

DO WE NEED SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LINKAGE ? A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Dinesh Pandey*

*Assistant Professor, Institute of Education, SHEPA, Varanasi
Contact: ddd.pandey@gmail.com

Abstract

There is lack of community work in school curriculum and consequently there is little or no relationship of schools being established with communities creating a wide gap in school-community linkage in our systems of secondary education. Schools are not interested in organizing local community works as it has not been made a mandatory constituent of the prescribed curriculum of the Boards of Education in India. Schools should earn a good rapport in local community not only as an important exponent of education but also to imbibe socio-moral conscience and responsibility in young scholars by establishing linkage of the school to various people, groups, communities and institutions (including students, teachers and parents community of the school) to which the school renders its services out of social commitments for welfare of society and nation. The results of this case study depicted a poor linkage between school and community and thus it can be inferred that the present state of school-community linkage needs immediate attention of all the stakeholders of secondary education in India. The school and society need to set forth a common goal to ensure establishment of social, moral, economic and cultural bonds between school and communities.

Keywords: community work, secondary education, school-community linkage

Introduction

Lack of community work in school curriculum and consequently little or no relationship of schools with communities have created a wide gap in school-community linkage in our systems of secondary education. Schools do not take keen interest in organizing local community works. Though some schools organize visit to orphanages or old age homes but it is just a formality to celebrate makar sankranti or other festivals. Community work is the most desirable need of the schools to earn a good rapport in local community not only as an important exponent of education but also to imbibe socio-moral conscience and responsibility in young scholars. School rapport refers to the linkage of the school to various people, groups, communities and institutions (including students, teachers and parents community of the school) to which the school renders its services out of social commitments to society and nation. Organizing literacy camps, cleanliness campaign and movements, plantation of trees, philanthropic works etc. which form face goodwill of the schools in the eyes of common man of society are examples of school's rapport with local communities.

Though a few private secondary schools render community services but most of the private secondary schools never consider community work as a compulsory constituent of school programs to accomplish their social obligations. Hence they lack in earning a good rapport in local communities.

The following researches pertaining to school-community linkage and its impact on students' socio-moral and academic development are significant in relation to this case study.

Limerick, Brigid's study (1988) revealed the ways in which secondary schools in Queensland respond to parents and community members who wish to become involved in school activities. Two basic questions were posed. First, what processes are used by secondary schools to involve the community in projects which are deemed to be successful? Second, what perceptions about, and rationales for, involvement are given by various participants - principals, teachers and parents - in these projects?

The review of the literature on community involvement in education and school-community linkage indicated that little research had been conducted on either processes of involvement or participant rationales for such involvement.

The results of the Brigid's study suggested that conventional institutional rationales for involvement were too narrow to encompass the range of reasons and motives given for involvement. His central finding was a theme that parents or community members need not interact at high levels of "participation" to feel personally empowered. This study offered a number of contributions to the development of community involvement in education. It provides a re-conceptualization of school-community interactions through a more sensitive understanding of both the basic processes, and the underlying rationales, of involvement. A multiple project model of interactions which enables parents and community members to choose the ways in which they wish to interact with the school is suggested.

Thus the school may serve an educational purpose for its broader community. Various other studies highlight the need to educate teachers and principals on the issues involved in school-community interactions. It points to the need for teachers to develop the skills to work with a wide variety of parents and community members and for principals to develop the skills of understanding, managing and developing the culture of the school in context of school-community linkage.

Handy and Aitkin (1986) identified four cultures that contribute to give each school a distinctive feature and a unique ethos: 'the club culture', 'the role culture', 'the task culture' and 'the person culture'. The club culture is when there is a dominant figure in the organization, someone with a rich personality and where there is plenty of folklore from the past that will influence the organization of the institution. The role culture concerns mainly organization where specific roles are assigned to people who are fully trained to fulfill them. Handy and Aitkin (1986) claim role cultures apply mainly to secondary schools. The task culture is usually when there is a warm and very friendly attitude among different members of the school community. Everyone co-operates for a single purpose, that is, for the smooth running of the school whereas for the person culture, emphasis is laid on individual talent and this "puts the individual first and makes the organization the resource for individual talents.

Aggrawal, K. (1996) in his study made comprehensive district wise comparisons among different educational groups of secondary schools in Garhwal district, presently in Uttarakhand. It was found that the high achieving group was found as getting higher parental encouragement in all the groups based gender, districts and urban rural locations demonstrating thereby parental involvement as a positive co-relate of academic achievement.

The purpose of this case study was to make an in-depth study of the school's relationship with the local communities. It included both the quantitative and qualitative investigations to find answer to the research question i.e. Do private secondary schools make a good rapport with local communities?

