



Parents' Involvement In Schools Through School Management Committee

Abstract

Parents as primary educators have a great share in the child's education and the quality of his becoming an adult. Decades of research in the area of family involvement supported the simple fact that children of involved parents have a much greater chance to develop into healthy, knowledgeable, responsible adults.

The school alone cannot satisfy all the requirements for complete, comprehensive education. When schools, parents work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, and enroll in higher level programs. To better understand the students, to identify the best teaching approaches suitable to the learners, frequent interaction of teachers with parents is essential. Similarly, without community support and involvement, school alone cannot create appropriate learning environment to enhance children's willingness to learn.

Government of India has taken initiation in different programme of action to ensure parents involvement in their wards' school. SSA launched in 2001 has a strong decentralization remit, with aims to increase accountability of schools to communities. This was mandated and enhanced under the Right to Education Act (2009) through the formation of the School Management Committee (SMC).

RTE Act mandates 75% members of SMC should be parents so that effective monitoring mechanism can be established at grassroots level. This is a key decision which can lead towards the revolutionary changes in education. The SMCs formed as a remedy to the management and quality monitoring problems in government schools. Through this community can participate, take ownership of the schools.

This paper is an attempt to explore the importance of parental involvement in schools and functions of SMC and role of parents in SMC.

Keywords: SSA, RTE Act, mandated, School Management Committee

Introduction

There is a saying in Sanskrit, "Yath Lokaaha, Tatha Shikshana Karmaah". As the people are, so is the education system. If the community is indifferent towards its teachers, its school and the educational system, it has no reason to expect its children to get good education. If people want their children to be educated properly, they should be willing and ready to put in their own efforts towards the all-round development of education system, beginning with their immediate neighbourhood. For successful implementation of elementary programmes of education, peoples' participation is of the utmost importance. Further this involvement should be at the grassroots level which will as a result bring about participation of voluntary organizations and social activities. Till to-day we have anticipated that the

school will transform the society and how we are anticipating that the same society to transform the school. However, the school and the community are related to each other in a cyclic relationship of mutual benefit. If the school serves the community through its education programmes, the community, in turn, will help enhancing the status of the school. On the other hand, if the community supports the school in implementing the educational progress, the school in turn will help in improving the community.

The school is a social organization, organically linked to the community. The school can never replace the home but it continues to build on the foundations laid by the parents at home. Parents play a significant role in supporting their children's health and learning, guiding their children successfully through school processes, and advocating for their children and for the effectiveness of schools. Government of India has taken initiation in different programme of action to ensure parents involvement in school. SSA launched in 2001 with an aims to increase accountability of schools to communities. This was mandated and enhanced under the Right to Education Act (2009) through the formation of the School Management Committee (SMC). Through this community can participate, take ownership of the schools.

Community Participation

Community participation implies the participation of the disempowerment (Vimal Ramchandran, V. 2003). Community participation is not a onetime affair. Sustaining meaningful participation demands organizing activities and development mechanism for continuous involvement, year after year. Community participation in education in India has always been thought as an integral part of the educational set up. In the last years community participation, has been more and more viewed as a convincing factor in assuring increased girls' enrolment, constant attendance, teacher taking responsibility and efficient functioning of a school. Community participation is now accepted as a significant component of any policy designed to improve educational performance in a country. The relationship between the school and home must be seen as supplementary education and not substitutive education. Decentralization of educational governance promises improved involvement of the community in school education (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2010). Thereby, Parents' participation in school as a representative of community is crucial for pleasant, purposeful and successful achievement, not only of the education situation at home, but also of educative teaching at school.

Schools and communities were closely related entities in ancient India. Social institutions in India such as joint family and kinship group collaborated with the school, and together they accomplished the broad objectives of education. These included the inculcation of the norms and values of society, skills for life, culture and refinement, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic.

Reasons for Parental Involvement

Parents, on the strength of their parenthood, are the primary and natural educators of their children and therefore fully responsible for their formal education. The school alone cannot satisfy all the requirements for complete, comprehensive and relevant education. For the sake of complete education parents need to play a supportive role in formal education. Effective education cannot take place without sound partnership among all stakeholders in the education of the child. Educators cannot perform their educational task without the full partnership of parents. Educators and parents are responsible for the

same child which means that they accept responsibility for the child in partnership. Parents and educators must be able to see the advantages for them in their mutual involvement in the formal education of the child. Improved academic achievements and a healthy school community are seen as the biggest advantages of accountable parental involvement. The parent-educator partnership is intended essentially to promote and support the child's learning, school performance and general well-being.

