



RESEARCH PAPER

Role of School Councils for Developing Community Participation in School Improvement

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ABSTRACT

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The major purpose of this study was to examine role of community participation in administrative measures in School. Study was qualitative in nature, the heads and community members of school councils of public sector elementary schools were population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to invite members of school council of said schools of tehsil Koti Sattian. The schedule of school council meeting was obtained in this regard and the members were invited to participate in research process. After getting their consent on volunteer basis, the in depth interviews of thirty members of school councils and five head teachers were conducted. It was concluded that there was active role played by community in administrative measures and school community meetings were beneficial for school improvement.

Introduction

The involvement of community in schools paves the way to get shared goals achievement easily. Community school co-operations can be very effective for school's standards as school community assistance is developed and in this way school improvement is attained (Kabearu, 2016). Education is facing top to down policy failure in many developing countries. In these countries participation of community in schools has been a key to achieve success in many aspects of schools. There is abundance of literature which shows that school management committees, school councils and parents involvement in schools have revealed positive effects on schools' standards and successes (Harlin, 2015).

One of the main aims of education is to develop ethically and socially strong community. Learning is not associated with only schools, it is also demanded a positive role from home and community in students' learning and functioning of schools. Participation of community in education always has great impact on

education. Educational targets cannot be met without the active participation of the society. Hence it is needed to empower the communities' members and established the legal bodies consisting on parents, communities' members, intellectuals and school staff in the education set up of the schools. Concept of community participation in education is very old. Today school councils are part of almost every school in public sector of the world. School councils were given different names like school management committees, parents' councils, parents' teacher councils and schools councils etc. the purpose of such councils remain to involve the community in decision making of schools administration and help and work for school improvement. This concept appears in Pakistan in 1994. Now, school councils are part of every public sector school of Punjab.

School community relationship is main source of school improvement in modern era. School administrators all around the world are focusing much to improve their schools' quality. Community can provide schools a unique support and environment that can enhance the quality of learning. Community members play significant role in school affairs but there is need of defined roles of community members to be played in school matters. Community cooperation in school exercises helps community individuals have a more certain perspective on the school. It assists youngsters with having better participation, better conduct and high scholarly accomplishment inspiration so the head educators and instructors can have the option to foster a system for powerful educating. The study is significant for the government officials to understand the critical need of community cooperation and coordination in schools in present days to work on the quality of education in Pakistan.

Literature Review

There are many factors related to school in which community can play its efficient role. These factors can be environment of home, community assistance for education, community support for eliminating drop out from schools, community participation in school funds. Community can play role of quality bridges between government drives and community wants (Cummings and Dall, 2013). Through community participation public offices become accessible for masses, the school place can be best utilized in free hours and community is here to sponsor different activities or events organized by school (Christenson, 2016). The bond between school and parents can be strengthened as a result of financial & economic wellbeing of community (Carren & Chaue, 2012; UNESCO, 2013). There is a dire need to facilitate families and community for wellbeing of children as well (Shah & Yousuf, 2021).

There are many important role of community in school matters. School councils are there to boost motivational factor among teachers and to target best learning activities for school improvement. The sources of motivation are both inherent and outward. As indicated by Haicket (2017), natural motivation happens when individuals participate in movement without outside motivators. They get propelled when they can handle how much they contribute as an input and how much the output is available. The motivational factor provided by management is a vital example to ensure best participation of workers in any task. Nzueve (2018) thought cash as the clearest illustration of outward prize in the institution.

Acknowledgment of the instructors' work by the management comprises a motivation to accomplish. As per Cole (2015), acknowledgment is a reality regardless of one's age and educational level. He further focused on that acknowledgment should be genuine, and should be founded on better than expected execution. This then, at that point, infers that individuals with obligation need to buckle down for the work to be seen and regarded. Areemu (2014) noticed that in Jamaica grade schools whose presentation was high had fulfilled educators who felt that their school was respected by the community and got appreciated and support from the parents. Similar instructors likewise allotted more significance to acknowledgment by executives and chiefs.

As the main management organ in the school, the SMC ought to give guidance and clear channels of correspondence for ideal collaboration in the school. To support educators and other staff, they ought to guarantee there are suitable correspondence strategies and systems set up, and guarantee every one of the gatherings working in agreeable great relationship cultivated inside the entire school community. Accomplishment in management of the school relies upon the capacity of the SMCs to energize the requirement for keeping open correspondence channels.

The quality of administration has the effect between the achievement and disappointment of a school (Kapin, 2015). Kapin (2015) further clarifies that examination and investigation explain the degree to which the quality of authority is urgent to improvement. Opande (2013) showed that with the execution of Universal Primary Education, the consideration was put on the 'nearby school management'. The School Management Committee is accused of the obligation of guaranteeing the everyday school activity.

For universalization of primary education, community support can guarantee the functionality and its implementation with real spirit. Mibiti (2016) in an exploration discovered that, where there is community inclusion, there is higher grades and graduation rates, better school participation and increased motivation. Community assists with forestalling terrible conduct like delinquency, drug taking and whatever other wrongdoings that may hurt the learning of the students in school.

