



REPORT ON OUR INTERVENTION FOR STRENGTHENING SMCs

Conducted by Dahanu PO Shri Saurabh Katiyar

in partnership with



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Context

In May 2018, the Tribal Development Department of the Maharashtra government released a GR mandating a fund of Rs. 5 lakh for School Management Committees in the state's Adivasi Ashramshalas. Aimed towards empowering and strengthening SMCs in these schools, this fund was meant to be used for providing students a more holistic learning experience. For provide further clarity on the utilization of the fund, the department released another GR with a detailed breakdown of the fund and a comprehensive list of works that can be conducted under the fund. On paper, this was an admirable effort to give more agency to parents and community members in improving schools as well as in addressing bureaucratic red-tapism. However, there was significant ambiguity on the ground regarding the proper use of the fund among HMs and other school staff. Owing to lack of awareness and requisite information, the SMC fund remained unused or underused in many Ashramshalas.

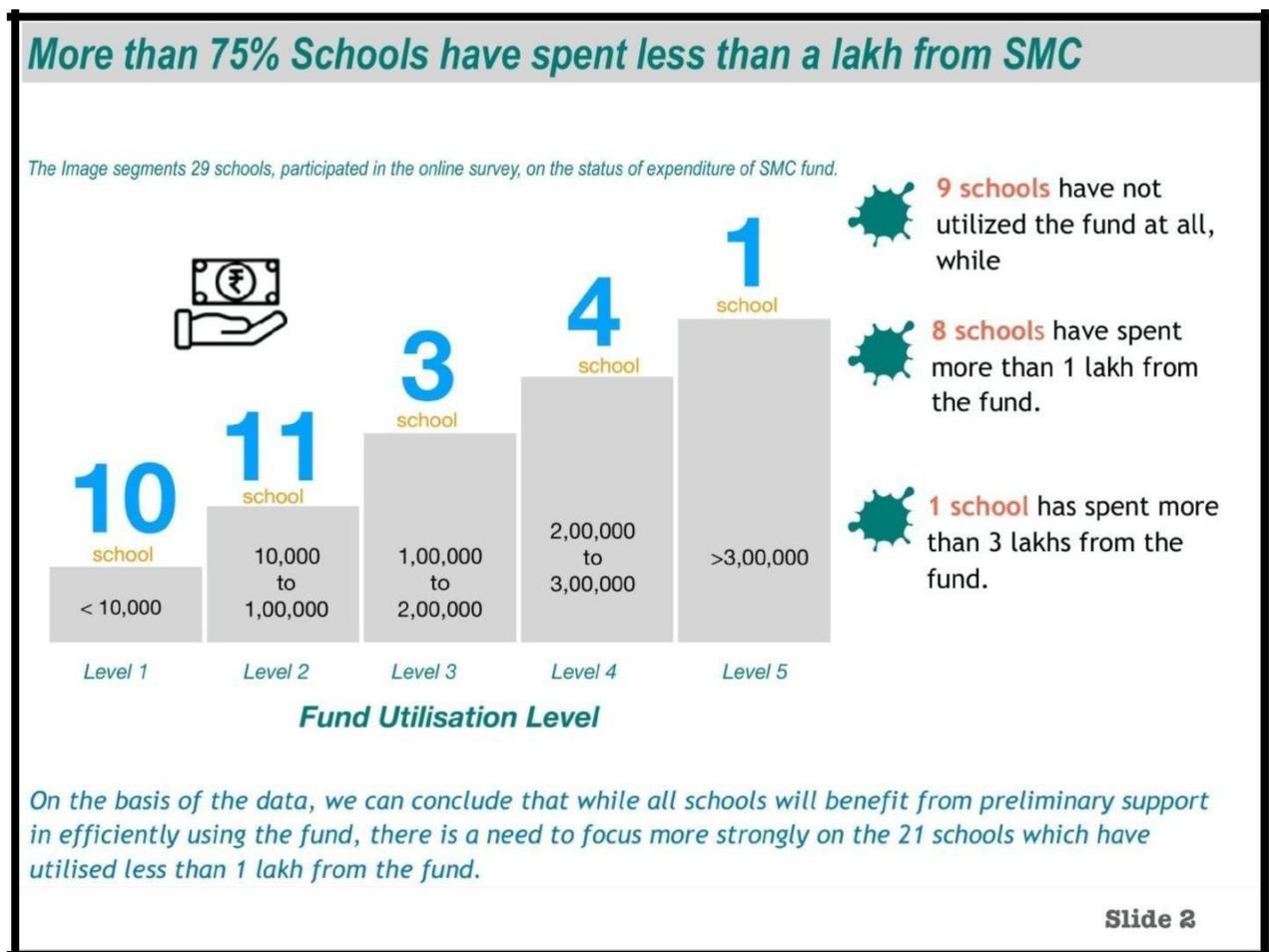
In order to address this situation, the Dahanu PO under the leadership of Project Officer Shri Saurabh Katiyar planned an intervention in partnership with Saajha aimed towards generating awareness among SMCs regarding the fund in its 34 Ashramshalas. After conducting a preliminary survey in the schools, Saajha prepared tools to aid HMs to understand the nuances regarding the utilization of the fund. Additionally, we also planned a series of workshops in schools which required support in using the fund appropriately. In essence, Saajha wanted to achieve two key objectives through the intervention:

1. Increase awareness about the role and responsibilities of SMC among SMC members
2. Increasing expenditure under the SMC fund for all schools

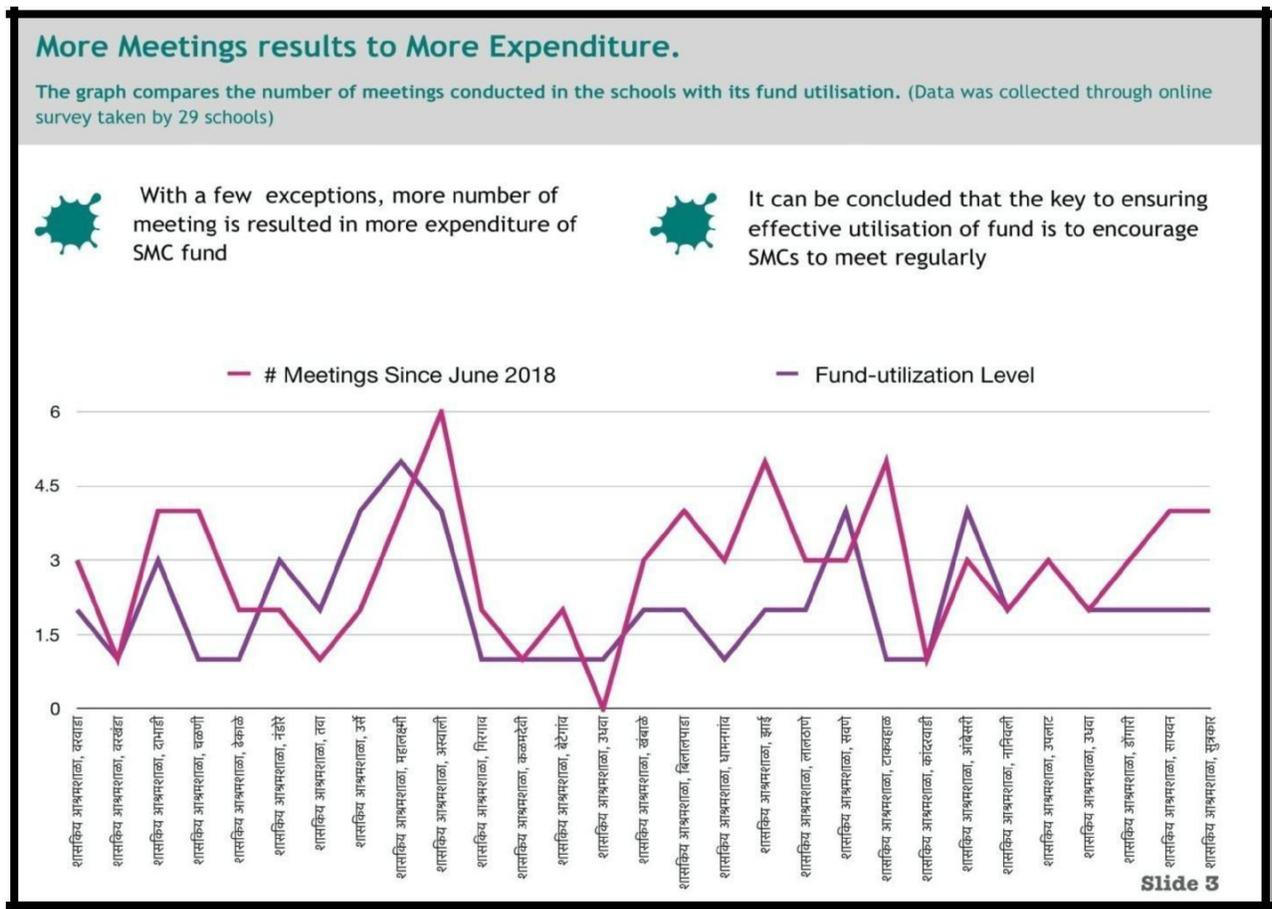
This document will elaborate on various aspects of the intervention – designing, training and implementations. We will also articulate our key learnings, challenges and recommendations to ensure that SMCs are able to function smoothly and work more proactive towards facilitating a better future for thousands of students in Dahanu’s Ashramshalas.

Research

Before embarking on the intervention, Saajha conducted a preliminary survey among Dahanu's Ashramshalas to get a brief understanding of the state of SMCs in the PO as well as the status of utilization of the SMC fund. An online survey form was circulated among HMs asking for details regarding the expenditure under the SMC fund. The data thus obtained from 29 schools revealed that at least 22 schools needed extensive support in adequately using the SMC fund.



The data also revealed that schools which regularly conducted SMC meetings were using the SMC fund more proactively. We were able to conclude that any intervention to increase expenditure under the fund will also have to focus on strengthening SMCs and specifically on increasing the number of SMC meetings conducted in schools.



Additionally, we also conducted visits in 5 Ashramshalas to delve deeper into parental involvement in the school, classroom, community and home level.

