Status of Schools in Shikaripara Block, Dumka District

2018-19

Report on the Local Education Governance Data collected from the Government Schools in Shikaripara Block of Dumka District in
Jharkhand State.

Introduction

All children regardless of age, sex, identity and ability deserve equal opportunities to development in order to reach their fullest potential. The appropriate treatment of children is not only a moral issue, but an important investment in the country's future. No child should be excluded from the ambit of quality education. Schools should therefore, be managed in a way that ensures all children can learn in a child-friendly, safe and stimulating environment, in order for them to reach their full potential.

Decentralisation of education governance

Towards this, considerable efforts have been made in enhancing the accessibility and enrolment of children to primary schooling, through the massive investment in enhancing the schooling infrastructure in the country. The success can be seen in the increased enrolments across the country and similarly in Jharkhand. Yet it is a commonly agreed fact that children are not learning.

This maybe due to the way education is perceived in the country. With education always been viewed from a utilitarian point of view rather than as an empowerment tool, the citizens have not been part of the dialogue of what we want as a nation from our education system. For this there has to be a shared vision of what a school means or does to a society. This essentially requires a process of learning that will strengthen people's relationship with their socio-cultural contexts, develop in them a perspective of collaboration, collective decision-making, inclusiveness and strengthen their innate potential for creativity and innovation. This learning process should also support in developing abilities to analyse issues that confront communities - especially issues of livelihood and lifestyles that ensures a democratic way of life and also enable them to find an appropriate balance between sustainable growth and preserving one's environment in order to be able to live in peace and harmony with one's surrounding.[1] It should enable them to appreciate every person and their abilities and find a way to let them thrive thus making it a truly inclusive community and society. This leads to education in the true sense. For this there needs to be an active engagement of the community with the schooling process. This is completely missing in the present scenario where the community has been alienated from the decision making process and thereby the learning process itself.

A decentralised approach to governance gains more importance in Education with the system becoming bigger with more and more children coming into its folds and

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[1]Facilitating a systemic change towards decentralization of education governance, 2015 : Prajayatna

the need for structures which are more closer to the actual grassroots (here it means the schools) to be involved in the actual functioning and decision making and thereby changing the patterns and dynamics of power distribution. Decentralisation and improvement of the governance system by involving communities and other stakeholders[2] is believed to improve the efficacy and have an effect on access, enrolment, attendance and the learning process of all the children.[3] Hence community ownership is the key to decentralization.

The National Policy on Education-1986 laid primary emphasis on decentralized planning and management of elementary education in the country. The Policy visualized direct community involvement through the formation of Committees representing parents and community members for the management and improvement of schools. This was reinforced by the Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) which explicitly calls for developing responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management:

The experience of the past decade has under scored the need for better governance of education systems in terms of efficiency, accountability, transparency and flexibility so that they can respond more effectively to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners. Reform of educational management is urgently needed — to move from highly centralized, standardized and command - driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision -making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. These processes must be buttressed by a management information system that benefits from both new technologies and community participation to produce timely, relevant and accurate information (UNESCO, 2000:19).4

Based on the suggestions of various studies and observations of committees, school level community based structures have been operational for several years; such as the Village Education Committees, School Betterment Committees and more recently the School Management Committees. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act was passed in 2009 in order to ensure that every child had the right to quality elementary education. As per the Act, the state, teachers, families and communities have to fulfill this entitlement together. The Act mandated the constitution of the School Management Committee (SMC) for every school as a

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[2]Stakeholders' as used in this paper refers to educational bureaucracy, local community, parents, teachers, elected representatives, children, academia etc.

[3]Changing Framework of Local Governance and Community Participation in Elementary Education in India, 2010 : R. Govinda, Madhumita Bandyopadhyay

[4]Changing Framework of Local Governance and Community Participation in Elementary Education in India, 2010 : R. Govinda, Madhumita Bandyopadhyay

crucial step in the implementation of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for the child through the involvement of the community and more importantly the parent or guardian, in their children's education.[5]

Though this has created a structure to be involved in the schools, the SMC does not have the wherewithal to actually have a say in the management of the schools due to a number of reasons, mainly, that of the lack of information, training and an institutional framework which allows for them to truly participate in the governance of the schools. However, a need to strengthen these structures to work as an institution is seen across schools. A need to formalize and provide an institutional framework for functioning is necessary at this point of time.

