

The Role of Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) in Educational Development in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: *Complaint in the 21st century global campaign for the creation of a conducive learning society and environment fed by India through lifelong learning for social inclusion and economic empowerment of both individuals, philanthropist, corporate systems and society, cannot be overemphasized for capacity building and skill development through its non-formal workplace training has become very necessary. This paper focused on the developmental, functional role expectations of Parents Teachers Association (P. T.A.) cadre within the broad spectrum of school administration and partnership as a sine qua non for improving school effectiveness in terms of learner's outcome and educational development in Himachal Pradesh. Considering the locality under which the school exists and operates, the paper also identified the need for Parents Teachers Association (P. T.A.), the school administrator and the community to know their functions, as expected in relation to educational goals and objectives. The harmony in relationship between Parents Teachers Association (P. T.A.) and school as functional social system is noted as a bench mark for achieving effective Parents Teachers Association (P. T.A.)/ school educational effectiveness through their obligation and plans. A cursory look was also taken on the problems of Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.) in Himachal Pradesh and PTA was redefined as stakeholders in educational development. The researchers equally tried to point out certain roles that Parents Teachers Association (P. T.A.) has to play as partners and stakeholders in educational development in Himachal Pradesh..*

Keywords: Education, Parents Teachers, Students, Stakeholders

I. INTRODUCTION

We are constantly being told by the government; or rather its highly placed officials that the cost of education has become so enormous that it cannot be entirely left in the hands of the government alone.

Citizens are repeatedly urged through the different arms of the mass media to come not only to the aid of their various governments but their localities where schools are located, that means that their involvement in both the planning and maintenance of schools is sought from individuals, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The typical school in Himachal Pradesh is a community school. It exists to serve the educational and social needs of the community in which it is located. This would imply that community or public schools in state are supposed to be a microcosm of the Indian society. That is to say that they are expected to reflect the needs, aspirations, traditions, mores, expectations and idiosyncrasies that characterize the communities or societies in which they are situated. It is not in every situation or period that social institution including schools live up to the expectations of the societies or groups that they are responsible to. A number of factors may work independently to deter an institutions' capacity or effort to live up to its expected objectives. These situations underline the need for PTA's involvement in certain defined aspects of the school. Such an involvement is to ensure that each school is given the various forms of support or props that are needed for its effective operation and growth.

Concepts of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and Membership Composition

According to Arop, F. O. Esq. (2008) in a paper presented for teachers retraining programme, defined Parents Teachers Association as a conglomerate of parents and teachers of the children in a particular school. He further described it as a

welfare organization established to pursue the welfare interests of the school and community in which the school is situated and where parents live.

The Himachal Pradesh Government guideline on the operation of PTA published by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008) defines Parents Teachers Association as a welfare Association of parents of the children and the teachers of a particular school, these parents also include guardians who are living within the community where the school is located. The membership of the PTA shall be selected from unquestionable character members of this community where the school is located. The PTA members shall be made up of all: Parents/guardians of children attending the school.

- Every teacher in the school is an automatic member by virtue of his position as a
- teacher in that school.
- Formal community leader or project leader who have keen interest in the educational development of the community.
- Zonal supervisor, Ex-officio representing the zone where the school is sited/located.
- Area education officer, or any other representative of the Ministry of Education Ex-officio.

The aforementioned executive committee of the PTA shall be responsible for the running of the association and shall be headed by the chairman and supported by the vice chairman, secretary, publicity secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, the principal or the head teacher, chairman and secretary of special committee set up by PTA, the area education officer or any other representative of the Ministry of Education and the Zonal supervisor as ex-officio members. It is assumed that expert assistance may be needed in certain areas.

Consequently, the association shall be free to co-opt any member of the community as the need arises for expert advice and services. The PTA shall appoint ad-hoc committee for specific projects as the need arises. Members of PTA shall be people of unquestionable character and shall be resident in the community where the schools are located and shall be parents or guidance whose children or wards are pupils/students in the respective schools.

Problems of Parents Teachers Association in Cross River State

There is no gain saying the fact that education is an instrument for national development, integration and self-reliance. It is for this reason that the business of education calls for active participation by individuals, communities and other non-governmental organizations. And one of such community-based organizations is the Parents Teachers Association (PTA).

