

**IMPACT OF ‘NEELAMBARI - A SYMPHONY’ A PARENTAL
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME TO FOSTER STRONG CONNECTION
BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL.**

A Case study submitted by

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Introduction

Community involvement in school activities has proven to be a significant catalyst in creating a thriving educational ecosystem. By actively engaging parents, local organizations, and stakeholders, schools can augment the educational experiences of students, foster a sense of belonging, and promote their holistic development. This case study celebrates the collaborative efforts and showcases the positive impacts of community involvement, highlighting its instrumental role in creating a nurturing and inclusive educational environment.

GNLPS Puliyanloor, a venerable institution with a legacy dating back to its establishment in 1911, stands as a beacon of education and excellence in Kerala. Founded in 1911, GNLPS Puliyanloor has long been a pillar of education in the Pala Subdistrict of Kottayam District, Kerala, India. Situated in the picturesque Mutholy grama panchayat, the school offers a serene and conducive environment for learning. There are five teachers in the school including the headmistress and two non teaching staff. The infrastructure, though faced with challenges, has been adapted to suit the evolving needs of modern education. Over the years, it has produced numerous prominent personalities who have excelled in various fields, contributing significantly to society. The school takes pride in its distinguished alumni, including Mrs. Reshmi Mohan, recipient of the President's Distinction Award 2021-22, and Mr. Jose K Mathew, a Jr. Scientist who played a crucial role in India's Chandrayaan Mission. The school's rich history is marked by the achievements of its alumni, reflecting its commitment to nurturing leaders and contributing to societal development.

The school has a legacy of academic excellence, with a focus on holistic development. Under the leadership of Smt Asha Balakrishnan, Head Mistress, GNLPS Puliyanloor, the staff strive to provide a nurturing environment that fosters intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity among students. The institution's commitment to academic excellence faced a transformative period during the COVID-19 pandemic in January 2020. The ensuing crises and social conditions prompted a decline in student numbers, necessitating creative solutions to maintain the quality of education.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the school took proactive measures, engaging parents in various activities, through the **'Neelambari – A Symphony'** a creative parental empowerment programme. This innovative approach ensured continued academic progress despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Recognizing the importance of parental involvement in the era of online education, the school formed the Neelambari – A Symphony, a creative platform for parents as well as learners. This innovative effort aimed to engage parents actively in their children's education and provide a platform for them to contribute to online learning at the earlier stage.

Neelambari- A Symphony was inaugurated with an online musical evening invited featuring invited guests, creating a sense of excitement and engagement among parents. It was a great success. Then every activity organized was enriched by the participation of parents. Parents actively participated in various activities, contributing to a renewed enthusiasm for learning among the students. A new enthusiasm and awakening for learning was visible in the children. In conjunction with the reading week, 'Hridayaragam' a commemorative poetry recital by Neelambari was held for Malayalam's very own poetess, Srimati Sugathakumari. The parents of Neelambari gave life to poetry recitals with their lovely voice. In the Ezhutani Ezhutulsavam held in connection with Wayanavaram related to Reading Day, the parents were able to prepare a handwritten magazine with the children. The manuscript magazine was very attractive which harnesses the skills of parents for children's learning and also provides a platform for parents to perform. It plays a big role in bringing up one day in a week in the morning assembly and parents present the appreciation note of the book they read and it has a positive impact and could arouse great inspiration in students. The involvement of parents showcased their commitment to education and instilled a sense of joy and pride in the students. Even in the midst of the Covid pandemic, the celebrations did not diminish at all, such as Independence Day, Onam, Christmas, 'Kaitola' Folk Song Art Fair, various awareness classes, Amma Vayana and various programs were conducted under the auspices of Neelambari.