Prajayatna

Prajayatna is a development initiative that has been working to facilitate systemic reforms in public education for the past decade and a half in various states in India. Through a decentralized approach towards education governance, Prajayatna has been working with all stakeholders towards enhancing community ownership to address quality in all aspects related to Government schools.

In this context, it realizes that the School Management Committees (SMC) form the primary unit of education governance and represents the needs and aspirations of the local community. Towards ensuring the holistic development of schools in a sustainable manner, it is critical that the SMCs are supported to understand and fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Local Education Governance Data

As a preliminary step towards facilitating community involvement and to improve decentralized governance of schools, it is important that all stakeholders – especially the SMCs have access to essential, relevant and recent information pertaining to their schools. Lack of information which in turn leads to lack of transparency and thereby accountability is one of the key reasons for the communities not interacting with the school. Information on enrolment of all children including those with disability, attendance, out of school children, learning levels of the children are all crucial information that the SMC should have to understand the various facets of the

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[5]Study report on the implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009, in the State of Telangana, 2014 : Alliance for Child Rights, An Advocacy Campaign on Rights of Children and Youth in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States, which is supported by UNICEF

problems faced by the schools and initiate their engagement accordingly towards the development of the schools.

Enhancement of enrolment and attendance, bringing down the number of children dropping out of school including those with disabilities and improvement of learning levels of the children are the outcomes that the schools will be trying to achieve for the overall improvement of the schools. With the SMC being an important player in reaching these outcomes, it becomes imperative that they are aware of the status of the schools. The collection of information called Local Education Governance Data (LEGD) serves that purpose as it is the information that will support in the proper governance of the school and provides key stakeholders with not only information about their schools but also covers basic and relevant information about the locality and school surrounding.

This information forms the basis for initiating an engagement with local community and other key stakeholders. This will enable not only the School Management Committees but support in enhancing the understanding of other stakeholders as well about the condition and status of the schools which will in turn help in bringing about changes within the school and the system at large.

Through different interventions that utilize the information from the LEGD the following objective can be met:

> Eliciting community involvement and enhancing stakeholders' ability to articulate needs, issues and aspirations.
> Support the process of prioritizing needs and issues and facilitating the process of decision making.
> Inculcating practices of transparency and accountability amongst key stakeholders.
> Giving a bird's view of the entire block, which will help other stakeholders to understand the issues in a broader sense.
> A baseline to measure the progress of the schools in the block.

The LEGD was collected from all the Government Schools in Shikaripara block of Dumka District.

Tool – Questionnaire

The LEGD is a process that collates extensive and detailed information of school and its surroundings for the purpose of enabling main stakeholders to work towards the development of the school.

The main sections under which the LEGD captures information are:

➢ Basic information of the locality in which the school is situated.
➢ Basic information of the school.
➢ Detailed information on enrollment, attendance, children with disability and out of school children.
➢ Basic information on learning aspects (teachers, training, Teaching learning materials, grants).
➢ Information on availability of amenities and their condition.
➢ School management aspects.
➢ Monitoring and supervision.

Methodology

The LEGD process involved the following processes:

• **Designing the tool - LEGD questionnaire**
  Prajayatna follows a standard format for the LEGD processes that has been designed through its experience of several years on working with communities and schools. This is suitably modified according to the contextual needs.

• **Training of team members**
  The staff was trained on understanding the local context, the purpose of the LEGD process, understanding the format, eliciting information from appropriate stakeholders, verification of information, process of documentation and other procedures to be followed for completion of the process.

• **Review of the information**
  The information from the first few schools from where the information was collected was reviewed and feedback given to the team members who were collecting the information. This helped them to correct themselves and ensure that the data they collected later was of good quality.

- **Conducting the LEGD data collection process**
  The actual process of collecting the information from schools was conducted and onsite support to team members who face issues during the collection was provided by the assigned coordinators.

- **Data entry**
  The data was entered in spread-sheets by the team members for consolidation and analysis. A database was also created of the same.

- **Preparation of report**
  The data was consolidated and then analysed and a preliminary report made based on the observations. The report was produced in different formats depending on the platform/stakeholders being addressed.

Profile of Jharkhand

India is home to the largest child population in the world. The Constitution of India guarantees Fundamental Rights to all children in the country and empowers the State to make special provisions for children. It was the directive of the Constitution of India, as per Article 45, to the government to provide free education to all children of the country till they attain the age of 14 years. Besides, the Right to Information (RTE) Act mandated the Government of India and State governments to make provisions for all children of the country to have access to elementary education.

