



Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion
Aligning People to Policy & Policy to People

Social Equity and Education Audit 2018-19






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Chapter 1. Educational status and challenges of marginalised groups

Eight years of free and compulsory schooling is a fundamental right of all children between 6-14 years in India under Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution. This means that all children are guaranteed this right at birth and cannot be denied their right because of discrimination on the basis of social identity (caste, class, religion, ethnicity, tribe, gender) or personal characteristics (age, disability, etc.). Such denial can be challenged in court. However, despite the Constitutional guarantee of right to education, children from disadvantaged groups and economically weaker sections continue to face diverse barriers to equal and quality education. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides for free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 based on principles of equity and non-discrimination. Almost a decade later, the Right to Education Act has made noteworthy progress in many areas. As per a government estimate, achieving hundred percent net enrollment rates¹ is definitely a progress, however retention and completion still remains a challenge for many. Their social identity often acts as a barrier in completing their schooling. Effective monitoring and tracking of each child by the administration and school management committees is still in nascent stages.

“Whenever the teachers are angry, they call us Mullahs. The Hindu boys also call us Mullahs because our fathers have beards. We feel insulted when they refer to us like this. – Javed, a 10-year-old Muslim boy, Delhi

The teacher always made us sit in a corner of the room, and would throw keys at us [when she was angry]. We only got food if anything was left after other children were served.... Gradually [we] stopped going to school. – Shyam, a 14-year-old Dalit boy, Uttar Pradesh

We were asked to massage a teacher’s legs. If we refused, he used to beat us. There was a toilet for teachers, which is the one we had to clean. – Naresh, a 12-year-old Dalit boy, Bihar

The teacher tells us to sit on the other side. If we sit with others, she scolds us and asks us to sit separately. The teacher doesn’t sit with us because she says we ‘are dirty.’ – Pankaj, an eight-year-old tribal boy, Uttar Pradesh.”²

Studies have highlighted the practice of untouchability and caste discrimination with children from socially excluded (SE)/Disadvantaged (DA) communities. They are made to sit separately, insulting remarks, caste or religious slurs were thrown at them by teachers and peers. These children are barely considered for leadership roles like class monitor, head boy/girl, leading morning assemblies, because of their social identity. They are instead expected to perform unpleasant and menial jobs such as cleaning toilets, classrooms, staff room etc. Schools in marginalized neighborhoods also have the poorest infrastructure and are mostly understaffed. Identity based discrimination remains a major barrier affecting access to education for children from SE/DA communities. Already vulnerable because of their social position, these children require special attention and encouragement to

¹ National University of Educational Planning and Administration, “District Information System for Education statistics for 2011-2012,” <http://dise.in/Downloads/Publications/Publications%202011-12/Flash%202011-12.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2013), p. 36.

² “‘They Say We’re Dirty’: Denying an Education to India’s Marginalized,” HRW

remain and retain in schools. Instead, insensitive pedagogy, hostile school environment, apathetic administration has continued to push these children to margins resulting in poor retention of these children, many of whom end up pushed into dangerous labour, early marriage etc.

Recognizing the existing discrimination and continued exclusion of SE/DA communities and also at same time mapping the emerging dimensions of discrimination in schools, the Social Equity and Accountability audit seeks to both map the diverse barriers faced by disadvantaged groups and economically weaker sections and facilitate understanding of equity measures necessary for achieving inclusive and universal education. Achieving inclusion means removing exclusionary practices in schools. The SEAA Audit aims to map the barriers which exclude the SE/DA children from the learning and participation opportunities. The Social Equity and Accountability audit was carried out in five states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Delhi. A total of 604 School going children representing socially excluded and disadvantaged groups and in the age group of 10-16 years from standard 6th till 8th were interviewed.

The following chapters will detail on the framework adapted, the SEAA processes, the tools evolved, and the findings in identified dimensions. The report is concluded with recommendations and way forward for interventions.

Chapter 2. Social Equity and Accountability (SEA) Audit Framework and Rationale

This chapter presents the Social Equity and Accountability (SEA) Audit framework and the rationale behind SEA Audits, with special focus on SEA Audits on school education. Pioneered by the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI), the 5R framework is an analytical tool that can assist individuals, organisations and governments to decisively bring in 'equity and inclusion' thinking into their work. It draws upon the Constitutional values of equality, liberty and fraternity in promoting a just and inclusive society. The framework is premised on the realisation that the imagination of *rights for all* or *universal rights*, crafted around a dominant identity, precludes a consideration of socially excluded groups and the contextual realities in which their rights are to be realised, thereby leading to a default or active exclusion of these groups. The framework has an expressed focus on the socially excluded (SE) and disadvantaged (DA) sections of society.

"I did not receive scholarship in school because I did not want to stand up when the teacher asked all Dalit students to stand up so she could write our names for scholarship".

"I always felt humiliated when other students watched as we went to the Head masters' office to receive the scholarships"

"My mother does not want me to eat the MDM as sometimes the food has gone bad. She says she does not have the time to go to the hospital and it will cost more if I fall sick. She is a domestic worker"³

These statements and the feelings behind them raise some serious questions on what are the actual needs, perceptions and aspirations of children from the socially excluded (SE)/Disadvantaged (DA) communities about their education/schooling today. What do they look for from teachers, education administration, larger society and government to achieve their potential and fulfil their educational aspirations? How does the system understand and respond to these aspirations?

Very clearly, children and parents from the SE/DA communities today demand more than just fulfilling the physiological needs. Their concerns of safety and self-esteem are evident from these statements. One is reminded of Maslow's hierarchy of needs which speaks of the five levels of need from the basic to the more evolved ones – i) physiological, ii) safety, iii) Belonging/love, iv) esteem, v) self-actualisation.

The Social Equity and Accountability (SEA) Audit recognises these changing needs and aspirations of the SE/DA children/communities. Further it paves way for society, institutions and governance to put in place systems and mechanisms to identify and address the challenges and aspirations of the SE/DA children and communities. Following are the salient features of the SEA audit tool:

1. The SEA Audit tool is based on human rights approach. It audits the current context of the SE/DA children on their access to rights and entitlements, institutions and mechanisms from the rights perspective.
2. The SEA Audit tool is explicitly focused on children and communities from the SE/DA sections.
3. The SEA Audit is not a comparative tool, comparing access to education between children from other dominant/affluent sections or schools and children from the SE/DA sections.

³ Through field interactions

4. The SEA Audit tool analyses the current challenges and barriers faced by SE/DA children and communities and what it takes to ensure their optimum access and performance.
5. The SEA Audits include both qualitative and quantitative methods. It allows large scale surveys to be carried out with the added use of technology, to strengthen the evidence base for the analysis and evolving strategies.
6. It is focused on building capacities among the SE/DA communities and organisations to review rights from equity and inclusion dimensions.
7. It is directed towards building advocacy strategies for promoting equality and inclusion

SEA Audits to reduce inequality

With its explicit focus on the SE/DA children and communities, it provides the information and evidence to address challenges and barriers of SE/DA communities and evolve specific and focused policies and programmes for reducing development inequalities.

SEA Audits and SDGs

The core of the SDGs talks about 'reaching the furthest behind and 'leaving no one behind'. Both these principles declare the aspiration to reach the socially excluded, vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Most often, there is limited knowledge on the complex causes and processes that keep these communities vulnerable and at the risk of being left out. Available knowledge is largely in the form of case studies and qualitative. There is little quantitative evidence to back important qualitative information. The SEA Audits facilitates quantitative data gathering and evidence building on these communities. The qualitative information is central to developing the quantitative tools. The SEA Audit evidence can be of tremendous value in implementing the SDGs and progressing towards its transformational potential of leaving no one behind.

SEA Audits Addresses 2nd generational needs and aspirations

SEA Audit is a progressive tool and a work in progress. Recognising that communities may have moved beyond (albeit to an extent) the first level of physiological needs, the current SEA audit tool here identifies indicators that relate to other human needs that have been expressed like safety and self-esteem. This awareness has come from our experience of working with SE/DA communities and continuous interactions with the communities and the children. The tool uses these progressive needs and categorised them along 5Rs – Recognition, Respect, Representation, Reparation and Reclamation – the *5 R SEA Audit Framework*.

I. Working Definitions of 5Rs in SEA Audit framework

RECOGNITION: To identify and name the SE and DA groups; recognise the root causes of their exclusion; recognise the form and nature of their exclusion; recognise the magnitude of the exclusion issues in terms of population groups, development and participation inequalities.

RESPECT: To ensure respect and dignity for the SE/DA communities in all policies, programme implementation and monitoring processes. Respect the uniqueness, diversity of their culture, practices and lifestyle; respect their contribution to nation building.

REPRESENTATION: To ensure representation of SE/DA communities in various public and social spaces; to ensure their representation in leadership and decision-making roles; representation of their issues and concerns in planning, implementing, monitoring and advocacy.

REPARATION: Take adequate and effective social, legal, political and cultural measures to address the historical and continuing exclusions and discriminations in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres to promote social justice and inclusion.

RECLAMATION: To promote public education for social inclusion; create formal and informal public spaces for social interface across excluded and dominant sections; active social inclusion measures based on experiential learning; cultural and social interface based on mutual respect and dignity.

The 5-R Dimensions with Indicators

Recognition	Naming the social groups that are excluded Recognising the root causes of social exclusion Recognising the form and nature of social exclusion Recognising the magnitude of the issue in terms of population groups, development inequalities, participation inequalities etc
Respect	Respect the identity and culture, practices of the excluded groups Ensure dignity when rights and entitlements are implemented Respect the contribution and leadership of the socially excluded communities in the national growth and development.
Representation	Proportionate representation in various social and public spaces Proportionate representation in leadership and decision-making spaces Representation of the concerns and issues in the dialogues, policies, provisions
Reparation	Adequate and effective legislative and other measures to address historical social disadvantages Adequate and effective legislative and other measures to address historical economic disadvantages Adequate and effective legislative and other measures to promote social inclusion Updated measures to meet the dynamic process of social exclusion-inclusion
Reclamation	Public education for promoting social inclusion Formal and informal public spaces for social interface across excluded and dominant sections Active social inclusion measures based on experiential learning Cultural and social interface based on mutual respect and dignity

II. SEA Audit on School Education

The SEA Audit on school education emerged out of the long experience of working with SE/DA children and communities as well as reports and experiences shared. On the basis of these qualitative inputs, the tool identified 6 major dimensions along the 5R's to be audited.

1. Physical Dimension: Equitable non-discriminatory and barrier free access to required infrastructure in schools for all.

2. Culture Dimension: Inclusive culture and equitable practices in class rooms/schools

3. Rights and Entitlements: Ensuring rights and dignified disbursement of entitlements for all.

4. Inclusive Teaching and Learning: Classroom participation, absence of favouritism, respect by teachers and equal learning opportunities for all.

5. Safety: Fear free and safe environment for all.

6. Participation and leadership: Equitable and equal opportunities to participate and lead

III. Education SEA Audit: Dimensions and Indicators

The following indicators are based on the provisions available under the Right to free and compulsory education, Act, 2009, from secondary data sources and face to face interaction with SE/DA children and communities. The dimensions and indicators do not have to be a fixed set, but can be evolved based on the context, needs and aspirations. The basis for developing the dimensions and indicators are the existing challenges and barriers that SE/DA children and communities face in their access and performance to their right to school education in both fulfilling their aspirations and potential. 22 indicators within the 5 R frame-works under the 6 dimensions have been used in this SEA Audit tool.

S No	Dimension	Indicators
1	Physical Dimension (4 Indicators)	1.Barrier free access to drinking water sources 2. Barrier free access to toilets 3. Inclusive seating arrangements in class rooms 4. Barrier free access to play grounds/sports equipment
2	Inclusive culture and practices (5 indicators)	1. Common celebration of diverse festivals 2. Curriculum includes role models/leaders from SE/DA communities 3.Pictures of leaders from SE/DA communities in public places 4. Opportunities for children to share culture and role models 5.Prohibition of derogatory comments on social identity
3	Rights and Entitlements (2 indicators)	1.Inclusive mid-day meals 2.Adequate and dignified handling of scholarships, books
4	Inclusive teaching and learning (4 indicators)	1.Fear free interaction with teachers 2.Additional support by teachers/peer group 3.Inclusive content/methodology/pedagogy 4.Class room participation, non-favouritism and respect
5	Safety (3 indicators)	1.Personal safety on the way to school 2.Fear/humiliation by peers in class rooms 3.Fear/humiliation by teachers
6	Participation and Leadership	1. Participate and lead in school activities

	(4 indicators)	2. Leadership in tasks opportunities 3. Academic opportunities 4. Absence of active discouragement
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IV Methodology

The Social Equity and Accountability (SEA) Audit was carried out in five states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Delhi. 20 Community Led Organizations (CLOs) undertook the SEA Audits and was completed from July, 2018 to Feb, 2019.

The broad purpose of the SEA Audits was to build capacities of the CLOs to:

- I. Map and measure the existing barriers faced by SE/DA children and communities in accessing their right to education.
- II. Generate community recommendations on equity measures necessary for achieving equitable and inclusive education for the SE/DA children and communities.
- III. Develop advocacy strategies to engage with multiple stakeholders at both local governing structures and collectively at state and national level.

Tool Development

The tools were drafted by the CSEI team internally and further reviewed and finalised with the CLOs. The Constitution of India and the Human Rights to Education are the fundamental pillars of the SEA audit tool, also incorporating the objectives of education in the UN Child Rights Convention (UNCRC) and provisions under the RTE Act, 2009 and other relevant UN mechanisms..

In particular, the tool drew considerable inputs from various reports that articulated the issues of SE/DA children in accessing and performing their rights on education. It drew upon formal and informal consultations with the CLOs and communities that were engaged in promoting education. Inputs were strengthened with CSEI’s experience of working with the Dalit, Tribal and Muslim CLOs and communities and long term experiences of the members of CSEI in working with the SE/DA communities.

The idea of Social Equity and accountability audit and the framework was drafted with OXFAM India in 2014-15. Inputs were also drawn from the experiences of the 22 CLOs who conducted Ground level Panel (GLP) processes on education.

Iteration of the draft tools

A four days consultation was held with 20 CLOs to understand the concept of social equity and inclusion and the framework and methods. Further a three-day workshop was organised to present the tools, review and draw inputs and fine tune the same.

Digitalisation of the tools

The tools were digitalised with the help of a data intelligence organisation 'Social Cops'. The data was gathered using the 'Collect Mobile Application' of Social Cops.

State level roll out

Three meetings were held in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi for rolling out the Audit processes with all CLOs across 5 states. The meetings also unpacked the data collection application and its usage.

Data Collection on the field

Pre audit preparations

Before the actual SEAA was carried out in the states the following exercises were conducted by each CLO. Each CLO represent the socially excluded and disadvantaged groups. The CLOs were elected on their community connect and ability to delve further in the area of education rights of SE/DA communities:

- A field survey and mapping exercise to list 30 government, and 10 private school going children out of 10 habitations from particular Panchayat
- Mapping and listing 10 out of school children (SC/ST/, Muslim-boys girls, disabled). These Out of school children should be in age between the 10 to 14 years.
- Identification of 10 SMC members out of 10 school and 4 SMC members representing each school.
- Selection of private/ unaided/ recognized public school.
- Selection of one administrative official block or district level.

SEA Audit Data collection:

For the data collection following three methods were used-

- 1. Digital data collection** the digital data collection will collect data from school going children, member of school management committees and private schools.
- 2. Individual Interviews with stakeholder** 6 headmasters from government schools, one interview from District/ Block education officer.
- 3. Focus group Discussions** 3 FGDs with following
 - I. 10 school going children;
 - II. 10 school not going / dropout children and;
 - III. 10 parents of the children from the community.

