A study on parental involvement in higher level of education: voices of parents and students in Pub-Kamrup College and Patidarrang College, Kamrup district.

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Abstract

Through this paper an attempt has been made to bring into light the views, both positive and negative, of parents and students on the desirability parental involvement in higher education level. Education does not only involve acquiring academic qualifications it also involves learning how to be a productive member of society, it involves how to behave in social settings, it involves learning how to figure everyday problems, and so much more. Parents play a very valuable role in their children’s education in and out of the classroom. Because of this reason, parents need to take on the challenge and provide their children the tools they will need in order to be successful in life. Parental involvement in the schools/college is considered to be one of the most definitive predictors of students’ educational success. Parental involvement is “the critical socializing force in for balance development…it is expected to enhance parent-child interactions as well as attachment to school, thus promoting readiness (Reynolds, et. al, 1996, 1123). Many of the preceding researches have greatly emphasized the need and importance of parental involvement in school level education. But the question on desirability of involving parents in education of their children in higher educational stages still remains unanswered. This paper mainly discusses parents’ views on six areas of parental involvement as identified by Epstein and associate (1997) i.e. parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community along with students’ attitudes on other aspects related with parental involvement in education on the basis of study is conducted in two colleges of Kamrup District of Assam using Descriptive Survey Method and Observation Method.

Keywords: Higher education, parental involvement, students’ and parents’ perspective.

1. Introduction

Education is a developmental process, which takes place in an individual as a result of one’s own exposure and interaction with people and other stimuli in the environment. Due to this interaction the individual acquires a mastery of knowledge as well as right attitude, appreciation, skills, thoughts and processes, which enable to utilize the knowledge and prepare the person to live efficiently in the society and contribute to advance the society. Knowledge affects the living and as a consequence one’s education must be continuous to cope with the ever rising problems of ever changing society. All these result from influences of different agencies of education including family, formal institutions of education and social acculturation process.

The role of parents in educational life is a vital issue. House is the source of the most important components for students from early childhood throughout their later developmental phases. Parents enrich the lives of their children inculcating cultural values, proper social attitudes and by means of providing much needed knowledge which contribute to the development of intelligence. Family encourage the child and increase the motivation to learn, and responsible for providing the appropriate conditions.

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A parent can help child deal with lots of issues with their constant guidance and support. A parent actively involves in their child’s development and growth, the same involvement should be applied to their child’s academic development along with various arenas which include overall development of a child, extracurricular activity, sports, physical education and mental education. Parent’s involvement can be an accelerating factor for a child’s development. His / her academic performance will improve and so would be his/her confidence in various other aspects of life.

‘Parent involvement’ is the participation of parents in every facet of children’s education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children’s lives. Parent involvement takes many forms, including:
- Two-way communication between parents, schools.
- Supporting parents as children’s primary educators and integral to their learning.
- Encouraging parents to participate in volunteer work.
- Sharing responsibility for decision making about children’s education, health, and well-being.
- Collaborating with community organizations that reflect schools’ aspirations for all children.

Among educational institutions Colleges and universities are places where students separate from their dependent roles and begin to identify as individuals but the need for parental support may not end when students enter college and young adulthood. The transition from high school and living with parents at home to college and living independently can be stressful for many young adults. Along with adjusting to the college social environment, most students experience increased academic demands. Maintaining a healthy relationship with parents during the college years may be very beneficial to young adults in making their educational and personal growth worthy for meeting individual and societal needs.

2. Location

Kamrup district is an administrative district in the state of Assam of India formed by bifurcation of old Kamrup district in 2003, named after region it constitute. It occupies an area of 4,345 sq. km. Boundaries shared by Kamrup district are- Baksha and Nalbari on North, Kamrup (M) on the east, Meghalaya on the south and Goalpara on the east.