Government schools in India account for 63 % of enrolment in elementary education. The challenge for universalisation of elementary education is most severe in the educationally backward states, especially among the tribal populations. The relatively new and small state of Jharkhand was created by bifurcation of the southern part of erstwhile Bihar in 2000. Rich in minerals and natural resources, the state is largely rural. The impetus on education reinforced with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has influenced enrolment to a substantial extent and is also reflected in lowering child labour across the country over time.

Jharkhand is also moving in the same direction. Nevertheless, it continues to be among the worst states along with Bihar in terms of the educational development index (EDI) calculated by NUEPA (DISE, 2011-12). According to the Jharkhand Economic Survey (2017-18), about 79 % of the schools in the state are government schools managed by the department of school education, about 2 % are government aided and about 3 % are private unaided schools. About 14 % only are private unrecognized schools. The remaining about 1 % of the schools includes all other management-type schools, which include Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kendriya

Vidyalaya/Central School, recognized (by Wakf board/Madarsa Board) and Schools of Social welfare Department.

The infrastructure index improved especially for the primary schools while the teacher index presents the gains in this sphere at both primary and upper primary levels. Despite the index value improving for the upper primary level schools, the rank of the state remains at 34 - the second worst after Bihar. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2018) which is based on independent assessment, has also reported that the learning levels are not at all satisfactory in the state and they require focused and concerted efforts to improve the same.

Profile of Shikaripara block

Shikaripara block of Dumka is situated at about 308 km from Jharkhand's capital Ranchi and 29 km from Dumka, the district head-quarters. In 2011 there were total 27,609 families residing in Shikaripara Block. As per 2011 census, Shikaripara has a total population of 131464, out of which 65,723 are males while 65,741 are females. 100% of the population lives in the rural areas and 60% of the total population constitutes the tribal population. The population of children of age 0-6 years in Shikaripara Block is 22931 which is 17% of the total population. There are 11650 boys and 11281 girls between the age of 0-6 years. The literacy rate of the block stands at 57.1%. which is way below the state rate of 66.41%. In these neglected tribal area the literacy rates are pitifully low.

The Shikaripara block comes under tropical monsoon region. The climate of this block is salubrious as it is surrounded by forests and mountains. People here speak Santhali and Hindi. There are 22 Gram Panchayats. The sex ratio is 1000 females for every 1000 males, which is better than the national sex ratio of 930 females for every 1000 males[6].

Key details of the block are as follows[7]:

Total Number of Panchayat	22
Total Number of Villages	242
Total Population	131,464

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[6] Census of Dumka 2011/DCHB_A/20/2017_PART_A_DCHB_DUMKA
[7] Census of Dumka 2011/DCHB_A/20/2017_PART_A_DCHB_DUMKA

Total Population of Male	65,723
Total Population of Female	65,741
Total Population of SC	5,035
Total Population of ST	79,522
Total number of Literate Male	37,037
Total number of Literate Female	24,931

Data and Analysis

In Shikaripara, LEGD information has been collected from 250 out of the total 260 schools.

Details of Educational institutions in Shikaripara

The following are the number of schools and anganwadis as per the data collected:

Educational institutions	Approved/functioning	Number of Schools (Data Collected/Total Number)
Anganwadi	**160/ 153**	
Primary Schools	-	**162**
Middle School	-	**84**
Other schools(madrasa, mission school, etc)		**4**

Data Analysis

The study was conducted in 250 schools of Shikaripara block of Dumka district, Jharkhand state. The analysis of the information collected is given below:

1. **Enrolment and attendance of children in schools**
1.1.   **Enrollment**

The Right to Education Act mandates the Government of India and State Governments to make provisions for all children of the country to have access to elementary education. The present study shows that there 19,556 children enrolled in 250 schools in which boys constitutes 9,701 (49.86%) and girls contribution is 9,855 (50.4%). The ratio of boys and girls are almost 50:50. If we see the enrolment based on their caste, majority (56.4%) of the children are from Scheduled tribes followed by the minority caste (20.9%). There are number of tribes in the block such as the kol, santal, pahadiya 18.9% are from the other backward caste such as saha, bhagat, kumhar, sudi, Ansari with only 3.6 % belonging to the scheduled castes such as chamar, kamar, mridha. The children from general class is extremely low i.e. 0.17% only. This shows that children of general group study in private schools. The government schools are thus exists for the children of deprived group only whose parents are poor and illiterate.

