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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR UNIVERSALISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The goal of achieving universal primary education has been on the international agenda since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which affirmed, in 1948, that elementary education was to be made free and compulsory for all children in all nations.

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All noted that the generally poor quality of education needed to be improved and recommended that education be made both universally available and more relevant. The Declaration also identified quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. While the notion of quality was not fully developed, it was recognized that expanding access alone would not be sufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society. Emphasis was accordingly placed on assuring an increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their school environment and administrative programs and established an agenda for achieving enrolment, retention and achievement for quality education.

KEYWORDS: *primary education, schools, teachers, parents*

Objectives are:

to develop curriculum and learning materials

to create and nourish community-school partnerships

to realize democracy

to improve home environment

to ensure sustainability:

to increase accountability:

to improve education

to identify and integrate resource

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships i.e. government and non-governmental

organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families at all levels will be necessary. Genuine partnerships contribute to the planning, implementing, managing and evaluating of basic education programs. When we speak of 'an expanded vision and a renewed commitment', partnerships are at the heart of it.

Communities and society must support parents and families in upbringing, socializing, and educating their children. Schools are institutions that can prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate, by equipping them with skills important in society. Education takes place most efficiently and effectively when these different groups of people collaborate.

Recent interest in community participation in formal education has come from two distinct sources: Neo-liberal imperatives for more efficient use of financial and material resources; and increased political advocacy for greater community 'ownership' and involvement in decision-making

(Rose, 2003; Pryor, 2005). However, greater community involvement has frequently been a top-down imposition and not a response to demands from communities for greater involvement. In various national contexts many communities consider this kind of participation as an additional burden on the already considerable demands on their time and resources (Watt, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Rose, 2003), whereas school and local government officials often ascribe what they perceive to be poor or non-involvement by parents to lack of interest or lack of formal education (Probe, 1999; Vasavi, 2003). The key arguments made in the literature reviewed in favour of community participation are summarized as: (i) Mobilization of additional resources for schooling (through cost-sharing), (ii) Increased ownership (e.g. through resource allocation and decision-making), (iii) Increased accountability of schools, (iv) Increased efficiency in schools (v) Increased responsiveness of schools to local needs, (vi) Increased choice in schooling, (vii) Better pupil attendance (through increased parental involvement) and achievement, (viii) Greater teacher professionalism, (ix) Improved educational quality (through increased accountability and extra resources), (x) Improved democratization and social cohesion within the community, (xi) Acquisition of new skills in the community through participation in school management/governance and (xii) Means of implementing educational decentralization.

EDUCATION TO FACE THE CHANGING WORLD

Particularly after the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, an increasing number of countries have attempted to reach the goal of providing education for all. It is found that the resources and capacities like learning materials as well as human resources are limited everywhere, particularly in developing countries. Although some communities have historically been involved in their children's education, it hasn't been fully recognized that communities themselves have resources to contribute to education, and they can be resources by providing local knowledge for their children. Involving parents, families, and communities in the process of research and data collection can reveal to them factors that contribute to lower enrollment and attendance, and poor academic performance in their schools. In places where teacher absenteeism and poor performance are critical issues, parents can be part of the system of monitoring and supervising teachers, ensuring that teachers arrive at classrooms on time and perform effectively in the classrooms. Communities can help identify and address factors that contribute to educational problems, such as low participation and poor academic performance. The

work was carried out in order to understand why girls do not attend schools, to mobilize communities around these problems, and to assist them in organizing their own solutions (World Bank 1995a).

Community participation can contribute to promoting girls' education (UNICEF, 1992). Through participating in school activities and frequently communicating with teachers, parents and communities can learn that girls' education contributes to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as increased economic productivity, improved family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates, and reduced child mortality rates. Involving parents and communities in discussions as part of school activities also helps to identify factors that prevent girls from schooling. Parents are encouraged to express their concern and reasons why they are not sending their daughters to school and community members can convince them to send their girls to schools.

Community members closer to schools can serve, including: (a) minimizing discontinuities between schools and communities, and between schools and families; (b) minimizing conflicts between schools and communities, schools and families, teachers and parents, and what is taught in school and what is taught at home; (c) making easy transition of pupils going from home to school; (d) preparing pupils to engage in learning experiences; and (e) minimizing cultural shock of new entrants to schooling (Cariño and Valismo, 1994). Parental involvement in education, particularly in school governance, is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society which funds them. This has been witnessed in some places such as England and Wales, Canada and the United States.

