Community Participation in Primary Education: Reflections from the Field

"A central plank of public policy for improving primary education services in India is the participation of village education committees, consisting of village government leaders, parents, and teachers."1

After discussing the profile of the study area and the socio-economic background of the respondents in the previous chapter, the present chapter deals with the analysis of empirical data collected from 345 respondents in 26 villages of 3 mandals2 in Rampachodavaram agency3 area of East Godavari district. The respondents belong to three different categories; they (except students) are part of different education committees at the village level, namely; 1) members in School Education Management Committee (SEMC) comprising of parents of the school going children, PRI members and school teachers, 2) members in Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), and 3) students at the primary education level (Table 6.1). Since the objective of the study is to assess the level of participation of the respondents in education related activities, this chapter focusses on the responses and views of the respondents on their participation in primary education during the implementation of first phase of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Rampachodavaram agency area.

Table–6.1: Details of the sample break-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the Mandal</th>
<th>Total Villages</th>
<th>Sample Villages</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
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<td>SEMC Members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents of School going Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Y. Ramavaram</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gangavaram</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maredumilli</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>262</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
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</table>

2 Mandal is a revenue division in the district, which earlier was called Tehsil.
3 Usage of ‘Agency’ is the legacy of the colonial government which identified the areas of tribal concentration as ‘Agency areas’. The agencies were administered with different policy formulation.
The results of the empirical data are analysed and discussed under four sections in this chapter. Section-1 deals with awareness of the respondents on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Micro Level Planning (MLP) and facilities available in schools, Section-2 deals with participation and awareness of the member in School Education Management Committee (SEMC) on their roles and responsibilities, Section-3 deals with participation and awareness of the members in Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Section-4 deals with responses of students about teaching aids and other facilities available in the schools.

Section – 1: SSA, MLP and Facilities in Selected Schools

In this section an attempt is made to explore awareness of the respondents on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Micro Level Planning. MLP is an important component in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. It is a plan of action and document in the school pertaining to primary education. It contains the details like enrolment, drop-out, financial requirements to the school, teacher requirement etc. As per the policy, the MLP is to be prepared in a common forum by parents of the school going children, school teachers, PRI members and other active leaders in the village before the start of every academic year. Here an attempt is made to explore the respondents’ awareness about micro level planning. This section is also dealt with the school facilities available in the schools located in the selected sample villages.

1.1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

As discussed in Chapter 4, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan forms the cornerstone of government’s recent interventions in providing basic education for all children. The basic approach of the programme is to focus on community ownership and the village education plans are prepared in consultation with the members in PRI. Through habitation level planning and community participation, it is envisaged that the members of SEMC take decisions based on the local needs. In the design and implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, local action is an essential element in the process of ensuring universal enrolment, retention, and achievement of a satisfactory level of learning. The members in SEMCs are seen as the mechanism through which public funds for education services flows to the village, through which planning, implementation and monitoring is co-ordinated. Based on these objectives it is proposed to assess the awareness of the respondents on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
Figure–6.1: Awareness of the respondents on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Source: Field Survey
Note: PRI = Panchayat Raj Institutions and PTA = Parent Teachers Association

The above figure 6.1 indicates that more than 60 percent of all categories of the respondents reported that they are aware of SSA. It is observed that an overwhelming majority (i.e. 87.2 percent) of the school teachers were aware of SSA, whereas in the case of PRI members it is around 61 percent, PTA members at 53.4 percent and parents of the school going children at nearly 52 percent. It also indicates that nearly 40 percent of all categories of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of SSA. It is very high in the case of parent members where around 48 percent of the respondents reported that they are not aware of it, followed by PTA members at 46.6 percent, PRI members at 38.5 percent and even nearly 13 percent school teachers expressed the same.

In the analysis it is identified that of all the respondents, school teachers are the most aware of the programme followed by PRI members. This can be attributed to their close association with the SSA programme. In the course of field work it is identified that among the teachers, vidya volunteers are not exposed to the SSA. On enquired about the reasons for lack of understanding on SSA among the vidya volunteers, it was found that their recruitment had taken place in the middle of the academic year hence they were not given orientation or training. From the data presented in the above figure, it is evident that most of the respondents in SEMC and PTA are not aware of SSA. This needs to be taken note of and rectified. The following figure 6.2 explains the understanding of respondents about SSA.
It can be seen from the figure 6.2 that, more than half of the respondents from all the categories (i.e. 53.5 percent) said that they did not know what SSA meant. Among the respondents who said that they reported in negative, parents and PTA members constitute the highest. It is also identified that nearly one-fourth (i.e. 23.5 percent) of the respondents reported that SSA means only mid-day meal programme. The 38.5 percent of the respondents from PRI expressed this view followed by parents, PTA and school teachers. In their view SSA meant providing mid-day meal to the school going children. Mr. Pallala Subhareddi, a parent member in SEMC in Agavalasa village of Maredumilli mandal holds the view that “I send my daughter to the school everyday. I do not know about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. I know that every day food is made available to all the children in the school”. A few respondents reported that SSA meant distribution of books and utilization of school grants. While explaining about Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Ms. Sadala Rekamma, PRI representative to SEMC in P. M. Lanka village of Y. Ramavaram mandal reported that “teachers distribute books and uniform in the school”.

It can be also noticed from the data that a few respondents (nearly 20 percent) reported that SSA meant all children are brought into the school. Among the respondents who expressed this view, school teachers constitute more than half (i.e. 57.4 percent). This trend clearly indicates that only school teachers are more aware of SSA than the other respondents like parents of the school going children, PRI
members and PTA members. Mr. Komaram Baburao, school teacher in Government Primary School in Perikivalasa village of Y. Ramavaram mandal explained that “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan means enrolling all the school going age children in the school by creating awareness in the community. Funds are also available in this programme for the development of school. The objective of the programme is to achieve 100 percent enrolment”. Another 4 percent of the respondents had the view that SSA meant better quality of education, enrolment, distribution of books and utilization of school grants. In the overall analysis of the data, it is observed that the parents of the school going children, PRI members and PTA members were not aware much about SSA. It is a clear indication that their awareness levels on SSA were not satisfactory and needs orientation for better participation in school related activities.

