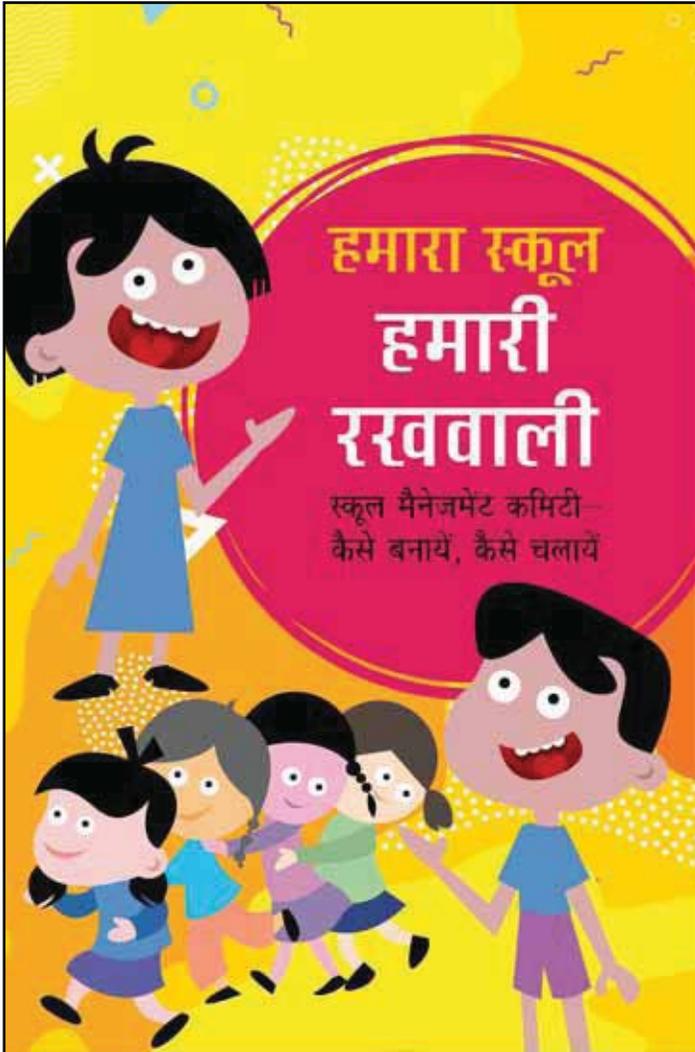


MAKING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT A REALITY

SMC Meetings of Common Cause

Common Cause Team



'Humara School, Humari Rakhwali,' a Common Cause booklet, features crucial information with simple illustrations, and is meant for SMC members.

Common Cause launched its ambitious booklet in Hindi 'Humara School, Humari Rakhwali,' in July, 2018, aimed at empowering the members of the School Management Committees (SMCs) to improve community participation in the running of schools, particularly in slums and urban villages.

This exercise was undertaken to make SMCs equal partners in school development and to strengthen the hands of those NGOs who are working towards the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act. The Common Cause team started this initiative owing to a void in this space. It began work on the booklet by taking part in the SMC Convention organised by the RTE Forum, where over 400 SMC members had participated. Subsequently, the team held one on one meetings with school principals and local MLAs, so as to draft a simple yet imaginative booklet for SMC members. The idea was to acquaint the members with their rights and duties.

Common Cause raised funds for this initiative through a crowd funding platform and social media convergence forums like Reddit AMA. The process of producing and distributing the booklet has been an incredible learning experience for an organisation that has never worked directly in the domain of RTE before. The booklet's simple and fun illustrations and relevant information for SMC members, has been received with great enthusiasm.

SMC Booklet Distribution

Common Cause has participated in several SMC meetings in Delhi, using these occasions to interact with SMC members and distribute around 1030 booklets so far. These exercises were undertaken in association with several NGOs working across Delhi. We partnered with RTE Forum, Samarthyaa, Josh and AV Baliga Memorial Trust for spreading awareness about our manual, and received enthusiastic response. Some of these SMC meetings were held in far flung areas of Delhi including Saboli Village in Gokulpuri, Narela Sector VI and Holambi Kalan in Outer Delhi as well as in Trilokpuri in East Delhi. The Indian Social Institute in Lodi Road, too, played host to a similar event in collaboration with the NGO, Josh.

