

School-Community Partnership: A Model of Participatory Governance for Students' Learning Improvement

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Abstract: *The effective implementation of school-community partnerships significantly enhances students' learning experiences by expanding their knowledge exploration opportunities. This paper investigates the school-community partnership programs undertaken within a school in Godawari municipality, a burgeoning city located near the capital of Nepal. The adoption of school-community partnerships serves as a fundamental aspect of school governance, with the aim of fostering holistic school development and student growth. This case study involved program observations and interviews with the school's principal and a parent. The study's findings reveal the tangible benefits of these programs for both the school and the local community. The school leverages its connections within the community in areas encompassing culture, society, academia, skills, and business partnerships. These connections translate into social, cultural, academic, and behavioral advantages for both the school and the community, ultimately benefiting the students. The study underscores the positive impact of school-community partnership programs on the enhancement of students' learning. This participatory governance model not only increases community engagement in the school but also secures the institution's long-term sustainability. Through this collaborative approach, students have the opportunity to explore a diverse range of knowledge areas, fostering a dynamic and enriching educational environment that not only benefits their academic progress but also contributes to the overall development of the community. The findings affirm that school-community partnerships are a valuable tool in promoting students' learning and enduring the school's future success.*

Keywords: governance, school, community, partnership.

Entering to the Issue

As Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) aptly articulated, governance extends beyond mere direction; it encompasses the involvement of decision-makers and the capacities in which they participate (pp. 4-5). Karatas (2020) concurs, defining governance as a systemic order collaboratively fashioned by all stakeholders within a social-political structure (p. 2663). Constricting school governance to a select few impedes the school's progress, while broadening participation in governance augments its development. Extensive community involvement in schools enriches the educational opportunities available to both the institution and its students. School-community partnership represents a model aimed at enhancing community engagement in school governance.

Schools are established with the purpose of nurturing human resources for social development. In this context, fostering a strong school-community relationship bridges the gap between the school and the community, enabling the education system to align more closely with community expectations. Moreover, communities harbor valuable knowledge and skills that may disappear if not preserved by schools. For instance, the community

in this study previously possessed expertise in traditional cloth-making and local herbal remedies, both of which have dwindled due to a lack of institutional support. Greater community participation in schools can facilitate the preservation and promotion of such knowledge.

This case study, situated in the developing city of Godawari Municipality, Nepal, near the capital city of Kathmandu, focuses on the practice of school-community partnership models within a specific school. The study examines two key questions: the variety of partnership models employed by the school and the resultant benefits for both the school and the community. The researcher engaged with the school for a year, actively participating in its programs, while conducting interviews with the head teacher and a parent. Data collection involved observation, informal conversations, and formal interviews, with subsequent data analysis, interpretation, and conclusion-drawing. Prior to finalizing the conclusions, the interviewed principal and parent reviewed the report to ensure the accurate representation of their intentions.

Supporting Literatures

In the course of this research, the foundational theories underpinning the study revolve around 'school governance' and 'school-community partnership.' The literature review serves as a conduit for bridging practical school experiences with these theoretical constructs, drawing on the insights and research of scholars in the field. This section delves into the theories and perspectives advanced by researchers who have delved into the realms of 'school governance' and 'school-community partnership.'

School Governance

Governance is a dynamic process, marked by numerous local 'moments,' which has evolved into a concept brimming with democratic potential, permeating the realms of politics, academia, and other discourses since the early 1990s (Everatt, 2019, pp. 19-20). As Edwards et al. (2012) emphasize, governance is primarily concerned with the management and leadership of societies, governments, and organizations (p. 9). The concept of governance, as noted by Coskun (2013, in Karatas, 2020), is a pervasive notion encompassing a wide array of areas, including the environment, education, health, and international relations (p. 2665). The term governance necessitates the active participation of diverse stakeholders, as articulated by Latib (2019), who suggests that it includes elements from legal frameworks covering humanitarian issues, youth, gender, and culture (p. 47).

When we connect 'School Governance' with the broader concept of governance, it becomes evident that the control and direction of the school system and its reforms are not the exclusive domain of a single entity. According to CERID (2009), it extends beyond mere administrative efficiency, involving the exercise of power and the development of sub-structures (p. 5). A multitude of actors must be engaged in shaping the education system. To foster innovation, teachers and school leaders must take innovative ideas and translate them into action. In a broader sense, 'educational governance' encompasses formal and informal processes, spanning policy formulation, monitoring, and plan implementation, with contributions from every level of the system, from central government to the classroom and the community (UNESCO, 2009, in Akram, 2020, p. 38). These underpin responsive approaches, as advocated by Morgan (2017), which stress the transformation of educational governance into equitable, democratic, transparent, and participatory institutional forms (p. 512).