Table. Status of enrolment of children

Enrolment of children in school	Boys	Girls	Total
SC	362	349	711
ST	5415	5621	11036
OBC	1848	1835	3683
Minority	2059	2034	4093
General	17	16	33
Total children in school	**9701**	**9855**	**19556**
Children's attendance	**5542**	**5633**	**11175**

1.2 Attendance

Regular attendance at school is very important to help children achieve and get the best possible start in academic learning. Children who frequently miss school are bound to fall behind. There is a strong link between attendance and academic achievements. Studies have shown that young people who are frequently absent from school are more likely to become involved in or be a victim of crime and anti-social behaviour. Overall regular attendance can result in the child not only progress academically. They have better chances of staying in school and graduating from school.

Looking at the above table containing the attendance details, it can be seen that only 57.4% of children enrolled in primary school are regular to the school which is a little above half of the children. Many reasons have been cited for the irregularity of the children. Reasons varying from housework, sibling care, marriage, festival etc make the children irregular at school. Disinterest in school is another major reason for many of the children remaining absent from school. Hence it becomes important that

irregularity of the children is seen as a problem of the kind of pedagogy being used in the schools and not only that of social economic problems of the children and community. These conditions further aggravate the situation but it is time that the kind of teaching learning processes that is being employed in school is also reviewed.

This is bound to have an adverse impact on the learning levels of the children. It is important that all stakeholders come together and work towards enhancing the attendance of the children in the classrooms.

2. Teacher Information

Teacher is the most important part of the education process. A teacher impacts the learning of children in the school and the lack of sufficient teachers at the primary level can lead to children not getting adequate attention and guidance for learning basic concepts which is required to build a strong foundation for the child's future. The lack of conceptual clarity at the primary stage leads the children to not learn in higher classes, thereby leading to very low learning levels and eventually dropping out of school.

Therefore, it is important to ensure sufficient teachers in the schools, especially at the primary level for a quality learning process and it is the responsibility of all the concerned stakeholders to ensure this. Though RTE norms clearly states that no school should function with single teachers and the ratio between the teacher and students at the primary level must be 1:30 and at the upper primary level 1:35, the figures in the table below shows that this rule has not been implemented in all the schools of the block.

Table: Availability of teachers

School	Number of Sanctioned Posts	Number of Working Posts	Number of Para teachers	Number of Schools with only Para Teachers	Number of Schools with single Para Teacher
Primary School	333	130	204	73	53
Middle School	353	179	160	15	17
Total	686	309	364	88	70

The figures reveal that there are 364 para teachers functioning in the 192 schools. While 103 schools have one or more than one para-teachers with them, 88 schools (73 primary schools and 15 Middle) have only para-teachers with them. This means that children in more than one-third (35.8%) of all the schools in Shikaripara have only para-teachers to teach them. Furthermore, 73 schools (53 Primary and 17 Middle Schools) are functioning with one para-teacher only.

Out of the sanctioned posts, 203 and 174 teachers need to be appointed in Primary and Middle Schools respectively in order to completely fill the number of sanctioned posts in these schools. With the requirement of teachers being very important for quality learning to take place in the schools, it is imperative that this need should be addressed by all the concerned stakeholders.

3. Availability of basic facilities in the schools

It is the only proper functioning of primary schools that can assure the delivery of primary education. The functioning of schools depends upon the school environment, availability of basic amenities, the motivation and dedication of teachers and proper supervision and monitoring by both school and local community.

3.1. Classrooms:

A safe environment which is provided by having good classrooms enhances the security of the children and creates a conducive learning environment. On the other hand, the premises or classrooms rooms which are old and are in dilapidated condition allow neither the students nor the teachers to feel safe in the school premises. Leaking roofs and walls full-of cracks cannot be expected to help in creating a good learning environment in the schools. The lack of enough classrooms for the children is another issue which at times prevents children from having a quality learning process.

Table: Status of classrooms

Class room	
Total no. of rooms	1241
Useful (No.)	985
No use (No.)	256

A look at the data from the LEGD shows that in Shikaripara , out of a total of 1241 class rooms, only 985 classrooms are in a usable condition and 256 of the total number, which is 20.6%, are in need of some kind of minor or major repairing and are not in a condition to be used as of now.

