

# The Role of School Management Committees in Enhancing Educational Outcomes

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## Abstract

This paper explores the crucial role played by School Management Committees (SMCs) in shaping educational outcomes at the primary and secondary school levels. Drawing on an extensive review of relevant literature and detailed analysis of case studies from diverse educational settings, the study illustrates how SMCs function as vital mechanisms for governance, accountability, and community participation in schools. The evidence suggests that well-functioning SMCs can lead to notable improvements in student achievement, resource mobilisation, and parental involvement—contributing to a more inclusive and effective educational environment. At the same time, the paper acknowledges the challenges that often hinder the effectiveness of SMCs, including limited resources, inconsistent training, and varying degrees of stakeholder commitment. In response, it offers a set of practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the capacity and influence of SMCs, emphasising the importance of supportive policies and structured capacity-building initiatives. Ultimately, the study argues that strengthening SMCs is not only essential for school-level improvement but also for fostering broader, sustainable educational development.

**Keywords:** School Management Committees, educational governance, community engagement, learning outcomes, school accountability

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## 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, School Management Committees (SMCs) have gained prominence as pivotal governance structures aimed at enhancing community participation, transparency, and accountability in education systems, particularly across low- and middle-income countries. These local bodies—typically composed of parents, teachers, and community leaders—embody the principles of decentralisation with the goal of improving school oversight, resource management, and, ultimately, student learning outcomes.

The rationale for strengthening SMCs stems from the growing recognition among policymakers that local involvement in educational governance can lead to more responsive, context-specific decision-making. When SMCs function effectively, they help align educational priorities with community needs, foster participatory budgeting, and reinforce accountability mechanisms at

the school level (RISE Programme, 2022). Empirical research from multiple contexts has underscored the positive impact of functional SMCs on various dimensions of school performance. For instance, studies from Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda have documented correlations between active SMCs and improvements in teacher attendance, school infrastructure, financial transparency, and even student academic achievement (Saad et al., 2025; Mwanga, 2023; Kitenda, 2018).

Nevertheless, the performance of SMCs is highly variable and contingent upon several enabling factors. Chief among these are capacity building, community engagement, role clarity, and the availability of adequate financial and logistical support. When members are well-trained and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, they are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to school development planning, monitoring

of teacher performance, and the management of school funds. Furthermore, effective communication channels between the school administration and committee members facilitate collaborative problem-solving and decision-making (Mugo et al., 2021; Ouma & Kibet, 2022).

Despite these strengths, SMCs often encounter significant barriers that inhibit their potential. Common challenges include limited institutional capacity, political interference, irregular meetings, and a lack of financial resources. In many cases, SMC members are selected without sufficient orientation or training, leading to confusion over roles and responsibilities. Additionally, socio-political dynamics may result in the domination of committees by local elites, thereby undermining inclusive and democratic governance (Kifle & Teshome, 2020; RISE, 2023).

Recent policy innovations offer insight into how these barriers might be overcome. For example, in Nigeria, the RISE Program has introduced structured interventions combining community sensitisation, committee training, and financial oversight mechanisms—resulting in observable improvements in school management and student outcomes. Similarly, initiatives in Tanzania and Uganda have shown that regular engagement with parents, transparency in the use of funds, and accountability in teacher performance evaluation can significantly enhance SMC effectiveness (Mwanga, 2023; Kitenda, 2018). In India, programs such as Chandigarh's "Mission 100" have integrated SMCs into broader educational reform strategies, using them to track student assessments and reduce dropouts (Times of India, 2025).

In sum, School Management Committees represent a critical interface between communities and schools, offering a viable mechanism for participatory governance and local accountability. However, their effectiveness is not automatic; it must be intentionally cultivated through capacity-building initiatives, policy support, and systematic engagement with all educational stakeholders. A deeper understanding of the conditions under which SMCs thrive—along with the challenges they face—remains essential for realising their full potential in improving education quality and equity.

### 1.1: Overview of the Educational Landscape

The global educational landscape has become increasingly nuanced, shaped by evolving demographic trends, rapid technological progress, and diverse socio-economic realities. Central to this transformation is the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aspires to guarantee inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for every learner by 2030 (dataviz.unesco.org+5en.wikipedia.org+5unicef.org+5). While some nations have made significant strides in expanding digital learning and bolstering infrastructure, many continue to struggle with inadequate school

facilities, insufficient resources, and entrenched cultural biases that impede access, particularly for marginalised communities (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2020).

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges, disrupting education for some 1.6 billion students at its peak. [axios.com](#). Research indicates a global decline in learning outcomes—TIMSS and PISA studies report average drops of 0.11 standard deviations, with disproportionately heavier impacts on low-performing and vulnerable learners [arxiv.org](#). Technology-dependent solutions, while necessary, “supercharged” inequalities, especially in low-resource contexts where digital access is uneven [arxiv.org+15axios.com+15mdpi.com+15](#).

As countries transition from emergency response to recovery, educational reform is squarely focused on rebuilding resilient systems. Policymakers now emphasise adaptive governance, local decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. School Management Committees (SMCs) are at the forefront of this shift, offering a mechanism that empowers parents, teachers, and community representatives to co-design educational policies, monitor implementation, and bridge school-community gaps. [sciencepg.com+2sciencepublishinggroup.com+2timesofindia.indiatimes.com+2](#).

Simultaneously, educational innovation is accelerating. Hybrid and blended learning models, enhanced by digital tools, promise to enrich pedagogical practice—yet they require robust governance frameworks to ensure equitable access and sustained adoption. UNESCO's 2024 roadmap emphasises not only the expansion of digital infrastructure but also the quality and contextual appropriateness of content, as well as teacher empowerment and curriculum reform ([devdiscourse.com](#)). Promoting equity through technology, teacher training, and responsive governance is increasingly considered essential in preparing education systems for future disruptions.

Taken together, these developments underscore the importance of SMCs within a broader strategy to advance SDG 4. Their potential lies in mobilising local insights, fostering transparency, and ensuring shared accountability in school governance. However, unlocking their full potential relies on context-specific capacity building, supportive policies, and the seamless integration of technology and community voice.

This study thus seeks to examine the confluence of global educational trends, post-pandemic reforms, and localised governance mechanisms—positioning SMCs as a central pivot in building resilient, equitable, and high-quality education systems in a rapidly changing world.

### 1.2: Definition and Purpose of School Management Committees (SMCs)

School Management Committees (SMCs), often called School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs)

in various jurisdictions, are governance structures established within schools to promote participatory management, accountability, and community engagement in educational decision-making. As defined by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA, 2019), SMCs are collective bodies comprising key stakeholders—typically parents, teachers, local government representatives, and community members—who collaborate to enhance the governance and functioning of schools through inclusive and localised decision-making processes.

The primary purpose of establishing SMCs is to democratise school governance by involving those most directly impacted by educational outcomes in the administration of educational institutions. This participatory framework allows stakeholders not only to voice concerns but also to contribute meaningfully to operational matters such as budgeting, school development planning, infrastructure monitoring, and the academic progress of students. By fostering a shared sense of ownership, SMCs aim to cultivate a culture of accountability, where schools are responsive to the needs and priorities of their communities.

The establishment and institutionalisation of SMCs are often underpinned by decentralised policies that recognise the importance of community-based governance in improving educational quality. These policies are guided by the principle that local communities possess contextual knowledge of their educational challenges and socio-cultural dynamics, making them essential partners in school improvement strategies. The World Bank (2020) notes that such localised governance frameworks, when properly implemented, can lead to more equitable and efficient management of educational resources.

Recent evidence points out the vital part SMCs play in promoting educational equity and improved school performance. For instance, studies conducted in Nigeria and Nepal highlight how well-functioning SMCs facilitate better resource utilisation, enhance teacher accountability, and ensure the integration of local priorities into school planning processes (Puri & Chhetri, 2024; Saad et al., 2025). In Nigeria's Gombe and Yobe States, SBMCs have not only contributed to infrastructure development but also fostered active parental involvement, resulting in improved student enrolment and retention rates (Saad et al., 2025; Tika et al., 2024).