Central to school governance is the school board, a pivotal institution. According to Dervarics and O'Brien (2011), school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement, focus on policy formulation for student success, and engage in team development and training. Governance is pivotal in achieving full compliance with all standards, ultimately facilitating and sustaining school success (Ozar and O'Neill, 2013, p. 17). It views private and civil society actors as resources and instruments for co-produced public decision-making rather than passive targets and subjects of public regulations (Ansell and Torfing, 2016, p. 2).

The literature underscores that school governance fundamentally centers on enhancing student learning. Effective school management is the means to attain this goal. The concept of governance in education emerged as a consequence of public-private partnerships. School governance structures, as outlined by Mncube (2009), create an opportunity for all stakeholders,

including community representatives, to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school (p. 85). Education, as a public asset, needs to be approached through the perspectives of its stakeholders, including students, parents, and the community. The term governance embodies the notion of balancing government's unilateral decision-making with the meaningful and participatory involvement of the general public. School governance incorporates community participation in decision-making to enhance student learning.

School-Community Partnership

Kladifko (2013) asserted that schools cannot be isolated from their local communities, implying an inherent partnership between the school and the community, even before considering additional collaborations. Alleman and Neal (2013) noted that one particular advantage of establishing school-community partnerships is the positive impact on the school's atmosphere. According to Smith (2014), school-community partnerships offer students opportunities to access resources beyond the regular school hours. Casto (2016) added that the connections among students, schools, and the community can distribute social capital to students and their families, regardless of where the students attend school. Tytler et al. (2018) emphasized that programs focusing on local environmental and sustainability issues are well-suited for community input and engagement (p. 254). Ford et al. (2019) concluded that school-community partnerships are (a) critical for student outcomes and (b) should encompass entities addressing the needs of a diverse young population (p. 102).

Epstein and Sheldon (2019) claimed that hundreds of studies confirm that students perform better in school when their parents and other community members take a keen interest and get involved in their education (p. 31). Bryan (2005), as cited in Cook et al. (2020), stated that collaborative family-school-community partnerships have been found to help optimize academic and social outcomes, resulting in improved and more equitable student performance (p. 146). Similarly, Sepanik and Brown (2021) concluded that school-community partnerships are a widely recognized, evidence-based approach for bringing additional resources and services into schools (p. 8). There is a wealth of research demonstrating the effectiveness of school-family-community partnerships in boosting academic achievement, including increased attendance, improved test scores, and reduced disciplinary issues when schools, families, and communities work together (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Henry, 2014; Jaynes, 2011, as cited in Griffin et al., 2021).

Scholars emphasize that school-community partnerships are vital for the benefit of both the school and the students. Zuckerman's (2022) findings suggest that the mobilization of political capital directly or indirectly impacts child development (p. 105). Ansell and Gach (2008), as cited in Zuckerman's study, proposed that the concept of political capital necessitates moving beyond traditional adversarial politics to foster collaborative governance in schools and other public institutions (p. 106). Casto (2016) and Green (2018), as cited in Benavides (2022), highlighted that current research on school-community partnerships underscores the significance of community involvement in public schools and the resulting positive outcomes for students, families, and academic performance (p. 68). Tashi's (2022) conclusion is that in Bhutanese schools, it is advisable to establish robust school-community partnerships in which both the school and the

community contribute to providing meaningful education for Bhutanese children (p. 108). He further recommends that recognizing their significance, school-community partnerships should be supported through policy interventions, and sharing such policies with the community is likely to enhance engagement and attention from both schools and communities (p. 109). Mkhize and Hungwe (2022) concluded that while the school found many partnerships effective for resource mobilization, studies suggest that partnerships, on their own, do not yield favorable outcomes unless efforts are made to sustain them (p. 11).

Discussion on the Field Information

In this section, the data obtained through observation, informal conversations, and formal interviews is organized into three overarching themes. These themes emerged during the observation of various programs conducted. Subsequently, interview guidelines, consisting of open-ended questions, were crafted based on these themes.

