Community Participation in Public Schools: Impact of Information Campaigns in three Indian States

Priyanka Pandey, Sangeeta Goyal & Venkatesh Sundararaman

South Asia Human Development
World Bank
Policy context

- Indian states have decentralized control over schools and other public services to local communities (since mid 1990s)

- A nation-wide government scheme “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)” was initiated in 2001 to universalize quality elementary education

- A key strategy: increase accountability of schools to the community through greater involvement of:
  - village education committees (VECs)
  - parent-teacher associations (PTAs)

- However, studies show communities not involved and learning outcomes remain poor
Improving quality of education remains a challenge

For example, ASER (2005) finds

- More than 93 percent of children are in school

- Yet 67 percent of Indian children in grades 3-5 cannot read simple text
Hypothesis

Campaigns that provide information to the community about its oversight roles in public schools and the services children are entitled to would improve learning outcomes.

What would be the channel of change?
- The community being the direct beneficiary of public services has greater incentive to monitor the services than state/district governments. VECs and PTAs are expected to facilitate this monitoring.
- These Information campaigns would make VECs and PTAs more effective.
- However monitoring public services is a public good and may be subject to free rider problem and capture by local elites.
- Whether community participation works to improve service delivery is an empirical question.
Study Design

• 3 states: Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Uttar Pradesh (UP)
• Randomized Controlled Trial
  – 340 treatment villages
  – 270 control villages
• Sample: 23000 students & parents, 1700 teachers, 4900 school committee members
• Baseline survey of teachers, students, community members in ‘06

Intervention: Information Campaign in ‘06
• Blinded follow-up survey at 2-4 months in ‘07
Intervention

- Partnered with Nike Foundation in creating campaign design
- Intervention structured to maintain uniformity in delivery of information
- Information campaign consisted of 8-9 meetings in a village over 2 months
  - Target audience: parents, school committee and teachers
  - 800 people attended in a village in UP, 700 attended in MP
- Meetings were announced 2-3 days ahead using banners, posters, pre-recorded audio tape
Intervention: Campaign Tools

• Key information in:
  • Short film of 6-7 minute duration
  • VEC/PTA poster
  • VEC/PTA wall painting

• Complete information in:
  • Take-home calendar with all of the information written in detail
  • Learning assessment booklet
Intervention

What Information did the Tools Communicate?

- Rules for selection of school committee
- Rules for committee meetings
  - E.g. minimum attendance at these meetings
- Roles and responsibilities of committees
- Organization and funding of school accounts
- Right to information regarding the school
  - including right to copies of any school record
- Grade level minimum level of learning as defined by the government
- Specifics of benefits that students in primary grades are entitled to such as uniform, mid day meal
- Where to complain about school related problems
Intervention: Typical meeting lasted 35-40 minutes

- A team of 2 read a scripted introduction
- The film was played (twice)
- Opportunities to ask questions and discussion among the audience
- Team not allowed to participate in discussion
  - Team was allowed to provide answers which were already written in the calendar
- This was done to maintain uniformity in delivery of information campaign
- Also distributed posters, calendars, assessment booklet
- Wall painting on school wall


ಕರ್ನುಡದಲ್ಲಿ, ಕೆಲಸುವ ವೃತ್ತಾಂಕಗಳು 14 ಸಾಲದ ಕಾಯಿಲು ಕೆಳಗಿನ ವರ್ಷದಿಂದ ಸ್ಥಾನಶೃಂಗ ಕೆಲಸುವ ವೃತ್ತಾಂಕಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದವು.
शिक्षा समिति के जरूरी काम

शिक्षा समिति के सदस्य - 1 श्रीमती प्रमादेश, 2 नीता बिल्ली, 3 हलवा रामेश, 4 मेहरा

1. सहभागिता के साथ सड़कों और मार्गों के नियमों का पालन करें।
2. जानकारी देकर नाबालिग और अन्य व्यक्तियों के साथ नाबालिग के फर्जी जुड़वाने का सामना करें।
3. जानकारी देकर नाबालिग और अन्य व्यक्तियों के विदेशी भाषाओं का प्रदर्शन करें।
4. नाबालिग ओर अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के तहत अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के रूप में नियमों का पालन करें।
5. नाबालिग ओर अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के रूप में नियमों का पालन करें।
6. नाबालिग ओर अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के रूप में नियमों का पालन करें।
7. नाबालिग ओर अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के रूप में नियमों का पालन करें।
8. नाबालिग ओर अन्य व्यक्तियों के नाबालिग के रूप में नियमों का पालन करें।

आपला संवेग अभियान
हराम का हूट बांधें, अगला काली को ही भूलें।
Outcomes

Primary
• Teacher attendance
• Teacher activity
• Performance of students on reading, writing and math test

Secondary
• Receipt of benefits by students
• Committee members participation and knowledge
• Parents participation
Summary of Baseline 2006

• Learning levels are low
  16-17% in grade 4 can read sentences and words in MP and UP
  25-42% can do 2 digit addition

• Low teacher attendance

• Even lower rates of teacher activity
  In UP attendance 64% and activity 25%

• Lack of knowledge and participation of school committee members in their oversight roles
  In UP 2% of parent members had received any training, 38% reported school visits by committee, more than 50% cannot list any roles/responsibilities

• Much variation across states in outcomes
  For example, teacher attendance in Karnataka is 88%
RESULTS: Impact on teacher behavior

- **UP**
  Teacher attendance $\uparrow 11\%$ from baseline ($p = .04$)
  Teacher activity unchanged