Furthermore, SMCs serve as communication bridges between schools and communities, ensuring that vital information flows in both directions. Through regular meetings, community consultations, and school visits, committee members help to align school activities with community expectations while also sensitising parents to their roles in supporting children's education. This collaborative ethos enhances trust among stakeholders and contributes to the creation of a positive educational environment.

In sum, the definition and purpose of SMCs reflect a transformative shift in educational governance—from top-down administration to inclusive, grassroots-driven participation. While their effectiveness varies depending on context, the global trend toward participatory governance affirms the value of SMCs as pivotal instruments for strengthening educational systems, especially in underserved or decentralised settings.

### 1.3: Evolving Role of School Management Committees in Educational Reform

The role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in facilitating educational reform has gained growing recognition among policymakers, educators, and development practitioners. As decentralised governance structures, SMCs serve as critical intermediaries between national education policy and grassroots implementation. They play a pivotal role in contextualising and translating broad policy frameworks into locally relevant practices. By incorporating diverse voices into school-level decision-making, SMCs foster inclusive governance—a foundational element for addressing the nuanced and varied challenges faced by different communities across socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural contexts (Banerjee et al., 2022).

SMCs are particularly significant in fostering participatory governance models, wherein parents, community leaders, teachers, and sometimes students contribute to shaping educational priorities. This participatory structure enhances local ownership and accountability, leading to more grounded and effective school-level reforms (UNESCO, 2023). Involving community members in school affairs ensures that policies reflect local needs and empowers traditionally marginalised stakeholders, especially women, lower-income families, and ethnic minorities, to voice their concerns and influence educational outcomes (Chakrabarti, Banerji & Sethi, 2021).

Recent empirical research underscores the positive correlation between active SMC involvement and improved student outcomes. For instance, schools with engaged SMCs tend to show better student attendance, higher learning achievements, and more transparent management of school finances (Panda & Choudhury, 2020; World Bank, 2023). By leveraging local knowledge and social networks, SMCs facilitate resource mobilisation that goes beyond government allocations—whether through community donations, volunteer engagement, or partnerships with NGOs. This community-driven resourcefulness allows schools to tailor educational interventions and infrastructure to the specific needs of their learners, particularly in under-resourced settings.

Moreover, SMCs have emerged as important instruments for promoting equity and social inclusion in education. Their inclusive structure helps elevate the

voices of marginalised groups that are often excluded from formal governance systems. When actively involved in school governance, these groups gain a sense of agency and shared responsibility, contributing to a more equitable and culturally responsive educational environment (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2022). Evidence suggests that when parents from disadvantaged backgrounds are involved in school planning and oversight, the likelihood of their children's sustained engagement in school significantly increases (UNICEF, 2023).

In the current context of rapid globalisation, digital transformation, and evolving societal expectations, SMCs play a more pertinent role than ever. As education systems strive to become more adaptive and resilient, especially in the post-COVID era, SMCs offer a robust platform for community engagement and responsive governance. They facilitate collaboration among key stakeholders—teachers, parents, school heads, and local governments—ensuring that educational reforms remain locally relevant and socially just (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2024).

Ultimately, SMCs are not merely administrative bodies but crucial agents of systemic change. Their ability to nurture democratic participation, foster accountability, and promote inclusive development positions them at the heart of sustainable education reform. Strengthening their capacity, especially through training and support mechanisms, should remain a key priority for governments and development partners committed to achieving equitable and high-quality education for all.

#### **1.4: Research Objectives and Questions**

This study aims to critically analyse the role of school management committees in improving educational outcomes. The specific objectives of this research include:

- i. To evaluate the effectiveness of SMCs in improving student performance and school resources.
- ii. To explore the challenges faced by SMCs in different educational contexts.
- iii. To identify best practices in SMC functioning that contribute to successful educational reform.

The research will address the following questions:

- i. How do SMCs influence educational outcomes in various settings?
- ii. What are the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of SMCs?
- iii. What challenges do SMCs encounter, and how can they be addressed to maximise their impact on education?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

School Management Committees (SMCs) have garnered substantial scholarly attention for their critical role in promoting participatory governance and enhancing educational outcomes across various contexts. Research indicates that effective SMCs significantly contribute to improved school infrastructure, transparent resource management, and more inclusive decision-making processes within communities. For instance, a study in Ghana found that the limited knowledge and involvement of SMC members in the School Performance Improvement Plan's (SPIP) preparation adversely affected the overall effectiveness of school management, emphasising the need for better training and engagement (Agbi, et al., 2023, Kwaah and Nishimuko, 2023).

In Kenya, a longitudinal study highlighted that schools with active SMCs reported markedly higher student enrolment rates and improved academic performance. The study showed that empowered SMCs were able to improve accountability and community involvement, which led to positive educational outcomes (Kiprono et al., 2015)). This aligns with findings from Uganda, where school committees were linked to higher passing rates, demonstrating the importance of structured governance in educational improvement (Galukande-Kiganda, 2022)).

Moreover, SMCs serve as crucial links between school communities and governmental authorities. By fostering local ownership, SMCs encourage proactive problem-solving and resource mobilisation tailored to the specific needs of the schools they supervise. UNESCO, (2016)) noted that this localised approach enhances transparency and responsiveness, cultivating trust among stakeholders (Nwanguma and Nwuke, 2024)).

Despite the promising evidence supporting the role of SMCs, several studies document challenges that undermine their efficacy. Many SMCs struggle with inadequate training and a lack of clarity regarding their mandate, leading to passive involvement rather than proactive governance (Puri and Chhetri, 2024). Additionally, political interference and local power dynamics often distort the functioning of SMCs, compromising their neutrality and focus on educational quality (Saad, 2025).

Resource constraints further limit the potential of SMCs. Many committees operate under financial austerity and lack access to technical expertise, which hampers their ability to initiate or sustain impactful educational projects (Agbi et al., 2024). The cumulative effect of these challenges underlines the necessity for comprehensive policy frameworks that formalise the role of SMCs and ensure ongoing training, resource allocation, and protection from political interference (Hidayat, 2021).

In conclusion, the literature positions SMCs as

promising agents of change in the pursuit of improved educational quality through community engagement and shared governance. However, realising their full potential requires addressing systemic barriers through targeted policy action, continuous capacity development, and fostering an enabling environment that values and supports community participation at all levels.

### 2.1: Theoretical Framework

Understanding the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in enhancing educational outcomes necessitates a robust theoretical foundation. Two prominent frameworks that elucidate the dynamics of SMCs are social capital theory and stakeholder theory, both of which provide helpful observations about how these committees function within educational settings.

**Social Capital Theory** suggests that social networks, shared norms, and mutual trust serve as vital resources that facilitate cooperation and collective action aimed at common goals (Putnam, 2000). In the context of schools, SMCs leverage social capital by strengthening relationships among parents, teachers, community members, and other stakeholders. This interconnectedness fosters collaboration in school governance, resource mobilisation, and community support, which is crucial for improving educational outcomes (Coleman, 1988). Recent empirical studies underscore this relationship; for instance, a study by Tetteh et al. (2022) in Ghana demonstrated that high levels of community social capital positively correlated with increased parental involvement and improved student performance. Such findings reinforce the idea that vibrant social networks within communities can significantly influence school effectiveness.

On the other hand, **stakeholder theory**, as articulated by Freeman (1984), emphasises the importance of recognising and balancing the interests of all parties involved in an organisation. Applied to SMCs, this perspective highlights the necessity of inclusive participation of diverse stakeholders—parents, teachers, local authorities, and community members—in decision-making processes. Engaging these groups ensures that educational initiatives are aligned with community needs and promote a sense of ownership and accountability. Recent research by Abdeladim, and Yahyaoui, 2024 and Orge et al., 2025 in India illustrated that stakeholder engagement in school governance leads to improved educational quality and greater equity, as policies become more responsive and inclusive. This approach underscores that effective school management depends on incorporating multiple perspectives to foster sustainable educational improvements.

By integrating insights from social capital and stakeholder theories, we become familiar with how SMCs operate and their potential to influence educational reform. Strengthening social networks enhances community cohesion and collaboration, while inclusive

stakeholder participation ensures that school policies are relevant and equitable. Together, these frameworks advocate for a model of governance rooted in community engagement, which has been shown to contribute significantly to better educational outcomes. Contemporary research continues to affirm the importance of these approaches, emphasising their relevance in designing effective, participatory school management structures that drive positive change (Njuguna & Wainaina, 2023).