1.2. Micro Level Planning (MLP)

One of the major exercises of the preparatory phase in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the preparation of habitation level educational plans through effective community participation for MLP and school mapping. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has the clear aim of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), and it is mandatory to track the progress of each and every child in the 0-14 age group. In this process, to ensure good participation of the community members in education related activities, capacity building of members is proposed for at various phases. The preparatory phase provides for a process and activity based organisation of such committees and training of community leaders for better management of schools.4

MLP exercise includes a participatory process of a core planning team. It is constituted in each village at the habitation level including selected SEMC members, selected community leaders, head masters of schools, selected teachers and some selected parents, ensuring participation of women as well as persons from the deprived communities such as SC, ST, BC and physically challenged persons. Parents of children with special needs may also be included in the team. It is important that the broad norms for improving school facilities are shared with habitation level planning team. While explaining about the importance of school mapping and micro level planning, Vimala Ramachandran in her article opines that the core principle

behind doing school mapping and micro level planning is “to rely on the people to diagnose the problem and articulate their demand. There was a confidence that once this happened, everything else would start falling into place”. As discussed, school mapping and micro level planning are the core component in the preparatory phase of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Keeping this as a major objective, the awareness levels and understanding on MLP at the habitation level have been assessed among the respondents.

Figure–6.3: Awareness of the respondents about Micro Level Planning (MLP)

![Figure 6.3: Awareness of the respondents about Micro Level Planning (MLP)](image)

Source: Field Survey

It can be seen in the above figure 6.3 that an overwhelming majority (i.e. 90.1 percent) of the respondents were not aware of MLP. It is very alarming to note that more than 85 percent of the school teachers are not aware of it. It gives an understanding that the school teachers who are working in tribal areas are not fulfilling the basic objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Mr. Kadala Devireddi, school head master in Government Primary School in Gondivada village of Maredumilli mandal holds the view point that “I was not trained on micro level planning. This is a small village and I know about the details of the children. As of now all the children are coming to school. MLP is not required”. This implies, in the view of school head master that there is no need of doing MLP if all the children are

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regular to the school. It indicates that he does not possess a fair understanding about the need of MLP. It is observed that less than 10 percent of the respondents in all the categories said that they are aware of MLP. Among the different categories of the respondents 12.8 percent of the school teachers expressed that they are aware of it, followed by less than 10 percent each of the PTA and parent members and in the case of PRI members it is less than 4 percent. It is also observed from the data that only one PRI member out of 26 sampled is aware of it. It is a clear indication that participation of the representatives from panchayat raj is a major issue of concern in the tribal areas. Ms. Sadala Laxmamma, ward member in Yedlakonda village of Y. Ramavaram mandal explained that “I am not aware of MLP. The school teacher did not inform me about it”. In the policy, it is clearly stated that the community leaders and parents should be trained in the process of habitation level planning to track the issues related to elementary education in their respective villages. However, the data presented here, explains that the community members in PTA and SEMC are not aware of the basic planning process in their villages.

Among all the respondents who were aware of MLP (i.e. 9.9 percent), were also asked to brief about it. The respondents explained that it meant quality of education (i.e. 2.9 percent). Only 7 percent of the respondents explained that MLP meant school development plan. It is observed that out of 243 respondents only 17 respondents (i.e. 7 percent) explained the relatively right view about MLP (see Appendix Table 6.1). During the course of field work, it was observed in the discussion that the respondents had not even heard about MLP. In some cases the teachers explained that they were not asked about MLP by their higher official whenever they visited the school. Mr. R. Ramakrishna Reddi, school teacher in M. P. P. School in Dadilikavada village of Y. Ramavaram mandal reported that “the School Complex Resource Person (SERP) or Mandal Resource Person (MRP) whenever they visit the school did not ask about MLP. I too was not aware that it should be available in the school”. It indicates the weak monitoring of the process in the schools. The teachers lack proper guidance about basic requirements in identifying the school needs. Among the teachers who know about the process of micro level planning, Mr. Bachela Danial Reddi, vidya volunteer in Government Primary School in Pusivada village of Maredumilli mandal explained that “MLP is a school development plan which contains the details of school going children, drop-outs, the infrastructure required for the school,
requirement of the teachers and grants. It is prepared at the beginning of the academic year. Community members also participate in its preparation”. In this instance, the vidya volunteer was trained by CARE-STEP.6

From the above discussion it is understood that most of the community members in SEMC, PTA and even school teachers don’t know about MLP. This is a clear indication that in tribal areas neither community members nor school teachers (except in the case of negligible number of school teachers) were aware of the basic contents of community participation in school related activities.

About availability of micro level plans in the schools, out of twenty six schools selected in 26 sample villages, the micro level plans were available only in five schools (i.e. 19.2 percent). In the course of field work, it was observed that none of the schools had micro level plans in Maredumilli mandal and in one school out thirteen in Y. Ramavaram mandal had micro level plan (see Appendix Table 6.2). It is because these villages in Maredumilli and Y. Ramavaram mandals are very interior and most of the area is covered with forest. Whereas Gangavaram mandal is near to the non-tribal area and exposed to the mainstream, hence most of the schools (four schools out of six had micro level plans) had micro level plans in their schools. However, this is not an excuse for non-availability of MLP in their respective schools.

When enquired about the reasons for non-availability of micro level plans in the school, teachers responded that the plans were submitted to their Mandal Education Officers. However, as per the policy, the micro level plans should be made available with the school. In some cases, where the regular teachers are available, they were not aware that they have to prepare micro level plans. The teachers in cent percent schools in Maredumilli mandal and three schools out of thirteen in Y. Ramavaram mandal said that they were unaware that they have to prepare micro level plans. It is

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6 CARE is an international voluntary organization. Sustainable Tribal Empowerment Project (STEP) is a multi-sectoral project aimed at social mobilization, education attainments, health attainments, interventions in livelihood, food securing and local self-governance in the tribal areas. This project was implemented in Rampachodavaram agency area by CARE with the financial assistance from European Union (EU). To implement this project CARE was working with six local partner NGOs. These partner NGOs were ARISE, Creator’s, PRAGATI, SAKTI, SUJANA and SWEEP. These partner NGOs, with the support from CARE-STEP, trained the community members in SEMC on their roles and responsibilities and vidya volunteers on lesson planning during the project implementation period i.e. 2002-2007.
clear that teachers were not trained properly in the interior villages about the preparation of micro level plans in their schools.

