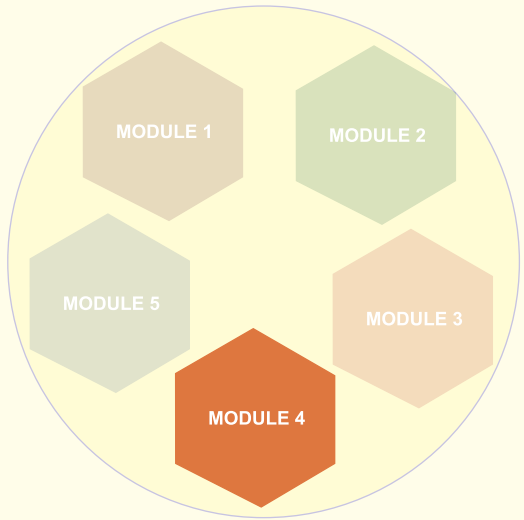


MANAGING EXTERNAL RELATIONS



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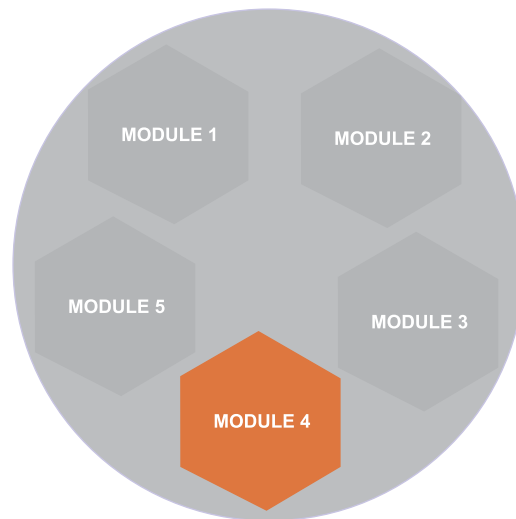
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ANTRIEP

MODULE 4

MANAGING EXTERNAL RELATIONS



NUEPA



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Foreword

A comparative research study on successful schools conducted under the ANTRIEP in seven countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri-Lanka, Malaysia, and the Philippines) showed that heads of schools play a critical role and possess common characteristics though they adopted different strategies in managing schools. Despite significant differences in the context and conditions characterising different schools, managerial skills of school heads emerged as a significant factor contributing to effective functioning of schools. Specifically, possessing a set of core skills of planning and management by the school heads was found to form essential pre-condition for making the schools successful.

As a sequel to this collaborative research on successful schools, a set of five modules on “ Making School Successful “ have been prepared by a group of experts from ANTRIEP member institutions from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Malaysia and International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris through workshops organised in Nepal and Sri Lanka. The five modules cover: (i) Successful Schools; (ii) Managing People at Work; (iii) Managing Student Affairs; (iv) Managing External Relations; and (v) School Development Planning.

Even though each module is an independent unit of learning with appropriate school case study analysis, they are also interrelated. The modules along with the synthesis report underscore the intricacies of school management process. An independent volume is being presented consisting of thirty successful school case studies which form the basis for the Synthesis Report as well as the Modules.

Representatives from ANTRIEP member institutions took keen interest and participated in the collaborative research study on successful schools and preparation of these modules. Dr. Anton de Grauwe from IIEP, Paris and Professor K. Sujatha from NUEPA developed the framework for the modules. Mr. Gabriel Carron provided advice and suggestions. Mr. John Retallick, Former Consultant, Institute of Education Development, Aga Khan University carried out the final editing of the modules.

National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India which is the Focal Point of ANTRIEP has printed the modules, synthesis report and School Cases studies.

We hope these modules will be found useful in training heads of schools by the ANTRIEP member institutions.

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MODULE – 4
MANAGING EXTERNAL RELATION

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MODULE 4

MANAGING EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Introduction

You have read in the previous two modules about successful ways of managing staff and students. However, the success of a school does not only depend upon the internal functioning of staff and students. It also demands establishing harmonious relationships with others who are mainly outside the school but who contribute significantly towards its success. The teachers and the head teacher need to interact with outside persons and agencies regularly for effective management of the school.

There are three categories of people you will normally need to interact with outside the school: (1) parents of students, (2) the wider community, and (3) administrators in the education system. In order to manage a school successfully, the head needs to maintain good and useful relationships not only with the system but also with the local community and especially with the parents. The head teacher of a school, in consultation with the administration or the governing body, the parents and the community, provides vision, leadership, and direction for the school. This ensures that it is managed and organized to meet its aims and targets. The head teacher needs to communicate regularly and frequently with the parents for reporting students' progress and be available for consultation i.e. be accessible to them and respond sensitively to their needs and concerns. A successful head teacher also liaises with the community to ensure effective running of the school, mobilizes resources and ensures the participation of students in the schooling process.

