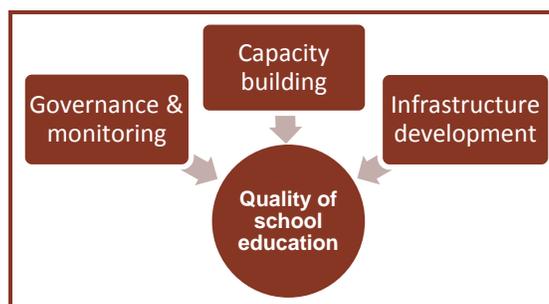


Improving Quality of School Education Through Better Governance and Capacity Building

In the past decade and a half, India has made significant improvements in school education. In primary education, after 15 years since the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched by the Central Government, near universal enrollment has been achieved in the 6-14 age group. In secondary education, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is still low, but it has increased steadily from 56% in 2006 to 69% in 2011 (Source - World Bank data).

However, the **rate of increase in enrollment has not been matched by an improvement in the quality of school education**. As a result, there has been little increase in the learning outcomes among children, while the number of children dropping out of school continues to be high. According to the Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) 2013, most children in rural India have poor reading and arithmetic abilities.

Some of these challenges can be addressed if the **governance systems in schools, especially government schools, are improved, and greater emphasis is laid on capacity building of teachers and other staff in these schools**. Apart from these, better compliance with RTE (Right to Education Act) norms on pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) and infrastructure requirements such as blackboards, desks, chairs, playgrounds and toilets (separate ones for boys and girls) could further improve the level of education in India's schools.



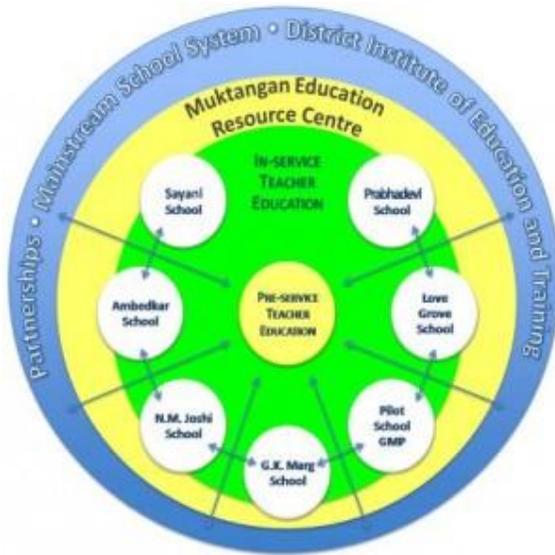
While basic infrastructure, especially in rural areas, is still inadequate in many schools, this problem is gradually being addressed through more funds from Central and State governments. This brief focuses on the other two aspects: - a) capacity building of teachers and other staff; and b) better governance and monitoring. The case studies in the following pages present examples of how innovative and participatory approaches in these areas could lead to tangible improvements in the quality of education in our schools.

1. Private/voluntary sector based hub-and-spoke model for teacher training

The challenge of improving the level of education is too big to be met by the government alone. Moreover, the competence and efficiency of the private sector need to be tapped in a better and more efficient manner to improve the quality of teachers in Indian schools. For this purpose, a **hub-and-spoke could be utilized**.

Here, a single large school run by the private sector/NGO is used as a hub for a variety of activities, such as **teacher training, auditing of education in neighbourhood schools, as well in designing the curriculum**. The example of Muktangam schools below illustrates this.

Muktangan Schools and Resource Centre – a Hub-and-Spoke Model



“**Muktangan Schools**” is a unique concept which *integrates school education with teacher training and capacity building*. Muktangan is a voluntary organization which currently runs **7 Municipal Schools** (beginning with preschool) in Mumbai in partnership with the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation.

Along with these schools, it also runs an **Education Research Centre** as the hub to impart training to teachers. It includes *in-service education for all teachers in the 7 schools*, as well as a pre-service teacher education programme, which **trains members from low income groups in the neighbouring areas to become skilled and competent teachers**.

Additionally, the organization also partnered with the Maharashtra State Council for Education, Research and Training (MSCERT) to train government personnel trainers. These trainers, in turn, train more than 10000 teachers in 3 districts of Maharashtra

A **Working Group on Private Sector participation in School Education (2011)** has also recommended such a model for teacher education in India. According to its Report, the **Model Schools** run by the private sector (in 2500 blocks) under the Model Schools Scheme could become hubs for teachers’ training in their respective blocks. This would benefit all schools in the block, *including government schools*. The Model School could also charge a **nominal fee for teacher training**, which could be a useful source of revenue for it. In case of government school teachers, this fee could be paid directly by the State government to the Model School. Finally, the Model School can also operate as a **residential school** in areas with high demand.

2. School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs) for better governance in schools

It has been observed in almost all development schemes and initiatives, that efficient utilization of funds and good quality services are possible only with good governance systems. The same holds true for school education also. The best kind of governance in schools is one where all stakeholders – parents, students, teachers, local community and NGOs – have a role to play. The **School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs)** are an important institutional mechanism to improve governance in schools. An SDMC is supposed to take part in all activities pertaining to the welfare of schools. It should ideally have a representation of parents, teachers and the local community. Some of the important functions which the SDMC could perform are:

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching
- facilitate social audits
- mobilize funds from the community for upgradation of school infrastructure.
- Arrange funds from other sources like corporate sector, NGOs etc

Most of these functions can be performed more effectively if the SDMCs organize themselves in a **federated structure**, similar to SHG federations of women. This is illustrated through a case study from **Karnataka** below.

Federation of School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs) in Karnataka



Image courtesy azimpremjifoundation.org

In Karnataka, the Azim Premji Foundation is working in partnership with the Government of Karnataka in 74 schools across 4 districts under the **Namma Shaale (my school)** project. Under Namma Shaale, an important innovation has been the creation of a federation of SDMCs. The advantage of such a structure is that **i)** it can lead to **scaling up** of the SDMC model, **ii)** allow for sharing of best practices between different SDMCs, **iii)** allow greater coordination with the Gram Panchayat in matters pertaining to the school, **iv)** make it easier to access funds from a variety of sources, and finally, **v)** monitoring learning levels of students in government schools.

Under the Namma Shaale project, all such SDMC federations are supported through public funds under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. There are also plans to raise the corpus of funds with SDMC federation through a membership fee payable by all member SDFCs.

Resources

Schemes	Name of the scheme	Description
Central Schemes	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)	Under this scheme, funds can be accessed for infrastructure development in all government primary schools. Funds are also available for strengthening school-level institutions like SDMCs.
	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)	Funds are available for infrastructure development in secondary schools (14-18 yrs)
	Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teachers' Education	Funds available for developing teacher training institutions at State, district and block levels. The revised guidelines for the scheme also have a provision for exploring PPPs in teacher education, wherever possible.
	Model Schools Scheme	Funds available for developing model schools of excellence, which could act as hubs for quality improvement in school education
Resource Personnel/ institutions	School Management and Development Committee (SDMCs)	Responsible for overall development of physical and human infrastructure in schools.
	State Councils for Education, Research and Training (SCERTs)	Responsible for academic resource support to all government-run schools in the State.
	District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)	Responsible for academic resource support to all government-run schools in the district.