The Parents Teachers Association in both public primary and post primary schools in Himachal Pradesh was discontinued due to some lapses on the part of the managers of the Association. Some of these lapses were identified to include;

- Inability of the Association to meet as at when necessary
- Regular collection of PTA levies in spite of the Association not meeting
- Activities of the Association revolving mainly around the head teacher/principal and some PTA officials

Noticeable recklessness in spending PTA funds

In spite of these observations, the need for the resuscitation of PTA was expressed in various for a during the Commissioner's Need Assessment Tour of Schools. The proponents for the resuscitation maintain that it will afford parents/guardians the opportunity to contribute to the

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- Noticeable recklessness in spending PTA funds
- In spite of these observations, the need for the resuscitation of PTA was expressed in various for a during the Commissioner's Need Assessment Tour of Schools.
- The proponents for the resuscitation maintain that it will afford parents/guardians the opportunity to contribute to theeducational needs of schools in particular and the state as a whole. Consequent upon the above resolutions, the following objectives were formulated and identified for PTA reformation in the state.
- To assist in the provision of needed facilities in schools to complement government efforts
- To provide an effective link between the school and the home for the students moraland academic excellence
- To show interest and concern in the affairs of the school so as to ensure theachievement of high moral and academic excellence
- To give moral and financial support to the school. In doing this, parents agree to levy themselves to assist in the development of the school system.
- To encourage cooperation and understanding between teachers, parents and pupils/students for the progress of the children.
- To provide a forum for the general enlightenment and the development of the school
- To encourage the participation of the local community in the education of their children. *PTA guideline for primary and post-primary schools (2008)* The above discussions led to redefining and repositioning of PTA in schools in Cross River State.

Redefining PTA as Stakeholders in Educational Development

The school is to be conceptualized here as a formal and organized functional social system comprising appropriate plant index, students, teaching and non-teaching staff, whose core goal is to inculcate and stimulate desirable behavioural outcomes in the students for a better living within the community. PTA conveys a partnership that exists or is supposed to exist between the parents of pupils or students, members, of the community and the school as represented by school heads and sub-ordinates staff.

It designates according to Igwe (1999), the complex network of relationships and interdependencies located at both individual and group levels such that their activities and roles cut across the social, economic, cultural and educational realms all in favors of better student academic outcomes, better school effectiveness and educational development.

Zuniga & Alva (1999) contend that parents' involvement in school administration is widely acclaimed as important component of educational reform. Comparative studies in education by (Zuniga &Alva, 1999) indicates further that most nations of the world like the United States of America have stipulated in their national education goals that every school will promote partnership that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of the children. In consonant with the above international experience, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:55) section 12(104) agrees that systems and consequently their management and day-to-day administration shall grow out of the life and social ethos of the community which they serve. Literature on parents' involvement in school reveals to a large extent that, schools typically decide what parents should know and teach their children and therefore set agenda for PTA relationship (Corner, 1984, Davies, 1991; White, Taylor& Moss, 1992; Zuniga & Alva, 1999). It is through this PTA partnership that parents can be taught informally what is worth knowing in relation to their expected roles in that partnership and what they should teach their children at home.

The rationale for PTA school/community relationship cannot be put away by a wave of hand in haste. Some schools of thought have it that the PTA school/community relationship have been justified by empirical studies (Epstein, 1995; Flaxman & Inger, 1992; Hickman, Greenwood & Miller, 1995). It is proven by these studies that a correlate of increase levels of parents' involvement in school activities is an increase in students' achievement. Also established is a correlation between parent involvement and improvestudent attendance and reduced dropout rate due to their support in matters of students' discipline (Berger, 1991; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). It is also accepted that beyond educentric gains the correlation fosters parents' self-esteem as they get involved in non-academic activities of the school such as sports. Their involvement in school makes their children behave better because parents' presence increases accountability at school and in the community (Zuniga & Alva, 1999). At the same time, it promotes parents, families and community empowerment and well-being (Zuniga & Alva, 1996). Finally, for PTA collaboration to be successful, provision must be made for parents to recognize and value their knowledge and skills in that partnership.