The aim of this module is to highlight the various strategies that successful schools adopt to involve the parents, the community and system administrators in various school activities. The programmes and activities organized by successful schools for community development are described and ways of gaining the cooperation of local administration for ensuring efficient functioning of the school are addressed.

The module has three units:

- Unit 1: Relations with Parents
- Unit 2: Relations with the Community
- Unit 3: Relations with the System Administration

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, you will have strengthened your ability to:

1. Identify strategies of involving parents in your school to improve students' performance;
2. Mobilize your community for school development and fulfill the community's expectations of your school;
3. Elicit support from system administration for effective functioning of your school.

Unit 1: Relations with Parents

Case study example

Bangladesh

On his way to the agricultural field a father came to visit his daughter's school. He was bare footed and dressed casually. On his arrival the teacher welcomed him saying, "Hello brother! How are you?" After the greeting phase, the parent asked the teacher whether his daughter came to school today. The teacher replied positively. Then the father asked about the performance of his daughter. The teacher assured that it was satisfactory. He was pleased and went to his work. The teacher invited him to visit the school again.

Of all the outside people, parents of the students in the school are the most important ones that a school needs to relate to. This is because it is this group whose children's future the school is shaping. The above example shows that the parents, irrespective of their background, remain concerned about the progress of their children and expect the school to provide them the necessary information

REFLECTION

- a) *Do you think that the school should make efforts to reach out to the parents and also involve them in various school activities?*
- b) *Mention two advantages and two disadvantages of involving parents in the school activities.*

Advantages:

1. _____

2. _____

Disadvantages:

1. _____

2. _____

Throughout the world it is strongly felt that the school should take proactive steps to closely involve the parents in the school's activities. Parents bring to the school their perception of the strengths and weaknesses of their wards, which helps the teacher in understanding the child. Further, in all countries, parents are making increasingly high demands for quality education to be provided to their wards. Regular participation of their wards and evidence that they are learning satisfactorily are some of the important concerns of parents. To meet the parental demands, the school has to continuously devise new ways and means to bring improvement in their functioning and also to involve them in the schooling process.

REFLECTION

- a) *Do you make efforts to reach out to the parents regularly?*
- b) *If yes, list some of the ways in which you involve parents in the school activities.*

- c) *What difficulties, if any, do you experience in this process?*

Parental Involvement: Formal Versus Informal

The involvement of the parents with a school generally takes place at two levels: formal and informal. At the formal or legal level, parents are involved as members in the management committees of the schools. In many schools there exists a School Management Committee (SMC), with varying nomenclatures in different countries, which is responsible for making policy decisions and overseeing the functioning of the school. Parents are made members of this committee either by election or nomination. This committee takes all major decisions. The school informs the SMC of the progress of students as well as the major difficulties faced by them. The committee meets at regular intervals, usually once a month. The case study example shows that the SMC's oversee various activities of the school like student and teacher attendance, teaching-learning provisions, school environment, finance, linkage with the local education authority, etc.

Case study examples

Nepal

Among the School Management Committee (SMC) members, at least 4 members are from among the parents. They are involved in policy formulation and resource mobilization activities. This is the highest decision making body in the school. It has the authority to approve the annual programme, budgetary expense and the fee structure to be charged from the students.

Bangladesh

Parents have their representative in the SMC, which is the main body for overall management of the school. Except for purely academic matters, management of all other areas like financial, teacher, material/infrastructure come under the purview of the SMC. Also, in academic matters like extra-curricular activities, SMC members are the conveners of different sub-committees.

India

There exists a Vidyalaya Management Committee (VMC), which is headed by the District Magistrate. It is the highest decision making body. About 3-4 parents are the members of this committee.

At the informal or voluntary level, a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and a Mother-Teacher Association (MTA) are found in almost all the schools. The PTAs or MTAs usually have an elected chairperson who remains in touch with the schools. These parents visit the school on special days to know the progress of their wards. In one school (Pakistan) where no formal parent-teacher association existed, the principal adopted an 'open door policy' by making herself available everyday from 12.00 noon to 1.00 pm for meeting with the parents. Another school (Philippines) maintains an open-communication line with the parents.

Strategies and Innovations for Parental Involvement

The schools attempt to relate to the parents in many ways, such as inviting them to know the progress of their wards, providing feedback by post, taking part in annual and cultural activities, and also organizing a children's fair.

Providing Feedback to the Parents

Parents are concerned about the progress of their wards and the schools have to accept the responsibility of informing parents about this. In most of the cases the schools organized open-house sessions or parents' day two or three times a year at the time of announcing examination results. This provides the parents an opportunity to interact with the teachers and know the strengths and weaknesses of their wards. This enables them to take corrective measures. In addition to sharing the results, in some schools, this occasion was used to communicate to the parents that "children are capable of doing better". The different ways of providing feedback to the parents are given in the next examples.

