

**A Study on Mapping of Learning Environment and Communities
Relation with School**

**Dissertation Report
in
Urmul Setu Sansthan, Lunkaransar, Bikaner**

**By
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**Under the Guidance of
Dr. Rahul Ghai**

**Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management
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**School of Rural Management
Institute of Health Management Research,
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2014**

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This is to certify that **Ms. Sumukhi Vaid** student of PGDRM, Batch 3rd School of Rural Management, Institute of Health Management Research; Jaipur has undergone her Dissertation on the topic entitled "**Mapping of Learning Environment and Communities Relation with School**" at Urmul Setu Sansthan, Lunkaransar, from **March to May 2014**.

The Candidate has successfully carried out the study assigned to her during dissertation and her approach to study has been scientific and analytical. This dissertation is partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the award of Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management.

I wish her all success in all her future endeavors.

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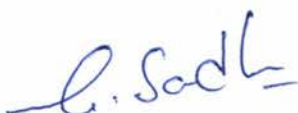
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This is to certify that the dissertation titled "Mapping of learning Environment and Communities Relation with School" by Sumukhi Vaid, Enrollment No. IIHMR/PGDRM/2012-14/03-55 under the supervision of Prof. Rahul Ghai for award of Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management of the Institute carried out during the period from March-May, 2014 embodies my original work and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma associate ship, fellowship, titles in this or any other Institute or other similar institution of higher learning.

Sumukhi

Signature

Executive Summary

Urmul Setu Sansthan has been working towards education since a long time. They presently are working with the Government in order to strengthen Right to Education. The study aims to understand the learning environment and the relationship that communities form with the school of Lunkaransar block of Bikaner. The objectives of the study were to assess if School Management Committee have helped in creating a learning environment, to understand what relation community forms with school and to point out a say of children's perception towards a school. It was an explorative research for which questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, informal interaction and documentary research were used. There were 8 schools from Kalu cluster, KGBV and a school in 507 head, khiyaraan village and interaction with education workers that helped in completing the study. A few case studies in the study help describe what can constitute an effective learning environment - One needs a good coordination among teachers, students and parents, Young, energetic and motivated teachers can be the central part in bringing an effective learning, School Management Committees can be more effective if there is willingness on the part of both teachers and community to bring in school a better learning environment, Learning environment is under a threat of jobs and grades and study because one gets a job out of that is a wrong concept being circulated in the market and grades criteria for knowledge. The study tries to tell that one can portray the same learning environment that one would wish to learn from. Fostering learning environment is not as hard as one thinks of to be.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the last decade, India has made greater stride in strengthening its education system. One of the major reforms was the enactment and implementation of Right to Children Free and compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. Nearly, 98% enrolment at primary level has been seen successfully by implementing the Right to Education Act. With the growing time India is slowly and slowly seeing changes in the Education system. There have been many improvements in the teaching learning method apart from just chalk and blackboard and teacher dictation. There have been many new technologies that have come up in order to make learning fun than just a rote learning process. However, it has been seen that these have been restricted just to urban schools and unfortunately not moved onto the schools which have been in the rural areas.

It is a disquiet that even up till now India's education system has not achieved strong learning outcomes and still has a long way to go to ensure that every child reaps the full benefits of a high quality education system. There are several concerns over this system like to mention a few:

1. The education system has been facing a distress in terms quality, negligible parental involvement, well trained and dedicated teacher staff.
2. The introduction of non-formal schooling system came up due to several reasons like drop outs, but many have come up because of the lack of access and quality in the education system. But one has to ensure that this does not act as an excuse for not improving the schooling system.
3. Syllabus constraint creates another problem both for the teachers as well as the students. It is another challenge to develop an ideal classroom wherein all children get equal opportunity to learn at their own pace.
4. The issue of learning for the sake of passing tests. It has somehow now become a tradition and unfortunately the Right to Education which came up positively has reversed

back negatively. The teachers along with the students have become less motivated as they know that a student by any chance will pass on till 8th. This stands for a good reason for children after this level dropping out.

Thus, the education system should be flexible and evolve in a manner that caters the demands of the society. The whole thing to seek quality education starts from school building to programme monitoring. Quality would include content and process of education, classroom process, textbooks, materials used and teachers training. Conducive learning environment is created where all learners feel wanted, valued and teachers role is that of a facilitator in learning. Discipline is created where teachers and children develop their own norms jointly and follow them instead of teachers directed principles. Physical environment includes a safe and tidy place with sufficient space to conduct various kinds of activities. These all constitute to the learning environment. One needs to understand that learning environment is the contribution of teachers, students and community together.