3.2.   Availability of drinking water facilities in the schools

Access to drinking water in the school is a necessity as water is a fundamental human need. Intake of unclean water and not drinking water for long hours can lead to health issues in the children. This may further result in missing out on school. Availability of water is also needed for cooking of meals. Hence, it is important for the stakeholders to ensure availability of safe and clean drinking water in the schools.

Although all the 250 schools that surveyed had their own building, only 232 (92.80%) schools have the facilities of drinking water in their premises. Only 18 (7.20%) schools do not able to arrange for drinking water facilities for the children. However, out of 232 schools where drinking water is available for the children only 188 (75%) schools have safe drinking water facility.

Table. Status of drinking water facility in schools

Drinking water	Drinking water	Useful
Yes	232	188
No	18	41
No info	0	4

3.3.   Status of Electricity in the schools

Having electricity in each school has become necessary as there are many learning programmes/activities broadcasted through the radio for children at primary and Middle level. It is also important from the perspective of providing computer education and using electrical devices in cultural events. It will also enable the usage of fans, television, tube light, etc in the school and will add to the comfort of the children in the schools. In the present context, lack of electricity can also cause hindrance to learning in different ways. In Shikaripara block, only 23 (9%) schools out of 250 have electricity. Out of these 23, it is in a useable condition in 18 schools.

3.4. Availability of toilets in the schools

Encouraging hygienic habits in young children has a great impact on the health of the child and thereby the community at large. Usage of toilet is one of the most important aspects of maintaining hygiene. It is mandatory for all the schools to have

toilet facilities for the children with adequate supply of water which will also help in maintaining the cleanliness of the toilets.

The data reveals that there are altogether 492 toilets including boys and girls in 250 schools. Four schools do not toilet facilities in their premises. However, out of 492 toilets only 381 (77.44%) toilets are being used by the children while rest 110 toilets are not suitable for the purpose.

Table 1. Status of toilets in the schools

Total	492
Useful	381
No use (No.)	110
No information	01
No. of schools that don't have toilet	4

3.5. Availability of playground for the children

In the present study, we found that only 46.4% schools have playground in their premises while 53.6% schools do not have playground at all. Out of 116 playgrounds, children are comfortable to play in 112 (96.55%) playgrounds of their schools. More than half of the schools in the concerned study do not give importance to play which is important for the physical development the children.

Table. Status of playground in schools

Play ground	Available	Useful
Yes	116	112
No	134	4

3.6. Availability of furniture in the school

Well-furnished furniture and mat for sitting of the children is essential for the health and comfort of the children so that they can concentrate on study rather than to move here and there. The data shows that 98.8% schools have furniture for the teachers and 99.2% schools have furniture and mat for the children. Only few schools are not able to arrange furniture for the teachers and the children in the region.

Table. Furniture and fixtures in schools

Furniture/Mat	For teachers	for children
Yes	247	248
No	3	2

3.7. Availability of learning materials

Besides books and copies, a school is supposed to have other learning aids such as radio/tape-recorder, computer, science-mathematics kits and other playing equipment.

The LEGD data shows that majority of schools (146 Primary and 79 Middle Schools) have map or globs in their premises. Similarly, science and math kit are available in more than 50% of Primary schools while 84% middle schools have their science and math kits. Additionally, 100% Middle Schools have playing materials in their campus while in primary school, it is 98%. However, in Shikaripara , a number of schools did not have these:

Table: Status of learning materials in the schools

Sr. No.	Name of learning materials	Primary Schools		Middle Schools		Total Schools without these Equipment
		Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available	
1	Map/globe	146	16	79	5	21
2	Television	03	159	30	54	213
3	Radio / Tape-Recorder,	33	129	38	46	175
4	Computer	00	162	00	84	246
5	Science-Mathematics Kits	88	73	62	21	94
6	Laboratory equipment	00	162	26	58	220
7	Playing materials	159	03	84	00	03

None of the primary or middle schools have a single computer in their campus. In terms of other items like radio, television, laboratory, the situation is almost the same. 89% of schools are taking science classes with laboratory equipment. Similarly, 87% schools do not television and 71% schools do not have radio or tape recorder in their school premises.

3.8.   Status of Library

The library plays a big role in schools as it enables the children in reaching out to a far wider world which is beyond their physical accessibility. This also exposes them to knowledge far beyond what their syllabus textbooks can cover and thus helps them in expanding their understanding of the world. It also helps in inculcating the habit of reading at an early age. In the Shikaripara, the library facility is available in 63 (33%), schools while books are not available in the remaining.