### 2.2: Relationships between SMCs and Educational Outcomes

The relationship between School Management Committees (SMCs) and educational outcomes has gained significant traction in contemporary research, highlighting a strong correlation between the effective functioning of SMCs and improved student performance. Recent studies indicate that active and well-structured SMCs play a crucial role in enhancing educational quality by fostering accountability and transparency within schools. For instance, Adhikari (2023) underscores that SMCs contribute to better resource allocation and infrastructure improvements, which directly influence student achievement.

Moreover, SMCs serve as essential bridges between schools and their communities, facilitating communication and collaboration that enhance parental involvement in education. Engaging parents through SMCs has been shown to positively affect students' academic performance. This relationship is supported by the notion that active parental involvement reinforces expectations and creates a supportive learning environment (Adhikari, 2023). Additionally, SMCs that solicit feedback from parents and community members can tailor their strategies to meet local needs, further enhancing educational outcomes.

Furthermore, SMCs are pivotal in promoting equity within the education system. By involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes, SMCs can address the unique challenges faced by marginalised groups and ensure their needs are met (Adhikari, 2023). This inclusive approach not only supports the educational success of these groups but also fosters a sense of belonging and ownership within the community. Schools with inclusive SMCs are more likely to implement equitable policies, contributing to improved educational outcomes for all students.

In summary, the relationship between SMCs and educational outcomes is multifaceted, encompassing governance, community engagement, and equity. As ongoing research continues to illuminate the positive impact of SMCs on student performance and overall school effectiveness, it becomes increasingly evident that

fostering strong and active SMCs is essential for achieving sustainable improvements in education.

### 2.3: Role of Governance in Education

Governance plays a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape, influencing how schools operate, how resources are allocated, and how educational policies are implemented. School Management Committees (SMCs) represent a significant aspect of governance in education, providing a framework for decentralised decision-making and community involvement. Effective governance structures, such as SMCs, empower local stakeholders to take ownership of educational processes, ensuring that schools are responsive to the needs of their communities (World Bank, 2020).

One of the primary functions of governance in education is to enhance accountability. When governance structures are transparent and inclusive, stakeholders can hold schools accountable for their performance and resource utilisation. Research indicates that SMCs operate with high levels of transparency and community participation, making them more effective in promoting accountability, which leads to improved educational outcomes (Agbi, 2024). By involving parents and community members in monitoring school activities, SMCs help ensure that educational initiatives align with local needs and priorities, fostering a culture of accountability and responsiveness.

Moreover, governance in education is also linked to the equitable distribution of resources. SMCs can play a pivotal role in identifying resource gaps and advocating for equitable resource allocation within schools. This is particularly important in contexts where disparities exist between urban and rural schools or among different socioeconomic groups. Studies have shown that SMCs can effectively mobilise community resources and partnerships to address such disparities, enhancing educational accessibility and equity (MHRD, 2019). By prioritising the needs of marginalised groups, SMCs contribute to a more equitable educational system that promotes inclusivity.

Lastly, effective governance fosters innovation and adaptability within the educational sector. SMCs that encourage stakeholder participation are more likely to embrace new ideas and approaches to improve educational practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for flexibility and innovation in education, and SMCs can facilitate the development of adaptive strategies that respond to changing circumstances. Research emphasises that SMCs are crucial for overseeing school administration, ensuring quality education, and facilitating development (Agbi, 2024). As schools navigate the complexities of modern education, strong governance through SMCs becomes

essential for promoting sustainable reform and enhancing educational quality.

### 3: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The emergence of school management committees (SMCs) or school-based management committees (SBMCs) reflects a long-standing shift in educational governance—from centralised, top-down control towards more localised, participatory models. During much of the 20th century, national authorities dominated school oversight, with minimal input from parents or community stakeholders. It wasn't until the wave of governance reforms in the late 1980s and 1990s—driven by international institutions such as UNESCO and the World Bank—that community-driven models gained traction. The landmark Salamanca Statement of 1994, advocating inclusive and decentralised education, provided one of the first global frameworks calling for local accountability mechanisms, like SMCs, to become standard in school systems (Zenodo, 2024; UNESCO, 1994).

Since then, SMCs have been implemented through legislative or policy measures in many countries. In India, the 2001 Right to Education Act made SMCs mandatory for government schools, charging them with oversight of school planning and resource allocation. This mandate has had mixed success: while some states have seen strong functionality, others still struggle with irregular or dormant committees (Times of India, 2025a). A recent report from Karnataka revealed that roughly 1,581 of the state's 45,000 government schools lacked active School Development Monitoring Committees—despite incentive packages of ₹50,000–₹100,000 for well-performing bodies (Times of India, 2025a). In Ranchi, private schools are now required to form fee-regulation committees under the Right to Education framework, underscoring a broader policy trend pushing local participatory structures even in non-government schools (Times of India, 2025b).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the history of SMCs is both long-standing and evolving. A 2025 study in Gombe, Nigeria, found that SBMCs substantially enhanced school decision-making, parent-community relationships, and infrastructure development in secondary schools (Gomje, 2025). Another investigation in Yobe State showed that SBMCs played a key role in mobilising community support and supervising infrastructural projects, although challenges arose around limited authority and capacity (International Journal of Educational Management and Technology [IJEMT], 2025). In Rivers State, SBMCs were found to be essential in bridging schools and communities and promoting equitable access, yet they remain constrained by fuzzy roles, low engagement, and capacity gaps (Nnadozie, 2025).

These findings reflect a broader global pattern. A 2025 review of Uganda's school governance highlighted how many SMCs lack essential training, allowing committee members to overstep official mandates or

effectively rubber-stamp leadership decisions (Nile Post, 2025). In Tanzania and Nepal, reviews of SMCs raised similar issues, noting that many members didn't fully understand their roles, lacked resources, and had little involvement from others; however, stronger committees were found to enhance planning, monitor infrastructure, and promote fairness.

Importantly, more recent policy improvements are closing these gaps. In Nigeria, February 2025 saw the Federal Ministry of Education introduce updated guidelines for SBMCs in Federal Unity Colleges, emphasising inclusive governance, shared accountability, and stakeholder-responsive decision-making (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2025).

In summary, the evolution of SMCs mirrors a global governance trend toward decentralisation, participation, and democratisation in education. While historical recognition of their value dates back to the 1990s, recent empirical studies continue to affirm their positive impact—provided that legal clarity, training, community engagement, and capacity-building are sufficiently emphasised. As educational systems worldwide strive for equity and localised accountability, understanding the roots and development of SMCs is vital to realising their full potential.

### **3.1: Evolution of SMCs in Different Educational Systems**

The evolution of School Management Committees (SMCs) reveals significant diversity across different educational systems, shaped by local contexts, governance structures, and policy frameworks. In various countries, SMCs have been formalised through legislation, while in others, they have developed more organically through community initiatives advocating for better school governance.

In India, the establishment of SMCs is largely driven by the legislative framework established by the Right to Education Act of 2009. This act mandates the formation of SMCs in all government schools, entrusting them with responsibilities related to school management and fostering accountability (MHRD, 2009). Research indicates that SMCs in India are crucial for enhancing community engagement and facilitating communication between schools and parents, contributing to improved educational outcomes (Samarthya, n.d.).

In Kenya, the evolution of SMCs has been influenced by local needs and educational reforms. A study focusing on the role of SMCs in the Mswambweni Division illustrates their impact on academic performance and resource management, emphasising the importance of community involvement in school governance (Okwiri, 2024).

In Latin America, SMCs have emerged as vital channels for enhancing community participation in

education. Research on school-based management in the region highlights how SMCs improve educational efficiency and student outcomes through decentralised decision-making and community involvement (Baker, 2021).

Overall, the evolution of SMCs across diverse educational systems illustrates the value of context in shaping their roles and effectiveness. While some countries have institutionalised SMCs through legislative frameworks, others have seen them arise from grassroots movements. This diversity emphasises the need for tailored strategies to support SMCs in enhancing educational governance and outcomes.