Chapter 2

Thar Region and Urmul Setu Sansthan

Bikaner district, having a population of 1,673,562 is spread over an area of over 27,244-sq. km. in northwestern Rajasthan bordering Pakistan. The area forms part of the Great Indian Thar.

The Thar Desert has never been hospitable to large permanent settlements due to environmental constraints such as: grossly impoverished soils, seasonal high wind velocity, winds creating acute soil erosion, continuously shifting sand dunes, and very deep and saline water resources (300-500ft).

Lunkaransar and Chhatargarh are one of the backward blocks of Bikaner Districts. Sardarsahar is one of the backward blocks of the Churu District. The interior villages of this block still lack access to the basic necessities of education, health, water, communication infrastructure, and employment opportunities. The block comprises 110 revenue villages with a total population of 1,56,382. The revenue villages do not take into consideration the numerous smaller settlements near the agricultural fields/ canal (*Dhanis*) that are so typical of this part of the state. The ranns of Lunkaransar are the major saline depressions.

Development challenges

- ❖ Harsh climate and fragile ecology
- ❖ Extreme caste gender inequity and discrimination
- ❖ Inadequate communication and infrastructure facilities
- ❖ Scattered and mobile population
- ❖ Backward and poor status of women
- ❖ Prevalence of endemic diseases and epidemics

- ❖ Lack of access of information
- ❖ Ecological imbalance
- ❖ Save drinking water
- ❖ Proper knowledge of government schemes
- ❖ Lack of people participation

Urmul Setu – Lunkaransar

Urmul Setu took birth as a result of the decentralisation process of Urmul Trust. It was registered as a separate organisation in the year 1994 under the Society Registration Act. The programmes in the Lunkaransar block were being carried under the name of Trust prior to this. The projects thereby had separate management boards, which had membership from eminent persons at the state and national level as well as from the communities with whom the Trust works. This decentralization brought to the fore enhanced community involvement. URMUL Setu is today led by local people from the region. Lunkaransar and chhatargarh is the most backward block in the district. Saradarsahar is the most backward block in churu districts. The interior villages of this block still lack access to the basic necessities of education, health, water, communication infrastructure, and employment opportunities. The revenue villages do not take into consideration the numerous smaller settlements near the agricultural fields/ canal (*Dhanis*) that are so typical of this part of the state. Milk production, sheep rearing for wool, and subsistence farming are the primary economic activities of the area. There has been a switch to cash crops, and a disbandment of grazing lands. Severe water logging in many previously fertile areas has displaced a large number of farmers. Additionally, a vicious cycle of indebtedness sets in, given

the inability of farmers to sustain their investments from their agricultural income. The allotment of erstwhile grazing lands further deters farmers from considering animal husbandry as a livelihood option. Over a period of time, both lands as well as people's lives have deteriorated. Marginalised, small and middle farmers who are unable to both hold onto and cultivate their lands have been worst affected. With the settlement of farmers into dispersed hamlets, and with the 12 month farming routine, women find themselves increasingly overworked and socially isolated. Some or the other part of the block is always under drought like conditions because of irregular rainfall. This gives rise to large scale migration (almost 30 % of the total population) every year. Though this gives them enough opportunity to survive, it has obvious long-term repercussions in the areas of health and education of the family members, especially child and mother. And if there is a good agricultural harvest in a year, the proceeds are either spent in expensive social rituals (like Mrityu Bhoj and marriage), or given to the moneylender as instalments for the debts incurred. As mentioned before, the problems of rain fed and irrigated areas are different. The farmers in the rain fed region remain completely unaware of the latest techniques, research, and applications in the field. They become dependent on seeds, fertilizers and pesticides available in the market on the recommendations of the unscrupulous agents without being aware of their utility, quality or dosage. This more often lands them in heavy investment without adequate returns. The poor in the region have an altogether different problem. They have been allotted land that requires heavy investment to become fit for irrigation. The farmers resort to loans from moneylenders at usurious rates. One more reason for the small farmers approaching the moneylender is that they are unable to plough in working capital into their fields on a sustained basis. And usually when they are unable to repay the loans

taken, sell their land at throw away prices. Unavailability of enough water in the canal has further compounded their problems.