There should be opportunity also to utilize those strengths and resources present among the parents and create multiple pathways for parents to expand their abilities.

The Role of PTA In Educational Development In Cross River State

The PTA is expected to play the following roles in the educational development in Himachal Pradesh as enshrined in its guidelines. M. O. E. (2008) Based on the resuscitation of PTA, it is noteworthy that, this association has a lot of roles to perform for the sustenance and educational development of the school system in Himachal Pradesh.

The PTA has the responsibility to:

Identify the needs of the school and assist in the provision of essential facilities that will promote effective teaching and learning outcome of the children;

- Provide moral and financial support to the school through generation of funds for minor projects and repairs of school facilities;
- Encourage the participation of local communities in the education of their children through payment of teachers in key subject area thereby ensuring the achievement of high moral and academic excellence.
- Show great interest trust and support in the organization of the school's prize giving day celebrations by contributing items for presentation to best students in various subject areas;

- Monitor closely the activities of teachers in schools to reduce cases of truancy and non-challan attitude to work;
- Encourage parents to provide needed learning material to their children for effective academic work;
- Make regular input into the school curriculum to enhance academic performance
- Provide adequate security of life and property in the schools through the organization of vigilante groups, and erection of perimeter fence round the schools
- Show keen interest in and contribute to exhibitions mounted by schools from time to time on various aspects of the curriculum.
- Show interest in the organization of open day celebration
- Help to promote discipline of their children both at home and at school.
- Emphasize to the students the need for attendance and participation in all school activities including the formation of youth's clubs
- Discuss at meetings and find solutions to common problems e.g. random withdrawal of students on festival or market days, farming seasons etc.
- Encourage cooperation and promote mutual understanding between parents and teachers;
- Seek cooperation of the ministry of Information and the mass media in publishing the role and activities of the association;
- Encourage inter-school sports and other interschool activities e.g. essay, debate, drama, quiz etc. ‘
- Encourage the raising of funds to supplement government efforts especially in the
- area of infrastructure, equipment and service.
- Encourage its members to contribute in kind by rendering skilled or technical services to the schools;
- Where applicable, be responsible for the boarding arrangement of students; and
- Participate in the guidance committee of the school so as to help in implementation of the counselling and career programme of the school.

It is expected that PTA will play these roles and play them effectively to facilitate rapid educational development in Cross River State. The extent to which PTA will be allowed to play these roles the way and manner it should be played is left to posterity. For possible achievement of these roles by PTA and effective implementation of educational development goals in Himachal Pradesh, the association shall convene through regular meetings at the instance of the chairman and at the school premises. In-loco parentice (in place of the parent) the PTA shall hold a general meeting for the rendering of reports including financial statements once a term and an annual meeting. A biannual meeting shall be held for election of officers. This will foster growth and development and will shun monopoly.

All minutes of meetings shall be kept by the principal after developments by the secretary. Copies of the signed minutes shall be sent to the school board, Ministry of Education and board of governors as this will show an act of transparency. Officials of the Ministry and the controlling board shall have unfettered access to the PTA records of minutes and account books for the purpose of accountability.

Suggestions

A cursory look at the above role of PTA in Educational development in Himachal Pradesh, the collectors, custodians and disbursers of PTA funds should take into consideration the following:

- The decision to levy and the amount of levy should be agreed upon in a general meeting of the PTA and clearance should be sought from the authority before implementation.
- Details of projects to be undertaken by PTA including the costing should be forwarded through the appropriate channel to the authority for consideration and approval.
- Termly reports on PTA activities should be forwarded to Ministry of Education. Ministry of Education shall monitor PTA projects from commencement to completion.
- There should be no gigantic projects that cannot be completed within two years.
- All PTA levies collected by both principal/head-teacher should be properly receipted for and ensure that they are paid to the PTA accounts.

- No PTA funds should be disbursed without approval of the general meeting except in emergency cases. PTA accounts should be separated from other school accounts.
- The PTA accounts should be subjected to periodic auditing by the Ministry of Education.

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