



RESEARCH PAPER

Role of School Councils in Public Sector Elementary School Improvement: Multi Case Study Perspective

Muhammad Kamran ¹ Dr. Abida Nasreen ² Ambreen Iftikhar ³

1. Ph.D. Scholar, Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Associate Professor & Chairperson, Department of Secondary Education, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Ph.D. Scholar, Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: April 29, 2020	The basic purpose of the study was to explore the school councils' role in elementary school improvement. The nature of the study was qualitative. The population of the study was members of the school council of three public sector boys' elementary schools in district Sheikhpura. The sample included 12 members of three public sector elementary school councils. A purposive sampling technique was used. For the purpose of to explore the role of school councils in the public sector elementary school improvement a self-developed in-depth interview protocol was used to collect the mandatory information. The collected data was analyzed manually by using narrative analysis model. On the basis of results, it was concluded that majority of the school council members are playing their due role in school improvement in terms of students' enrollment, students' attendance, utilization of allotted funds, and development of physical infrastructure
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Corresponding Author: nasreen.ier@pu.edu.pk	

Introduction

Elementary education is the cornerstone of our country. It is the primary step of basic and compulsory education in which the Pakistan government lays prior emphasis for providing education to fourteen years. The fast-changing nature of society has also vehemently influenced the schooling system. For enhancement of quality education, there is the voice of various committees, commissions, agencies, and schemes implementing in all government and private elementary schools. These committees are Village Education Committee (VEC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Council (SC). Among these committees, the school council is one of the important committees working in the elementary school system. School council has a very crucial role in actualizing the goals of the National Education Policy (1998-2010).

It has a very good point to transform the existing system of education, characterized by multiple demands of globalization, the defective system of functionaries, and different stake holders. School council works towards revitalizing a well-functioning school system through its positive plan of action and a needful constructive dialogue with other stakeholders. Its major roles or functions are to develop the quality of teaching, proper utilization of fund that is provided by the government, implementation of different schemes devised by the state as well as the central government, to create awareness regarding health among the children, to provide sanitation facilities, develop school infrastructure, etc.

Mishra, (1989) revealed that parent-teacher associations should be activated to maintain the discipline of the school. Sachchidananda (1989) found that the dropout at the elementary stage was substantial and expanded throughout the long term, the different elements liable for the horrible showing of elementary instruction is low enrolment, high dropout, the destitution of rustic families, absence of the instructors' responsibility to their obligations, absence of successful management, and wild debasement in the administrative frameworks.

Sarma, et.al (1991) investigated that 71 percent of teachers considered watchmen's opposition critical issues of basic education, 64 percent of educators and directors contemplated irregularity in support of understudies as a huge issue. Yadav (1991) found that educators shortcoming for not meeting their folks for examining their challenges. Mohapatra (1991) revealed that educators didn't attempt to keep contact with the gatekeepers. Sarma (1992) found that watchmen's obliviousness of the noteworthiness of training is the explanation behind non-enrollment and non-support and guardian's non-interest or obliviousness concerning the teacher gatekeeper relationship is another issue for non-selection.

School Councils in Punjab

Community interest assumes a significant function in arranging, coordinating, and executing the scholarly exercises in school. As indicated by a Chinese saying, it needs an entire town to teach a youngster. It is a collaboration including educators, guardians, and community to pick up progress for fruitful learning of youngsters. At the point when schools cooperate with families to help to learn, youngsters will, in general, succeed in school, however all through life (Henderson and Berla, 1997; Cole, 2007; Putnam, 2000). It might uphold and maintain neighborhood culture, customs, information, aptitudes, and build up a feeling of pride in community legacy.

