

ROLE OF PARENTS IN STRENGTHENING OF PARENT'S TEACHER COUNCILS (PTC'S) IN SCHOOLS IN KPK, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in schools could improve academic and social gains of students. Teachers alone were unable to provide a satisfactory brought up to students. Throughout the world parental involvement in educational institutions was encouraged due to their positive role. Government of Pakistan and provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan) established similar community participatory bodies in public sector schools to enhance qualitative and quantitative aspects of public sector schools. Government facilitated, funded and inspired such bodies. These bodies started involvement of parents and communities in schools since 1993. This study was conducted to see the effectiveness of such parental involvement in public sector schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For this purpose 500 parents were approached through a questionnaire. Various relevant questions were asked from them. The analysis of the data depicted that according to the parents, the involvement of families and communities proved successful in improving the functioning of schools. It is recommended that parental involvement should be encouraged in educational institutions of the province.

Keywords: Parents, teachers, Community involvement, Public sector schools, Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

In the past times it was considered that school staff alone was responsible for education and social guidance of students. Parents and other community members did not feel it necessary to visit school and to ask about academic and social behaviour of their children. Schools did their best in performing their duties but output in terms of academics and social behaviour was very weak. Then the concept of involving parents, community and retired persons in schools was introduced. This concept was known as community involvement in education. According to Heine (2008, p.1) Community has two literal meanings (i) a group of people living in the same vicinity and under the same regime, and (ii) a group of people having common interests. According to him a community is an evolving state of likeminded individuals, however, one thing remains intact and that is "place"

Government ordered public sector schools to involve parents and other community members compulsorily in schools and organize them through an elected body known as Parents Teachers Councils(PTCs)/Schools Managements Councils(SMCs). These bodies consisted of eight members in which five were elected parents, while Principal/Head Master of the concerned schools acted as Secretary of the council, remaining two members were nominated by the council in which one was to be an influential person and second from amongst retired government servants. These councils were deemed to be responsible forums for helping schools in improvement of teaching, discouragement of absenteeism, collection of funds, maintenance of school building and financial help of deserving students etc. Such councils could discuss school problems in their regular meetings.

Parents could help their children and concerned schools in a number of ways, such as assistance in home works, retention of lessons, paying visits to schools, contacting teachers to ask about academic condition and social behaviour of their children, providing financial donations, granting stationery and uniforms, supplying construction material and in offering teaching services to schools.

Due to such type of involvement of parents and community, academic and social aspects of children improved in various countries. Government of Pakistan and Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa decided to involve parents in schools on regular basis. For this purpose bodies like “Parents Teacher’s Councils” (PTCs) were formed. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the first province of Pakistan where such councils were established in 1993. Their aim was to cooperate with school in enrolments, teaching, parenting, discouraging students/teachers absenteeism and minimizing unnecessary interference etc in schools. Moreover, they also spent PTC funds provided by Government to each school on class room consumable commodities and pity repairs. It was the responsibility of a Principal/Head Master to hold meetings of PTCs quarterly and to invite parents in order to solve problems faced by school administration.

Educational Policies in Pakistan mentioned the importance of community participation in its texts. Here latest two Education policies of Pakistan were quoted: National Education Policy 1998-2010 gave importance to Schools Management Committees(SMCs) and quoted that: “At the village , chairman of a School Management Committee, who will be an elected person, shall constantly review educational development in the area of his/her jurisdiction and ensure implementation of key policy provisions. The chairperson will also remain in constant touch with education authorities of the area and serve as the key supplier of information through supervisor as well as the Assistant District Education Officer” (Government of Pakistan,1998).

