

Importance of School Management Committee in Managing Schools

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Abstract

An effective administration of a school is the most essential prerequisite for its success. A school is treated to be successful if it fulfills the needs of all its stake holders namely - the students, staff, parents, society, government and its service providers. For proper functioning of the schools, the Government of our country has made it mandatory to run the schools through the support of School Management Committee (SMC) placing below the Trust or the Society as the governing agency. Besides, the school management should also make use of certain standard and time-tested management principles and abide by the prevailing national and international norms in subtle way synergizing with the scope of Management Committee of the schools for success of the schools.

Keywords: Management, School Management Committee, Total Quality Management, Government School, Private School, CBSE, CISCE, IGCSE, IB

Introduction

An effective administration of a school is the most essential prerequisite for its success. A school is treated to be successful if it fulfills the needs of all its stake holders namely - the students, staff, parents, society, government and its service providers. A school becomes that much successful as much it makes its stake holders satisfied. And it is possible only by administering the institution well under a dynamic leader. A school management, therefore, needs to have a well-empowered leader on board, needs to adopt right strategies and create a balance in the institution to achieve its mission. And the most important way of creating that essential balance is by having a well composed, powerful and fully functional School Management Committee.

Aims and Objectives of Schools

The objective of schools is to prepare the future citizens of a country by nurturing young children. Schools shape the future of the nation by making young students knowledgeable, skilled, healthy - physically, mentally, emotionally and socially - and self-reliant humans so that they can become responsible partners of growth for the country in future. The schools need to lay the basic

foundation in the lives of the young generation, promote their overall healthy growth and thereby contribute to the progress of the nation.

The State of Elementary Education in India

Our country went into formal and universal education in the eighteenth century during the British East India Company's rule in the country. After the Government of the Great Britain took over the rule of India from the Company, it took its noble task of educating of the common people of India more firmly than ever. The doors of education were thrown open to every citizen of India, irrespective of the cast and creed of the people, during their rule. Then, after the independence of the country, the elementary education was given some more boost. But till today, even after 70 years of our independence, we have not been able to make all our people even literate which places our country as one of the low literacy rate country. The census of India 2010 has recorded the rate of literacy at a mere 74.4%,¹ which by no means could be treated as satisfactory. As to the skill development ratio of India is concerned the state is even more grim. We have more than half of the population of the country plunged below poverty line due to lack of

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employment which is due to lack of proper skill-based education. India is now a country of the largest number and ratio of unskilled and illiterate population.

Spectrum of Private Schools in India

We have about 1.08 million² elementary schools in India today. Out of those, the Government run schools are about 1.04 million and the private run schools are about .04 million³. It means that about 28% of the schools are run by private owners. Out of about 229 million total elementary level students of the country about 79 million students study in private schools. It makes that 35% students are dependent on private run schools⁴. It reveals that about 28% private schools provide education to about 35% students, i.e., proportionately the private schools educate more number of students. It is understandable that if the private schools can improve their quality, a large number of students of our country would be benefitted.

Affiliating Bodies of Schools in India

Majority of the schools of India are controlled by the State Governments as the Education of our country has been placed under the state list. Though recently the education has been positioned under the concurrent list; but other than formulations of major policies the administration of the schools lie under state Governments. Besides the State Education Boards, we have two central boards namely the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). We have two international boards also operating in our country, which are International Baccalaureate (IB) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), operating in our country.

Leadership in Private Schools

The school is a teamwork. Broadly there are two types of human components which function together in the school or for the school. One is the owner's component of the school which is responsible for creation of a school with its vision and monetary investment; and the other one is the functionary's component i.e., the principal of the school and staff who actually make the school function. The owner's component is generally known as the 'management' and the management engages the principal for running of the school. But virtually it is the leadership of the principal which makes a school function and achieve its goal with the financial and material support of the school management.

Provision of School Management Committee

For the proper functioning of schools, the Government of our country has made it mandatory for private owners of the schools to run the schools under registered Charitable Trust or Societies. The Government has made it mandatory to run the schools through the support of School Management

Committee (SMC)⁵, placing below the Trust or Society as the governing agency. The School Management Committee is the body which is comprised of Chairman and such number of number of members which makes the team of odd number not exceeding the number eleven. Generally, the chairman of the Trust or the Society himself or his nominee chairs the body. The committee should have one or two staff representatives, one or two parents' representative and about two eminent educationists as members in it. The eminent educationist is necessarily an experienced principal of the locality holding the responsibility of an institute of similar magnitude so that he can provide more relevant guidance. The Government has bestowed the privilege to the Trust or the Society Chairman to induct the remaining members as per his own discretion, may be from among the other Trustees. The committee should meet at least three times in a year - ideally once in a quarter or even more frequently depending upon the requirement. This committee is expected to deliberate on major issues and frame strategies for its running for the larger interest of the stake holders.

Significance of the School Management Committee

It is believed that it is the appropriate way of running the schools through the School Management Committee. It is considered to be the law making body which decides on the priorities of the institution so that the institution can achieve its goal to the fullest extent. This virtually works as a balancing body. As it is the body which involves some of the stakes holders, this forum could be termed as the people's body. This is a means by which the government has created people's representation in the school administration for the greater benefit of the society.