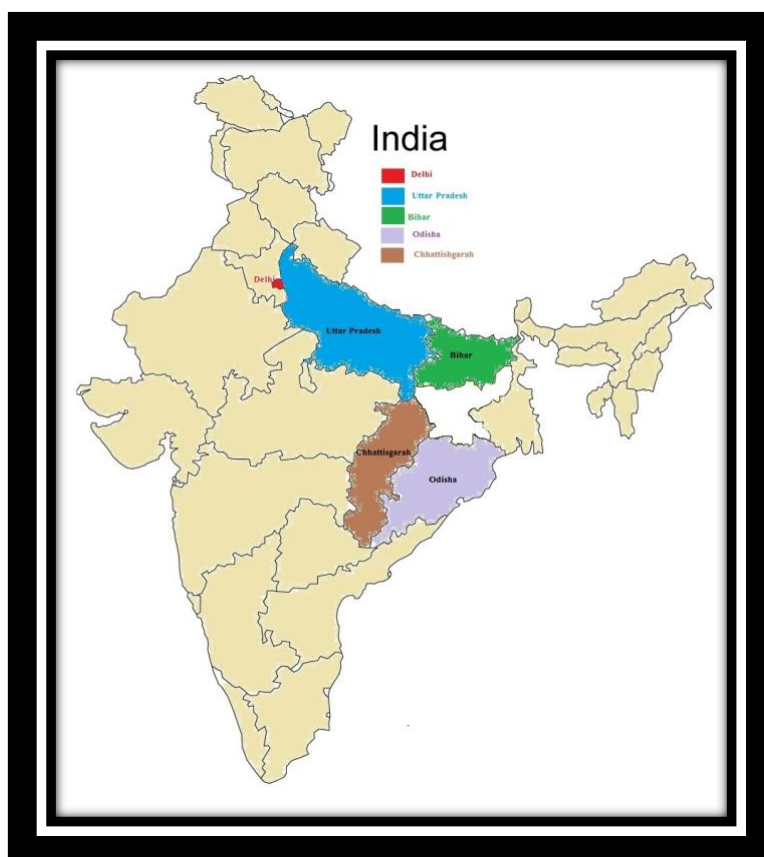
Overview of Tools

Stakeholders	Tools & Methodology	Location	Sample Size/CLO	Total Sample
School Going Children	Survey tool operated by field investigator Mobile technology used to gather survey data	Habitations	40 children per CLO	40 X20
Out of school children	Focus Group Discussion	Habitations	10 OoSC per CLO	10 X 20
SMC members/parents	Interview tool	Habitations	1 FGD/CLO	1 X 20
School teachers	Interview tool	Schools	5 per CLO	5 X 20
Schools	Observation tool	Schools	12 per CLO 10 govt 2 pvt per CLO	100 govt + 40 pvt= 140 schools
School Administrator	Interview tool	Office	1 per CLO	1 X 20

Planned Coverage - Overall target planned for SEA Audit

Indicator	Stakeholder	Location	Target
Equity in Classroom & school	40 school going children (6-14 age group)	Habitation	800
Equity in education	SMC Members	Habitation	200
RTE implementation	Government Schools	School	100
RTE sec.12.1.C implementation	Head of Private unaided school	School	40
RTE implementation	DEO /BEO (District / Block level) Government Education Officers	Block / District	20
RTE implementation	Principals & Teachers of Government schools	School	120
Equity in education	School going children	FGD	20
Equity in education	Out of School & Dropped out children	FGD	20
Equity in education	Parents	FGD	20

States covered:



Actual Coverage:

Social equity & accountability audit education covered 5 Project States –Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.

S. No.	Name of the state	Districts	Details of CLO
1.	Bihar	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Supaul2. Patna3. Nalanda	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DVAS , Dharmendra Kumar2. DJKS, Subodh Ravidas3. Wahid Foundation, Mumtaz Begum
2.	Delhi	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. North West2. North East3. South east4. Central district5. East district	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Labour Education Development Society, Hemlata Kansotia2. Ideal Youth health and welfare society, Vijay Kumar3. Youth Unite for Voluntary Action, Hashib Alam4. Nai Umang Nai Sonch Society, Mohamad Asif5. 4 B foundation Sunita Chauhan

3.	Uttar Pradesh	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kanpur 2. Jalun 3. Gazipur. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Praditi- Kapil Dev Kesri 2. Gramin Jivan Vikas Training and Research Institute Manoj Kumar, 3. Prayas Jan Utthan Samiti Kuldeep Baudh 4. Buniyaad Buniyad Jan Jagriti and Vikas Sansthan Dev Kumar
4.	Chhattisgarh	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Korba 2. Bilaspur 3. Bastar. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jan Vikas Parishad Evam Anushandhan Sanstha Manoj Jangde 2. Rohidas Mahila Kalyan Samiti Binda Azad 3. Adivasi Sewa Mandal, Anand Marwi 4. Jan Jagran Samiti ,Vibhishan Patre 5. Janhit Chhattisgarh Vikas Samiti, Rohit Patil 6. Asra Manch Jaya Dhruv
5.	Odisha	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kendujjar 2. Dhenkanal 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baitarani, Shantilata Shi 2. SHRUTI, Mamatanjali Behera

Coverage Output:

Details	Target	Participated	% Output
Total number of CLO	22	19	86.36
Volunteer (Phones used in data collection)	100	58	58
States	5	5	100
Districts	16	20	125

Chapter 3. Social Equity and Accountability (Education) Audit – Findings

The Social Equity and Accountability (SEA) Audit in school education, audited the social exclusion-inclusion of socially excluded (SE) and Disadvantaged (DA) Dalit, Tribal and Muslim children and communities across 5 states. The audit was conducted drawing quantitative and qualitative data from different stakeholders and included:

1. School observations
2. Interviews with School going children
3. Focus group discussions with Out of school children
4. Interviews with School Management Committee members/Parents from the SE/DA communities.

Tools were made to interview Teachers/Head teachers and Education Administrators. They were not administered widely by the organisations; hence the information is not included. The Audit used a mobile application to draw information through questionnaires, interviews, observation and Focus group discussions in gathering data⁴. The interview schedule with 604 school going children constituted the prime source of information for the quantitative data and are strengthened with the inputs from the other tools. The tools were framed around the 5R framework of ‘Recognition, Respect, Representation, Reparation and Reclamation’ to identify and measure equity Domains in school education as a means to advocate for equal opportunities and inclusion.

The SEA Audit tool identified 22 indicators along 6 domains in school education to measure equity-inclusion. The basis for developing the domains and indicators are the challenges and barriers that SE/DA children and communities face in enjoying their right to school education. They are also based on the provisions under the RTE Act, from secondary reports and face to face interaction with SE/DA children and communities. These domains and indicators do not have to be a fixed set, but can be evolved based on the context, needs and aspirations.

S No	Domain	Indicators
1	Physical Domain (4 Indicators)	1. Barrier free access to drinking water sources 2. Barrier free access to toilets 3. inclusive seating arrangements in class rooms 4. Barrier free access to play grounds/sports equipment
2	Inclusive culture and practices (5 indicators)	1. common celebration of diverse festivals 2. Curriculum includes role models/leaders from SE/DA communities 3. Pictures of leaders from SE/DA communities in public places 4. Opportunities for children to share culture and role models 5. Prohibition of derogatory comments on social identity

⁴ See chapter on tools

3	Rights and Entitlements (2 indicators)	1. Inclusive mid-day meals 2. Adequate and dignified handling of scholarships, books
4	Inclusive teaching and learning (4 indicators)	1. Fear free interaction with teachers 2. Additional support by teachers/peer group 3. Inclusive content/methodology/pedagogy 4. Class room participation, non-favouritism and respect
5	Safety (3 indicators)	1. Personal safety on the way to school 2. Fear/humiliation by peers in class rooms 3. Fear/humiliation by teachers
6	Participation and Leadership (4 indicators)	5. Participate and lead in school activities 6. Leadership in tasks opportunities 7. Academic opportunities 8. Absence of active discouragement

Dimension A. Equitable, non-discriminatory access for all to required infrastructure in schools

The RTE Act outlines the physical infrastructure essential in any school to facilitate and support children's learning and development. The Schedule of the Act outlines the basic infrastructure requirements where children are gathered together, spend considerable part of their time and can have facilitative environment to go about their tasks. The infrastructure requirements have drawn considerable attention, discussion and effort so far. Annual working plan and budgets clearly set out targets to ensure compliance, states and the Centre allocate budgets and statistics are collected to measure compliance with them. . An independent third party evaluation of the SSA Scheme was also conducted in 2017-18. It has pointed out that SSA achieved considerable success in universalizing access and strengthening of infrastructure in schools.⁵ The SEA audit tried to explore this dimension from the point of view of access by children from socially excluded and disadvantaged communities.

The SEA Audit tool recognizes physical infrastructure as an important domain and mapped some of them from an equity-inclusion lens.

4 Indicators were mapped and measured through interviews with children.

A. 1 Barrier free access for all children to drinking water

A. 2 Barrier free access to toilets

A. 3 Seating arrangement in classroom ensuring every child has equal learning and participation opportunities

A.4. A barrier free classroom

A. 4 Barrier free access for all to playground/ sports equipment

⁵ Status of implementation of the right of children to free and compulsory education act, 2009, a draft report card 2014-2019

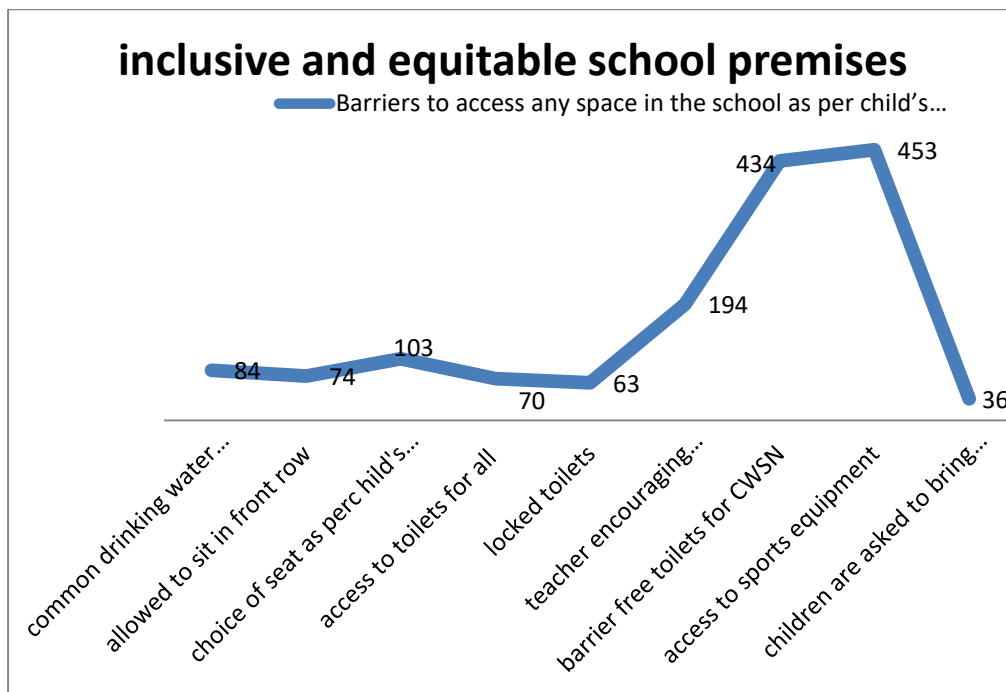


Figure 1.1 Inclusive and equitable school premises

A. 1 Barrier free access for all children to drinking water

Children from socially excluded marginalized communities continue to report being discriminated while accessing drinking water sources in schools, even where drinking water is available. In addition to being a critical deprivation to the child in the context of her physical well-being and learning, it is a human right denial and violation and has reported negative impact on the dignity, personality and confidence of the child, with the undesirable consequence of dropping out of school. Hence this indicator is tracked in the social equity and accountability framework.

The national picture

The government has carried out various projects since many decades to provide drinking water in schools. It is mandated under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The Swachh Vidyalaya (clean school) under the flagship Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has made roadmap for WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) in schools; and stresses on the importance of providing 'child friendly and sustainable safe drinking water'.

As per the District Information on School Education (DISE) 2015-16⁶, data, 4.8% schools still lacked drinking water facilities in schools; reflecting that in absolute numbers considerable numbers of children still lack the basic facility of drinking water in their schools. One can only imagine its negative impacts –health hazards, c safety hazards, children may drop out too. Providing adequate sustained safe potable drinking water in all schools is a basic requirement and human right.

⁶ http://dise.in/Downloads/Elementary-STRC-2015-16/Elementary-State_Report_Cards_2015-16.pdf, page 25

Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

The SEA audit carried out in 5 states have highlighted following facts related to access to drinking water in schools for children from disadvantaged communities:

- **14 per cent children do not have barrier free access to drinking water:** out of 604 children interviewed using tool 1 (refer to chapter 4 on tools) 84 children reported that even though water is available in their schools, they do not have free access to the drinking water.
- **18 percent of surveyed schools lacked drinking water facility:** School observations using tool 2 (refer to chapter 4 on tools) reported 15 out of the 84 schools did not have drinking water facility for children.

Inference:

- As per the audit, there are still schools that do not have drinking water provisions, which is also corroborated through national data. 100 per cent provision of drinking water is yet to be achieved.
- Even when drinking water is available, a section of children from the marginalized communities reported barriers in accessing it. The promise and plans that 'no child will be left behind' in their access to drinking water in schools is a far dream for considerable numbers of children in schools.
- The progress on providing drinking water at the last mile is very slow, may be even neglectful.

Recommendation:

From the response of the change they would like to see in their schools, availability of drinking water in their schools is a priority for the children. We need a clear '**last mile provision approach**' in government plans and budgets to provisioning adequate safe potable drinking water to all children in all schools.

A.2 Barrier free access for all children to toilets

Toilets are an important infrastructure provision in a school to promote health and hygiene practices and also an important indicator to determine the equity and inclusive fabric of an institution. Many studies have reported that children from marginalized communities and specially Dalit children are assigned and forced to clean toilets, or denied access to toilets. Many cases of female students dropping out from school are reported owing to lack of toilet facilities. The availability of girls-appropriate toilets and water supplies is essential for girls and female teachers to comfortably change and dispose of sanitary pads and wash themselves in private during the menstrual cycle. If not already motivated by religious and cultural beliefs that staying home during menstruation is normal, the absence of facilities means that for many girls it is preferable to stay at home during menstruation and not attend school. A study in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal calculated that the number of school days missed during menstruation varied from 3 to 4 to as many as 7 days a month. Even the lower number adds up to 30 to 40 school days missed each year⁷.

⁷https://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/UNICEF_WASH_for_School_Children_South_Asia_Report.pdf

Schools have reported girls (and boys) face the threat of (sexual) abuse or violence from male teachers and older male students. Studies show that girls are most likely to be abused on their way to or from school, in or near toilets, in empty classrooms and other isolated places. This shows the importance of constructing girls' toilets at safe locations.

The national picture

As per DISE 2016-17⁸, 96.5% of schools have girls' toilet which implies approximately there are still 51,366 schools out of the 140,000 elementary schools without girl's toilet. Quite different from the government DISE reports, ASER 2018 report points out only 66.4% school have available and useable toilets, there is a marginal improvement from 61.9% in 2016.

The Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

The SEA audit had specific questions in the tools aimed to understand the access to toilets by all. The children were asked whether they have toilets, if these were locked and if separate toilets for girls and children with special needs were available.