After the opening of the school during 2022- 23, the activities of Neelambari have been successfully carried forward. Parents took up the activities of changing one discourse form to another form with great enthusiasm. They presented stories, choreography, recitation in the morning assembly with great confidence and interest. Children said that it gives them a lot of joy and pride to see their parents coming to school and participating and performing various activities. The initiative received praise from elected officials, including the MLA who commended the scheme as a first-of-its-kind initiative and recognized its attractiveness at the state level. In the realm of storytelling, the Bodhi Science Forum unfolded its narrative journey towards enlightenment during the years 2023-24, with a prominent focus on Neelambari's aura. Over seven days, seven storytellers (parents) presented tales from the Panchatantra, fostering a blend of wisdom and entertainment. The subsequent events featured children engaging in narrative discourse, weaving the fabric of knowledge through their stories.

In the beginning very few parents came forward to participate in this activity. Lack of confidence held many parents back to some extent. Getting them to come forward was a big challenge. After opening the school, the financial expenditure required for the practical training area and art classes was another challenge. Challenges related to practical training and art classes were alleviated through generous contributions from teachers and supportive parents. Mutholy Grama Panchayat provided significant assistance in the development of physical facilities at the school. . During the academic year 2022- 23 the school received recognition and awards, including the State Government Revenue Level Best PTA Award

(2nd position) , the Pala Sub-District Level 1st position, SCERT Mikavu School, excellences in Sub district and District Kalamelas. The school also received the Swachhavidyalaya Award from the Government of India. There was a huge increase in the number of children and about 60 children enrolled in the school during 2023- 24 academic year. Considering the conditions of this school, a flow from 15 to 60 is a great achievement.

This unique initiative transformed parents into co-learners and co-teachers, leveraging their skills to enhance online learning. The Neelambari ,comprising four teachers , became a symphony of collaboration among learners, parents ,teachers, educators and experts later. This case study explores the dynamics of this creative parenting approach , shedding light on how it addressed the challenges of maintaining a warm relationship with parents during virtual learning and thereafter. The school actively fosters a sense of community and belongingness among students, parents, and teachers. The collaborative effort through this initiative Neelambari a creative parenting reflects the school's commitment to building a supportive educational ecosystem.

Community involvement plays a crucial role in fostering a positive and enriching educational environment for students. This case study focuses on the impactful role of community engagement in school activities, highlighting the benefits it brings to the overall development of students. By actively involving parents, local self government , and stakeholders, the school aims to create a collaborative and supportive ecosystem where students thrive. It also focuses on the impact of the "Neelambari - A Symphony" parental empowerment program initiated at Govt New L P School Puliyanloor, Kottayam. This program aims to foster a strong connection between the community and the school by tapping into the diverse talents of parents and creating a collaborative environment for the holistic growth of the children.

By addressing the following major objectives and utilizing the specified tools, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Neelambari program on the community-school relationship and its implications for student development and academic success. It examines how GNLPS Puliyanloor navigated unprecedented challenges, maintained academic excellence, and fostered innovation through community engagement

Assessing the Impact of Neelambari – A Symphony on Relationship Strengthening.

- Examine the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students regarding the effectiveness of Neelambari in fostering mutual understanding and support.

Measuring the Success of Rapport Establishment.

- Investigate how well Neelambari has achieved its objective of establishing a robust rapport between parents and the school.

- Explore the qualitative experiences of parents, teachers, and students in terms of improved communication and collaboration.

Assessing the Utilisation of Parental Skills

- Examine the extent to which parental skills have been leveraged to enhance and develop students' abilities.

Evaluating Parental Participation in School Activities

- Identify specific examples of how parents have actively contributed to the educational experiences of students.
- Measure the level of parental participation in various school activities facilitated by the Neelambari program.

Analysing Social Participation in Academic Activities

- Assess the success of Neelambari in ensuring social participation in academic activities, disseminating the excellence of the school to the wider community.

Examining the Enhancement of Learning Experiences

- Investigate how community involvement through Neelambari enriches the educational experiences of students.

Evaluating the Broadening of Resources

- Examine the extent to which the school has tapped into additional resources, such as expertise, infrastructure, and funding, through community engagement.
- Assess the impact of these additional resources on the overall quality of education provided.

