

A Module on

ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADER IN INVOKING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN RURAL AREA BASED SCHOOL - A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GHSS KOTTAYI - 9006, PALAKKAD.

ABSTRACT: - Kothari Commission (1964-66) focused on need of decentralisation of school education and involvement of parents, and local bodies in the process of improvement of school. National Curriculum Framework (2005) also emphasised to encourage community participation as a means of enhancing quality education. There is also a provision to constitute school management committees in RTE Act, 2009). This paper focuses on practices of community participation GHSS Kottayi, rural area based school in Palakkad district.

Keyword: - Community participation

INTRODUCTION:

An old African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child". One could imagine, that it would take a community to raise a school. This reveals the significance of community participation in schools.

Community participation is a concept that attempts to bring different people together for community problem solving and decision making. With regard to school, it is meant that the involvement of parents and local bodies in school management affairs. It plays a vital role in school through its reciprocal relationship that exists between schools and members of society, in general, and families in particular. Family is the basic unit of the community and a child who receives support from the community grows up to be a responsible citizen. Community participation in education helps to identify issues and problems in school education. School is a part of community and it supports to give quality education to every student for the development of the society. Schools are the first social institutions from which community reforms begin.

Researchers and most educationalists agree on the importance of role of community participation in schools. Parent, Family and Community involvement in school is the way to take responsibility and accountability to identifying the problem, to design and implement programme for the development of the society.

Scope of community participation is very high, especially, in rural areas; all institutions make community aware of the importance of their involvement and management process of the schools and thereby would be a part of school governance.

Dimension of Community Participation

- Look after school Buildings and maintenance and facilities: -

School management Committee (SMC) and **PTA** take the responsibility of providing amble atmosphere in schools by providing infrastructure facilities like buildings, boundary wall, garden, and availability of drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls, library, laboratories etc.

- Overall Supervision: -

Community may take the responsibility of overall supervision of punctuality of teachers, student' attendance, timely supply of text books and other teaching materials, abolition of corporal punishment, mental and physical harassment, regular health check up for children, audit of financial grants, PTA fund etc..

- Attitudes and Responsiveness:-

The successful functioning of a school depends on the willingness and readiness of community members to help students, teachers and other staff, availability of guidance and counselling, personal attention and curiosity to help students.

- Participation in Policies and Curriculum preparation:-

The community members may also take responsibility to develop and design curriculum and learning materials according to the local context. Also the community can involve in school's policies and text book preparation.

World Bank (1999) viewed the ways through which the community can contribute the school education

- i. Advocating enrolment in schools
- ii. Raising money for schools
- iii. Boosting morale of the staff
- iv. Recruiting and supporting teachers

- v. Ensuring students' attendance and completion
- vi. Constructing repairing and improving school facilities
- vii. Forming village education committees to manage schools and actively attending school meetings
- viii. Providing skill instruction and helping children with studying
- ix. Making decisions
- x. Identifying factors contributing to educational problems (low enrollment, Drop outs etc..)

Benefits of Community Participation:

According to Hamdan 2013, Community participation is significantly correlated to school community relation. Report of "save the children", also emphasis its importance. Community-based approaches to educational development have the potential to enhance ownership, accountability and efficiency. The benefits of community participation in school education may be listed below;

- Maximisation of limited resources
- Developing need and context based curriculum
- Helping students to succeed and boosting behaviours
- Promoting girls education
- Identifying school problems and addressing
- Creating and nourishing community-school partnerships
- Ensuring sustainability and improving home environment etc..

Community Participation in Kerala's context.

The declaration of Nava Kerala Mission has enlightened the General Education. The evidences of the school level achievements are to be propagated to the society through creative transaction between the teacher community in the school and the parental and social community surrounding the school. The construction of such creative community can be attained by strengthening the PTA, SMC and other community stakeholders. "Praveshanolsavam" is celebrated at the beginning of each academic year to welcome thousands of new enrolled students, by giving sweets, new books, dresses etc. And the first day is celebrated as the talent day. This activity helps to

ensure total enrolment of the school aged children, the support of LSG and the society for the school and make aware of the society about the academic and infrastructure developments of the school.