In December 2011 the Supreme Court of India ruled that, "It is imperative that all schools must provide toilet facilities; empirical research has indicated that wherever toilet facilities are not provided in schools, parents do not send their children (particularly girls) to schools". The bench said that denial of the basic right to water and toilet facilities "clearly violates the right to free and compulsory education of children guaranteed under Article 21-A". It also directed the District Magistrates across the country to file comprehensive affidavits within a month regarding the availability of basic facilities such as potable drinking water, toilets for both boys and girls, electricity, boundary walls and mid-day meals in primary schools

⁸ http://dise.in/Downloads/Elementary-STRC-2015-16/Elementary-State_Report_Cards_2015-16.pdf

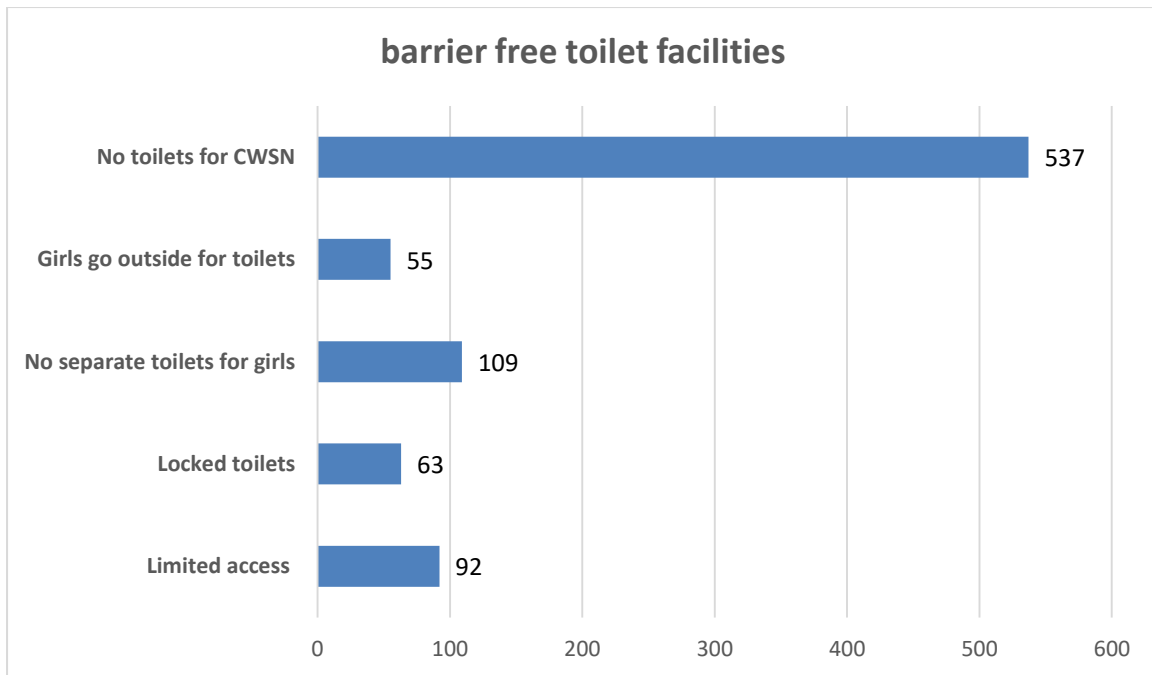


Figure 2.2 Barrier free toilet facilities

- 15 % of the responding children complained that they had ‘limited access’ and were not able to use the toilets when they needed
- 10 % children said that the toilets in their school are locked.
- 18% of the responding children reported that their schools do not have separate toilets for girls.
- 9% shared that often female students have to go out in open as there are no separate toilets for them.
- 89% of the respondents reported that their schools do not have barrier free toilets for CWSN

Inference

- Even after many years and projected plans and provisions, absence of toilets continues to be a major constraint in schools.
- Basic mandated norms of toilet availability and accessibility, especially for girls are yet to be ensured for all children, reflecting state neglect resulting in child indignity and creating safety hazards,
- The plans and provisions to provide suitable toilets for children with disabilities is not operationalized in schools.

Recommendation

The state plans and provisions need a more nuanced approach to providing equitable and non-discriminatory access to toilets. The SEA report shows that in addition to non-availability, other constraints are prevalent. These include not being allowed to use when required, locked toilets, lack of girls’ toilets, lack of disabled friendly toilets continue to plague the system. The infrastructure equity require attention – accessibility of toilets to all children based on need, safe location of

toilets, accessible toilets to children with disabilities, availability and accessibility of toilets to girls during menstruation. Teachers' attitude to children using toilets need review and re-direction.

A .3 Seating arrangement in classroom ensuring every child has equitable learning and participation opportunities

The physical setup of chairs, tables, or durree (mats) in a classroom can significantly influence classroom learning of a child. Classroom seating is an important indicator for creating an equitable and inclusive classroom. The seating order can play important role in the entire learning process a child, a child's ability to form friendship bonds or interactions with peers, engagement with the teacher, participation in classroom activities etc.

The National Picture

Children from socially excluded and marginalized communities have reported barriers in class room seating, particularly being prevented from sitting in the front both by peer and teachers. Children have also reported related physical abuse and violence when they try to sit in front⁹. Unfortunately there is no national tracking of this indicator in the school system and little attention is paid to it in teacher training and preparation. This is an important equity-inclusion indicator that needs attention within the school system.

The Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

The social equity and accountability audit considered seating arrangements in classrooms as an important indicator to determine the equitable and inclusive environment of schools. The SEA audit recognizes the relevance of seating arrangements in promoting diversity, friendship, social interface and peer support mechanisms in the learning and participation of children in schools. The tool included focused questions on understanding the access, choice, existing practices, evident bias or favoritism by teachers when it comes to seating arrangements in schools.

Fig 1.2 SEAA on inclusive and equitable seating arrangements in school

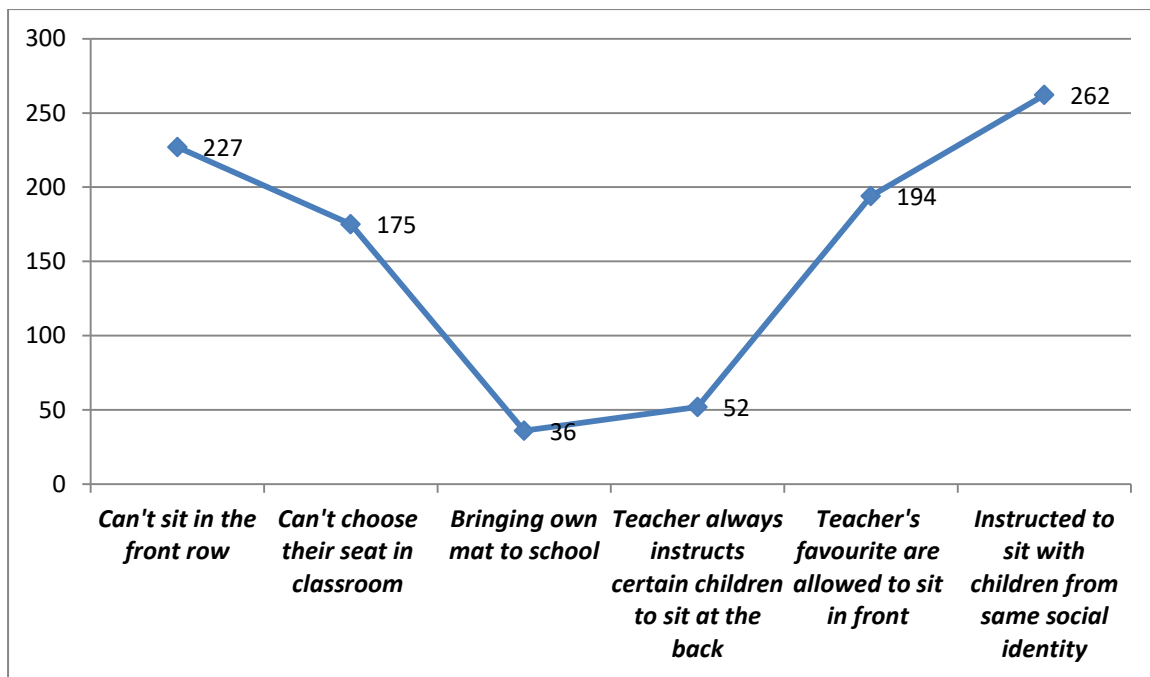


Fig 1.3 SEAA on inclusive and equitable seating arrangements in school

- 38 % children reported they can't sit in the front row of the class room
- 29% report they don't have the freedom to choose their seat in the classroom
- 9% reported that teachers decide who can sit in the front, and instruct marginalized children to sit at the back
- 32% children reported that teachers encourage only their favorite children to sit in the front seats
- 43% children report that teachers instruct them to sit within their own caste/social groups

Inference

- The SEA audit highlights discriminatory practices and barriers in seating in classrooms.
- The audit highlights that children recognize practices of bias, prejudice and discrimination by teachers. In one to one discussions, they reported long-lasting negative impact of such bias from their teachers.
- Open or tacit support to sitting and interacting with children from one's own identity and social background is widely prevalent, undermining the diversity in class rooms, possible friendship and peer group support across children.

Recommendations

- Tracking the seating arrangements in class rooms is important and periodic spot checking on these is important to promote equitable inclusive schooling.
- Teacher trainings need to include the importance of promoting diversity, friendship and peer support through relevant seating arrangements in classrooms.
- Teacher attitudes and bias need safe and reflective spaces in teacher training modules for behavior change.

- Some earlier classroom experiments have reported experiments in seating arrangements like children sitting in a circle, children sitting in smaller groups, rotational basis of seating etc. Such discussions and practices need to be brought back into discussions and practice.

A.4 Barrier free access for all to play grounds and games

The availability and access to play grounds, libraries, labs and computer rooms are essential for learning and development. They are also important tools to promote equity and inclusion.

Beside promoting physical development playgrounds encourage children to build social skills. When children meet others on the playground, they learn to get along, agree on rules and resolve conflict – all of which are necessary when building social skills. Additionally, playgrounds can be more diverse places than a child's classroom, since they invite children of all different ages and backgrounds to play together.

The national picture

Physical education and sports, though an integral part of education policy documents, has always remained on the fringe and have not received much importance until recent times.. The culture of playing sports and recognizing the equity dimension of sports in education process,, is really missing India., not much data exists on school physical education and sports in India.

There has been an attempt to popularise sports.

The government of India has initiatives like Khelo India, a national programme for the development of sports by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Department of Sports. Khelo India is envisaged to be an annual national sports meet. Every year 1,000 top performing sportspersons will be selected for an annual scholarship, which they will get for 8 years, to help them prepare for international

Another initiative is Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan¹⁰, an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to Standard 12. It articulates four important ways in which the new scheme will support school sports: sports equipment will be provided to all schools; sports Education will be an integral part of curriculum; every school will receive sports equipment under the scheme to inculcate and emphasize relevance of sports in the school curriculum; and support to 'Khelo India'..

However, despite the hype, the picture on the ground is still dismal. Governments own sources like DISE 2016-17¹¹ reports only 61.5% schools have playgrounds out of 1,467,680 schools. ASER 2018¹² has also pointed out in their report that of 15,998 govt schools surveyed (9,177 primary schools and 6,821 upper primary schools) only 66.5% had playgrounds.

The Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

¹⁰ <http://samagra.mhrd.gov.in/features.html>

¹¹ <http://udise.in/Downloads/Elementary-STRC-2016-17/All-India.pdf>

¹² <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202018/Release%20Material/aser2018nationalfindingsppt.pdf>

The social equity and accountability audit tool had a question on only one aspect of sports and physical education i.e. access to play material and sports equipment. The audit exercise carried out in five states showed that.

- 75% of the children reported that they don't have access to play material and sports equipment in their respective schools.

Inference

Clearly the hype of providing opportunities for sports and games in the schools is not translated at the school level. Majority children do not have access to play grounds, sports materials or equipment in their schools.

The children from marginalized communities have a cultural history of physical activities and exercises that could have been promoted through sports. Such enhancing is lost out. Further, they also have their own traditional sports and games embedded in their culture and values. These are again lost.

Recommendation

Incorporate sports and games and physical education in schools to improve the opportunities and potential to enhance talents among children to enhance both individual and national achievements.

Schools promote sports and games as a means to promote self-confidence, leadership, social interface and inclusion. Many organized forms of games is available that cater to these objectives like – play for peace, ultimate Frisbee etc.

Dimension B- inclusive culture and practices in class rooms/ schools

India has succeeded in promoting near 100 percent enrolment in school. However, the drop-out rate to the tune of 50 percent by class VIII and 70 percent by class X reduces the value of the progress made in enrollment. While there are many reasons for dropout, the Social Equity and Accountability Audit recognizes the presence of an inclusive and equitable culture in schools and class rooms to be important for children's retention and learning. The tool has designed five indicators to review the inclusive culture in classrooms and school

An inclusive and equitable culture in the school is the one which promotes equal representation and barrier free participation for all. An inclusive culture starts from the premise that everyone in the school – students, educators, administrators, support staff and parents – should feel that they belong, realize their potential, and contribute to the life of the school. In an inclusive culture, diverse experiences, perspectives and gifts are seen to enrich the school community.¹³

Achieving an inclusive and equitable school culture goes beyond gender or children with special needs' integration, gender sensitization training, putting in ramps or other aids, or offer sensitization training to staff. It is more than just developing a value statement that talks about equity and inclusion. Inclusive and equitable culture paramounds on the recognition of existing barriers children from marginalized communities face. A conscious effort to ensure representation of their social

¹³ "An Inclusive School Culture," Ontario Community Inclusion Project of Community Living Ontario (CA)

identity features like language, symbols, role models, celebration of festivals, an attitudinal shift among key stakeholders are all pre-requisites of inclusive culture. Real inclusion is only about actions, not just words. An inclusive and equitable culture is based on the philosophy that the whole school shares. A real culture of inclusion and equity cannot be brought about unless everyone embraces it.

Creating an inclusive school culture is critical because our schools act as mirrors of the larger community. There is a great opportunity to teach students, early in their development as citizens, about the importance and value of inclusion. They will learn behaviour that will ultimately help nurture truly inclusive communities. It also provides an opportunity for parents to learn through their children about the importance of belonging, acceptance and community.

Indicators

1. Common celebration of diverse festivals in schools
2. The curriculum/ pedagogy shall include chapters on leaders and role models from marginalized communities
3. Pictures representing person of importance and leaders from the marginalized groups
4. Opportunities for students to share and talk about their culture and role models representing marginalized communities.
5. Prohibition of derogatory comments by teachers/staff/ students on any particular social identity

The National Picture

The national educational framework lacks focus on identifying, reviewing or promoting cultural equity-inclusion. Given existing global frameworks on inclusion of girls and children with disability, one can find some references to them in curriculum and pedagogy. One also has some references to the language or culture of tribal communities. Sadly, there is little to promote inclusion of the diversity of our population groups or their culture, particularly scheduled castes, nomadic tribes, Muslim community, urban poor and others. Even more critical is that the education framework does not take cognizance of the barriers experienced by socially excluded and marginalized children in participating and performing within the education system.

An important initiative was taken under the National Advisory Council for RTE Act by the MHRD, where a sub-committee on 'equity and inclusion' was set up. The Sub-committee evolved recommendations to promote equity and inclusion. (

An important study to understand the barriers was also Vimala Ramchandran on existing discrimination and barriers in schools.¹⁴ Some amount of work on gender – representation and stereotypes is also available¹⁵.

¹⁴ Ramachandran, Vimala Gender Issues in Higher Education - Advocacy Brief. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2010 Ramchandran

¹⁵ Gender audits - SSA

The Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

The SEA pilot tool reviewed the equity-inclusion in school/class room culture along the following indicators along the 5 R Equity Framework (see chapter 2).