Objective of the Study

The key objective of the study has been to examine the factors and determinants which help to make the private secondary school to establish its rapport with local community.

Research Hypothesis

There is difference in the private secondary schools in terms of school-community linkage.

Research Tools & Methodology

A combined methodology of quantitative and qualitative research study was adopted in this case study. The researcher used three self prepared tools, viz., School Profile Questionnaire, Principal's interview schedule and students' response schedule. The school profile questionnaire was served to 10 teachers who were teaching class-IX & X from each of the ten selected schools in the presence of the

researcher. All the ten principals were interviewed using the principal's interview schedule and responses were taken from students of the respective schools using the students' response schedule to validate the findings of this study. Beside the above, observations were made to validate the results.

Population:

The population of the study consisted of all private secondary english medium schools affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi.

Sample:

The study was conducted on 10 selected schools in Varanasi city. The sample constituted of 10 principals of 10 selected schools, 100 teachers i.e. 10 teachers from each of the ten schools who were teaching class-IX-X and 100 Students i.e. 10 students who were studying in class-X in the respective schools.

Statistics Used, Analysis & Discussion

SPSS 17.0 Version was used to make analysis of the data collected through three tools. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance i.e. the Kruskal-Wallis Test and Mann Whitney U Test were performed on school profile questionnaire to determine the differences in local community rapport of each of the schools under study in groups and in pairs respectively. Later percentage agreements of student respondents were calculated and an analysis of principal's response schedule was made to corroborate the results.

Table 1
Value of Kruskal-Wallis Test on School's Rapport with Local Communities:

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean Rank</u>	<u>Sample Size (N)</u>	<u>Value of Kruskal-Wallis (Chi-square)</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p-value</u>	<u>Inference (p < .05 will be significant)</u>
School's Rapport with Local Communities	S1	63.10	10	24.731	9	.003	Significant
	S2	77.65	10				
	S3	32.60	10				
	S4	48.25	10				
	S5	51.15	10				
	S6	43.75	10				
	S7	29.10	10				
	S8	60.25	10				
	S9	60.75	10				
	S10	38.40	10				

P<.05

Table 1 above shows the result of Kruskal Wallis Test on school's rapport with local community revealing the value of Chi-square as 24.731 and p-value as .003 at 9 df which is less than .05. Hence, the result shows significant difference in the school's rapport with local communities in different private secondary schools.

The Kruskal Wallis test revealed the following mean rank of groups based on different schools pertaining to the community linkage of private secondary schools shown in Fig. 1 given below:

