A Study on Global School Education and Community Involvement in Haryana

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Abstract

Post-Jomtien, one of the most visible elements of all global educational development programmes is the incorporation of community members into school education administration. In keeping with this tendency, India has implemented several initiatives, such as LokJumbish, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, etc., that give local communities a central role in the administration of schools. International organisations like UNICEF and the World Bank have contributed significantly to the success of all of these programmes. School mapping, social accountability, curriculum design, resource mobilisation, etc. have all been delegated to local stakeholders via these community involvement programmes, which see the community as a legitimate grass-roots institution. However, these initiatives have not adapted the universal concept of community engagement to the specifics of the Indian context. These initiatives severely weaken the local identity of the communities that these institutions serve. Due to the fact that public schools in India primarily serve the poor and underprivileged, the local community's educational resources have remained severely constrained. Further, there are still problems with the social gap between teachers and other stakeholders, as well as caste and gender differences. Using qualitative data gleaned from a primary field survey based on semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders in a hamlet in Haryana, India, this research seeks to probe these worries. The research warns that we run the risk of missing the mark on our present idealisation of community engagement if we don't take on the social and local ethos of a particular place. Community involvement as a strong sustainable grass-roots structure in successful school administration is an admirable aspiration, but it is now unlikely to bring about the necessary reforms due to resource constraints.

Keywords:- *Education, School, Globalization, Community Involvement.*

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a noticeable uptick in the prevalence of community involvement in the administration of schools worldwide in the wake of the Jometian period. In keeping with this pattern, India has implemented a number of World Bank-funded initiatives aimed at empowering local communities to take an active role in managing their schools. These initiatives include the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the SarvaShikshaAbhiyaan (SSA). These initiatives, particularly DPEP, were the catalyst for the worldwide expansion of the idea of parental involvement in their children's education. The purpose of this research is to examine the notion of community engagement in school education from both a global and a domestic perspective. If community engagement is so important on a global scale, how does it vary from how communities work on a more micro level? These initiatives have not adequately adapted the international concept of community engagement to the specifics of the Indian context. Public schools do a terrible job of preserving the unique identity of each community they serve. This article examines these contrasting equations from several angles, including but not limited to: caste, gender, the relative proximity of the teacher's community to the student population, etc.

The research paper is split up into four parts. The first portion of this paper provides context for the research, while the second discusses the genesis of outside influence on Indian education. In the third section, we examine the meaning of community involvement in an Indian setting. Findings from the field survey are used to corroborate the theoretical worry stated in the third section. The last chapter summarises the findings.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In 1996, Haryana launched the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in the four districts of Hisar, Kaithal, Jind, and Sirsa where the literacy gap was found to be the largest. VECs (Village Education Committee) were formed under various DPEP laws with the aim of increasing parental and community involvement in their children's formal education. Communities in these areas of Haryana were the first to actively implement the idea of community involvement in school education. According to the criteria used to

choose these areas, Jind was the most underdeveloped. Given this, the city of Jind is a perfect fit for the research. The government report and State School Board reports were used to determine that Dhamtan Sahib should be chosen as the model village. The Board of School Education in Haryana ranked this area as the best in the province in terms of academic excellence in 2005–2006. In 2006, the state administration designated the town as "an ideal community" (Haryana Administrative Report, 2006–2007). For the sake of consistency with the macro characteristics of the micro studies, only public schools were included in the analyses.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this case study, we employed a combination of different research techniques. A survey, in-depth interviews, and a review of relevant documents served as the basis for the study. There was a lot of inferring done from the transcribed answers to open-ended questions and interviews. Interviewees included the village's headman (Sarpanch), former VEC presidents and secretaries, female and SC (Scheduled Castes) VEC members, school instructors, and members of newly formed SMCs (School Management Committees). Records and archival materials from academic institutions and government agencies were also scoured for further details. Two rounds of data collection were conducted for this investigation. The initial data for this research was acquired in 2007–2008, back when only VECs were active, when the project was a part of my MPhil dissertation. In 2011, data collection was repeated to capture the most recent situation. This time, school-based committees took the role of VECs. The newly established School Management Committees (SMCs) are a result of the Right to Education Act of 2010.