In Kerala the LSG play a great role for the development of education especially in rural and tribal areas. Provision of free books, uniforms, food and nutrients (milk, egg, food-rains, noon meal etc.), lump-sum grants, scholarships, fee concessions etc. Kerala government initiated many welfare programs for the children belonging to socially backward and scheduled caste/scheduled tribe category students.

The importance of Community involvement has also been highlighted in National Policy on Education in 1986 which emphasised establishment of district board of education, district institutes of education and training, village education committee and the involvement of the community with educational process and creating a new form of accountability of the educational system.

One of the important provisions of the RTE act 2009, is to constitute school management committees. National Curriculum Framework (1975, 1988, 2000, 2005), and the Ministry of Human Resource Development GOI, 1993 also strengthened the importance of involvement of community participation for curriculum development and management of school.

Stages of Community Participation

The process of community participation in school education goes through different stages;

- Access – community must be the part of various committees or bodies
- Awareness – community members must be aware with their roles.
- Involvement – community should be involved in the different school activities.
- Decision making – they should get a chance to be the part of decision making.

The Principal as a leader of a school has to play a significant role in developing an atmosphere which is conducive for the community participation. As a leader he is to direct and coordinate effective educational programmes within the school and to

promote the improvement of teaching and learning within the school. This can be achieved by the active community participation.

In background of such related experience, and to work out for sustainable solutions, I have designed this module. This module will provide healthy platform for all school leaders to have an insight in the role community participation in schools.

TITLE OF THE MODULE

Role of School Leader in Invoking Community participation in Rural Area, special references to Kerala.

Objectives:- .

- To understand the significance of community participation in school education.
- To understand the scope of community participation in educational institutions.
- To identify the role of school Principal in harnessing community participation for the effective implementation of school programs.
- Recognising the main ways to develop school leadership for community participation in schools of Kerala.

SCOPE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

School-Community participation is the relationship between the community and the school that is characterised by reciprocal and mutual provision of services. Kerala, the topper in National Ranking of governance level has incorporated school-community partnership at all levels of education.

- Empowerment
- Building beneficiary capacity
- Increasing project effectiveness
- Improving project efficiency
- Project cost sharing

Community Participation

*Quality Education

* Access

*Retention

* Attendance

There is a positive relationship between community participation in schools and quality education.

There is a positive relationship between community participation and Access.

There is a positive relationship between community participation and retention.

There is a positive relationship between community participation and attendance.

Most common understanding of community involvement in schools includes:

- (a) Volunteering in schools
- (b) Mentoring
- (c) Inviting families to school
- (d) School visits to local professionals
- (e) Workshops with community organisations

Important Community Participants

1. School Management Committee (SMC)

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കോട്ടായി, പാലക്കാട് 09006

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ഉദ്ഘാടനം : ശ്രീ. ടി.കെ. ദേവദാസ്
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അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻ : ശ്രീ. എസ്. സിദ്ദീഖ്
വികസനകാര്യ സ്റ്റാ. കമ്മിറ്റി ചെയർമാൻ, കുഴൽമരം ബ്ലോക്ക് പഞ്ചായത്ത്
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ആഘോഷ-വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സ്റ്റാ. കമ്മിറ്റി ചെയർപേഴ്സൺ, കോട്ടായി ഗവ: പഞ്ചായത്ത്

Anything done to improve the quality of education may be ranging from the supply of materials, human and financial resources to the highest cultural or academic needs comes under the scope of School Management Committee

The objectives of SMC are community contribution to development of school. The SMC's structure, role and responsibilities are prescribed by the central act and state rules.

As per RTE norms, School Management Committee (SMC) actively participating school development programme.