School-Community Partnership Programs practiced in the School

The school has implemented a variety of initiatives to cultivate and strengthen its relationship with the local community, establishing a profound and mutually beneficial partnership. These activities encompass an array of engaging events and programs that promote community involvement, cultural exchange, and knowledge sharing. The school's commitment to these endeavors is not only evident in the diversity of its programs but also in the ongoing effort to expand its engagement with the community. The activities carried out serve as a testament to the vital role that school-community partnerships play in the overall development of both the school and the local community.

One of the noteworthy initiatives organized by the school is the "food show." In this event, the school invites parents and local residents to showcase and share their cultural heritage through food. Participants are encouraged to prepare and bring dishes that represent their culture. At the event, the individuals responsible for each dish provide explanations about the food, its preparation, and its significance within their culture. This provides a platform for the community to celebrate and share their culinary traditions with one another. Importantly, the event also invites local residents to attend, providing them with an opportunity to sample a wide range of foods. The principal of the school pointed out that this program has been an annual tradition for five years, and over time, it has witnessed increasing participation, both in terms of demonstrators and attendees. He emphasized that such community involvement programs help increase student enrollment, as the participants effectively become advocates for the school.

Another similar event is the "cultural dress show," where participants don traditional attire that represents their cultural backgrounds. Like the "food show," this program fosters cultural appreciation and understanding within the community. The principal noted that these events play a role in enhancing the school's reputation and encouraging community engagement, as they bring the community into the school environment and create a positive atmosphere.

The "health camp" program has been identified as one of the most beneficial activities by the local community. The school

hosts health camps twice a year, providing an opportunity for community members to receive consultations from medical professionals. The parent interviewed during the study lauded this program, highlighting the positive impact it has on the community's health. She remarked, *"The school organizes health camps two times a year. We can get good doctor consultation. It is making our health good."* According to her, the school's efforts extend beyond the classroom and into the realm of community well-being.

Recognizing the strengths and expertise of community members, the school actively involves them in the educational process. For instance, the school invited a nurse to address the assembly, offering insights on healthy eating habits. The principal stressed that the impact of such activities is maximized when the expert addresses the students while dressed in a nurse's uniform.

The school has also established strong ties with local offices and industries. It regularly arranges field visits for students to various local offices, introducing them to a range of professionals and providing valuable insights into potential career paths. The principal highlighted the importance of these visits, explaining that they help students form a clearer understanding of their future goals. Additionally, the school organizes visits to local industries, such as furniture factories, rice mills, and poultry farms. These visits expose students to entrepreneurial endeavors and various industries, broadening their knowledge and aspirations.

The "Best from the Waste" program has made a significant contribution to maintaining cleanliness within homes and the wider community. This initiative encourages community members to create useful items from household waste materials, promoting recycling and waste reduction. The parent who has been observing this program for five years attested to its effectiveness and revealed that some individuals have started selling products they create from waste materials, such as pen stands and flower vases.

The "Curriculum Day" program stands out as a remarkable endeavor in fostering community involvement and promoting better educational governance. During this program, parents are invited to the school, where teachers present the curriculum content and teaching methods they intend to employ. The open dialogue between parents and teachers allows for constructive feedback and a negotiated approach to teaching content and methods that satisfies both parties. It results in a collaborative effort to enhance the educational experience, and both parents and teachers leave the event with a sense of accomplishment.

Language and cultural preservation is another area of focus for the school. The school promotes linguistic diversity through assemblies dedicated to languages like Tamang, Newari, and Sanskrit. In these weekly assemblies, students, parents, and local community members are invited to address the gathering in their respective languages, sharing their linguistic and cultural heritage with others. This practice not only celebrates diversity but also strengthens the connection between the school and the community.

In the interview, the principal unveiled plans for new programs aimed at furthering community engagement. One such initiative is "industry partnership," which involves collaboration

with local industries such as brick factories, poultry farms, vegetable farming, and rice mills. The school intends to invite local industry experts to provide educational sessions to students, offering them insights into various industrial processes and entrepreneurship. The goal is to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications, empowering students with practical knowledge.

The school is also actively seeking individuals within the community who can share ancient and mythological stories in an engaging manner. The principal believes that these stories contribute to the moral and character development of students, making this an important addition to their community engagement efforts.