Education at Urmul Setu Sansthan

URMUL Trust was a pioneer in initiating education initiatives in the harsh and interior terrsain of Bikaner district. The roots of the education programme as we see now can be traced back to efforts that began almost a decade and a half earlier. The education programme primarily focuses on ensuring that all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years attend school. The program aims to work in cooperation with Government schools to enhance capacity of the teachers at the primary level. It organises residential literacy camp (balika Shivar) for middle, secondary and high secondary level girls students. Education still struggles to be a part of mainstream. Kalu is a cluster consisting of 17 villages 21 kms away from a small town named Lunkaransar. The hot and humid climate does not let the villager take a sign of relief. Rainfed agriculture is the only means and water scarcity remains a crisis in the region. Ill effect of the same is seen during the monsoons when half the population in the classrooms become empty as most children either go to work in their respective fields or migrate along with their families in search of work. Retention of children in schools during the peak agricultural season or during droughts has been a persistent challenge for education workers. This reinforces the conviction that a good learning environment may facilitate better retention of children as well more involvement of the communities in schools. It also underscores the fact that learning environment cannot be created by a teacher alone but with the joint effort of children, community and teachers.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Below are mentioned some key points from select studies reviewed that help in understanding the different aspects of learning environment.

Seeing the current impasse in assessing children at schools many studies have tried to understand the issues involved in assessment in a manner that it does not hamper the congenial learning environment on schools. One such paper suggests some alternative methods for assessment. Assessment refers to collecting information on the progress of students' learning using a variety of procedures, and evaluation refers to making judgements on the basis of the information collected. The process and purpose of assessment should shift from merely assigning grades/awarding marks to include constructive feedback and assist with the learners' improvement. Learner-centred teaching should also use assessment as a part of the learning process. In the Indian education system, the present trend in evaluation lays too much emphasis on scholastic aspects, ignoring co-scholastic ones. Memorisation of facts is given precedence over abilities and skills involving higher mental operations such as problem solving and creative thinking. In effect, the real potential of the child is not assessed. (Dr. Kirti Kapur ,2008).

Teachers are crucial for constituting a holistic learning environment. Their knowledge and motivation levels determine their performance in schooling system. This paper aims to understand the existing elementary education system through the structures and processes as they exist currently, and how the teachers are playing a role in improving the learning achievement in overall school management. The specific objectives of the paper are outlined below:(i) to take stock of the administrative and management processes undertaken by the teacher in the class room, as well as practices and processes within organizations, (ii) to assess and reflect on the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and administration of elementary education,(iii)

to identify critical issues which need to be addressed, in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in student learning , with particular reference to the need for teacher development and provide solutions to enhance their efficiency (iv) to take stock of current training module for the teacher training and identify demand-supply gap in terms of skill development like information, communication and technology (ICT) and capacity building in the knowledge management process. (Nilay Ranjan and Naimur Rahman, *undated*)

Literally and from social, political and economic perspectives, the statement is valid even today. Around 65% of the State's population is living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in semi-urban and urban areas. However, this is not the reality. The paper discusses issues related to the Indian Educational System, especially focusing on the problems faced by rural poor. (Sumitaben K. Chothani, 2013)

The article shows that around 78 per cent of primary schools have three or fewer teachers to attend to all grade levels, and more than 55% with 100 or fewer students in 2005. These schools are commonly found in impoverished rural communities, often characterised by the need for multigrade classroom management as a result of low enrolment and/or too few teachers, and usually face significant shortages in terms of teaching and learning resources and basic infrastructure. This frequently leads to poor educational quality, student disillusionment, high rates of drop-out and low rates of retention. The teaching and learning which occurs in small schools, however, varies a great deal depending on a number of factors such as local social and economic circumstances, the availability of physical and human resources, curriculum and assessment methods, and type of school management. Yet to date research on small schools in India largely consists of quantitative datasets which attempt to measure their characteristics (class size, number of classrooms, style of management, etc.) and geographical distribution. The

qualitative dimension of students', teachers', and policy makers' perspectives and experiences of education in these settings, on the other hand, has remained largely unexplored. (Nicole Blum and Rashmi Diwan (2007))

The attributes that contribute to the learning environment are the physical environment, nurturing an enabling environment, participation of all children , discipline and participatory management, space for parents and the community, curriculum sites and learning resources, time and teacher's autonomy and professional independence. (National Curriculum Framework,2005)

Chapter 4

Objectives

- To assess if School Management Committees have helped in fostering learning environment.
- To understand the relationship of communities with respective schools.
- To understand different dimensions of school from the perspective of children.