Assessing the Promotion of Holistic Development

- Identify specific initiatives or programs that have contributed to holistic student development.
- Measure the success of Neelambari in promoting holistic development, going beyond academic achievements to include social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Cultivating a Sense of Belonging and Pride

- Investigate the impact of active community participation on creating a sense of belonging and pride among community members.
- Understand how this sense of ownership translates into an investment in the success and well-being of the students.

Major challenges faced by the school :

1. Decrease in Student Enrolment: Prior to the pandemic, the school experienced a gradual decrease in the number of students, with only 16 enrolled in 2019.
2. Maintaining Parent Relationships: Establishing and maintaining a warm relationship with parents during the era of online education presented a significant challenge.
3. Utilizing Parental Skills: To enhance online learning, the school recognized the need to leverage the skills and expertise of parents as co-learners and co-teachers.
4. Learning Gap : The global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the school's academic activities and necessitated a shift to online education. The learning gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has been a widespread concern globally. The disruption to traditional education systems, the shift to online learning, and the various challenges faced by students and educators have contributed to this gap.

Major Objectives of Neelambari are :

- Strengthening Relationships: The primary objective is to establish strong relationships between the school and the community, fostering mutual understanding and support.
- Establishing Rapport: The Neelambari program aims to foster strong connections between parents and the school, establishing a robust rapport.
- Utilizing Parental Skills: The program leverages the diverse talents of parents to enhance and develop students' abilities, promoting a collaborative approach to education.
- Parental Participation: Encouraging parental participation in school activities aims to create a sense of ownership and involvement in their children's education.
- Social Participation: The program seeks to ensure social participation in academic activities, disseminating the excellence of the school to the wider community.
- Enhancing Learning Experiences: Community involvement enriches the educational experiences of students by providing them with diverse perspectives, resources, and opportunities.
- Broadening Resources: By engaging the community, schools can tap into additional resources, such as expertise, infrastructure, and funding, to enhance the quality of education provided.
- Promoting Holistic Development: Through community involvement, the focus extends beyond academic achievements to encompass the holistic development of students, including their social, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Cultivating a Sense of Belonging: Encouraging community members to actively participate in school activities creates a sense of belonging and pride, instilling a strong sense of ownership and investment in the success of the students.

As a part of this parents are grouped based on their abilities and interests like music, dance, reading, sports, agriculture, art , craft , work experience etc. Parents and teachers are assigned similar areas of responsibility, fostering collaboration and shared decision-making in the educational process. Various programs, such as storytelling, themed morning assembly presentations, choreographed poem performances, folk song training, and yoga training , folk song art fair ,celebrations of festivals, various day celebrations are initiated to showcase and utilize the skills of both parents and students.

1. Parental Involvement: Parents are encouraged to actively participate in various school activities, including volunteering in classrooms, attending parent-teacher meetings, and contributing their skills and expertise.
2. Collaboration with Local Organizations: Partnerships are forged with local self government institutions , non-profits, and community organizations to provide additional learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and resources for students.
3. Community Events: Regular community events, such as art exhibitions, sports tournaments, cultural festivals, study tours and field trips are organized to promote community engagement and showcase the talents of students.
4. Networking and Collaboration: The school actively networks with community leaders, professionals, educational experts and alumni to provide students with opportunities for internships, hands-on experiences, and access to role models from diverse fields.

Objectives

- Evaluate the extend to which the Neelambari program has contributed to building strong relationships between the school and the community.
- Examine the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students regarding the effectiveness of Neelambari in fostering mutual understanding and support.
- To quantitatively assess any correlation between parental involvement facilitated by Neelambari and student achievements.
- Identify specific instances where diverse perspectives, resources, and opportunities have positively influenced students' learning.
- Examine the extend to which parental skills have been leveraged to enhance and develop students' abilities.
- Understand the impact of increased parental involvement on creating a sense of ownership and commitment to their children's education

Methodology

This case study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative methods include interviews, focus group discussions, and continuous monitoring, providing in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of parents, teachers, and students.