S.No.	R framework	Tool Question
1.	Recognition	<p>क्या आपके त्योहारों/महत्वपूर्ण दिनों को स्कूल में नहीं मनाया जाता है ? Does the school celebrate your festivals or days of importance?</p>
2.	Respect	<p>क्या स्कूल में शिक्षक या बच्चे आपकी संस्कृति/भाषा को लेकर टिका-टिप्पणी करते हैं ? Does the teacher or fellow students often make remarks/comments on your culture or language?</p> <p>क्या स्कूल में आपसे ऐसा काम करने को कहा जाता है या कोई चीज़ करवायी जाती जो आपके धर्म/संस्कृति के खिलाफ़ है ? Does in school they ask you to do or mandate you to do such work which is against your custom/ religion?</p>
3.	Representation	<p>क्या स्कूल में आपके समुदाय के लीडर/संस्कृति/समाज से सम्बंधित प्रतीक/फ़ोटो लगाए गए हैं ? Does the school have pictures of leaders/culture/representing your community?</p>
4.	Reparation	<p>क्या आपके समुदाय के प्रतीकों/रोल मॉडल के बारे में पूरे स्कूल या बच्चों को बताने के लिए मौक़ा दिया जाता है ? Do you get an opportunity to share about your community's symbol/ role model in the school?</p> <p>क्या शिक्षक पाठ समझाने के लिए आपके समुदाय या संस्कृति के कोई उदाहरण का प्रयोग करते हैं ? Does the teacher quote examples from your culture or community while teaching or explaining?</p>
5.	Reclamation	<p>क्या पाठ्यक्रम में अनुसूचित जाति अनुसूचित जनजाति, मुस्लिम, महिलाओं आदि से सम्बंधित सामुदायिक रोल माडलों ,नेताओं, प्रतीकों आदि के बारे में पढाया जाता है ?</p> <p>Does the curriculum includes sharing of experiences of leaders and important persons from SC/ST/Muslims/women community</p>

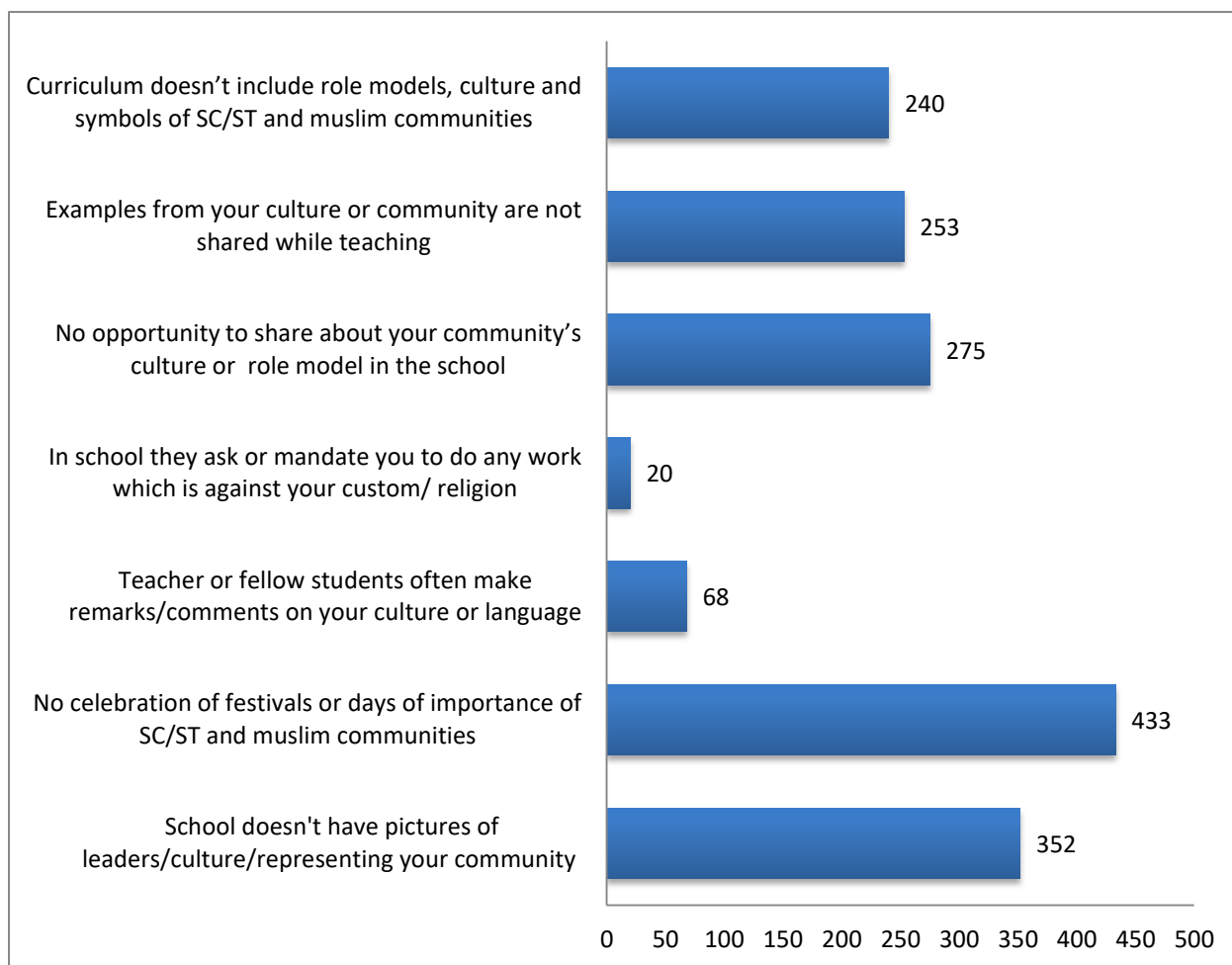


Fig 2.1 Responses on inclusive culture in schools

1. Presence of pictures of leader/cultural symbols representing marginalised communities

58% of the children reported that their schools do not have any pictures in the school compound or classrooms which represent their culture from their homes or communities.

2. Celebration of all festivals in school

72% of the responding school going children shared that their school does not celebrate their festivals or important days. Schools tend to celebrate festivals of the dominant communities and are often not even aware of the festivals of the marginalized communities. Children in many places reported how they celebrated festivals like Diwali, Dusshera and Holi in schools. Some new festivals of the dominant communities like Janamashtmi have become popular in more recent times with children dressed up as Lord Krishna or Radha. There was little recognition, understanding or celebration of other festivals like Ambedkar Jayanti, Valmaki Jayanti, Eid and Ramzaan in schools. Any discourse around these festivals was missing in the schools.

3. Remarks on child's social identity by teachers or fellow students

11.25% of the school going children reported that their teachers and classmates often made comments on their language or their religious or caste identity. 69 out of the 604 children, majority

of them from the scheduled caste community (56), reported being remarked upon (others being Tribal and Muslim children).

4. In school they ask or mandate you to do any work which is against your custom/ religion

A small percentage (3.3%) of children shared that their teachers often assign them non-academic work based on their social identity. This is a welcome positive behavior change given that cleaning classrooms and toilets was routinely assigned to Dalit students, particularly girls, and taken as the norm. The attention and reporting on the practice has obviously had some positive effect on the classrooms and schools.

5. Opportunity to share about your community's culture and role models in the school

46% of the school going children said they did not have an opportunity in the classroom to share about their community role models or talking about their specific culture.

6. Teachers quoting examples from marginalised communities experiences while teaching in class

42% of the children reported that the teacher does not quote examples from their community. This robs children of the opportunity to link their learning to their context and also apply their class room knowledge to real world issues. Most of all, it takes away a sense of history and culture and worth and confidence from children from SE/DA communities.

7. Curriculum includes sharing of experiences of leaders and important persons from SC/ST/Muslims/women community

40% of the responding children shared that their curriculum does not talk about their community. The investigators have highlighted how stories from particular religious ideology are highlighted while sidelining the stories from other cultures. The children irrespective of their diverse identity read stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata while

Inference

There is a lack of recognition and understanding on inclusive and equitable culture within the education framework. The SEA audit exercise is a first of its kind in identifying some of the core indicators and conducting a survey among children from Dalit, Tribal and Muslim communities across the five states. The responses highly varied and relied on the individual capacities and the perspectives of the investigator. The concept of culture we have realized could have been further explained and unpacked for the children through more participative methods and group exercises. The responses reflect the need to take this forward and do more work on it – both from quantitative and qualitative. The future tool to map barrier to inclusive culture requires more thinking and re-designing of the questions. (See Chapter 4 for tool)

Recommendations

- Recognise the need for promoting inclusive and equitable culture, with special focus on recognizing and promoting the culture of socially excluded communities and children within the school and education framework.
- Teachers training and sensitization to understand and promote inclusive culture in the school and education environment

- Use sharing of culture as a tool for promoting understanding and overcoming stereotypes.
- Use cultural inclusion as a resource in learning, development and nation building.¹⁶

Dimension C – Ensuring rights and entitlements

Mid-day meals, scholarships and provisions of textbooks and uniforms are measures adopted by the state to promote enhanced enrolment, particularly of girls and children from the scheduled caste and tribes. Over the years, some states have created additional entitlements like cycles for promoting girls education beyond the elementary level. The SEA Audit reviewed the access of Mid-day meals, scholarships and books for children from the Dalit, Tribal and Muslim community.

Indicators

3.1 All children have adequate timely provision to ensure complete and free education

3.1.1 Inclusive MDMS

3.1.2 Adequate and dignified handing over of children’s entitlements.

Mid-day Meals

National Picture

The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education, which is popularly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), was started in 1995 with the aim of enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance of children in schools till class VIII, as well as of improving their nutritional levels. According to the government, the scheme covers about 120 million children and forms 32 percent of the total elementary education budget for 2013- 14 at around \$2.2 billion². The last decade has witnessed the scheme being more broad based and enhancing coverage beyond

¹⁶ “Diverse classrooms promote creativity, high level thinking, and collaboration”

- **It is important for all students to be culturally aware.** Learning about other cultures, languages, religions, and holidays aside from their own will help children learn that their classmates may be very different from them. Being culturally aware is a wonderful way to promote inclusion for all in your classroom.
 - **It is important for students to appreciate cultural differences.** In addition to being aware of the fact that their peers may be different, it’s also important for kids to learn about some of the unique and amazing things that come from other cultures and ways of life.
 - **It is important for students to overcome stereotypes.** Celebrating different cultures will bring to light new thinking and understanding. Students need to understand there is never a right or wrong way- what is ok is that we are all different and we learn and grow together. This type of learning will encourage students to be creative thinkers.
- Most important by acknowledging different cultural practices, celebrating festivals enhances participation of children from marginalised communities.** The children are more likely to connect and participate without any hesitation. It will also enhance their participation in classroom activities.

government schools and including recognized and unrecognized madrasas (Muslim religious schools) supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.¹

However implementation has reported many loopholes like incomplete coverage, irregular provisioning and the negative impact on teacher time away for academic activities. Some of the empirical studies have shown active discrimination based on caste identity, such as violating fair norms by directly excluding SC children from the programmes (Mander and Kumaran 2006). Sometimes SC children are included but not treated properly. For example, the child is made to feel unwelcome through taunts, selective neglect, is made to sit separately, is excluded from extracurricular activities and receives very harsh punishment for misbehaving (IIDS-UNICEF 2012). Discrimination is not practiced at the beneficiary level alone. Service providers from lower castes are discriminated against by the upper castes-one example is the refusal to eat in the MDM Scheme and ICDS if the food is prepared by a SC cook (Thorat and Lee 2010; Ramachandran 2004; Menon 2003).

Social Equity and Accountability Audit Findings

The SEAA findings highlighted that there has been substantial reduction of segregation and other evident forms of exclusionary practices during MDMS.

- 4% of surveyed children shared that they are seated separately during mid-day meals.
- 6% said they are served separately during mid-day meals
- 26% of children reported they bring their own utensils for the mid-day meal.
- 5% of the responding children shared that they are asked to make separate queue on the basis of their social identity while getting their meals.
- 4 % has also shared that the meals are served last to them.

MDM has been an area of study for considerable time. Earlier studies have reported much discrimination in the distribution of the MDM and also in the appointment of cooks/helpers. The attention created has promoted sensitivity or compliance to non-discrimination. The level of evident practices of discrimination has reduced considerably as seen above.

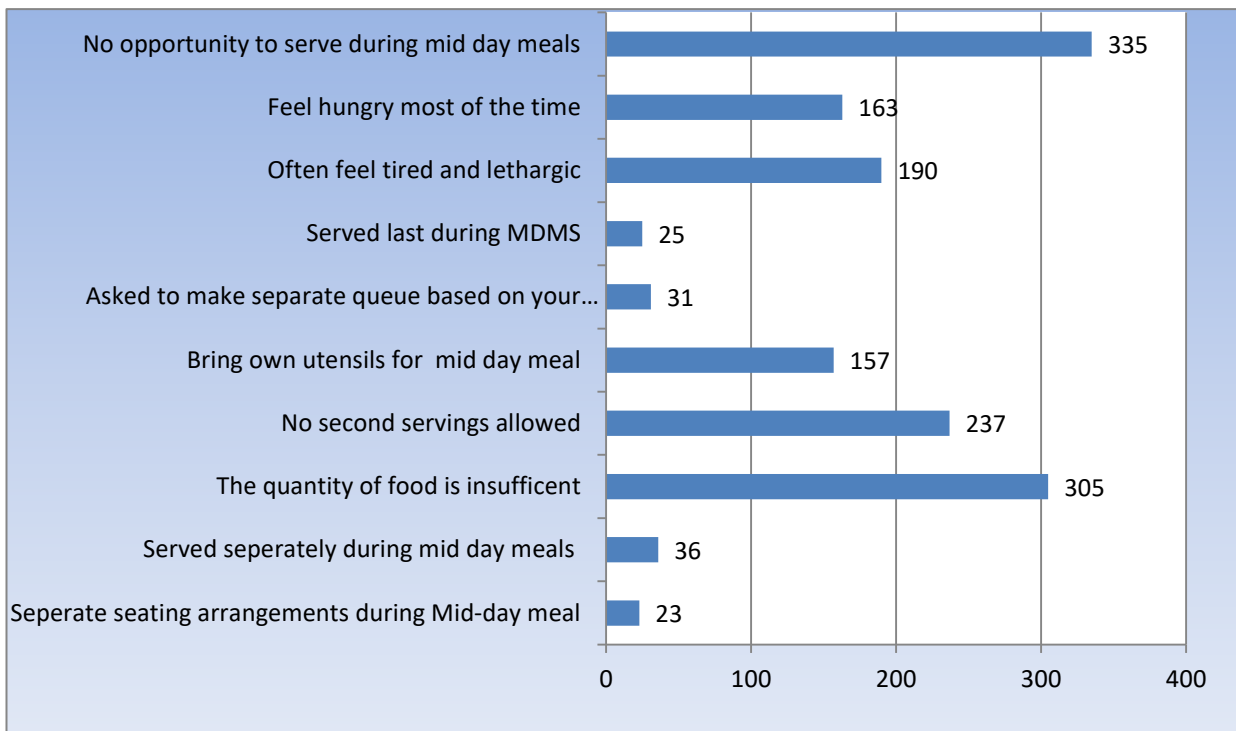


Figure 3.1 Inclusive mid-day meals

While the evident forms of discrimination in MDM have come down, children from the SE/DA communities reported other more nuanced forms of discrimination in the MDM. It highlights the fact that hunger and tiredness is a reality for children from the SE/DA communities. Even as the MDM has the objective of addressing hunger and malnutrition, the MDM discriminated them on second servings. MDM did not meet the objective of reducing hunger and malnutrition thereby failing in an important objective.