Case study examples

India

About 60 to 70 per cent of the parents visit the school on the parents' day, which is normally held on every second Saturday in the school. This is the occasion when parents meet their wards, see the marks obtained by them in the unit or monthly tests displayed on the notice board, and if necessary, also see the teachers to discuss their wards' progress.

Philippines

There are four grading periods in a school year, and correspondingly four grading examinations. These examinations afford every teacher the opportunity to meet with the parents during the report card day, during which time the parents are required to come to school, pick up the report cards of their respective children, discuss what form of assistance can be extended to help their children and other measures to make learning more productive, interesting and challenging to children.

India

In addition to sharing the results of the students with parents, one thing was consistently emphasized in the PTA meetings that the child was capable of doing better. A great deal of positive intentions was shared.

Pakistan

When we announce our results we invite all the parents and we request them to visit school because the school doors are open for you, you can come, you can ask about your children and even visit our classes, you can sit in a class and you can see what is happening.

Nepal

The parents are invited to discuss on the progress report of their children. The progress report card is handed over only to the parents/guardians. The teacher and parents discuss on progress and problems of the students in the groups and individually also. The status of the progress of the particular student is discussed and the strategies to be taken in future are identified.

Bangladesh

On the day of publication of the results, parents meet the class teachers group-wise in the classroom. They observe the result sheet distribution, check the results of their children, seek advice of the teacher for improving the performances of the learner, and ventilate their grievances regarding the teaching-learning process. On the other hand, the teacher also asks parents, in cases of children having learning difficulties, to take care, suggest ways of improvement, and the like.

Bangladesh

The mother of a student of class II came to school to know the reason of bad performance of her son in mathematics. The assistant head teacher let her to be seated with due respect and showed her the respective examination sheet. The teacher also explained to her the mistakes done by her son and also the possible solutions. The mother was seen happy after the meeting with the teacher.

The parent-teacher meetings do not only help the parents to know the progress of their wards but also make teachers accountable to the parents (see next examples).

Case study examples

India

The parents of the students are very conscious of the academic performance of their wards. When they find that there is decline in the performance of their wards or he/she is not showing improvement over the past result, they approach the teacher and try to know the reasons thereof. The teachers are afraid of facing such situations and do their best to consistently bring out improvement in the academic performance of the students.

Pakistan

I think the meetings with the parents are useful to the parents as well as for the teachers and for administration as well. Because the parents come to know what is the result of their daughter and the teachers know that they are going to see someone who will also tell their weak points, it improves their working.

Inviting Parents to School Activities

The involvement of parents is not limited to sharing the examination results. The next case study examples show that, in some of the schools, the parents are invited to see various activities and even to sit in the class to know how their children are taught. At the end of the day, they discuss their observations with the head teachers and teachers, and give suggestions for further improvement.

Case study examples

Sri Lanka

Twice a month ten parents come and spend the whole day in the school. They observe all academic activities, co-curricular activities, and hidden curricular activities also. Furthermore, they observe students' behavior and discipline too. At the end of the day at about 4.00 PM they meet the principal and discuss whatever they have observed. They have the opportunity to give suggestions for further improvement of school activities.

Philippines

The principal takes time out to talk to the parents, invite them to the school to see for themselves how their children are doing, the progress they have reached so far, what her teachers are involved in to optimize student learning and what she is doing as school head to ensure the safety and security of every student.

Pakistan

Sometimes they (parents) sit in our classes, they come with their children and then sit in their class with them. They are not there to observe us but only sit with their children as to know how their children work in the class. They take interest in the children's progress.

Inviting Parents to School Functions

The successful schools adopted the strategy of inviting parents to cultural and annual days' functions. In some of the schools the parents are given the honor to distribute prizes to the students and teachers.

Case study example

Nepal

The school celebrates parents' day in the last week of August. Parents are invited to attend the function and distribute the prizes to the best performers in the annual examination, sports, and literary symposium.

Organization of children's fair

In a school there existed a Mothers' Club that organized funfair events for the school and also helped in some of the students' initiated projects.

Case study example

Pakistan

The school recently organized a 'peace vigil' at Hill Park to express their solidarity with the people of Iraq. This was a student initiative that was very much appreciated by the school. Members of the Mothers' Club assisted by providing help in organizing this event and with arrangements for a 'bonfire' that the students wanted to do.

Reciprocity in School-Parent Relationships

The relationship between the school and the parents is two-way in nature. For many reasons, some parents are not able to participate in school activities. In such situations, what should the schools be doing? One alternative is not to bother about such parents and remain content with the group which can afford to visit the school. In contrast, as is shown in the next case study examples, the successful schools find time to visit the homes of such parents to inform them about the progress of their children and also to know their difficulties.

Case study examples

India

The principal and some teachers visited the homes of a few students during summer vacation and discussed with the parents the performance of their wards.