Community has effective involvement for the sake of improvement in schools' quality. Parents have to produce suitable environment in homes for children to make school learning much effective (Mahoney, 2017). The role of head teacher is always crucial for sharing information with parents & community for increasing students learning results (Tahira et al., 2021). A viable improvement in schools is possible exactly when the close by community and accomplices step in to help neighborhood administration and dynamic to the best benefit of the children (Nasira, 2010).

Role of community is important as school is meant for achievement of community and society targets. Community can be assistance in achieving aims and targets set for education. Community can look after schools. Community can assist schools in generating funds (Ringer, 2017; Bowlby, 2017). Discipline of school can be improved by involving school management committees (Yousuf et al., 2010).

School as a social association, works appropriately on the viable interrelationship inside it and with its partner's networks. Schools work as social

change agent for developing harmony in society members (Rubab et al., 2021). An issue in a school influences the community moreover to what exactly occurs in the community influences school. This infers that the community fabricates its schools in like manner to the schools. Thus, school connection with the community is commonly reliance. School community relationship assists with working on the quality of education for all students. It helps parents and different citizens perceive their obligation regarding the quality of school (Sidhu, 2017).

Materials and Methods

Study was qualitative in nature; qualitative design helps to seek the meaningful conceptions of the respondents towards the situation being observed by them (McCombes, 2021).

Population comprised of all heads and community members of school councils of public sector elementary schools in Tehsil Kotli Sattian. Purposive sampling technique was used to select elementary schools from the said tehsil. Concerned administration was contacted for getting permission to conduct the study by involving school council members. The schedule of school council meeting was obtained in this regard and the members were invited to participate in research process. After getting their consent on volunteer basis, the in depth interviews of thirty members of school councils and five head teachers were conducted.

Focus groups were based on group interviews to ensure the maximum interactions with participants and to generate data through the in-depth interview. Such types of sessions were arranged for getting reliable information through provision of perceptions of participants in mutual discussion. The researcher asked and requested respondents to provide their comments and criticism for school improvement. The researcher visited heads of all schools personally and the schedule of meeting of school council was circulated with the help of concerned school heads. After getting the consent on volunteer basis the schedule of interviews were set. The triangulation of data gathered from different members of community members was enabled and grounded theory was used for analysis of data.

Results and Discussion

Academic Achievement of Students

While giving the opinion regarding parents' help to accelerate the academic learning of students, most of community members vetted that parents rendered their help to accelerate the academic learning of students. According to views of most of community members,

Students' regularity can be ensured with the help of community, students can get higher marks with involvement of parents as in most of the cases it's the active participation of parents for helping the school in achieving good grades and getting positions by the school students at higher forums.

When it was inquired either community was aware of ongoing process of teaching or learning through children, most of community members agreed with the

fact. How dropout rate can be decreased with the help of community, most of community members concurred that dropout rate in the schools can be decreased with the help of community. Community members can be helpful to school administration in reduction of dropout rates and in planning recourses useful for schools. So was reported in this regard:

Droop out is a serious problem, it can be reduced when parents and community is ready with their active role to handle the situation. Parents' mind set can be changed with propagation of school heads and along with the members of school community to convince the parents to keep them in school.

Financial Support

While giving the opinion regarding community members' help in providing financial assistance for school welfare, most of heads negated the claim. According to views of most of heads, it is clear that community members do not help in providing financial assistance for school welfare but community helps in proper utilization of school finance. Most of community members were agreeable that community avoid to misuse of school financial resources. One of the community members explained this claim as:

Such participation of community in school administration specially in fiancé through their volunteer contribution in developing resources also ensure their keen obseroation that nobody can miss use the resources rendered by school with involvement of all members from community.

According to views of most of community members, it is clear that community's role is not beneficial for generating school finance. Further it was also clarified by school council's members that community does not generate financial resources according to school needs.

Most of the time it is felt that need is not fulfilled up to mark as compared to the financial assistance and school has to cut short the actual plan of utilization of such resources. Like the toilets were reduced in number while less amount was available and also the material cost raised.

Administrative Measures

School is uplifted by efficient administration. Proper planning and appropriate decision making uplifts school. Taking timely decisions about training areas for school improvement, making process of assessment reliable and keeping stakeholders informed and other administrative decisions are to be approved by community representatives within school council. The level of commitment to accomplish mission of school by head & other teaching faculty represent the overall school development planning. It is clear that community enables school for setting its targets for school improvement indicators. According to views of most of heads, it is clear that community helps in administrative decision making. It is clear that school community meetings are beneficial for school improvement.

Community members often support heads' decisions and assist management of school. Community and school participation accelerates school's efficiency. School management and community schools address the primary issues through which networks partake in schools.

Community and school coordination is much necessary in those areas where necessities of life are not easily available. Community can generate financial help for those schools. Community can help to purchase important resources of school like furniture, writing boards, audio and visual aids. Students of these backward areas can be educated in order to get familiar with modernized world. Education is only source for these backward areas to acquire uplift.

