Awareness of Parents and Teachers on Parental Involvement in Education under Trashigang District

Mrs. I. Victoria Susan\textsuperscript{1} and Mr. Kinley\textsuperscript{2}

Asst. Prof, Department of Education, ANU, Andhra Pradesh, India\textsuperscript{1}

Research Student, ANU\textsuperscript{2}

Abstract

The lack of effective parental role in education has become a catchphrase in almost all the societies of the world. Even in a small developing country like Bhutan, the issues of poor parental roles in education has been raised in many educational forums. The general effects of weak parental involvement in education is already indicated through diverse youth problems such as juvenile delinquency, unemployment, drug abuse, alcoholism, suicide cases, school drop outs and inability to close the gap of achieving cent percent primary enrollment and also improving the literacy rate of the country. Besides these problems, the weak parental engagement in education could also be a primary factor of the widely discussed subject –deterioration of quality of education in Bhutan. Since the establishment of modern education system in the country in early 1960’s, imparting of education has been one sided and projected as the sole responsibility of the teachers. And if this trend is continued even in this 21st century, then all those problems related to education will rise to worsen the situation and that will be a threat to the government. Hence, it is not too late that teachers and parents must come together and work in partnership to rescue the situation and take proper responsibilities of educating the children and producing future dutiful citizens for the nation. Thus, by virtue of being both parent as well as teacher, the researcher has taken up this study “Awareness of Parents and Teachers on Parental Involvement in Education under Trashigang District”.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Education, Teachers, Parents, Trashigang District

1 Objectives

The broad aim of this study is to investigate the combined roles of parents and teachers for holistic development of a child. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1) To study the opinion of parents and teachers under Trashigang district about parental involvement in educating a child in primary education with respect to
   a) Communication - Basic Responsibilities of Schools & parents
   b) Parenting - Basic Responsibilities of families
   c) Home Involvement - Parent Involvement in Home Learning Activities.
2) To study the opinions of male and female teachers on parental involvement in primary education in Trashigang district, Eastern Bhutan.
3) To compare the opinions of the parents and teachers about parental involvement in primary education with respect to their locality in Trashigang district.
4) To compare the opinions of literate and illiterate parents about their roles in educating a child at primary level.

2 Hypotheses
1. There is no significant difference between the opinion of parents and teachers about parental involvement in educating a child at primary level in Trashigang district, Eastern Bhutan.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers on the perception of parental involvement in Education in Trashigang district, Eastern Bhutan.
3. There is no significant variance between the opinion of parents and teachers about their roles in education with respect to their locality in Tarshigang district, Eastern Bhutan.
4. There is no significant difference between the opinion of literate parents and illiterate parents about their roles in education at primary level in Trashigang district, Eastern Bhutan.

3 Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependant variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality</td>
<td>Urban, Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>Literate parents, Illiterate parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications, Volunteer, Parenting, Home environment, School governance, Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Research methods
Descriptive Survey method is used in the present study.

5 Research Tool
The present investigation is aimed to know the opinions of parents and teachers about interactive roles of parents and teachers and parental involvement in the education of children at school. The research tool consists of two questionnaires one each for parents and teachers.
Questionnaire 1

Perception of parents about parental involvement in education of children. About eighty items were collected and after analysis by experts in the field, some items were eliminated due to repetition of ideas and vagueness in questioning. The questionnaire consists of following parts

- Part A: Communication (1 to 5 items)
- Part B: Volunteer (6 to 10 items)
- Part C: Parenting (11 to 15 items)
- Part D: Home environment (16 to 20 items)
- Part E: School governance (21 to 25 items)
- Part F: Collaboration (26 to 30 items)

The questionnaire is designed on a three point scale and the respondent were asked to make a check mark (√) against each statement for one option that is either Agree, Neutral or Disagree.

Questionnaire 2

Perception of teachers about parents’ involvement in education of children. About seventy items were collected and after analysis by experts in the field, some items were eliminated due to repetition of ideas and vagueness in questioning. The questionnaire consists of following parts

- Part A: Communication (1 to 5 items)
- Part B: Volunteer (6 to 10 items)
- Part C: Parenting (11 to 15 items)
- Part D: Home Environment (16 to 20 items)
- Part E: School Governance (21 to 25 items)
- Part F: Collaboration (26 to 30 items)

The questionnaire is designed on a three point scale and the respondent were asked to make a check mark (√) against each statement for one option that is either Agree, Neutral or Disagree.