One of the forms of continuing discrimination in MDM is not engaging children from SE/DA communities in the process of preparation or serving of the MDM. This reflects the continuing bias against them which is also rooted in their identity of being Dalit, Tribal or Muslim.

- 32 % school going children covered under the SEA Audit reported that they often feel tired and lethargic.
- 28% of the children said they feel hungry most of time
- 39 % children denied getting second servings and felt hungry after their mid-day meals.
- 55% of children reported they do not get a chance to serve in the MDM process.

The SEAA team in Chhattisgarh has observed that 'irrespective of age and size, same quantity of mid-day meal is given to all children. The children are not allowed to have second servings. By the end of the month when ration reduces, so does the serving. There were instances of teachers taking the ration home. Some female children complained that if they ask for a second serving, the cook/ server shouts at them and says "Are you pregnant?". Children raised complaints about quantity and quality of food.

Inference

- Reports of exclusion and discrimination in Mid-day meals of both children and functionaries have been highlighted through studies, particularly of the Dalit communities. It is encouraging to note that the very explicit and visible forms of discrimination and exclusion in the process have come down.
- A next layer of discrimination continues in not engaging children from the SE/DA communities in the MDM processes of preparation and serving. This could be the reflection of the social identity of the Dalit, Tribal and Muslim children.
- The SEA Audit process further recognized the next layer of equity issues with regard to the adequacy and quality of mid-day meal in addressing hunger and mal-nutrition among children from the marginalized sections. The widespread prevalence of hunger, lethargy and its impact on children's learning and development needs further attention. The findings of the study show that there is little focus on providing adequate quality of food for the children. Children continued to complain of hunger and lethargy in the audit.

Recommendation

Mid-day meals should essentially take the next step to create a menu and ensure the adequacy and quality of food to promote nutrition, health and wellbeing among children as measure for promoting equity for children who come from poor and marginalized sections.

Mid-day meals also have the potential to promote inclusion among children in a very vital area of sharing food and having common meals together. This potential for inclusion also needs further measures.

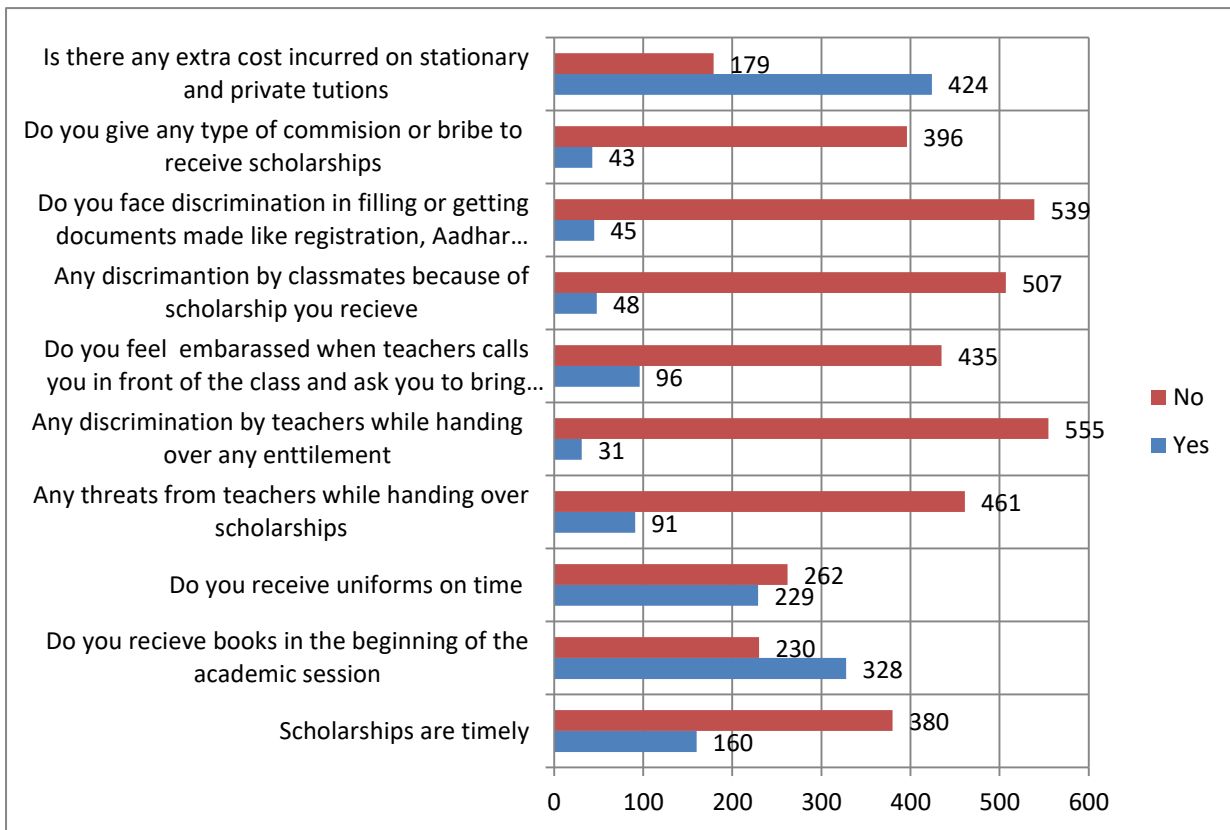


Figure 3.2 distribution and handling of scholarships and entitlements

Scholarship, Uniforms and Books in school

It is often considered that elementary schooling is free and hence there are no costs of the family. However, in reality the family has an out of pocket expenditure on education. A recent study of ten most vulnerable families reported how families spend out of their pockets based on their own financial situation. Bonded labour families who are very poor and vulnerable spend a little more than Rs.1000/per child in a year in the government schools. The national average of out of pocket expenditure on schools is about Rs.20,000/child/year¹⁷. This clearly shows that even when families are aware and desirous of spending on educating their children, they often compromise based on their own financial situation.

Scholarships need to be reviewed in this context, as an equity measure to ensure that no child has to drop out of school owing to poor financial situation of the family. The SEA audit recognizes that state and central government has created slabs for scholarships that are not based on the actual cost of schooling for the children or the financial gap of the family. A token sum is designated without a realistic basis, which also varies from state to state. Further, it is seen that state and central governments are in the process of cutting down scholarships than doing a real-time assessment and revising the same.

The SEA Audit had questions on additional expenses towards schooling and also based on the 5R framework on equity, particularly on the basis of respect and reparation. "Discussions around

¹⁷ 100 Hotspots study

scholarships for Dalit children largely centre round their meager value, lack of adequate coverage, delay in receiving funds and malpractices. Though scholarships are usually delayed, and the amounts received are relatively small, many respondents use these funds to tide over part of the incidental school expenses. What appears significant and little commented upon is the manner in which scholarships tend to reinforce stigmatizing of Dalit identity as 'lower castes'. Ironically, to claim incentives under affirmative action programmes and facilitate inclusion, those who have suffered from disadvantage must publicly proclaim identities that are still the target of discriminatory practices. They are often required to do so in the school assembly and before their classmates ostensibly to 'facilitate' their identification as SC students and thereafter to receive fellowships and other incentives. A few respondents brushed aside this 'name calling' and appeared to be able to take on adverse comments from general caste peers. However the majority said they suffered considerable anguish as their identities are brought into public 'gaze' again and yet again, and they are constantly at the receiving end of disparaging barbs from peers, office staff as well as teachers."¹⁸ Reports of discrimination and 'name calling' based on their identity equally holds true for a Tribal and Muslim children.¹⁹

The scholarship reimbursements no doubt supports the cost incurred in stationary, tuition fees etc. However the evidence of disrespectful handling over the scholarship, the humiliation can't be ignored. The pilot SEAA audit tools had questions on checking the timely and fair disbursements, respectful handing over of the entitlements and any discrimination by peers or teachers because of entitlements received.

Timely and fair disbursements of entitlements

The SEAA has questions designed around disbursements of the incentives. The questions focused on whether the entitlements like uniforms, books and scholarship are provided on time.

- 63% of the responding school going children stated that their scholarships are not received on time.
- 38% of the books are not received at the beginning of academic session.
- 43.3% don't receive uniform on time.
- 7% of the respondents shared that they pay some sort of bribe or commission to receive their scholarships/entitlements.

Dis-respectful handing over entitlements.

- 16% of the children covered in SEA Audit admitted that their teachers make them stand in the class and ask them to call their parents to school to collect cash entitlements. This public calling out and disclosing their social identity by teachers often leaves the children embarrassed and also prone to ridicule or harassment by their peers.

Discrimination in accessing entitlements

- 7.5% of the responding children facing some form of discrimination while filling documents for Aadhar etc.

¹⁸ *Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools: Experiences of Dalit Children* Geetha B. Nambissan

¹⁹ "They Say We're Dirty': Denying an Education to India's Marginalized," HRW

- Though scholarships are unconditional 16% interviewed children reported that their teachers often threatened to stop their entitlements as are irregular or reported late at school.
- 5% also shared that their classmates discriminate with them as they receive scholarship and their classmates do not.

Extra costs incurred for education

- 70 % of the respondents reported that they spent on private tuitions as they often face difficulty in understanding in the classroom

Inference

- Scholarships and other incentives in education are both equity and inclusion measures. It lightens the financial burden on the family partially and enhances enrollment and retention of students from marginalised communities.
- Children find the current mechanisms for providing entitlements inadequate and deterrent to their dignity in the processes of identifying children, ensuring timely disbursements, ensuring entitlements to all eligible children.

Recommendations

- Include a mechanism to assess and meet the full and real time costs through scholarships and other entitlements to make school education completely free.
- The equity and inclusion dimensions of scholarships and entitlements need greater emphasis with the teachers and wider public and not merely as a 'subsidy' or even un-necessary expenditure by the government.
- Explore ways in which the identity and dignity of children accessing entitlements is ensured while providing scholarships and entitlements.
- Include information and dialogue on the positive sides of entitlements in education expanding upon the resilience of the individual and community, cultural and diversity social capitals and national value.

Dimension D. Inclusive teaching and learning

Every child's learning potential is dependent on their individual capacities, experiences, background and interests. Conventional pedagogical approaches are becoming redundant and innovative, participatory and child centric approaches to learning and teaching are necessary; especially while working with children from SE/DA communities. Right to Education Act (2009) also talks about making children fear free and learn through activities, discovery and exploration. Embedded within this new approach are also the beliefs that children construct their own knowledge and children need to be encouraged to reflect upon and apply their learning. Teachers need skills to understand, create and give spaces to children so that learning becomes joyful and fun for them, rather than a burden. Creation of an inclusive pedagogy is central to creation of an ALL-inclusive education

National Picture

The RTE Act in keeping with accepted teaching and learning pedagogy highlights the need for constructive and creative teaching learning practices in class-rooms. The continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) is inbuilt into the RTE to provide a stress-free joyful and learning environment for children. UNICEF and other global organisations have articulated the need even earlier and pilots have been done across the country. However, it has been next to impossible to bring about these transformative changes into our teaching-learning practices which are embedded in the rote memorizing process and inbuilt social hierarchy. In the absence of practice, there is also no system for tracking or monitoring these norms within the education system currently.

Indicators

The SEA Audit process evolved the following indicators to track how supportive and facilitative the teaching-learning processes in the class room are to children from the SE/DA communities. The entire gamut of constructivist creative teaching learning pedagogy can be tracked through a host of indicators. The following indicators are evolved in discussions with children and young people from the SE/DA communities, with special attention on their challenges and barriers.

- D .1 Fear free interactions with teachers
- D .2 Additional support by teachers and supportive Peer group
- D .3 Inclusive Content/methodology/pedagogy
- D .4 Classroom participation, absence of favoritism and respect by teachers

SEA Audit Findings

Fear free interaction with teachers

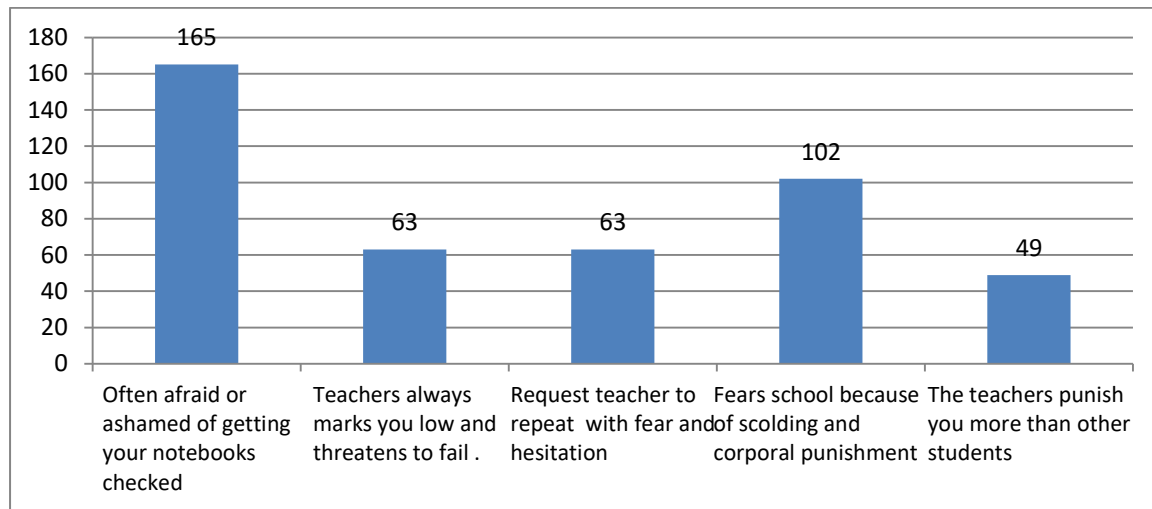


Figure 4.1 school going children on freedom to clear doubts, fear free interactions with teachers

Fear of getting notebook checked

27 % school going children expressed that they are afraid or shy to get their notebook checked by teachers. Many children shared how they found it extremely difficult to upkeep classwork and maintain notebooks. They had little support from the family and struggled with their homework. They reported feeling humiliated when teachers flung their notebooks on the floor or were subjected to ridicule by peers and punishments by teachers.

Fear of examinations

10 % school going children reported that they felt teachers gave them low marks and threatened to fail them in their examinations. They shared intense fear and anxiety about examinations and teacher response to them.

Fear to attend school

17 % reported fear of going to school owing to corporal punishments or scolding

8 % of respondents shared their feeling that teaches punish them more than they do other children

Inference

- Considerable number of children from the marginalized sections experience fear and anxiety in the classroom.
- Many children from SE/DA communities perceive teachers are actively biased against them. They give them poor marks compared to others. Teachers punish them more than they do others.
- They also bear the brunt of teacher threats to fail them.

- The schools and teachers do not meet the equity needs of these children given the social and educational limitations in their families and communities which needs additional attention, extra academic support, encouragement and peer support.

Recommendations

- Uphold and implement the continuous comprehensive evaluation and non-detention clauses of the RTE Act in letter and spirit
- Uphold and implement the additional academic support promised in the RTE Act by providing additional budgets, engaging community volunteers and teacher support
- Create spaces for teachers for self-reflection, dialogue with children and skills to promote a creative and constructivist approach to teaching and learning in class rooms.
- Treat teacher aberrations seriously in teacher assessments and career promotion.

D. 2 Additional Teacher/Peer support

Children from marginalised communities might have serious learning barriers and limited participation in the classrooms. The true inclusion will happen if children with variable learning needs are respected and welcomed by their peers and teachers. The sensitization of peers and teachers through activities which deconstruct stereo types, burst myths regarding different cultures and misconception holds lot of value in learning.

