

# Swot analysis of school-community partnerships



## INTRODUCTION

Partnership is a type of business in which several people work together. Partnerships in education plays a significant role. School community partnership is between students, teachers and school management on one hand and member of community including parents, guardians and people on the other hand said Cohen (2015). Partnership between school and community is a shared responsibility of school and community. In this partnership families take steps to support their children's learning and development. To improve student outcome and development several educational reforms have been made from last few decades and the community partnership is one of them said Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson (2014). This partnership is made to strengthen school and families and develop neighbourhood. Moreover, It also help in student development and learning. Educators and policy makers are attracted towards this partnership. This partnership is created to assist families and students. School community partnerships have expanded the traditional way of school by involving community in school services like providing health and social services which help both community and school. In this paper I am going to shed some light on the strengths and weaknesses of partnership between school and community. Apart from it, some recommendations will be suggested and at the end overall conclusion will be drawn. Schools plays a significant role in community development. Collaboration of school and community has given birth to sustained community, social capital and development of self confidence by youth. Moreover, it has given chance to the adults to use their skills for the betterment of community. Partnership

between school and community is not made by chance but it is planning and a product of development. The main motive of schools forming partnerships with community is to improve student outcomes like social, health, wellbeing, academic, curriculum related and vocational Clerke (2013) Trust is the major factor in building effective partnership. There should be high level of trust between school members and community members to sustain the partnership. It builds the interaction between both the groups of partnership to work collaboratively for the same goals and similar aims and outcomes. Benefits and loses are shared by both the parties involved in the partnership. There is development of knowledge between both groups

#### THE MAIN REASONS IN FORMING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

- Connect students with community: schools take steps to connect with community so that they should not feel isolated and should have sense of belonging to a community
- Develop the health and wellbeing of pupils: Schools form partnerships with medical institutions, universities and other community organisations where volunteer are trained to teach vulnerable students. The main motive of these partnership is to develop mental, social and emotional health.
- Develop vocational skills of students: Schools form partnerships with communities to develop training opportunities for their students. Many industries and businesses help students to get work experience and develop skills for work in their future life.

- To improve learning outcomes of students: Students could participate in creative and academic competitions if they are connected to the community

Apart from it, some schools form partnerships to share resources and skill with communities Clerke (2013).

### STRENGTHS

The partnership between school and community is effective when there is strong commitment to the partnership by community leaders and school. Continuous involvement of members of community in all the areas of school management and organisation makes partnership more effective. Moreover, the involvement of school staff and students in the community activities also helps in successful partnership. Leadership and the sense of shared community are the two factors which put the vast impact on effective or successful partnership between school and community.

Three approaches which help to build strong school-community partnerships are

- School as community centre: In this approach school students and staff members are used as resources for learning and for delivery of various services like health care, day care, and dental services.
- Community as curriculum: In this approach students take part for the development of community through various activities like recording of local history and visualising of environmental land use
- School -based enterprise: In this approach entrepreneurial skills of school students are developed.

Partnership between school and community help in student's healthy development and learning. There is real need of community in running schools successfully Cohen (2015). The partnership increases the overall school environment Warren (2005). Involvement of Parents and other community members help to provide better environment in school by helping the school managements that which are the things in which their children are interested. It minimize the problems in the behaviour of students said Dryfoos, n. d. Behaviour of student plays a vital role in building the future of child. Parents and teachers collectively examine the behaviour of every child if any child is misbehaving then appropriate steps are taken by both parents and school management to improve the behaviour. Moreover, Harkavy & Blank (2003) examined that partnership between school and community help teachers to concentrate on teaching. Partnership between school and community help the teachers to give their best in teaching because extra activities or duties of teacher are completed by the community members. According to Blank, Melaville, & Shah (2003) School community partnership minimize the teacher turnover and improves teacher satisfaction. Some teachers leave the job and join another school or another job which put great impact on child's learning and teacher student relationship. Community helps to decrease the teacher turnover by interacting with the teachers and helping them in different ways.