5.1 Statistical Techniques

The data collected in this study is analyzed and interpreted by using the following statistical procedures

1. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentages
2. Inferential statistics: ‘t’ test, ANOVA
3. Graphical Representation

5.2 Limitations of the Study

- The primary schools used in this study were limited to schools located in low regions of Trashigang district. There is paramount need to study parental involvement and parent teacher relationship to enhance children’s education in the remotest part of the district with special focus
on the highlanders. It is generally believed that these group people prefer keeping their children at home for domestic works.

- The study is limited to primary schools only as primary education is the beginning and basis of all education.
- The study was confined to government schools as majority of the schools in Bhutan are government schools.

6 The Sample and Sampling techniques

110 primary school teachers and 124 parents were selected randomly from Trashigang district of Eastern Bhutan, using simple random sampling technique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Male 61, Female 49</td>
<td>Urban 70, Male 38, Female 32</td>
<td>Literate 40, Male 23, Female 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Male 68, Female 56</td>
<td>Urban 57, Male 31, Female 26</td>
<td>Literate 67, Male 37, Female 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural 66, Male 34, Female 32</td>
<td>Illiterate 58, Male 34, Female 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Analyses and Interpretation of data

7.1 General opinion of parents and teachers on parents involvement in educating a child

Table 1: Opinion of parents and teachers about parental involvement in education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.33*</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at 0.05 level
The above results show that parents and teachers differ in their opinion with regards to parental involvement in education. This result, in fact, indicated the true nature of the problem prevailing in the education system as far as the parental involvement is concerned. Major chunk of the Bhutanese students come from illiterate family background and this is one major factor that causes inefficient parental involvement in children’s education in Bhutan. The teachers have the feeling that parents have failed to justify their responsibilities in line with the need and expectation of the children and the education system, today.

As per the findings, parents were not able to perform their roles adequately in the areas of creating conducive home learning, proper parenting, regular guidance, and supervision over homework and maintaining contact with the teachers or the school at large. For the greater benefit of the children in terms of their academic performance, solving the learning difficulties in the classroom and other miscellaneous issues that require the concern of the teachers and parents, this study reflects that teachers have placed high importance in communication and collaborative interaction. A regular contact with the teachers in the school shouldn’t be seen as a daunting task in this contemporary world due to advancement and easy access to communication facilities nationwide. Parent’s volunteerism in school activities is one specific area which both the teachers and parents themselves accept for further emphasis.
Most of the parents including literate parents in this 21st century are aware of the value of education but they lack required knowledge and skills to guide and support their children’s educational programs beyond the classroom situation. To this end, educating a child is almost felt as the solitary obligation of the teachers in the school and is left at the discretion of the teachers. The teachers are also in the view that they have been facing inadequate shared responsibilities from the parents in education. Most of the parents including the literate parents lack parenting skills. The so called Parenting Education has not been able to reach its services to almost all the primary schools in Trashigang district.

Both the parents and teachers have a common goal in removing the barriers influencing their partnership and strengthen collaborative relations in discharging their duties towards educating children.

### 7.2 Gender wise opinion of teachers on parental involvement in primary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male teacher</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teacher</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS: Not significant at 0.05 level

Both male and female teachers involved in this study have similar perceptions in the six areas of parental involvement in education program. Their chief areas of concerns are communication, parenting and voluntarism. With the wide network coverage of different modes of communicating facilities, effective communication shouldn’t be a problem in hand in this advancing society. But this study reveals that establishing effective communication between teachers and parents has been a challenge. Usually, parents and teachers communicate only to discuss disciplinary matters and discussions over other educational prospects were limited or ignored.

Parenting is otherwise; to guide and cater to the basic needs of the children including health and safety needs by the parents at home. Often teachers say that appropriate parenting is either missing in some cases or insufficient in most cases because of the rising youth problems and other familiar associated problems at school. Teachers proclaim that once children leave the school campus, they are least bothered about their studies if strict supervision and family laws are not properly framed. In some cases, parents take the liberty of engaging their children in daily household chores and deprive the learning opportunities of the child at home. Such impressions of the parents draw the concern for better parenting education to the mass parents.

Parents’ act of voluntarism in most of the schools is low and is normally presented in form of labour contributions especially in the community schools. Unlike the voluntary actions of the parents in the west, most of the Bhutanese parents lack skills, knowledge and competence to visit schools and help in educational programs.
7.3 Locality wise opinion of parents and teachers on parental involvement in primary education

Table 3: Difference of opinion of urban and rural teachers on parental involvement in primary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>F crit</th>
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<td>12.44539</td>
<td>2.901294536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at 0.05 level

- There is variance of opinions in rural and urban teachers regarding the parental roles in education. The teachers from urban schools share better opinions on the roles of parents in education. This is...
obvious due to the fact that urban settlements usually consist of more civil servants, cooperate workers, business people, constitutional post holders and politicians and as a result majority of the school children comes from literate family background.

