



**Institute of Rural Research and Development®**

**Report on Capacity-Building  
Needs: Village Education  
Committee**

**Capacity Building Center- Training Need Assessment-Series 2  
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# Report on Capacity-Building Needs: Village Education Committee

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis of Capacity-Building needs of Village Education Committee (VEC) explores the effectiveness of the VECs in influencing the access to and, quality of education in 13 villages of District Mewat, State of Haryana, India. It investigates the level of knowledge and awareness of present VEC members pertaining to their roles and responsibilities, and about Government policies and constitutional rights for the promotion of formal education. Furthermore, it explores the level of involvement of members in education related activities in villages and coordination among VEC members, schools and District administration.

87 members participated in the study, out of which 56 were male and 31 were female.

Univariate and bivariate analysis of the response obtained was undertaken. The findings reveal that the effectiveness of VECs in the villages is limited. More than half of the VEC members are inadequately informed about their roles and responsibilities. Their participation in activities to ensure quality formal education in the villages is inadequate. The members admit to having received no formal training, before being made members of VEC. The involvement of VEC members in activities as stipulated in VEC guidelines is negligible, and even VEC meetings are not organized on a regular basis. Whatever limited activities VEC members do undertake are mostly driven by external agencies. The members are not involved in budget tracking and many of them are not aware of annual funds granted to VECs. Effective engagement of VEC members with the community is missing in almost all villages. Across villages, the level of knowledge and participation of members varies. It has also been observed that the literate members of the VEC are usually more informed and involved. Similarly, male members are more aware and participative, as compared with female members.

From the analysis, it is evident that there is need to build the capacity of VEC members around their entitlements and responsibilities. Such a capacity-building program must aim to educate the members about importance of VEC, reason behind the formulation of VEC and its role in ensuring quality formal education in villages. The program must also ensure that the knowledge gained by VEC members gets translated into affirmative action by members at village level. The report also suggests that the program needs to be designed in a manner accommodative of the varied training needs of the members.

The focus areas for the training have been identified as: Constitution of VEC and roles and responsibilities of VEC members; information about Right to Education, Right to Information and Mid-day meal Program; budget tracking; VEC – Community engagement; promotion of higher education for the girl child; involvement of VEC in planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation; regularity of VEC meetings; participation of members in VEC meetings; linkages with District administration; participation of female and uneducated members in affairs of VEC; and VEC to be an effective institution at village level.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

Village Education Committee (VEC) is a regulatory body that exists at school level in a village to ensure community participation in smooth functioning of the school. **VECs have been formed as part of the decentralized management structures envisaged under District Primary Education Program (DPEP).** A VEC consists of 12 to 14 members and is elected by the Gram Sabha. It constitutes of individuals interested in promotion and development of education in the villages. 50% of the members must be female and representation of the deprived sections of society is ensured to mainstream them and enable their participation in decisions affecting their interests. The Village Sarpanch is the Chairperson and school Headmaster is the Convener of VEC.

VEC's role is to establish a link between school and community and to create awareness about the importance of formal education. In addition, it is also expected to take up the task of management of school affairs along with school administration. VECs are considered vital for promoting enrolment and retention of children in school, especially of girls. It is the responsibility of VEC to ensure that every child in the age group of 6-14 years gets enrolled in schools and completes elementary education.

Universal Elementary Education (UEE) has been the most important goal of educational development in India since independence. The National Policy of Education 1986 stresses the involvement of community in education management. It states that local communities, through appropriate bodies, must be assigned a major role in the program of school management. Community involvement would establish a close linkage between school and community, besides helping to improve quality of education and reduction of absenteeism. The Revised Policy of Education in 1992 also calls for community participation in educational planning and management. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment act (Panchayati Raj Act), 1992, stipulates the formation of democratically elected bodies at the District, Sub-District and Panchayat levels. These Panchayat bodies have been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing development plans, besides dealing with subjects closely related to education, health, social welfare and women and child development.

In August 2009, with the passage of **“Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Act, 2009”** the Indian State has provided children, aged between six to fourteen years, with the right to free and compulsory education. In addition, it has also asserted the significance of community participation for the realization of UEE. This act stipulates the constitution of a School Management Committee in every Government elementary school with seventy five percent of members from amongst parents or guardians of children. Among the various tasks, this Committee has also been entrusted with the tasks of making the communities aware of the rights of children and the duties of State Government, local authority, school and parents; monitoring implementation of the mid-day meal program in schools and preparing an annual account of receipts and expenditure in schools.

Despite unprecedented efforts made by the government in terms of providing schemes and policies, the country continues to struggle, even with basic literacy. The 2001 census statistics highlight the literacy

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rate in the country to be 64.84% wherein, the national average for women is 53.63%, and for men, it is 75.26% (Census of India 2001, no date). Thus, it is apparent that there continue to be roadblocks, which prevent the realization of elementary education for all.

One of the greatest weaknesses for poor progress in achieving UEE has been the lack of community involvement in school administration. The policies for increasing participation of communities in education processes do not seem to get translated into empowered Committees of people at grassroots. The Committee members are still ignorant about educational rights and are reluctant to participate and contribute to the process of improving access to quality education.

### 3. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Mewat is a District in the State of Haryana. This area lags behind the rest of Haryana on most development indicators. It is amongst the 150 most backward districts in the Country and has a grim education scenario. The average literacy rate in the District is 44%, of which male literacy accounts for 61.53% and female literacy is around 24.26% (Source: mda.nic.in). Condition of schools is dismal especially in rural areas, and in almost all the schools, basic infra structural facilities are either absent or not working properly. The villagers have adapted themselves to the desolate state of education and are skeptical of any improvement in the situation. This poor condition of schools, combined with an indifferent attitude of the community towards education, are directly affecting the future of thousands of children in the villages-both enrolled as well as out of school. For development of Mewat, access to quality education is a prerequisite. Education is an enabling skill which helps to bridge information asymmetry and expands personal horizons. It gives people command over their environment, equips them to cope better with work and family responsibilities and supports skill acquisition.

IRRAD has been working in some selected villages of Mewat to raise awareness about the importance of education and improve its quality. The focus has been to revive the Village Education Committees in these villages. With IRRAD's effort, there is an increased awareness about the functions of VEC among the members. However, the VEC as an institution to promote and ensure quality education for all in the village is still dependent upon external agencies for its functioning-**it needs to be acted upon**. There is lack of a sense of responsibility among the members and an active process of participation is missing. The members have a resigned attitude and are oblivious to the significance of their role as VEC members. From our experience of working with VECs, we have realized that there is need to build the capacities of the VEC members around their roles and responsibilities and to inculcate a spirit of participation and contribution among them.

For VEC to be an effective institution in a village, it must understand its importance, know its responsibilities and must perform and deliver. It should ensure that every child in a village enjoys his or her fundamental right of free and compulsory education. To facilitate and empower VECs to carry out their responsibilities in an effective manner, there is a need to build the capacity of VEC members and

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make them aware of their roles and responsibilities and the Laws and Rights enshrined in the Constitution to further the cause of quality school education in villages.

In order to design a detailed capacity-building program, it is imperative to assess the capacity building needs of VEC members. Such an assessment is also expected to help in creating interest and a desire for change and participation among the participants.

## 4. OBJECTIVE

- To assess the effectiveness of currently constituted VECs.
- Based on an analysis of needs, design a curriculum to build capacity in areas which need to be strengthened, promoted or enhanced to ensure effective functioning of VECs at the grassroots.

## 5. AREA OF STUDY

Institute of Rural Research and Development (IRRAD) has been working in some select villages of Mewat for the past 10 years. The organization pursues a holistic approach referred to as the Integrated Sustainable Village Development (ISVD), addressing the interrelated constraints, needs and opportunities of poor villages in a holistic manner. ISVD rests firmly on the belief that to be effective over the longer term, women and village poor must be empowered to participate in advancing their own development. The four core centers at IRRAD which carry the vision forward include the Capacity Building Centre, the Natural Resource Management Center, the Rural Research Centre and the Policy, Governance and Advocacy Centre.