Pakistan

Teacher visited the home to know why a particular student is not attending the school regularly, does not bring tiffin to the school, to inform the parents about the progress of the child, to know why the child has not been completing his homework, etc.

Teachers also come to know the parents through informal ways. One of the informal ways, as adopted by one of the Government Primary School in Bangladesh, was organization of a mothers' rally where the teachers got the chance to orient/educate the mothers about the importance of education for their children and necessity of parental involvement in it.

Difficulties in School-Parent Relationship

Involvement of parents in school activities is not always easy. Sometimes parents feel that providing education to their children is the responsibility of the school. Therefore, why should they waste their time and energy? In this type of situation, the school needs to devise innovative ways to solicit the parental support. Case study examples contain some of the alternative strategies. One of the schools organizes a symposium to teach the parents about responsible parenthood. Another school recognized both students with high academic achievement and their parents on the annual day.

Case study examples

Pakistan

Fathers mostly don't participate and get involved as much as the mothers. Unfortunately the fathers only think that their responsibility and duty is finished when they pay the fees...because of financial problems they are also doing 2 jobs, that's why they don't have much time to contribute towards the school.

Philippines

To reach out to parents, the school conducts a symposium on responsible parenthood. In this symposium, parents are made to realize that they should take an active part in the education of their children, and not leave this opportunity to the school alone. Alumni of the school also attend the symposium and often serve as resource persons.

Philippines

Another way of reaching out to the parents is the holding of the Recognition Day for Parents when pupils' report cards are distributed. On this occasion, the parents of pupils with high academic performance are the ones given the awards.

Malaysia

Last year, there were 10 awards for the teachers.....Creative Teacher, Innovative Teacher and so on. On Teachers' Day last year, at the school level, The PTA presented Appreciation letters. We celebrate success together.

The high degree of parental involvement raises expectations among the parents from the school and they come to the school with many complaints as you can see in the next case study example. The school needs to tackle such problems carefully.

Case study example

Pakistan

One parent came to the school with a complaint that you have not given homework to my daughter and he really created problems here in the school. The teacher was called into the office and when we discussed it we found that the teacher had given the homework but the student had removed the page. For the last 2 or 3 months the father had not checked and the single day he checked he came to complain.

Sometimes, it is not easy to establish rapport with the PTA members, more particularly the chairperson. The head teacher has got to understand not only the parents but also the working style of the PTA chairperson. The next case study example depicts this situation.

Case study example

Malaysia

We cannot just bring our own former style of communication or leadership with the PTA chairperson. He cannot immediately accept us...he has to be given time to adjust to us....the style changes with time, situation and current happenings. It is not easy and it is very time consuming

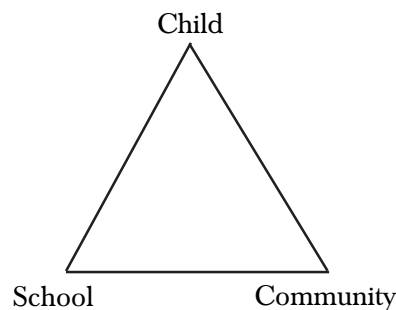
ACTIVITY 4-1

- a) Mention various ways, with their advantages, of involving parents into different school activities

- b) Prepare a plan for effective integration of parents in your school. A small committee should be appointed to assist with this task and then implement the plan.

Unit 2: Relations with the Community

In the earlier unit you read about the significance of relating to the parents. However, the parents are not isolated individuals; rather they live in a larger community. Each member of the community, through interaction, influences others in different ways. Also, the school remains located in the context of a community or a society, where each influences the other. It is no longer accepted that only teachers and students participate in education. Rather, education is now seen as a social activity in which, in addition to the school, society plays the role of a facilitator and a partner. As a result, the community gets acquainted with the school and the school comes to know about the community. This makes education more meaningful and effective. The relationship between the school, the community and the child can be represented by a triangle, in which all the three influence each other.



It is, therefore, essential that in addition to relating to the parents, schools establish good and harmonious relationship with the larger community. In this unit, we will describe some of the strategies adopted by the successful schools in establishing good relationships with the community, and also the difficulties faced by them in their efforts.

REFLECTION

- a) *Does your school make efforts to involve the local community in different activities?*
- b) *If yes, mention the ways of relating to the community with their specific advantages.*

- c) *If no, what are the problems for not taking such an initiative?*

Nature of School-Community Relationships

As with school-parent relationships discussed earlier, the relationship between the school and the community exists at two levels: formal or legal and informal or voluntary. The formal school-community relationship takes the form of the representation of the community in the management of the school,

such as School Management Committee (SMC), Village Education Committee (VEC), and School Development Committee (SDC). As members of these committees, they have the authority to take certain decisions about the school. The members of these committees are either elected or nominated. For example, in one school in India the higher education authorities nominate them and in a school in Pakistan, members are selected on the basis of their role in community leadership. In other schools in India, the village chief becomes the ex-officio chairman of the VEC and is elected by the community. The community also elects other members. Attempts are made to include people from different sections of the society such as women and other underprivileged groups.