- * Prepare and recommend School Development plan.
- * Participation through regular and active attendance.
- * Monitoring the utilization of funds/grants received from the government or local authority or any other sources.
- * Implementing delegated powers.
- * Advocating enrolment and education benefits.
- * Ensuring child's quality of education
- * Boosting morale of faculty
- *Coordinating with the local authorities, generating funds from other sources for development of schools
- * Sharing local culture information.
- *Creating and maintaining an educational database
- *Instituting social audit mechanism and process to bring transparency in the system.

Challenges to school principal

- *Low interest of SMC members to attend the meeting
- *Lack of awareness about the school atmosphere.

Role of Principal

- *Organise workshops for SMC members.
- *Invite SMC members to each program in school.
- *Allocating work among SMC members
- * Timely Appreciation given to members for the work done.
- *Training programme to SMC leader and members.
- *Principal should create an accessible environment in school for SMC members.

2. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Mother Parent Teacher Association (MPTA)



Parent Teacher Association is formal organisation composed of parents, teachers, and staff that is intended to facilitate parental participation in school. It is the formal platform through which parent gets the first hand information about the performance of his child. MPTA, is a part of PTA is the association of mothers, which stands for the wellbeing of students. It assists PTA, especially on the part of mothers.

Objectives:

*To assist school in solving the collective safety and security problems of the students.

To assist the staff in organising different events

*To assist school in solving discipline issues and other nonfinancial matters of students, teachers and parents amicably.

Scope and Contribution

PTA works with parents and teachers to organize and facilitate events both during and after school hours that serve to enrich children's educational experiences and build a stronger community.

*To foster mutual understanding, harmonious relationship and cooperation among parents, guardians, teachers for the fulfilment of common aim and welfare of the school.

*Regularly attending school meeting and provide feedback about children's performance.

*Ensuring child's regular attendance

Helping children studying at home.

Promoting education benefits among community.

Keeping an eye on the children in their wards.

Challenges to School Leader

* Poor economic background

*Low literacy level

*Cultural barriers

*Lack of adequate finance

*Lack of cooperation and support from members

*Irregular attendance on the part of some members

Role of School Leader

*To take a lead role in conduct school meeting as a celebrating event.

*To address the issues and ensure participation of PTA

*To develop parent involvement programme

*Appreciate parents and reward them wherever possible

*Conduct PTA meets at regular intervals.

*Involving them in school development plans.

3. Grama Panchayat



Grama Panchayat is an essential link between the community and the school. The primary education is totally controlled by Grama Panchayat. It plays a vital role in activation and implementation of primary education. They are actively engaged in planning, implementation and monitoring of the institutions related to children and in also protecting child rights.

Scope and contribution

As the political body of the village,`grama panchayat act as an important institution to channelize community efforts in all aspects of school education

- Implementation and monitoring of schools
- Protecting child rights
- Provision of basic infrastructure and other services
- Well-being of students by providing drinking water supply, sanitation etc.
- Garnering more resources and solving issues in schools through education department
- Advocating enrolment
- Financial help
- Sharing local culture information
- Providing security to teachers and other staff
- Support in connecting education with social activities

Challenges to school Principals

- Political interest of Grama panchayat
- Lack of regular communication between school and grama panchayat

Role of School Leader

- Maximise the continuity of communication with Grama panchayat
- Participating extracurricular activities
- Involving to identify issues and problems faced by students in the locality
- Skilfully negotiate on common interest programmes with grama panchayat
- Seek financial help for developing infrastructure facilities

4. Local NGOs



NGOs play a major role in bringing development of inclusive education

- * NGOs support teachers by providing learning materials
- * They conduct pre-service and in-service course to teachers.
- * Contributing funds materials for education purpose
- * Helps to develop the learning skills of school children.
- * Contribution in health and hygiene
- * Encouraging meritorious students in different events. * Vocational training to children
- * Provide inclusive education to children with learning disabilities and special needs.

Challenges to School Leader

Requires the involvement of all stakeholders to utilize the available opportunities.