The other reason for non-availability of the plans was because of the non-appointment of regular teachers in the government schools. There are a few schools in the interior and inaccessible villages where vidya volunteers are teaching the students. These vidya volunteers are identified from the tribal community in the respective villages. Instead of regular teachers, vidya volunteers are in charge of teaching. It reveals that since the non-appointment of regular teacher have led to non-availability of micro level plans. According to the policy framework in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, vidya volunteers are also properly trained on the preparation of micro level plans a part from teaching and lesson planning. However, it is observed that these vidya volunteers who are working in the study area are not trained on various teaching methods.

1.3. Facilities Available in the Schools

Basic facilities and infrastructure is required at the school level for better teaching as well as learning process. It is important to use Teaching Learning Material (TLM) while teaching the tribal children, because they are culturally bound and can understand things easily when the teacher uses relevant play items. TLM refers one of the teaching methodologies used by the teacher while teaching the students in primary schools. Sanitation and other facilities within the premises of the school are also important in providing a healthy environment to learn. Particularly, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has taken up these issues to be addressed during its implementation.

Keeping this in view, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme has also allocated budget for providing infrastructure and other facilities to all the schools. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is being implemented to achieve UEE particularly in remote and inaccessible areas and made up its objectives in this direction. Hence the tribal areas are more important to address these issues during its implementation. One of the major beneficiaries of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme is Scheduled Tribes. The other beneficiary groups are Scheduled Castes, minorities, girls and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). The programme has special focus for these socially backward sections especially for Scheduled Tribes. The data presented in this section reveals the basic facilities and infrastructure facilities available in the schools in the sample villages, where Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented.
Congenial atmosphere, adequate space and proper accommodation are necessary for conducting a school, besides other facilities for making teaching-learning process effective. In this process, teaching aids and other facilities like black board, TLM, television, electricity, separate class rooms, library, separate rooms for teachers, play ground, sports instruments, drinking water, compound wall and separate toilets for boys and girls in the schools are important for effective learning. The data related to the facilities in the schools are collected from 26 schools in the sample villages. Out of 26 schools, thirteen are Government Primary Schools (GPS)\(^7\), nine are Mandal Praja Parishad Schools (MPPS), three are Integrated Schools (IS) and one is Mandal Parishad Upper Primary School (MPUPS)\(^8\).

Figure–6.4: Facilities (teaching aids, sports etc.) available in the sample schools

![Facilities Available in Schools](image)

Source: Filed Survey.

\(^7\) In the G.O. Ms. No. 302 dated 10/07/1986 orders were issued for opening 1000 single teacher schools in school less tribal villages/habitations and these schools were named as “Primary School” in 1986 as one of the policy initiatives of the government in order to develop the tribals. These “Primary Schools” were renamed as “Girijan Vidya Vikas Kendras (GVVK)” by G.O. Ms. No. 46 dated 07/02/1994. In the circumstances, reported by the Commissioner of Tribal welfare, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad and by G.O. Ms. No. 12 dated 03/02/2005 the name of GVVK schools in tribal areas are again renamed as “Government Primary Schools (Tribal Welfare)”.\(^7\)

\(^8\) MPP Schools and MPUP Schools are under the management of mandal parishad, whereas Integrated Schools are under the management of the Department of Tribal Welfare. The Integrated Schools are also called as Alternative Schools. These Integrated or Alternative schools are opened in the school less habitations, where there are 5 to 10 school going age children are found in a village or habitation. The children could study in these schools upto II class.
Out of 26 schools, two schools do not have blackboards (figure-6.4). Usage of TLM is an important technique for teaching in primary education. Education policies strongly recommend and special funds are also allocated for each teacher for preparation of TLM in primary education.\(^9\) The usage of TLM in primary education, particularly in the schools located in tribal areas, is necessary and they can understand teaching better if it is in a pictorial form. As per the analysis of the data presented in the figure, it is a fact that in 12 schools out of 26, TLM is not available. Out of 26 schools only 2 schools have separate class rooms for all the classes. Even in M. P. P. Schools, teachers run all the classes in one room. On enquired about the various reasons for not having sufficient classrooms Mr. Krishna Reddi, school head master in M. P. P. School in Valamuru village of Maredumilli mandal explained that “existing facility is provided by the government for running the school. Whatever facility is available for teaching, we are utilizing it”. The other facilities like electricity, library, television and separate class rooms for teachers are not sufficiently provided in the schools in the tribal areas. The basic infrastructure facilities and teaching aids in these schools situated in the tribal areas are live examples to say that, primary education of Scheduled Tribes’ children is in a backward stage. As discussed in the review of literature, the same findings were also observed in 1993 by K. Sujatha in her study\(^{10}\).

The situation regarding infrastructure facilities in tribal areas have not improved even after implementation of larger education programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Some of the schools in tribal area run in a private shed and lack sufficient place for playing. It is observed that only in seven schools out of twenty six schools, playgrounds are available. Even among the M. P. P Schools half of them do not have playground facility. When it comes to sports instruments, more than half of the schools have these items for the children. Fourteen schools out of twenty six schools provide these materials including some of the Integrated Schools and G. P. Schools. About the usage of sports instruments the teachers opined that “whatever sports instruments provided to the school are made available to the children”.

\(^9\) The government has allocated Rs. 500/- per teacher per academic year for preparation and usage of TLM in the class.

The issues like drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls are major concern in the tribal areas. The data reveals that toilets are not found in twenty schools for boys and in eighteen schools for girls. Because toilets are not available in their schools, students have to go to near by canals, forest and some of them even go home for the purpose. As we know, drinking water is a basic need in human life and it was observed that eighteen schools out of twenty six do not have drinking water. The students responded that they use near by community hand pump and some of them go to their home to have drinking water during the class hours. With reference to the basic facilities available in the schools, the same findings were also identified in PROBE report.\(^{11}\) These issues are discussed in detail in Section-4 of this chapter. It is observed from the data that in twenty one schools, compound wall is not constructed (figure-6.4). Overall analysis of data with reference to facilities available in the schools in tribal areas found that many of the schools do not have basic facilities for healthy teaching and learning.

Against this background of awareness among the community in tribal areas on SSA and MLP, the discussion also reveals about the poor infrastructure facilities including lack of drinking water and toilets facilities in these schools. In light of the above discussion and understanding, it is also a subject of enquiry to assess the participation and awareness of the members in various education committees at the village level. The following section deals with the participation of the SEMC members in school related activities as well as their awareness on their roles and responsibilities being members in SEMC.