Research Question

Q1. How according to parents and teachers School Management Committees have been beneficial?

Q2. What do they think about 'school'?

Q3. How many times have you visited school in order to know your child's progress?

Q4. Are they aware of the problems their school is facing?

Q5. What is the kind of school you would enjoy studying?

Chapter 5

Method, Scope and Process

The purpose of the research was to find out how School Management Committee is being helpful in creating close relations of community with school. It also helps me to find out if at all SMCs can foster a learning environment. Through questionnaires and observations 8 schools in Kalu cluster were assessed. Teachers, parents and community were the people for interaction.

To further examine what really constitutes a learning environment several people were interviewed. People who were involved in the education work, a few teachers from Government School, Balika Shivar, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalya, a teacher from Mastermind who initiated a new concept of making calculations fun through abacus as a tool of creating a learning environment and CCE members of Bodh Shiksha Samiti. A different set of questionnaire was set up to find out answers towards the learning environment.

The study was qualitative in nature. The entire process of gathering information was by using a questionnaire as an open guiding tool. Observation was another way in the process of collecting information. Semi structured interviews with adults and children, informal interaction with children (that included taking walks and playing with them) were relied upon to understand the different layers of perceptions and opinions that play a significant role in determining learning environment.

In the entire process there were certain constraints that limit the scope of this short inquiry. In the beginning getting accustomed to a new language took time. Distance and coordinating with the timings of vehicle along with school was a limit. In the initial few days I had no fixed questionnaire that was to be followed in school. Initial visits were more in the nature of explorations that shaped my inquiry. This helped me decide exactly how and which schools are to be covered. The option was to conveniently choose the villages that the organization was

already covering. Out of 17 villages selected the organisation was covering 10 villages. I took up 7 villages out of those 17 villages; 2 where the organisation was not working and 5 where it was working. Since I had to understand the concept of the overall learning environment in schools deciding the age group of children to be interacted with was not really important. Being a student it was clear that learning environment was the requirement of not just school children but even Colleges and Universities. I opted for going from primary to upper primary, middle and even secondary schools.

Chapter 6

Different Dimensions of Learning Environment

Below are presented some case studies on the different dimensions of fostering learning environment.

Joyful ride of learning things at a school in khiyaraan village

It would not be wrong to say “If you have the will to bring a change you can” and that is exactly what I felt after meeting Thamanji who basically is a Sanskrit teacher but is making all his efforts to teach his students English in a joyful manner. It does not make them feel dull and bored of the subject. Talking to him made me realize that fostering such an environment has not been an easy task. People around him have called him foolish for making an attempt to make studying at school a playful experience. Unmindful of these aspersions it has taken him three long years to foster a better learning environment at his school. Though he made efforts for the same from the year he joined i.e in 2008. He goes beyond the help given by Government to make available all the facilities to the village children from his own pocket for instance, colours, A4 sheets, sometimes even copies and books. He is a live example of showing that the environment can be created through a better interaction between teachers and students. The walls are beautifully painted, all the writings of the students are pasted on the walls. When a teacher does not just act as a teacher but a facilitator in the teaching learning process we see improvements happening. His efforts have lasted in connecting parents with the school. The staff retention has been seen past years. Ego clashes have reduced among teachers and peer learning among staff has started happening.

The Comprehension and Continuous Evaluation is also helping the school to build a positive learning environment. Urmul Setu Sansthan along with Bodh Shiksha Samiti is helping to

strengthen the CCE programme in the same school. This further aids in creating a learning environment by connecting community to school. The efforts of evaluation are such that it aware the teacher of what student has learnt, what it need to learn and how can the learning take place.

The case study points out that a learning environment can be created even in a hostile environment by sheer motivation of teachers and their willingness to walk an extra mile. It not only qualitatively enhances the class room transactions but also motivates the community to participate in school in a more willing and fuller way.

