

As per the National Curriculum Framework 2005, multilingualism, which is constitutive of the identity of a child and typical feature of the Indian linguistic landscape, must be used as a resource, and classroom strategies planned accordingly by a creative language teacher. This is not only the best use of a resource readily available, but also a way of ensuring that every child feels secure and accepted, and that no one is left behind on account of her/his linguistic background (NCERT, 2005). Contrary to this, it was observed that local tribal languages were completely ignored in all the schools --- not only in academic classes but also in day to day activities and conversation in the schools. The hiatus between the home language of a tribal child and the state language, i.e. the medium of education in the school, poses a problem for the children coming from the Scheduled Tribes (Chauhan, 2010; NCERT, 2017; Singh & Chauhan, 2019). Children were found engaged in cooking, cleaning and other such activities of the schools even during school hours. There were insufficient numbers of staff in these residential schools, which might be the reason behind participation of children in such activities other than academic activities. The subject teachers were mostly appointed on contractual basis and that too on period-wise contracts. They were not retained in the school for a complete academic session, which creates obstacles for the learning of children. There were no librarians appointed in these schools. Students were running their own school libraries, without any librarian. The teachers appointed in the schools were also working as wardens of the hostels. If a warden is ever appointed, she works as a teacher as well. Let us recall that similar issues were raised earlier also in the Position Paper of National Focus Group on Problem of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Children (NCERT, 2007 a and b); it had concluded that a highly inadequate teaching force in terms of both quantity and quality, in schools frequented by the SCs/STs, has been a serious facet of unequal provisioning (NCERT, 2007). In Jharkhand, it was reported that there was no warden's post in the residential schools. Many of the girls' hostels had male wardens and watchmen, which again raises concerns and pose serious problems in terms of privacy, safety and security of girls. Therefore the roles of SMCs must be considered all the more significant in case of such residential schools. In most of the residential schools, it was reported by the SMC members that school administration performs activities without consulting SMC members and they do not at all cooperate with the SMC members. The SMCs had no active role in school activities regarding the infrastructural management, monitoring of teaching learning activities, supervision of meals, safety and security, and in formulating the SDPs.

The RPD Act 2016 has assigned to educational institutions the duty to provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements and to provide them necessary support, individualised or otherwise, in environments that maximise the academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion. It was found that the teaching learning materials and teaching aids used in the classrooms were not adapted as per the needs of such children. Illustrations from local events, materials, actions, festivals, traditional handicraft, occupations etc. add milieu to their classroom contents (Chauhan, 2002). Teachers should be aware of the individual needs of students with disabilities and make necessary accommodations as per the challenges faced by the children with special needs (Singh, 2014). In the earlier, traditional approach to teaching in the class, the tribal and home languages were not used in the classrooms and schools activities, while the teachers need to know about the languages spoken by their children in their own classrooms (Chauhan, 2010). It was almost like the death of their own languages in the schools.

The pupil teacher ratio was not found as per the norms --- contrary to the data provided by the concerned states on school education (NUEPA, 2015). In Chhattisgarh, the SMCs were found comparatively active in some of the monitoring activities of their schools, like attendance of children and teachers, mid-day meals, maintaining school cleanliness etc. They also involved themselves in formulation of SDPs for three years. Positively, as reported by Narwana (2015), strategies for strengthening the community participation should consider the local social and cultural ethos, in the absence of which the community participation in the effective school management would only remain a distant dream. Most of the schools under study did not have adequate facilities of water, electricity, toilets, seating arrangement and other infrastructure. For example, there was only one toilet, that too without a shed for 1300 students, including girls, in the Government Middle School Block Headquarters at Sesai, Gumla, Jharkhand. It was also inaccessible for the CWDs.

Further, Takayi *et al* (2014), in their study have reported the challenges faced from both side that is educational administration and community. While the educational administration reported inadequate funds, difficult terrains and the lukewarm attitude of the community, the community members mentioned poor communication between the district and the local community stakeholders as biggest challenge. In this study too, the SMC members used to communicate about the lack of facilities in schools to village panchayat. None of the toilets in schools were found disabled friendly. Both the states had appointed resource teachers on contract basis for improvement in education of CWDs, but it was reported that they seldom visited the schools or homes of the concerned children. These children were found completely neglected in the schools as well as in home based education programmes. The reasons might be that these teachers did not know how to deal with these children in the class. Neither they were trained in disability related matters during their pre-service training nor were they oriented for educating such children during their service period.

Let us recall that similar issues had earlier been highlighted in a multi-country review of pre-service teacher education in the Asia-Pacific region --- that study had revealed that pre-service teacher education in many countries in the region still had a long way to go to fully prepare their graduates to effectively address and embrace the diversity of learners (UNESCO, 2013, UNESCO-NCERT, 2017). Teachers had the opinion that only trained teachers should be appointed as resource teachers to educate these children. In practice, the resource teacher has to visit the schools and gather all children with different disabilities of different classes in a separate classroom for teaching survival skills to them for an hour or two. But these resource teachers too showed limitations in their functioning. They were mainly trained to deal with particular types of disabilities. For example, if a teacher was trained to deal with a child with blindness, she could not take care of children with intellectual disability. It was observed that the resource teachers used to visit once in a month or two. Further, learning materials for the CWDs were not available. In most of the schools, Individualised Education Programme (IEP) for the CWD was not prepared and, in place of the IEP planning, only case reports were documented in the IEP file, that too without any detailed assessment. No follow-up intervention was recorded in an individual child record file.