**Section – 2: School Education Management Committee (SEMC) Members**

This section presents the analysis of the responses of the members in SEMC and issues related to its functioning. As discussed in Chapter-3, School Education Committee (SEC) was restructured and renamed as School Education Management Committee (SEMC) in 2006. The present SEMC has a composition of seven members with representation of four parents of the school going children and one panchayat ward member as its members, school head master as its convenor and panchayat sarpanch as its chairman. It reveals that SEMC has representation from parents of school going children, panchayat and teachers. In this section, an effort is made to

analyze the participation levels of these members on the functioning of SEMCs in the selected villages. The indicators like awareness of the respondents about the existence of education committees, participation in the monthly meetings, understanding on various school resources/issues, training particulars and their roles and responsibilities pertaining school functioning are analyzed.

The data gives an interesting picture about participation of the community. Nearly 70 percent of the SEMC members are not aware of the composition of SEMC. It is observed from figure 6.5 that the respondents do not know exactly how many members constitute SEMC. Only 10 parents (i.e. 19.2 percent) out of 52 are aware about the exact number of members in SEMC. In the case of PRI members, 15 (i.e. 57.7 percent) out of 26 are not aware of it. Most of the school teachers (63.8 percent) are not aware of the composition and number of members in SEMC (figure-6.5). It is an indication to say that in tribal areas most of SEMC members themselves are unaware as to how many members constitute SEMC. If the committee is functioning and conducting regular meetings, it would have been easy for them to say that how many members constitute SEMC. Review of literature also pointed out that many members are unaware of their own membership in education committees. This proved to be correct in the findings of the present survey also. It indicates that these committees in tribal areas are not conducting regular meetings once in a month for discussing the issues related to school and primary education. It reveals their non-participation in the school related activities.

Figure–6.5: Respondents’ awareness on the exact number of members in SEMC

![Respondents' Awareness on Exact No. of Members in SEMC](Source: Field Survey)
The respondents were asked whether there was any committee in the village to deal with issues related to education. Nearly 50 percent (63 respondents out of 125) of the respondents said that there is no such committee in their villages. It is hard to escape the irony of the fact that half of the members in SEMC themselves did not know that they were members in SEMC. In the case of school teachers/head masters, 25 (more than 53 percent) out of 47 were unaware that they are the convenors in SEMC (see appendix table 6.3). Ms. V. Ramulamma, head master in M. P. P. School in Dadilikavada village of Y. Ramavaram mandal told that “these committees exist only in paper. Community never attends the committee meetings even after repeated calls. However, we prepare minutes of the meeting without conducting meetings and forward it to the MEO.” As discussed in the review of literature, the same findings were revealed in the article “Can Information Campaigns Raise Awareness and Local Participation in Primary Education?”. Abhijit Banerjee, in this article, reveals that “many people do not know about the existence of a local institution like the VEC and therefore are unaware about the possibilities of decision-making at local level through the committees”. Hence he concludes that “local participation (at individual or collective level) in the activities to improve school functioning or strengthening learning is negligible.”

During the course of the present field work too the community members expressed that the school teachers wrote minutes of the SEMC meetings without conducting formal meetings and took signatures from the members. They also pointed that they sign because they trust the school teachers. On the same issue the arguments of the teachers differ. Mr. Kechela Laxmi Reddi, school teacher in GPS in Kut ravada village of Maredumilli mandal holds the point of view that “the community members never come to the meeting even after repeated reminders. Because of the pressure from School Complex Resource Person (SCRP) and Mandal Education Officer (MEO), I am forced to send the minutes of the meeting without conducting the formal meetings”. It is very surprising and reveals the fact that the community members are not participating in the decision making process related to education in their villages. It is also observed during the course of field work that most of the schools do not maintain minutes of the SEMC meetings.

13 Ibid., p. 1369.
It is interesting to know that out of 61 respondents who were aware about their own membership in SEMC, 27 percent were illiterates, 26 percent were those who had completed primary education while 18 percent had education up to secondary stage. 13 respondents (i.e. 21 percent) had intermediate education and only 5 percent of the respondents had education level up to under graduation (figure 6.6). This trend indicates that irrespective of educational background, they were aware of their membership in SEMC.

The literacy background and awareness of the respondents is interpreted in figure 6.6. Among the interviewed 125 respondents, those are members in SEMC, representing parents of the school going children, PRI members and school teachers, only 61 (i.e. 48.8 percent) of them were aware about their own membership in SEMC. More than 50 percent of them (64 respondents out of 125) were not aware. On enquired about the reason for not aware of their own membership in SEMC, Mr. Palagadda Ramachandra Reddi, who qualified for secondary education and working as Vidya Volunteer in Government Primary School in G. Vottigadda village of Y. Ramavaram mandal explained that “I have been working in this school since last five months. No one told me about education committee. The government had not appointed a permanent teacher in this school. We, two vidya volunteers are working in this school and are not trained about education committees.” Mr. Pallala Leela Prasad, panchayat
president belonging to Valamuru village in G. M. Valasa panchayat of Maredumilli mandal told that “I know that I am the chairman of education committee. However, there are no formal meetings. The school teacher looks after everything. We support the school teacher in all the matters regarding running of the school.” This indicates that neither teachers nor PRI members take initiative for conducting monthly meetings. As discussed in the above, even the respondents who know that they were members in SEMC neither conduct the meetings nor participate.

However, contrary to these above findings, there are members who participate in education related activities at their village level irrespective of SEMC meetings. Ms. Tongi Gangamma, one of the parent members in SEMC in Marrigudem village of Y. Ramavaram mandal explained that “I had been trained by CARE-STEP on my roles and responsibilities. I look into the functioning of mid-day meal programme in the school. I also interact with education officials who visit our school. The school teacher is co-operative. There are no formal meetings where we sit and discuss about the school issues. However, I interact with school teachers on all issues related to school.”

Figure–6.7: Details of capacity building to SEMC members on their roles and responsibilities

![Graph showing the number of respondents trained in SEMC members](image-url)
Training is one of the important components for improving individual performance in his/her area of work. Particularly in the case of community members who are from different social groups and educational background, intensive training on their roles and responsibilities is required to perform better in their given field. Training in the areas like monitoring of school activities, participating in the school meetings, community mobilization, utilization of school grants, monitoring the attendance of school teachers are important to raise the level of performance of community activities particularly in the tribal areas.