As indicated by the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, India it is obligatory for all government schools to establish a 7 to 15 individuals SC, involving parents, educators, and different individuals from the community. Reexamined arrangement of school chamber comprised of 11 individuals: instructors, students, two resigned government workers, and a 'lamberdar' or income official. Parents would have at any rate 50 percent representation on the Councils. It is answerable for guaranteeing educators' quality, expanding enrollment by persuading parents to send their youngsters to school, directing co-curricular exercises, taking measures to shield

instructors/students' privileges, offering help in the dissemination of free reading material and payments in the school, and taking measures to ensure school structures. It is likewise obligatory to hold gatherings in any event once per month, set up a School Development Plan (SDP) for the utilization of assets, and keep up specific records (Nasira, 2010). It was fueled to spend up to Rs. 400,000 on school development and this consumption would be assessed by the education department and inspected. The absence of limit of school council individuals and the absence of contact among councils and the authorities of the school education department of the government of Punjab stayed exceptional concerns.

School Management Committee (SMC) or school council is a relationship at the school level used for the community to contribute and figure out their individual and genuine assets for the development of basic education at the local stage. This affiliation can get management authority from the regional government that licenses inclusion, help, and planning and to invigorate amplexness of school education. These committees should add to recognizing, predict, actualizing, and checking all learning practices and to grow a ton of assets in control assignment adventures. The plan prerequisites in the National Education Policy (1998-2010) raise that at the rural community level, the head of the School Management Committee, who will be picked singular, will reliably survey educational progression in the zone of his field. Governments' essential plan to make grassroots society participating in the assistance of government based principal education has been by methods for the development of SMCs or school council and the relationship of educator guardian

The Pakistani government took an initiative for the establishment of SMCs in 1994, similar patterns have also been followed as School Councils (SC). The education system of the province in the country broadcast this regulation to District Education Officers (DEOs) to set up school councils by way of as a minimum of 09 members in every one school in all areas of Pakistan. In Punjab, the SMCs comprises of head educator which for the most part be executive of the school council and the others are Teacher Member (TM), Parents Member (PM) and different partners, huge figure of community, formers, community association representatives, public association officials, and military resigned people from the general public considered as a General Member (GM). To reinforce the norm of education and to finish the development program school management committees were set up under the Social Action Program (SAP) Sep 22, 1994. The idea was to ensure the participation of the local community in school management. Now every primary, elementary and secondary school has an SMC consisting of teachers and members of the local community. "Leader of the institution has to direct and generate the ability to work in his subordinate. The orders should be based on principles, ethics, and stability of the institution and requirements of all stakeholders of the institution. The manager must be ensured the formation of techniques to coordination and strategies for achievement brilliance inspiring improvement and construct information and capability" (Besterfield 2003. pp 29-30). To implement the plans in education the School management has adopted procedure to make sure the collaboration, contributor, interfering, and participation of others in

the efficient attainment of lays main importance on the communication of community both in and outside the tool.

Responsibilities and Duties of Members of the School Council

Driessen, Smit and Slegers (2005) have identified the supplementary duties of the SC members. They are:

1. School Council would fill in as a mind of absenteeism.
2. Monitor the execution of obligations by educators.
3. Utilization of government reserves.
4. Acquisition of furniture and equipment and so forth
5. Raising neighborhood assets.
6. Enhancement of enrollment and decrease in nonconformists.
7. Create, implement, screen, and audit the plan for student achievement.
8. Prescribe the plan to the board for endorsement.
9. Identify assets to help the school plan.
10. Audit student execution information.
11. Focus on the parent involvement strategy and school-parent smaller.
12. Team up with other school warning committees.
13. Direct a yearly necessities assessment.
14. Set up a yearly gathering schedule.
15. Timetable training for members to find out about their job and duties.

Nasira (2010) and Hopkins (2001) uncovered that a large portion of the SCs in Pakistan are torpid bodies with head educators running the entire show. A maintainable improvement in schools is conceivable just when the nearby community and partners step in to help neighborhood administration and dynamic to the greatest advantage of the kids (ITA, 2007). Community some way or another represents itself in gatherings yet the necessary yield can be accomplished just when community members are responsive and mindful to work on a coordinated stage for accomplishing time-bound targets. Community involvement is a necessary element of advancement yet this involvement becomes positive when individuals show dynamic cooperation rather than representation.