Implementing KGBV? Fostering ‘Learning Environment’ or ‘Homely Environment’

Often we have sympathy for girls considering that life is really tough for them. This is correct considering life of the girls in villages. It also forcefully begs the question as to what a good learning environment is for girls. A scheme like KGBV launched in 2008 by GoI tries to address this question of learning environment in their design. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalya gives girls a platform to learn and express themselves. After visiting a lot of villages you do see the difference of girls staying in villages and the ones staying in such camps. One needs to build a lot of trust and faith among the community and parents in order to make girls avail the facilities of such camps. First issue is that to bring girls closer to literacy and second is to give them a good learning environment. When in theory you ask, people know how such an environment has to be created and what all efforts are required to bring such an environment but is that happening in practicality is the question. A short narration that might help one understand why has this been said;

The conversation between students and me.

Me: Were the schools in villages better or this one is?

Students: We like this more.

Me: Why?

Students: There we had to work at homes after coming back from school and even used to bunk school because of some work at homes.

Me: So what is the difference you work here too?

Students: Well this is ours we only have to keep it clean.

True enough this is yours and you only have to keep it clean. But keeping it clean for the sake of somebody coming over to visit them wasn't appropriate. It would be too harsh if I claim that it was child labour but what other name could be given to this! Certain instances that made me think of what kind of learning environment would be given to this place where teachers sit in a room the entire day busy with their phones, so much that they are unable to see what is happening around them. It was disheartening to see girls washing even the used plates of teachers. For the teachers it was a usual affair and the expression they used to cover this up was *"inko aadat hi esi hai bade kha lete hai to unki plate saaf karti hai. Ye humko karne ni deti"*. Even I had that guilt giving them my plate for washing. I thought how easy the task was for the teachers. What kept irking my mind was the justification for such an act as for me education stood for different values like the importance of doing one's work and did that not apply to the adults and was only meant as a school lesson for children! Another instance like I was helping the children in peeling off the onions for food and they wanted me to leave the knife because I was not supposed to do such things. Well in that case even they were not. There was a level defined among the students and that one could make out by the way they once said that I was meant to sit on a chair because I was a teacher and if one amongst them had to sit on that chair then one has to acquire that. There was something wrong in the understanding of the concepts. Interviewing the teachers made me feel that feelings that they had were all good but when in practicality they were to be applied it was not the same. Was it not that the home environment with all its hierarchies and patriarchal values was imposed on the school environment! It was more disappointing to see the attitude of the teachers towards the school environment. You could see teachers attending school without bathing, even using cell phones during classrooms, breakfast was offered in the classroom. These things indicate how 'disciplined' and 'child

friendly' the environment was. Above mentioned were few of the observation that I could analyze. It would not be justifiable to judge the environment of the school in a two days time. So I even interviewed the girls in order to understand what they feel about the school they are studying in.

Meera Jiyani studying in her 8th standard shares her views about schools and education. She says “teachers should treat us like their own kids that way we will learn more quickly and easily. Teachers should be balanced. They should be allowed to scold us and should be playful too as per the need of the hour. The fear of getting hit by the teacher does not let children learn things in an easy way. Library books or extracurricular activities help in many things. Story books do not just entertain but even improves our reading and writing skills. Other activities like dance, skit, songs, sports etc. help us increase the self confidence in us. All over a schools environment should be fun filled and that fun filled environment should help us in learning things.”

Kasturba Gandhi Vidhyalya in itself is a school whose quality can be considered better in comparison to ordinary Government Schools. The infrastructure is far better than what Government School provide.. One of the best things about these schools is that these are managed by women. Parents do not have to feel unsafe about it. It is like a good opportunity to make 100 girls succeed in life every year.

A good learning environment can be effective with young, energetic, and motivated teachers.

Striving to make School Management Committees (SMCs) Effective

School Management Committee has been constituted in order to create good relations between school and community. This in turn will also help in creating a good learning environment. The table below points out the state of School Management Committees in different villages of Kalu cluster.