The Draft National Education Policy (2009, pp.30-31) expressed that SMCs/PTAs have had limited success and that too were either due to a dynamic Head teacher or to a local NGO. It said that in rural areas these bodies were controlled by influential political persons. Beside it, Head teachers were inexperienced to collaborate with communities. Main problems were lack of acceptance and misunderstanding of the concept both at community and at school level. New policy vowed to be collaborative with all concerned. It gave five policy actions which were i) strengthening of SMCs through involvement of students, teachers, educationists, parents and society (STEPS), ii) lengthening tenure of SMCs, iii) moving from financial audit to performance audit system, iv) training of Head teachers in social mobilization and v) launching of awareness campaigns at grass root level (Government of Pakistan, 2009).

In order to enhance community participation in the province, Elementary Education Foundation (EFF) was established (2012, p.1) by Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2002. Its purpose was “To promote Elementary education through community involvement”. Objectives of this body were i) improving literacy through community schools, ii) to improve quality of education through teachers training, iii) to enhance community participation in education, iv) to streamline teachings of maddaris (religious schools)/ mosques, v) to introduce innovation in literacy and vi) to increase social, functional literacy and post literacy (Elementary Education Foundation, 2012). Provincial Government provided legislative support to community involvement in Education sector in the year 2005/06-2007/08. It promulgated “North West Frontier Province Provincial Reform Programme II under the heading “Encouraging public-private partnerships and community involvement”. Its clause No; 30 said that Government has “strengthened PTAs at almost all 20,000 primary schools and started providing them funds that PTAs were now using for

minor repairs in schools. The PTAs would become more important in future as they would get involved in other activities, such as monitoring and reporting on teacher absenteeism” (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2005). Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa take steps to involve community in Educational institutions since 1993. It published a guide for general information which was known as PTC Guide (2007, pp.1-13). It contained all necessary details regarding composition, formation, responsibilities and powers of a PTC.

Antunez (2001, pp.53-59) stated that besides other merits of parental cooperation with schools, it could improve social behaviour of students and stop them from indulging in violence and unnecessary activities. Blud (2002, pp.40-45) noticed a positive and satisfactory correlation between family involvement and student’s academic, behavioural, and social improvement no matter whatever was the social/educational background of their parents. Ceperley(2005, pp.1-7) conducted a review of literature on parental involvement in schools. She gave references of 24 different studies conducted in United States of America on subject of families’ involvement in schools. The review showed names of researchers, years of publications, focus of studies and their findings in three columned tables. Compiler of the review gave four key findings derived from the above 24 studies, which were (i) those children who were supported by their families had higher academic achievements than other students, (ii) continued family involvement helped in continued education of their children, (iii) families of all cultural backgrounds, education and income levels encouraged their children alike, and (iv) parental involvement should be focused on specific knowledge and skills. She said that parental involvement could improve attendance and behaviour of students. She recommended to (i)adopt a family – school partnership policy, (ii) identification of target areas of low achievements, (iii) professional development for teachers should be offered so that they could work more effectively with families, and (iv) innovative techniques should be thought for creating a learning community.

Kechia (2007, pp.1-20) proposed that in order to promote good parent-school relations (i) guide parents and welcome them (ii) allow them to visit classrooms to observe teaching, (iii) award top readers in their presence, and (iv) show flexibility with respect to time. Combs(2008, pp.1-24) suggested that (i) a community should be allowed to use school infrastructure after end of the school timings, (ii) friendly policies with communities should be appreciated, (iii) talented students should be encouraged and (iv) congratulations should be sent to them. La Bahn (2009, pp.1-9) said that parents wanted to cooperate with schools but they did not know its methods. Skiba & Strassel (2010, pp.1-2) observed role of parental involvement in learning of students and in creation of a positive climate in schools. They pointed six different methods of family involvement in which three belonged to home and remaining to schools. First three were i.e. i) parenting, ii) learning at home and iii) communication, while later three were i) volunteering, ii) decision making and iii) collaboration with community. They concluded that enhanced parental involvement could accelerate success of students and satisfaction of school staff. Involvement of parents and communities was a compulsory feature in school affairs throughout the world. Various studies showed that it affected student academic and social gains positively. Smith (2011, pp.12-15) reported that in the United States parents teachers associations were a common thing. Every school had a PTA. In some schools they were known as Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), their aim was to facilitate parents in their involvement with educational institutions. It said that there existed a National Parent Teachers Association (NPTA), which was established in 1897. Every member of PTA automatically became member of NPTA. In 1960 its members were about 12 millions, which decreased to 5.2 millions. There were 23,000 local PTAs in the United States.