Census date 2011, govt. of India shows that, male literacy rate in this region is- 81.30% while literacy rate of female is 69.47% with a population of 1,517,542 of which male and female were 778,461 and 739,081 respectively and sex ratio is 949 per 1000 male. The study is confined to 2 colleges in Kamrup district of Assam, namely-

a) Pub-Kamrup College,
b) Patidarrang College.
3. **Need of the study**

Parents play a crucial role in both the home and outer formal and informal learning environments. In general, parental involvement is associated with children’s higher achievements, enrolment in more challenging programs, greater academic persistence, better behavior, better social skills and adaptation (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

According to Balli, Demo and Wedman (1998), parental involvement such as attending a parent-teacher conference, volunteering at school, helping with homework, or simply encouraging student achievement, provides an opportunity for the student to gain more achievement, to increase cooperative behavior. In the same vein, Phillips (1992) outlined the association between parental involvement and education, and described the parental involvement in student achievement in three main areas: (a) education at home, both directly and indirectly; (b) socialization, including discipline, parental aspirations and beliefs, and cultural influences; and (c) formal parent-school involvement.

Higher education aims at enabling students to pursue knowledge for finding solution to varied life problems, critical appreciation of achievement and training of men at a really high level for making students adaptive to the emerging complexities of socio-cultural structure. Students at this stage require guidance and support through formal educational institutions and worthy inter-personal relationship with parents. Hence, to study the views of students’ and parents’ on desirability of parental involvement in education hold utmost importance at higher stages of education.

4. **Objectives**

1. To study the students’ desirability of parental involvement in higher educational level,
2. To analyze the views of parents on parental involvement in higher education stage,
3. To identify barriers in parental involvement if any.

5. **Delimitation of the study**

Following are the delimitation in the development of present study-

- The study restricted to a particular area of Kamrup district.
- The study is limited to two higher educational institutions namely, Pub Kamrup college and Patidarrang college.
- In the study attention is given to degree level students only i.e. first three years of higher education after higher secondary level.

6. **Methodology and procedure**

In present study the investigator has used-Descriptive Survey Method and Observation Method to explain educational phenomena in terms of the condition or relationship that exist, opinion that are held by students as well as parents, processes that are going on, effects that are evident and trends that are developing on parental involvement in education.

6.1 **Sample**

To meet the objectives of present study 40 students were selected consisting 20 students from each college along with 40 parents i.e. 20 parents of students from each college using one of the non-probability sampling methods i.e. Judgement Sampling Method on the basis of available information thought to be representative of total population.

6.2 **Tools**

The present study is carried by using following tools-

- **Questionnaire**- The investigator in this study collects necessary information from the sample with the help of two questionnaire schedules comprising of 15 questions each, one for parents’ and other for students.
- **Interview**- The investigator collects needed information by verbal interaction with the sample group to meet the objectives of present study.

7. **Major findings**

Analysis and Interpretation of the findings drawn from the study has been presented as follows-

- **Students’ views**-
  i) In Pub-Kamrup College 65% students desire to get assistance and guidance while 35% students are of the view that parents should not interfere in their independent decisions. In case of Patidarrang College 75% students expressed
  ii) 65% students in Pub-Kamrup College take advice from parents while making decision on important issues while 35% students do not. In Patidarrang College 70% students take seek advice from parents in their decisions while 30% take decisions independently.
iii) 85% students both Colleges consider parental involvement as a factor in enhancement of educational achievement, while 15% do not.

iv) In Pub-Kamrup College 55% students take help of parents in solving problems related to education, while in Patidarrang college percentage of students taking help of parents in educational problems is 60%

v) While studying areas in which students view parental involvement important shows that, Most...
of the students from both of the colleges consider parental involvement essential for fulfillment of psychological needs followed by other areas.

