

Effectiveness of Community Participation in Public Sector Schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Community participation in schools mean positive contributions of parents, general public, people representatives and retired servants in enhancing enrollment, minimizing absenteeism, voluntary teaching, financing and monitoring construction works in schools .It is an important trend in education. Many countries are welcoming communities for the betterment of educational institutes. Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also favouring the concept of community participation in education. It is providing millions of rupees for spending in schools through communities. The provincial government has clearly mentioned it in the job descriptions of District Education Officers of schools that they will involve community in improvement of schools. This study aims to judge that to what extent the said officers are fulfilling that objective effectively. Each district has three managers of schools, i.e. one is District Education Officers, second is Deputy District Education officer and the third one is Sub divisional Education officer. Out of 75 such officers in the whole province, fifteen officers of the five districts were selected for the study. Data regarding their role/contributions in this regard was collected through a questionnaire. The data were tabulated and analyzed by using Chi-Square. It came to know that in five obligations the efforts of these officers to involve communities in schools were ineffective, while in three aspects their efforts were effective. It was recommended that the provincial government should stress the above officers to fulfill their duties with respect to community participation in education through proper planning, the government should support this involvement through media so that masses may be aware of their role in schools.

Keywords: Community participation, Secondary Schools, District Education Officers, Job description.

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Introduction

Imparting effective education to students is no more the sole responsibility of a school teacher alone. It is a shared responsibility of Education department, school staff, parents and community. Government of Pakistan supported community participation in education since “The Commission on Education of 1958” in which it was stated that education of parents is more important than education of children.

Amongst all provinces of Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the first province to launch community participation in education. Since District Education Officers manage all public sector schools in districts, therefore, they have been bounded for involvement of community in schools.

In order to promote community involvement in schools, Elementary Education Foundation (EFF) was established by provincial Government in 2002.¹ Its Board of Directors was headed by Chief Minister of province; the mission of this foundation was “To promote the elementary education through community participation and to supplement government activities with the help of non-governmental educational institutes”.² Its objectives were i) improving literacy through community schools, ii) to improve quality of education through teachers training, iii) to enhance community participation in education.³

Provincial government of KPK provided legislative support to community involvement in Education sector in the year 2005-06 and 2007-08. It, therefore, promulgated “North West Frontier Province Provincial Reform Programme II. It said that Government has “strengthened PTAs in almost all 20,000 primary schools and started providing them funds to be used for minor repairs in schools. The PTA’s would become more important in future as they will be involved in other activities, such as monitoring and reporting on teacher absenteeism”.⁴

In each district of a province, public sectors schools are controlled by District Education Officers. They consist of District Education Officers (DEO) for High and Higher secondary schools, Deputy District Education Officers (D/DEO) for Middle schools and Sub Divisional Education Officers (SDEO) for Primary schools. All of them are bound by their respective job description to coordinate schools and communities. According to a Job Description Manual of Government of KPK, the responsibilities of a DEO were (i) to ensure community awareness campaign and its planning, (ii) to attend meetings with the elders of community , (iii) to ensure that PTCs were formed in all government schools,

(iv) to consolidate the lists of schools for allocation of funds and occasionally check its utilization, (v) to judge that all expenditures were incurred in accordance with the criteria of Finance department, and (vi) to initiate mass awareness campaigns about out of school children.⁵ A D/DEO should (i) supervise the community awareness programme, (ii) attend meetings of Parents Teacher Councils (PTC's), (iii) contact different agencies and donors to seek their technical/financial assistance, (iv) should arrange awareness through media and publicity, (v) monitor formation of PTCs in all public sector schools, (vi) should motivate community participation, and (vii) should draw and disburse PTC funds amongst all such schools (2010, p.39). An SDEO should (i) arrange celebration of National days, (ii) help D/DEO in different organizations, (iii) should approach media, (iv) assist D/DEO in PTC formations, (v) make arrangements for meeting with representatives and prominent figures, (vi) should prepare plan for "Education for All" (EFA) implementation and (vii) should make efforts to increase the quality of education and enrolments.⁶ On the basis of this document, it is now the duty of these officers to develop good relationship between community and public sector schools. The current study will analyze the level of commitment of these officers in the light of the above job descriptions. In other countries of the world, the importance of community participation in education can be felt with the help of the following descriptions.

Sharma (2011, pp 1-3) wrote that a Community is an informal and active agency of education. It can play a number of roles in promotion of education. These roles may be (i) increasing attendance in schools, (ii) financing of education, (iii) maintaining good atmosphere in schools, (iv) catering physical facilities, and (v) providing media of informal education.⁷

United States of America has a good deal of experience in community participation. Not only a classroom but also the whole physical building and social environment of a school could be improved with the help of community participation.⁸ A town Davidson, whose community was active and interested in construction of a school through self-contribution. They decided to collect funds for a new elementary school to replace the old one. Its teachers decided to have the method of "Team teaching" in their elementary school. "Davidson school had already a committee of teachers and parents, all of them were eager to participate in designing a new school".⁹

Smith¹⁰ presented a model in which he mentioned three points about community participation i.e. (i) process of community

building, leadership development and training of participants, (ii) changes in institutional policies/distribution of powers and (iii) resource allocation. The model said that advocates of the term 'participation' relied on two key arguments: (i) people could influence through collective decisions, and (ii) people could learn through participation. He distinguished between the terms of (i) Popular participation, which meant broad issues of social development, creating opportunities and involvement of common man in social, economic and political life, and ii) Community participation, the involvement of people in local affairs.