- **MP**
  Teacher attendance unchanged
  Teacher activity $\uparrow 30\%$ ($p = .02$)

- **Karnataka**
  No impact
RESULTS : Impact on inputs

• **UP**
  Percent girls who received uniform ↑ by 18 %
  Scholarship students received ↑ by 33 % for general caste

• **MP**
  Percent girls who received uniform ↑ by 14 % for general caste
  Scholarship students received ↑ by 26 % for SC/ST girls

• **Karnataka**
  Percent students who report receiving quality mid day meals ↑ by 5 percentage points (7%)
## RESULTS: Impact on process

### UP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improvement (percentage points)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent members only</strong> - Number of school committee meetings</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent members only</strong> - % who attended</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent members only</strong> - Number of school inspections by committee</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent members only</strong> - % who participated in inspections</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improvement (percentage points)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent parents who talked to head teacher or teacher</strong></td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Karnataka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improvement (percentage points)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent parents who talked to school committee</strong></td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS: Impact on learning

- **UP**
  Improvement in reading \( \uparrow \) by 3 percentage points (27 %) \( p < .05 \) (Grade 3)

- **MP**
  Improvement in reading \( \uparrow \) by 4 percentage points (14 %) \( p < .05 \) (Grade 3)

- **Karnataka**
  Improvement in writing \( \uparrow \) by 6 percentage points (15 %) \( p < .02 \) (Grade 4)
  Improvement in mathematics \( \uparrow \) by 8 percentage points (27 %) \( p < .03 \) (Grade 5)
Summary of Impact

• Significant and positive impact of the campaign on
  - behavior
  - process
  - delivery of entitled benefits to students (stipend, uniform, mid day meal)
  - learning outcomes

• Pattern of impact differs because states differ in
  - starting points at baseline
  - extent of oversight devolved to local communities

• Focus groups in two states suggest possible channels of change
  - discussions among community
  - community brought up issues with teachers and school committees
Interpretation of findings..

• Political decentralization to communities is meaningless unless it is made real i.e., community needs to know what oversight roles it has

• Providing information to communities that are unaware, through a structured campaign, has a positive impact on behavior and learning outcomes.
  - Another study finds different results (Banerjee et.al. 2007)

• It matters:
  – What information is communicated
  – How information is communicated
  – Structure, intensity and uniformity of campaign

• Supporting evidence - in a one year follow up after a similar standardized information campaign, study finds positive impact on demand for services (JAMA, Oct 24, 2007)
Directions for future….

- Important question for follow up research is whether impact is larger and sustained over longer time period

- Follow up plan: sustaining campaign and re-assessing impact in next one to two years
Thank You
Baseline in 2006
Learning levels are low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage children who can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong> Read sentence and words</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read words with and without <em>matra</em></td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read words without <em>matra</em></td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong> Write sentence and words</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write words with and without <em>matra</em></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write words without <em>matra</em></td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong> Addition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtraction and less</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiply and less</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divide and less</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Baseline 2006 Teacher Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- High teacher absenteeism
- Even lower rates of teacher activity
Baseline
Committee members’ participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% members that say yes</th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you received any training from the government on roles/responsibilities of VEC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has committee met in this school year</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has committee inspected the school in this school year</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Lack of knowledge and participation of school committee members in their oversight roles
## Baseline

### Committee members’ knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% members that list each item</th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspect schools</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage civil works</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare schemes/plans for school improvement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage school accounts, decide how to spend funds in school accounts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select contract teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify and sign on teachers salary slip/attendance register each month</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure teachers come regularly and on time</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure teachers teach satisfactorily</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complain to higher authorities if teachers performance/attendance is unsatisfactory</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure distribution of textbooks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure distribution of scholarships</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure preparation and distribution of quality mid day meals</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure distribution of uniforms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## RESULTS  Impact on teacher behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UP</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>Karnataka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(p =.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(p =.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutions of decentralization in UP & MP

- **UP**
  - Village education committee (VEC) made of at least 5 members who are headmaster, elected village head (pradhan), 3 parent members
    - Has a 5 year term
    - Can hire and fire para teachers
    - Manages school accounts

- **MP**
  - Parent teacher association (PTA) in every school
  - PTA executive committee made of headmaster & 14 parent members including PTA chair.
  - PTA committee
    - executes the roles and responsibilities of PTA
    - Has a 1 year term
    - Supposed to verify teachers’ attendance each month
    - Has no extra control over para teachers
    - Manages school accounts
UP Roles and Responsibilities of VEC

• Ensure that all government primary and junior high schools that come within the GP are functioning well. Prepare schemes for improving schools.
• Ensure that all children in ages 6-14 are enrolled in school
• Ensure that children attend school regularly
• Establish new primary schools, repair and management of existing schools
• To manage and monitor funds that comes to the school account.
• Monitor distribution of textbooks and scholarships
• Implement the mid day meal program.
• Monitor distribution of uniforms
• Ensure that teachers come to school regularly and teach properly. Take any action necessary to ensure this
• Ensure that children are learning at appropriate levels
• If teachers do not come or do not teach properly, can recommend to BSA or ABSA to take disciplinary action
• If primary school has more than 40 students per teacher, select an additional shiksha mitra (SM). SM cannot be a close relative of the pradhan or the VEC secretary.
• If VEC is dissatisfied with the performance of SM, SM can be fired anytime with a two thirds’ majority vote of VEC members. If satisfied with the performance of SM, VEC can renew the contract of the SM to the next year.