- By nature of living styles in the urban settlements, most of the children are exposed to latest developments in the technology that boost the overall learning capacities in children as compared to those children in rural areas. Easy access to information technology gadgets and e-learning has enormous influence in the academic performance of children.
- Since parents in urban areas can afford to provide different learning materials available in the market such as play toys, visual and audiovisual aids, magazines, general knowledge books, newspapers, and so on, they are able to engage their children at home in a meaningful manner.
- The children in the urban places have the advantages of visiting educational learning centers usually set up by private firms or in some instances by government agencies to promote their learning, meet other friends and interact with them.
- Parenting skills are better in urban places than in rural places due to the education level of the parents, advancement of the society, demands from children, and fear of influence by antisocial behaviors.
- The rural setting of the Bhutanese society normally consists of the parents who are farmers and their knowledge about effective parental roles in education is vague. As a consequence of this, teachers from rural schools are not satisfied with the performance of parents in children’s education. Parents’ participation lack not out of ignorance but mainly due to their capacities to deal with the academic aspects of the children.
- Lack of other facilities that contributes to the all round development of children is a common problem in rural areas. Children are confined to whatever is taught to them in the classroom and does not have access to any other sort of extra learning at home. Parents in rural areas have the narrow thinking that imparting education is the right duty of the teachers and they are no way responsible for the task.

The rural teachers have common feeling that students in rural areas are engaged in doing farm work than academic work at home. Due to the nature of works that the parents do at home, children are asked to assist them in doing any kind of farm work or household chores regularly. This hampers the academic achievements of the children and it remains as a big challenge to be removed from the society.

### 7.3 Opinion of parents on parental involvement in primary education basing on their education level

Table 3: Difference of literate and illiterate parents opinion on parental involvement in primary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literate</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at 0.05 level
The information obtained from the above graph tells us that literate parents outperform the illiterate parents in all the aspects of parental roles except in volunteerism.

- The current investigation indicates that literate parents play imperative roles than the illiterate parents in all the spheres of the parental roles associated with communication, parenting, home involvement, volunterism, school governance and collaboration. Obviously, it is because of the favorable reasons pertaining to literacy, exposure, knowledge, experience, dealings, and the greater sense of responsibilities that the literate parents held. Moreover, most of the literate parents work in urban areas where they are compelled by the advancing society to take more accountability in discharging their parental duties.

- Most of the illiterate parents hail from rural areas where government’s support in education is still continued in form of school feeding programmes, free supply of text books and stationeries, boarding facilities and many other small grants. Such provision from the government has indeed limited parental attention towards their children’s education both in the past and at present. They have the traditional feeling that their role is to simply send children to school with basic necessity things such as clothing, beddings, toiletries, etc.

- It is explicit that by nature female posses greater concern, love and care towards children as compared to male. And similarly, when it comes to educating a child, it is assumed that female literate parents would have created differences in taking up their roles and with special consideration that if the mother is from a teaching profession.

- One of the major gaps exists in providing a conducive home learning environment to the child. Home environment should be conducive for children to study, 70% of the illiterate parents disagreed with the statement whereas more than 80% of the literate parents agreed to this statement. In this context, it can be concluded that most of the literate parents have better home organization, specified task schedules, better supervision over activities, and recreational activities for children in accordance to their family income. On the other hand, activities beyond school were given less importance by the illiterate parents and knowingly or unknowingly they involve children in household chores.
7.4 Barriers to parental involvement

Teacher’s perception of barriers to parental involvement in education

- Parents’ attitude that school is not important enough to take time from work.
- Parents inability to help with the school task
- Absence of adequate activities and programs to draw parents in school programs.
- Parents unrealistic expectations of the teacher’s role.
- Large family size
- Indication of failure of school management team.