4. GLOBALIZATION AND INDIAN SCHOOL EDUCATION

"Globalization is the most general element of the historical period education will encounter in this century," as stated by Ruperez. In the field of education, globalisation may be seen as "the process through which specific ideas, images, and practises of teaching, learning, and schooling are brought about, mutually interact, and impact national educational systems." As a result of this wave of globalisation, educational policies in many nations throughout the globe, including India, are embroiled in a series of educational reforms that call for significant changes in the planning and administration of education. First, let's review the short history of globalisation in education before we look for its consequences in India's educational system.

After the Jometian summit, the international community's attempts to provide a good "Education for All" were in the spotlight. In March of 1990, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) joined forces with the World Bank to host the Education for All (EFA) Conference in Jomtien, Thailand. The meeting produced a statement in which both governments of developing countries and donor organisations pledged to provide children everywhere with access to elementary school by the year 2000. The economic downturn also led to less money being spent on education generally. Because of this, an opening presented itself when the World Bank requested that poor nations use their loans to fund basic necessities like health care and elementary education. India has a long history of rejecting World Bank loans for elementary education before to the 1980s. When it comes to the Indian schooling system, DPEP was the first significant instance of a nexus between foreign assistance and the beginning of global effect. Kumar argues that "although programme (DPEP) is undoubtedly a result of the post-Jomtien period," the connection between DPEP and Jomtien is hardly mentioned in official programme documentation. According to Kumar, even before DPEP, there were smaller projects in various parts of India: "In India, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Bihar Education Project, the Lok Jumbish Programme, Rajasthan, and the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Programme, ushered in with the help of UNICEF, SIDA, and ODA, represented the "Education for All" ethos. The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Programme, initiated as a pilot project in the state's 10 districts with the lowest female enrollment, was another step India took to strengthen its ties with the World Bank in the realm of basic education. The DPEP was a high point and solidified this partnership.

The SarvaShikshaAbhiyaan (SSA) (Education for All) programme followed DPEP as a key initiative that brought international educational concepts to India. Many innovative changes have been introduced to the Indian schooling system as a result of all these programmes, especially DPEP and SSA for example:

- The deep manifesto was the first national-level document where government concern shifted from elementary education to primary education;
- The concept of para teacher was inaugurated in indian schools on a large scale;
- Decentralization of educational administration was heavily emphasized as never before;
- A reliance on community participation in improving educational management at grass root level.

The growth of global impact on the local front is accompanied by, or amplifies, the aforementioned key themes. These shifts have expanded the scope of education as a whole by highlighting the necessity for systemic changes, particularly in the areas of decentralisation and localization of educational administration. The educational changes necessary to optimise the educational relevance to local development and to draw in community support and resources, local partnership and cooperation in learning, teaching, and research, are all made more feasible by globalization's localization. In light of this, the purpose of this article is to investigate, at the grassroots level, how the most amazing worldwide trend—"community engagement in school education"—actually operates. The study aims to draw attention to the discrepancy between idealised conceptions of community involvement and its actual application in the real world.

5. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL EDUCATION: IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

In the DPEP, the first-time role of community participation was emphasized in providing quality school education. To share Kumar's (2001: 564) views,

> …the community has a central presence in the discourse of DPEP. The guidelines booklet says that the DPEP strategy consists of 'stressing the participatory processes whereby the local community facilitates participation, achievement and school effectiveness…. [T]he usage of term community by DPEP technically implies 'institutions' like Village Education Committee (VEC), Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Mothers Teacher Associations (MTA), Mahila Mandals, etc. Of these, The VEC has been envisaged as a key institution for community mobilisation, participation and empowerment under DPEP.

In addition, the Indian government's flagship initiative, Sarva Shikhsa Abhiyaan (SSA), places a heavy emphasis on community involvement in order to provide high-quality primary school education. The effectiveness of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan will rely on the quality of the community-based planning process, as outlined in the framework for SSA implementations. These community participation programmes have delegated important responsibilities for school management to local stakeholders, such as school mapping, social accountability, curriculum design, resource mobilisation, infrastructure survey, and constitution of School Development Plans, etc., in recognition of the community as a strong grass-roots institution. As a result, the concept of community engagement has main significance on pedagogical discourse in these programmes launched in response to global forces.