A World Bank study (1997) which analyzed primary education in India discovered that families who are involved become more willing to cooperate with schools in attempts to improve children's learning and parents can help their children with homework, and make sure that children are physically ready to learn at schools.

Community participation in education can also be a powerful incentive for teachers. Teachers' absenteeism and lack of punctuality are monitored and supervised for their attendance and performance by communities; they tend to be more aware of what they do. Feedback from parents and the community about their teaching performance can be a strong tool to motivate teachers, if schools are also collaborative.

The goal of any kind of activity that attempts to involve community and families/parents in education is to improve the educational delivery so that more children learn better and are well prepared to face the changing world.

SUGGESTIVE GUIDELINES

- In general, the school environment likes school building, clean campus, playground, boundary wall, garden, drinking water facility, and toilets, although need improvement and are to be maintained. An activity room is important in the school. There are significantly good provisions for classroom environment such as room for each class, quotations on the walls, and light and ventilations in the classrooms. Clean classrooms, sitting facilities, and teaching aids are to be supervised by the community members.

- The teaching-learning processes of the schools are appreciably maintained with the markers; lesson scheme, lesson plan, class evaluation, result feedback, progress card, and guardian appraisal and need some attention for development of use of more audio-visual aids, students' better participation in classroom activities and competitive spirit among the students' needs to be taken about the implementation of government programs and preparation of study aids by the community groups.

- There is also appreciable community involvement in the activities of the schools like committee meeting, maintenance of school building, and arrangements for midday meals, parent meetings and inspection of academic activities are to be regulated.

- About teachers' quality and efficiency, markers like teachers' training participation, regular school attendance, teachers' efficiency in local language, and Headmasters' classroom inspection have yielded high positive results.

- The members demonstrate appreciable interest, for other activities they demonstrate low to least interest. Relating to school environment, the members showed some interest in sanitation and cleaning and beautification of the campus. However, they showed very limited interest about classroom furnishing, child-friendly school atmosphere, and furnishing of students' activity room.

- Relating to VEC members' have to supervise the study activities, and parent contact, preparation of study aids, knowledge about teaching-learning practices, and knowledge of development programs and the administrative function i.e. administrative control, implementation of government programs, knowledge of school supervision, and management of school funds excepting for the developmental planning of the schools.

- One of the major reasons for low representation of general caste children in primary schools is the competing private English Medium Schools which necessarily point to the limitations of the government schools. The private schools maintain

better school and classroom environment and keep persuasive contacts for which parents prefer to send their children to those schools. However, government schools have usually more efficient and experienced teachers who should make sustained and pervasive efforts to influence the parents to send their children to government schools. Village committee members and other learned people of the locality should also take efforts in this regard.

- The Mother Teacher Association (MTA) meeting should be arranged to make the involvement of the female members of the family to check the dropouts basically of girl children as well as from the both category. So the MTA meeting should be regular at least once in a month or more than that is better. Practically there is a need of basic improvement of sanitation facilities of the girls toilets in maximum schools, so the involvement of MTA members mobilize the school administration in order to make it clean and hygienic for the girls section which improves the rate of retention of the girl students up to the end of the study of the school. Formation of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) giving them the responsibility of school management and respective supervision must be taken by the VEC members in different intervals to look after this.

- Due to attaining puberty, mostly girls are restricted from outside movements and boys are asked to join the family and outside workforce, which is the most important reason for dropout of girls. This problem can be addressed by providing nearby schools around every village, and by preventing all forms of child labor. Further, awareness programs are also more important which should be largely taken up by the teachers, VEC members, influential publics and social organizations.

- The positive attitude of the village education committee members makes an involvement for the growth of the infrastructural development of the school as well as the academic improvement of the students and relatively the activities make the goal qualitative. Co-operation of VEC members with the school staff and the guardians also improves the rapport among the hike of enrolment percentage as well as the retention as a whole reduces the dropouts. Village education committee members have to make emphasis on the regularity of students as well as the teachers to regulate the elementary areas.

- The deficiencies in sports activities, and library books arising from the lack of sufficient developmental funds. The problem can be addressed by the district administration by providing funds earmarked for these purposes and ensuring the proper use of the funds.