The SMC's usually meet once a month, but sometimes they meet more frequently, if there is a need. Case study examples show that the SMC's perform diverse roles which are primarily related to the maintenance of buildings, ensuring attendance of students and teachers, appointment of community based teachers, organization of parents' day, collection of fees, convincing parents to allow the school to take their children on study tour, observing the teaching-learning process and providing feedback to the teachers etc. The inclusion of female members in the SMC proves especially advantageous as they visit the homes and convince the mothers about the usefulness of education to their children. The following case studies present such specific examples.

Case study examples

Philippines

The involvement of community ranges from participation in development, strategic and operational planning for the school, sourcing of funds for certain programs and projects, assisting in carrying out the plans of the school, monitoring and tracking of students' behaviors including attendance, tardiness, and truancy.

Pakistan

The SMC is involved in maintaining the buildings and to ensure good management practices in the school and they also help in raising funds and getting teachers. If the school is short of some teachers, the SMC appoints some community-based teachers.

Bangladesh

The SMC oversees various activities including attendance of the teachers and the students, students' performance in examinations, teachers' classroom performance, overall environment in the school, finance and co-curricular activities.

Bangladesh

The SMC members were found very cordial and spirited, at the same time very concerned with the school affairs. The Vice-Chairman and one or two other members very frequently visit classrooms, sit inside, observe the teaching-learning process and give feedback to the head teacher.

India

The VEC, a statutory body, has been given the responsibility of all round educational development of the village, selection of site for the school, construction and maintenance of school building, proper utilization of school improvement grant, distribution of mid-day meal, scholarships and textbooks, procurement of material, monitoring of teachers' attendance, and development of education plan for the village.

India

The SMC generally meets twice a year and discusses the matters related to the infrastructure, finance, and academics of the students. It closely monitors the activities of the school and gives feedback about bringing improvement in the smooth running of the school as well as suggesting ways of enhancing academic performance of the students.

At the informal level, the community's participation remains voluntary. They are invited to participate in school activities on special occasions such as national festivals, etc. In some cases the alumni of the schools have formed associations (Old Boys' Association and Old Girls' Association), which helps the school in its activities. The old boys, as was evident in one case study in India, have constructed a colony and named it after the school, which is called Jawahar Colony.

Strategies and Innovations Related to Community Involvement

It is evident from the case studies that eliciting community support primarily depends upon the principal's personal and leadership qualities. The community should perceive the principal as displaying the ability and a wide range of personal skills, particularly the ability to be sensitive to the needs of others. This was particularly evident in the case study of Philippines.

Case study example

Philippines

It was reported by the community that we extend support to the school because:

- the principal has the vision of improving the school, thus we are very supportive of her;
- she has the leadership and the moral integrity, that's why we do not hesitate to help her in all her endeavors;
- we can see how serious she is in her work and she is a good team player;
- she is honest, and that's a very important quality of a leader.

Some of the strategies adopted by the successful schools to solicit community involvement are described in the following sections.

Participative Decision Making

Successful schools consult the community as a partner before taking major decisions. The head teacher, teachers, and the community jointly take such decisions. This brings in the sense of ownership in the community.

Case study examples

Philippines

For the principal it is almost a requirement to consult with the stakeholders on matters involving important decisions, the implementation of which is likely to affect them. Decisions on school improvements, for instance, will definitely affect parents, PTCA officers, and village officials. Thus, she invites them at an early stage of the planning process and also at the latter stage when a decision is to be carried out.

India

The decision making in the school was observed and reported participative. The head teacher, teachers, and the community as a whole served as lubricant to the cog of the school management wheel and made it run smooth. The interactive process had entered automation phase. Around the head teacher the work clock of the school ticked. The head teacher had galvanized all actors to commit themselves to school and lend their support in its effective management.

Resource Mobilization

The community helps the school by mobilizing the physical and human resources. Sometimes when the community is not in a position to extend financial help, they donate physical labor. However, this demands taking initiatives on the part of the head teacher.

Case study examples

India

Due to the persuasion of the principal, parents have contributed money and also complimented the school with chairs, which are used for staff and PTA meetings. The Member of the Parliament of the locality donated a multi-media computer from his constituency development fund. He also granted funds for building a playfield.

Bangladesh

The school decided to build bamboo fence around the school. The school authority made a call to the villagers to donate bamboo according to their capacity. Some people reacted to this and did not cooperate; however, many contributed to this initiative. The amount of bamboo collected was more than actually needed. The extra bamboo was sold to meet other needs.