It is observed that total 67 respondents (i.e. 53.6 percent) were trained on their roles and responsibilities (figure 6.7). It is clear from the figure 6.7 that most of the PRI members (i.e. 69.2 percent) are not trained, whereas among the respondents who are trained, teachers constitute 44.8 percent (30 respondents out of 67). Overall the data reveals encouraging results, though efforts are required to impart training to all the members in SEMC.

Among the respondents who were trained (67 Respondents), CARE-STEP alone trained more than two-third (i.e. 80.6 percent) of the respondents whereas the ITDA was responsible only 19.4 percent (13 respondents out 67). Among the respondents who are trained by ITDA (13 respondents out of 67), an overwhelming majority of them (i.e. 92.3 percent) are school teachers (see Appendix Table 6.4). These facts indicate that the ITDA had trained neither parent members in the committee nor PRI members. Data indicates that CARE-STEP alone made a good effort to train these members on their roles and responsibilities. There are special funds allocated in SSA for community mobilization through various activities. The activities like training programmes, kalajatha etc. are some of them. The data reveals that the ITDA had not utilized those funds for community mobilization in the area. In this connection Mr. Karam Thrimurthulu, parent of the school going children in SEMC in Surampalem village of Gangavaram mandal holds the view that “I had been trained by the cluster co-ordinators in CARE-STEP continuously for five days. It was residential training programme. I learned about my roles and responsibilities being member in SEMC. The ITDA had not played any role in my training.”

The strategy for encouraging decentralised planning and decision making within SEMC is to ensure local participation in the school related activities. It is expected
that parents ought to be active in the life of their children’s education. Keeping this as a policy norm and to decentralise the decision making of school education, the parents of the school going children and PRI members were made part of the education committee at the village level. It is expected from them that they come together and discuss various issues related to education at their village. However, the data reveals that nearly 70 percent (87 out of 125) of the respondents reported that they had not participated at least a single time in the monthly meetings during their tenure (see Appendix Table 6.5). Ms. Bumula Sakhubai, parent member in SEMC in Doramamidi village of Gangavaram mandal strongly revealed that “it is the responsibility of the school teacher to run the school properly. I did not know that I am a member in the school committee. No one had informed me. I was never asked to participate in the meetings”. Such a trend is cause of serious concern and the non-attendance of SEMC members in the monthly meetings raises serious concern on their participation in the school related activities. As discussed earlier section, most of the schools do not maintain records of the meetings as well.

This trend indicates that community participation in school related activities is negligible in the tribal areas. As per the provision in SSA, every school has grants for their school development. These grants are spent for the preparation of TLM, for school development and for school innovation. The TLM grant is spent by the concerned teacher for preparation of TLM, whereas the school development grants and school innovation grants are spent by the head master. The school head master, as a convenor, can spend these grants only with the prior consent of the SEMC members in the monthly meetings. The policy clearly indicates that the funds received by the schools should be spent through proper community resolution based on decisions taken in the SEMC meetings. If majority members in the SEMC agree for such expenditure of the grant for school development, the school head master passes a resolution, where the members give their consent for expenditure.

In the course of the field work and in discussion with the respondents, the community members revealed that they are not aware of the financial resources that the school receives. They also pointed out that “the teachers do not disclose the financial resources and its expenditure”. As a result, they believe that the school teachers have greater say in decision making over the financial resources. It is felt by the
respondents that teachers spent the grants on their own without discussing these issues with them. The respondents also indicated that even they were not aware that these issues shall be discussed in the meetings. It clearly indicates that the community and schools in the interior places are neglected by the teachers too. This trend reveals that the government initiation to create awareness among these tribal groups for their greater participation in school related activities through various education programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is lagging far behind.

As discussed in the study, participation of SEMC members in school related activities is a major concern. However, a few respondents expressed that they had been involved in and had participated in education related activities during their tenure. Twelve respondents (i.e. 10 percent) out 125 said that they had helped in the enrollment of the drop-out children in the schools (figure-6.8). Six percent of the respondents reported that they participated and monitored mid-day meal programme. While sharing her experience about how she was involved in mobilizing the drop-out children, Ms. Pallala Nagamani, community member in SEMC in Chinthakarrapalem village of Y. Ramavaram mandal, said that “there were two male drop-out children in our village. They were not interested about their own education. They were unaware of the value of it. I discussed with their parents many a times, whenever I found them. I also discussed with the children many a times, but they used to run away if they saw me in the village. I persuaded this issue repeatedly with school teachers too. Finally with the help of the teachers and their parents, we were able to enroll them in the nearby Ashram School.” This kind of example creates some hope on participation of community members in education related activities in tribal area.

The members in SEMC also revealed that they had participated in various education activities like monitoring school development activities, participating in the community meetings etc. Nearly half of the school teachers (23 school teachers out of 47) said that they mobilized infrastructure for the school, organized parents meeting, created awareness among the parents and children about education and closely working with community members for school development. 30 percent of the respondents expressed these views as they have participated in education related activities during their tenure (figure-6.8). While sharing his experience about organizing community meetings Mr. S. Prabhakar Reddi, school head master in
Marrigudem village of Y. Ramavaram mandal revealed that “organizing the committee meetings is a challenging task. The members never turn up for discussion in the meetings. Even, if anything goes wrong with the implementation of mid-day meal programme, they never contribute their time to resolve the issue. Most of the time, I alone solved the problems with the help of outsiders in the committee. However, our panchayat sarpanch supports me.” This indicates that even though there are a few members within the education committee who wants to participate in the issues related to education, the lack of organisation between the committee members makes it difficult. However, these issues can be resolved through proper training and mobilisation.

During the course of the field work the SEMC members, were asked to give suggestions to improve the functioning of education committees at their village level. Interestingly, they came up with different suggestions. Nearly 17 percent of the respondents (21 out of 125 respondents) suggested that creating awareness among the tribal parents would enable them to participate in school related activities. From this suggestion made by the respondents, it is clear that most of the tribal people want to participate in the school related activities, but they are not able to, because they were unaware of their roles and responsibilities and the positive impact of education. Mr.
V. Prabhakara Vasudeva Rao, head master of M. P. U. P. School in Jaggampalem village of Gangavaram mandal who has been working for the last twenty years in tribal area holds the view that “I have worked very closely with the tribal community in my career. Most of them are not aware about the value of education. Even though they are members in education committees, they are unaware of their roles and responsibilities. Creating awareness among them through kalajatha activities is an important task. They can be easily mobilized, if we really make efforts.” The other suggestions were to introduce mid-day meal programme on a daily basis in the school, making drinking water available in the premises of school, use of TLM materials by teachers while they are teaching, provision for better infrastructure schools and so on. All these suggestions provide us with insight that the tribal community members are participating in some way or the other in school related activities. However, to organize them in a common platform, the ITDA needs to focus on creating more awareness among tribals for better results in their participation.