In India, the Gandhian doctrine has had a greater impact on the meaning of community. Gandhi believed that society as a whole, and the village community in particular, functioned better when everyone pulled together to meet their common needs and advance their shared objectives. After gaining independence, these concepts remained at the core of community development initiatives and programmes. But other academics have uncovered flaws in this theory. "The village as "imagined community" (as harmonious and egalitarian)... never became a reality and in fact reinforces the division and hierarchy around which the village were traditionally organised," writes Vasavi (2008). He concludes that the concept of community on which Indian policy and programmes of community development/decentralization are based has overlooked the most realistic portrayal of village communities, as sites of caste-based conflict, tension, and exclusion. To deny the diversity of India's people is to misunderstand the meaning of the word "community" in this country. Keep in mind the caste and gender issues that exist. If these problems are not addressed strategically, they may render community involvement itself useless. Communities, like schools, are made up of individuals with varying goals and requirements that must be taken into account.

The contemporary phenomena of community mobilisation are prompted by external factors. It's unusual to find a case of a community taking the initiative on its own, especially in the realm of basic education. The initial germ for mobilisation is always something from the outside, whether it be money or ideas. The majority of the time, this is part of a larger enterprise that has its origins elsewhere, maybe even in India. For the most part, there is money from somewhere other than the project itself. Ideological pressure from outside may cause people to place less emphasis on the community's actual needs and more on producing a superficial "echo effect." Less emphasis is placed on identifying community features that are unique to a certain location and developing strategies to address those needs. It becomes very relevant to quote Kumar (2001: 564) here:

> "… we need to ask whether community is a discovery or an invention …. [H]ad it been a discovery, its own powers or life forces would have been recognised. Instead, we find that the DPEP presents the community itself as an instrument to be first devised and than sharpened for a given purpose. Thus

invented community however, does not have the freedom of choice to either demand what it actually desires or not demand primary education as the invention is bound by a predestined purpose."

The most underprivileged members of society are mostly represented in public schools. When we talk of community involvement in education, we usually imply the involvement of these underrepresented groups. However, local community capability was still relatively low in terms of educational management. Capacity development for stakeholders has long been a focus of official policy. While SSA is based on the idea that communities may make their own plans, the SSA framework emphasised the need of acknowledging the massive need to build up community capabilities. Maintains that educational planners need further training to meet the challenges of globalisation, maintain a country-led relationship with international bodies, and support and steer the decentralisation process. There is a wide range of general and analytical, technical and specialised, technical and social competence they will need to gain. While agreeing with these worries, argues that "under decentralisation, new stakeholders in the local management units become crucial and they need to acquire new skills" and that "it is desirable that decentralisation be accompanied by a long-term strategy assisting local officials to develop the skills they need." This is especially true in the Indian context, where the parent stakeholders belong to the most marginalised sections of society, making the task of capacity building all the more important. In spite of this, it had been mostly disregarded. Afterward, we'll go into the current state of capacity-building initiatives on the ground.

Facilitating communication and relationship building between educators and community members is a key goal of community engagement. There is no denying the importance of teachers as facilitators and boosters of student engagement in community activities. Cooperative, two-way relationships between schools and their surrounding communities are key factors in producing successful academic outcomes for students. Participatory approaches to the student-teacher interaction have traditionally framed community involvement in terms of monitoring instructors' adherence to strict attendance policies. According to Raina, everyone seems to agree that the community has a responsibility to exert pressure on the helpless and generally overworked teachers to perform and check their absenteeism, as if this were the primary problem in public schooling, which would entail a supervisory role for the local committee. However, educators often probe the knowledge of rural residents who lack formal education. Teachers are resentful when they believe communities lack the professional skills and insights necessary to make appropriate interventions, as stated by Vasavi (cited in Bray, 2001: 26): "The teachers question not only the capacity of village leaders to perform functions related to educational matters but also the desirability of making teachers accountable to them." According to the PROBE Team study (1999), teachers continue to have a social status that is distinct from that of other members of the rural community in terms of class, caste, and gender. From a socioeconomic stratification point of view, government school teachers nearly always come from the wealthier parts of rural community due to their higher pay and better working conditions. These theoretical issues will be explained using a case study on parental involvement in K-12 schooling.