Saboli Village in Gokulpuri

The SMC booklet distribution in Saboli Village in Gokulpuri was done in association with NGO Samarthyaa, which works with about 12 SMCs in north east Delhi. Held on August 17, 2018, the meeting saw the participation of around a dozen people. Small milestones in their achievement trajectory included installation of lights at school gates for late evening shifts, ensuring punctuality of teachers and posting of guards at school gates.



SMC members in Saboli Village helped install lights at school gates for late evening shifts.

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Members of the elected bodies said they needed to speak up about their challenges.

Narela Sector VI and Holambi Kalan

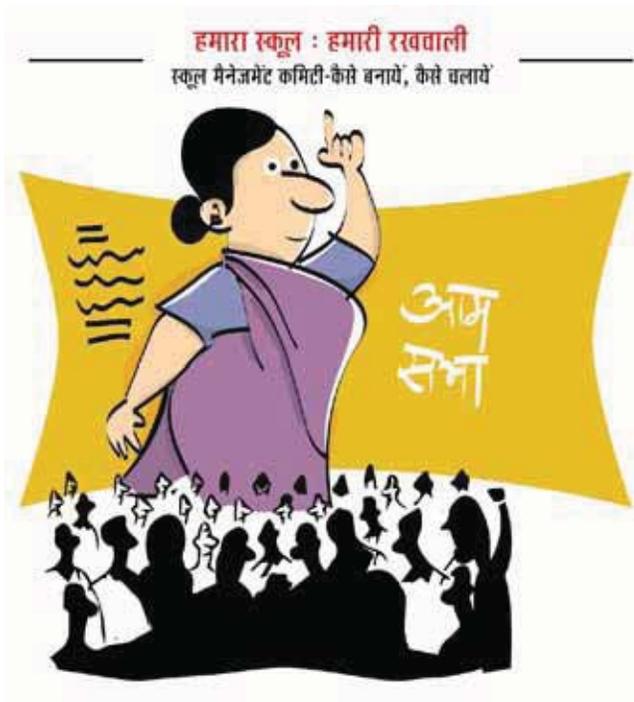
SMC meetings at Narela Sector VI and Holambi Kalan were held on August 19, 2018, in collaboration with AV Baliga Memorial Trust. The trust takes care of about half a dozen SMCs in Outer Delhi's Narela area. While nearly 10 SMC members participated in the training session organised at Sector VI, 35 participated in the Holambi Kalan meeting. Members of these elected bodies stressed on the need for vocalising issues experienced by them to strengthen their role as a link between the community and school. Emphasis was also placed on boosting capacities of SMC members with the help of NGOs.



Dr Vipul Mudgal (standing), Director, Common Cause, with area MLA Pankaj Pushkar (right), discussed ways to improve community ties with schools.

Timarpur

The SMC congregation at Timarpur saw attendance of members from 15 schools in the area. Labelled as SMC Mahasabha, the meeting took place on October 7, 2018 at Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, on the joint initiative of Common Cause and the area AAP MLA Pankaj Pushkar. The booklet was distributed among a highly-engaged community of members. It was an experience in knowledge sharing, where SMC members exchanged notes with the Common Cause team on strengthening and improving community ties with schools while we discussed how enabling conditions can be created for students.



Trilokpuri

The Common Cause team visited Trilokpuri as part of its commitment to make regulations laid down by the RTE Act more accessible to SMC members. We wanted to simplify various norms and standards provided by the Act that may be too complex an area to navigate for certain individuals. The meeting, which took place on December 22, 2018, included a discussion with SMC members of Trilokpuri's Block 32 around issues they face while monitoring school functioning. This was followed by the distribution of the Common Cause SMC booklet, which presents the powers, duties and responsibilities of SMC members as provided for in the RTE Act, 2009. The event ended with suggestions on how both SMC and Non-SMC members could contribute further towards school oversight and learning outcomes. Some of the suggestions included collaborative efforts with school administration and organising summer school programmes, among other things.



Learning outcomes for children still remain the biggest challenge for the SMC members.

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