The present study was conducted with VECs of 13 villages in four blocks (Taoru, Nagina, Nooh and Firozpur Zhirkha) of Mewat. Names of the Villages are Goela, Dingerheri, Jaffarabad, Notki, Ghagas, Uletha, Karhera, Santhavadi, Kotla, Agon, Pathkhori, Bhond and Raniyala.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

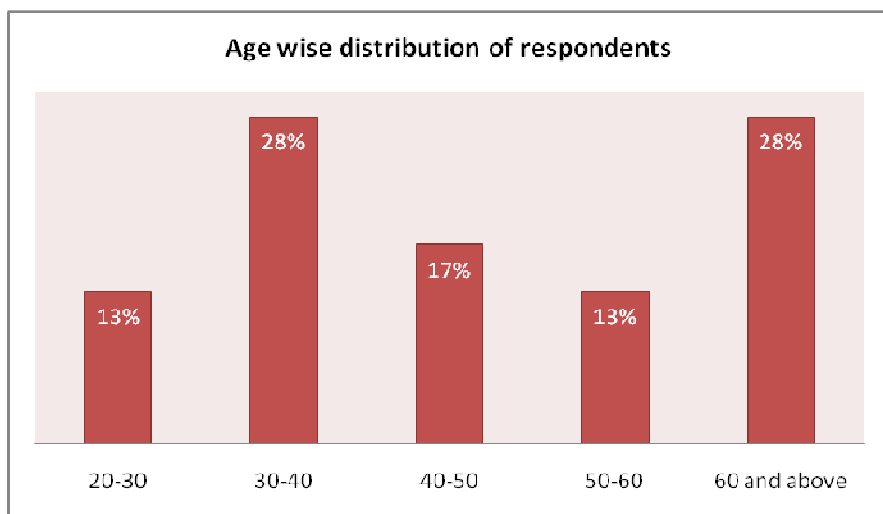
Primary data, both qualitative and quantitative, was collected from members of VECs. Members were identified after procuring their names from the Government school records in villages. Focus Group Discussions were held with members of each VEC, following a convenience sampling approach wherein members were invited to a common location in villages for discussions. Subsequently, a structured questionnaire was administered to the members present during the FGDs to ascertain the members' level of awareness and participation in the Committee.

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## 7. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The following section reflects the profile of the VEC members. It is indicative of the composition of the members of the Committee. Furthermore, the analysis of effectiveness of VEC is related to this profile.

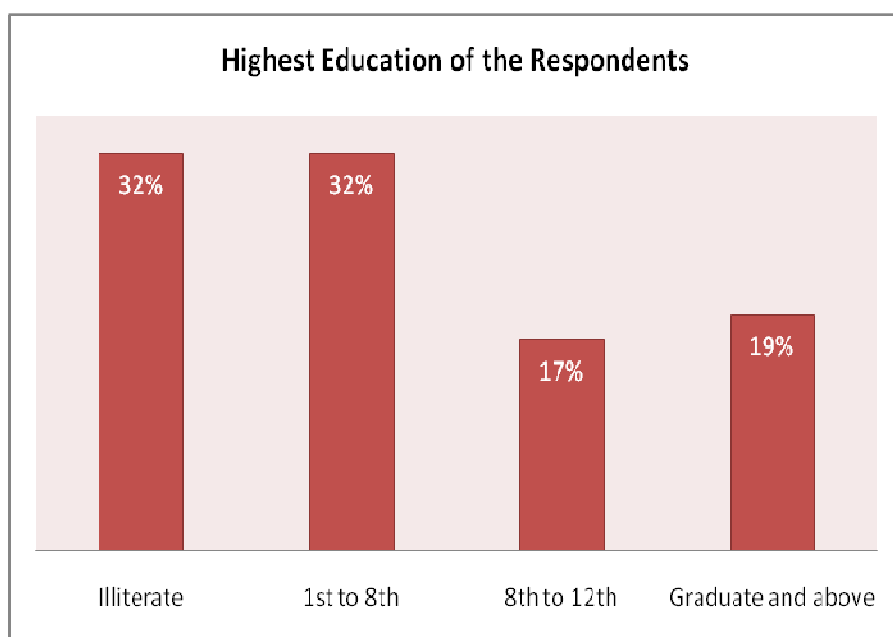
A total of 87 members from 13 VECs participated in the study, out of which 56 were male and 31 were female.



**Graph 1: Members' distribution of age**

A majority of the members are in the age group of 30 to 60 Years. It may be noted that a significant number, 28%, was in the age group of 60 and above (Graph 1). During FGDs, it was observed that some of the members were too old and infirm to be able to participate in the activities of the VEC. Hence, it is suggested that during the formation of VEC, care must be taken to keep active members.

Level of education of the VEC members was looked into. A substantial number (32%) of VEC members were found to be illiterate while only 19% of the members were graduates and above (Graph 2). It was interesting to observe that, most of the graduate members in VECs were teachers, representing school administration while the illiterate members were female representatives of VECs.



**Graph 2: Members' level of education**

## 8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Univariate and bivariate analysis of the responses obtained has been undertaken. Furthermore, analysis has been sub divided into sections based on the issues that were explored during the interviews.

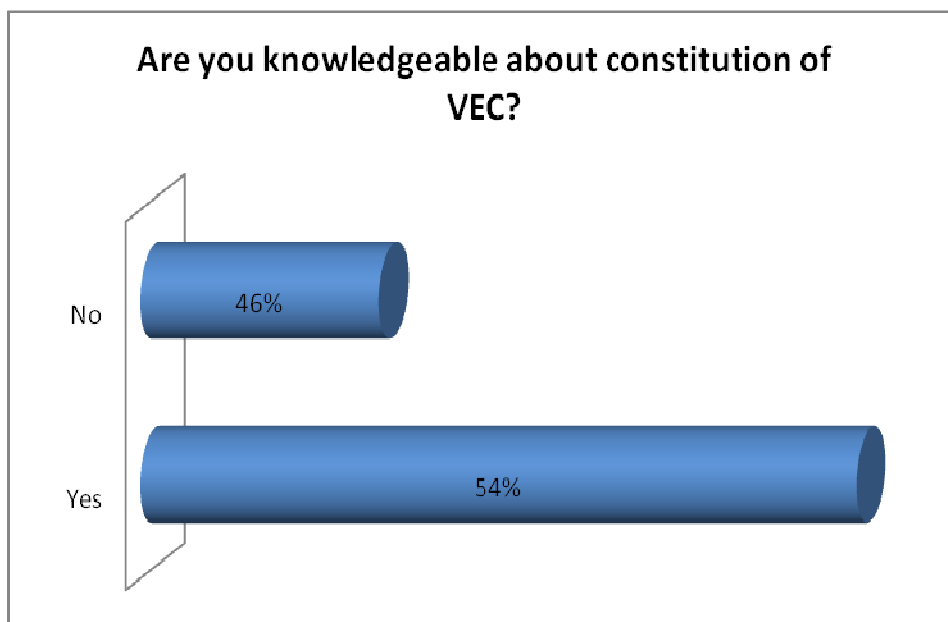
### 8.1 Level of knowledge of VEC Members

For smooth and effective functioning of any Committee, its members must be knowledgeable about its constitution and function, the external environment in which it operates and the relevant Government policies. This section explores the level of knowledge of respondents as members of VECs.

#### 8.1.1 Constitution of VEC

As per a directive of the Haryana Government, VECs are constituted at the village level to ensure participation of local communities in the Government schools in villages. The Committee comprises of 11-15 members and their selection is carried out in a meeting of Gram Sabha, in consultation with all the Panchayat members. Village Sarpach is Chairperson and school Headmaster is Convener of the Committee.