6. GLIMPSES FROM THE GROUND: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

In order to properly examine the community involvement scenario, it is important to first examine the village's sociological make-up. According to data collected to create a sociological profile of the area, around 17% of residents identify as belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) group. Visible residential segregation indicates the social and economic differences across the settlements. Taking a stroll around the various homes provides the idea that there is a one-to-one relationship between a person's financial and social standing in the hamlet. Upper-caste homes tend to have more outward indicators of wealth, such as cement construction, television antennae, livestock, a local market, and an overall sense of contentment. Even while these conveniences are increasingly present in SC neighbourhoods, they remain less common than in UC enclaves. Given that the Jaat group is statistically and socially the largest upper caste, it seems that the majority of the decision-making authority lies with them. Most often, a member of this community will be elected to serve as Sarpanch. At now, a Jaat lady serves as Sarpanch. According to conversations with the Sarpanch and other villagers, the woman's official representation is simply on paper, while her husband exercises actual authority. In terms of economic status, the elderly landowners and government employees all reside in villages that do not belong to the SC category.

7. GENDER PERSPECTIVE

It's crucial to note that Haryana is a patriarchal culture if we're considering gender roles. It was found in the 2011 census that Haryana had a sex ratio of 879, which was lower than the national average (943). "Gender oppression is prevalent in all socioeconomic sections of Haryana," according to a report. "Female foeticide, domestic violence, dowry deaths and harassment, caste based oppressions, and cultural restrictions on women's

access to educational and health opportunities are some of the well documented and commented aspects of gender oppression." Despite this, the government has taken many affirmative actions, including ensuring that women make up 33 percent of the membership of panchyats. Girls are not just welcome, but actively encouraged, to serve on VECs and SMCs. The status of women, however, has not improved as a result of these measures promoting diversity in the media. Marie Eve Bondroite discovered less gender parity in educational opportunities for men and women in Haryana than in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh. It has been noted that many Haryana moms do not know how much their children's educations cost, and that they regard this to be none of their concern.

For the most part, males are the only ones who actively participate in communal activities. Female VEC members are noticeably underrepresented during meetings, according to attendance records. The 'Veil System' is another example of patriarchal norms and practises that might contribute to the problem of 'no female involvement.' Veiling is a common practise in modern culture. Women often cover their faces while in the presence of male adults. The women of the village don't dare disobey the rules of propriety when it comes to the village elders, and that's all because of the veil. They can't feel safe enough in public to break away from these conservative societal norms. This attitude of men hogging common areas and women being too modest is fostered in the classroom. It was discovered that even at the co-ed school, there were separate spaces set up for males and girls inside the same classroom. Teachers needing to arrange a combined class must first get the green light from school administration. The villagers' panchyats gave the order, thus it was carried out. When people are separated into different areas depending on their gender, women don't feel safe in mixed crowds. The data from the field shows that when given the chance, women can make significant contributions to addressing the educational challenges faced by their communities. When parents were asked to create an SMC, it was discovered that in all of the villages, the majority of those who showed up were moms. The head of one of the schools included in the survey said that whenever they call the parents of any kid, normally women come to the school. They make an effort to hear the instructor out and get to the bottom of her problems despite their differences in social status. It was shown that mothers were more likely to be actively involved in making sure their kid went to school regularly if the mother herself did so. This possible place for women requires attention. Despite the social and cultural hurdles, it has been shown that mothers are more likely to visit their daughters' schools or participate in parent-teacher conferences when they are expected to interact with a female educator or when their daughters attend a school specifically for girls. It's still unusual for men and women to talk to one other.

8.   CASTE PERSPECTIVE

Caste is another social barrier that prevents people from fully engaging in society. Situated in VECs and SMCs alongside women's representatives are SC representatives. Similarly, their involvement is still based on cultural and societal norms that emphasise hierarchy. Conflicts between the high and lower classes in the community often seep into the educational environment. To provide an example from the field, one of the surveyed schools hired someone from a lower caste to prepare the midday meal. The majority of kids at the school are from lower castes, however some parents from higher castes were offended by the appointment. While the lower-caste chef was there, the handful of upper-caste youngsters refused to eat. A new, upper-caste chef was hired to replace the previous one. This demonstrates the dominance of the ruling class. Since the SMCs and VECs were unable to stop these acts despite the presence of SC representatives, it's clear that they had a detrimental impact on the participative process as a whole.

