural framework exists, it has yet to evolve into a platform of genuine empowerment. For decentralization to succeed, both systemic reforms and cultural change are essential. The discussion suggests that empowering SMDCs is not just about policy compliance but about transforming school governance into a collaborative, inclusive, and dynamic process that can truly enhance the quality of education. It is essential to ensure capacity development, inclusive participation, and recognition of community contributions. Moving from symbolic presence to substantive involvement should be the guiding principle of future reforms.

References

- Barnett, E. (2012). An analysis of community involvement in primary schools in Malawi. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(5), 497-509. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.05.002>.
- Chatterjee, N., Biswas, S., Chattopadhyay, K. (2024). *Role of Industry–Academia Interface in Skill Development - Internalizing Education Policies*. Routledge.
- **Dayaram, K.** (2011). School management committees and the Right to Education Act 2009. In T. Ashutosh & N. Singh (Eds.), *Resource material for SMC training* (pp. 9-13). American India Foundation. www.aif.org.
- **Karia, F.M.** (2009). The challenges facing school management committees in managing public primary schools of Abogeta Division, Kenya. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Nairobi.
- Kumar, A. (2019). *Grassroots governance in Indian schools: Role of SMDCs*. New Delhi: Academic Press.
- Kumar, P. (2019). Role of Universities in Continue Education in India. *Universal Research Reports*, Vol. 06 (01).
- **Kumar, S.** (2015). Roles and functions of school management committees (SMCs) of government middle schools in district Kullu of Himachal Pradesh: A case study. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Sciences & English Language*, 3, 3876–3886.
- **Mahiwal, G., & Kumar, P.** (2017). Difficulties being faced by secondary school teachers during implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in Jammu Division. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(5), 741–745.
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan: Framework for implementation*. Government of India.
- MHRD (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English.pdf.

- NCTE (2009). *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher*. New Delhi: National Council for Teacher Education.
- NCERT (2020). Community participation and school governance in India: A situational analysis. New Delhi: NCERT.
- NITI Aayog. (2021). School education quality index. New Delhi: Government of India.
- Teachers Professional Development (2010). *An analysis of teachers' professional development based on the OCED's teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)*. Retrieved from <http://europa.ed>.
- Varghese, N.V., Sarup, V., Anuradha, D., Sinha, A. (2025). *Improving learning outcomes in schools understanding the challenge of quality in the Indian context*. Routledge.
- Verma, M.K. (2025). *New Education Policy, Sustainable Development and Nation Building - Perspectives, Issues and Challenges*. Routledge
- **Yousuf, M.A.** (1995). Role of community participation in compulsory primary education in Bangladesh. *Research report*, NIEPA, New Delhi.