Sri Lanka

Labor contribution is the main support given by the community to the school. They involve in repairing and in the maintenance of school garden, buildings, furniture, and so on.

Involving Community to Bridge Communication Gap

The SMC can also help in bridging the communication gap between the school and the community as can be seen in the next case study example.

Case study example

Pakistan

The SMC helps us to bridge the gap between the community at large and the school community. So, if there is any important decision we make, they (SMC) go and communicate with the rest of the community members ... This year we increased fees by 7%. Some of the community members had the feeling that the decision was made by teachers and they were not ready to pay the fees, but the SMC members went in the community centers and tried to convince the people that it was OK.

Formation of Sub-Committees of SMC

The next example communicates that sometimes a small number of sub-committees of SMC are appointed to look after various activities in the school. This strategy was more prominently used in one of the schools in Pakistan.

Case study example

Pakistan

One committee conducts different programs like Parents' Day and there is a committee for photography. One committee is for fee collection, which consults with the parents who do not pay the fees in time and another for school absenteeism.

Involvement in Academic Activities

Some of the SMC's go beyond the supervisory role and involve themselves in academic activities in different ways. This has also contributed towards the success of the schools.

Case study example

India

The school was able to mobilize local treasure of ethnic literature in the form of stories, songs and scripts with the help of senior people of the villages and used this material as supplementary reading material. School has made hand-written manuscripts which were developed by the senior students.

Role in Changing Attitude of the Community

The female members of the community play an important role in changing the attitude of the community. In some cases, parents show reluctance in allowing the girl children to participate in activities such as sports, dance, etc. As a community member reported in the case study of a school in Pakistan, "I personally don't play (sports) with the students but we have interaction with their parents. Some mothers object to their daughters playing cricket, dance, tableau, or dress show. *I personally tell them that these extra-curricular activities are also important for the students. We are now successful in motivating the parents*". The SMC female members usually contact the parents by themselves if any child is absent, irregular in attendance, not punctual, weak or not giving fees on time, they visit those parents and ask the reasons and extend the necessary help to solve the problem.

Responding to the Community Needs

The relationship between the school and the community is not one-way; rather, the relationship is reciprocal in nature. While the community through its various efforts facilitates the process of school functioning, the schools also help the community in diverse ways. Some case study examples show the different ways in which schools help the community. They do so by organizing a number of programmes such as dance, drama, etc, to remove the prevalent myths in the society. They also arrange cleanliness and literacy drives in the villages. Rich schools allow the other schools in the vicinity to use their resources like laboratories, playgrounds, etc. These activities help the school in building a positive image about themselves in the community and enjoy a deservedly better reputation.

Case study examples

India

The head teacher insisted on parents to learn signature—writing one's name. He would defer admission of wards of illiterate parents till they learnt to sign. The head teacher, it was reported by the parents, took pains to teach them to write their names. He even visited their homes to complete his mission.

India

Teachers organize meetings in the villages occasionally for discussing issues like health, polio, cleanliness, and school's progress, where teachers participate and contribute in various ways.

Bangladesh

Our duty is to provide education to all children. If we don't understand local situations, it would not be helpful for us to carry our duty.

Challenges in School-Community Relationship

The direct interference of the SMC into classroom activities sometimes creates problems. One school in Pakistan faced this problem and adopted the following approach to solve it, *“Previously, SMC members would go directly to the classrooms to observe lessons and this was upsetting for the teachers. The principal requested them not to go straight to the classes but to come to him first for a discussion and a talk with the teacher before going to the class. The teachers felt much more comfortable with this arrangement”*. Further, the teachers remain apprehensive about the involvement of the community in school activities. One of the ways to overcome this problem is to involve some of the teachers in the SMC meetings: *“He (Principal) tries to involve some of the teachers in SMC meetings, so that they know that the community people don't talk against them but they are working for their benefits”* (Pakistan).

Approaching the community for establishing school-community linkages is a delicate issue, which needs to be handled carefully. In case the school gets in touch with a person who is not liked by the SMC Chairperson or its members, this creates problems for the head teacher and the teachers. Also, some influential persons in the community may get elected to the SMC as it adds to their prestige, but they do not take an interest in school activities.

Case study examples

Nepal

Some 15 years ago, when the school was growing, very few persons from the community took interest in its development. The head teacher decided to go to the villagers and convince them to participate in the school activities. One day he went to an educated person and requested him to come to the school. Next day, one of the SMC members came to his office and started rebuking the principal badly. He even held his collar and pulled him from his chair. At that moment teachers arrived and tried to pacify him. Thereafter, the teacher questioned him for his rudeness. The member said that the head teacher went to his opponent house yesterday. He asked: “why did he go there? He need not have gone there.” Then the teachers explained him the need of every villager's help, because school was the property of the community and not of a single person. The students also gathered there. All of them in one voice demanded an apology from the member, which he finally did.