### **3.2: Policy Frameworks Supporting SMCs**

The efficacy of School Management Committees (SMCs) is profoundly shaped by the policy environments that underpin their formation and operational functions. International and national policies serve as critical foundations, guiding the decentralisation of educational governance and fostering community participation in school management. These frameworks outline what SMCs can do, how resources are distributed, and what responsibilities they have, which affects their ability to make real improvements in the quality and fairness of education (Lassibille & Tan, 2019).

On the global stage, frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015) underscore the centrality of inclusive education and community engagement in realising equitable learning opportunities. The Salamanca Framework explicitly advocates for decentralisation, emphasising the importance of local governance structures—including SMCs—that enable community voices to shape educational policies and practices (UNESCO, 1995). Similarly, the Incheon Declaration reaffirms the necessity of participatory governance models to promote access and quality, aligning national reforms with international commitments to foster local ownership and accountability (UNESCO, 2015).

In the Indian context, the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 constitutes a landmark policy framework mandating the formation of SMCs in government schools. The Act defines the roles of parents, teachers, and community members in school oversight, emphasising democratic participation and local accountability (MHRD, 2015). Empirical studies have demonstrated that RTE-driven SMCs have enhanced community engagement and improved school performance by facilitating resource management and local problem-solving (Kumar & Sinha, 2021).

Similarly, in Kenya, the implementation of policies such as the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy alongside guidelines for SMC formation has

institutionalised community involvement in school governance (Oluoch, 2017). These policies empower SMCs to oversee resource distribution, curriculum adherence, and accountability mechanisms, thereby contributing to increased access and improved educational quality in underserved regions (Oloo, 2020).

Latin American countries have also adopted policy frameworks supporting SMCs within broader decentralisation reforms. Bolivia's 1994 Education Reform, for example, prioritised local participation and devolved decision-making authority to SMCs, fostering community ownership of schools (Baker, 2020). Such policies have been instrumental in aligning educational governance with local needs and promoting sustainable community engagement.

In sum, well-designed policy frameworks are vital for the successful functioning of SMCs. They provide essential legal and institutional scaffolding that enables SMCs to exercise authority, mobilise resources, and participate meaningfully in school management. When they follow international guidelines and are adapted to local needs, these frameworks greatly improve SMCs' ability to positively impact education results (Kanyike et al., 2022).

### 3.3: Case Studies Highlighting Successful SMC Initiatives

Case studies of successful School Management Committee (SMC) initiatives offer helpful details about their effective functioning and their impact on educational outcomes. These examples demonstrate how SMCs can strengthen school governance, foster community engagement, and promote accountability—ultimately improving educational quality (Pradhan & Singh, 2020).

One notable example is from Tamil Nadu, India, where the government implemented a comprehensive capacity-building program for SMC members. This initiative aimed to equip members with the skills necessary for effective school management and community participation. A study by Rajan and Sadanandan (2021) found that trained SMCs were better able to mobilise local resources, engage parents, and improve school performance. This emphasises the importance of capacity development in empowering SMCs to fulfil their roles effectively.

In Kenya, research in rural schools highlighted the critical role of SMCs following the implementation of the Free Primary Education policy. A case study from Kisii County revealed how active SMCs facilitated partnerships with local organisations to obtain additional funding for infrastructure and learning materials (Mugo & Otieno, 2021). These efforts led to increased enrolment and improved student achievement, illustrating the positive effects of community engagement in school governance.

In Bolivia, SMCs have played a vital role in promoting inclusive education. A case involving a rural school in the Cochabamba region showed how the SMC identified the needs of marginalised students, including those with disabilities, and collaborated with local authorities to implement inclusive policies. This initiative improved access to quality education and fostered a sense of belonging among marginalised groups (Barrera, 2022). It demonstrates how community-led governance can advance social inclusion and equity.

Another example from Mexico describes how SMCs in Oaxaca adopted participatory budgeting processes, allowing community members to directly influence resource allocation. This transparency and inclusivity improved the efficiency of fund use and increased community satisfaction with school services (López & García, 2022). Such participatory approaches exemplify how effective governance can enhance educational quality and build trust within communities.

These case studies highlight the diverse roles SMCs can play across various contexts. By fostering community participation, ensuring accountability, and addressing local needs, effective SMCs have the potential to significantly improve educational outcomes. Supporting and empowering these governance structures is essential for sustainable educational development.

## 4: FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SMCs

School Management Committees (SMCs) have emerged as pivotal structures in the decentralised governance and participatory management of public education systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. As mandated bodies at the school level, SMCs are entrusted with a broad spectrum of responsibilities that directly influence educational quality, school accountability, and community engagement (Puri and Chhetri, 2024). Central to their mandate is the oversight of policy implementation, ensuring that national and regional educational frameworks are contextualised to meet local priorities and socio-cultural realities. This process involves monitoring student performance, setting achievable academic targets, and co-developing school development plans that aim to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Osiesi, 2023).

Importantly, SMCs function as conduits for grassroots participation in educational decision-making, thereby fostering transparency and democratic accountability. By actively involving parents, guardians, and local community stakeholders, these committees help legitimise school-level decisions and build trust between educational institutions and the communities they serve (Kwashabawa, 2017). Research increasingly shows that such participatory governance not only improves school functioning but also strengthens community ownership and oversight of public education systems (Rose, 2003).



Beyond governance, SMCs are also engaged in critical administrative and operational functions. They are responsible for the prudent management of school infrastructure, human resources, and financial planning. This includes mobilising and allocating local and external resources; advocating for increased government funding; and liaising with non-governmental organisations for supplementary support (Ajuna et al., 2023). Their role in budgetary oversight is particularly vital in contexts where financial mismanagement undermines education delivery. Furthermore, SMCs are increasingly recognised for their role in promoting inclusive education. They are tasked with identifying and addressing barriers to learning for marginalised and vulnerable groups—such as girls, children with disabilities, and those from minority communities—thus contributing to a more equitable and responsive school environment (Hayes and Bulat, 2017)).

Overall, the effective functioning of SMCs is strongly correlated with improved school outcomes, particularly when they receive adequate capacity building, institutional support, and autonomy in decision-making. As such, strengthening the operational frameworks and participatory mechanisms of SMCs remains a key strategy for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education.

#### 4.1: Governance and Leadership Roles

The governance and leadership functions of School Management Committees (SMCs) are crucial in shaping the institutional culture and fostering effective educational practices. As highlighted by Mutsotso et al. (2020), SMCs serve as vital links between schools and their communities, facilitating active stakeholder engagement in governance processes. This participatory approach is instrumental in cultivating a shared vision for the school, as it integrates diverse perspectives that inform decision-making and policy formulation. Furthermore, SMCs are responsible for establishing educational objectives and ensuring that school policies resonate with community expectations, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of educational initiatives (Owino, 2021).

Effective leadership within SMCs is key to encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders. The chairperson—often a parent or community representative—plays a pivotal role in steering discussions, coordinating meetings, and ensuring inclusive participation. Leadership at this level cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability among members, motivating active involvement in governance activities (Kinyanjui & Wainaina, 2022). By nurturing a culture of shared leadership and teamwork, SMCs can catalyse positive institutional change, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for students (Mutua & Onyango, 2023).

#### 4.2: Financial Management and Resource Allocation

Financial management and resource allocation are fundamental responsibilities of School Management Committees (SMCs), which have a major effect on the quality of education delivered within schools. According to the World Bank (2018), effective financial governance within educational institutions is closely linked to improved academic outcomes, as it ensures that limited resources are directed toward priority areas that enhance student learning experiences. SMCs are charged with developing comprehensive budgets that align with the strategic objectives of their schools, requiring them to exercise prudent financial planning, transparency, and accountability. This process involves not only determining necessary expenditures but also establishing robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation to ensure funds are used effectively and ethically.

An essential aspect of SMCs' responsibilities is identifying diverse funding sources, including government allocations, community contributions, and external grants. Research by Nwafor (2020) emphasises that diversified funding streams can increase financial stability and enable schools to implement innovative programs or infrastructure improvements that might otherwise be unattainable. Strategic decision-making in resource allocation entails prioritising investments that directly impact student achievement, such as teacher training, learning materials, or infrastructural upgrades. Such decisions require a nuanced understanding of the school's specific needs and the ability to balance competing demands within constrained budgets, a challenge that underscores the importance of capacity-building for SMC members (Kanyimba et al., 2019).