Present State of Private School Administration in India

It has been observed that most of the private schools of our country do not lay much importance to the practice of School Management Committee supported type of administration. As a result, a great amount of ad-hocism is cropping in in the administration of schools. The Principal of the school is not considered to be the sole leader in the school and the decisions arbitrarily taken by the management are imposed on to him or her thus making the principal lose the most needed professional freedom. There appears to be a perpetual mismatch prevailing between the management and the school head i.e., principal of the school. We often find frequent changes of the school principals and other key personnel resulting in instability in the institution. The most of the schools are therefore failing to satisfy their stake holders.

Other Good Practices for School Administration

As in the corporates, a school management should also

make use of certain standard and time-tested management principles and prevailing national and international norms in subtle way synergizing with the scope of Management Committee of the schools. Following are some areas where some synergy could be created: -

- (a) **Principal as the Director:** The school must have four levels of functional demarcation as – ‘Conceptual Level’, ‘Directional Level’, ‘Supervisory Level’ and the ‘Functional Level’. As to the conceptual level of functions task, which is the futuristic goal setting task, the responsibility goes to the topmost person of the management – may be the Trust head or the School Management Committee head. Remaining all tasks should rest on Principal of the school. He should draft the policies of the school and get them ratified by the School Management at the predetermined periodicity. And once the proposals are given the nods by the committee, the principal should have the privilege and responsibility to implement the decisions in letters and spirit. The principal should be allotted with the resources both financial and human, as approved by the committee. However, the principal should be completely and singularly responsible to the committee for achievement of goals.
- (b) **Principal as the Manager:** A manager in corporate generally needs to perform five tasks. Those tasks are – ‘Planning’, ‘Organizing’, ‘Directing’, and ‘Controlling’ and ‘Communication’. This tasks are inseparable by nature and could be performed better if placed on a single person. The principal of a school is the person who takes the entire responsibility of functioning. Therefore, the Principal of a school should have the position of the General Manager responsible only to the School Management Committee.
- (c) **Principals as the Quality Leader:** In the recent time the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) has emerged. It has reduced the functions of the managements to three as to ‘Plan’, ‘Do’, ‘Study’ and ‘Act’ (PDSA). As per this concept, an organization must have its coined ‘Vision’, ‘Mission’ and ‘Core Values’. In this concept all members of the organization need to join together to fix organization’s vision with the spirit of building the institution. This, in one sense, is the organizational permanent goal to be achieved by the efforts of all. Vision primarily expresses the goal set by the entrepreneur. The next in the order is the Mission. Mission lays down the spirit of the team which all members need to keep in mind. While coining the visions, the members need to adopt some values for the organization which the members need to uphold to help the organization achieve its goal. This is applicable in educational organizations too and the Principal should be supported by the management in

incorporating the TQM principal wherever he or she feels essential.

- (d) **Principals should have Authority along with Responsibility:** It is the golden principle of the management that the ‘Authority’ and ‘Responsibility’ should go hand in hand. It connotes that if a person has been assigned with any responsibility, he should be bestowed with adequate authority to be exercised upon the personnel placed below him for the accomplishment of the tasks. As the principal of a school holds all responsibilities of the school he or she should have complete command over the staff members of the school. He or she may, in turn, delegate certain authority to his subordinates according to the responsibility he or she assigns to the other members of the staff.
- (e) **Adherence to the Legal Principles:** Law has been described as the set of norms created out of the social wisdom for the larger benefit of the society. Law of natural justice is an area of law, the knowledge of which for an administrator is essential for better administrative efficiency. The schools should adhere to some of the norms like-Ignorance of Law is not an excuse. Not to jump into conclusion without sufficient proof. Consider an offender innocent till the guilt is proved. Give an offender ample opportunity to present his case. Let an offender go scot free but no innocent should be punished (in case of lack of sufficient proof) etc. These principles should be used while dealing with the students and personnel of the schools.
- (f) **Adherence to the International and national Norms:** There are sets of norms laid down the by the United Nation’s Organization (UNO) in its charter of human rights. There are several other norms laid down by the National Human Rights, Women’s Rights, Children’s Rights and Animals’ Rights organizations which should be keep in mind while running the administration of schools.
- (g) **Rule of Games should be laid before Game Begins:** It is observed that these days the schools suffer from the attrition of staff as well as the Principals, which is detrimental to the schools’ quality. This sometime happens due to lack of understanding between the employers and employees as to what one should expect what from the other. This mostly happens due to absence of having proper terms. To make an institution function smoothly, a school administration should frame the rules first; and ‘the rules of game should not be changed after the game is begun’ - unless there is mutual agreement. In short, an organization should have the practice of having clear terms for operation and should not have arbitrary and frequent changes of the term.

Conclusion

It is quite possible that if the managements of private schools make it a practice of having functional School Management Committee and internalize the standard management practices, there would certainly be further improvement in their functioning. It would also help the private schools to enhancement of their quality.

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