Quantitative data will be collected through academic grades, enrolment figures, and statistical analysis of various activities such as Science Mela and Kalamela.

Sample

Parents :Randomly selected parents of students enrolled in GNLPS Puliyanloor

Teachers :Members of the Neelambari committee

Educational Officers : DIET Principal Kottayam, Assistant Educational Officer , Pala sub district, Block Project Co-ordinator , Pala, Samagra Siksha Kerala, Lecturer DIET Kottayam.

Learners : A representative sample of students from various grade levels from pre-primary to grade 4.

Tools

Interview : Semi – structured interviews with parents , teachers, educational officers and students to understand their experiences and perceptions regarding the Neelambari Programme.

Focus Group Discussions : FGDs with groups of parents to explore collective perspectives on the impact of parental involvement on the school community.

Continuous monitoring and observations; Regular observations of Neelambari activities and interactions within the school community to capture real time dynamics.

Academic grades : Analysis of academic performance data to assess any correlation between parental involvement and student achievements.

Data collection and procedure

Interviews will be conducted in person or via virtual platforms, ensuring flexibility and convenience for participants.

Focus group discussions will be organized at the school premises or through online platforms, allowing for open dialogue.

Continuous monitoring involves periodic visits to the school to observe Neelambari activities and document ongoing interactions.

Qualitative Analysis :Thematic analysis of interview transcripts and FGD recordings to identify recurring themes and patterns.

Quantitative Analysis :Statistical analysis of academic grades and enrolment figures to determine trends and correlations.

Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Neelambari program. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring their willingness to participate in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process . The research will adhere to ethical guidelines, and participants will have the option to withdraw at any stage without consequences.

Limitations

Potential biases may arise due to the subjective nature of qualitative data.

The study's generalizability may be limited to the specific context of GNLPS Puliyanloor, Kottayam.

Results and Impacts :

1. **Student Enrolments :** Number of students increased by 100 percentage in school in one year of implementation. Despite the challenges faced, the school witnessed a remarkable increase in student enrolments in 2022-23, with 60 new students joining.
2. **Overcoming Challenges:** The initiatives undertaken by the Neelambari committee, coupled with the collective efforts of teachers, parents, and local authorities, enabled the school to overcome various obstacles successfully. Teachers and parents worked together to learn and develop non-verbal skills in children.
3. **Enhanced Parental Involvement :** The active participation of parents resulted in a vibrant and engaging learning environment for the students, fostering a stronger sense of community within the school. The growing warmth between parent and teacher relationship created positive changes in children. A unique world of unity is created in school where one parent of one child becomes the parent of all children in school.
4. **A Unique opportunity :** A gift for mothers to express their creative talents and nurture them.

As the study unfolds , it evaluates the outcomes of GNLPS Puliyanloor's innovative approach , examining the impact on student engagement , academic performance , and overall community cohesion . Insights gained from this case study may offer valuable lessons for other educational institutions navigating similar challenges.

Conclusion

The Neelambari - A Symphony parental empowerment program has successfully created a harmonious academic environment among learners, parents, and teachers in Govt New L P School Puliyanloor. By harnessing the diverse talents of parents, this program has not only enhanced academic skills among children but also encouraged active parental participation and social engagement in the school. Overall, the Neelambari program has been instrumental in fostering a strong connection between the community and the school, leading to the holistic development of students.

This case study highlights the school's proactive approach to address challenges and foster parental involvement in education. By establishing the Neelambari -A Symphony and encouraging parent participation, the school successfully navigated the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring the continued academic excellence and holistic development of its students. To continue its legacy of nurturing leaders and providing quality education that empowers students to excel in a rapidly changing world it's journey through and after COVID-19 pandemic , as explored in this study ,showcases resilience , adaptability , and a beacon for institutions seeking innovative solutions to unforeseen challenges , emphasizing the importance of community collaboration in ensuring continued success.

Reference

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https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QjDyPeSci6BfrXn_w-uAlbBdq-3j_rVg?usp=sharing
(Photos)

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