The members were asked questions pertaining to formation and membership of VECs. 46% of the members stated that they did not know about constitution of the VEC whereas 54% claimed to be knowledgeable about it (Graph 3). During the FGDs, the members mentioned that they were not aware of the objectives behind constitution of VEC as well as the procedures



Graph 3: Knowledge about the constitution of VEC

to be followed for such constitution. They also did not know who could be members and the criteria for their selection. Some of the members did not even know who the members of their village VEC were.

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VEC Member's Highest Education	Members' level of knowledge about constitution of VEC	
	No	Yes
Illiterate	75%	25%
1st to 8th	46%	54%
8th to 12th	27%	73%
Graduate and above	13%	87%

Table 2: Members' education and their knowledge about constitution of VEC

There seems to be a direct correlation between VEC members' level of education and the level of knowledge about constitution of VEC. 75% of uneducated members claimed to have no knowledge whereas 87% of the respondents who were Graduate and above claimed to be knowledgeable about the constitution of VEC (Table 1). This suggests that more efforts are required to increase the level of knowledge among illiterate members.

Village	Members' level of knowledge about constitution of VEC	
	No	Yes
Agon	0%	100%
Bhond	38%	62%
Dingerheri	67%	33%
Ghaghas	17%	83%
Goela	0%	100%
Jaffarabad	25%	75%
Karhera	67%	33%
Kotla	83%	17%
Notki	57%	43%
Pathkhori	57%	43%
Raniyala	86%	14%
Santhavadi	67%	33%
Uletha	0%	100%

Table 3: Village and members' knowledge about constitution of VEC

A comparative analysis of villages reflects that in Goela, 100% of the respondents were knowledgeable while in Raniyala and Kotla more than 80% of the respondents reported to be not at all knowledgeable about the constitution of VEC (Table 3). This suggests that level of information varies from village to village.

Sex of the VEC member	Members' level of knowledge about constitution of VEC	
	No	Yes
Male	38%	62%
Female	61%	39%

Table 4: Members' sex and their knowledge about constitution of VEC

A Comparative analysis revealed that there was a considerable difference in the level of knowledge between male and female VEC members. While 38% of males claimed to have no knowledge, this figure went up to 61% for women (Table 4). This suggests that there is a need to build capacities of female

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members and to educate them to bring them at par with the men. During the FGDs the female respondents had shared that they were rarely called for meetings and their opinion was never sought. Some of the women members were not even aware of their membership. This implies that there is also a need to change the perception of male VEC members towards female members. The male members must encourage females to participate more and should be open and respectful towards their contribution.

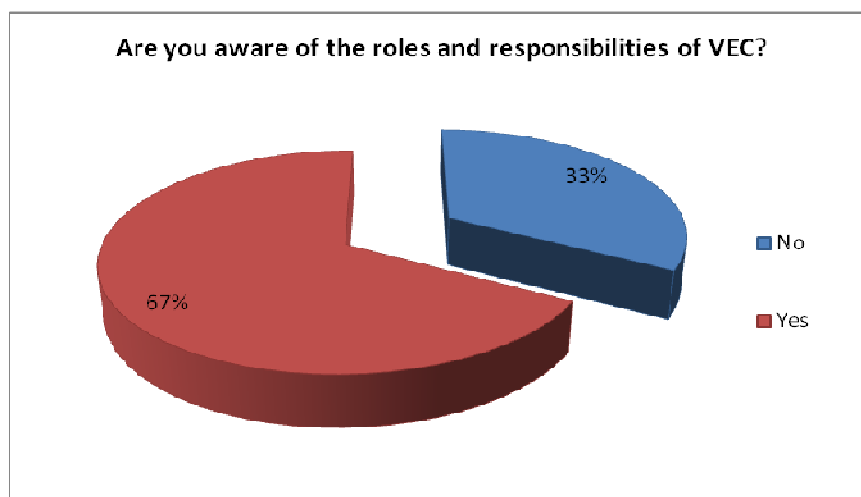
## 8.1.2 Roles and responsibilities of VEC

The chief functions of VEC include:

- Ensure 100% enrollment of children in the age group of 6 to 14
- Provide alternative study center for students unable to attend formal schools
- Ensure admission of children aged between 4 to 6 years in “Bachapan Shala”
- Promote awareness about importance of formal education in villages
- Ensure enrollment of out-of-school children and completion of their elementary education
- Ensure enrollment and retention of girls belonging to SC category
- Facilitate medical check-up and distribution of prostheses for children with special needs to enable their formal school education
- Supervise the delivery of education in the schools

As per the Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyaan (SSA) guidelines, 2 VEC members are to be trained every alternate year, to educate them about their roles and responsibilities.

Members’ level of knowledge about VEC’s roles and responsibilities was investigated. 67% of the members claimed to be aware of the roles and responsibilities (Graph 4). However, during FGDs it was observed that members were not aware of all their responsibilities, especially towards children with special needs and girl children. The members also



Graph 4: Knowledge about VEC’s roles and responsibilities

stated that no formal training had ever been organized, to educate them about their roles and responsibilities. They further went on to state that whatever knowledge they had was through the efforts of NGOs, operational in their villages.

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VEC Member's Highest Education	Members' level of knowledge about roles and responsibilities of VEC	
	No	Yes
Illiterate	57%	43%
1st to 8th	36%	64%
8th to 12th	13%	87%
Graduate and above	0%	100%

Table 5: Members' education and their knowledge about VEC's roles and responsibilities

In addition, a direct link between level of literacy and awareness on roles and responsibilities was observed. 57% of members unaware about their roles and responsibilities were illiterate (Table 5). As the level of literacy increased, the knowledge also increased. During the FGDs this was probed further. The uneducated members stated that they believed they could not contribute anything and hence refrained from participating. They considered it ironical to talk about education. This suggests that the capacity building exercise must aim to change the resigned mindset of illiterate members and make them realise that illiteracy should not be a limitation for participation -rather it should be a motivation to participate more. They are the people who realise most the problems associated with not having education and hence they ought to work to create awareness about importance of education and improvements in its quality.

Village	Members' level of knowledge roles and responsibilities of VEC	
	No	Yes
Agon	0%	100%
Bhond	25%	75%
Dingerheri	33%	67%
Ghaghas	0%	100%
Goela	0%	100%
Jaffarabad	25%	75%
Karhera	33%	67%
Kotla	50%	50%
Notki	43%	57%
Pathkhori	43%	57%
Raniyala	86%	14%
Santhavadi	67%	33%
Uletha	0%	100%

Table 6: Village and members' knowledge about VEC's roles and responsibilities

A comparative analysis of the villages revealed that except for Raniyala and Santhavadi, more than 50% of the members in other villages were knowledgeable about VEC's roles and responsibilities (Table 6). During FGDs the members had shared that as VEC members' their chief responsibility was to ensure that school teachers were regular and punctual. This reflects that members have very limited knowledge of their functions and hence there is a need create awareness among the VEC members about their roles and responsibilities.