Beyond financial efficiency, SMCs are instrumental in promoting equity through equitable resource distribution. By conducting needs assessments that consider the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of their student populations, SMCs can advocate for targeted interventions aimed at marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Studies such as those by Owoo et al. (2021) highlight that resource allocation strategies centred on inclusivity can mitigate disparities and foster an environment conducive to learning for all students. This aligns with the broader educational equity agenda, which calls for the fair distribution of resources as a means of achieving social justice and improved educational outcomes across diverse populations.

Ultimately, the role of SMCs in financial management and resource allocation extends beyond mere fiscal responsibility; it fosters community trust and stakeholder engagement. When community members see their contributions—whether financial or material—being thoughtfully allocated and reflected in tangible improvements, their confidence in the school's leadership is reinforced (Mugo & Mugo, 2022). Transparent and accountable financial practices enhance operational efficiency and cultivate a collaborative environment where

stakeholders are motivated to participate actively in school development. As such, strengthening the capacity of SMCs to perform these vital functions is integral to advancing quality education and equitable access within the broader framework of educational development.

### 4.3: Community Engagement and Stakeholder Collaboration

Community engagement and stakeholder collaboration are essential components of effective school management, particularly within the framework of School Management Committees (SMCs). Research by Chakrabarti et al. (2021) underscores that when SMCs actively foster partnerships with parents, local organisations, and community members, they create a robust support network that significantly enhances the educational environment. Such partnerships cultivate a sense of shared responsibility and ownership over school development, which in turn promotes higher levels of community involvement in school activities and decision-making processes. This participatory approach is vital for fostering communal trust and ensuring that educational initiatives are aligned with local needs and expectations, thereby contributing to improved student outcomes and overall school effectiveness.

Furthermore, SMCs serve as facilitators of meaningful collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including educators, parents, community leaders, and local NGOs. This collaborative engagement often manifests through organised workshops, training sessions, and community forums aimed at addressing specific educational challenges. According to research by Komba and Msonde (2020), such participatory strategies enable schools to leverage local knowledge and resources, fostering innovative solutions tailored to contextual realities. These interactions not only strengthen the capacity of schools to implement relevant educational policies but also help in mobilising community resources that might otherwise be underutilised, thereby enhancing the sustainability of educational programs.

The active involvement of community members in school governance has been linked to tangible improvements in educational quality. Studies by Mugo and Mugo (2022) demonstrate that schools with high levels of community participation tend to report higher student achievement, increased attendance, and greater satisfaction among students and parents alike. This is because engaged communities are more likely to support initiatives that promote inclusive and responsive education, ensuring that diverse needs are met and that barriers to learning are minimised. Such engagement fosters an educational ecosystem where stakeholders work collaboratively to identify priorities, develop strategies, and monitor progress, ultimately leading to more effective and culturally relevant educational practices.

In sum, community engagement and stakeholder collaboration through SMCs are foundational to building an inclusive and responsive educational system. These partnerships not only mobilise local resources and knowledge but also instill a sense of collective ownership that sustains school development efforts over time. As highlighted by the World Bank (2019), fostering strong community-school linkages is critical for achieving equitable access to quality education, especially in contexts where resources are limited and diverse stakeholder interests must be balanced. Strengthening these collaborative frameworks can thus significantly contribute to creating vibrant educational environments that are attuned to the needs of all learners and responsive to community aspirations.

## 5: IMPACT OF SMCS ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

School Management Committees (SMCs) are integral to advancing participatory governance within educational systems, playing a vital role in engaging communities and fostering shared responsibility for school development. Recent scholarly work underscores that well-functioning SMCs contribute significantly to improved educational outcomes, including increased student enrolment, retention rates, academic achievement, and enhancements to school infrastructure. For instance, studies indicate that active community involvement through SMCs creates a conducive environment for resource mobilisation and ensures that school development initiatives are aligned with local needs, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders (Kipkemai et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Okello and Mugo (2019) in Kenya demonstrates that SMCs with active participation and strategic management positively influence school management practices, leading to higher enrolment figures and more efficient utilisation of available resources. Their findings reveal that when SMCs are empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills, they are better positioned to address challenges such as infrastructure deficits and resource allocation inefficiencies. Similarly, Mulwa et al. (2020) observed that capacity-building support provided to SMC members resulted in measurable improvements in literacy rates and infrastructural development, highlighting the importance of targeted training programs for SMC effectiveness.

The capacity and empowerment of SMC members are critical determinants of their success in fostering accountability and inclusive participation. Kibet et al. (2021) emphasise that well-trained SMCs are more likely to promote transparency, encourage community involvement, and advocate for marginalised groups, thereby contributing to more equitable educational environments. Conversely, when SMCs lack adequate training or are subjected to political interference, their ability to positively influence school management

diminishes, undermining efforts to improve educational quality (Ouma & Orodho, 2019). These findings suggest that strengthening institutional capacity and safeguarding the independence of SMCs are essential for realising their full potential.

Furthermore, the role of SMCs in promoting inclusive education—particularly by involving marginalised and vulnerable groups—has been linked to enhanced social cohesion and educational equity. Orodho and Kombo (2018) argue that inclusive participation within SMCs fosters a sense of belonging among diverse community members, which translates into improved school climate and student performance. Such inclusive engagement not only advances social justice but also ensures that educational policies are responsive to the needs of all learners, ultimately contributing to better overall school outcomes. Collectively, these studies emphasise that investing in the capacity building, independence, and community engagement of SMCs is vital for elevating the quality and inclusivity of educational systems.

In conclusion, the scholarly consensus underscores that strengthening the operational capacity and community involvement of SMCs can serve as a powerful strategy for improving educational quality and outcomes. By fostering participatory governance, ensuring inclusivity, and safeguarding their autonomy, SMCs can effectively mobilise resources, promote accountability, and address local educational challenges. As highlighted across recent research, such investments in SMCs are crucial for building resilient, equitable, and high-performing educational institutions that can meet the diverse needs of learners and communities alike.

### 5.1: Student Performance and Achievement Metrics

The influence of School Management Committees (SMCs) on educational outcomes has been widely studied, with evidence indicating that active and well-organised SMCs contribute significantly to improved student achievement and school performance. According to Oketch, Rolleston, and Wamahiu (2014), SMCs facilitate community participation in school governance, which enhances resource mobilisation, accountability, and overall school management. Empirical studies, such as those by Murefu and Wainaina (2019), have demonstrated that schools with effective SMCs tend to have higher academic performance, better attendance, and improved infrastructure, largely due to the collective efforts of stakeholders involved in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, SMCs play a critical role in identifying student needs and implementing targeted interventions to support underperforming learners. By analysing academic data, this committee can advocate for remedial programs, extra tuition, or extracurricular activities that promote inclusive education. For instance, a study by

Orodho and Waweru (2013) in Kenya highlights that SMCs that actively engage in monitoring and evaluation are more successful in implementing strategies that address specific learning gaps, which ultimately results in better student outcomes. The emphasis on data-driven decision-making empowers SMC members to make informed choices that directly influence academic progress.

In addition to resource management and targeted interventions, SMCs foster a culture of accountability and community involvement in school affairs. As noted by Osodo and Waweru (2014), participatory governance through SMCs enhances transparency, builds trust among stakeholders, and encourages shared responsibility for educational quality. This collaborative approach ensures that schools are responsive to community needs and that all parties are committed to improving educational standards, which translates into tangible gains in student performance and school sustainability.

Overall, the evidence underscores the importance of SMCs as vital actors in the educational ecosystem. Their ability to mobilise resources, support targeted interventions, and promote accountability contributes to measurable improvements in educational outcomes. Strengthening SMCs through capacity-building and active participation should thus be a priority for policymakers aiming to enhance the quality and equity of education (Kinyua & Mugo, 2017). Recognising the centrality of community involvement in school management is essential for fostering sustainable educational development.