Yoga, known for its numerous health benefits, is another program in the pipeline. The school has planned sessions by local yoga experts to introduce students to the practice of yoga. Yoga not only promotes physical well-being but also nurtures a sense of mindfulness and mental health, an essential component of holistic education.

In addition to these programs, the school is organizing lectures by local vegetable farmers to enhance students' knowledge of agriculture and sustainable farming practices. The school recognizes the value of involving community members with expertise in agriculture to educate students about responsible and sustainable agricultural practices.

Community engagement will be further bolstered by a "review meeting" with the local community, allowing open discussions and the collection of feedback and suggestions. The principal explained that by placing a suggestion box outside the school, they aim to gather input from a wider range of community members. *"If we keep the suggestion box inside the school, only students and parents have access to it. But when we keep it outside, all the people in the community will have access. The suggestions enrich us and help us improve ourselves,"* he noted.

As part of their future school-community partnership plans, the school is set to open a community library enriched with books for adults. The library will be accessible to the community on Saturdays and public holidays. This initiative not only fosters a love for reading and learning within the community but also provides a valuable resource for community members seeking knowledge and entertainment.

Reciprocal Benefits of School-Community Partnership Programs

Both the principal and the parent involved in the school-community partnership programs have experienced significant benefits from these collaborative efforts. Their experiences underscore the mutual advantages of such engagement, as well as the positive impact on the school and the community.

The principal's perspective on community involvement in school activities is highly encouraging. He noted that community members enthusiastically participate in the programs, although some individuals occasionally pose challenges. The school maintains active communication and collaboration with the community through mechanisms such as the School Management Committee (SMC) and monthly meetings with clusters of community members from different areas. This dialogue serves as a platform for gathering feedback, discussing school plans and

policies, and integrating the community's input into the school's decision-making processes. The principal emphasized, *"I have experienced good involvement of the community people."*

In the eyes of the parent, their active involvement in school activities is a reciprocal and beneficial experience. She expressed that participation in school activities fosters a sense of ownership and a familial connection with the school. She noted that when the school actively engages parents and community members, it creates a bond that makes students feel at home in the school environment. The parent highlighted, *"Our involvement in activities is beneficial for school and for us as well. When the school involves us in school's activities we feel ownership toward school. Our children also feel like homely in school. They see the relationship of parent and teacher."*

From the principal's perspective, community participation in enhancing students' learning is on the rise. He pointed out that during events like "Curriculum Day," parents actively provide feedback, especially the younger generation of parents who offer various ideas on curriculum content and teaching methods. Their involvement is instrumental in curriculum development and improvement. The principal emphasized, *"In curriculum day the parents give feedback. The young generation of parents has various ideas on content and process of teaching. They involve in curriculum construction. They suggest about the content also."*

The parent echoed the sentiment that her understanding of her involvement in her child's learning improved through her participation in activities like "Curriculum Day." She emphasized that this engagement has a direct impact on her child's learning. Not only does it enable her to offer suggestions to the school and teachers on what and how to teach, but it also facilitates a collaborative approach where the school and parents share educational content to support learning both at home and at school. She stated, *"After participating in the program I came to know that my child's learning improves. On the one hand I can suggest the school and teachers on what to teach and how to teach, and on the other hand, school and parent can share the content to teach at home and school."*

Furthermore, the school is increasing its involvement for the benefit of the community, according to the parent. The school takes part in community cleaning programs as part of its commitment to social service. One significant initiative on the horizon is the school's plan to open a community library. The parent commended the school's vision of creating a reading society through the school library and encouraging parents and anyone interested in reading to become library members. The principal expressed the school's desire for the community to participate in expanding the library. They plan to promote a reading culture within the community, where individuals become library members and contribute by paying a certain fee. This approach allows the community to access a wide range of books while generating funds for the library's further development.

The school also provides space for community programs and events, such as those organized by cooperatives and *Mahila Samuha* (Women's Group). The principal emphasized the importance of supporting the community, viewing the community as a vital asset for the school. He acknowledged that a positive relationship with the community is essential for the school to

achieve its goal of providing quality education. The school's readiness to offer meeting halls and grounds for community events reflects its commitment to nurturing a strong bond with the local community.

The experiences of both the principal and the parent affirm the reciprocal benefits of school-community partnership programs. These initiatives contribute to a sense of ownership, strengthen the ties between the school and the community, and offer opportunities for collaborative learning and development, benefiting students and the community alike. The ongoing collaboration between the school and the community demonstrates their shared commitment to creating a positive and enriching educational environment.