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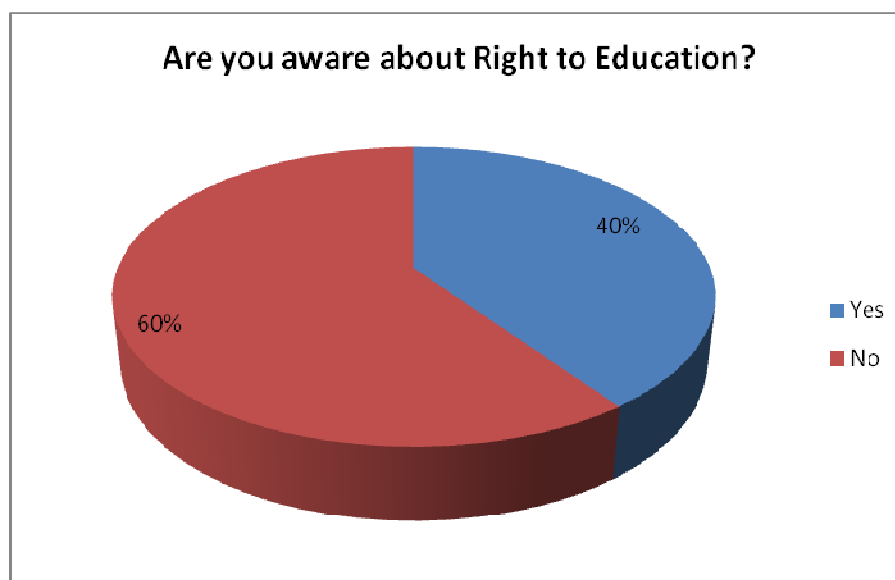
Sex of the VEC member	Members' level of knowledge about roles and responsibilities of VEC	
	No	Yes
Male	38%	62%
Female	61%	39%

Table 7: Members' sex and their knowledge about VEC's roles and responsibilities

In terms of gender, 61% of women did not have knowledge about their roles and responsibilities as a part of VEC, whereas it was 38% in case of men (Table 7). As mentioned above, the participation of female members in the VEC is very limited and they are rarely called for VEC meetings. In the absence of exposure to the functioning of VEC, most of the female members are ignorant about their roles and responsibilities as VEC members. Hence, there is a need to enhance the involvement of women in the functioning of VEC and also to enhance their knowledge about members' roles and responsibilities

### 8.1.3 Right to Education

Recognizing the role of education in the development of an individual, the Indian State, with the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution in 2002, made education a fundamental right. With the enactment of "The Right to Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" in August 2009" the right to education was accorded the same legal status as the right to life in the Indian Constitution. This act provides for 8 years of free and compulsory education to every child in the age group of 6-14 years, in an age appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his/her neighborhood.



Graph 5: Awareness about Right to Education

Members were asked, if they were aware of this important act. Majority of the members (60%) were not aware of this Right (Graph 5). During the FGDs, members expressed complete ignorance about this landmark act. It was ironical to observe people, to whom it should matter the most, being ignorant about it. This reflects the extent of information asymmetry prevailing in the villages. The members were unaware of one of the most talked about and recent constitutional amendments, directly related to their functioning. This stresses the fact that there is a need to create awareness among the VEC

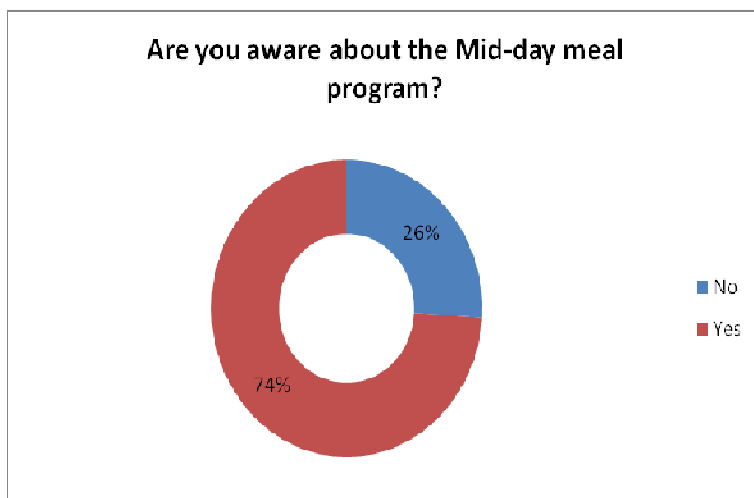
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members about the Right to Education Act and to educate them on how this right can play a key role to address their education related issues.

### 8.1.4 Mid-day Meal Program

The Mid-day Meal Scheme is one of the most popular schemes of the government. The chief objectives of the scheme are to protect children from classroom hunger, increase school enrolment and attendance, improve socialization among children belonging to different castes and address malnutrition among children.

Members' level of awareness about mid-day meal program was investigated. 74% of the members reported that they were aware of the program (Graph 6).



Graph 6: Awareness about Mid-day meal Program

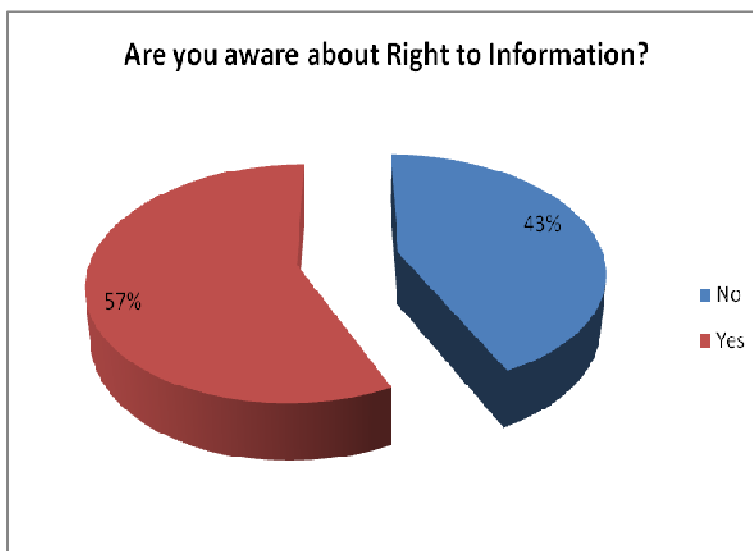
However, during the FGD the members had expressed that they were only aware of the weekly menu of the meals but were not aware of the per child budget, sanctioned for this program. They did not know the procedure of procuring food grains, hiring cooks, payment basis for the cooks and hygiene and safety measures to be followed. This suggests that there is a need to make the members aware of technical and financial aspects of this scheme to enable them to check misappropriation of funds and to ensure delivery of quality food to children. Village wise comparisons showed that across all villages most of the members were aware about this program, except for Raniyala (Table 8).

Village	Members' level of awareness about Mid-day meal program	
	No	Yes
Agon	25%	75%
Bhond	25%	75%
Dingerheri	22%	78%
Ghaghas	17%	83%
Goela	0%	100%
Jaffarabad	0%	100%
Karhera	22%	78%
Kotla	17%	83%
Notki	29%	71%
Pathkhori	29%	71%
Raniyala	86%	14%
Santhavadi	67%	33%
Uletha	0%	100%

Table 8: Village and members' level of awareness about Mid-day meal program

## 8.1.5 Right to Information

A paramount requirement of any democracy is an informed citizenry and transparency of information. This is vital to its functioning, to contain corruption and to hold Governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed. The Right to Information Act, 2005 provides citizens the right to secure information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability on the working of every public authority.



Graph7: Awareness about Right to Information

VEC members' level of awareness about this act was explored. Almost half (43%) of the members were unaware about this act (Graph 7). During the FGDs, the members' expressed their willingness to know more about this act and its usage. Only in Goela and Jaffarabad were most of the members aware about the act. In Kotla, Raniyala and Santhavadi more than 80% of the members had no knowledge about the Act (Table 9). This again reflects that level of knowledge varies from village to village and the capacity-building program must be able to accommodate the varied needs.