Involvement of Various services like health services, psychological counselling, youth development programs, English classes provided to parents and many other social; services are given to the families Pebbles & Wilkins (2004). In the non-school hours' schools allow community members to use libraries, playgrounds, cafeterias and many other services. There is

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improvement in academic performance of students through school - community partnership programs. Parent meetings are organised in schools to check the result of their child. Parents and teachers interact with each other in front of the child. Teacher tell the weakness of the child to their students. Teacher, parents and child focus on the weak area for the future. There are three major strengths that school-community partnerships can do but schools alone cannot do.

- ☐ It decreases the demands of school staff by collecting additional resources.
- ☐ It provides better learning opportunities which enhance academic well as non-academic competencies.
- ☐ It also builds social capital.

School community partnerships share expectations and trust. It builds connectedness of students to enhance their sense of security and help them to know about the positive aims which they must achieve in their future life Blank, Melaville, & Shah (2003). Human capital and capacity are also improved by school - community partnership programs for instance better family health and parent's education level is improved. Apart from it, it helps teachers to spend their full time on teaching rather than spending time on social activities, counselling or peace making because school community partnership program provides various student social and psychological needs said Harkavy & Blank (2003). Partnership with community organisation help school to use those physical and intellectual resources which are not

available in school. Purpose of these resources is to improve student outcomes such as enhance student knowledge, build new skills, increment in engagement level and develop more positive attitudes and behaviour.

### OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities are external positives. There are various opportunities for partnership between community and school which benefit both school and community in many ways. School is benefited in ways like providing funding, better environment for students, sharing family wisdom and history, providing classroom help, organising school events, donation of materials such as books, exercise material, providing athletic activities for both students and teachers and engagement of students in various community activities. Moreover, it provides technical equipment's for teaching. In this partnership community also gets benefits in many ways. Community members feel the sense of belonging to the school. Moreover, members learn the instructional techniques from professionals in the school. They learn how to control children. Parents implement this technique on their own children and clients. District leaders play a paramount role in implementing reforms by building schools said Sanders(2013). Apart from it , school members and community members collectively plan, coordinate and implement various programs and activities at school and in community which strengthen children and develop their academic, social and personal skills explained Bryan & Henry (2012). Teachers get chance to build their relationship with students, family members and other teachers said Honig et al.(2001).

According to Mitchell & Bryan (2007), There are six types of partnership involvement

- Communicating
- Parenting
- Volunteer working
- Learning at home
- Decision making
- Collaboration with community

Parents take part in decision making, planning and finding solution to the problems which effect their children Holcomb & Bryan (2010).

School community partnerships increases the capacities of school in various ways:

- ☛ It increases the help provided by parents at home.
- ☛ It brings support in school and classroom activities
- ☛ It helps teacher in improving their teaching by understanding needs of children and strengths of community.
- ☛ It develops better learning environment for children.
- ☛ It helps to provide more resources to study.

### WEAKNESSES

Partnership between school and communities have some weakness. Excess involvement of community leaders in school activities lead to degradation in



student learning and achievement. Many schools face difficulties in sustaining positive relationships with families and communities. The weak area of school and community partnership is family engagement in education. For instance, in one American survey it was identified that family engagement is the most challenging part of school community partnership.

There are many benefits of parent's involvement in educating but there are still some barriers for parents' involvement in education. The four major areas for the hurdles in parental involvement in education are Parent and family aspect, Child aspect, Teacher – parent aspect and Social aspect.