Another anecdote illustrates the interaction between a teacher from a higher social class and a pupil from a lower social class, highlighting the existence of such divides. In most classrooms, the instructor relies on the pupils to get water throughout the day. When I visited this school to conduct a survey, the teacher brought me a glass of water personally. When I questioned her why she hadn't requested a student to do so, she gave me an answer that seemed to be tinged with caste prejudice. She said that since just two upper-caste students were there that day, she felt it was unacceptable to let the lowly caste kids use the water. These stratifications in the classroom are reflective of larger socioeconomic divisions in society. As a rule, instructors from higher social classes don't see the value in these pupils' education.

9.   TEACHER–COMMUNITY LINKAGES

Involving parents and other stakeholders in school improvement requires connecting the teaching community with them. There have been many attempts to develop processes and institutions to stimulate community engagement, but little success has been achieved. Community involvement may be improved or hindered depending on how school officials see the stakeholders and their socioeconomic status. These institutions primarily aid the most disadvantaged members of society (both in terms of caste and class). Teachers working

for the government have been interviewed, and their responses reflect a widespread belief that the locals are not interested in education. The parents are illiterate, thus they are unable to help their children in school. For many of these households, the problem of having first-generation college students remains a significant obstacle. The parents are accused of not caring whether or not their kid has accomplished their homework. No one in these areas has ever been to school before. Teachers say that the only thing that gets parents excited is financial aid in the form of scholarships, free uniforms, books, and no fees. Parents reportedly only come to the school when there is a holdup in the distribution of fellowship. One educator explained that because the parents of these students were daily wage workers, "they treat government school as free crèches where their children are safe for the whole day with free mid day meal." Generally speaking, it was found that the teachers looked down on the parents because they didn't think they were interested in their children's education. It should be emphasised that most of the comments made by the educators focused on the students' caste. The educators' view on the value of community involvement was summed up by the question, "What participation these people can provide?" If they could refrain from disrupting classrooms and other school activities, it would be very helpful. Since most parents are illiterate, they have no idea how their children's schools really work. The school administration did not see any advantage in having the community come into the school on a regular basis because of the disruption their presence would cause to the normal operation of the school. Teachers' assessments and stances on communities' social backwardness reflect the widespread biases towards these groups. The question we asked ourselves was, how far can we encourage individual teachers to act for change when the educational system itself is not suited for it? What teachers think and how they respond are both part of the social processes that shape our society. In this setting, Lipman discovered that until changes are made on both the individual and social levels, participatory school restructuring would not be able to improve the educational opportunities for underprivileged kids. She says that the status quo in classrooms and local power structures should be questioned. State-run educational institutions are not safe spaces where cultural capital is acknowledged or cherished. The teacher's role in negotiating or not negotiating with students of varying cultural capital is influenced by the teacher's own cultural capital, which in turn is influenced by the students' own cultural capital.

10. CONCLUSION

There are important problems about the nature and extent of community involvement in schools that are brought up by the examination of how community participation works.

In the future, it would be ideal for community engagement to play a key role as a strong, robust grass-roots structure in successful school administration. However, given the current constraints, this is unlikely to bring about the necessary adjustments. Developing tools for enacting this universal idea inside particular contexts is what's needed now. Taking ideas and methods from elsewhere is unlikely to succeed in India because of the country's unique history and culture. Working with local communities and in Indian educational institutions would provide invaluable professional experience and insight. The system's ability to make choices and carry them out, as well as its relationship to society, are heavily influenced by the architecture and procedures of the foundational institutions. The odds of successful action are all but ruined when local institutions are understaffed, underequipped, and run by employees who are inadequately educated and without sufficient authority. According to Sharma and Ramachandran (2009: 316), improving the system's responsiveness to the community is a top priority.

A two-pronged strategy is necessary for increased responsiveness. A genuine strengthening of community-school linkages would be possible when the internal dynamic of the system allows for community-based institutions and local governments to become genuine forms for the articulation of community concerns. First, teachers and head masters need to be trained to establish relationships and work with such organisations and engage in a dialogue about education with them.

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