Village	Members' level of awareness about Right to Information	
	No	Yes
Agon	50%	50%
Bhond	25%	75%
Dingerheri	33%	67%
Ghaghas	17%	83%
Goela	0%	100%
Jaffarabad	25%	75%
Karhera	44%	56%
Kotla	83%	17%
Notki	57%	43%
Pathkhori	43%	57%
Raniyala	86%	14%
Santhavadi	83%	17%
Uletha	17%	83%

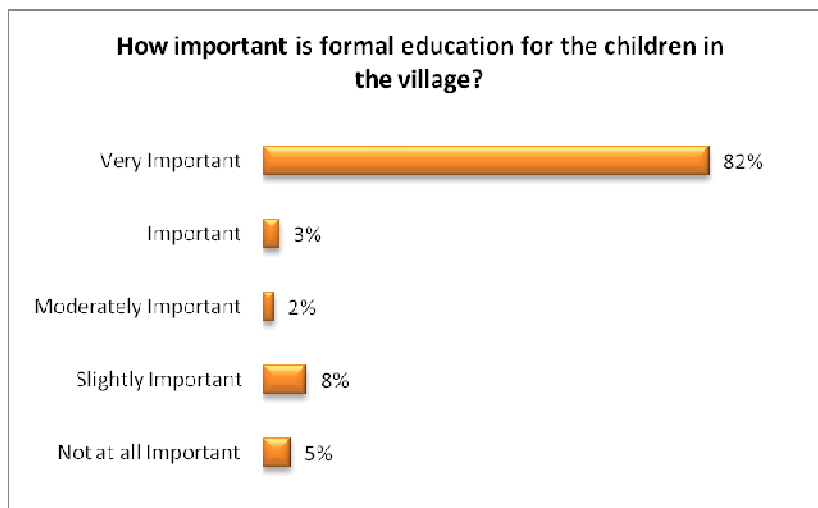
Table 9: Village and members' awareness about Right to Information

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## 8.2 VEC Member's awareness about importance of education

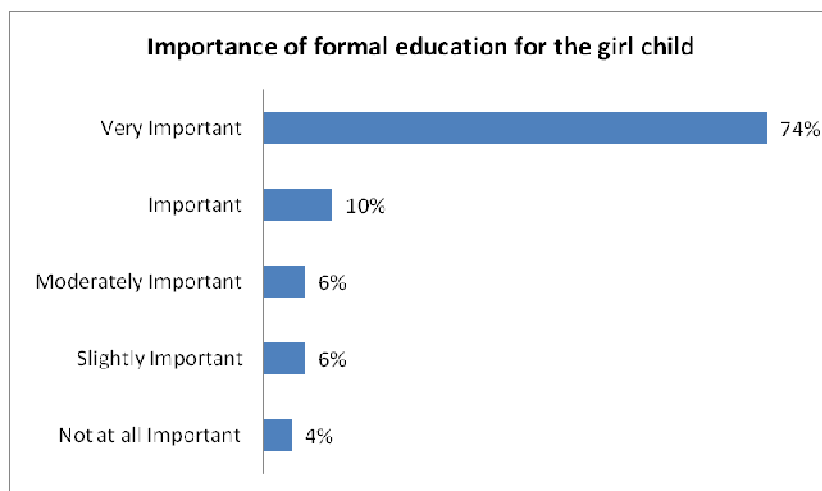
One of the responsibilities of VECs is to raise awareness about the importance of formal education in the community, particularly for the girl child. This section explores the extent of importance attached by VEC members towards the cause they are entrusted to promote.

Majority of the VEC members- 82% (Graph 8) - expressed that formal education was very important for the children in the village. During FGDs, they stated that education helps in the overall development of the child as it expands personal horizons, bridges information asymmetry and equips the child with skills to cope better with the surroundings. They further went on to say that, one of the chief reasons for the poverty and



**Graph 8: Importance of formal education for the children**

underdevelopment in the villages was the lack of access to quality education. The members felt that quality of education was better in private schools; hence many parents preferred to send their children to these schools. The teachers in private schools were more dedicated towards ensuring that the students were learning well and the children were well looked after. However, the poor people in villages could not afford to send their children to private schools and this resulted in a vicious cycle- a poor child wants quality education to break out of poverty but cannot afford quality education because of being poor.



**Graph9: Importance of girl child education**

Upon being enquired about the importance of girl child education, 84% of the members expressed that educating a girl child was important (Graph 9). However, during FGDs it was realized that generally the girls dropped out of school after attaining primary education. Various reasons were cited for this, primary being her requirement at the household

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level, to assist her mother. The VEC members expressed helplessness to address this situation. This necessitates the need to sensitize the VEC members and subsequently the entire community about the importance of higher education for the girl child.

Across villages, most VEC members reported that educating a girl child was important. However, in some villages, some of the members still felt that educating girls was not important (Table 10). This suggests that efforts are required in these villages to raise awareness about the importance of formal education for the girl child and to create an environment to enable their education.

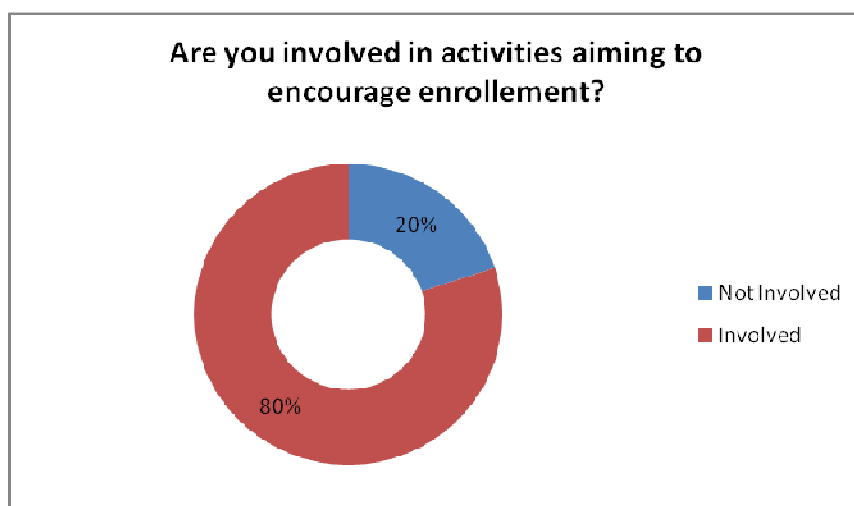
Village Name	Importance of formal education for the girl child				
	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Agon	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Bhond	13%	13%	0%	25%	50%
Dingerheri	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Ghaghas	0%	0%	17%	17%	67%
Goela	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Jaffarabad	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Karhera	0%	22%	0%	33%	44%
Kotla	0%	0%	17%	17%	67%
Notki	0%	14%	29%	0%	57%
Pathkhori	0%	14%	0%	14%	71%
Raniyala	0%	0%	14%	0%	86%
Santhavadi	0%	17%	33%	0%	50%
Uletha	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

**Table 10: Village and importance attached to formal education for girl child by members**

### 8.3 Level of involvement of VEC members

This section analyses the involvement of members towards improving the access and delivery of education in the schools.

Members' level of involvement to improve access to education was investigated. About 80% of the members reported to be involved in activities aimed to improve enrollment and prevent dropouts in the school (Graph 10). During FGDs the members stated that had they participated in enrollment drives in the villages to increase awareness about importance of education and enrollment of



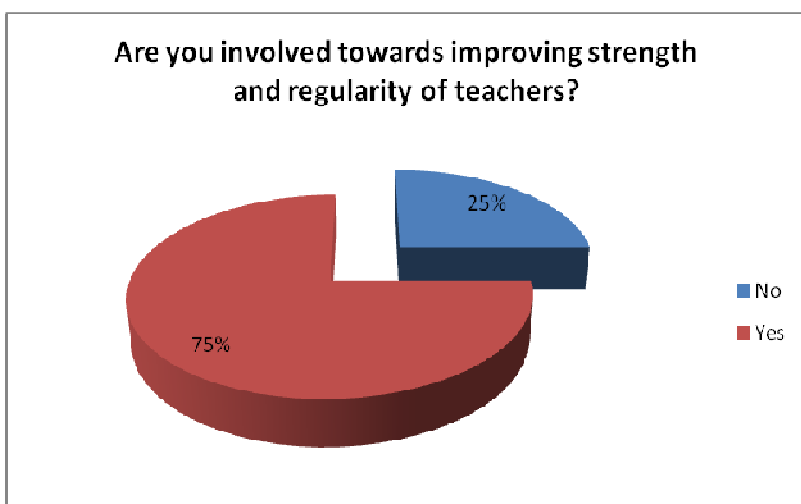
**Graph 10: Involvement towards encouraging enrollment**

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the children. The members, however, clarified that they did not organize enrollment drives or such activities on their own but extended support to external agencies to organize the same in their villages. This reflects that the VEC members do not take initiative but are willing to provide support to improve access to education. The VEC members also expressed their helplessness in mobilizing the parents, in the event of them not sending their children to schools or them asking their daughters to drop out of school after primary level. This reflects that VEC members need an effective strategy for engagement with parents. Furthermore, the VEC members require to be sensitized that ensuring complete enrollment in villages is one of their responsibilities and they must take initiatives to achieve the same.