Field Observations

Visited 5 Ashram Shalas in Dahanu (Ambesari, Dhamangaon, Warwada, Warkhande, Savne). Interacted with teachers, children, parents and SMC. Our questions were focussed to see

- How actively parents participate in **School** decisions?
- Teacher-Parent communication on learning and **class** practices?
- How do SMC members interact with other **community** members and SMCs of different schools?
- How thriving is **home**-environment (after-class) in the Ashram-shalas ?

 School	 Class	 Community	 Home
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funds expenditure seems to be the major driver of formation of SMCs 2. The feeling of connection with school as well as the village was evident 3. SMCs had limited or no conversation on learning related agenda 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 60% of the Children responded that their parents meet them at least twice a month. 2. Parents spend more than 2 hours in school premises on their visit. They spend time with other children of their community 3. Parents and Teachers do not engage in learning related conversation on their visit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No platforms for SMC members to meet, share best practices and solve common problems 2. SMC Members not actively creating learning spaces in the communities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Well planned days with fair focus on sports, free-play and academics 2. Fundamental need of safety, security and diet are taken care of 3. A significant adult to listen to children is missing. All superintendent complained that the children do not express

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Based on our preliminary surveys and visits, we identified a few key roadblocks that were hampering the utilization of the SMC fund. We planned our intervention, keeping in mind these roadblocks aimed at increasing the increasing the SMC fund expenditure and at engendering greater involvement of the SMC in the functioning of schools.

Key Road-Block in Expenditure and Proposed Solution

Understanding Government Regulation

According to a few HMs, the GR for the SMC fund is ambiguous.

Simplifying it and issuing clearer guidelines could be useful for SMCs

Access to Service Providers

For many schools located in remote areas, lack of resources and service provider is roadblock in using the fund.

These schools could be provided access to resources pools and information on fund utilization in order to address it.

Involvement of SMC

As we see more SMC meetings results to more utilisation of funds

In schools, where meetings are not conducted regularly or parents remain absent, there is a need to involve the SMC more proactively in the school's functioning.

Hand books

Saajha would prepare resources:

- Simplified Interactive GR guidelines.
- Suggestive items for expenditure
- Directory of resource pools.
- Model case studies from other schools and tools to create a comprehensive school plan.

Trainings

We are proposing following trainings:

- preliminary training of all HMs, where they will be trained on conducting effective SMC meetings and preparing a school plan.
- Intensive workshops in 20-25 schools which have used less than 1 lakh rupees from the fund.

Support

After the training, regular follow-up calls will be conducted to monitor the utilization of the fund
On-ground support will be provided whenever required.

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Out-come of the Pilot

1. Increase Expenditure by 25-30%
3. 50% of Principals have created Schools have a School Vision Plan , shared with SMC and incorporated their feedback
 - Short Term: Jan to March 2019
 - Long Term: April 2019 to March 2020

Week-Wise Work Flow

Activities	DECEMBER				JANUARY				FEBRUARY				MARCH				
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	
Content	Pictorial GR Guidelines					■											
	List of Expenditure Items						■										
	Resource Pool Directory						■										
	Best Practices Guidelines						■										
	School Plan Tool						■										
Trainings	All Head-Master Training						■										
	22 School-SMC-Workshop							■	■	■	■	■	■				
Support	Telephone- Helpline										■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Need Based On-Ground Support															■	■

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Content and Design

In order to address key concerns pertaining to the utilization of the SMC fund, Saajha conceptualized and designed a booklet that could serve as a guide for HMs.

The booklet included the following details:

1. Simplified GR - The GR document was simplified using infographics and charts. A detailed breakdown of the SMC fund was provided. It also included the process to be followed for using the fund
2. Expenditure Items - Based on our interviews with HMs, we provided a list of suggestive expenditure items. The expenses were under the following heads: classrooms, toilets, drinking water, tree plantation and health
3. Planning Tools - We created a few planning tools to help HMs in systematically using the SMC fund. These tools were for both short-term and long-term planning. We also provided a planner for future SMC meetings.
4. Resource Pools - An informal list of contact details of vendors was provided as an addendum. The list was obtained from HMs who had conducted works in their respective schools with these vendors.

In addition to the booklet, the other resources that were prepared and shared with SMCs as a part of this intervention are listed below:

1. FAQ document – A comprehensive document with responses to all questions and concerns raised by school HMs and SMC members regarding the fund. The responses were compiled based on inputs from the Tribal Development Department and the Dahanu Project Office.

2. School Vision Plan – A visual tool was provided to HMs to help them to propose their idea of an ideal school, explain the current state of the school and to draw up a vision for the next two months since the intervention.
3. Meeting tool – A guide to help SMC Chairpersons conduct SMC meetings effectively. It included steps to be followed before, during and after an SMC meeting.