Bangladesh

The head teacher found that managing SMC members and ensuring their active participation are very challenging tasks. Some influential members elected from the parents' quota are not educated. Working with these uneducated members is very difficult because, at times, they do not like to abide by the rules and regulations required for conducting school's internal as well as external administrative and academic affairs.

ACTIVITY 4-2

- a) Initiate a staff discussion about the advantages of associating the community in school activities.

- b) Ask the staff to identify strategies of school-community relationships which may be advantageous in your context and select those you would like to try.

Unit 3: Relations with the System Administration

In addition to maintaining good relationships with the parents and the community, all schools have to deal with the administrative authorities. The administration should provide inspiration and motivation to the staff, pupils and parents. They are, to some extent, responsible for developing the vision and purpose of the school. In the case of public schools, liaison with the administration becomes crucial, as they are part of the government system and are controlled by them. These schools depend to a large extent on the administrative machinery for the availability of physical and human resources, conducting curricular and co-curricular activities, and finance. Even the private schools cannot totally function independently because they have to follow the structure of schooling and other mechanisms as approved by the government. The very fact that the local government recognizes the private schools makes it mandatory on their part to adhere to the broad framework of education prevalent in the district, state or country.

This unit summarizes the strategies employed by the successful schools to deal effectively with the administration.

REFLECTION

a) Describe the nature of autonomy that you as the head teacher enjoy in your country.

b) What efforts do you make to get proper support from the administration?

This section contains a description of some of the strategies and innovative methods adopted by the principals of the successful schools for maintaining positive relationships with the administration.

Going Beyond the Prescribed Limits: Taking Risks

In most of the case studies, the authority of different functionaries, including the principal, is clearly prescribed. Any action beyond this limit requires the approval of the higher authorities. This is, however, a time-consuming process and hazardous too. In order to meet the emergent demands, the principals have, sometimes, to exercise their powers in violation of the established norm. This, of course, involves risk as their action may not be approved later on, and also might invite the displeasure of the higher authorities. But in the interest of the school the action is very much needed.

Case study examples

India

Within a few days of my joining I found that the school vehicle was out of order. The principal has the authority to spend up to Rupees 25,000/-, while it actually required Rupees 30,000/-. This needed the approval of the Headquarters at New Delhi, which would take a long time. I approach Chairman of the SMC and with his permission got the vehicle repaired. Thereafter, I wrote to the Headquarters for ex-post approval. The matter is lying there for more than a year.

Sri Lanka

We must take risk ... and even if something goes wrong and we are in trouble, we must be brave to take decisions. I took a decision to start a computer programme with a private company (which is probably not admissible under government rules). I got my repair done by talking to people and from the school development fund (probably not permitted under normal circumstances) and got the money later on from the department.

Learning Lessons from school Supervision

In some of the schools, the formal supervision of the school is an elaborate exercise, wherein different activities of the school are examined in detail and suggestions for improvement are offered. While in some cases, these suggestions are mechanical in nature, the recommendations of the supervisory team provide useful insights for school development. The successful schools take it as a learning opportunity and work towards strengthening the aspects identified by the supervisory team.

Case study example

India

The school supervision takes place twice in a year, each for two days, by a team consisting of Deputy or Assistant Director, three principals and one local educationist. The classroom teaching, assignments, testing and evaluation, teaching methodologies, coverage of syllabus, co-curricular activities, library facility, infrastructure, administration, and finance are examined by the team. The schools have to take immediate action on their reports and also have to report to the next inspection team about action taken.

Deciding School Target: A Democratic Process

The targets for the school can be decided by following a democratic process. It may involve taking decisions at certain levels: the administration level or the school level, and again communicating the school level decisions to the administration for bringing suitable modifications in it. The school authorities can be convinced to adopt this procedure in other contexts as well.

Case study example

Pakistan

For setting the target for the whole academic year, all the head teachers are invited and there would be discussion, debate, group work and presentations and they would come to a consensus that these should be the targets for the teachers and the heads. The heads would then share those targets with the teachers and if there is any comment or concern they would then take them back to the Field Education Office head and the targets may be slightly modified.

Adopting a Non-Compromise Attitude in Accepting Teachers in the School

It was found in the case studies that teachers are recruited at the central level and are posted in different schools depending upon vacancies. In the case of Bangladesh, it was reported, *“the school cannot recruit, punish, or dismiss any permanent teacher. It cannot select textbooks. The school is obliged to admit all children, eligible for primary schooling, living in the catchment’s area. No selection process or choice can be applied”*. With regard to selection of teachers and textbooks, the story is similar in private and government primary schools in India. However, the head teacher in a successful school would not permit any teacher, though selected by the administration, to join the school. Rather, he would first satisfy himself whether the teacher could deliver the goods. This should not be misinterpreted as making a confrontation with the administration. The head teacher has to convince the administration about his requirements and point out the weaknesses of the teacher posted to the school. You should remember that in this entire process, the head teacher remains concerned about the welfare of the students and the school.