The involvement of VEC members towards improving the number and regularity of teachers was examined. 75% of VEC members reported to be involved in activities to ensure the availability of teachers in schools (Graph 11). During the FGDs, the members had shared that though they regularly approached the District Administration for ensuring adequate number of teachers, still the number of teachers in the school was never sufficient. There



Graph 11: Involvement towards improving strength and

were no subject matter teachers for higher classes and the average pupil to teacher ratio was very high, thus affecting the quality of education. The members were interested to understand the effective ways of approaching the District Administration to ensure that their requests were addressed properly. However, they also shared that in some cases the teachers were not open to their involvement in teacher related issues as that would mean more accountability on the parts of the teachers. This suggests that there is need to create an environment of mutual trust and understanding among teachers and VEC members. They should support each other and work together to improve the status of education in villages.

### 8.4 Level of participation of VEC Members

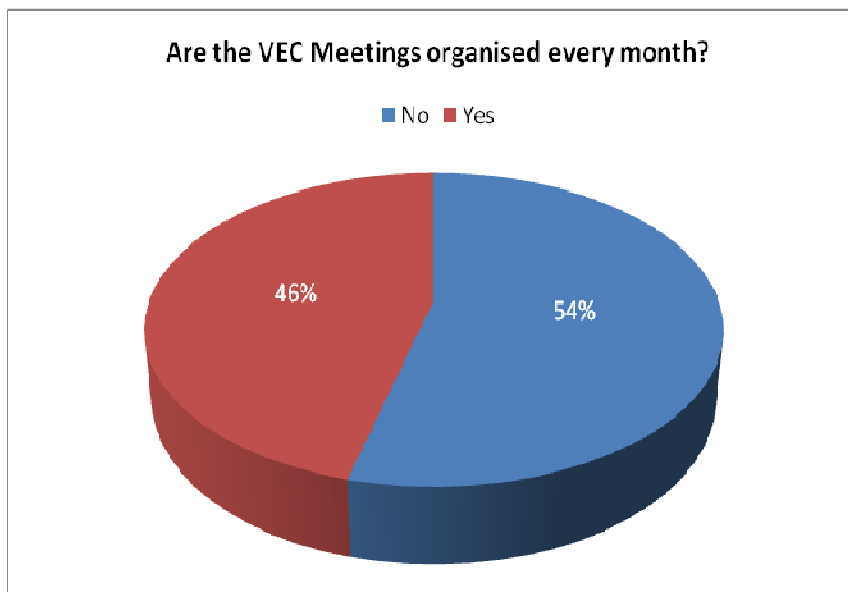
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Mary Parker Follet in her book “The New State” had mentioned that neighborhood organizations must be a method of effective popular responsibility. They should encourage people to act instead of constantly being acted upon. Citizens must realize that they can operate as government as well as with the government and that, the citizen functions through government and the government functions through the citizen. The concept of Village Education Committee rests on the same tenet. In this committee, the members are expected to play an active role in the identification and the redressal of problems related to access and delivery of education in the villages.

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This section explores the extent of participation of members in the functions of VEC--how critical the members feel their role is to ensure good education in their village school and how actively the members pursue their role in VEC. To facilitate the functioning of VEC members, the operational guidelines of the VEC stipulate that every month, VEC members must organize a meeting to discuss their functions and other education related issues. These monthly meetings provide a platform to the members to affect the functioning of the VEC and all members are expected to participate actively.

The frequency of holding the VEC meetings was investigated. Around 54% of the members reported that VEC meetings were not organized every month (Graph 12). On further investigation during FGDs, many of the members stated that even if the meetings were organized, they seldom got intimated about it. No formal communication was ever sent to the members about the meeting dates. Some of the members were not even aware of the fact that VEC meetings needed to be organized every month.



**Graph 12: VEC Meetings**

Village	Are the VEC meetings organized every month	
	No	Yes
<b>Agon</b>	100%	0%
<b>Bhond</b>	13%	88%
<b>Dingerheri</b>	22%	78%
<b>Ghaghas</b>	100%	0%
<b>Goela</b>	0%	100%
<b>Jaffarabad</b>	0%	100%
<b>Karhera</b>	100%	0%
<b>Kotla</b>	83%	17%
<b>Notki</b>	86%	14%
<b>Pathkhor</b>	71%	29%
<b>Raniyala</b>	71%	29%
<b>Santhavadi</b>	67%	33%
<b>Uletha</b>	0%	100%

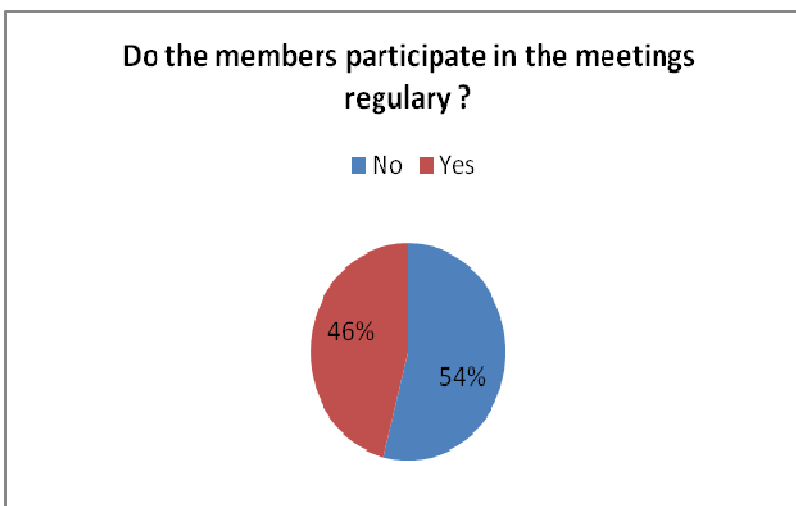
**Table 11: Village and VEC meetings**

# Report on Capacity-Building Needs: Village Education Committee

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In most of the villages, majority of the members reported that VEC meetings were not organized every month (Table 11). This suggests that VEC as an Institution is at various stages of development across villages and hence calls for the adoption of different capacity- building strategies for different villages.

The members were further asked if they participated in the meetings regularly. Only 54% of the members stated that they participated regularly -subject to prior intimation about the meeting date (Graph 13). This reflects that some of the members themselves are not inclined towards participating in the meetings. Hence, the capacity building program must aim towards ensuring effective participation of all the VEC members and to sensitize



**Graph 13: Participation in the VEC meetings**

members towards the importance of these monthly meetings for their smooth functioning. The regular participation of the members in the meeting will pave way for their involvement in other activities towards improving the state of education in their village.