Training

A three-hour training session was organized for the HMs of the 34 Ashramshalas in Shaskiya Ashramshala, Khambhale on 21st January, 2019. The objectives and outline of the training are explained below:

Desired outcomes –			
1. Increase the utilization of funds till march 2019. 2. One SMC Meeting with SMC Meeting Process in all schools. 3. Orientation of all SMC Members on SMC fund.			
Session and Objective	Process	Timeline	Required Material
Opening –To start workshop on an energetic note.	Facilitator will do an energizer and introduction round.	10-15 minutes	Mike
About Saajha –To develop understanding on saajha and to build rapport with participants.	Facilitator will give a brief orientation about Saajha. 1. What Saajha does? 2. Where and why was Saajha started? 3. Where we are working currently etc.?	5-7 minutes	Mike Presentation of Saajha
Importance of SMC –To build understanding amongst participants that why SMC is important and why Parental involvement is important	1. Facilitator will show a video (my dad is a liar) and ask participants to see the video. 2. After video, facilitator will ask some debrief questions to participants (facilitator can share their own story as well to build an environment of sharing) – a) What they saw in the video? b) What was the girl's father doing in the video? c) Why was her father lying to her? d) Have your parent's done anything like this/how did your parents help you? e) Share the best moment/ contribution of parent which you cannot forget 3. After debrief share concept of SMC – a) PARENT PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR LIVES THAT WHY THEY ARE IN SMC. b) AND THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO FOCUS ON SMCs. SHARE SOME EFFECTIVE STORIES OF DELHI'S SMCs through video etc.	25-30 minutes	Video, Speaker, Mike, Projector
Ideal SMC Meeting	1. Facilitator will share the ideal process of SMC meeting through PPT. 2. Will cover all aspect of pre, during and post meeting strategies.	10-15 minutes	Mike, PPT, Projector

Session and Objective	Process	Timeline	Required Material
What is SMC (KBC) –To build understanding on structure of SMC and SMC funds.	1. Make group of 5-6 people. 2. Orient the SMC structure to participants through PPT. 3. Share SMC circular and pamphlet with participants. And share the instructions of KBC – a) You will have 10-15 minutes to read this circular. After that we will play a game called 'Kaun Banega Scorepati'. b) In this game I will ask you some questions related to the SMC circular. c) Every question will have 4 option, you need to select the right answer. d) If you give the correct answer then you will get the 10 point and 0 points for the incorrect answer. e) After every answer respective group needs to define the reason of their answer. 4. AFTER THIS GAME FACILITATOR WILL EXPLAIN THE MAIN POINTERS OF CIRCULAR AGAIN THROUGH PPT. 5. REQUEST SOME PRINCIPALS TO SHARE THEIR EFFECTIVE FUND UTILIZATION STORIES IN LARGE GROUP.	35-40 minutes	Projector, PPT, Circular, Pamphlet, Marker, Board.
SMC FUNDS Status –To ensure proper understanding on SMC funds and reflect/vision the future picture of fund utilization.	1. Facilitator will give FUND Status format to each participants and share instructions to fill the format – a) As now you know many successful stories of fund utilization and you know the process of fund utilization. b) Now each of you need to imagine your school and fill the given format - what is the ideal situation according to them for each head. What is the current status of each head. what they will fill march 2019 under each head. c) There are 3 sections in the format –You will have 10-15 minutes to share this format. 2. After filling this format some of us will share their plan in large group.	10-15 minutes	Copy of format, projector and mike
Plan of First SMC meeting – Enable participants to create an effective SMC meeting plan.	1. Distribute the SMC Meeting Planning sheet amongst participants. 2. Elaborate the heads of planning sheet and how they need to fill it (with example). 3. Display the effective SMC meeting pointers on projector. 4. Give them 10-15 minutes to plan smc meeting. 5. Share some plan in large groups.	10-15 minutes	Copy of format, projector and mike



The training session was also attended by Extension Officer Mohite Sir and APO (Education) Jadhav Sir. The training was quite successful and was well-received by the HMs. Towards the end of the training, HMs created long-term and short-term plans for using the SMC fund. As mentioned in the above plan, HMs were also informed about the school-wise workshops in the 22 Ashramshalas which had significantly under-utilized the SMC fund. The schedule was shared with them and they were asked to make necessary preparations for the workshop – including sending invitations to their SMC members for the workshop.

School-wise workshops

In the second leg of the intervention, we focused on schools which needed more support in the utilization of the fund. The plan for these workshops has been explained below:

1. Interaction with SMC members on their involvement and understanding the factors that aid/hamper their active participation
2. Understanding the previous utilization of the SMC fund as well as the challenges faced by the school in using the fund, providing solutions and suggestions wherever necessary
3. Taking a round of the school along with the SMC, asking for their suggestions on where the SMC fund can be utilized as well as providing necessary inputs
4. Helping the SMC in preparing long-term and short-term plans for utilizing the SMC fund using the tools we provided. Also, helping the HM for creating a plan for future SMC meetings.

The schedule for the school-wise workshops has been given below:

No	Day	Date	School			
			10.00 am to 12.00 pm		2.00 pm to 4.00 pm	
			Jenil	Chetan	Jenil	Chetan
1	Wednesday	23-Jan-19	Girgaon	Aswali	Dongari	Uplat
2	Thursday	24-Jan-19	Varkhanday	Dhamanagaon	Kalamdevi	Udhawa
3	Friday	25-Jan-19	Kandarwadi	Nanivali	Rankol	Tawa
4	Monday	28-Jan-19	Betegaon	Mendhawan	Nandore	Takwalah
5	Tuesday	29-Jan-19	Embur	Govade	Bhatane	Lalthane
6	Wednesday	30-Jan-19	Bilapada	Saiwan		

A brief snapshot of these intensive workshops has been provided below:

No	School's Name	HM's name	Level of SMC	Challenges in using fund	Plans for the fund
1	Girgaon	N.M. Rathod		1. Work has already been sanctioned in the school, but hasn't commenced from PO 2. Can't use SMC fund for those works as there can be overlap	Well cleaning Ground levelling Sports equipment Lab equipment Library Sick room
2	Dongari	G.D. Gavit			Classroom painting Cleaning school campus Waste water management Constructing cabin for watchmen; maintaining register at entrance Space for washing clothes
3	Varkhande	M.R. Gaikwad		1. School is in rented space, hence infra work can't be done 2. Rent not paid, hence landlord unwilling to conduct repairs 3. SMC meetings are rarely held; members don't turn up 4. Ambiguity about using SMC fund in rented spaces	Purchase sports equipment Space for washing clothes Organize competitions
4	Kalamdevi	K. N. Gole			Newspapers for students Purchasing kitchen utensils Entrance gate repairs Painting 'Kattas' around big trees Purchasing books for competitive exams
5	Kandarwadi	C.K. Vedga		1. No sanctioned HM in the school 2. Since teachers are taking up	Shed for drying & washing clothes Girls hostel floor repair & painting

				the post on rotation, they are unwilling and hesitant to take responsibility of fund	Sports equipment Painting of classrooms
6	Rankhol	K.R. Gowali			Painting Newspapers Solar geyser repair Pipeline for water Soak pit Construction around tree
7	Aswali	S.S. Khurule			Water supply for 24 hours
8	Uplat	B.P. Ahire		1. Building has been newly constructed, hence major expenses not needed	Repairing of windows Tree plantation hot water for bathing
9	Dhamangao n	P.B. Bhivgade		1. SMC newly constituted; meetings not held 2. HM is inactive; doesn't take initiative on using fund 3. SMC has no information about using fund	Furniture Teaching Aids Drinking water facility
10	Udhawa	L. Y. Wagh			Sports equipment Shed for drying clothes Plumbing work.
11	Naniwali	M.B.Patil		1. Work has already been sanctioned in the school; hence can't conduct repairs 2. Lack of space in the school for undertaking more works	Drainage work Equipment for science laboratory
12	Mendhawa n	D.L. Bhalekar		1. SMC fund was allotted only recently hence school hasn't utilized it all 2. HM is new and didn't know much about the procedure to utilize the fund 3. Waiting for the new building	1. Repair all doors and windows 2. Painting of the school building 3. Teaching aids in the classroom 4. Refurbish the school ground 5. Build a hand washing station 6. Tiles in the toilet 7. Construct a new soak pit

				to be constructed, they have been a bit unsure about conducting repairs in the old premises	8. Renovate two old classrooms 9. Buy furniture for the Principal's room 10. Nameplates for all rooms"
13	Takwalah	S.S. More		1. Lot of PWD work left in the school, hence they can't use the fund for undertaking repair work since it has already been sanctioned 2. HM is very cautious about using the fund	1. Doors for toilets 2. Nameplates for classrooms
14	Betegaon	R.B. Mhatre			Soak pit Levelling of ground Pipelines Sports equipments Lab equipments Water tank Newspaper stand Gate for girls hostel Toilets Fans
15	Nandore	B.P. Choudhari			Daily Newspaper Dustbins Sports equipment Teaching aids in classrooms
16	Embur	K.V. Paste		1. No active participation of SMC	Shed Construction around trees Develop garden behind the sheds
17	Bhatane	R.R. Darves		1. Rotating HMs - hence no one is taking much initiative	Sports equipment Lockers for students Shoe rack Girls bathroom repair

					Wall compound repair and painting Painting for 2 classrooms
18	Bilalpada	J.L. D'souza		1. Rented space; hence ambiguity on using fund 2. HM used to take permission from PO office for repairs	Repairing School gate Hand wash station Sports equipment Electric fitting Shed to dry clothes Place to wash clothes Magazine for students Painting (teaching aids in walls)
19	Tawa	T.I. Patil			Painting drainage work
20	Govade	C.T.Bhoye			Painting, electrical fitting
21	Lalthane	V.V. Pawate			Water connection, Painting work
22	Saiwan	Kedare Sir		No challenges persay, need more funds	Material for science lab Shed for dining hall Furniture
				†As per data submitted by HMs on 7th December, 2018	
				Level of SMC:	
				Very active	
				Somewhat active	
				Inactive	

In the second leg of the module which was conducted in March 2019, telephonic support was provided to all the schools in the PO. During this period, updates were collected from SMCs on their progress wrt utilization of the SMC fund. At the same time, they were asked about their future plans regarding the fund and whether there

was any support that these SMCs still required. A summary of these conversations has been given below:

School's Name	HM's name	Details of expenditure of fund in Feb and Mar. Update on each plan	Plans for the future
Girgaon	N.M. Rathod	0	
Dongari	G.D. Gavit	Classroom painting Cleaning school campus Waste water management	Constructing cabin for watchmen; maintaining register at entrance Space for washing clothes
Varkhande	M.R. Gaikwad	-	Purchase sports equipment Space for washing clothes Organize competitions
Kalamdevi	K. N. Gole	Newspapers for students Purchasing kitchen utensils Painting	Kattas' around big trees Purchasing books for competitive exams Entrance gate repairs
Kandarwadi	C.K. Vedga	Shed for drying & washing clothes Girls hostel floor repair & painting	Sports equipment Painting of classrooms
Rankhol	K.R. Gowali	not completed	Painting
Aswali	S.S. Khurule	not completed	Pending work
Uplat	B.P. Ahire	Repairing of windows hot water for bathing	Tree plantation