School, Villages	School Management Committee	Communities Relation With Schools	Response of Children
Rajkiye Uchprathmik Vidhyalya, Ravasar	Maintained register but meetings are mostly conducted as per need in the school. Parents are blamed for not coming to school to keep a check. Illiteracy is another factor considered by teachers in paying less attention to the school work by the community.	By interacting with a few people it was clear that many of them were not aware of SMC. They were definitely concerned about school but women had a view that since there are no female teacher staffs they were hesitant to go and others simply	Families were supportive in making children study. No library register was maintained and the books were mostly read by students who were good at studies. Projector was a good TLM used in school. Computers were available but not used due to no teacher. Recently girls toilet was prepared with the help of

		blamed their fate and their own illiteracy for not keeping much relation with school.	SMC (Community money).
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Rajkiye Prathamik Vidhyalya, Kalu	In the initial stage SMC as per the teacher was good but now it was getting difficult to maintain. CCE becomes a factor to be blamed for paying less attention to other things like issuing library books. In order to create a good learning environment teachers suggest that new electronic means could be initiated in the school.	Since Kalu is more like a town so one can see more number of Private Schools in comparison to Government School. People have also set up a mentality towards private school being better. The complain remains for government school is that less attention is paid there. Whereas the member of SMC says that there has been improvement in terms of enrolment in the school. At the same	Since the school was till 5th the child in the SMC wasn't aware of him being a member. Out of the selected students only 1 or 2 students were active participants. Couldn't find out much as students were shy to speak up.
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		time the other member says that one of his boys is a 5th pass out from this school but now he has enrolled his child in 3rd standard in private school so that he could learn English. Some feel that paying money in private is a big waste and for some Government school is the fate of every poor.	
Rajkiye Balika Uchmadyamik Vidhyalya, Kalu	Sufficient staff. SMC register is maintained but no register was shown during a visit. Only mess	This side of the village was totally unaware of SMC. A very casual attitude	Books are the only medium of studies. Parents are illiterate so they don't pay much

	salary and money for food items was used in the name of SMC's bank copy. Charts and wall paintings as TLM were available but in practicality were not seen much.	towards girls was seen n case of higher studies. Preference was given to male candidates for going far from homes for studies, for girls correspondence or no studies at all. Hardly had any connection with school. Complain towards the attitude of school staff towards parents. Politics played a major role in the village due to which not many were considered.	attention. Though science room and even library are available but none of these is used. None of the students is aware of SMC running in school.
Rajkiye Madhyamik Vidhyalya, Garabdesar	SMC for teachers have been good. Due to which enrollment of students has	People in this village were aware of SMC be it through Urmul	It was a little dicey to find out because more than students teachers

	increased. The staff is well qualified. Chats, projectors and even a science lab are available as TLM. CCE acts as a challenge because they are unable to pay much attention to the students.	Setu or during election. The ones who knew had a saying that it has proved to be beneficial. They keep a check on the food quality, cleanliness and are the teachers attentive towards their children. Some feel SMC is a good way of indulging in schools.	was making them say things. Nobody read books from library. Library was not at all functional.
Rajkiye Uchmadhyamik Vidhyalya, Sehajrasar	Past two years no TLM has been received. For understanding what quality and learning environment would constitute no proper answer was given. Enrollment has been increased but not because	The SMCs condition was worse in the school. The members who could not go to attend meeting their signatures were taken by visiting	Got late due to transport problem couldn't interact much with children. But during home visits most of them favoured private education because English was taught there. As per them students

	of SMC but the informal camps organized by Urmul Setu. More of learning was done through books.	their homes. Unfortunate is that the members didn't read what is written and signed. Though they consider private education similar to Government but atleast where they pay money they think their children get a little attention there. Some are not bothered if their child is studying or not.	studying in private was more knowledgeable than the ones studying in Government.
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Rajkiye Uchprathmik Vidhyalya, Nathusar	3 teachers with the entire school strength as 62. Middle staff was yet to come. English was a problem. SMC and initiatives by Urmul Setu have helped build an environment. Books were the only means of teaching. No games material and no library books were there. Though separate toilet facility was available but water problem was the main issue.	None interviewed knew anything about the SMC. Those families who are too poor do not send their children to private rest around 100 children from the village go to Kalu in a private institution for studying. Few had a say that paying and making children study was a better option than not making them study at all. Complains about a teacher who often slept in school after drinking and taught students even when drunk.	The students had the same complain for the drunk teacher. They were not at all aware of SMC.
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Rajkiye Uchprathmik Vidhylya, Chandsar	SMC is just a formality. They see no link between teachers and parents. CCE might prove benefit if it works well but it brings along a lot of paper work which leads to less attention towards the children.	Maximum no for SMC. People were totally dependent on the teachers. They were not concerned of what is being taught. A girls education was dependent on the entire communities decision on sending girls further for education.	Read library books. Knew about SMC but a casual attitude towards meeting and just a signature as a formality is done.
Rajkiye Uchprathmik Vidhyalya, Nakodesar	TLM material used only that is given by Urmul Setu. SMC meeting is conducted but no register was shown. Load of CCE is not letting the teachers	Political issues amongst villagers. Much wasn't talked about SMC but feels Urmul Setu has bring along a lot of	Children were sharp. Not just books but TLM was being used in making children understand things. Library wasn't functional.