## ***8.5 VEC Member's synergy with the District Administration***

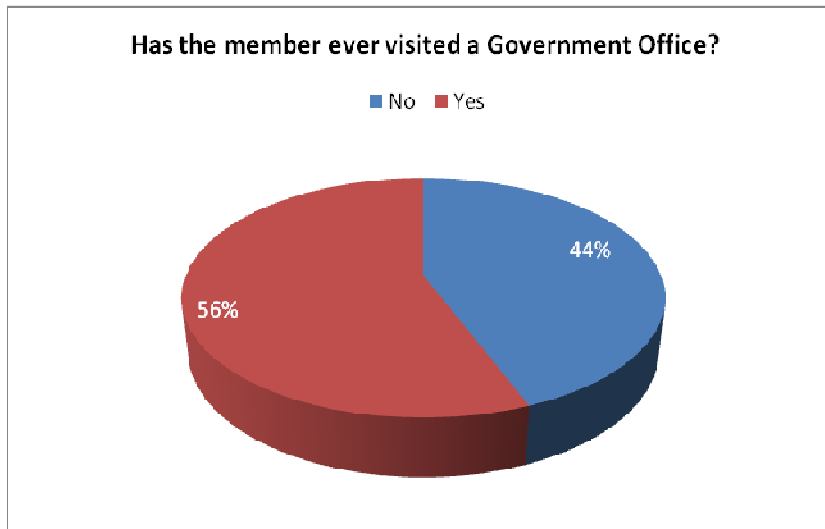
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The District is the Principal Administrative unit below the State level. It is a unit of administration covering most of the departments of Government. A study team on district administration constituted by the Administrative Reforms commission stated "the district is the most convenient geographical unit where the total apparatus of public administration can be concentrated, and where it comes into direct contact with the people". The block and village level bodies are generally executive in nature, while the district level body mostly has a coordinating and supervisory role.

This section examines the synergies between the VEC members and the district administration-the level of interaction between the VEC members and the district officials.

## Report on Capacity-Building Needs: Village Education Committee

Around 56% of the VEC members reported to having visited the district government offices for education related matters (Graph 14). However, during the FGDs, the members shared that most of the meetings with the government officials were organized by the teachers or external NGOs working in the village. The VEC members were hesitant to meet the Government officials on their own, as they felt, they might face rejection. There is a need to encourage VEC members to be more communicative with the Government Officials and to help them shed their perceived fear.



**Graph 14: Visit to Government Office**

In this case also, there was a direct relation between the level of members' education and his or her visit to the district government office (Table 12). Similarly, the male members were more out-bound as compared to the female members (Table 13).

VEC Member's Highest Education	Has the member ever visited a Government Office	
	No	Yes
Illiterate	61%	39%
1st to 8th	50%	50%
8th to 12th	27%	73%
Graduate and above	19%	81%

**Table 12: Members' education and their visit to Government office**

VEC Member's Sex	Has the member ever visited a Government Office	
	No	Yes
Male	23%	77%
Female	81%	19%

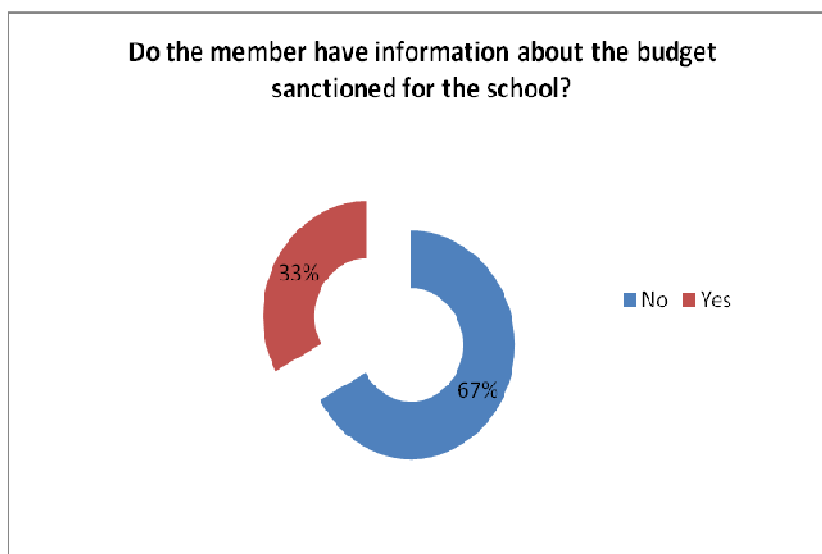
**Table 3 Members' sex and their visit to Government office**

# Report on Capacity-Building Needs: Village Education Committee

## 8.5 VEC members' Involvement in budget tracking

A VEC receives an annual grant of Rs. 5000 for School development and Rs. 7500 for repair and maintenance of school building, per school.

As per our analysis only 33% members are aware about the budget sanctioned for VECs (Graph 15). During the FGDs, majority of the members expressed their ignorance about the funds allocated. Most of them were not even aware of the fact that the school VEC receives annual funds from the Government.



Graph 15: Information about sanctioned Budget

During the FGDs, members expressed that in some cases the teachers do inform them about the funds being spent on the school but they were never involved in budget planning or spending. They were usually the recipient of the expenditure information. This suggests that there is a need to sensitize teachers to involve VEC members in the school related financial transactions. Furthermore, the VEC members need to be informed about their financial rights and their capacities must be built for assertion of these rights.

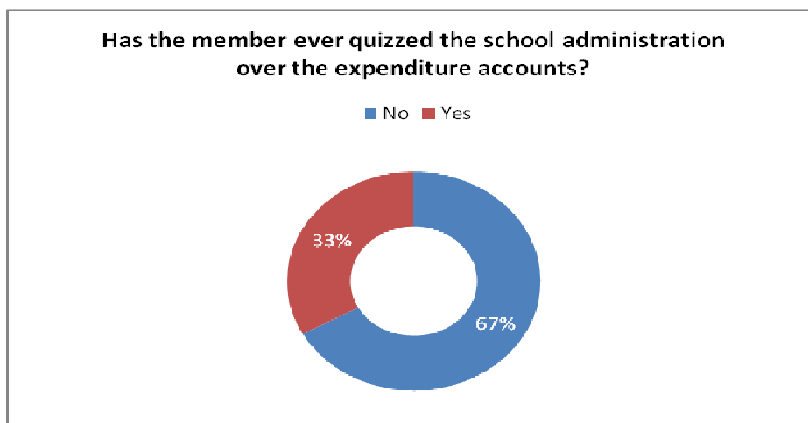
In this case also as the level of education of VEC members increased so did the percentage of members having information about budgets. 81% of graduate members had information about budgets (Table 14). However, as mentioned earlier most of the graduate members are school teachers and this might be a reason for their being informed about budgets.

VEC Member's Highest Education	Does the member have information about the budget sanctioned for the school	
	No	Yes
Illiterate	86%	14%
1st to 8th	82%	18%
8th to 12th	53%	47%
Graduate and above	19%	81%

Table 14: Members' education and information about budget

# Report on Capacity-Building Needs: Village Education Committee

It was further investigated if the members have ever questioned the school administration about expenditure accounts. Analysis reflects that most of the members have never done that. (Graph 16). During FGDs, the members had stated that even if they enquired about it, they seldom got satisfactory information. Consequently, they had developed a belief that

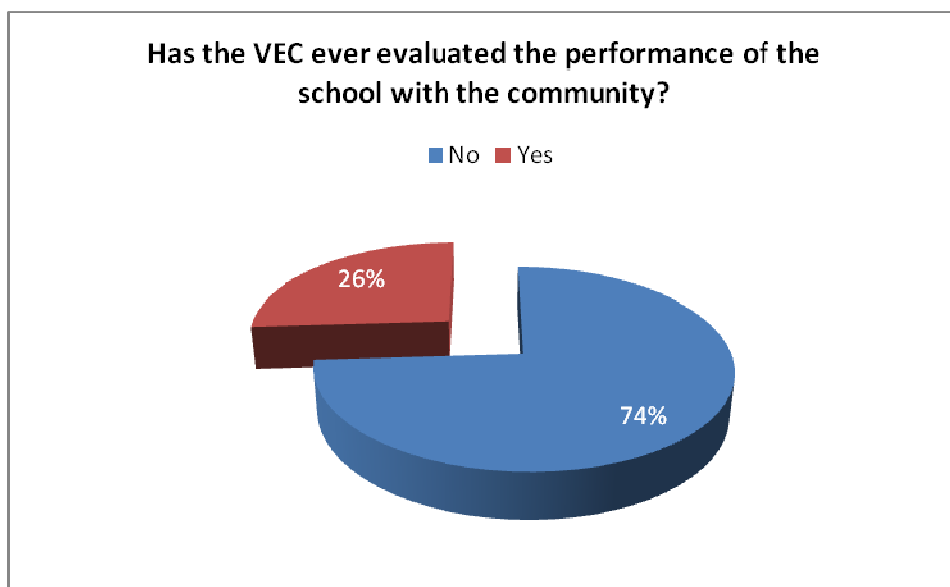


**Graph 16: Information sought about budget expenditure**

school related financial transactions are the responsibility of the teachers and did not perceive any role in it for them. The members stated that it was the prerogative of the teachers to inform them or not.