Opportunities and Challenges in School-Community Partnership Programs

It's interesting to note that the parent and the principal have different perspectives on school-community partnership, with the parent seeing more opportunities and the principal perceiving more challenges in this collaborative endeavor.

The parent's perspective is filled with optimism, as she perceives a multitude of opportunities stemming from school-community partnership. She acknowledges the enhanced learning environment created through these partnerships. She particularly values the opportunities to develop her public speaking skills, as the school provides forums for parents to address the community. Additionally, the parent highlights the invaluable reading opportunities facilitated by the school. Most importantly, she emphasizes the role that these partnerships play in allowing parents to actively participate in their child's learning journey. However, she also recognizes the challenge of time management as a significant obstacle, given the demands of household and professional responsibilities. She notes, *"The only challenge is managing time. Completing the household work and official work, it is very hard to manage time for school."*

On the other hand, the principal's viewpoint is more cautious, with a focus on challenges rather than opportunities in school-community partnership. He suggests that while the school can reap significant benefits, such as positive publicity and community support through various partnership programs, it faces the challenge of coordinating and managing the limited time available to both parents and the school itself. The principal acknowledges the time constraints experienced by parents who are often engaged in their businesses. Simultaneously, the school staff also grapple with limited time resources. Furthermore, the principal recognizes the existence of some negative-minded individuals in the community, which can pose additional challenges.

The principal also shares ideas to further enhance school-community partnership. He envisions collaborating with local industries and establishing mini-industries within the school to provide students with valuable skills. By exposing students to practical skills and entrepreneurship opportunities, the school aims to broaden their career aspirations beyond traditional professions like becoming a doctor or pilot. This approach not only broadens students' horizons but also equips them with practical knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, the principal expresses a desire to conduct more programs that actively involve the community within the

school's activities. These programs may include talk shows, book fairs, and poetry recitations, providing platforms for community members to share their literary and creative talents. The principal envisions these programs as a means to unearth hidden talents within the community, not only among the literate but also among the illiterate. In this way, the school becomes a hub for teaching and learning, extending its reach to benefit a broader audience beyond the enrolled students. The principal emphasizes that such initiatives can transform the school into a center for knowledge and skill development for everyone in the community, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and creativity.

The differing perspectives of the parent and the principal reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of school-community partnerships. While the parent recognizes the numerous opportunities for personal and community development, the principal acknowledges the challenges related to time management and the presence of negative influences. However, both parties share a common vision of expanding the scope and impact of these partnerships to benefit the community, nurture creativity, and equip students with valuable skills.

Findings of the Study

In a year-long investigation conducted at the school, it was revealed that the institution orchestrated a multitude of initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration between the school and the community. This endeavor proved to be advantageous for both parties involved. Upon careful examination of data obtained through observations and interviews, the results were categorized under three distinct headings: models delineating school-community partnerships, advantages derived from such partnerships, and obstacles encountered in the context of school-community collaboration.

Models of School-Community Partnership

Following an extensive examination of the school's implemented programs, coupled with consultations with the principal and a parent, these programs were identified and categorized into five distinct models.

Cultural Partnership

The research determined that initiatives such as food exhibitions, cultural attire displays, and language promotion during assemblies constituted cultural partnerships with the local community. These programs facilitated students' understanding of the cultural and linguistic significance within their community. Simultaneously, the community benefited from having a reputable institution to safeguard and share their cultural heritage. Tobgay (2014) as cited in Tashi (2022), underscores the importance of inclusivity in education, stating that in a world marked by disparities, education should embrace and respect various backgrounds (p. 19).

Social Partnership

The programs, such as 'best from waste,' community space initiatives, and health camps, exemplified a form of social partnership. This collaboration proved to be highly beneficial for the community, as it provided valuable support from the school through these programs. The students, in turn, acquired social skills and developed a sense of social responsibility through their active involvement in these activities. As Willems and GonzalezDeHass (2012) note, this type of school-community partnership entails

students engaging in service activities integrated with the school curriculum, enabling them to deepen their learning through reflective practice. The advantages of this type of partnership are significant, as it not only encourages students to actively participate in social service but also promotes experiential learning. As Ludden (2011) aptly put it, 'these partnerships play a crucial role in fostering citizenship, enhancing psychological well-being, and reducing problematic behaviors in students.