Similar findings such as traditional approach of teaching, temporarily employed teachers and staffs, restricted provision for leisure time activities, unawareness about inclusive education, misdiagnosis/wrong identification, absence of educational and

therapeutic interventions to girls with disabilities and unavailability of support services etc. were reported in the study on KGBVs of Gujarat state (Singh & Chauhan, 2020). Parents of such children and also the members of SMCs were found unaware of such situations. Parents of the CWDs had raised the demand for regular visits of resource teachers in schools and also to attend their children for home based education. But they did not know how to handle such situation with the impression that such children are not educable. Therefore there is an urgent need to orient the SMC members on the issues related to education of CWD particularly in tribal areas. Training the professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education is one of the specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education as articulated in the RPD Act 2016.

Conclusion

In the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, SMCs have been constituted in all the schools. The size of SMCs was 16 in each of the schools, though the composition of SMCs was different in different schools. However, 12 members out of 16 were elected by the local people through *Aam Sabha*. Only one out of 35 schools had a parent of a CWD as a member of the concerned SMC in spite of numerous CWD enrolled in these schools. The state guideline does not specify that an SMC should have a CWD's parent as one of its members.

In spite of prior information to meet SMCs members of schools, less than forty per cent members were present during the school visits. The role of SMC members was not effective in school functioning. In most of the school activities like procurement of items, construction work, mid-day meal, classroom activities, teachers' regularities and attendance, the participation of the SMC members was very unsatisfactory; at places, they were completely ignored by the headmasters of the concerned schools. They did not have information related to different activities and duties as articulated in the RTE Act, 2009. In all the visited schools, although monthly meetings of SMCs were indeed conducted, the attendance of the members in the meetings, was reported very low in most of the schools. Mostly, members were invited in the school functions, disbursement of scholarships, uniforms, etc. Training materials for SMCs, in form of a manual, have been developed in Chhattisgarh, but not yet in Jharkhand. Some hand-outs on RTE Act 2009 have been prepared for distribution among SMC members in Jharkhand.

Teaching in the classroom was carried out mostly in Hindi language, though their home languages were different. Some Block Resource Centres were occupied by police forces (e.g. BRC, as in Muruhu, Khunti in Jharkhand) to deal with Naxalite activities in the area. Most of the KGBVs and other residential schools were found overcrowded. Appointment of wardens (mainly female wardens in the girls' schools) has been ignored in KGBVs (in Jharkhand) in spite of the provision of a warden in the KGBV scheme. Most of the members of SMCs were unaware of the infrastructural facilities, identification, enrolment, regular attendance, classroom intervention, assessment, services of resource teachers, volunteers, IEPs and other entitlements and educational provisions and support services required for tribal children and CWDs. Similar findings were articulated about the lack of basic facilities, absence of barrier free infrastructure, no awareness on inclusive education among teachers and staff, cases of misdiagnosis, poor implementation of individualised education and unavailability of support services in an earlier study on KGBVs of Madhya Pradesh (Singh & Chauhan, 2019). However, in this study, only a few members participated

in the distribution of materials and scholarships under different government schemes to help the headmasters and teachers. In some schools (e.g. Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh), SMCs members used to visit schools daily and contribute in classroom teaching through group activities or story-telling activities and also assist the teachers during examinations. They are contributing in social auditing and assessment (e.g. Kanker in Chhattisgarh) of children during teaching-learning processes in classrooms.

Recommendations

Creating a secure, enabling, accessible and inclusive environment in the schools in tribal areas is a challenging process. There is a need to address this challenge in a more realistic and holistic manner. An innovative approach of teaching and learning, like collaborative learning, peer tutoring, differentiated teaching-learning, adapted and individualised approach of teaching, techno-based and application of multimedia like films, theatre, story-telling through weaving the cultural-lingual aspects of tribals in the classrooms, is required to be implemented. Efforts must be made to bridge the existing gaps between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching. Textbooks in classes at the preparatory and middle stages should be in mother tongue of the students and, in case such textbook materials are not available, the language of transaction between teachers and students must be the home language/mother tongue of students. Specific actions including the use of appropriate technology enabling children to work at their own pace, with flexible curricula to leverage each child's strengths, should be initiated. Teachers, besides the knowledge of their subjects and an understanding of the subject-related aims of education, should have relevant skills for understanding of special requirements of tribal children with disabilities. Revamping of the pre-service as well as in-service capacity building programmes is also required to build the capacity of teachers in teaching effectively for realisation of diverse learning needs of tribal children and children with disabilities. Mere capacity building of teachers may not work to address the issues and challenges of education of tribal students with disability; what is needed is the sensitisation of all stakeholders in the school education system, including the SMC members, teachers, principals, administrators, and students, to the requirements of all students with the notions of inclusion and equity. Technology-based solutions can be used for the orientation of parents/caregivers to enable the parents/caregivers to actively support their children's learning needs at home too. Concerted efforts are needed for sharing of resources across schools in tribal areas to remove the crisis of basic facilities and resources in schools. In this regard, it is recommended to intervene for the more robust and improved governance and monitoring mechanism with cooperation and support across schools for the educational management of inclusive schools in tribal areas.