Dom and Verhoeven (2006) investigated that the jobs and obligations of School Council (SCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) contrast incredibly across

public outskirts. A few nations have the lawful arrangement for the two establishments others just have one, while others none by any means. When all is said in done terms SCs have a part in school administration, strategy making, planning, and budgetary designations. They include a scope of individuals including nearby community members, education officials, head educators, parents, and neighborhood government representatives among others. Most members are officially chosen. Then again PTAs will in general assistance with asset preparation, running social events for parents and understudies, running clubs for extra-curricular exercises, coordinating gatherings to illuminate parents about education issues. At times, they are a free relationship of individuals inspired by the school who are not normally officially chosen representatives.

Material and Methods

The study was qualitative in nature and multiple-case study research design was adopted.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 21 members of the school council of three public sector boys' elementary schools in the district Sheikhpura. According to Punjab School Council Policy 2007 Amended 2008, every the school council is comprised of a minimum of seven members or a maximum of 15 members of the school council including the head teacher who is chairman of the school council.

The sample of the study was included 12 members of three public sector elementary school councils including head teachers of district Sheikhpura. Three members of the school council and one head teacher was selected from each selected school by using a purposive sampling technique.

Instrument Development and Validation

A self-developed in-depth interview protocol was used for data collection from members of school councils including head teachers. In-depth interview was prepared for members of school councils to collect data about different dimensions like student's enrolment, student's attendance, utilization of allotted funds, and development of physical infrastructure, monitor teacher's performance and student achievement.

In order to develop a valid instrument for the study, the role of school councils in public sector elementary school improvement, the instrument was consulted with the experts. Subsequent to accepting the expert criticism from specialists, the instrument was improved. The general master judgment helped in building up a substantial instrument. One mock interview was conducted to ensure the validity and judgmental reliability of the interview. This interview was not part of the actual study.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

After the development of in-depth interviews, the researchers visited the schools and hold a meeting with the members of school councils. After that, the researcher gave a brief description of the research study project. The investigators personally collected all the data relating to the present study. The investigator collected the data from members of the school councils of elementary school with the help of a self-developed in-depth interview protocol.

Data of meetings were recorded on a scratchpad. Analyst completely read the records to identify data that was applicable to the issue under investigation. Patterns arising during the survey of these records were accounted for by receiving the story examination model.

Results and Discussion

Following are the key findings of the study:

School Council's Role in School Improvement

Majority of members viewed that role of the school council as a collective effort for school improvement. Parents, teachers, students, and members of the school council are part of this collective effort. Some of the school council members argued that the role of the school council is to conduct meetings with parents and their children for better teaching and learning environment. The School council should meet the demand of the school in terms of infrastructure development of the school. A male member of the school council, for example, said that the "school council is the mother of school". He was of the opinion that the role of the school council is the same as the role of a father in a home. Some of the respondents viewed that they see the role of the school council is to make sure cooperation regarding students and school improvement. A member of the school council commented in this regard as "cooperate with the students".

It is investigated that the greater part of the respondents was of the perspectives that the school council assumes an indispensable function in school in school improvement. Members of the school council go door to door to motivate students regarding the importance of basic compulsory education. One member of the school council stated "being a member of the school council, I asked parents to cooperate with the committee for their education". Some of the members of the school council argue that they contributed to the school council by conducting and coordinating the logistics of meetings of the school council every month. Instances of the sort of exercises they gave, the school council were ensuring the gathering room was appropriately organized, seats and tables are arranged , speakers are ready and in order, and getting ready introductions. The comment included, "I make efforts for school improvement without hesitation".