The review of related literature shows that most of the research studies relating to community participation have considered the importance of participation of community in school management without a doubt.

The prior studies in the area of School Management Committee revealed that SMC has a pivotal role in maximizing physical and human resources through strong linkages with parents, teachers, students, individuals and institutions. SMC's are seen as very effective in solving school community relations (Owusu and Sam 2012), another study revealed that SMC members when are involved in decisions relating to physical facilities, the functions became adequate (Damris 2011). From the implementation of School Based Management there have been school improvements and student achievements also was found to be improved (Prabhakar and Rao 2011). SMC members believed in working with collaboration and fulfilled their roles as the key representatives of the community. SMC also was found to create better teaching/learning environment (Bandur 2008). One study explored the presence of a village education committee (VEC) as highly statistically significantly in increasing teachers in primary schools (Poole 2007). The SMC could bring about positive changes in the school through commitment and consensus (Khan 2006).

The findings of the studies depicts the presence of SMCs in schools significant effected teachers' presence in the schools, participative management, student achievements, school community relations, positive changes in the school and school improvement through commitment & consensus.

Government Initiations for Community Involvement

The establishment of Community Development Blocks and the creation of Panchayati Raj Institutions at Gram Panchayat, Block and District levels were initial attempts to ensure community involvement especially in development and administration. In all respect parent and community participation as a novel and unique approach, have always been emphasized in all the elementary education related policy documents in India have been designed in order to build a synergic concrete relationship between the community, Parents and the government with a view to create a sense of ownership and better resource management for effective functioning of Schools. Government of India has taken initiation through different programme of action to ensure parents' involvement in their wards' school which as follows:

1. Lok Jumbish

Lok Jumbish initiated in 1992 a joint initiative developed by the Government of Rajasthan in cooperation with local NGO's later became a part of SSA program. It aimed at providing elementary education by mobilizing the community and soliciting its involvement in the running of local schools.

2. Education Guarantee Scheme

In 1997, the government of Madhya Pradesh pioneered a community centered, right based initiative to universalize primary education called 'EGS'. Under this scheme community had right to suggest any local resident to be the teacher or Guruji.

3. District Primary Education Program

District Primary Education Program initiated in 1994 provided a significant emphasis on development of community ownership. It was expected that community would play a greater role in quality improvement and school effectiveness.

4. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

In 2001, Government of India launched a flagship for elementary education program named Education for All (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), which aimed to promote universalize elementary education (enroll all 6-14 years old) by community-ownership of the school system, thereby bridging social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. The nomenclature for the community level structure varied from state to state such as Village Education Committees (VECs), School Development Management Committees (SDMCs), Mother Teacher Councils (MTCs), or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

5. Right to Education Act

To ensure quality with equity the RTE act through School Management committee envisioned parents to get involved as decision makers with an objective to make teachers and principal more accountable for education delivery leading to better learning outcomes. With a strong decentralization remit to universalize quality elementary (6-14) education across India, SSA in 2001 aimed to increase accountability of schools to communities. This was mandated and enhanced under the Right to Education Act (2009) through the formation of the School Management Committee (SMC) in every government-funded schools government owned/run school in the country; to encourage community and more particularly, Parental Involvement. The Right to Education Act 2009 also focused the role of local self governance in school Education by necessitating the formation of a School Management Committee (SMCs) in school.

School Management Committee

Community involvement in the schools, can contribute to learners development. School management committee is said to form a critical group which enables active community participation and mobilization. Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010) argued that linking up management of schools with village Panchayats or corresponding bodies in urban areas by establishing SMCs/ VECs/ MTAs/ PTAs is one of the strategies for incorporating community involvement into school activities. There are a number of examples of how communities exhibits crucial role in School Managing.

Under the Right to Education Act, SMC is required to include teachers, parents/guardians and others as its members. The SMC constitutes of 12 to 16 members & amongst them at least three-fourths (75%) of its members are parents, or guardians of children studying in the school, with proportionate representation of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other socially and educationally backward

classes. Thus, SMCs have been vested with a huge responsibility of ensuring the enrollment, retention and sustaining quality in the schools.

The Right to Education Act 2009 is another historic step which recognizes the role of local governance in school education. The Act specifies that a School Management Committee (SMC) shall be constituted for every school to monitor and oversee its working, and to plan and facilitate its overall development with representation of parents, teachers and community and local authority members, as may be prescribed by the appropriate State government. As such community participation in education through Village Educational Committees has been given utmost importance in most policy documents of the Government relating to school education and the crucial link between community participation and equitable quality education has always been given due recognition. Major policy decisions and the Governmental programme channelized and helped in streamlined the process of school management committee participation in school system.