With this understanding of the ground reality of community participation and awareness of SEMC members in tribal area, the study now proceed to understand the functions of PTAs in the tribal areas. Is there awareness among PTA members on their roles and responsibilities? What is their participation in education related activities in the tribal area? Is there any impact of SSA on their participation? Are the members in PTA aware about the functions of PTA committee? These are a few questions that are the subject of enquiry in Section - 3.

**Section – 3: Parent Teachers Association (PTA) Members**

Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is one of the important committees at village level. The parents of school going children and teachers in the school are the members in PTA and the school head master has to conduct its meeting once in a quarter with all the PTA members to discuss various issues related to school. The PTA performs its functions as per the Andhra Pradesh School Education (Community Participation) Act 1998. In this section, an effort is made to present the awareness of community members on functions of PTAs in the selected sample villages.
Decentralisation in management of schools is essential to make tribal involvement meaningful. For better management and optimal functionality of the educational system in tribal areas, local management committees, preferably at the village level, composed of tribal representatives invested with adequate power and responsibility should be placed in charge of school affairs. Keeping this in view, the role of the members in PTA is assessed in the sample villages.

It is observed in the data that 29 out of 118, which is nearly one-fourth (i.e. 24.6 percent) of the respondents are aware that the PTAs existed in their villages. The important criterion as per the Andhra Pradesh School Education (Community Participation) Act 1998 is that all the villages that have a school, should have a PTA with parents of the school going children and school teachers as its members. As per the Act, one of the important responsibilities of the school head master is to form the PTA at the beginning of the academic year. The point to remember here is that in most of the tribal areas the situation of not having PTAs in these villages is a major concern with respect to the role of community participation. The MEO of the respective mandals need to act upon this and should take responsibility to form PTAs in all the tribal villages, so that community members may involve in the school related activities.
Table 6.2: Literacy of the respondents and their awareness about the existence of PTA committee in their villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy of the Respondents</th>
<th>Existence of PTA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>Not Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>16 (34.0)</td>
<td>31 (66.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(55.2)</td>
<td>(34.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>9 (17.3)</td>
<td>43 (82.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31.0)</td>
<td>(48.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Primary Education</td>
<td>2 (16.7)</td>
<td>10 (83.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
<td>(11.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>2 (33.3)</td>
<td>4 (66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Graduation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29 (24.6)</td>
<td>89 (75.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate row as well as column percentage

The analysis of Table 6.2 explains about the level of education and the awareness of PTA members about the existence of PTAs in their villages. The analysis shows that among the respondents who said that they are aware of the existence of PTAs in their villages, respondents from illiterate category constitute more than half (i.e. 55.2 percent) followed by the respondents who completed their primary education (i.e. 31.0 percent), and the respondents from upper primary education and secondary educations constitute less than 7 percent each. It gives an understanding that more than half of the illiterate respondents are aware about the existence of PTA committees in their villages than the literate respondents. This analysis reveals that literacy/education has had not much impact on the respondents’ awareness about the existence of PTAs in their villages. It gives an impression that the participation of the PTA respondents who are illiterates participate more than the literate PTA respondents.

When asked about their roles and responsibilities, nearly 68 percent of the PTA members indicated that they were unaware of their roles and responsibilities as PTA members. It is found that nearly 17 percent of the respondents said that their role is to monitor mid-day meal programme (see Appendix Table 6.6). Ms. Vanthala Chandramma, member in PTA in Sindhuvada village of Y. Ramavaram mandal revealed that “I ask teachers about the ration in the mid-day meal programme. Apart
from this, I monitor teachers’ attendance regularly in the school”. It is observed from the data that 2.5 percent of the respondents reported that their role is to mobilize the drop-out children and to enroll them in the school and 8.5 percent of them said that they enroll school going age children in the school (see Appendix Table 6.6).

Figure–6.10: Awareness of the PTA members on their membership in PTA

The overall summary of the data presented reveals that most of the respondents were not aware about their roles and responsibilities as PTA members. The reasons for lack of awareness among the PTA members on their roles and responsibilities are noticed during the course field work. Lack of co-ordination among the members, irregular conduct of the PTA meetings, lack of proper training, and absence of issues related to education in their agenda etc. are some of the reasons behind the gross lack of unawareness among PTA members about their roles and responsibilities.

The data presented in figure 6.10, indicates that nearly 67 percent of the PTA members (80 out of 118 respondents) indicated that they were unaware of their membership in PTA. The respondents who said that they are not aware of themselves being the members in PTA were more in Y. Ramavaram mandal followed by Gangavaram and Maredumilli mandals. These can be attributed to the fact that the villages located in Y. Ramavaram mandal are very interior and are not easily accessible.
During the course of field work, it is observed that most of the PTA members were also not aware of the composition of the PTA committee. Less than 8 percent of the respondents said that parents and teachers in the school are the members in PTA whereas 17 percent of the respondents said that only parents of the school going aged children are the members. It is also observed that two-third of the PTA members said that they did not know who the members in PTA are. If such situation prevails in tribal areas, it would be difficult for the community members to act as they are primarily accountable for education in their villages. The discussion reveals that PTA members were not properly oriented. It results in their non-participation in education related activities.

With this background on their poor participation in the school related activities, an effort is also made under the study to track the suggestions of the PTA members to improve their participation in education. There are a few insightful suggestions given by the PTA members for improving community participation in primary education in the tribal areas.

22 percent of the PTA members suggested that creating awareness among the tribal parents would enable them to participate in school related activities. From this suggestion made by the PTA members, it is clear that most of the tribal people want to participate in the school related activities, but they are not able to, because of their lack of awareness about need for their participation in PTA. It is observed from the data that around 10 percent of the respondents suggested that community participation is possible only if the school teachers, who are working in their respective village schools, work closely with the village community members outside the classroom especially focusing on interaction.