OBJECTIVES

The current study aimed:

1. To see the level of involvement of parents in schools.
2. To see the interaction of schools with parents of students.
3. To recommend strengthening of parents-schools relations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There were 1472 public sector high and higher secondary schools in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 100 schools were selected out of them and then 5 parents from each school were taken as sample, in this way total number of parents contacted became 500.

Parents of only tenth class students were selected. They were approached through Principals/Head masters of the schools. A questionnaire was provided to them. They were asked to tick mark the relevant box about the effectiveness of Parents Teachers Councils (PTCs)/Schools Management Councils (SMCs). Three options were given against each statement i.e. Mostly, Rarely and Not at all. Data collected was thus analyzed with the help of Chi-square technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H_0 : Community participation in schools is ineffective.

H_1 : Community participation in schools is effective

Table 1

<i>Statements</i>		<i>Mostly</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	χ^2
	f_o	93	135	222	
	f_e	150.0	150.0	150.0	
The school invited you on the occasion of parent's days	Residual	-57	-15	72	58.5
	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	3249	225	5184	
	$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	22	1.5	35	
PTC informed you about educational position of school.	=	1.7	1.7	6.8	10.2
PTC corresponded with you about student problems.	=	8	11	0.24	19.24
You were invited in the annual sports functions.	=	0.42	6.8	3.8	11.06
You were informed about repair works of the school building by PTC	=	1.7	10	1.1	12.8
Influential people take interest in solution of school problems	=	6.8	2.4	17	26.2

$f_o = 0.05$, $df = 4$, Table value = 9.488

Where χ^2 denoted calculated valued of Chi square, f_e denoted level of rejection, df denoted degrees of freedom, and Table value means corresponding value in Chi square table. In all of

the above cases, calculated values of Chi-squares were greater than the Table value, therefore, Null hypothesis were rejected and Alternative hypothesis were accepted. It proved that parental involvement in schools were effective for the academic and social uplift of schools.

ANALYSIS OF PARENTS SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Six different questions were asked from parents about functioning and effectiveness of Parents Teacher Councils (PTCs) and about their own role regarding supporting schools administration. In all of the six questions they responded that the said councils were effective and that the role of parents in supporting school administration was positive.

22.4% parents suggested nothing. Remaining 77.6 % gave different type of suggestions, such as (i) activation of PTCs, (ii) arrangement of parent days, (iii) regular meetings, (iv) control on Television programmes, (v) reduction in playing cricket matches, (vi) cooperation with Head of schools (vii) empowerment of PTCs, (viii) to admit the children of educated and influential people, (ix) meeting with Members of Provincial Assemblies, (x) holding of PTCs meetings on holidays, (xi) reducing political interference, (xii) presence of District Education Officers as necessary in meetings of PTCs, (xiii) sincerity of school Head and members, and (xiv) moral uplift of students.

DISCUSSION

It looked exemplary that in all of the six statements, parent responses were positive. Such positive responses about all situations might generate a doubt about respondents. Since some of School Heads considered involvement of parents in their school as interference, therefore, so much positive responses were not expected. It seemed that respondents have camouflaged some facts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings and discussion, following recommendations proposed:

1. Education department should appreciate those schools who invited parents to parent days.
2. All PTCs should inform parents about educational position of students on regular basis.
3. PTCs should maintain correspondence about student problems.
4. Government should encourage those schools who invite parents in sports functions.
5. Parents should contribute in repair works of schools whenever they receive information about such repairs in schools.
6. Influential persons should keep on solving school problems.

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