7.5 Parents’ perception of barriers to parental involvement in education

- Strict norms of the school
- Parents feelings of inferiority
- Negative experiences with the school
- Lack of encouragement from the school/teachers especially in decision making activities.
- Parents nature of complacency
- Language barriers or communication gaps.
- Children’s restrictions on parents visit to school
- Limited parental education

8 General Findings of the study

a) Communication

- The communication between the teachers and parents was generally found moderate and weak in rural areas.
- Literate parents were effective in communication than the illiterate parents.
- The study reveals that females are better in communication than the males.
- Both teachers and parents accept communication gaps and need to strengthen it.
- Parents have the broad feelings that teachers communicate with them especially during odd happenings to discuss and solve problems.

b) Parenting

- Teachers have the opinion that parents lack basic parenting skills and they need to be offered more courses in parenting programs.
- The traditional notion of the illiterate parents still exists with regards to teacher’s sole responsibility in educating a child.
- There is a common feeling among the teachers that parenting education program has to be introduced even in the primary schools than limiting it to secondary and selected urban primary schools only.

c) Home Environment

- Although most of the parents know the benefit of creating conducive home environment, they take it as a challenge on various reasons.
• Teachers stress more importance on healthy home environment for children to do extended classroom works and revisit the taught lessons regularly.
• Most of the parents including literate parents share the difficulty in assisting children’s learning at home. Mainly they are not comfortable with the new curriculum and methodologies.
• Parents either literate or illiterate have no time to talk to children, supervise their work and guide them regularly due to their other obligations.
• To some parents, study or doing homework is in campus school task and they engage children in house hold chores.

d) Volunteerism
• Volunteer service from the parents to school is very weak as per the perception of the teachers and parents themselves. However, the parents of rural setting indicate better participation in form of labour contributions to the school developmental works.
• Time constraint is one of the common views of the parents failing to provide volunteer service to the school.
• Most of the teachers are not very competent with the parental service especially in academic aspects.

e) School Governance
• The School Management Board seems not to be effectively functioning in most of the schools. It is surviving as a mandatory programme in the school.
• Parental involvement in school’s decision making is found to be a rare incident. Usually parent’s decisions were taken in solving problems created by their own child.
• A clear direction on the involvement of parents in school governance is not judiciously spelt out in the school policy documents.

f) Collaboration
• Both teachers and parents call for collaborative actions for the benefit of educating a child.
• The localities of the parents and teachers have no significant influence on collaborative actions in educating a child.

9 Suggestions to the teachers
- Always welcoming parents into school for discussions concerning children’s overall performance.
- Making time for calls to the home or using SMS and e-mail to notify parents whenever ever possible.
- Reveal up to date progress of the child to parents for further improvements and necessary actions.
- Accept suggestions from the parents on educational matters
- Maintain proper records of each child to for recognition as well as to provide necessary support.

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Act as a liaison between parents, students and the administrator.
Should identify the learning difficulties of the child and inform parents accordingly.
Provide counseling services to students and parents.
Must gain trust and confidence of students and parents and be a role model to them

10 Suggestions to the parents
- Keep in touch with the school and the teachers on regular basis.
- Participate in all school functions, meetings, workshops and programs.
- Raise opinions regarding education without any hesitations during meeting public gatherings.
- Create home learning atmosphere for children and strict to schedules.
- Avoid engaging children for household chores.
- Keep close supervision over children’s achievements and progress.
- Provide necessary requirements of children for educational purposes.
- Adjust family recreational time from daily schedule at home.
- Seek advice from the teachers on educational matters.
- Recognize children’s achievements in any aspects.
- Create or contribute to a school newsletter on parenting.
- Set family goals and expectations.
- Respond to school or teacher’s queries pertaining to child’s education and other matters.

11 Implication of the study
This research study discussed about the problems of parental involvement in education as perceived by the teachers and parents in Trashigang district only. Through this study it is expected to be seen in the following area:
- More awareness will be created among the teachers and parents regarding their interactive roles to support children’s education irrespective of location, education background and gender.
- The prejudice view of the parents claiming that imparting education is the sole duty of the teachers will be removed and they will come to better understanding of combined roles of both parents and teachers in education.
- Parents and teachers frequency in interaction for the benefit of children might increase after knowing the value of such contact.
- There will be shift in certain school policies which are against the principles of enhancing parents- teachers’ relationship henceforth.
- A new form of policies may come into effect to increase parental involvement in school activities despite the existing policy of doing it through the School Management Board. The policies of School Management Board require review for effective implementation at the grass root level.
- Parenting Education services may extend to all levels of schools as it is useful educational programme for the parents to learn parenting skills.
- There shall be general improvement in the attitudes and moral responsibilities of both teachers and parents.
12 References

[18] NG, Shun Wing. (2001). Are parents prepared to be involved in children’s education?. Hong Kong Institute of Education.