School Council's Successes in term of Student's Enrollment

Members of the school council viewed in response to the question regarding his successes in terms of student enrollment, stated clearly, "I motivated parents about their children education. It is what I do live every day." Another member explained that it was the school council who worked hard with the school teachers to conduct the universal primary education (UPE) campaign, successfully. It was a difficult task for the school council members to enhance student enrollment, especially in rural and remote areas. In these areas, people do not have awareness about the importance of education. Notwithstanding that each school council part communicated the wish that later on the individuals from the school council would have the option to take on more authority and the essential's function to upgrade understudies enlistment. The majority of members expressed that about 75 percent of children in the age group of 4-16 have been enrolled in the school particularly from that locality. Further queries revealed that community members and teachers were regularly monitoring or tracking the attendance in the school and subsequently communicating with parents of the child.

Role of the School Council in Student's Attendance

Maximum respondents observed that the school council was carrying out its due role to increase and maintain student's attendance and domestic and personal problems in maintaining attendance. They expressed that they are familiar with students' strength of the school and further, information regarding the monitoring of regular attendance of students in the class. Members of the school council also reported that they have monitored the attendance of students in a class. They take steps for the students who were not regularly attending the classes; by a conversation with parents, interaction with concerned students, and neighbors. On the other hand, some of the respondents stated that they couldn't monitor the regular attendance of students in class because they had no time to spend on monitoring the regular attendance of students in the class. Therefore, they had handed over the responsibilities to the chairperson to monitor the regular attendance of students in the class. Members of the school council also expressed their views about the causes of students' absence. They remarked that they tried to know the causes of students' absence. One of the school council members stated that "students are not coming to school because of domestic responsibilities and helping the parents in their household work". Another school council member expressed that "some students are not coming to school because of their personal problems". However, interaction with school council members during the interview reflected that school council members and teachers were vigilant over the students' enrollment and absenteeism.

Utilization of allotted Funds for the Improvement of School Education

The majority of the respondents of school council members indicated that the government provided funds to the school. The school council members reported that they invest money towards the school building, repairing, purchasing of teaching and learning materials, and utensils. Some of the respondents also remarked that they have met their higher authorities and informed the authority in written format release funds

for the development of an infrastructure system like classrooms and boundary walls. The school council members stated that they assist schools in complimenting government efforts in the provision of equipment facilities and funds; they also help the head of the school in developing the school. One of the respondents expressed regarding the utilization of the funds as “I make use of funds without hesitation”. Another school council member expressed that “we give money to two feeder teachers through the non-salary budget”. Proper utilization of budget is a source of improvement of quality education in elementary school.

Role of the School Council in the Development of Physical Infrastructure in the School

Member of the school council viewed, in answering the question towards their role in term of the development of physical infrastructure in the school, stated clearly, "I took around to see a building for its renovation. The majority of the members of the school council expressed that they were not suitable with the basic structure of the school and some of the members of the school council reported that they were satisfied with the infrastructure of the school. Further investigation during a discussion with the school council members it was reported that students were also not satisfied with the existing infrastructure of the school. Further, revealing information regarding various problems of the school; the majority of the school council members expressed their views that there were many problems that arose in the school. The problems like lack of separated sanitation facilities for boys, lack of a sufficient number of classrooms, and lack of common rooms. Members of the school council expressed that they had taken measures to extend or develop the existing infrastructure of the school by informing to the higher authorities.

Role of School Council regarding Monitoring of Teacher Performance

The majority of the participants viewed that they check teacher performance according to the prescribed time table. They check the students' performance by using formative and summative assessment techniques. They take tests of students and assess students' performance. For them, test-taking is a tool to monitor teacher performance. The member of the school council explained, “I take a test to the students to judge teacher's teaching performance”. Mostly members expressed concern about monitoring of teachers' teaching performance. On the other hand, some of the school council members remarked that it is impossible to monitor the teacher's performance because of close relations with the teachers. They feel hesitant to monitor teachers' teaching performance. As one of the members of the school council stated “I cannot monitor teachers' teaching performance as they are my friends”.