The School Management Committee (SMC) plays an essential role in school governance to enhance the quality of education offered. In bringing together representatives of different stakeholders, it lays the groundwork for broadened and shared decision-making. One major challenge to the SMC is its proposed corporate status, a departure from the present arrangement of assigning to the supervisor full responsibility for the running of the school. Instead, the duties of the supervisor are to be taken up by the SMC who will assume collective responsibility for school management and performance. This also serves to protect individual managers from personal liabilities in relation to the activities and responsibilities of the school. As a body corporate under the Education Ordinance, the SMC is a separate legal entity and its liabilities could be limited by the statute.

Functions

The SMC performs functions, mainly, monitoring & facilitating the working of the school, its plan, its development, managing the assets of the school, ensuring the teachers of the school diligently perform their duties. Along with main functions, it is required to perform secondary functions such as ensuring enrolment of all non-enrolled children through enrolment drive and their retention in the school till they complete the elementary stage of education. Other than this the members have to ensure regularity of attendance of children in the school, distributions of incentives such as mid-day meals, text books and other reading writing materials, uniforms etc. and attend to emergent needs of the school at the time & unforeseen accidents like fire, flood and cyclone. Moreover the committee has to convene PTA/MTA meeting and celebrate Parents Day in the school; coordinate with other organizations like Anganwadi Center. As SMC includes parents among its important member, it has become essential for parents to take active part in their wards school activities. In short, Parents' Involvement in school functioning has become an important aspect. A few contributions in this regard need a mention here.

Relevance of Parents Involvement in SMC

Teachers and Parents share a common goal for the upbringing of the children. This goal is achieved most effectively when teachers and parents work together. It is widely recognized that if pupils are to maximize their potential from schooling they will need the full support of their parents. SSAs & RTE's remit to involve community, underpins the findings of educated parents being more involved in children's education at home, parental involvement and identifying academic problems.

Parents, on the strength of their parenthood, are the primary and natural educators of their children and therefore fully responsible for their formal education. The school alone cannot satisfy all the requirements for complete, comprehensive and relevant education. For the sake of complete education parents need to play a supportive role in formal education. Effective education cannot take place without sound partnership among all stakeholders in the education of the child. Educators cannot perform their educational task without the full partnership of parents. Educators and parents are responsible for the same child which means that they accept responsibility for the child in partnership. Parents and educators must be able to see the advantages for them in their mutual involvement in the formal education of the child.

Conclusion

The parent-educator partnership is intended essentially to promote and support the child's learning, school performance and general well-being. The relationship between the school and home must be seen as supplementary education and not substitutive education. Thereby, Parents' participation in school as a representative of community is crucial for pleasant, purposeful and successful achievement, not only of the education situation at home, but also of educative teaching at school.

Social changes have initiated in more people being interested in educational activities at schools. However, earlier practices have shown that parent-educator partnerships, which mainly relate to parental involvement, remain a crucial topic. To ensure quality with equity, the RTE act through School Management committee envisioned parents to get involved as decision makers but how far this is a reality, needed to be studied. In the background of where the enactments of RTE act make mandatory for government schools to have SMC, the questions arise as what are the strategies that how government schools SMC adopt to involve parent to strengthen their functioning. How demographic profile of parents contribute to SMC functioning is an area which needs attention. How parents' are motivated to work as SMC member, need to be checked. Moreover how school size, school climate; contribute in involving parents in schools needed serious examination.

Research findings indicate Teachers and Parents share a common goal for the upbringing of the children. This goal is achieved most effectively when teachers and parents work together. SSAs & RTE's remit ion to involve community, underpins the findings of educated parents being more involved in children's education at home. The RTE act involves parents by entrusting certain powers through the SMC. School Management Committee (SMC) plays an important role by engaging local people in the educational and development activities of primary schools. Thus it is a bridge between the school and the local community. The SMC also plays vital role in the school as both leaders and decision makers.

Through this study contribution of parents can be maximized in building strong linkages with institutions. Not just being guardian of wards, how the demographic background act as an essential factor in executing the functioning of school can be realized. Moreover this study would be able to throw light on actual functioning of parents as SMC member. Other than that how far SMC has succeeded in bridging the gap between the school and the communities, will be revealed.

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