	pay much attention to the students.	changes in terms of educating girls. One sansi family said that in the entire community our daughter is the only one who has completed her graduation else not many are taught in their caste. Considered as low caste.	
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If a regular check is kept on the effectiveness of meetings being conducted can be a good way for School Management Committees to work. Willingness in terms of making community a part of school will result in a better learning environment.

“Bachho ke liye school yaan school ke liye bachhe” Balika Shivar at Urmul Setu Sansthan

Free flowing laughter and chirping of girls adds to the rustic beauty of URMUL Setu campus. In the midst of a barren desert with its thick cover of trees and bubbling life it almost resembles an oasis in a desert. All facilities are easily made available for the girls. The calmness in the mornings fills your mind with freshness and the evenings are lively. You see all the kids and teachers around playing together, sitting and talking. I wonder if these girls could ever get the same in the villages they have come from. Who would not enjoy life of a free bird? Talking to them felt as if restrictions were like rituals that they had to follow. There is a wide difference one can see amongst girls in villages in comparison to the one in the campus. Entering the campus the students in themselves feel a lot of change within them. The way they dress, punctuality, discipline. The best initiative that they end up doing for themselves is that they start taking their own decisions. Decisions in terms of their schedule maybe even what dress to wear and so on. Decision is one such thing which generally lacks in women. Not because she cannot take one but the patriarchal society does not think appropriate for a woman to be a decision taker.

Girls feel proud to be a part of Urmul Setu Sansthan. Some have come from such an environment that they do not feel like going back. They end up trying to find out ways to study more or join some job as soon as possible. I met a few girls who were studying in the hope of a good job. Yes, getting a job is a byproduct of studying but is not the only thing. I felt as if this concept was not still that clear in the minds of the students. It probably would be difficult to make them understand too. After coming from a restricted environment they get an opportunity to experience new dimensions of life in which a good job is a part.

“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only option you have.” The phrase holds true for Indra Raigar a girl I have always seen in the campus with a smiling face. Her father passed away when she was only 2 years old. She stood for her sister and her mother when the entire family was against them. None in the family wanted them to study but they wanted her mother to get them married. I would say not the fate but her mother’s determination made her study till 12th and I’m sure she will continue it till whatever point she wants to. While sharing her journey about her student life she describes the difference between the three schools she has studied in. Till her 5th she was a part of a Government School. Then she got herself enrolled in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalya. Presently she is studying in her 12th in Urmul Setu Sansthan. She says she was an average student and felt OK about what she was studying. With happiness she shouts and shares that it was in her 8th board when she scored 77 per cent and realized that she can work harder and achieve greater heights. It was disheartening to see that marks were the criteria where she defined herself to be an average or a good student. She says in Government School teachers attitude is very careless. No punctuality is seen and very less attention is paid on the students. In KGBV sports was given a lot of importance and she feels very proud in saying that she was there a national level player. Urmul Setu Sansthan’s environment changed her life a lot. “Indra was back then in villages was a different girl what she is now” she says. She is not a shy girl anymore. Now she stands for things she feels are wrong. Where this life will take her she does not know. All she is determined with is that now it is time for her to stand for her family like her mother did for her when she wanted to study.

The case study aims to tell how a learning environment is under a threat of jobs and grades. Study because you’ll get a job is to some extent a wrong concept being circulated openly in the market and grades criteria for defining knowledge.

A journey of commitment towards education of rural children

It is quiet fascinating to interact with such education workers who themselves were not able to achieve much in their educational qualification due to some constraints but are making every effort to leave no stone unturned in the lives of others. The commitment towards education has helped them understand education as a wider concept. Further points explain their perception about the thing that still needs to be worked upon.

