

Bringing together stakeholders for achieving quality education

Malala Yousafzai said, “One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world.” It is time for more collaborative efforts in this direction.

The Haryana Education Forum, held annually since 2013–14, is an initiative that strives to bring the government, NGOs, experts, corporates, and citizens together on one platform to facilitate a dynamic exchange of ideas, challenges, experiences, and solutions. This year, the forum was a collaborative effort of Sehgal Foundation and the Lady Bamford Charitable Trust, an initiative of J. C. Bamford Excavators Limited (JCB). The objective was to provide a platform for learning and sharing best practices on school education in Haryana. The forum included a SMC (School Managing Committee) conclave aimed at providing a voice to SMC members and strengthening their spirit and functioning in schools.

The Right to Education Act of 2009, provides every child, ages six to fourteen, with eight years of free and compulsory elementary education in age-appropriate classrooms. Under this Act, SMCs are constituted to oversee the management of schools. The SMCs ensure transparency in funds management and in school functioning and seek the active participation of parents, students, and socially responsible individuals in the education process.

Saurabh Srivastava, program leader, Strengthening Village-Level Institutions, Sehgal Foundation, says, “The convergence of different stakeholders for achieving quality education is the mission of this forum. Since the participation at the forum involves diverse stakeholders, the knowledge takeaway is high. Problems and solutions, ideas and feedback, facts and figures, experiences and journeys, needs and requirements add to that knowledge bank. In addition, there are valuable networking opportunities on platforms such as these. Over the years, this forum has seen such an enhancement in quality.”

Another important feature of the forum was that SMC members had the rare opportunity to voice their concerns and share their successes. This is especially true of women, who constitute 50 percent of the members of the Executive Body of SMCs. An important outcome of this forum was the signing of a MoU between the Department of Education, Government of Haryana and Sehgal Foundation, enabling many more exploring possibilities for synergies in the near future.

We can all acknowledge the fact that education is an integral part of development. However, the Right to Education still has many challenges in

its effective implementation that requires active advocacy involving different stakeholders, innovative and cost-effective solutions to actual problems, and the generation of awareness of the diverse challenges and nuances of the act.

Added highlights of the Haryana Education Forum 2017

- Addressing the vital role of SMCs in education, special guest, Jaibeer Singh Arya, additional district commissioner, Nuh, and Khursheed Rajaka, chairman, Mewat Development Agency, shared that schools should provide a welcoming environment to schoolchildren. He focused on the role of teachers in motivating the children and maintaining good level of education in schools.



- Over 150 participants, including representatives from the SRF Foundation, Humana People to People India, Lotus Petal Foundation, and CEQUIN, were present at the forum.
- Sehgal Foundation trustee Jay Sehgal and CEO Ajay Pandey addressed the group, promoting education for the propagation of human rights and the importance of building synergies among various stakeholders: government, NGOs, and educational institutions.
- Others who shared their experiences included District Education Officer, Dinesh Shastri; and Block District Officer, Abdul Rehman; Shanti Sagar Jain Girls College of Education, Principal, Ramji Tiwari; and JBT, Firojpur Namak, Abdul Majid.
- A quiz program was organized to engage and generate interest among SMC members on their roles and responsibilities.



- Government school teachers were felicitated for their contributions to a recent plantation drive in schools by Sehgal Foundation. More than 20,000 plantations were done with the support of SMCs and teachers.
- A play presented by the team highlighted the importance of participation by the general body of SMCs and the process of forming an Executive Body of SMCs.

(Contributed by Sarah Berry, communications and media consultant, and Anjali Makhija, director, Strengthening Village-Level Institutions, S M Sehgal Foundation)