Dhamangaon	P.B. Bhivgade	not completed	
Udhawa	L. Y. Wagh	1.Plumbing work completed in february. 2.shed for drying clothes is in progress. Try to complete this in next two week.	1. complete remaining work. 2.Repair of toilets in both hostel
Naniwali	M.B.Patil	-	drainage work
Mendhawan	D.L. Bhalekar	Repair all doors and windows Painting of the school building is going on	Teaching aids in the classroom Refurbish the school ground Build a hand washing station Tiles in the toilet Construct a new soak pit Renovate two old classrooms Buy furniture for the Principal's room Nameplates for all rooms"
Takwalah	S.S. More	Doors for toilets and Nameplates for classrooms	sport equipment
Betegaon	R.B. Mhatre	Water tank, Newspaper stand, Gate for girls hostel, Toilets	Remaining work
Nandore	B.P. Choudhari	Dustbins, Teaching aids in classrooms	Daily Newspaper, Teaching aids in classrooms

Embur	K.V. Paste	No	Shed work is going on
Bhatane	R.R. Darves	Lockers for students Shoe rack Girls bathroom repair	Wall compound repair and painting Painting for 2 classrooms
Bilalpada	J.L. D'souza	Repairing School gate, Hand wash station, Shed to dry clothes Place to wash clothes,	Sports equipment, Electric fitting, Shed to dry clothes, Magazine for students Painting (teaching aids in walls)
Tawa	T.I. Patil	drainage work	Painting is going on
Govade	C.T.Bhoye	Painting,	electrical fitting
Lalthane	V.V. Pawate	Water connection completed. cloth dry shed	Painting work Remaning, Science kit
Saiwan	Kedare Sir	no	Material for science lab Shed for dining hall Furniture
Ambesari	Bhosle Sir	Door Repair, Toilet Repair	Water tank, Gate ,
Khambale	Khairnar Sir	Toilet Repair Drenage Repair water tank	remaning painting work
Dabhadi	Deshmukh Sir	Solar Lamps, Stages, Building Maintenance,	Drainage
Dhekale	Vanmali Sir	Light fittings, emergency expenses, drainage	Water tank
Mahalakshmi	Patil Sir	Painting, Gate, Dhobi Ghat, Water Tank,	Light Fitting

Urse	Solanke Sir	Painting, toilet tank repair, steps, handwash	Sheds to dry clothes
Khutal	Chavan Sir	Painting, genrater shed	Drenage, gate,
Chalni	Shete Sir	Light fittings, sanitary accessories, water tank repairs,	hand wash stand Repair
Sawne	Patil Sir	Window repair, new water tank, painting,	Sheds to dry clothes
Varwada	Bhurkud Sir	Repairing of windows hot water for bathing	1. complete remaining work. 2.Repair of toilets in both hostel
Sutrakar	Madne Sir	Door repairs, clean-up materials, plumbing, water purifiers	
Betegaon	Mhatre Sir	Light fittings, painting, water filters,	Drainage repair, plumbing

Final Training Session

A three-hour training session was organized for the HMs of the 34 Ashramshalas in Shaskiya Ashramshala, Mahalakshmi on 16th April, 2019. The objectives and outline of the training are explained below:

Desired outcomes:				
1. Felicitate HMs for progress in SMC fund 2. HMs prepare plan for SMC fund use for April to June 2019 3. Orientation of HMs on modifications to GR				
Session & Objectives	Process	Time	Materials	
Opening - To start workshop with enthusiasm	Facilitator will conduct an energiser and an introduction	10 min	Mic	
Data sharing - To appreciate HMs for using fund effectively	Facilitator will start with a few guessing questions - do you think we were able to use SMC fund, how much was the increase/decrease etc. Then APO sir will share a few slides while Facilitator will explain 1. the increase in fund use 2. areas in which the fund was used 3. What factors were catalysts in increasing the use	15 min	Mic, PPT	

<p>Discussion: HMs will identify factors that helped in SMC fund, their aha moments and challenges/suggestions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All HMs will be divided into groups of 5 2. HMs to discuss three issues - what factors led to improvement in fund use, what were their personal highlights in their experience, what is the way forward/challenges/suggestions 3. Facilitator will then hold discussion in the larger group 	<p>20 5 min</p>	<p>Diares, pens,</p>
<p>Saral/Asar - HMs to identify areas of effective utilization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitator will say so far our focus was on utilization, now will move to effective utilization 2. Facilitator will share a scenario of an earthquake in the village and suggest four remedies 3. All four remedies will be pasted on chart paper on the wall. HMs have to put a green sticker on 1 remedy they will do first and 1 remedy they will never do. 4. Once they have chosen, Facilitator will explain the saral/asar chart - picking up remedies that are both saral and asar 5. Facilitator will now give the saral/asar chart to all HMs (in groups) with chits about suggestive works in the school. They have to 	<p>40 min</p>	<p>Saral/Asar chart, sketchpens, chits, postits, chart paper, Mic, PPT, case study</p>