1. Rote learning concept is acting as a restriction in the learning environment.

For example, *जय जय*

Now when students are asked who is this none had the answer.

2. Teachers are well qualified but the problem is that maximum is untrained.
3. Tailor takes measurement because not all have the same size. Same teaching method cannot be applied for all.
4. Ways of creating a learning environment can be different. Storytelling, debates, peer learning, group work, games, crafts and so on.
5. Other things that apart from curriculum form an environment for students to learn are infrastructure, the space, no gender or caste discrimination, students regularity, communities attitude towards school, greenery, cleanliness, teachers attitude towards their students, ways of making children understand.
6. The attitude of not considering games or any form of art as extracurricular but another source of imparting knowledge to the children would convince teachers, students and even community that it is not a waste.

Chapter 7

Findings

1. No English staff was the major problem.

2. Parents illiteracy is the factor to be blamed as a hindrance in creating a learning environment.
3. Teachers understand that books cannot be the only source of teaching. Practical knowledge helps students grasp more but lack of TLM in schools does not let that happen.
4. As such no biases towards caste were seen but only one community that was looked down upon was Sansi Community. Such biases may affect the community to come forward in the mainstream.
5. An attitude of dependency towards the masters only and blaming illiteracy can be a hindrance in achieving the learning environment.
6. Village politics also plays a role in formulating SMC.
7. Lesser or almost no female staff was another concern for mothers to maintain distance from schools.
8. Maintenance of cupboard filled with library books was there but were not functional.
9. Celebration of hand washing day was the only day when soaps were used by the kids otherwise “mitti” was considered to be pure for washing not even hands but utensils as well.
10. Girls education still remains a problem. Nobody allows girls to go after a certain distance for their education.
11. Unawareness and lack of staff for other streams i.e Commerce and Science.
12. The inclination of people towards private also shows that they know the value of education and are ready to pay for it if at all it gives good result.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Learning environment is a vague concept. Its literal meaning would not explain what it is. With time you keep forming such environment which is good for learning. Going back to the time when “hit and make study” concept was followed which has now changed to child friendly environment. Where books were the only source of making children learn, now there are different ways like new technologies, peer group learning, charts, paintings and so on. So, we can say there are several things that constitute a learning environment. In simple understanding that one can make from the study is that if one has the willingness then one can portray the same environment that one would wish to learn from.

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Annexure

Questionnaire while assessing SMCs

Name of the village:

Name of the school:

Inception of school:

Teachers

Q1. When was the last meeting conducted of SMC?

Q2. Have you maintained its register?

Q3. Do you think SMC is proving beneficial in any way to school?

Q4. Do you use any other method of teaching apart from books?

If yes, what are those?

Q5. What do you think practical knowledge helps gain maximum or just delivering knowledge through books?

Q6. Is library acting as a source of learning? If yes, is the library functional in your school?

Q7. Are their separate toilet facilities available for students?

Q8. How are the utensils washed after having their food?

Q9. Is continuous and comprehension evaluation proving any beneficial? If yes, what special efforts do you make for children falling in grade B and C?

Q10. Do you try sharing the progress of the child with the parents?

Parents

Q1. Do you know about School Management Committee? If yes, do you think it to be of any benefit so far?

Q2. Are you a part of the SMC?

Q3. Do you visit school to know your child's progress?

Q4. Do you spend time with your child in his studies when he returns back from school?

Q5. Do you see any difference in private schools in comparison to government schools in villages?

Q6. What according to you are the problems of the school?

Students

Q1. Do you get a chance of reading library books in your school?

Q2. What all games do you play?

Q3. How do you wash your utensils after having food?

Q4. Are books the only medium of teaching or there are other ways with which you are taught?

Q5. Do you try to find out from teachers how well are you doing in class?

Q6. Are the things re-explained when you don't follow?

Q7. Do you receive any help from your parents in your studies?

Q8. Do you wish to see any changes in your school?

Few general questions asked while interviewing

Q1. How do we define quality when we talk about quality education?

Q2. What is learning environment and how can it be created?

Q3. Do you think community should be connected to school? If yes, what other than SMCs can the efforts be to bring community closer to schools?

Q4. Why do you think people in the villages are more attractive towards a private school than Government?

Q5. How far is it correct to that girls are for Government school and Boys for private?

Q6. Any changes you felt so far since the time you started working in the education sector?