Academic Partnership

Events such as Curriculum Day, the establishment of a community library, and curriculum review meetings provided the community with an opportunity to actively engage as academic partners with the school. during discussions about the curriculum and participation in curriculum review meetings, community members gained insights into their children's educational experiences and had the chance to contribute their own ideas. The 'Library for Society' program represented a significant means for the community to expand their knowledge base. As Myende and Nhlumayo (2020), as cited in Mkhize and Hungwe (2022), emphasized, 'parents were identified as a valuable resource in enhancing academic performance within schools' (p. 9).

Capability Partnership

In this particular partnership model, the school actively seeks out capable individuals from both parents and the broader

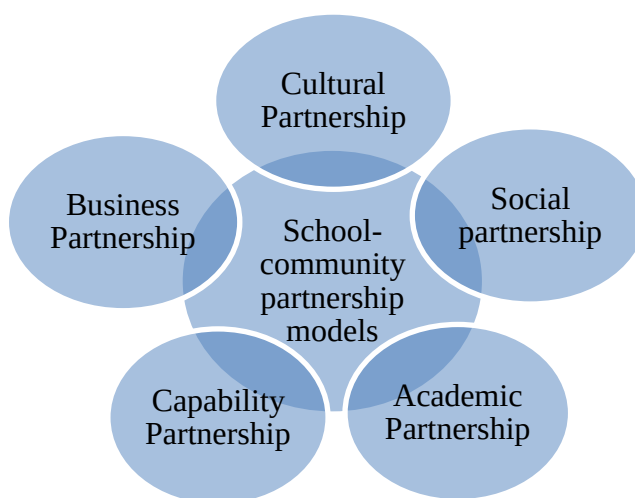
The above mentioned partnership models are summarized in the figure

community, harnessing their skills for the betterment of students. The school implemented various programs, such as storytelling sessions, yoga classes led by local experts, and guest lectures by accomplished individuals. Elected representatives from the community could also serve as valuable assets for the school, providing motivation to the students. As described by Gross et al. (2015), these partnerships are characterized as 'those collaborations between schools and local government officials and employees holding positions of civic responsibility' (p. 22).

Business Partnership

Deliberately, students were organized to embark on field visits to local offices and industries with the objective of gaining insights into various occupations, professions, and entrepreneurship. This approach, offering more than conventional classroom lectures, offered students a broad perspective on the future prospects. The school regularly arranged trips to industrial facilities, offices, and farms, representing a business partnership model. As proposed by Sanders (2006), such partnerships are 'of critical importance, as business leaders, managers, and personnel possess unique qualifications to assist schools in preparing students for evolving workplace' (p. 2), which, in turn, fostered entrepreneurial ideas among the students. According to Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009), 'these partnerships can be established through both formal and informal channels'.

Figure 1: School-community partnership models



Benefits of School-Community Partnership

The study additionally examined the advantages that could be derived by both the school and the community through the school-community partnership.

Social Benefit

The school's community partnership initiatives yielded various social benefits. Programs such as health camps and the community library directly contributed to social welfare by providing community members with essential services. In contrast, initiatives line providing space for the community program had an indirect yet notable impact on social well-being. Bauch (2001), as cited in Zukerman (2020), characterizes school-community

partnerships as a form of 'social capital for the school' (p. 5), while Lunnablad (2019) further underscores that 'school-community partnerships, as a social innovation, are not only positioned to enhance students' academic outcomes but also to promote social security and safety within the communities' (p. 6).

Cultural Benefit

In our society, cultural tolerance and the dissemination of knowledge are imperative. Through initiatives such as the food show, cultural dress exhibitions, and assemblies conducted in different languages, students gained insights into each other's cultures, fostering cultural understanding and tolerance. This behavioral shift was nurtured by the school-community

