

Project: Raising Standard of Education by Going Digital

Re: SMC Meetings

Date: 17th and 18th February, 2017

Place: - Barola, Noida

SMC (School Management Committee) consists of parents, headmaster, teachers and locally elected representatives. It is supposed to hold a meeting once every month. The role of SMCs is crucial as parents have a strong role to play in efficient management of the school. The RAISED team has been working with SMC Committees since November 2016. Currently, SMC members aren't very active and are not aware of the potential of SMCs in solving critical issues of the school like low enrollment. So, two SMC meetings were conducted in Bhangel and Barola on February 17 and 18 with the aim to discuss the relevance and potential of the SMCs with parents, teachers and the headmaster. Also, the RAISED team tried to come up with a structure for SMC meetings so that there can be a tangible plan of action for issues specific to a particular school and a follow up for the same.

February 17, 2017 - Primary School Bhangel

Duration: 1 hour

Conducted by: Aashna, Ujjwal and Vinaya

Issues highlighted

- 1. Littering by surrounding community members:** The tenants surrounding the area litter the school premises, in spite of repetitive requests. The headmaster makes every effort possible to keep the school premises clean but this action of the community members makes her helpless. They feel reaching out the owners instead of the tenants can be impactful. They expressed that a cleanliness rally having a member from DEF can change the situation as teachers and parents are not being taken seriously by the tenants. An external member can put more pressure. The parents and teachers were active and were willing to participate in the rally. This can be looked into before the next SMC meeting. Also, the headmaster suggested if the police can be taken into confidence and asked to warn the owners once so that this problem is solved. Through a rigorous discussion, the RAISED team tried to emphasize the importance of self-motivation and proactiveness in parents and teachers to make the school better. The response was good and there is a good scope of change in this school.
- 2. Cleaner:** Until the area was under the Pradhan, there was regular cleaning in school by cleaners from the authority. Ever since the Noida authority took over, the cleaners have stopped coming. The headmaster also shared the contact of the local counsellor: Anu Kumar (9811071211).
- 3. Security (Major concern):** Bhangel Primary School shares its boundary with a private school for girls. They have a common gate which is open most of the times. This causes strangers to

enter the school premises without check. This is a major concern in this school. The owner of that school has contacts with an influential person, which makes it difficult for the Bhangel headmaster to have a constructive conversation with them. The assemblies of the two schools also overlap and the ground of this government school is used by girls from the other school, which creates inconvenience. A conversation with the private school authorities with the help of headmaster and some member from DEF can provide further lead on this issue, as suggested by the headmaster.

February 18, 2017 – Junior High School, Barola

Duration: 1 hour

Conducted by: Aashna, Ujjwal, Vinaya and Yachita

Issues Highlighted:

1. **Inactive SMC:** In the SMC meeting here, it was visible that the SMC members come and go individually but haven't had collective meetings till now. This was the first time around 7-8 parents had come to meet at the same time. The president of the SMC members amongst the parents was quite unaware of her responsibilities as the president of the SMC. A long discussion on the importance and roles-responsibilities of SMC was held with each of the parents including the president. The response from the parents was good. Parents were asked about the favourable time for SMC meeting every month. 1pm was suggested by the parents. So, **one SMC meeting can be held around middle of every month at 1pm.** The headmaster normally asks students to inform parents about the SMC meetings. To make it more organized, it was proposed by the SMC meetings if they can send out a slip containing the details of the next SMC meeting with the help of students or call the parents, to ensure that information is conveyed clearly to the parents.
2. **Report Card:** As per the discussion with parents, it was clear that the parents face a difficulty when it comes to understanding report cards. So, it was proposed in the SMC meeting by the RAISED team to conduct a workshop for parents on "How to read a report card?". The headmaster and teachers welcomed the idea and expressed that it can be quite effective. They will incorporate this workshop with their next Parent-Teacher Meeting.
3. **Low attendance and long breaks taken by students to visit villages:** 178-190 out of 256 is the average attendance of the school, which is low. Also, parents take their kids to their village for one-two months while the school is going on. This issue affects the performance of students in academics as such long breaks disrupt their learning in school. The parents in the SMC meeting, themselves expressed how it is not right for the students. So, a discussion was held on how SMC members can help other parents realize the importance of regular attendance in schools. To tackle this problem, the headmaster has already taken one action - she suggests parents to leave their children at home when they go to village. Some parents have started doing this but a lot more awareness is required to solve this issue. SMC members can take charge of this issue in Parent-Teacher meetings by talking to other parents. They can take the list of students with very low attendance from the headmaster and talk personally to each of their parents.

4. **Strict teacher:** One of the teachers is very strict with students, which SMC members expressed anger for. We had a discussion on how SMC members can interact with the teacher to work out a softer solution and also, interact with the students who are always late for class to reinforce the importance of punctuality in their minds.

A list of case studies having issues successfully tackled by SMCs by Saajha, an organization working with SMCs in Delhi, were shared with the headmasters of Primary School Bhangel, Primary School-1 and 2 Barola, and the Junior School Barola. All of these SMCs need a demo activity to strengthen the belief that parents are key stakeholders in improving the functioning of a school and have the right to question the school faculty for the betterment of their kids. SMC has a potential and we need to make them realize this potential.