- **Parent and family aspect:** parents have different beliefs on different issues of education so this can be regarded as obstacle in successful parent involvement in education. Some parents believe that inclusion with the education of their child will not bring positive results. Moreover, some parents are not confident to help their children in education because medium of instruction is not their first language, so they feel that they are unable to communicate effectively with the school teachers and staff. Moving further, some parents are not having academic skills to help their children in studies. Apart from it, parents of those students who are very intelligent think that due to high ability of their child school is getting achievement and there is no need of their involvement in education. According to these parents helping children in doing their homework and attending parents meeting in school is wastage of time. On the other hand, some parents view that their involvement in the child's education will help to develop their child's ability and they view positive about parent involvement in

education. Moreover, teacher's encouragement and good behaviour also play main role in inviting parents' participation in education. In some cases, parent's education also become barrier for participation of parents in education. Apart from it, situation of family also become hurdle in parent involvement. For instance, single parent, joint families, young families find it difficult to participate in education. When both parents are doing jobs also face difficulty to give time to the child's education both at school and at home.

- Child aspect:

Age of children plays a crucial role in the parental involvement in education. As the child grow older the level of participation of parents in education decreases. Moreover, older children do not feel comfort if their parents interfere in their studies as they want to independent. Whereas, children who are disable or feel difficulty in learning prefer parents to help them in studies. When parents feel that their child is academically gifted then parents show less interest in their child's education. Sometimes there is conflict between the teachers and parents of those students who are good at co-curricular activities such as sports, arts and music. These activities need off school hours to grow. If students spend their school time on these activities, they can lack behind in their academics. Parents think that school is not giving response to their child's abilities. Therefore, there is conflict between parents and school which results in the weakness of school -parent partnership. Apart from it, challenging behaviour of child also stop parents to involve in education because parents feel embarrassed to interact with school staff and teachers.

- Parent-teacher aspect:

Difference in goals of schools and families is an issue which results in conflict between school and parents. Apart from it, sometimes teachers give a lot of homework to the students and the parents feel that it is a great burden on their children which give rise to the conflict between school and parents.

There is lack of mutual understanding between parents and teachers which give birth to mistrust and hurdles. Teachers are addressing the problems of students to the parents and the parents think that teachers are only concerned about the problems, but they are not finding solution to these problems.

- Social aspects

A silent barrier to the school- parent partnership is provided by history. Many schools have hallmarks of the formality, inflexibility which characterised the school historically, but parent school partnership needs flexibility. Family structure is another obstacle in parent's involvement in education of their child. In modern era, family structure has changed due to mobility and increment in the working hours of parents. Moreover, number of divorces give birth to sole parenting, level of religious practice decrease, stress level in parents increase, poor financial condition and lack of time forbid parents to participate in education of their children.

Working with parents with different backgrounds and culture is difficult for school teachers and other staff members. On the other hand, parents also face many cultural and structural barriers while engaging with school teachers Mapps & Kuttner(2013). For example, in India some schools are English medium in which teachers are hired who only speak and understand <https://assignbuster.com/swot-analysis-of-school-community-partnerships/>

English. Some parents are illiterate they are unable to communicate with the teacher of their child. In this situation parent's involvement with teachers is very challenging.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND THREATS

Partnership program must include the features below

- Parents should get involved in adult education
- School curriculum should be developed beyond the school walls with cooperative strategies.
- Efforts should be made to help parents provide learning at home.
- Communication between home and school should be made by home visits.
- Parents and community leaders should be involved in classroom activities
- For parents and children summer enrichment should be organised.

Families should involve in their children's education Sanders (2013).

Involvement of families in education improves the development and learning of child in many ways for instance parents can interact with the teacher and can know about the performance of their child. Partnership should be strength focusing where both partners focus on using identifying and developing strength in children, families and communities. Moreover, it produces developmental assets such as school bonding, school competencies and caring school climates which minimize the bad or risky behaviour and develop their opportunity to success.

There is a great need to find the strategies that are helpful in working towards conflicts and misunderstandings in partnerships between parents and schools.

### CONCLUSION

At the end it is clear that School community partnership is a good step towards the development of students. It focus on the student learning and development. It is really an initiative step to promote education. Partnership help community to understand school better and families can understand better about school. There are both strengths and weaknesses of the partnership. We can follow the recommendations and make the partnership more effective and successful

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