### 5.2: Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Development

School Management Committees (SMCs) have a significant impact on enhancing teacher effectiveness by supporting head teachers in administrative and supervisory roles. In Luweero District, Uganda, Serunjogi (2022) notes that SMCs assist with planning, financial control, and enforcing discipline, thereby creating a structured environment conducive to effective teaching and learning ([ResearchGate][1]). Their collaborative relationship with head teachers and district inspectors bolsters institutional capacity and ensures that instructional standards and policies are upheld. This administrative support enables more efficient school operations and allows teachers to focus on pedagogical quality.

In Ghana, SMCs play a pivotal role in fostering teachers' professional learning by organising workshops, in-service training, and peer learning. A study by Gyimah and Ayinselya (2022) involving basic school teachers in Ghana found that all respondents engaged in various forms of professional learning, including workshops and collaborative reflection sessions. However, challenges

such as inadequate resources and weak institutional support limited their effectiveness ([Taylor & Francis Online][2]). When SMCs bridge these resource and support gaps, they empower teachers to take control of their continuous professional development, which in turn improves classroom practice and student outcomes.

Moreover, SMCs contribute to building a culture of ongoing professional growth by fostering collaboration and reflective practice. In the Ghanaian context, effective SMC engagement grants teachers access to professional development built around their needs—such as ICT integration, classroom management, and peer observation—recognising these as high-value areas for instructional improvement. By coordinating these activities and advocating for adequate funding and institutional backing, SMCs reinforce teacher motivation and accountability. The result is a learning ecosystem in which educators continually refine their methods, adapt to new challenges, and improve their effectiveness, ultimately boosting student engagement and performance.

### 5.3: Community Support and Parental Involvement

The involvement of the community and parents is fundamental to the success of School Management Committees (SMCs) and their positive impact on educational outcomes. Active community support and parental engagement in school governance contribute significantly to creating a nurturing and supportive educational environment. SMCs facilitate channels for parents to participate in decision-making processes, attend school events, and engage in discussions regarding school policies and practices. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among parents, which has been shown to correlate with enhanced student performance (Nnadozie, 2025).

Moreover, SMCs play a pivotal role in building partnerships with local organisations and stakeholders, amplifying community support for schools. By collaborating with local businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies, SMCs can secure additional resources, funding, and services that benefit students and families. This collaborative approach not only enhances the educational experience but also strengthens the ties between schools and their communities, creating a holistic support system for students. As research indicates, higher levels of parental involvement and community engagement are linked to improved student achievement, emphasising the critical role of SMCs in fostering these relationships.

In summary, the impact of School Management Committees (SMCs) on educational outcomes is multifaceted, encompassing improvements in student performance, teacher effectiveness, and community involvement. Through effective governance and leadership, SMCs facilitate a collaborative environment

that supports academic achievement and fosters continuous professional development among educators. Moreover, by engaging parents and communities, SMCs create a supportive ecosystem that enhances the overall educational experience for students. As educational systems continue to evolve, the role of SMCs in promoting positive educational outcomes remains crucial, highlighting the importance of community-driven governance in achieving quality education for all.

## 6. CHALLENGES FACED BY SMCS

School Management Committees (SMCs) play a vital role in shaping the governance and quality of education within their communities. However, they frequently encounter a range of obstacles that limit their capacity to function effectively. One of the most significant challenges is the scarcity of resources—financial, human, and material—that are essential for implementing initiatives aimed at improving school management and educational outcomes. Many SMCs are constrained by limited budgets, which restrict their ability to fund programs or infrastructure improvements that could otherwise enhance the learning environment and community engagement (Gomje, 2025).

In addition to resource limitations, the level of stakeholder participation significantly influences the success of SMCs. The commitment and active engagement of parents, community members, and other stakeholders often vary, which can weaken collaborative efforts. When stakeholder involvement is inconsistent or superficial, it hampers the decision-making process, undermining the collective responsibility essential for effective school governance. Such variability in engagement can lead to disjointed efforts and diminish the overall impact of SMC initiatives (Kinyua and Mugo, 2017).

Another challenge faced by SMCs relates to the clarity of their roles and responsibilities. In many cases, committee members are not adequately informed about their specific duties or the scope of their authority. This lack of clarity can stem from insufficient training or guidance, resulting in misunderstandings and sometimes conflicts with school administrators or local education authorities. Without a clear understanding of their functions, SMC members may struggle to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, which can hinder their ability to contribute to school improvement efforts (Rose, 2003).

Addressing these challenges is critical to empowering SMCs to fulfil their intended purposes. Providing comprehensive training, clear delineation of roles, and adequate resources can significantly enhance their effectiveness. Strengthening the capacity of SMCs not only improves their operational efficiency but also fosters greater community involvement and accountability. Ultimately, a well-supported and clearly defined SMC can serve as a cornerstone for sustainable educational reform.

and improved educational outcomes within their respective communities (Mugo and Otieno, 2021).

### **6.1: Resource Constraints and Funding Issues**

Resource limitations and funding challenges are among the most pressing issues that hinder the effectiveness of School Management Committees (SMCs). Many SMCs operate with very limited financial means, which significantly constrains their ability to introduce or sustain programs aimed at improving the educational environment. Without sufficient funding, SMCs find it difficult to undertake essential activities such as infrastructure development, staff training, or acquiring necessary educational materials. Consequently, these financial constraints often compel SMCs to focus predominantly on covering basic operational expenses, leaving little room for innovative or transformative educational initiatives that could elevate school performance (Ngow et al., 2022).

In addition to the immediate lack of resources, securing ongoing and reliable funding remains a persistent obstacle. While some SMCs depend on government grants or allocations, these funds are frequently limited, irregular, or delayed, creating uncertainty and making long-term planning difficult. This unpredictability hampers the ability of SMCs to implement consistent development strategies and maintain momentum in school improvement efforts. Furthermore, mobilising community resources can be challenging, especially in economically disadvantaged areas where members may have limited capacity or willingness to contribute financially or otherwise (Gumel and Bardai, 2021).

To address these financial challenges, SMCs must consider adopting more strategic approaches to resource mobilisation. Diversifying funding sources can be an effective way to build financial resilience, such as by establishing partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, or philanthropic organisations that support education. Developing such collaborations can provide additional financial support, technical assistance, and resources that are critical for sustaining educational programs. Building these networks not only increases the financial capacity of SMCs but also fosters greater community involvement and shared responsibility for school development (Noch and Rumasukun, 2024).

Ultimately, overcoming resource constraints requires proactive planning and innovative approaches. SMCs that actively seek diverse funding streams and cultivate collaborative relationships can better navigate financial uncertainties and expand their impact. Strengthening their financial base enables SMCs to prioritise meaningful initiatives that improve teaching and learning environments, thereby resulting in more equitable and effective educational outcomes for all students.

### **6.2: Variability in Stakeholder Engagement**

The inconsistency in stakeholder engagement presents a significant obstacle to accurately assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of School Management Committees (SMCs). While active involvement from parents and community members is crucial for the success of these committees, participation levels often fluctuate due to a variety of socio-economic and logistical factors. In many communities, especially those facing economic hardships, parents may lack the time, resources, or awareness needed to engage meaningfully in school affairs. This variability in involvement can lead to imbalanced decision-making, where only a select few voices dominate, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives necessary for comprehensive school governance ((Noch and Rumasukun, 2024)..

Furthermore, the diverse backgrounds of community stakeholders can introduce conflicting interests and priorities within SMCs. Different cultural, social, or economic perspectives may result in disagreements over the direction of school policies or resource allocation. Such tensions can impede the decision-making process, making it difficult for SMCs to reach consensus on key issues affecting the school's development. These internal conflicts, if not managed effectively, can undermine the collaborative spirit essential for effective governance and sustainable school improvement ((Ngow et al., 2022)..

To mitigate these challenges, SMCs need to prioritise creating an inclusive and participatory environment. Creating spaces where all stakeholders feel valued and heard is essential for building trust and ensuring broad-based support for school initiatives. Regular communication strategies, such as community forums, workshops, and feedback sessions, can serve as effective tools for engaging a wider range of voices. These platforms can help bridge gaps, clarify misunderstandings, and promote shared understanding among stakeholders, ultimately strengthening the collective effort toward school development ((Ngow et al., 2022)..