Social Contribution and Problem Solving

The idea of support from community in Pakistan in school education department was given noticeable priority in 1994 and school management committees were framed involving some members and some parents from community. These committees were initiated and started working in all govt. schools upto secondary level. These committees were assigned tasks in administrative assistance in decisions and finance. Community can help students in solution of their daily problems/issues by inculcating positive thinking among children.

Community promotes values in schools and supports students in their life skills preparation and further there is provision of voluntarily spending time to look after school. Schools are for communities and all targets and changes in communities are achieved by schools. Their interdependence is very close.

Challenges

According to views of most of community members, sometimes community does not hinder in implementation of school activities. Community does not play negative role in school progress. It is clear that involvement of community in school affairs sometimes proves a challenge. School community participation is not based on modernized and updated system prevailing in developed countries. Majority of heads opined that finance for school is not adequately and sufficiently generated from community members.

Community members gave their valuable suggestions to meet the solutions of the weaknesses being observed as challenges:

There should be proper and skilled training of community members. Majority of heads was the suggestion that political involvement should be minimized in order to achieve positive results. Community members should also focus on daily study routine of students after school. Majority of heads was suggestion that school community participation system should be updated in order to cope with demands of modern era. Heads suggested that community members should actively take part to generate funds for school.

While expressing weaknesses majority of heads opined that community members have no provision of adequately training regarding school matters. Some of heads reported that there was political interference with respect to community members in school affairs. Majority of heads declared that there was no proper focus of community on students' daily study routine after school. School community

participation was not based on modernized and updated system prevailing in developed countries. Heads clarified that finance for school was not adequately and sufficiently generated from community members.

Suggestions to overcome these weaknesses were also reported such as:

There should be proper and skilled training of community members; political involvement should be minimized in order to achieve positive results. Community members should also focus on daily study routine of students after school. School community participation system should be updated in order to cope with demands of modern era. Community members should actively take part to generate funds for school.

Discussion

This study has main focus on role of community participation school improvement. This study was carried out in Tehsil Kotli Sattian of District Rawalpindi. The main objectives of the study were: to explore the role of community in academic achievement of students, to highlight the financial support rendered by community members for school services, to examine the role of community in administrative measures of school, to assess the social contribution of community in school and to find out the challenges being faced by the heads in promoting school community relationship in public schools.

Most findings of this research manifest that there is effective role of community in school affairs which yield to school improvement. Results of some other researches also support the results of present research as a study was conducted by Saeed (2008) at the theme of improving the standard of education. He concluded that overall result of school councils in Chakwal district was positive but schools councils were not much effective as it was expected. Comparatively in female schools, school councils were more effective than that of male schools. It further concluded that member of school councils were not well qualified nor they were given training so they couldn't show effective result.

To evaluate the school management committees in promoting education in Punjab, Sajjad (2006) has conducted a research. He found that SMCs members are in favor of the improvement of educational standard and management of school but SMCs have not succeeded to do so. Whereas the findings of current study showed the improved behavior of school councils.

This study has a finding in which role of community was very effective in school matters. A research conducted by Kamran on the topic Evaluation of School Management Committees on the School Improvement at Elementary Level in AJ&K. His results are contradictory with this study. Variation may be because he conducted his study in different environment that was AJ&K. It further concluded that performance of school management committee is not satisfactory regarding monitoring of attendance matter of students as well as teachers. The committees also have no role in increasing students' enrollment in AJ&K (Kamran et al., 2020). The results of above mentioned researches clearly support the results of this research. In short we can say that school management committees are playing a significant role in promotion of education in the Punjab as well as in other parts of Pakistan.

It is concluded that community participation has vital role in school improvement because as found in this study community members enhance students' regularity, dropout rate can be reduced with help of community, community helps in various administrative decisions and it helps in financial matters. All school councils and school management committees are providing effective opportunities for betterment of schools. The results of this study are similar as the results of the research conducted by Porter (2014) and Yousuf et al. (2010). They both have same findings that community involvement assists schools in manifold matters and thus they have unique contribution in raising standard of schools.

Conclusion

1. Majority of heads and community members agreed that community enables school for setting its targets for school improvement indicators.
2. Majority of heads and community members recognized the community's help in administrative decision making.
3. Both heads and community members stated that school community meetings were beneficial for school improvement.
4. Majority of heads as well as community members were of the opinion that community members often support heads' decisions.
5. Majority of heads and community members hold point of view that community assists management of school.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were made on basis of findings of study:

- It is recommended that educational authority should arrange proper training for school council members for their better understanding of their roles and functioning for the school. On the base of findings it is recommended that every year, a training session may be given to the members of school councils.
- Majority of heads stated that there is political involvement in school affairs which serves as one of main hindrances in school improvement. Political involvement should be eliminated or minimized.
- Community members may generate funds for school in order to school improvement.
- Community members may check students' daily routine after school in order to enhance role of community in student's study and academic achievement.
- In order to avoid challenges, heads should discuss with community school affairs so that these may be solved in effective way.

- This study was delimited to only public sector schools of Tehsil Kotli Sattian. Further studies may be conducted on entire districts or one province or at National level to see more clear picture of role of community in school.

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