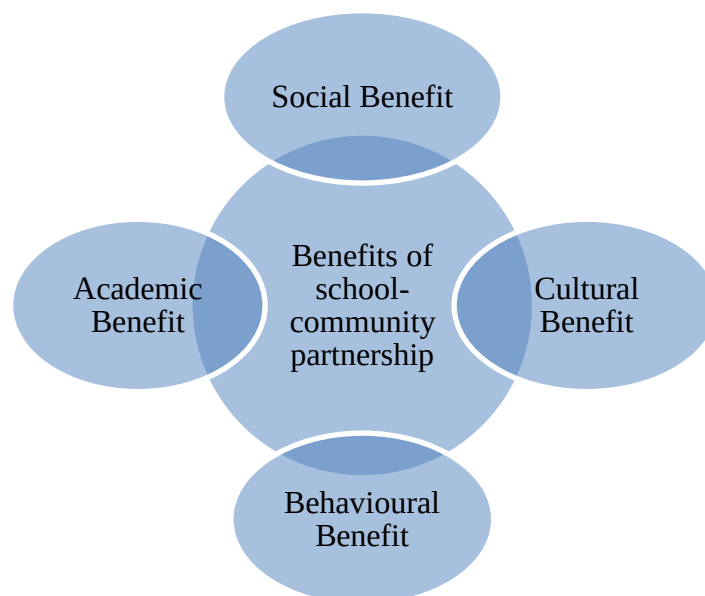
partnership, which provided an environment for ‘the cultivation of the potential in young individuals, enabling them to comprehend and embrace one another, internalize ideals within their identities, and assume responsibility in the development of society’ (Banes et al., 2015, p. 57). Furthermore, these programs played a crucial role in the preservation of diverse cultures.

Academic Benefit

The presence of a civilized society is often indicated by the academic proficiency of both students and parents within that community. Programs such as Curriculum Day, review meetings, and the Library for Society not only enhanced the academic performance of the parents and the students but also extended their benefits to individuals unaffiliated with the schools. The Library for Society program, in particular, had a wide-reaching impact. Simultaneously, the collaboration of ‘schools with various community partners, including individuals, businesses, and formal and informal community organizations, ensures that all students have equal access to educational opportunities’ (Codilla, 2022, p.107). As Edmondson and Zimmpher (2012, 2014) Henig et al.

These benefits are summarized in the figure.

Figure 2: Benefits of school-community partnership



Challenges in School-Community Partnership

As is often the case, the study uncovered several challenges inherent in the school-community programs organized by the school. the primary challenge revolved around time constraints, with neither the school nor parents having ample time to fully engage in these initiatives. Additionally, the school struggled with limited human resources, as the same personnel were stretched thin across multiple tasks, aligning with Zuckerman’s observation that ‘rural school leaders face challenges in juggling various roles within smaller schools’ (2020, p. 74). Regrettably, the desired outcomes were not always achieved. Another hurdle lay in the need to persuade community members, often hindered by a lack of awareness and understanding of the programs. Furthermore, the curriculum itself presented a challenge, as it incorporated only a limited number of concepts related to school-community partnerships.

(2016) in Zuckerman (2019) elaborate, ‘these partnerships facilitate cooperation, coordination, and collaboration to bolster educational outcomes at the community level by uniting organizations serving children, encompassing non-profit and community entities, business leaders, and philanthropic foundations’ (p. 1).

Behavioral Benefit

Students exhibited positive social behavior while actively participating in community service programs such as health camps, social cleanliness initiatives, and field visits. Their engagement in these activities led to the development of essential life skills, including communication and persuasion abilities, which are crucial for their lifelong journey. Casto and colleagues (2016), as cited in Zuckerman (2019), underscore the importance of ‘thoroughly addressing human development aspects in place-based partnerships to effectively meet the needs of rural communities, which encompass the cultivation of relationships and identity development contributing to community vitality’ (p. 2).

Conclusion

Both the literature and practical experience emphasize the advantages of participatory governance in enhancing students’ learning outcomes. Under the framework of school-community partnership, an array of programs can be organized by the school. The participatory approach fosters creativity and innovation, drawing insights from teachers, parents, students, and the local community, collectively generating ideas on how to engage society for mutual benefit. School-community partnership is inherently reciprocal, requiring both parties to possess persuasive abilities. When mutual agreement is reached, these programs prove beneficial for both the school and the community. The school gains substantial support from the community, while the community reaps the benefits of academic and skill development, which can manifest in both direct and indirect ways.

Ultimately, it is the students' community that reaps the maximum rewards, recognizing that knowledge solely from textbooks is insufficient to navigate life successfully. A well-structured approach, including these programs in the annual calendar, enhances organization, facilitating the attainment of desired outcomes. A school and community in consensus can effectively achieve their mutually beneficial goals. Despite the challenges inherent in implementing such programs, both the school and the community must collaborate to address and overcome these obstacles.

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