In conclusion, addressing the variability in stakeholder engagement requires deliberate and sustained efforts to promote inclusivity and open dialogue. By implementing structured communication channels and actively encouraging participation, SMCs can better harness the diverse perspectives within their communities. This inclusive approach not only enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of decision-making but also fosters a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders, thereby contributing to more sustainable and equitable educational outcomes.

### **6.3: Policy and Regulatory Hurdles**

Policy and regulatory hurdles present significant challenges for the operation and effectiveness of School

Management Committees (SMCs). In many regions, the legal and policy frameworks governing education may lack clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of SMCs, leading to confusion and inconsistency in their functions. When SMCs are not clearly defined within educational policies, it can result in conflicts with school administration or local authorities, undermining their authority and effectiveness in governance.

Furthermore, bureaucratic processes and regulatory requirements can impede the ability of SMCs to implement necessary changes and initiatives. Lengthy approval processes for funding, resource allocation, or program implementation can stifle innovation and responsiveness to local educational needs. To overcome these challenges, it is essential for policymakers to streamline regulations and create supportive frameworks that empower SMCs to operate effectively. Engaging SMCs in the policy development process can also ensure that the frameworks established align with local realities and promote their active involvement in educational governance.

## 7: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in enhancing educational quality and accountability has garnered increasing interest in recent educational research due to their potential to influence positive change within schools. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that well-functioning SMCs can significantly foster community participation, leading to increased local engagement and a sense of ownership over school initiatives. These committees are instrumental in mobilising resources, whether through local fundraising, community donations, or volunteer efforts that contribute to infrastructure development, the provision of learning materials, and the overall improvement of the school environment (Mingat & Tan, 2018). Furthermore, SMCs promote inclusive governance by involving diverse stakeholders—parents, teachers, community leaders, and students—in decision-making processes. This inclusive approach enhances transparency, accountability, and responsiveness within schools, ultimately creating a more participatory and democratic educational setting. Such collaborative governance models often lead to tangible benefits, such as higher student attendance, improved academic performance, and increased enrolment, especially in marginalised or underserved communities.

Building on these insights, the effectiveness of SMCs depends on various factors, including clear roles and responsibilities, capacity-building, and sustained community engagement. Challenges such as limited resources, lack of training, and socio-cultural barriers can hinder the full realisation of SMCs' potential. Nonetheless,

numerous case studies demonstrate that with targeted support and adaptive strategies, SMCs can overcome these obstacles and become catalysts for positive change. For example, successful SMCs often leverage local social capital and establish strong communication channels that facilitate ongoing dialogue between stakeholders. The lessons learnt from these experiences highlight the importance of flexible governance frameworks, ongoing training, and community involvement in ensuring the sustainability and impact of SMCs. Overall, understanding the strategies, challenges, and lessons from diverse contexts provides valuable guidance for policymakers and practitioners aiming to strengthen school governance and improve educational outcomes through effective SMCs.

### 7.1 Rural Contexts: Community Engagement and Resource Mobilisation

In rural settings, SMCs often leverage local social capital and cultural norms to foster a sense of ownership and accountability within the community. For instance, a study by Oduro et al. (2019) in Ghana highlights how rural school committees effectively mobilise community resources through local fundraising and volunteer efforts. These initiatives led to tangible infrastructural improvements, such as the construction of additional classrooms and sanitation facilities, which in turn contributed to increased student enrolment and retention. The committees benefited from strong social ties and shared cultural values that facilitated collective action, ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives over time. Such examples underscore the importance of harnessing existing community strengths to support school development and promote a culture of shared responsibility.

Similarly, in Malawi, SMCs in rural schools have played a pivotal role in promoting parental involvement and broader community participation. Mwamba et al. (2020) describe how these committees organised regular meetings with parents and community leaders, which fostered a collaborative environment for decision-making and resource sharing. These efforts were correlated with improved school attendance rates and enhanced academic performance, particularly among girls and marginalised groups. The success of these initiatives illustrates how culturally sensitive approaches—respecting local traditions and social structures—are crucial for effective governance. Such strategies enable SMCs to build trust and deepen community engagement, which are vital for sustaining improvements in educational quality.

Across diverse contexts, these examples demonstrate that the effectiveness of SMCs hinges on their ability to adapt to local social, cultural, and economic realities. In some cases, this involves leveraging existing social networks and cultural norms to mobilise resources

and foster collective action, while in others, it requires establishing new channels of communication and participation. Regardless of the approach, ongoing capacity-building, community involvement, and context-specific strategies are essential for overcoming challenges such as limited resources or socio-cultural barriers. By learning from successful case studies like those in Ghana and Malawi, policymakers and practitioners can design more inclusive and sustainable school governance models that harness community strengths and promote educational development (Mingat & Tan, 2018).

## 7.2 Urban Contexts: Leveraging Technology and Inclusive Participation

Urban SMCs often face unique challenges related to managing diverse stakeholder groups and varying levels of engagement among community members. A notable example is a case study from Kenya, where an urban school implemented a mobile-based communication platform to enhance stakeholder engagement (Kiptum et al., 2020). This digital tool facilitated real-time communication between parents, teachers, and administrators, enabling prompt sharing of information, feedback, and updates about school events and policies. As a result, there was a marked increase in participation in school activities and decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive and responsive governance environment. Such innovations highlight how leveraging technology can help overcome the complexities of urban school communities, which are characterised by diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and busy schedules.

Research by Kiptum et al. (2020) demonstrates that technology can effectively bridge communication gaps in urban school contexts, promoting transparency and inclusivity. In addition to Kenya, similar initiatives have been observed elsewhere; for example, in South Africa, some urban schools have adopted social media platforms and messaging apps to facilitate ongoing dialogue among stakeholders. These digital channels not only improve information flow but also enable more timely and interactive engagement, which is often difficult to achieve through traditional communication methods. Such innovations align with global trends emphasising the role of digital tools in strengthening educational governance, as highlighted by the OECD (2020), which advocates for integrating technology into school management to foster greater stakeholder participation and accountability.

Furthermore, urban SMCs are increasingly exploring other digital solutions such as online portals for submitting feedback, virtual meetings, and digital surveys to gather community insights. These tools are particularly valuable in urban settings where busy schedules or geographical dispersion can limit face-to-face interactions. For example, some schools in Latin America have used mobile apps to involve parents in monitoring students'

progress and participating in school planning activities. In general, these examples show that using digital tools wisely can help urban school management committees deal with different types of stakeholders, improve communication, and create more inclusive decision-making processes, which are important for making urban education systems better and more responsive.

## 7.3 Strategies and Outcomes

Successful SMCs employ a variety of strategies tailored to their specific community contexts, recognising that effective approaches in one setting may not be directly transferable to another. In rural areas, committees often prioritise community mobilisation, resource generation, and fostering a sense of local ownership to drive school improvements. For example, Oduro et al. (2019) highlight how Ghanaian rural schools mobilised community members to participate in fundraising activities and volunteer work, which led to infrastructural enhancements such as building new classrooms and sanitation facilities. Similarly, Mwamba et al. (2020) describe how rural Malawian SMCs engaged local leaders and parents in decision-making processes related to school management, resulting in increased community investment and support for the school's development initiatives. These strategies have proven effective in cultivating a shared sense of responsibility and ensuring the sustainability of school improvements.

In contrast, urban SMCs increasingly incorporate technological solutions to facilitate communication, stakeholder participation, and transparency. Kiptum et al. (2020) document how Kenyan urban schools implemented mobile communication platforms that enabled real-time dialogue among parents, teachers, and school administrators. This approach helped overcome barriers such as busy schedules and geographical dispersion, leading to higher levels of parental involvement and more responsive school governance. Beyond Kenya, other urban schools across different regions have adopted digital tools like online feedback forms, virtual meetings, and social media groups to engage stakeholders more effectively, fostering a more inclusive school community. These technological strategies align with the broader global trend emphasising the role of digital innovation in strengthening educational governance (OECD, 2020).