SEA Audit Findings

8% school going children reported that they do not get support from their peers in classroom learning or support with missing work when absent.

6% of children reported that they do not get any additional teacher support.

Inference

By and large children seem to find peer support in their classrooms and manage their learning. A small number reported lack of peer support or teacher support. They would really be the children in the last mile and the first ones to drop out of schooling.

Recommendation

- The education system need to evolve additional support measures and an inclusive class room environment involving peer groups to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and develop. Even as these proportions may be small or declining, they would be large in absolute numbers.
- Schools should be supported with budgets and human resources and encouraged to find strategies that no child drops out and all children enjoy learning and schooling.

D .3 Inclusive and equitable pedagogy

Creating an inclusive learning environment in the classroom is central to the learning and development of all children, particularly those from the marginalized sections. It requires specific capacity building and regular support to teachers.

SEA Audit Findings

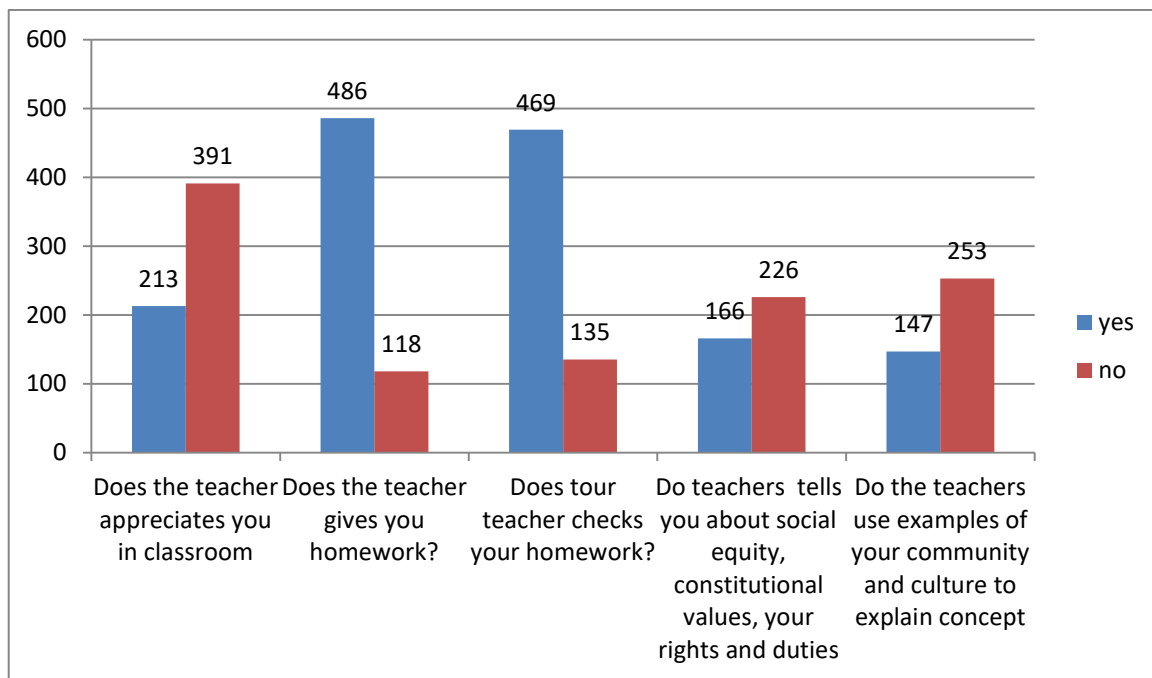


Figure 4. 3 inclusive and equitable pedagogy

- 65% school going children reported that their teachers do not appreciate them ever in the class-room.
- 20% of children do not get any homework,
- 22 % says their teachers do not check their homework.
- 27 % reported that their teacher teaches them about rights and constitutional entitlements.
- 24 % of the children said that their teachers use example from their culture to explain concepts in classroom

Inference

The majority of children from SE/DA communities did not experience appreciation from their teachers in the class room. Further they also experience neglect and apathy in terms of their homework or learning from the teachers who did not take the effort to give them homework or check their notebooks.

Majority of children reported that there is no discussion on Constitution, rights or entitlements in their class room; encouragingly 27% of children reported such discussions in their class rooms.

Similarly the majority of children reported that teachers do not take examples from their context to explain in class rooms; encouragingly 24% of the children said the teachers did take examples from their context to explain in the class rooms.

Student-teacher relationships develop over the course of the school year through a complex intersection of student and teacher beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with one another. Forming strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows students to feel safer and more secure in the school setting, feel more competent, make more positive connections with peers, and make greater academic gains. In contrast, conflict with teachers may place students on a trajectory of school failure in which they are unable to connect to academic and social resources offered within classrooms and schools.

Hamre, Pianta, Bear, & Minke

D. 4 Classroom participation, absence of favoritism and respect by teachers

Being welcomed, safe, included, respected, cared for, guided and supported in learning and treated fairly are all characteristics of an inclusive school. These qualitative features enable openness, trust, engagement, participation, and effective learning and positive growth. Pursuing these ideals in an equitable manner requires that teachers develop effective working relationships with all their students. Teachers and students are human beings and it should surprise no one that unintentional and intentional biases affect their relationships with each other. Such biases contribute to favoritism for some and neglectful and prejudicial actions toward others. Such barriers arise from negative attitudes related to sociocultural and economic background, current lifestyle, primary language spoken, skin color, gender, power, status, intervention orientation, and on and on. This negatively impacts

the class room environment as well as learning.

SEA Audit Findings

The SEA Audit explored some of the s related to teacher attention and bias. The findings brought out the favoritism practiced by teachers in schools. It is of concern children as young as 10-12 years of age are conscious and also recognize favoritism from teachers.

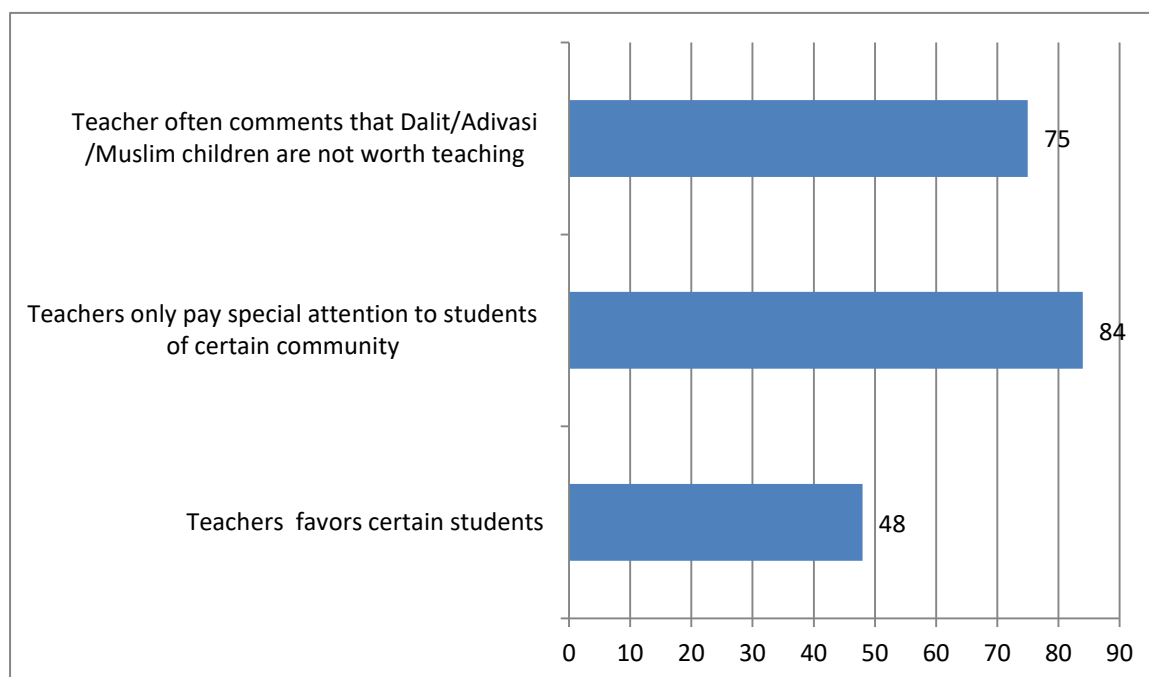


Figure 4.4 favoritism practiced by teachers inside the classroom

- 8 % of the children from marginalised groups feel that their teacher favors certain children over them.
- 14% have shared that their teacher pays attention to students from specific communities.
- 12 % responses also added that the teachers often comments that the children from dalit/tribal/Muslim communities are not worthy of being taught²⁰.

Inference

Children recognize that teachers favour some children and even children from specific communities. They also experience that teachers do not favour them and even discourage their learning. Even as the caste bias shows a decline, it is of concern that these are still evident in pockets. More so that children are aware of it and recognize it.

Recommendation

A continuous and constant monitoring against neglect and favoritism is central to promote inclusion and learning for children from SE/DA communities.

Teachers need support and continuous refresher on skills and approaches to encourage diversity and appreciation of children from SE/DA communities in their classrooms.

However, stringent measures need to be taken for bias, neglect and discrimination.

Incentives can be incorporated for teachers and schools for positive efforts on inclusive teaching-learning practices.

Dimension E. Fear free and safe environment for all

As often said education is more 'caught than taught'. All that happens in the school and the environment create learning opportunities for children. Children in the very formative stages of life are learning and getting educated through all the processes happening around them. Additionally,

²⁰ A research by Human rights watch has brought out practice of favoritism by teachers and exclusionary practices by teachers. The study highlighted evident bias against dalit, tribal and muslim children in classrooms.

<https://counterview.org/2018/02/26/new-national-education-policy-should-specifically-address-backwardness-of-dalits-and-advasis/>

http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/statistical_publication/social_statistics/Chapter_3.pdf

www.hrw.org/report/2014/04/22/they-say-were-dirty/denying-education-indias-marginalized

<http://www.usindiapolicy.org/documents/publications/USIPI-Publication-01-Shachar-Web.pdf>

learning and development happens in a positive and supportive environment, where there is encouragement, motivation, appreciation and opportunities.

This section reviews the experiences of children from the SE/DA communities in the school environment. How safe and comfortable do they perceive the environment within the school?

National Picture

Physical and sexual safety of children in schools is increasingly a concern, with reports of infrastructure gaps, accidents, sexual abuse and other forms of violence reported periodically. Mental harassment and corporal punishment as safety and well-being issues are also gaining attention.

In 2014, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) issued a set of guidelines to 'ensure the safety and well-being of children in schools' and to importantly protect and prevent safety hazards. The guidelines very comprehensively cover physical location, building safety, campus safety, class rooms, teachers and staff, excursions and trips, health and hygiene (drinking water, toilets, mid-day meal), psycho-social s (punishment, eve teasing, sexual abuse) to name. The monitoring and oversight as well as grievance redress is also detailed.

Unfortunately 'social safety' is yet to find a place in the discourse on safety. Our societal structure and system promotes fear and violence against children from the socially excluded and disadvantaged sections. The SEA Audit recognized the need to pay attention to fear and safety issues shared by SE/DA children. Social safety hazards are additional deterrents to their learning and development. The following indicators on safety were reviewed in the survey with school going children. Needless to say, additional indicators can be developed based on the context of the particular school.

Indicators

E. 1 Fear of personal safety on the way to school

E .2 Fear/ humiliation in class rooms by peers – to put the indicators on i) laughed at by other children, ii) beating by other children, iii) tearing books by children

E. 3 Fear/ humiliation by teachers (to put indicators on i) address by caste slurs, ii) assigned menial tasks, iii) punishment)

E.1 Fear of personal safety on the way to school

Parents and children have often reported fear en-route to schools prohibiting them to send children to school, especially girls. The RTE specifically talks about neighborhood schools to minimizing the travel time and reduce risks for children.

SEA Audit findings

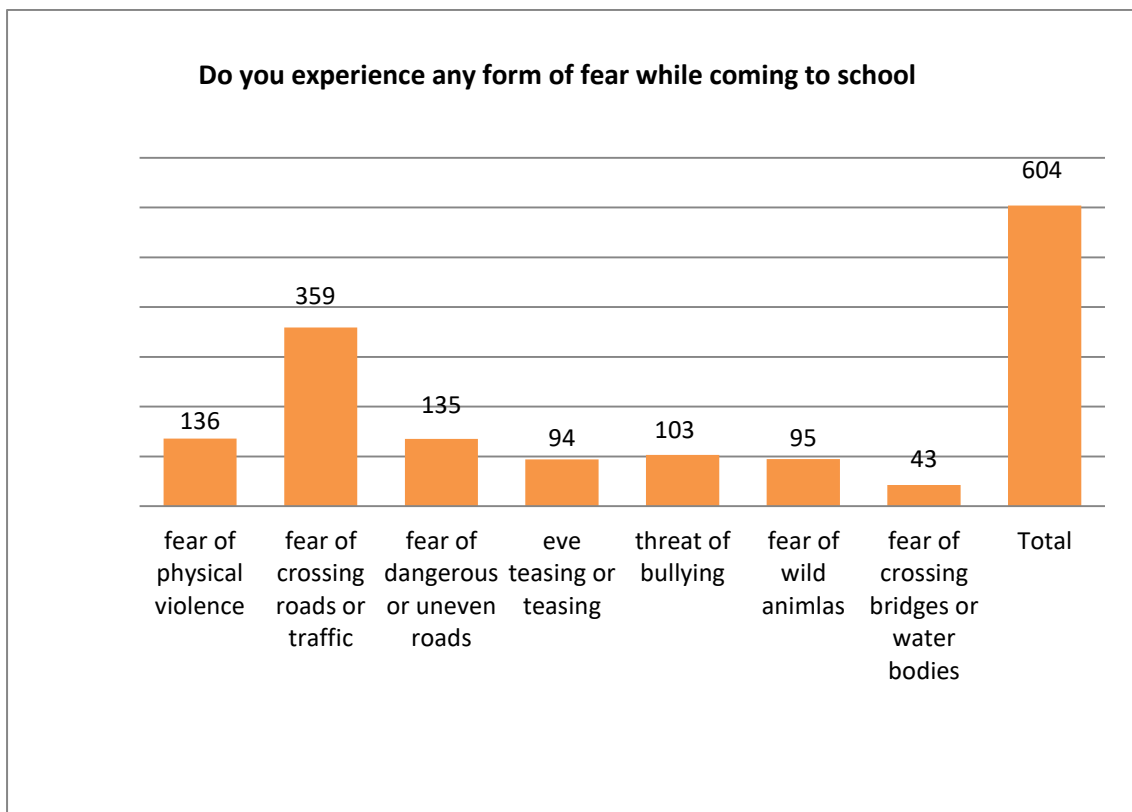


Figure 5.1 multiple forms of fears experienced by SE/DA children while coming to school

- 22.5% of children feared being subjected to physical violence while on their way to school.
- 59.4% children were afraid of traffic while going to their school.
- 22.4% of children feared crossing or passing through dangerous or uneven roads when going to school.
- 15.6% feared teasing or eve teasing in case of female students while going to school.
- 17.1% feared of getting bullied while going to school
- 7.1% feared crossing water bodies or the bridges
- 16% feared wild animals on their way to school

Inference

- Evidently the children who responded to the Audit reported different forms of fear and anxiety while on their way to school, with additional vulnerabilities faced by girl children.
- It is not clear if they have an opportunity to discuss these fears with parents on school authorities
- In focus group discussions, the children expressed fear of personal safety and violence when they crossed the dominant sections habitations. They also expressed that they feared bullying and threats primarily from dominant caste members including children.
- The survey did not have specific questions on fear and anxiety experienced by children with disabilities which need additional tracking.