	<p>put them in the four boxes of the chart</p> <p>6. Each group will then explain their charts to the larger group</p> <p>7. Facilitator will then advise HMs to focus on saral and asardar plans for the next three months</p>		
Planning - HMs to prepare plan for next 2 months	HMs will be given a planning sheet where they will prepare a plan for the expenses they have planned for April to June	15 min	Plannning sheet and pens
Amemdments to GR - To explain changes to SMC GR	<p>TDD rep will explain to HMS about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. changes in the SMC GR 2. Accounting rules 3. transfer of 10 lakhs to their fund 	10 min	Mic, PPT
Sawal Jawab - HMs to address their queries wrt fund	APO Jadhav Sir will address all HMs regarding their queries and concerns on SMC fund.	10 min	Mic
Felicitation of HMs	APO to give certificates to all HMs for completing the training	10 min	Certificates,mic, and flowers



The training session was also attended by Project Officer Shri Saurabh Katiyar and APO (Education) Jadhav Sir. The training was quite successful and was well-received by the HMs.

Impact

Before the intervention, Dahanu's Ashramshalas had spent only 18 % of the fund allocated to them, with 72 % of the schools having spent less than 1/5th of the fund. 33 of the schools had spent a total of about 28 lakhs from the fund. However, in March 2019, we found that over 70 % of the total fund allocated had been spent by SMCs. The 34 Ashramshalas had spent over 1.19 crore rupees of the fund by the first week of March itself. A detailed breakdown is given below:

School	Expense-Dec 2018	Expense-March2019
धामनगांव	35	93160
टाकवहाळ	0	107491
उपलत	167233	283698
चळणी	0	319776
ढेकळे	0	361286
बेटेगांव	0	398914
नानविली	22200	356605
सुतरकर	30333	321696
डोंगरी	37642	384059
आंबेसरी	294799	398000
गरिंगाव	0	426840
कांदरवाडी	0	439508
कळमदेवी	0	523679
तवा	43157	412287
लालछणे	55000	406138
बलितपाडा	67400	425000
खंबाळे	88065	420000
वरवाडा	94050	419708
दाभाडी	150000	400000
नंडोरे	196339	428675
असवाली	203500	409404
सवणे	215639	474000
उर्से	272045	412183
महालक्ष्मी	371087	464988
भाताणे	32312	283144.4
ऐंबुर	147846	389743
रनकोळ	162511	477345
खुटल	-	409569
मेंढवण	0	60714
वरखंडा	0	121650
उधवा	0	225000
सायवन	40061	399526
झाई	109727	424071

Enablers for SMC Fund

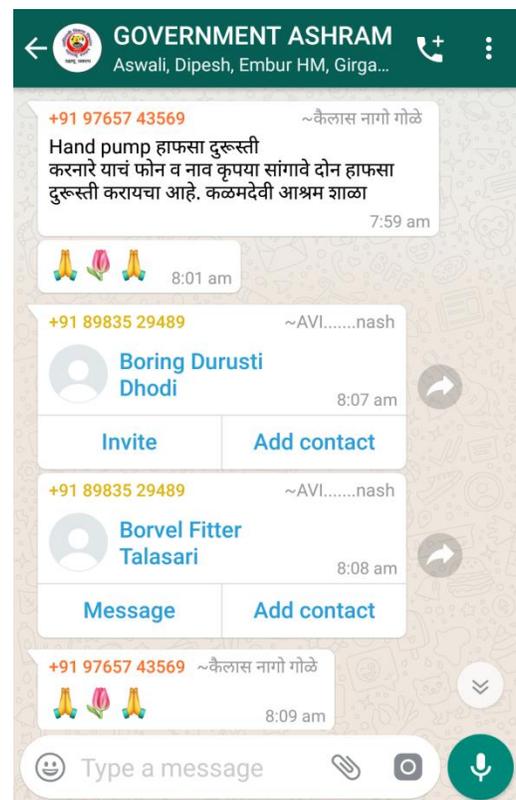
Based on our intervention, we have identified six factors that expedite the utilization of the SMC fund. They have been explained with the help of the diagram below:



Best Practices

Some of the best practices that emerged from this intervention are listed below:

- **Simplification of GR for SMC:** Due to the intervention, the SMC fund GR became an accessible document for SMC members, leading to their higher involvement in the fund's use. GRs are usually difficult documents to comprehend for SMC members. Before the intervention, SMC members were uninformed and even suspicious about details of the SMC fund. In Dhekale Ashramshala, the HM used the visual guides prepared by Saajha to educate his SMC members about various provisions of the GR. Armed with information on how exactly the fund can be used, SMC members in the school became more proactive in making suggestions for expenses and became cooperative with the HMs towards utilizing the SMC fund
- **Sharing of knowledge:** The intervention paved the way for promoting a culture of sharing among HMs. One of the points we stressed on during the intervention was the need to share knowledge/information among HMs. We suggested that HMs reach out to reach other if they need help with conducting repairs/other works in their school. It is often difficult to find suitable resource persons in many schools. However, HMs have now started using the Whatsapp group as a means to reach out to each other for information on vendors,



clarification regarding GR or documentation. This is contributing towards building a learning community of HMs in the PO.