**Table 4:** Percentage of students considering parental involvement as important in various areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas requiring parental involvement</th>
<th>Pub-Kamrup College</th>
<th>Patidarrang College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological need fulfillment</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance in Career planning</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for other activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Fig. 4:**

- **Parents’ views**
  - i) 95% of parents reflect their opinion that good parenting results in good education and 70% of them communicate with their children on major and minor issues related with educational aspects, which shows parents' desirability of involvement in their child's educational efforts.
  - ii) Though 65% of parents help students in home learning through their assistance in curricular activities, in respect of volunteering only 20% parents get opportunity from the college to get involved in educational planning and management.
  - iii) Regarding parents involvement in decision making process of the students 90% parents provide suggestion to their children to choose right path and goal, while the rest consider their children mature enough to take decisions independently.
  - iv) 65% of parents collaborate and coordinate with community through their own resources for socio-cultural and educational growth of students.
  - v) While collecting data on barriers on parental involvement in college level it was observed that majority of parents identified communication gap between children and parent along with lack of opportunity from college authority as the major issue inhibiting involvement of parents in educational efforts, other factors include time constraints, and other.
8. Suggestions

The research work reveals the fact that majority of parents view parental involvement as an important factor in determining appropriate educational development of students in higher educational level. Students from Pub-Kamrup College and Patidarrang College desire to get assistance from parents in their psychological, career related and educational activities and consider parental involvement crucial for academic growth. The U.S. Department of Education, 2004) illustrated that when barriers limit parents from becoming involved, the consequences might affect student’s academic achievement. With respect to this phenomenon certain suggestions can be given which may help in effective parental involvement-

- **Attitude:** Parental attitude affects child’s perceptions and attitude throughout all the stages of development. Parents must show positive attitude towards students’ education so that they remain encouraged in higher educational levels to learn better.

- **Support:** When a child needs help on homework or other special projects, it is their parents that they turn to. Likewise, in higher stages also whenever students’ seek parental support they must provide necessary aid to the best of their ability.

- **Get Involved:** Research reveals that high self-esteem and student achievement are closely related to positive parental involvement in school. When parents get involved in education it can be a motivating factor to the students.

- **Communication:** Parents should try to bridge the gap between parent and child so that young adults can discuss their problems freely with them. They should build up effective communication with college authority including professors, governing body so as to gather information about educational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers in parental involvement</th>
<th>Parents’ views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication gap</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunity from college</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints/Others</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Fig. 5:**

**Table 5:** Percentage of parents identifying various barriers in parental involvement
progress of students.

- **Encouragement:** When parents offer encouragement, they have a positive influence on the student's motivation and confidence in becoming a successful learner. Moreover, parents should:
  - Be aware of the unique challenges and opportunities facing today's college students, including both academic and non-academic expectations for students at the college level.
  - Challenge student to identify, define, and solve problems independently.
  - Support student as he/she faces conditions of uncertainty and provide assistance in solving complex, challenging tasks to promote self-advocacy by allowing student to make decisions independently.

9. **Conclusion**

Colleges and universities have seen an influx of parents being more involved in their student's education. Some argue that this increased involvement is related to a cultural shift toward more involved parenting, but soaring college tuition undoubtedly plays a role as well (Shellenbarger, 2005). Adjusting to college has been marked as an important step in the psychosocial development of individuals as they attempt to develop a cohesive ego identity which depends largely on psychological set up developed under influence of parents.

Responsibility of involving parents in education lies to a large extent on colleges and universities to find positive ways that parents can be involved and invested in the institutions. Parents should be seen as co-partners and a resource for meeting the goals of higher education; colleges and universities would be better served by finding ways to capitalize on parental involvement as opposed to trying to deter it. Most within higher education have heard the term “helicopter parent.” This term often evokes a negative image of a parent who is overly involved in a child’s education. This parent tries to act on the student’s behalf, attempts to solve all of the student’s problems, whether minor or major, for them, and occasionally even becomes involved in areas such as grade appeals and grade negotiation with professors. This type of extreme parental behavior is not desirable and that higher education administrators, faculty, and staff should be cautious in this regard. Colleges and universities must address this situation by determining positive ways parents can be involved in their children’s educational experiences considering the views of students as well as parents on various educational issues.

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