The other suggestions include daily provision for mid-day meal programme, availability of drinking water in the premises of the school (i.e. around 6 percent), use of TLM by teachers(i.e. more than 7 percent), provision for proper infrastructure facilities in the school (i.e. around 4 percent) and so on. All these suggestions are highly significant and give us a clean indication that the PTA members are participating in one way or the other. However, the education department needs to focus on creating more awareness among them for enhanced participation.
Section–4: Responses of the Students

This section presents the analysis of the responses of the students in primary school. The central object of this selection is mainly to draw the responses on teacher behavior, facilities available in their schools, the methodology of teaching and functioning of the mid-day meal programme. Other than enhancing community participation, building infrastructure facilities is another area of SSA in its implementation strategy, especially in the schools located in tribal areas. The quality of education is measured in terms of infrastructure facilities for schools, TLM, inspection and supervision, teachers’ qualification, in-service training etc. Hence, an effort is made to present the views of students on these issues.

Out of 102 students selected for the study across three mandals, nearly 30 percent of them study in second class, followed by fifth class (i.e. 25.5 percent), fourth class (i.e. 24.5 percent), third class (i.e. around 17 percent) and nearly 3 percent are in first class. The students who study in second class are numerically more and the sample selected in first class is less. During the course of the field work, it was found that the students who are studying in first class found it difficult to answer the questions. Hence much time was spent with them for gathering information for the study. However, they responded and interacted with the researcher. The students from the rest of the categories both male and female answered promptly without hesitation.

Figure–6.11: Education level of students (Respondents)
It is observed from the analysis of the data that nearly 13 percent of the students said that they have toilets facilities in the premises of their school. 80 percent of them complained that they had to go outside the school during school times (figure-6.12). Outside the school like nearby cultivation field (i.e. 21.6 percent), nearby canal (i.e. 25.5 percent), nearby bushes (i.e. 15.7 percent), nearby forest (i.e. 7.8 percent) and use of toilets at residence (9.8 percent) were reported by the students. Pallala Padmavathi, a fifth class female student in Government Primary School in Perikivalasa village of Y. Ramavaram mandal expressed that “there is a canal nearby our school. Many of us go for toilet to the canal with the permission of our teacher”.

Figure–6.12: Toilet facilities that the students use during school timings

While explaining about the use of toilets, Kechela Bulli Reddi, a fourth class male student in Government Primary School in Nimmachetlabanda village of Y. Ramavaram mandal, holds that “I go to nearby canal. I have no fear. Even during the out of school hours when I am at home, I go to the canal for toilet”. These were some the examples which indicate the lack of basic facilities in the school in the tribal areas. The whole data reveals that only a few students (i.e. around 13 percent) have facilities in their schools for toilet and the rest of them are using alternative ways, depending upon the location of the school. In this context Mr. Prabhakara Reddi, school head master in M. P. P. School in Yarlagadda village of Y. Ramavaram
Availability of drinking water is a major problem in the agency area. More than one-third (i.e. 35.3 percent) of the students said that they have water facility in the premises of their schools. In these schools, where water is available in the premises of the school, it is made available in the pot or students access from the hand pump located within their school. In the schools where drinking water is not available within the premises of their schools, students reported that they access water from the community hand pump (i.e. 38.2 percent). These hand pumps, in some of the villages, are not located near the school. Hence the students usually have to waste school time to access drinking water, which may obstruct their studies during the time. Moreover it is surprising to note from the study that 18.6 percent of the students go to their residence to have drinking water (figure 6.13). While explaining about his source for drinking water, Chedala Chinna Reddi, a fourth class male student in Government Primary School in Gondivada village of Maredumilli mandal explained that “drinking water is not available in our school. Hence, I go home to have water and return to the school immediately”.

Figure–6.13: Access for drinking water during school hours

The data reveals that most of the students do not have access to drinking water in the premises of their school. Alternative facilities like community hand pump in the
village and going to their residence would hamper their studies. On enquiring about the safety and accessibility of drinking water in the agency area, Sadala Sami Reddi, a vidya volunteer in Government Primary School in Perikivalasa village of Y. Ramavaram mandal explained that “children face difficulty in accessing drinking water in many of the schools in agency area. The students in our school access drinking water from the hand pump located in the premises of our school itself. However, the water is not clean and is mixed with iron silt content. It affects the students’ health especially during the rainy season”. One of the important issues in the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide infrastructure facilities to all the needy schools. Even after completion of its first phase of implementation, accessibility to drinking water is a major area of concern in the tribal area.

The role of teacher has long been recognized as central to the delivery system and the quality of education depends on it. The effectiveness of teacher in tribal situation depends on various factors like teacher’s socio-economic background, educational qualifications, age, service conditions, understanding of tribal culture and life, attitude towards tribals etc. Teachers’ behavior also determines students’ enrolment and drop-out rates. While explaining about the importance of teacher’s role the scholar, Vimala Ramachandran holds the view that “a motivated teacher is one who could communicate with children. He/she drew energy from his/her ability to attract and retain children in the school. A motivated teacher could build a rapport with the parents and the community and go beyond the call of duty to ensure that every single child is attended regularly, even if it meant visiting their homes and persuading the parents to send their children to school”.14

Keeping the high importance of a teacher especially in tribal areas SSA has made an effort to train the teachers on these lines. In this context, the views of students about the behavior of their teachers are examined in this study. About one-fifth of the students reported that their teachers are good and kind. The students also revealed that teachers use drama methods while teaching (i.e. 38.2 percent), which gives them more joy and understanding lessons easily (Figure 6.14). With regard to teacher’s behavior, Kosu Aruna Kumari, a fifth class female student in M. P. P. School in Doramamidi village of Gangavaram mandal explained that “our teachers teach well. I am able to

understand easily. Our teachers are very close emotionally to all the students”. However, the data also reveals that teachers often beat the students (i.e. 16.7 percent) in the classes. Mr. P. Swami Reddi, school teacher in M. P. P. School in Pulusumamidi village of Y. Ramavaram mandal holds the view that “sometimes we have to maintain seriousness with students. Otherwise they would not listen to us. There are different kinds of students in the class. Some of them listen to us only if we are strict with them”. This kind of attitude among the teachers reveals negative opinion about students which results in higher drop-outs.

Figure–6.14: Students’ views on teachers’ behavior in the class

Source: Field Survey

Overall, the data reveals that most of the teachers maintain good relations with their students and a few of them beat the students in the classroom. One of the important policy norms is that maintaining good relations with students could enhance the enrolment of the students. It is expected that teachers are properly trained on these aspects such that the teacher-pupil relationship is maintained in the classroom.