- **Involvement of superintendents:** Involving the superintendents has been another highlight of the intervention. The Adhikshak and Adhikshika spend a significant amount of time with students, hence are most aware of their needs and issues. In our school visits, we ensured that they were a part of the planning exercise on the SMC fund and we also insisted that they must be closely involved in the utilization of the SMC fund. Due to this, it can be observed that majority of the works conducted using the fund are directly related to living conditions of students in the Ashramshala. The most common expense is the construction of sheds for students to dry clothes. Inadequate drying space for clothes posed a health hazard for students, who would end up wearing wet clothes which would lead to the spread of various ailments among them – an issue Adhiksshaks/Adikshikas are keenly aware of. Involvement of the superintendents ensured that the overall well-being of students was at the centre of the utilization of the SMC fund.

Involvement of SMC

Across the Dahanu PO, the overall involvement of SMCs differs from school to school. In our visit, the attendance of SMC members ranged from 16 in one school to 0 in a couple of them. It can be concluded, however, that SMCs are still in a formative stage in Ashramshalas and capacity building measures are needed to ensure that SMC members are fully aware of their role and responsibilities and are taking active charge in working for the development of the school.



Some of the highlights we observed regarding SMC involvement are provided here:

- Many SMC members are daily wage earners. Attending meetings often amounts to losing wages
- SMCs are driven by HMs. HM has to take initiative in involving SMC
- Meetings are not conducted regularly in many schools
- Sarpanch can drive involvement of SMC as he/she know villagers well
- Low awareness among SMC about role and responsibilities; most members illiterate
- Involvement and ownership high among members who live in the school's vicinity

Our Learnings



1. **Decentralized decision-making:** HMs consider the SMC fund as a potent means to counter administrative delays as it gives them more financial authority in improving their respective schools. At the same time, it will also empower SMCs as it gives them access to a fund that they could use to bring their school vision to reality. Long-pending repairs are now being undertaken at the school-level at priority basis – it is a huge step towards decentralization and democratization of the school structure.
2. **Aspiration for change:** Most principals had an aspirational attitude regarding the use of the SMC fund. Many of them were keen to use the fund sincerely

for various purposes, but were bogged down by certain constraints (explained in the table). If those constraints are addressed, all SMCs will have greater freedom in using the fund proactively

3. **Need for shared responsibility:** Most HMs are quite overburdened with a mix of administrative and academic responsibilities. One of the reasons why SMCs are hesitant to use the SMC fund is that they see the work as an additional burden over their existing duties. For instance, undertaking a repair of the boundary wall will require constant supervision and follow-up – and some HMs might want to avoid it. It is important to build a culture of collective responsibility among the SMC to ensure that repairs and other works in the school do not become the sole responsibility of the HM.

4. **Reimagine SMCs:** As mentioned earlier, SMCs are still in a formative stage in Ashramshalas here. In order to propel them into the next stage, regular training sessions are required. Crucially, HMs will have to recognize the value that SMC members bring to the table and SMC too will have to see some value in their contribution. At the same time, we observed how, for most HMs, the role of SMC seemed limited to the utilization of the SMC fund. There is a need to move beyond that and to involve the SMC proactive in the school's overall development and management.

5. **Institutionalize Maasik Sabha:** There is a need to encourage and build spaces where HMs could build more clarity regarding the fund, There is significant lack of clarity over several provisions of the GR on the ground. While our intervention has addressed that significantly, there is a need for a platform where schools can easily reach out to the PO office for their queries and concerns. The Maasik Sabhas can be developed into a space where such a dialogue can be conducted.

6. **Cross-learning platform:** One of our learnings from Delhi has been to build a network of SMCs so that they can share knowledge, information and insights with each other. In Dahanu, while it is too early to expect a network of SMCs, HMs could be a part of a platform where they constantly share their work so that it can emerge as a cross-learning space. For example, HMs could use the WhatsApp group to inform each other about work they have done using the SMC fund from time to time.
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Recommendations

1. The PO office must encourage schools to regularly send them minutes of SMC meetings. SMCs in many of the schools we visited were dormant or inactive. There were several schools where no more than three SMC members attended meetings regularly. SMC members who haven't attended more than three meetings must be replaced with more active parents. Schools must be asked to compulsorily conduct at least one SMC meeting every month (and to send minutes to the respective PO office), so that regular activity is maintained.
2. The utilization of SMC fund often requires an inordinate amount of paperwork, which could hinder HMs from conducting expenses. While the new GR does address this issue at the school's end by mandating a simpler minutes format and minimal documentation, financial officers don't seem to have enough information on it. There is a need to brief them adequately on the SMC fund and encourage them to support HMs in using the fund confidently.
3. HMs are often torn between their academic and administrative responsibilities. If every school/a cluster of 3-4 schools has a person in-charge of infrastructure work, then it will ease of the burden of the HM as well as lend more primacy to overhaul of school infrastructure. In Delhi, retired servicemen were appointed as Estate Managers in government schools to look after infrastructural issues. A similar experiment could be replicated here.
4. As mentioned earlier, there is a need to build a culture of sharing and learning among HMs. The PO office should actively work towards building platforms that promote and foster the same. At the same time, best practices must be

duly rewarded so as to encourage excellence among them. Awards may be instituted for best utilization of SMC fund and case studies of such experiments must be prepared and shared.