- **E.2 Fear/humiliation in class rooms by teachers**

In various interactions with children from SE/DA communities, they have expressed their discomfort about their identity in the classroom space.

SEA Audit Findings

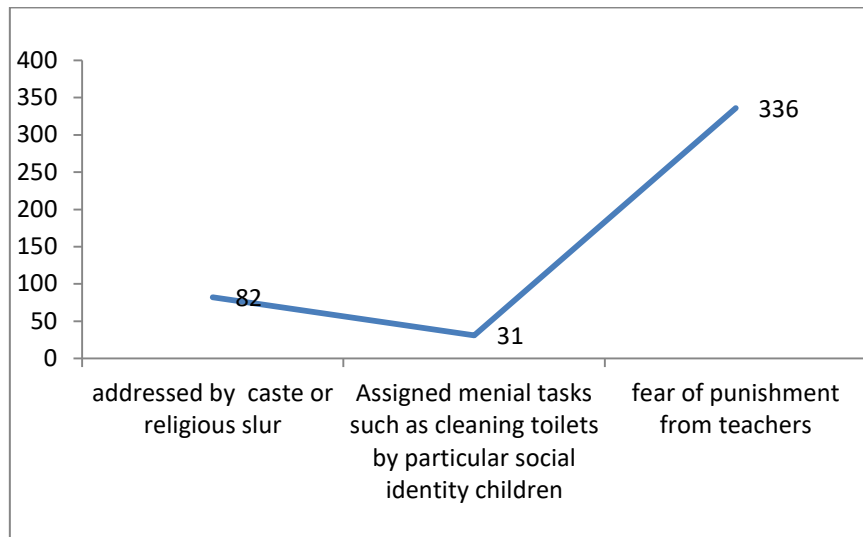


Figure 5.2 fear/ humiliation by teachers in school

Schools reflect many of the social norms and practices prevalent in society. Social identity of caste, religion or ethnicity is played out in the various practices within schools. Teachers play an important role in arresting negative social norms and building positive environment for all children, particularly those from disadvantaged sections in their classrooms.

- Children in some pockets reported that they felt humiliated in class rooms when referred to by their identities.
- There are instances where children are still assigned tasks like cleaning based on their identity.
- 56% of children were afraid of punishments by their teachers in the classrooms

Inference

It is encouraging that smaller numbers of children reported on name calling on caste/social identity and assigning of caste based tasks in classrooms. It is important to recognize that these trends have declined after recognizing them and also naming them as barriers and violations on children. The recognition, articulation and demand for addressing them have made a positive change.

Punishment by teachers continues to be a major of fear for children in the class rooms.

E.3 Fear/humiliation in class room by peer group

Children make lasting friendships from their schools. Peer relationships strengthen children's motivation to attend schools. The SEA Audit explored areas that highlight the manner in which caste relations or social identity pervade school processes and suggests that they are likely to vitiate social

interaction among children as well. Peer relations are a neglected sphere of school life but one that is extremely critical for academic and interpersonal relations.

- 79% of children feared being laughed at by other children
- 14 % of the responding children shared that their peers from general categories often fights with them and
- 17 % says that their books are often snatched or torn by children from general categories.

Inference

It is often seen in the class room and school that children continue to maintain their peer relationship with children from their habitations or social groups. While familiarity contributes to the process, fear and humiliation are also responsible for keeping them within known groups. Some of these need to address the fear of SE/DA children of physical violence by dominant caste children. The destruction or loss of their books can result in multiple fears in a child on how they will face their parents, how they will face their teachers, how they will manage to get another set of materials etc.

Recommendation

- The fear of segregation in the classroom/schools needs greater nuances and calibration to include fears experienced by children from SE/DA sections.
- While all the other fears outlined in the MHRD guidelines and other reports are also relevant to children from SE/DA sections, they experience additional s of fear based on their identities.
- Teachers need spaces to confront and address their own biases to promote a fear free and safe space and experiences for SE/DA children in the class rooms and schools.
- Teachers play an important role and can actively promote friendship across diverse groups of children.
- The ‘social s of fear’ as being deterrents to learning and development of ALL children need recognition and be incorporated into the discourse of safety and well-being of children in schools.

Dimension F: Equitable and equal opportunities to participate and lead

“The teachers don’t let us participate in any sports. Class monitors are always chosen from among Hindu boys and they always complain about us Muslim boys.”²¹ A 2006 report on the social, economic, and educational status of the Muslim population in India by a high-level committee set up by the prime minister (commonly referred to as the Sachar Committee report) concluded that “with regard to school education, the condition of Muslims is one of grave concern.” Participation and leadership practice in schools as the first and most organized space where children engage become critical for the growth and development of ALL children. Systemic bias against children from SE/DA

²¹ They Say We’re Dirty’: Denying an Education to India’s Marginalized,” HRW

sections continues to curtail the participation and leadership building within the school system. The ‘Co-Curricular’ space and activities provided in schools is important in developing their personality and confidence, strengthening peer relations and building secular identities in school.

National Picture

Participation of children is one of the four core s of the rights of children under the UN Child Rights Convention (UN CRC). Despite this recognition, there is little information or tracking on the participation and leadership engagement of children from SE/DA communities within the school or education sphere. Research on education often ignores this important sphere of school life.

Indicators

- F. 1 Participate/lead in school activities (children’s parliaments, morning assembly, school functions)
- F. 2 Leadership tasks opportunities (MDM, Guests, Class Monitor)
- F. 3 Academic opportunities (write and read in front of class)
- F. 4 Absence of Active discouragement

SEA Audit Findings

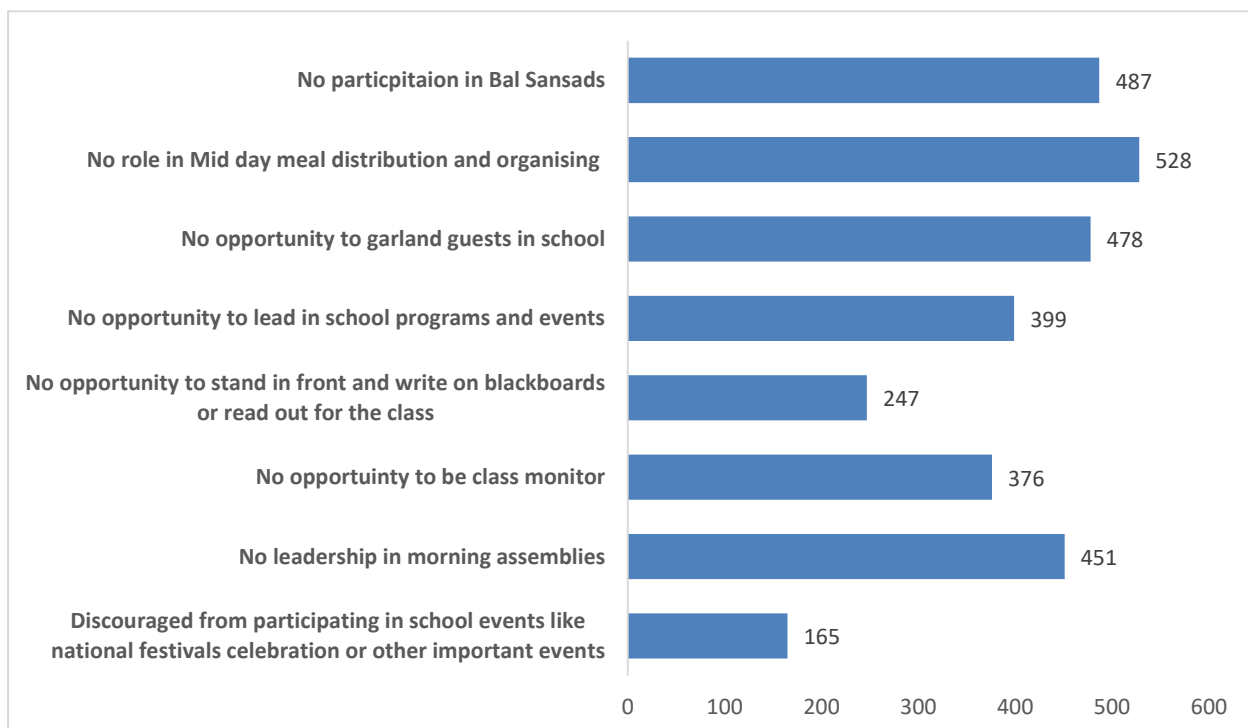


Figure 6.1 participation and leadership opportunities for SE/DA children

4.1 Participation/leadership

Bal Sansads/Children’s parliament

- 81% of the respondent children reported that they do not lead or participate in children's parliament.

Morning assemblies

- 75% of the responding children did not ever get opportunities to lead in morning assemblies. The children further shared that only hand-picked gets this opportunity.

Any school programme

66 % of respondents reported not participating/leading any school programme

4.2 Leadership tasks

Class monitor

- 62% of the responding children reported (376 out of 604) that they are not given any opportunity to be the class monitor. In discussions, they expanded saying Dalit and Muslim children are not made class monitors.

Mid-day meals

- 87 % of the responding children did not get opportunity to serve or manage mid-day meal distribution in school.

Garlanding guests

- 79 % of children reported that they have no opportunity to garland guests that come to school on functions.

4.3 Academic Opportunity

- 41 % of children said they did not have an opportunity to stand in the front and read aloud or write on the black board for the rest of the class.

4.4 Discouragement

- 27 % of children reported they were actively discouraged by teachers from taking leadership or participate in the school activities

Inference

Of all the mapped children articulated most clearly in the leadership and participation. They were conscious of the spaces where they had unequal opportunities or were actively prevented from participating or leading. They also recognize their social identity as the reason behind these barriers and prohibitions.

As reported earlier, some of the instances of institutional discrimination and practices in schools like in mid-day meal and segregation have been highlighted and are beginning to be addressed through guidelines, circulars and policy measures. MHRD has given guidelines against discrimination in

schools, particularly in mid-day meals. Even when participation is a core pillar in children's rights, there lack a translation of the principle in real time practices.

This SEA Audit has may be for the first time identified some of these critical s and indicators to track them.

Recommendations

Better integration of participation and leadership opportunities as part of education and schooling is necessary. Its use as a tool for learning and development of children within the school environment needs better articulation in the pedagogy.

Identify in a nuanced manner through discussions with SE/DA children their challenges and barriers to participation and leadership opportunities and build literature and pedagogy around them.

Give adequate importance to participation and leadership building as curricular and co-curricular activities in teacher training and support processes.

Chapter 4. Framework for SEA Audit tools for school education

stakeholders	Audit Dimensions	Tool	Guidance note
School going children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical infrastructure 2. Cultural equity and inclusiveness 3. Teaching and learning pedagogy 4. Rights and entitlements 5. Psychological fear 6. participation and leadership opportunities 	Individual questionnaire	The tool should be administered by the field investigator. It's a one on one interview with school going children from SE/DA communities.
OOSC	Reasons for dropping out	FGD	Check on all equity dimensions
SMC	Grievance redressal and accountability	Individual questionnaire with special focus on role and responsibility of SMC member	The field investigator must probe into the awareness level of SMC member and also inquire about the nature of complaints received and interventions to address the complaints
District Education officer	Grievance redressal and accountability	Individual questionnaire with special focus on accountability of DEO	The field investigator should check on monitoring capacity of DEO and also understand the nature of complaints received and challenges faced by DEO
	All equity dimensions	School observation sheet	The field investigator should observe the school on all mentioned equity indicators and fill up the sheet

SEA Tool for mapping equity and inclusion dimensions in schools

Notes to the Investigator: the questions below are addressed to an individual respondent and please ensure that the concerned person answers himself or herself (please make a note of child's participation and awareness). If at all possible, conduct the interview at home with permission from parents / guardian, and in any case not in a group. Before starting the interview, introduce yourself carefully and check that the responding child is willing to spare up time almost half an hour or so for this discussion. If during the discussion it is observed that the child is losing interest or concentration, pause and follow the procedures after a break. If any question is not applicable, write "NA" in the relevant space.

Village: / _____ / Gram Panchayat: / _____ /

Block: / _____ / District: / _____ /

Investigator's name(s): / _____ /

Name of respondent: / _____ / Date: / _____ /

Class currently studying: / _____ /

Name of school and address: / _____ /

/ _____ /

/ _____ /

School code: / _____ /

Dimension A: Equitable and inclusive infrastructure in schools		
S.NO	Indicators	Codes
A.1	<i>Barrier free access to all children to drinking water</i>	
	Do you carry your own water bottle to school?	

	[1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Is drinking water available in your school? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
1.	When available do you have any barriers in accessing drinking water in your school? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	If you have barriers, please identify? [1=teachers stop you from drinking water , 2=other children stops you from consuming water from common water sources, 3=taps are at height where you can't reach, 4=taps are broken, 5= too many children and less taps/points, 6=dirty water, 7=community is also accessing the water source, 8= water source is outside school premises, 9= Not applicable]	
2.	If no , how often are you stopped from drinking water [1= sometimes, 2= most of the times,3= always, 9=unclear]	
3.	Who stops you from drinking water? [1= teacher 2= peon or other help staff ,3= peers, 4= senior children, 9=any other]	
4.	[1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
5.	When they stop you from consuming water in common times, what are the reason they give you [1=, 1==there is no water,2== shortage of water, 3==you will pollute the water/water source,4= any other reason,9=unclear]	
4.	Do you think that because of your social identity you are stopped from accessing water? [1= yes 2= no,9=not sure]	
A.2	Barrier free access to toilets	
	Do you have toilets in your school?	
	If Yes, do you have separate toilets available for following: i. Females [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear] ii. CWSN [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear] iii. Staff [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	If No, where do you go for toilets? Females from the school goes for toilet..... Staff from the school goes for toilet.....	

	CWSN from the school goes for toilet.....	
	Do you have locked toilets in your school? [1= locked sometimes, 2= locked most of the times,3= always locked , 9=not applicable]	
	When available does anyone stop you from using the toilet? [1= teacher 2= peon or other help staff ,3= peers, 4= senior children, 9=any other]	
	When the toilets are locked, what are the reasons they give you. [1=you are not allowed to use toilets use the toilet, 2= the toilets are reserved for staff, 3=there is no water inside the toilet, 4= you take too many toilet breaks and disturbs the class, 5=you will dirty the toilets, 6= the toilets are under construction, 7=any other reason,9=unclear]	
	When toilets are accessible, what issues do you encounter? [1= dirty toilets, 2=no water, 3=too dark, 4= not safe, 5= bullying from other children, 6=any other,9=not applicable]	
A.3	Seating arrangement in classroom ensuring every child has equal learning and participation opportunities	
	Does at school they ask you to bring your own <i>durrie/ mat to sit in the classroom?</i> [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Can you choose your seat in the classroom? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
	Do you want to sit in the front row of your class? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Can you sit in the front row of your class? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
	If no, give reasons [1=teacher gets angry if you sit in the front, 2= only teachers favorites' can sit in the front row,3= you are too afraid to sit in the front row, 4= peers in the classroom doesn't allow you to sit in front, 5=children from <i>dalit/tribal/ muslim</i> communities are not allowed to sit in front, 6= all of the above, 9= unclear]	
	Are children from dalit/tribal/ muslim or other vulnerable groups are instructed by teachers to sit at the back / last row?	