About non-involvement of communities in planning and implementation, a study was conducted and it states that communities were not involved in planning, formulation and implementation of programmes. They were not delegated any meaningful authority for it. He recommended more effective levels of involvement and overcoming resistance of bureaucracy.¹¹

To make participation effective in schooling, public-sector reforms needed to be carried out to alter the power relations between parents, teachers, and government officials. In general, he said that NGO's schools performed only marginally better than government schools with respect to community participation.¹²

People's participation was a must for successful implementation of elementary education. The study said that if school served community through its educational services, and society helped schools in its services then both of them could transform each other. The report said that success stories of strong Village Education Committees (VEC's) can be proved as an example for weak VECs.¹³ The research said that the role of community proved to be successful in management, admissions, teaching & learning activities, healthy and clean environment and financial support to schools. The School-community relations were an integral part of educational administration in United States of America at graduate level; but was sadly viewed as of less importance than other subjects.¹⁴ Similarly, parents and community members were unaware of difficulties being faced by educational institutions where their children spent a good deal of time.¹⁵ He recommended a new model developed by him for the success of community participation in educational institutions. Government of Zambia decentralized basic education with emphasis on active community participation and increased accountability of teachers.¹⁶ Some studies, however, pointed out difficulties in the involvement of communities in education in third world countries. Since Pakistan also belongs to developing countries, therefore, this study

was conducted to see the role of District Education Officers of Education Department in communities' involvement in education.

Following were the objectives of the study:

- i). To see the extent that how much the District Education Officers were following their job descriptions with respect to community involvement in public sector schools.
- ii). To see effectiveness or otherwise of community participation in educational institutions.

The study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of community participation in education with respect to the role of District Education Officers in public sector schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It was assumed that the community participation in public sector schools with respect to the role of District Education Officers was ineffective.

Methodology

In 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) there are seventy five officers, five districts were selected (Nowshera, Mardan, Buner, Abbottabad and Kohat) in which there fifteen officers like five DEO's, five D/DEO's and five SDEO's. The researcher visited these districts for direct contact. Responses were obtained from them through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on certain questions which were related to the job descriptions of these officers with respect to involvement of community participation in schools. They were asked about fulfillment of same tasks in the form of statements. The responses were analyzed with the help of Chi-square technique.

Results and Discussion

Following results were derived from the study:

H₀: The role of District Education officers in involving community was ineffective.

H₁: The role of District Education officers in involving community was effective.

$\alpha = 0.05$

df = 4

Table value = 9.488

Data analysis table

Variables	Mostly	Rarely	Not At All	χ^2	Result
Community awareness campaigns were planned and carried out in districts.	0	9	6	8.4	Role is ineffective
Meetings regarding importance of community participation were held with the elders of community.	0	9	6	8.4	Role is ineffective
Utilization of funds placed at the disposal of PTCs were checked occasionally	9	6	0	8.4	Role is ineffective
Funds distribution was ensured according to the criteria of Finance Department	15	0	0	12.4**	Role is effective
It was assured that the funds were spent properly and according to the codal formalities.	3	9	3	4.8*	Role is ineffective
Mass awareness campaigns were initiated with the help of community to enhance enrollment.	15	0	0	12.4**	Role is effective
The formation and functioning of PTCs were ensured in the district.	15	0	0	12.4**	Role is effective
The list of schools were consolidated and sent for allocation of PTC funds to the concerned quarters.	3	9	3	4.8	Role is ineffective

*** $P < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.1$ *

Community Awareness campaign were planned and carried out in district have not statistically significant relationship with job description ($\chi^2 = 8.4$, $df=4$, p value is not less than 0.05) that is why we accept Null hypothesis *** $P < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.1$ *

Discussion

It was hypothesized that on the part of the District Education Officers, the community participation in educational institutions was ineffective. The data were analyzed and analysis showed a very realistic situation which resembled the ground realities. It was found that Educational Managers were not successful in five points, i.e. (i) launching of community awareness campaigns in their respective districts, (ii) meeting with the elders of community about their involvement in education, (iii) ensuring the formation and functioning of community bodies in schools, (iv) occasional checking of utilization of PTC funds, and (v) arranging campaigns for improvement of quality of education. The said Managers were, however, successful in three aspects (i) consolidation of the lists of schools for allocation of PTC funds, (ii) ensuring funds distribution to schools, and (iii) ensuring that the PTC funds were spent properly in schools.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendations of the study:

- Community awareness campaigns should be planned and carried out by District Education Officers.
- Meetings regarding importance of community participation should be held regularly by the said officers.
- Formation and functioning of community participatory bodies should be ensured by the DEO's.
- Utilization of funds of PTCs should be checked occasionally by Education officers.
- Mass awareness campaigns should be started by District Education Officers.
- District Education Officers should be appreciated for their successful efforts, if any.

Notes & References

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