The majority of the respondents of school council members viewed that they are playing important role in making better students' performance during the ongoing academic session. They endorsed teachers to use audio-visual aids to enhance students learning performance. Low cost no cost is a cheap source to develop critical thinking among students. When asked about this, the member answered, “I asked teachers to use low cost no cost teaching material”. It seems that the members of the school council

were realistic about their ability to provide additional resources and materials to the schools and selected the school goals accordingly.

Majority of the participants expressed that there should be a regular mechanism of school council meetings. The agenda of the meeting must be defined in advance. Teachers' and students' performance must be discussed in the agenda's meeting. There should be a real implementation of the decisions made in the monthly meetings of the school council. One of the school council members stated, "Meetings should not be conducted just to showcase in the files and documents". A few School council individuals appeared to be anxious to study the activity of the school to improve the exhibition of the school council in the nature of elementary education. School council individuals' worries about giving the school council greater authority generally managed the dread of abuse or maltreatment of intensity and absence of information to settle on great educational choices. Some of the school council members argued that students' economic condition is a big hurdle in bringing quality education. A male school council member commented in this regard as "students' economic condition is important in the achievement of quality education".

Conclusions

It is found that majority of the members of the school council are playing their due role in school improvement in terms of student enrollment, student attendance, utilization of allotted funds, and development of physical infrastructure. Most of the members expressed that children in the age group of 4-16 have been enrolled in the school particularly from that locality. Further queries revealed that community members and teachers were regularly monitoring or tracking the attendance in the school and subsequently communicating with parents of the child. Members of the school council also viewed that the school council was performing its due role to increase and maintain student's attendance. They expressed that they are familiar with students' strengths of the school and further, information regarding the monitoring of regular attendance of students in the class. Results of the study revealed that the chairperson and other members of the school council are intended about the proper sources and utilization of allotted funds for the improvement of school education. The majority of the respondents of school council members indicated that the government provided funds to the school for the development and improvement of the school.

According to the analysis of the study Majority of the members of the school council expressed that they were not satisfied with the infrastructure of the school because of its poor condition of the school building. On the other hand, some of the members of the school council reported that they were satisfied with the infrastructure of the school.

So, on the whole, it is found that majority of the members of the school council are playing their due role in school improvement in term of student's enrollment, student's attendance, utilization of allotted funds and development of physical infrastructure.

The researchers discussed within the ongoing discourse of the role of school councils in public sector elementary school improvement. According to the finding of the study, most of the respondents viewed that the school council was performing its due role to increase and maintain students' attendance. They expressed that they are familiar with students' strength of the school and further, information regarding the monitoring of regular attendance of students in class. Majority of the members of the school council are playing their appropriate role in school improvement in term of student's enrollment, student's attendance, utilization of allotted funds and development of physical infrastructure.

This investigation is lined up with the prior examinations that community support assumes a significant part in planning, arranging, and executing the scholastic exercises in school (Henderson and Berla, 1997; Cole, 2007; Putnam, 2000). Comparable sorts of discoveries have been accounted for by (Besterfield 2003). This turns out to be more critical for social orders like Pakistan where the educational framework remains sabotaged. Dom and Verhoeven (2006) investigated the jobs and obligations of the School Council (SCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and its incredible contrast across public fringes. This examination additionally featured the essentialness of jobs and duties of members of the school council.

Recommendations

Keeping in the view of the findings of the study, it is suggested that educational authorities should arrange proper training on capacity building of members of the school council for better functioning of the school operation.

Ministry of Education should bring reforms in training programs to improve school council performance as It was pointed out that there is a need to improve the performance of school councils in public sector elementary schools.

As this study deals with the role of school councils in public sector elementary school improvement in the district Sheikhpura, further researches can be conducted in other districts of Punjab. Furthermore, This study was only conducted in three government elementary schools of district Shiekhupura, Punjab. So this study may be replicated by taking a large sample in Punjab.

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