	[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
	Are children from dalit/tribal/ muslim or other vulnerable groups are instructed by teachers to sit together only? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
A.4	Barrier free access for all to play grounds and games	
	Does your school have play ground? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Can you access to the playground during breaks or sports period? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
	If no, why do you access? [1=the playground is too dirty, 2= the playground is occupied by people from outside ,3=playground has water logging, 4= the playground has animals (for grazing etc), 5= you find the playground unsafe, 6= absence of boundary wall, 7= all of the above, 8=any other, 9=unclear]	
	Do you get a sports or physical training period/slot in a week? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Do you have PT teacher in school? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Do you have play material and sports equipment in school? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Can you access the play material and sports equipment in school? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Dimension B. inclusive and Equitable culture in classrooms and school <i>[Note to the investigator: before initiating dimension B, please ensure you have a general discussion on child's specific culture focusing on language, festivals, role models, leaders etc]</i>	
B.1	Common celebration of diverse days and festivals in schools	
	Does the school celebrate festivals or days of importance of your community? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]	
	If never or sometimes, which festivals or days you would like to celebrate in school? 1..... 2..... 3.....	

	<p>Does the school have pictures of leaders representing your community in the school?</p> <p>[1= yes,2=few,3=not at all, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Any sayings or messages from your leaders in school?</p> <p>[1= yes,2=few,3=not at all, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you get an opportunity to share about your community's role models or leaders/people of importance in school?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Does the teacher in classroom quotes examples from your community while teaching or explaining?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Does the school curriculum includes lessons about your community or local leaders and important figures/personalities from your specific community?</p> <p>Yes or no</p>	
	<p>Does the teacher often make remarks /derogatory comments about your culture or language?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Does fellow students often make remarks /derogatory comments about your culture or language?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Are you mandated to do any task in school which is against your custom/religion?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>If yes, please explain the nature of task.</p>	
	Dimension C. Rights and Entitlements	
C.1	All children have adequate and timely provisions to ensure complete and free education	
C 1.1	<i>Inclusive and nutritive mid-day meal scheme (MDMS)</i> [Note to the investigator: Please leave this section blank if mid-day meal provision is not applicable for the child]	
	Are you provided with mid- day meals in school	
	[1=regular, 2=not regularo, 3= never provided, 9=unclear]	

	<p>Do you have fixed weekly menu for MDMS?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Is the weekly menu put on a display ?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you have separate seating arrangements during Mid-day meals distribution in school?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p> <p>Are you served separately during mid-day meals?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Are you served last during mid-day meals?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Are you instructed to bring own utensils for mid-day meal?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Are you asked to make separate queue during MDMS distribution based on your social identity?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Is the quantity of food served during MDMS sufficient for you?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you get second servings when asked during MDMS?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you often feel tired and lethargic?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you feel hungry most of the time?</p> <p>[1=yes always, 2=sometimes, 3= never, 9=unclear]</p>	
C 1.2	<p>Respectful Handover /disbursements of entitlements (like books, stationary and scholarship)</p> <p>[Note to the investigator: Please leave this section blank if above mentioned provisions is not applicable for the child]</p>	
	<p>Do you receive books in the beginning of the academic session?</p>	

	[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never , 5 =not applicable 9=unclear]	
	Do you receive uniforms in the beginning of the academic session(or beginning of season fpr winter uniform on time? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you give any type of commission or bribe to receive scholarships or any other entitlement? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you feel humiliated or embarrassed when teachers call out your name in front of the class and ask you to bring your parents to collect your entitlements? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does the teacher threaten to discontinue your entitlements? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does the teacher discriminates or is disrespectful toward you or your parents while handing over the entitlements? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does fellow students/peers discriminates as you receive the scholarships and they don't? [1= all of them 2=most of the them, 3=only some,4= never as they also receive entitlements ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you get help or support in while filling or getting your documentation like AADHAR card, Transfer Certificate, IDs , birth and caste certificate, bank account etc.? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	D. Inclusive Teaching and learning pedagogy	
D 1	Fear free interactions with teachers ,freedom to clear doubts	
	Do you fear getting your notebooks checked by teachers?	

	[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never , 9=unclear]	
	Does the teacher tears or flungs your notebooks on the floor ? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never, 9=unclear]	
	Do you fear examinations? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
D 1.1	Corporal punishments	
	Do you get punishments in the school? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	If you receive punishment which type of punishment? <i>[Note to investigator: please record if the child shares any unusual or any extreme form of punishment. Also probe that is this punishment exclusively meant for certain social identity or for all. Also make a note of frequency of the punishments]</i> [1= verbal scolding and warning, 2=Scaling on hands , 3= stand outside, 4= squat inside/outside classroom, 5=duster /chalks /notebooks being thrown at you, 6= twisting of ears, 7=slapping on face/back, 8=all of them, 9=any other]	
	Do you think that you receive more punishment compared to other students? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
D.2	Additional Teacher and peer support	
	Does the teacher make any additional efforts to help you understand and explain lessons in classroom? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does your peer supports you in covering up missing classwork/homework if you miss classes? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does you peer/fellow classmate helps you in understanding lessons or concepts? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	

D.3	Inclusive content and equitable pedagogy	
	<p>Does the teacher appreciate you in the classroom?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Does the teacher provide support to finish your homework?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Does the teacher check your homework?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do the teachers tells you about social equity, constitutional values, fundamental rights and duties?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never , 9=unclear]</p>	
D.4	Classroom participation, absence of favoritism and respect by teachers	
	<p>Does your teacher often comment that Dalit/Adivasi /Muslim children are not worth teaching?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do your teachers pay special attention to students from specific communities?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>Do you think you get neglected because of your identity</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	Dimension E. Fear free and safe school environment for all	
E. 1	Fear of personal safety on the way to school	
	<p>Do you fear for your personal safety while going to school?</p> <p>[1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]</p>	
	<p>If yes, what kind of fear do you encounter on your way to school?</p> <p>[1=fear of physical violence, 2= fear of traffic or crossing the roads, 3= fear of dangerous or broken roads, 4= fear of eve teasing or teasing, 5= fear of bullying by</p>	

	elder children, 6= fear of animals, 7= any other fear, 8=none of the above	
E.2	Fear/ humiliation in classroom by teachers	
	Does the teacher address you by caste or religious names/slur? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Assigned menial tasks such as cleaning toilets by particular social identity children [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you fear of getting punished from the teachers? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
E .3	Fear/humiliation in class room by peer group	
	Do you fear of being laughed at by other children? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you fear beatings or physical attacks by children from general categories in school? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Does anyone in the classroom forcefully snatches and tears your book? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Dimension F Equitable and equal opportunities to participate and lead	
F.1	Participate/lead in school activities (children's parliaments, morning assembly, school functions)	
	Does your school have Bal Sansads /Children's parliament [1=yes, 2=no, 3=not sure]	
	If yes, do you participate in Bal Sansads /Children's parliament? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable,	

	9=unclear]	
	Do you get to lead in morning assemblies and prayers? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you get an opportunity to participate any school program? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
E.2	Leadership opportunities	
	Have you have been given an opportunity to be a class monitor? [1= yes once, 2=more than once, 3= never ,4 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you ever get an opportunity to supervise or manage MDMS? [1= yes once, 2=more than once, 3= never ,4 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Do you get an opportunity in school to garland, offer flowers or light lamps etc during school programs? [1= yes once, 2=more than once, 3= never ,4 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
E.3	Academic opportunity	
	Do you ever get an opportunity to stand and read aloud or write on the blackboards? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
E.5	Active discouragement	
	Do you feel the teacher always discourages you from taking leadership role or participating in extracurricular activities? [1= always 2=most of the time, 3=only sometimes,4= never ,5 =not applicable, 9=unclear]	
	Grievance Redressal	
	Have you ever complained? [1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]	
	Complained to whom [1= class teacher 2= any other teacher/ head of the school, 3= Parents, 4=complaint box, 5=DEO, 6=any other,9=unclear]	
	Nature of complaint:	

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	<p>Has any action being taken to address your complaint?</p> <p>[1= yes 2= no,9=unclear]</p> <p>[Investigator: Please note the nature of complaint filed and if any action has been taken. If the complaint has any written record please make a note of it.]</p>	
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Investigator Notes:

Way forward

1. The state has recognised the infrastructural inequity and existing discrimination, the findings from SEA audit process has also reiterated this to some extent. The infrastructural gaps like water, toilets, playgrounds, classrooms has been recognised by state but requires a more specific 'last mile provision approach' in govt plans and budgets. The state plans and provisions need a more nuanced approach to providing equitable and non-discriminatory access to clean drinking water, toilets etc. Teacher trainings need to include the importance of promoting diversity, friendship and peer support through relevant seating arrangements in classrooms. Teacher attitudes and bias need safe and reflective spaces in teacher training modules for behavior change. Some earlier classroom experiments have reported experiments in seating arrangements like children sitting in a circle, children sitting in smaller groups, rotational basis of seating etc. Such discussions and practices need to be brought back into discussions and practice.

2. Inclusive and equitable culture within the education framework lacks recognition and understanding so far. The SEA audit is pioneer in identifying some of the core indicators and conducting a survey among children from SE/DA communities across 5 states. There is a need for recognizing the culture of socially excluded communities and equitable representation in curriculum and content to enhance participation in schools by all. Cultural inclusion can be an important resource and tool in learning, development and nation building.

3. The SEA's findings however highlighted that there has been substantial reduction of such segregation and other evident forms of exclusionary practices during MDMS. Given that MDM was a site for much discrimination and exclusion, the attention and reporting on the issues have clearly had a positive impact on reducing the same. Reports of exclusion and discrimination in Mid-day meals of both children and functionaries have been highlighted through studies, particularly of the Dalit communities. It is encouraging to note that the very explicit and visible forms of discrimination and exclusion in the process have come down. The SEA Audit process however recognized the next layer of equity issues with regard to the adequacy and quality of mid-day meal in addressing hunger and mal-nutrition among children from the marginalized sections. The widespread prevalence of hunger, lethargy and its impact on children's learning and development needs further attention. The findings of the study show that there is little focus on providing adequate quality of food for the children. Children continued to complain of hunger and lethargy in the audit. Mid-day meals should essentially take the next step to create a menu and ensure the adequacy and quality of food to promote nutrition, health and wellbeing among children as measure for promoting equity for children who come from poor and marginalized sections

4. Scholarships and other incentives in education are both equity and inclusion measures. It lightens the financial burden on the family partially and enhances enrollment and retention of students from marginalised communities. Children find the current mechanisms for providing entitlements inadequate and deterrent to their dignity in the processes of identifying children, ensuring timely disbursements, ensuring entitlements to all eligible children. Include a mechanism to assess and meet the full and real time costs through scholarships and other entitlements to make school education completely free. The equity and inclusion dimension of scholarships and entitlements

need greater emphasis with the teachers and wider public and not merely as a 'subsidy' or even unnecessary expenditure by the government. Explore ways in which the identity and dignity of children accessing entitlements is ensured while providing scholarships and entitlements. Include information and dialogue on the positive sides of entitlements in education expanding upon the resilience of the individual and community, cultural and diversity social capitals and national value.

5. By and large children seem to find peer support in their classrooms and manage their learning. A small number reported lack of peer support or teacher support. They would really be the children in the last mile and the first ones to drop out of schooling. The education system need to evolve additional support measures and an inclusive class room environment involving peer groups to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and develop. Even as these proportions may be small or declining, they would be large in absolute numbers. Schools should be supported with budgets and human resources and encouraged to find strategies that no child drops out and all children enjoy learning and schooling.

6. The majority of children from SE/DA communities did not experience appreciation from their teachers in the class room. Further they also experience neglect and apathy in terms of their homework or learning from the teachers who did not take the effort to give them homework or check their notebooks. Children recognize that teachers favour some children and even children from specific communities. They also experience that teachers do not favour them and even discourage their learning. Even as the caste bias shows a decline, it is of concern that these are still evident in pockets. More so that children are aware of it and recognize it. A continuous and constant monitoring against neglect and favoritism is central to promote inclusion and learning for children from SE/DA communities. Teachers need support and continuous refresher on skills and approaches to encourage diversity and appreciation of children from SE/DA communities in their classrooms. However, stringent measures need to be taken for bias, neglect and discrimination. Incentives can be incorporated for teachers and schools for positive efforts on inclusive teaching-learning practices

7. It is encouraging that smaller numbers of children reported on name calling on caste/social identity and assigning of caste based tasks in classrooms. It is important to recognize that these trends have declined after recognizing them and also naming them as barriers and violations on children. The recognition, articulation and demand for addressing them have made a positive change. Punishment by teachers continues to be a major dimension of fear for children in the class rooms.

8. Children make lasting friendships from their schools. Peer relationships strengthen children's motivation to attend schools. The SEA Audit explored areas that highlight the manner in which caste relations or social identity pervade school processes and suggests that they are likely to vitiate social interaction among children as well. Peer relations are a neglected sphere of school life but one that is extremely critical for academic and interpersonal relations.

9. It is often seen in the class room and school that children continue to maintain their peer relationship with children from their habitations or social groups. While familiarity contributes to the process, fear and humiliation are also responsible for keeping them within known groups. Some of these dimensions that need address are the fear of SE/DA children of physical violence by dominant caste children. The destruction or loss of their books can result in multiple fears in a child on how they will face their parents, how they will face their teachers, how they will manage to get another

set of materials etc. The dimensions of fear in the classroom/schools need greater nuances and calibration to include fears experienced by children from SE/DA sections. While all the other dimensions of fear outlined in the MHRD guidelines and other reports are also relevant to children from SE/DA sections, they experience additional dimensions of fear based on their identities. Teachers need spaces to confront and address their own biases to promote a fear free and safe space and experiences for SE/DA children in the class rooms and schools. Teachers play an important role and can actively promote friendship across diverse groups of children. The 'social dimensions of fear' as being deterrents to learning and development of ALL children need recognition and be incorporated into the discourse of safety and well-being of children in schools.

10. Of all the mapped dimensions, children articulated most clearly in the leadership and participation dimension. They were conscious of the spaces where they had unequal opportunities or were actively prevented from participating or leading. They also recognize their social identity as the reason behind these barriers and prohibitions.

As reported earlier, some of the instances of institutional discrimination and practices in schools like in mid-day meal and segregation have been highlighted and are beginning to be addressed through guidelines, circulars and policy measures. MHRD has given guidelines against discrimination in schools, particularly in mid-day meals. Even when participation is a core pillar in children's rights, there lack a translation of the principle in real time practices. This SEA Audit has may be for the first time identified some of these critical dimensions and indicators to track them. Better integration of participation and leadership opportunities as part of education and schooling is necessary. Its use as a tool for learning and development of children within the school environment needs better articulation in the pedagogy. Identify in a nuanced manner through discussions with SE/DA children their challenges and barriers to participation and leadership opportunities and build literature and pedagogy around them. Give adequate importance to participation and leadership building as curricular and co-curricular activities in teacher training and support processes.

The Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI), established in 2009 in Delhi, India, focuses on promoting social equity for marginalized communities, particularly Dalit, Tribal, and Minority youth.

CSEI envisions a just, inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunities and capabilities to reach their potential. The organization has evolved through internal and external reflections, leading to three primary streams of work: the Youth Equity Forum (YEF), youth skill development and entrepreneurship, and social policy, research, and advocacy.

Key interventions include promoting Youth Equity Forums, which provide marginalized youth a platform for leadership and action. CSEI also initiated the Girls Learning and Leadership Program (GLLP) in 2020, which supports adolescent girls from marginalized communities through gender and social inclusion curricula, digital literacy, career guidance, and community building. The program has engaged over 2,500 girls and aims to build a girls collective.

CSEI further supports sexual and reproductive health education, facilitates citizen-generated data for marginalized communities, and partners with community-led organizations (CLOs) to drive transformative social change. Through research, collaboration with curriculum experts, and a focus on civic action, CSEI aims to evolve and empower youth to challenge social inequities continuously.

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