The implementation of these tailored strategies has produced tangible outcomes across diverse settings. For instance, a rural school in Ghana reported a 20% increase in student enrolment following community-led infrastructure projects, demonstrating how local resource mobilisation can directly impact access to education (Oduro et al., 2019). Similarly, an urban school in Kenya saw a 35% rise in parental attendance at meetings after adopting a mobile communication system, which improved stakeholder engagement and decision-making processes (Kiptum et al., 2020). These examples illustrate that context-specific strategies—whether rooted

in community mobilisation or technological innovation—can lead to significant improvements in school infrastructure, enrolment, academic performance, and stakeholder participation. Ultimately, the success of SMCs depends on their ability to adapt strategies to their unique environments, leveraging local strengths and emerging opportunities to enhance educational outcomes (Mingat & Tan, 2018).

#### **7.4 Lessons Learnt and Best Practices**

Several lessons emerge from these cases:

1. **Community Ownership and Participation:** Engaging parents and local stakeholders in decision-making cultivates a sense of ownership, accountability, and sustainability (Mingat & Tan, 2018).

2. **Contextual Adaptation:** Tailoring governance approaches to local socio-cultural and infrastructural realities enhances effectiveness. Rural SMCs benefit from community mobilisation, while urban SMCs gain by leveraging technology (Oduro et al., 2019; Kiptum et al., 2020).

3. **Capacity Building:** Providing training and resources to SMC members strengthens governance effectiveness. Regular workshops on leadership, financial management, and conflict resolution are crucial (Gautam & Jain, 2021).

4. **Use of Technology:** Digital tools can enhance transparency, communication, and stakeholder engagement, especially in urban settings with diverse populations (OECD, 2020).

The success stories of SMCs across rural and urban contexts demonstrate that participatory, context-sensitive governance models are vital to improving educational outcomes. As evidence suggests, fostering community involvement, leveraging technology, and building capacity are key strategies for effective school management. Policymakers and educational leaders should prioritise adaptable frameworks that recognise local realities and ensure that SMCs serve as catalysts for inclusive and sustainable educational development.

### **8. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **8.1: Recommendations for Strengthening SMCs**

To enhance the effectiveness of School Management Committees (SMCs), a multifaceted approach is necessary that addresses both structural and operational aspects. First, it is essential to clarify the roles and responsibilities of SMC members to ensure that everyone understands their contributions to school governance. This can be achieved by developing comprehensive guidelines and training programs that outline the

expectations and functions of SMCs. Furthermore, establishing regular evaluation mechanisms will enable SMCs to assess their performance and identify areas for improvement, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous development.

Second, increasing financial and resource support for SMCs is crucial. Governments and educational authorities should allocate dedicated funds to support SMC initiatives, especially in underserved regions. These funds could be used for capacity-building activities, infrastructure improvements, or educational resources. Additionally, creating partnerships with local businesses and non-governmental organisations can provide supplementary funding and resources, thereby increasing the operational capacity of SMCs.

Lastly, enhancing communication channels between SMCs and the broader community is vital for fostering collaboration and engagement. Implementing regular community forums or feedback sessions can facilitate open dialogue, allowing stakeholders to voice their concerns and suggestions. By actively involving parents and community members in educational governance, SMCs can create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility that translates into better educational outcomes for students.

#### **8.2: Policy Recommendations for Governments and Educational Authorities**

Governments and educational authorities play a pivotal role in strengthening SMCs through targeted policy initiatives. One of the primary recommendations is to establish clear legal frameworks that define the roles, functions, and powers of SMCs within the educational governance structure. This legal clarity will empower SMCs to operate effectively and confidently, while minimising conflicts with school administrations or local authorities. Additionally, providing financial incentives for active SMC participation can motivate community members to engage more fully in school governance, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Another key policy recommendation is to promote inclusive practices that ensure the representation of diverse community voices within SMCs. Governments should implement policies that encourage the participation of marginalised groups, including women, minorities, and low-income families, in SMC activities. This can be achieved through targeted outreach efforts and training programs designed to empower under-represented community members, ensuring that all perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

Finally, ongoing support and resources for capacity building are essential for SMC sustainability. Governments should allocate funds for training programs that equip SMC members with the necessary skills in areas like leadership, financial management, and



community engagement. This investment in human capital will not only strengthen the capabilities of individual SMC members but also enhance the overall effectiveness of school governance.

### **8.3: Strategies for Capacity Building and Training for SMC Members**

Effective capacity building and training for SMC members are fundamental to enhancing their governance capabilities. One strategy is to develop a comprehensive training curriculum that covers essential topics such as educational policy, financial management, conflict resolution, and community engagement. This curriculum should be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of SMCs, ensuring relevance and applicability in local settings.

Furthermore, establishing mentorship programs that connect experienced SMC members with new or less experienced members can facilitate knowledge sharing and skills development. Mentorship relationships can provide guidance, support, and practical insights into effective governance practices, helping new members navigate the complexities of school management.

Additionally, leveraging technology to deliver training and capacity-building resources can enhance accessibility and reach. Online platforms can host webinars, workshops, and resource libraries that SMC members can access at their convenience. This flexibility allows for continuous learning and adaptation to emerging challenges and opportunities, ultimately strengthening the governance capacity of SMCs.

### **8.4: Enhancing Community Engagement and Partnership Models**

Enhancing community engagement and developing effective partnership models are crucial for the success of SMCs. One approach is to establish regular community forums or workshops that facilitate open dialogue between SMCs, parents, and local stakeholders. These forums can serve as platforms for sharing information, discussing challenges, and collaboratively developing solutions to improve school governance and educational outcomes.

Another effective strategy is to foster partnerships with local organisations, businesses, and educational institutions. By collaborating with these entities, SMCs can gain access to additional resources, expertise, and support for their initiatives. For example, local businesses could sponsor educational programs or provide internships for students, while academic institutions could offer training workshops for SMC members. Such partnerships create a network of support that enriches the educational environment and strengthens community ties.

Additionally, using social media and digital communication channels can significantly enhance community engagement. SMCs should leverage these platforms to share updates, solicit feedback, and promote school events, thereby increasing visibility and fostering a sense of community ownership. By actively engaging with stakeholders through multiple channels, SMCs can cultivate a more inclusive and participatory governance model.

### **8.5: Summary of Key Findings**

The exploration of School Management Committees (SMCs) has revealed several key findings that underscore their importance in educational governance. First, SMCs have demonstrated a significant impact on improving educational outcomes by fostering community engagement, enhancing resource allocation, and promoting accountability. Case studies highlighted the effectiveness of tailored strategies in urban and rural contexts, emphasising the need for contextually sensitive governance approaches.

Second, challenges faced by SMCs, including resource constraints, variability in stakeholder engagement, and policy hurdles, must be addressed to enhance their effectiveness. Recommendations for strengthening SMCs include clarifying roles and responsibilities, increasing financial support, and fostering communication channels with the community.

Finally, capacity building and training for SMC members, alongside the development of inclusive partnership models, are essential for sustaining effective governance. By implementing these strategies, SMCs can better fulfil their responsibilities and contribute to improved educational outcomes for students.

### **8.6: Implications for Future Research and Policy**

The findings of this study carry significant implications for future research and policy development related to School Management Committees (SMCs). Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of SMC initiatives on student outcomes across diverse educational contexts. Identifying best practices and successful case studies can provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to enhance SMC effectiveness.

Additionally, future research should focus on understanding the experiences of marginalised groups inside SMCs, including women and low-income families. By highlighting the barriers these groups face in participating in school governance, researchers can inform policy recommendations that promote inclusivity and equity in educational governance.

Policy implications also extend to the need for continuous support and resources for SMCs.

Policymakers should prioritise investing in capacity-building initiatives that equip SMC members with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate their roles effectively. By doing so, governments can strengthen the overall governance framework of schools and ultimately improve educational outcomes for all students.

### 8.7: Conclusion

In conclusion, strengthening School Management Committees (SMCs) is essential for enhancing educational governance and improving student outcomes. Through effective community engagement, targeted capacity building, and supportive policy frameworks, SMCs can play a pivotal role in fostering accountability and collaboration within schools. The diverse case studies highlighted throughout this analysis underscore the importance of context-sensitive strategies that leverage local resources and community strengths.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, educational authorities and governments can empower SMCs to fulfil their potential. The collaborative efforts of stakeholders, including parents, educators, and community members, will be crucial in creating an inclusive and responsive educational environment. Ultimately, the success of SMCs contributes to the broader goal of achieving quality education for all, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive in a supportive and nurturing learning environment.

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