While there are libraries in these 63 schools, it does not mean that the books available in them are also easily accessible to the children as most of these schools keep the books locked up in the cupboards. Thus, the children need special permission of the teachers in order to access them.

4. Health and hygiene of the children

Children are more vulnerable to disease and accidents as they are not aware of the pros and cons of certain activities that can make them fall sick or encounter any mishaps. It is the responsibility of the school management to be equipped with certain tools like first-aid box and maintain health and hygiene in the school premises including regular health check-ups of the children.

4.1. Availability of first-aid box in schools

It was observed in the study that out of 250 schools only 66 (26.4%) schools have first-aid box while 184 (73.6%) do not have such arrangement for any kind of mishap in the school. Further, out of 66 schools only 61 (24.4%) have all kinds of medicines in their first-aid box while 1.6% schools have limited medicines in their first-aid box. It shows that majority of schools are not conscious about the safety issue of the children.

Table. Availability of first-aid box in schools

Availability of First aid box	No. of schools
Yes	66
No	184
With all medicines	61
Improper	4
No info	1

4.2.   Status of health check-ups in schools

Since children are more vulnerable to diseases, it the responsibility of school management to conduct periodic health check-ups for the children. It was observed in the study that out of 250 schools, 228 (91.2%) schools have health check-ups of their children in the schools. Only 22 (8.8%) schools were not able to have any kind of health check-up camps in their school premises.

Table. Status of health check-ups in schools

Health Check-up status	No. of schools
Yes	228
No	22

5.   Management and administration at schools

Community participation and parental involvement in school management have been an integral part of India's school education policy. Community participation has been viewed as an essential element of decentralising education governance to the grassroots level. The mandate to form a School Management Committee (SMC) in every school is a statutory requirement under the national legislation on Right to Education.

5.2.   Status of School Management Committee (SMC) in schools

School Management Committees (SMCs), as mandated by the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009, have a critical role to play in ensuring accountability in the education system. The Act empowers parents to monitor the functioning of schools including utilization of grants, functioning of schools and preparation of School Development Plan (SDP). The data shows that almost all schools (99.2%) have constituted SMC for the overall management of the schools. It was also observed that SMC president have organised meeting in 57 (22.8%) schools while 145 (58%) have their SMC meeting through the need of teachers. The sad part of the meeting is that no SDP has been made in any SMC meetings. Furthermore, the members of SMC have no idea about the utilization of funds which is one of their responsibilities. This shows that SMCs are not active in the management of schools and are note performing their functions properly.

Table. Status of SMC in schools

School Management Committee Activity	Yes	No	No info
Constituted	248	2	0
According to need Teacher Conducts	145	103	3

meetings			
Regular monthly meeting organized by the president	57	191	2
School plans are made in regular monthly meetings	0	248	2
Members are aware of the expenditure of the school	0	248	2
Rent-free	4		
No info	99		
Regular meeting			
Yes	217		
No info	33		

Conclusion

The overall consolidated picture of the schools, based on the information that was collected in the academic year of 2018-19, clearly shows that there is substantial need for improvements in Government schools in the Shikaripara block of Dumka, Jharkhand.

There are critical aspects such as less than satisfactory level of attendance of children which needs to be addressed on priority. The dependency on the para teachers is to be corrected with the recruitment of regular teachers. Availability of good teachers and their judicious distribution among the schools are the most basic requirements that need to be addressed if the schools of Shikaripara are to become good seats of learning and to increase the enrolment and attendance of children therein.

Similarly, availability of better school infrastructure must be ensured in the schools where the same is lacking. A school must be equipped with good classrooms, drinking water facilities and toilets should be in usable conditions. In schools which don't have proper and regular electricity supply need to be ensured of it. The lack of basic infrastructure in itself leads to children not being regular, dropping out or joining private schools, etc. Further, the lack of a conducive environment for learning in the schools also leads to de-motivation in both the teachers and the students which harms the culture of the schools both in the short and in the long term.

The role of the various stakeholders like the SMC and the Gram Panchayats becomes critical here to improve the condition of the schools. Many studies in the past have

shown that community involvement has enabled significant development in schools. Community participation can range from sending children to school regularly, attending parents or school committee meetings, monitoring school development initiatives, mobilization of required resources, appointment of local youths to address teacher shortage, identifying learning needs of children, contributing towards the development of schools plans, etc., thereby leading to increased accountability and transparency.