- The teachers need to be properly trained in order to manage the classroom environment,

excepting adequate use of audio-visual aids, teacher-student interaction, nurturing competitive spirit among students and the students and teachers involvement in the beautification of school environment is also improve the creativity for the eco-friendship emotions. The role performance of VEC members are to supervise, guide and involvement in different school activities.

- Teachers also need to be trained about using different audio-visual aids while teaching in the classroom. In teaching learning situation the use of teaching learning materials is a must to make the class room situation interesting and it also creates the engagement the students even after schooling on making teaching learning aids. In VEC meetings the responsibilities must have to be fixed on the headmaster and teachers to use the teaching aids in the class room situation and make it child centered and activity centered in which the total involvement of the students gradually improves.

- Preparation of lesson diary and lesson plan makes the teachers involvement in the class-wise study area which is regularly supervised by the respective authorities including VEC members as to regulate the process perfect and activity based. Definitely the teachers will have to get ready very before, while entering into the class. In various schools there may be some difficulties but this lesson diary and lesson planning will seriously overcome the problematic situations like room shortage or less staff etc. but this activity improves if year wise long term practices follows. The course coverage in a systematic and regular manner and also the curricular improvement occurs in a cumulative manner.

- Along with curricular activities the interest must have to be created for the co-curricular areas and the creative activities have to be developed in order to inculcate the intrinsic efficiency of the students. The teacher's involvement, guidance and supervision will create a concrete structure in the short term memory of the students which gradually reflected in their practical life. So this must be supervised by the VEC members. In classroom situation one who stood first or in any rank of ten in any creative activities must be reflected on the hard board or on the result board as to make the enthusiasm among all the students of the class and this competitive spirit must have to be created by the teachers in the class room and teachers have to improve different literary competitions among the students.

- Teachers must have to teach as per the level of intelligence of the students and if essential the tutorial classes may be taken to make up the difficulties, clarify the doubts and question answer discussion which improves the regular involvement

of the students in the classroom situation. Teacher's role also to co-operate the students activities and guide to improve the efficiency and no corporal punishment will be allowed during studentship period as a result the students will not discouraged and get the direct reinforcement and encouragement when and where needs. The teacher has to provide the up to date knowledge in a refined manner tactfully to grasp and to make them fit to face different problems. Some of the performances like cleanliness, regularity in attendance, preparation and collection teaching aids and involvements in different activities like beautification of school campus etc. in the area of both curricular and co-curricular have to be evaluated in a cumulative manner by the teachers without the knowledge of the students recorded and also displayed regularly, the VEC members have to supervise and guide where ever essential or to avoid the negligence's if arises. The VEC members are to motivate the community to donate cash, kind, labour for the total development of the school including construction of all kinds of civil works like building construction, repair and maintenance of classrooms etc. The VEC members have to receive all grants given to the schools and maintained their cash books and also takes the necessary resolutions in its meetings before utilizing the grants. Regular training should be given on accounts keeping.

- The VEC members require necessary orientation and refresher programs to know the

responsibilities and community ownership of schools towards school development i.e. regular monitoring of enrollment, attendance, retention and improvement of academic achievement of children .The VECs invariably meet once in a month and take resolution relating to school management, grant utilization, enrollment of out of school children, civil works etc. They have contributed significantly to the development of school especially relating to construction of building, additional classrooms and toilets, enrollment and retention of children, utilization of school grants etc. general campaign, children fair to generate community awareness towards elementary education and management.

- One of the VEC members will have to remain present in each of the working day and the

report will be prepared daily and reported to the president of the VEC and to the higher authority. Daily reports will have to thoroughly analyze in the presence of some of the student guardians in the month ended meeting and unanimously passed a blue print for the coming month program. The total meeting will be recorded by the close circuit camera and will be communicated along with the report to the state and district level higher authorities. The

allowances to be paid by the management or the government to the supervising VEC member minimum not less than the daily wage in order to motivate and create interest towards providing education and to extract intrinsic efficiency from the teachers towards all-round development of the students.

The VEC members must have to co-operate the teachers to perform and organize different situations, school functions, and literary competitions etc. The all-round i.e. physical, social, moral, intellectual, spiritual development of student's activities, teacher's performance must have to be reflected in the VEC meetings. VEC members constitute a significant force in the development of quality education in primary schools. Their role perception as well as performance is actually important in order to modify the old practices and accept the new thoughts.

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