Case study example

India

Once a new teacher was recruited and posted in my school. When the person reported for joining, within minutes I could realize that this person cannot communicate with my students in English. I asked him about the same but he insisted that there would not be any problem. Before allowing him to join I sent him to a class. The feedback from the students was very poor. I sent him back to the regional office with the request that I cannot allow my children to suffer. Please post him to some other school where his services can be better utilized.

Taking Help in Starting New Initiatives

The next case study example shows that with the help of the administration a successful school in Bangladesh was able to take some new initiatives, which helped in solving the financial crunch faced by the school.

Case study example

Bangladesh

With the help of administration and the community, the school has started thinking of a permanent solution of monetary problem. The new initiatives are: arrangement of morning and evening shifts, appointment of volunteer teachers, and collection of local resources.

ACTIVITY 4-3

- a) Identify different ways of relating with the school administration.

- b) What steps do you propose to take to improve school-administration relationships in your context?

Conclusion

We began this module by identifying the main outside persons and agencies with whom the head teacher has to relate for effective functioning of the school. We identified three categories: the parents, the community and the system administration.

You have seen that the parents and the community are involved at the formal and the informal levels. At the formal level, some of the parents and the community members are included in the school management committee, which is concerned with policy formulation, and management of physical, human, and financial resources, and also curricular and co-curricular activities. At the informal level, parents become part of the parent-teacher association or mother-teacher association. An important concern of the parents is to be regularly informed of the progress of their wards. The schools invite the parents two or three times a year to share with them the examination results. This occasion is also utilized by the parents to meet the teachers and get information about the strengths and weaknesses of

their wards, and discuss further steps needed for bringing about improvement. In some cases, where parents are not able to come to the school, the school visits the parents or informs them by post. Some schools invite the parents to spend a day in the school to get first-hand experience of its activities and methods of teaching. Parents are also honored by providing them the opportunities to distribute awards/prizes to the students and teachers. Though it is recognized that excessive involvement of parents creates different types of problems for the school, successful schools find ways to tackle these problems.

The community performs diverse roles in the development of the school. This includes functions such as helping the school by mobilizing physical and human resources, reducing communication gap between the school and other members of the community, monitoring absenteeism of the students and the teachers as well as academic and co-curricular activities, changing the attitude of community related to different activities of the school. All this requires consulting the community in the process of decision-making. The schools also make efforts to build awareness among the community towards issues related to health and education, and allowing them to use their resources. In relating with the community, the schools need to be careful about the prevailing socio-political dimension existing in the particular community.

The need for establishing good relationships with the administration cannot be overemphasized. The administration helps the schools in diverse ways. The successful schools do follow their direction. They utilize the supervision report for bringing improvement in their functioning, adopt a non-compromising stand when the administrative decisions can harm the interests of the school, and exercise their judgment in making decisions.

Finally, a word of caution seems pertinent here. The strategies discussed in this module have been taken from case studies conducted in different contexts and countries. All of them may not be applicable in your context. You should apply your judgment, carefully select some of them, and try them out before implementing them in your school.

**The Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
(ANTRIEP: www.antriep.net)**

The Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP), which currently brings together 20 Asian institutions from Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri-Lanka and International Institute of Educational Planning/ UNESCO, Paris. The ANTRIEP offers an innovative answer to the question of how to strengthen national capacities in training and research in educational management. Without capacity-development, policies and programmes to improve the quality of education will have little chance of survival, let alone success. In its fourteen years of existence, the ANTRIEP network has grown to be a concrete and creative example of South-South co-operation.

The overall objective of the network is to create synergy between the participating institutions to enable them to respond better to the growing and increasingly diversified needs for skill development in educational planning and management in the Asian region. The network has organized several high-level policy seminars, its members have collaborated in research and training programmes and the Focal Point – National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) publishes a regular bi-annual Newsletter.

***National University of Educational Planning and
Administration (NUEPA)***

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), is a premier institution dealing with training, research, and consultancy services in the field of educational planning and administration, both at national and international levels. In addition to its multifarious activities, the University also offers M.Phil., Ph.D., and Post-Doctoral Programmes in educational policy, planning, finance, and administration from a broader inter-disciplinary social science perspective. NUEPA offers National and International Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration for senior educational policy makers, planners, and administrators from India and developing countries. It publishes quarterly *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* in English; *Pariprekshya* in Hindi; Occasional Papers and Research Study Reports. As a Focal Point, for ANTRIEP NUEPA publishes a bi-annual ANTRIEP Newsletter

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Making School Successful

Module 1: Successful Schools

Module 2: Managing People at Work

Module 3: Managing Student Affairs

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Module 5: School Development Planning