Role of School Leader

- The Principal, as the school leader can exploit these opportunities through good team work
- List the active NGOs in the locality and keep maintaining a regular communication with the NGOs
- Highlighting the school programmes on various social platforms
- Involving community participants for educational development programs

5. VOLUNTEERS:



In schools volunteer roles might include:

- Contributing Funds
- Teaching support to under privileged
- Provide extra classes to students during non-school hours
- Governors
- Trustees
- Reading with pupils
- Sharing special skills (literacy, numeracy after school club, career guidance and counselling)
- Helping on school trips

- Volunteer classroom/school assistant
- Maintenance or improvement work around the school (gardening, painting.)

Challenges

- Lack of communication between school and volunteers
- Committed efforts to explore the opportunities

Role of School leader

The school leader should focus on the development of leadership skills in teachers who can exploit the opportunities among local communities

The principal should make them aware of the importance of education and serve in their capacities. Seek support for monitoring regular attendance of students and their retention in the long term.

6. Role Model



Role models inspire and teach by example. They are the individuals with social influence among community members .They demonstrate their commitment to a desired goal and are willing to invest the necessary time and effort to achieve goals.

Scope and Contribution

- Promoting the quality of education
- Promoting enrolments
- Educational equalities
- Developing career aspirations, educational goals etc.
- Supporting the school children

Challenges to a School Leader

Demand regular intervention and take much time

Role of School Leader

To win the favourable response and support of role models, the principal can conduct cultural and other events in school to honour them.

7. Teachers



Teachers truly are the backbone of society, models to children offer guidance and dedication and give young people the power of education. They are socially ideal personality who has a long term respect on children in particular and society at large.

Scope and contribution

- Creating and implementing new ideas
- Developing a more comprehensive approach to teaching which involves the whole community.
- Cultivating emotional and spiritual socio-cultural values in the educational process
- Enhance awareness level of community members
- Developing educational quality
- Making long term impact on children

Challenges

- Sense of indifference towards the community
- Can have selfishness

Role of School Leader

- School leaders need to highlight the significant role and power of mutual trust and its contribution in making job more meaningful and productive.
- Appreciate them wherever necessary
- Classes on the importance of community participation in school education.

8. Alumni



The Alumni associations provide services to educational institutions such as career services, access to library materials, educational amenities etc. With their experiences, the alumni associations motivate children in their study. They take efforts for school reputation and its development.

Scope and Contribution

- They widen the school network
- Link to better career exposure
- Provide educational opportunities
- Knowledge development
- Developing school culture
- Platform for raising funds to schools
- Effective mailing list management.

Challenges to school Leader

Discontinuity in communication

Role of School Leader

- Honouring the successful students
- Keeping a regular track of well placed alumni
- Regular communications with the leaders of alumni associations
- Inviting them to schools during the occasions of important days in school and involving them in such celebrations

9. Local Craft persons



Local craft persons help to develop appreciation of visual aesthetics and function as building blocks for the development of school children. The craft persons influence the children by sharing their art skills. They, not only contribute much to the development of co-curricular activities, but also can be given a vocational direction.

Scope and contribution

- Local craftsmen stimulate creativity and the imagination.
- Provide platforms to students to connect their education with the locally available vocations.
- They can supply labour and materials to school
- They can introduce basics of their profession and create interest in them.
- Providing skill instructions.

Challenges

Socio-economic and cultural barriers are blocking the involvement.

Insufficient communication on the part of the school leader

Role of School Leader

School leader must encourage such craftsmen and develop a sense of pride among them. They must be invited to school during the occasion of cultural activities and honour them.

May organise craft festival/mela

May conduct competitions for craftspersons, students and parents.

Conduct Field trips to the craft village.

10. Village Education Committee (VEC)



The Village Education Committees were visualised as a part of decentralised management structures envisaged under DPE. The role of VEC is to establish a link between the school and the community. They also take up the task of management at ensuring community participation.