## 8.6 VEC Members' engagement with the community

One of the responsibilities of VEC is to improve awareness about formal education in a community. It should ensure that the entire community realizes the importance of education for their ward and takes



**Graph 17: Evaluation of School's performance with the community**

interest in delivery of education in their village school. The members were asked if they had ever evaluated the performance of school with the community. 74% of the members reported never having undertaken any such activity (Graph 17). In the FGD,

the respondents informed that such

an exercise never happened with the community. In some villages, community meetings were held on need basis such as problem of drop-outs in schools, motivating parents for enrollment of children but, a scientific participatory evaluation had never been carried out in any village. Training the VEC on this process is another strong need which has emerged from this assessment.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In the thirteen villages (covered in the study), VECs were partially functional and were mostly dependent on external agencies for their functioning. Though a majority of the members were aware about the constitution of VEC, the roles and responsibilities of VEC members and the Rights and Policies pertaining to education, but their knowledge was inadequate. No formal training had been provided to them before being made VEC members. Even though the members were aware of the importance of formal education for children, they expressed helplessness to address the issue of discontinuation of the education of girls after Primary Education.

The involvement of VEC members in the activities as laid down in the VEC guidelines was insignificant. The members were mostly not aware of their responsibilities as VEC members. They did participate in activities to raise awareness about the importance of formal education and to increase enrollment but seldom initiated such activities on their own. VEC meetings were not organized as stipulated in the guidelines and the participation of members in these meetings was irregular. The school administration generally did not share budget related information with VEC members and the members also did not ask for it. There seemed to be no involvement of members in budget planning and subsequent expenditure. The members were not involved in any budget tracking activities. There was a very limited engagement of VEC with the community as there were no platforms for this interface.

Across all parameters, as the level of education of members increased so did their knowledge and involvement in the stipulated roles of VEC. The illiterate members were reluctant to participate in the affairs of the VEC as they felt that being unlettered they did not have much authority. Furthermore, the male members were better informed and more involved as compared to female members and hence more emphasis needs to be laid on building capacities of female members. Across villages, the level of knowledge and participation of VEC members varies and hence the capacity-building program needs to be designed in a manner to incorporate these variations.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure active participation of the VEC members in the education process and to create awareness about the importance of education specifically for the girl child, it is envisaged to design and conduct a capacity-building program to capacitate and empower VEC members. The program would aim at revitalizing and strengthening the VECs in the villages to affect access to quality education to all.

From the analysis, it is evident that the capacity-building priorities vary across villages, gender and education levels and hence the training program will be styled to accommodate different needs of the members. The training would specifically focus on increasing the participation of illiterate and female members of the VEC. Based on the analysis the focus areas for the training have been identified as:

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- Constitution of VEC and roles and responsibilities of VEC members
- Information about Right to Education, Right to Information and Mid-day meal Program
- Budget Tracking
- VEC – Community engagement
- Promotion of higher education for the girl child
- Involvement of VEC planning, decision making and monitoring and evaluation
- Regularity and participation in VEC meetings
- Linkages with District Administration
- Participation of female and illiterate members in the affairs of the VEC
- VEC as an effective institution at the Village level

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## Annexure 1

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Table 10: Village and importance attached to formal education for girl child by members

Table 11: Village and VEC meetings

Table 12: Member's education and visit to Government office

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Table 14: Member's education and information about budget

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## Annexure 3

### Training Needs Analysis for Capacity Building of VEC- Focus Group Discussion Guide

- Are the VEC members aware of the purpose of VECs in the villages?
- Are the VEC members aware of who all constitute the VEC?
- Do the VEC members know about their roles and responsibilities?
- How active are the VEC members in terms of
  - Encourage Enrollment and prevent drop out
  - Involvement in projects in school
  - Performance of children in school examination
  - Civic sense/cleanliness in school
  - Extra curricula activities in school
  - Quality of teaching
  - Attendance of children
  - Number and regularity of teachers
  - Teacher student ratio
- How often do the members participate in the VEC meetings?
- Have the VEC members ever visited a government office, followed up with authorities, and attended PTA meetings? (leadership to manage relations with key stakeholders)
- VEC members' opinion towards girl child education and the importance of education in general.
- The attitude of VEC members in terms of school activities- indifferent, resigned, pro active, open, resistant
- Do the members know about the Right to Education Act? Its salient features.
- What does the VEC feels about the strengths and weaknesses of the school?
- What is the level of participation of the VEC members in School Management with regards to :
  - Decision making
  - Planning
  - Project implementation
  - Monitoring
  - Budget assessment-planning and spending
- Can VEC members mobilize parents for PTA meetings; engage stakeholders, primarily community for developing plans, accessing information, ensure participation in delivery of services?
- Have VEC members participated in the evaluation of school performance in the community?
- Do the VEC members feel empowered in terms of:
  - Knowledge
  - Positive attitude to make the school fully functional
  - Participate in the functioning of school activities

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## Annexure 4

### Training needs analysis for Capacity Building of VEC: Individual questionnaire

- Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_
- Village: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_
- Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Education: \_\_\_\_\_
- Religion: \_\_\_\_\_ Caste: \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
- Designation in VEC: \_\_\_\_\_
- VEC Member Since: \_\_\_\_\_ Resident of the Village: \_\_\_\_\_
- School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Indicators	Rating	
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Knowledge about the formation and membership of VEC	Yes	No
Knowledge about VEC's roles and responsibilities	Yes	No
Knowledge about Right to Education Act	Yes	No
Knowledge about the Mid Day Meal program	Yes	No
Knowledge about Right to Information Act	Yes	No
<b>Involvement</b>	Yes	No
Importance of formal education for the children in the village	Yes	No
VEC's involvement towards encouraging enrollment and preventing drop-out	Yes	No
VEC's role in ensuring cleanliness in school	Yes	No
VEC's concern towards the number and regularity of teachers	Yes	No
VEC's concern towards the attendance of children in village school	Yes	No

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VEC's concern towards quality of teaching in the Village school	Yes	No
VEC's concern towards the performance of children in board exams	Yes	No
<b>Gender Sensitivity</b>		
Importance of formal education for the girl child	Yes	No
Sensitivity towards the presence of enabling environment for the Girl Child in the school	Yes	No
Importance of completion of elementary education for the girl child	Yes	No
<b>Leadership</b>		
Are the VEC meetings organized every month	Yes	No
Do all the VEC members participate in the meetings	Yes	No
Do the VEC members support the school administration in ensuring quality education	Yes	No
Have the VEC taken any initiative to improve school education	Yes	No
<b>Empowerment</b>		
Have the VEC members ever visited a Government Office	Yes	No
Have the VEC members participated in implementing govt. projects in the schools	Yes	No
Do the VEC have information about the budget sanctioned for the school	Yes	No
Has the VEC ever quizzed the school administration over the expenditure accounts	Yes	No
Has the VEC ever put up a demand with the school administration	Yes	No
Has the VEC ever evaluated the performance of the school with the community	Yes	No