Teaching aids like black board, maps, charts and models play an important role for proper and meaningful curriculum transaction in primary schools. They assume special importance for imparting education to tribal children as teachers help in bridging communication gap between the teacher and the tribal child.
Teaching and Learning Material (TLM) include models of bus, train, circle, bottle, table, pen etc. which are used by the teacher while teaching the students particularly at the primary school level. These materials are prepared in the classroom by the teacher by involving their students, so that the students can grasp the content very fast. The purpose is to teach and learn by doing, watching and observing which would be more beneficial and helpful to the children in learning the content easily. As discussed earlier, each teacher is provided with Rs. 500/- per annum for the preparation of TLM in the classroom.

Nearly 67 percent of the students said that teachers use TLM while teaching. It is found in the analysis of the data that in Gangavaram mandal all the students reported that their teachers use TLM while they teach in the classroom (Figure 6.15). It is found from the data that most of the teachers in Maredumilli mandal do not use TLM (i.e. 69.2 percent) while they were teaching. In expanding the facilities and increasing access to education and its quality aspects particularly the use of TLM, due importance were not given in some of the schools located in the sample mandals.

The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education or the mid-day meal scheme was started by the Government of India in co-ordination with all the state governments. The aim of the programme was to introduce cooked mid-day
meals in all government primary schools. The purpose and objective of this programme is to reduce drop-out rates by providing nutritious food to the children in the poor families. SSA has made a special effort to monitor this programme for its effective implementation.

Figure 6.16: Implementation of mid-day meal programme in the schools

The mid-day-meal programme is being implemented in 651 villages across 7 mandals in Rampachodavaram agency area under various managements. The total number of beneficiaries is above 24,000 students. For this purpose, 177 cooking sheds have been constructed.15

An overwhelming majority (i.e. 96 percent) of the sampled students expressed that the mid-day meal is made available to them in their school, whereas around 4 percent of the students (in Y. Ramavaram mandal) reported that their schools were not providing mid-day meal to them (Figure 6.16). Interaction with the community members and school teachers during the course of the field work revealed that almost all the schools provide mid-day meal programme and in some cases it is irregular because of the delay in release of the funds from the Education Department. In some of these cases the community manages to run the programme by mobilizing local resources in the

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15 The data regarding the implementation of mid-day-meal programme is collected from the ITDA office, Rampachodavaram, East Godavari district.
form of own contributions. It is also interesting to note that in some cases it was found that teachers spent their own money and later reimbursed it from the respective authorities. Mr. Chekuri Venkata Krishnamraju, school head master in M. P. P. School in Patharamavaram village of Gangavaram mandal revealed that “it is compulsory to provide mid-day meal to all the children in the school. Sometimes we do not receiving funds on time to implement the scheme. In such cases we bear the expenditure or get rations on credit from the nearest shop. Later we repay it on reimbursement”. On enquired about the quality of food, the students reported that the quality of food was good, but quantity was not enough for them. Overall the data revealed that the implementation of the mid-day meal programme in the study area was satisfactory.

As it was discussed in the beginning the concept of community participation is a strategy to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education by 2010 while implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Even though the community in the tribal area is not active in participating education related activities, the enrolment figures of tribal children in the schools located in the Rampachodavaram agency area shows that their strength is increasing in each academic year from 2002-2003 to 2007-2008 (Appendix Table 6.7). The figures presented in the Appendix Table 6.8 shows that the drop-out rate or the status of ‘out of school children’ is coming down in each academic year from 2002-2003 to 2007-2008.

5. Summing up

In this chapter an effort is made to present the overall analysis of empirical data. The data reveals that more than half of the respondents in SEMC (parents of the school going children, PRI members and school teachers) and PTA were unaware of what Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan meant and overwhelming majority of them did not have a fair understanding about MLP. The teachers in these schools gave not so very pertinent responses for not having these micro level plans in their schools. Most of the teachers revealed that they did not know how to prepare these plans. Moreover, these schools located in these interior villages did not have basic facilities like drinking water, separate toilets for girls and boys, playing items, play ground, electricity, television, teaching-learning material etc.
The data presented with reference to members in SEMC (parents of the school going children, PRI members and school teachers) and PTA reveals low levels of participation and involvement in the school related activities. Most of these respondents did not have a fair understanding as to how many members SEMC consists of. When it comes to their membership in SEMC, half of them were unaware that they were members in SEMC. Nearly half of them were not trained on their roles and responsibilities. About such cases Abhijit Banerjee had observed in his study that “the existence of committees, by itself, cannot be an effective tool for change, if people are unaware of the existence of these committees, do not know their responsibilities, the resource that are available and how decisions can be made”16.

The respondents also gave suggestions for improvement of community participation in tribal area. The suggestions given were like creating awareness among the community members, providing training on their roles and responsibilities, conducting regular SEMC meetings, close working of teachers with the community, etc.

The data presented in this chapter also reveals that the respondents were not actively participating in the monthly SEMC meetings. It is very interesting to note the variations in the participation of various categories of the respondents in SEMC monthly meetings. It reveals that school teachers were participating more than the other two categories of the respondents. It also revealed that more female respondents were participating in the meetings than male respondents. Being members in various education committees most of the respondents did not know about the financial resources of school. Most of them reported that they never discussed about the utilization of these grants in the SEMC monthly meetings.

The school teachers, who are called change agents at village level, do not possess much understanding on community participation. Most of them were not trained and possessed only one to three years of experience. It was observed that more than half of the schools in the sample villages were not visited by the school officials during the academic year 2007-08. The data also reveals that nearly half of the schools did not have regular teachers in the tribal area. Instead of regular teachers, ‘vidya volunteers’ were working on temporary basis. Some of these vidya volunteers were not even qualified.

The respondents also gave suggestions for improvement of community participation in tribal area. The suggestions given were like creating awareness among the community members, providing training on their roles and responsibilities, conducting regular SEMC meetings, close working of teachers with the community, etc.

are some of them. In the case of PTA members, their awareness levels about the functioning of these committees were not satisfactory.

The students responded that they use community hand pump or they go to their houses to have water and for toilet they use the open space in the nearby canal or bushes. This is an indication of absence basic facilities in the schools. Most of the villages in tribal area do not have the basic facilities in the schools. It is observed that most of the teachers treat students well and they use TLM while they teach. In some cases, as per the responses of the students, teachers beat the students in the classroom. Overall, the entire analysis of data presented in this chapter, reveals that participation of different categories of the respondents in SEMC and PTA in school development activities during the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have not made much impact in the tribal area.