Scope and Contribution

- They are responsible for school construction and maintenance
- Purchase of materials, school mapping, micro planning etc.
- Preparation of Village Education Plan
- School management and teacher performance

Challenges

Irregular attention and discontinuity in communication

Role of School Leader

The School leaders need to highlight the requirements of the school and make them aware of their involvement in school. Always keep a constant communication between school and VEC.

BARRIERS IN INVOKING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

(A) Poor means of communication:

Lack of coordination and proper communication among teachers and community members (SMC, PTA, Other NGSs). There are chances on the part of teachers to undermine the importance of meeting and giving timely information to PTA regarding various activities and meeting schedule of the school.

Principal should monitor personally and instruct the teachers about the significance of meeting. This will, definitely improve in attendance.

(B) Lack of awareness :

Most of the Community members are unaware about RTE and NEP. Due to their socio-economic background, they are not aware of the significance of such meetings and functioning.

The Principal should make them aware of the importance of their participation in such meetings by distributing pamphlets, contact them in person, through telephone etc.

(C) Cultural Barrier:

The cultural difference between faculty and community inhibits free flow of sharing views between teachers and community members. Principal must take a lead role to reduce these barriers. Some role models from community can also be motivated.

(D) Low interest of PTA/SMC members: Community apathy and illiteracy among community members are barriers of poor participation.

Members from poor socio economic background think it as a loss of time and consider that it has direct bearing on their daily earning. Parents do not have a sense of belongingness to the committee functioning.

Here, the principal, as the school leader needs to maintain a direct contact and convey the message of importance of participating such committee and thereby achieve inclusive development of their children.

(E) Poor School Leadership:

Most commonly, the attitude and approach of the school leader affects the community participation. If the leader is more democratic, vibrant and interactive, that will definitely reflect the community. The leader must be aware of the significance of community participation in schools.

(F) Limited Resources: Shortage of resources comes in the way of poor participation.

Local NGOs and other civil societies can play an important role by providing support through cash or in kind.

(G) Discriminatory beliefs and customs, gender discrimination, caste discrimination etc are prominent in some rural areas, which have unfavourable impact on quality of education. The school leader should take it as a responsibility to amend this belief system.

Lack of time, Misperceptions of parents' abilities time ad flexibility, language barriers, lack of transportation, lack of confidence about school matters, cultural norms, feel unwelcome at school etc on the part of parents etc are factors to be mentioned which stand in the way of poor community participation

WHAT SCHOOL CAN DO

- Make a regular contact with parents early in the school year
- Communicate constantly with parents about their childrens performances
- Participate in home visits.
- Share the achievements and facilities available in school at various platforms.
- Work with parents to make a realistic weekly study schedule.
- Arrange time to time parents' meeting.
- Bring school on social medias like facebook, instagram, twitter etc. and share the activities on it.
- Conduct seminars, awareness classes and counselling classes for parents and other community members.

- Create a YouTube channel for school.
- Make strict schedule on uniform/outlook of students to attract community.
- Advertise about the results, admission and activities and programs of the school.

CASE STUDY - 1

Government Higher Secondary School, Kottayi, is located in a village, at Kuzhalmannam block panchayat in Palakkad district. Most of the children are hailing from families of poor agricultural labourers. Poor socio-economic background and low literacy rate is one of the main barriers for higher education. Due to the low rate of literacy among parents, most of the students are neither able to make use of opportunities available in school nor able to utilize their full potential. This was a great challenge as far as the school is concerned. To overcome this barrier, team of Teachers under the leadership of the school Principal decided to conduct special coaching classes for selected students who were irregular in their studies, after the school hours. And night classes were also arranged for boy students at school. Mr. Sajan paul, who resides nearby school took initiatives for this night classes with Dr. Sreedaran, the staff secretary. These classes are under the supervision of PTA executive committee. Students are given refreshments using the fund allotted by District panchayat. And ward members of the Kottayi panchayat helped a lot to bring students to school in the evening and back at their home at night. All these combine efforts helped to increase the exam results. Both parents and teachers were happy in improved results.