Fig. 1
Mean Rank of Groups based on different Schools

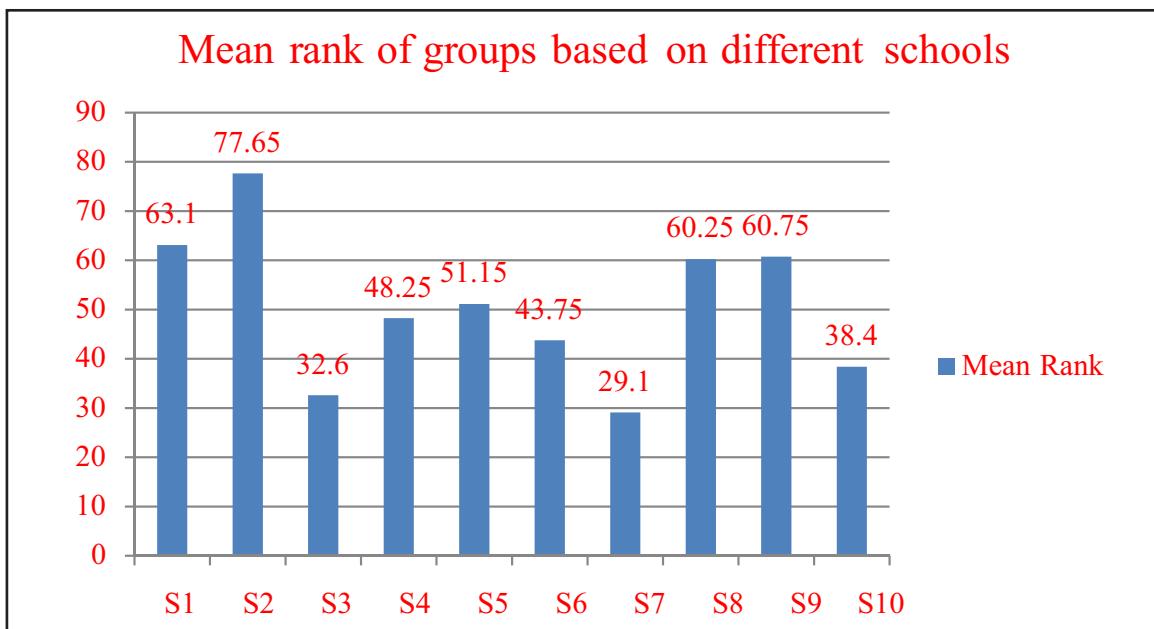


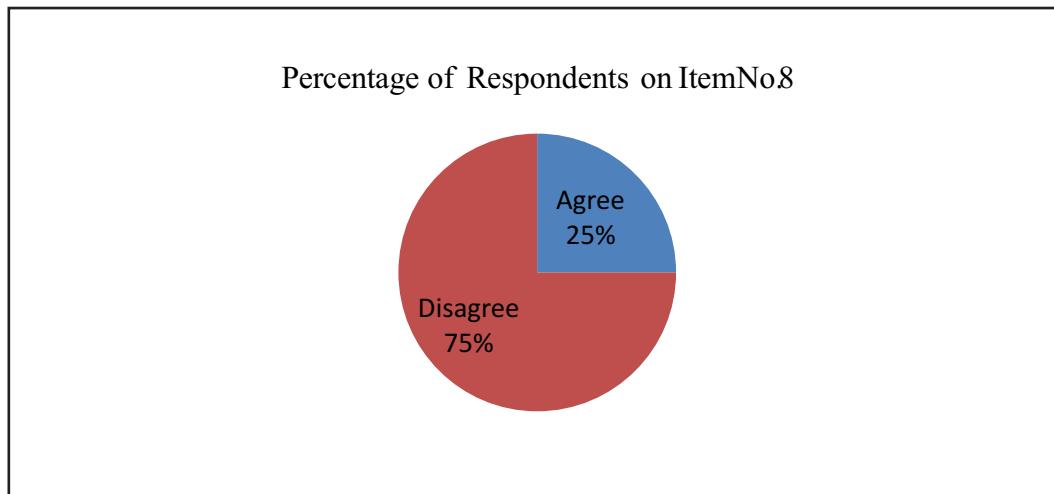
Fig. 1 above shows mean rank of groups based on different schools. The highest mean rank is obtained by case school 2 with 77.65 and the lowest rank is 29.1 obtained by case school 7. However, there are five schools which obtained mean rank from 0 to 50. This signifies that most of the schools do not possess good rapports with local communities. Since the acquired value of Kruskal -Wallis is significant therefore, to find out that out of 10 groups, which groups are significant, Mann-Whitney U test was used.

The Value of Mann Whitney U-Test was conducted after the Kruskal Wallis test which gave a significant result. The case schools 1 & 3, 1 & 7, 1 & 10, 2 & 3, 2 & 6, 2 & 7, 2 & 10, 3 & 8, 3 & 9, 7 & 8, 7 & 9, 8 & 10 and 9 & 10 have significant differences between the groups. This result reveals that there are schools which do not show significant difference. Hence, it seems that most of the schools do not have good rapport with local communities.

Percentage of student respondents on their involvement in community work and school-community linkage

<u>I.No.</u>	<u>Number and percentages of respondents</u>	
	Agree	Disagree
8	25(25%)	75(75%)

Fig. 2
Result of Student's Response Schedule



A similar finding as depicted in the above Fig. 2 is noticed in the result of student's response schedule where most of the schools scored poor percentage of agreement except case school 2 and case school 5 with 50 percent agreements. The reason may be attributed to the school's disinterest due to varied reasons including lack of time, fund, manpower etc. for not organizing and involving students in local community work.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be inferred that the present state of school-community linkage needs immediate attention of all the stakeholders of secondary education in India. The school and society need to set forth a common goal to ensure establishment of social, moral, economic and cultural bond between school and communities so as meet the true ends of education by imbibing socio-moral and economic welfare obligations in students through community work based on the need and aspirations of community and also involvement of community in the concerned affairs of secondary education. In this regard it is asserted that community is the target group where the students have to live and work, if

they remain isolated from this target group, they will deviate from rendering their services to society and nation due to lack of socio-moral foundations for which participation and involvement of community is considered obligatory in education.

The secondary school curriculum demands inclusion of community work not only as a informal exponent but also as a compulsory constituent of mainstream curriculum with test and evaluation at par with main subjects. All these mandate the change in policy framework of secondary education in our country to establish a common, congenial and reciprocal linkage aimed at strengthening the school-community relationship for a better and prosperous tomorrow of students, society and nation.

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