

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF HEADS OF SCHOOLS REGARDING SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AS PER THEIR ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to assess training requirements of heads of secondary schools regarding social mobilization for effective involvement of community in decision making at institutional level. The study further investigated roles and functions of heads of secondary schools so that training assessment could be made accordingly. Sample of the study was comprised of 178 heads of secondary schools, who were randomly selected from both the districts Rawalpindi and Islamabad with equal ratio of rural, urban, male and female. Data analysis was conducted by calculating percentages and mean score of the items. The findings of the study indicate that heads of secondary schools play three important roles i.e. interpersonal, informational, and decisional roles. They are supposed to perform four major functions, planning, organizing, leading and controlling. They needed training in social mobilization to establish linkages with the community for the development of the schools.

Keywords: Social Mobilization, Interpersonal roles, Informational role, Community Mobilization, Management

Introduction and Background

Educational Institutions are established to provide educational facilities to the community. The community consists of various groups which play different roles in contributing to their children's education. Therefore, heads of schools are bound to work in the social context where schools are located; students are to be obtained from the community. Consequently heads of schools have to develop understanding community members as to achieve desired objectives.

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Social mobilization is a participatory approach which can be adopted by the heads of secondary schools for the development of schools. In other words it is a powerful instrument for decentralization of educational policies and programmes at grassroots level with the aim to strengthen community for decision making. Social mobilization strengthens participation of rural poor in local decision-making. (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/>)

Social Mobilization, as defined by UNESCO (2000) is a “process of engaging people's participation to achieve specific goals through self-reliant efforts”. It can also be said that it is an involvement of all segments of society, i.e. policy makers, opinion leaders, bureaucrats and technocrats, professional groups, religious leader and all other stakeholders for taking rational decision at the right time for the development of schools (<http://www.tulane.edu/~icec/socmob.htm>) “Community mobilization is an attempt to bring all kinds of resources together to undertake developmental activities so as to achieve sustainable development”. (http://mob/Community_Mobilization.htm). In fact social mobilization is a decentralized process of seeking willingness of the people to facilitate change for development by involving all stakeholders so that interrelated and complementary efforts can be made to achieve desired objectives. It considers the felt needs of the people and their involvement, and seeks willingness of individuals and groups for appropriate action.

Community mobilizing is a strategy for involving community members in the process of defining and transforming social problems. Community mobilizing can take several different forms, depending on the extent to which “grassroots” community members (neighborhood residents or local group members) versus official community and government leaders and organizations are actively involved in defining the problems and deciding on solutions. Community mobilizing efforts can involve both confrontational and consensus-seeking methods of creating change. Mobilizing is accomplished through a sequential process that involves linking awareness among the concerned (www.communitychange.org searched on December 15, 2010, at 11:00 a.m.)

There should be efforts to make a bridge among all stakeholders in order to maximize their contributions for the development of secondary schools in the country. Consequently education will take place most efficiently and effectively due to collaboration of these different groups. It is important to establish partnerships among schools, parents, and communities. However, appropriate strategy is required for maintaining good relationship with parents and community. Therefore, organized and active community participation can be an

empowering experience for community members in the development of education. Sidhu (2003, p. 23), states, "head of school is responsible to establish good working, cordial and purposeful relationship between the school and community". Zainab (2004) found that in order to overcome the institutional problems at local level heads of schools have to ensure community participation for problem solving.

The local community has a genuine concern in the schools located within their jurisdiction and wants to know what is being done in school because this institution is usually established for the benefit of the community. Dash (2007) stated that "community participation and parental involvement can refer to assisting children with homework at home and engagement in learning activities" (p-44). The development or success of schools depend upon head teachers, parents, teachers and community members as their contributions and cooperation is requisite for enhancing enrolment as well as output.

It is an established fact that organized community participation is a meaningful contribution for educational development. The role of community in development of schools has been stated in various National Education policies. However, school committees have different names in the provinces such as School Council in Punjab, School Management Committees in Sindh and Parent Teacher School Management Committee in Balochistan. On the contrary in Islamabad and KPK Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were formed (Jatoi & Hussain, 2010). There are different nomenclatures of these Councils but the purpose is to involve the community problem solving in school level. As the role of community participation is vital for planning and organizing and controlling the educational resources for the development of education in the country. In fact School Councils are the only means of community participation in the school. UNESCO, (2000, p. 28) describes, "Smooth relationship between the school and the community is essential in order to improve school management and its efficiency".

In Pakistan heads of secondary schools are promoted on the basis of seniority cum-fitness among the secondary school teachers. Hence after promotion as head no sustainable management training facility is available for enhancing their required managerial skills. On the contrary heads of schools are supposed to play various roles. Aremides. (2000) stated that educational managers performed three basic roles such as interpersonal, informational and decisional role". Similarly education managers have to perform various functions. Bovee et al. (1993, p. 5) describe that the management process consists of four interrelated functions: planning, organizing, leading and controlling. According to Beach

“management is the process of utilizing material and human resources to accomplish designated objectives (1975, p5). Whereas UNESCO (1993, p. 6) views, “management as a collection of processes, including such things as decision-making, problem-solving and action-planning. These processes involve the management of resources including human, material, financial and time”.

Recognizing the importance of training for heads of educational institutions, government emphasized in-service training of these managerial heads in various policy documents and reforms programs in education sector with particular reference to training for school based management and community mobilization. The National Commission on Education (1959, p. 268), advocated that “administrative staff, inspectors, headmasters, and subject specialists for multi-purpose schools should receive in-service training through the education extension centers” (Government of Pakistan 2001-2004, ESR, p. 33). This shows strong commitment of the government for providing management training to heads of secondary schools as per their job description.

Government has announced administrative reforms through Devolution of Power Ordinance (2001) which focuses on devolution of education and community participation in decision making at grassroots level. Hence, importance of the role of heads of secondary schools has increased manifold tasks regarding community participation. Being head of an institution, s/he is vested with responsibility of making decisions, in planning, organizing, directing and controlling the optimal use of available resources. Govinda (2002, pp. 10) highlights as, “head teachers are accountable for school education programs, student support, school council functioning, parent communication and involvement, school organization, planning, review and accountability; personnel, finance, facilities and community representation”. Therefore, heads may be trained to handle all these important matters. Quraishi & Khatoon (2008) highlight that heads should be trained in individual capacity and group interactive roles at institutional level, in order to enable to establish community linkage to handle administrative matters of the institution.

Advancement in informational technology and globalization has changed the scenario of the whole world. Knowledge explosion as features of present era has created competitive environment for educational institutions. Reddy (2006, p 127) visualizes that “the principal is in a position to affect attitude, social climate morale, progress, cooperation and direction of efforts in secondary school” Consequently, effective management is pre-requisite for the quantitative expansion as well as qualitative improvement of education at school level. The present era of information technology has made the role of heads more comple