Activity 1

Identify the students who need special attention

Activity 2

Identify the problems in the school and find the remedies in collaboration with community members.

CASE STUDY - 2

Most of the children in GHSS Kottayi, Palakkad district in Kerala are coming from the families of poor economic background. Parents are agricultural labourers and daily wage earners. During covid-19 pandemic when schools had closed, education has changed dramatically with the distinctive rise of e-learning. Teaching-learning is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Most of the parents are not affordable to arrange smart phones for their children to facilitate on- line classes. In these circumstances, the school Principal took great effort to arrange smart phones for the students seeking the help of Alumni associations. The Secretary of the alumni association, with his team visited the school and offered 80 smart phones for the students. They distributed the phones in a function conducted in school premise. Also the principal took initiatives to arrange on-line learning tool from business persons, charitable trusts, Libraries, and well-wishers from abroad. These collaborative efforts helped a lot in on line classes and thereby to mitigate the learning gap.

Activity 1

Make a list of such organisations in your locality.

Activity 2

Find the solutions for the problems facing school children with creative use of community participation

CASE STUDY - 3

One day, when received a phone call from a mother of a student, talked and cried. By consoling her, teacher enquired, about the reason for her worry. She replied that her family is in a bankrupt and in the very next day she has to leave her home with her two adolescent girls. She said that she has taken loan from a nationalised bank, a few years ago and unable to repay it due to severe financial problems. Her husband is a patient bedridden; two girls are students and find no way to repay the loan amount. As she told that nobody is there to help her and her family is on the brink of suicide. They were given warning time by the bank and attempted bank seizure. The school principal sent two teachers along with MPTA president to her home and studied the

situation. Immediately, with the help of ward member from that panchayat, who is a very influential social member, they explained the ill effects of the issue before the bank manager and requested to give some more time to arrange the loan amount, The school principal took initiative and arranged some cash with the collaborative effort of teachers, PTA, MPTA and SMC members and helped her family, then arranged legal help for the postponement of bank seizure. Because of the bank seizure she is going to lose her newly built home. The sudden action of the teachers and MPTA solved the problem.

Activity 1

Approach the social influential members of community and communicate them about the issues of school children, if any, and involving them to find solution.

Activity 2

Understand the problems faced by school children at home which affects their studies

CASE STUDY 4

Community participation is a reciprocal relation between the school and the community, Of course, offered a helping hand to the community. A pottery making person who has socially and economically poor background was given a financial help to purchase a wheel chair by the school staff, students, and PTA. As the situation of the person concerned was pity that his leg was cut due to an illness affected in his younger age and he is unable to walk. With the combined effort of the community members, students and staff collected some cash and handed over to the family. This would be a great help to him and his family.

Activity 1

Identify the problems of society nearby the school locality and offer a helping hand.

Conclusion:

With regards to schools, Community Participation is all about the involvement of the local community in school management affairs. It is an important tool for the growth and development of the student. School is a part of community and community supports school to give quality education to every student for the development of the society. It is a well established fact that Community involvement is the thread to inclusive education.

SUGGESTED READINGS

International journal of science

<https://www.ijsr.net/> archive. pdf

University practiceconnect.azimpremiuniverersty.eGysnkish

<http://eavankosh.ac.in>

Times of India

timesofindia.ibdiatimes.com

Prepared by:

KRISHNALEELA.V. K
PRINCIPAL
GHSS KOTTAYI - 9096
PALAKKAD
KERALA.



Mrs. Krishnaleela V.K is the Principal in GHSS Kottayi, Palakkad dt, Kerala.

Service: 25 years

Service of Principal: 6 years

Worked as Dist. Resource Group Economics – 4 Years

Qualification: MA Economics

M. Sc. Applied Psychology

B Ed

SET