

LEADS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Community-Led School Governance & Quality Education Initiative

MODEL: SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)

Background

Government schools in rural and tribal areas of Jharkhand often face multiple challenges. The challenges often include inadequate infrastructure, shortage of learning resources, irregular attendance, weak community participation, and limited institutional planning. Although School Management Committees (SMCs) have been constituted under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, many committees lack the capacity to systematically assess school needs, prepare development plans, mobilize resources, and monitor implementation. Recognizing this gap, and in line with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for community-owned school improvement, LEADS developed the School Development Plan (SDP) Model to strengthen community ownership, participatory planning, and accountability in school governance. The model enables schools to identify their priorities, prepare evidence-based development plans, mobilize resources through convergence, and create an enabling learning environment for every child. The SDP follows a participatory nine-stage process involving teachers, parents, children, School Management Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and community members.

Concept

The School Development Plan (SDP) is a participatory and community-driven planning process. It enables every school to assess its existing situation, identify developmental gaps, prioritise needs, and prepare a comprehensive annual action plan for improving school quality. The model strengthens the capacity of School Management Committees (SMCs), teachers, parents, children, and local governance institutions to jointly plan, implement, monitor, and review school development initiatives.

The model promotes democratic decision-making, transparency, accountability, and community ownership. This ensures that all stakeholders actively participate in improving school infrastructure, teaching-learning processes, child protection, inclusion, enrolment, attendance, and learning outcomes. Through convergence with government departments, Panchayati Raj Institutions, CSR initiatives, and community contributions, the School Development Plan becomes a practical roadmap for transforming government schools. It successfully transforms these schools into child-friendly, inclusive, and quality learning institutions.

Steps of Implementation

Step 1: Community Mobilisation and Orientation — Orient School Management Committees (SMCs), teachers, parents, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Bal Sansad (Children's Parliament), and community members on the Right to Education Act (2009). The orientation focuses on strengthening stakeholders' understanding of their roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the importance of participatory school development planning.

Step 2: School Mapping and Baseline Assessment — Collect information on school infrastructure, enrolment, attendance, learning environment, teacher availability, child protection, sanitation, drinking water, inclusive education, and other educational indicators to understand the current status of the school.

Step 3: Situational Analysis — Facilitate participatory discussions with teachers, students, parents, and SMC members to analyse existing challenges, identify root causes, assess available resources, and prioritise issues affecting children's education.

Step 4: Visioning an Ideal School — Develop a shared vision of an ideal child-friendly school where quality education, inclusive learning, adequate infrastructure, safety, hygiene, participation, and children's rights are ensured for every learner.

Step 5: Preparation of the School Development Plan — Prepare a comprehensive School Development Plan with clearly defined priorities, activities, timelines, responsibilities, required resources, expected outcomes, and convergence opportunities with government schemes and local institutions.

Step 6: Resource Mobilisation and Convergence — Mobilise financial, technical, and community resources by establishing convergence with the Department of Education/Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC), Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Panchayati Raj Institutions, CSR initiatives, local donors, alumni, and community contributions to implement priority activities.

Step 7: Implementation and Monitoring — Implement planned activities through collective action involving the School Management Committee, teachers, parents, children, community volunteers, and local government institutions. Regular monitoring meetings are organised to review progress and address implementation challenges.

Step 8: Review and Annual Revision — Review the progress of the School Development Plan periodically, assess achievements, identify remaining gaps, and revise the plan annually to address emerging educational needs and ensure continuous school improvement.

Step 9: Sustainability through Community Ownership — Promote long-term sustainability by strengthening the leadership of the School Management Committee, teachers, parents, Bal Sansad, and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Encourage regular community meetings, local resource mobilisation, voluntary contributions, and continuous monitoring of the School Development Plan, so the community gradually takes ownership of planning, implementation, and review beyond project support.

Outcome for Sustainability

1. School Management Committees become capable of independently preparing and implementing School Development Plans.
2. Community participation in school governance and educational decision-making increases significantly.
3. School infrastructure, learning environment, and child-friendly facilities improve through planned interventions and convergence.
4. Greater transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making are established in school management.
5. Enrolment, attendance, retention, and learning outcomes improve through community monitoring and collective action.
6. Strong convergence with government departments and local institutions enhances resource mobilisation for school development.
7. Children's participation through Bal Sansad in school improvement processes strengthens democratic leadership and child rights.
8. Schools become inclusive, safe, and conducive learning environments for all children.
9. Community ownership ensures the regular preparation, implementation, monitoring, and updating of School Development Plans beyond external project support.

LEADS Experience

LEADS has been a pioneer in realising the RTE Act, 2009 in Jharkhand by involving School Management Committees in the formulation and implementation of School Development Plans. The organisation has built the capacity of more than 2000 School Management Committees on the SDP process across its intervention districts of West Singhbhum, Latehar, Khunti, Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, Simdega, Saraikela, and Lohardaga, and the slums of Ranchi, and maintains SDP monitoring and assessment tools with SMC members in more than 1500 schools. Through the state-level Jharkhand Right to Education Forum (JRTEF), which LEADS convenes with more than 200 member organisations, the model has also informed the formulation of School Development Plans in 10,000 government schools across Jharkhand in partnership with the Department of Education/Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC). This large-scale promotion of the SDP process has strengthened SMC federations from block to state level and improved school governance and learning outcomes across the state.

Concluding Remarks

The School Development Plan Model demonstrates that sustainable school improvement is possible when communities actively participate in planning, implementing, and monitoring educational development. By strengthening School Management Committees, promoting participatory governance, and facilitating convergence with government systems, the model transforms schools into inclusive, accountable, and child-friendly institutions envisioned under the RTE Act, 2009 and NEP 2020. It provides a practical, scalable, and replicable framework for improving the quality of education while ensuring that communities remain the driving force behind long-term educational development.