

School and community partnership in promoting elementary education: A case study of union council Chountra, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

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Abstract: The local communities and School Councils (SC) play a significant role in supporting the schools for successful and effective learning at the elementary level. This study examines the extent of community-school partnership in improving the functioning of elementary schools, and community development through the agency of SC. The main research question of the study was, how school and community mutually guide, interact and support each other for solving the burning issues faced to primary schools in their effective functioning. The case study method with survey technique was applied to conduct this study. Thirteen elementary schools located in Union Council (UC) Chountra, a Sub-Tehsil of district Rawalpindi were taken as an integrated case. The quantitative and qualitative data was gathered through a checklist with five point Likert scale, and a semi-structured interview which were corroborated for analysis to draw findings and conclusions. Analysis revealed that schools are not fully successful in increasing the retention rate for the universalization of elementary education due to poor teachers' commitment, unattractive school buildings, corporal punishment, and parents' deteriorating trust in public schools. Participation of community through the agency of SC in academic, administrative, logistic matters of schools is almost non-functional.

Article History

Received:
February 9, 2021

Last Revised:
April 28, 2021

Accepted:
May 2, 2021

Published:
June 18, 2021

Keywords: local community, school community, elementary schools, primary schools, school-community partnership, school council, students enrolment, students dropout.

How to Cite: Behlol, M. G. & Masood, F. (2021). School and community partnership in promoting elementary education: A case study of union council Chountra, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 5(1), 301-319. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/5.1.20>

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1. Introduction

Communities are primary educators which influence a child's growth in terms of learning and development during the school years and later period of life. Effective parental and Community Partnership (CP) with schools, facilitate utilization of scattered and multi-dimensional communal resources for the wellbeing, education, and proper development of a child (Gregoric, 2013; Epstein, 2010; Okenwa & Igbo, 2013; Aguba, 2009; Okwor, 2008; Cole, 2007). CP in primary school's academic, financial, and administrative management promotes social capital, greater assistance in academic activities, contribution in school committees, increase in fund-raising, provision of logistics facilities (transportation, building, classroom equipment's, furniture, and academic expertise), and address several problems (Tolbert & Theobald, 2006). Schools with a low level of CP show poor results and decision making, failure in developing inclusive plans (Prew, 2009; Tolbert & Theobald, 2006). Henderson and Mapp (2002) highlighted when schools build a partnership with families and parents, they tend to get success in improving students' achievements, and when families and communities make schools accountable, the school district brings positive change in policy, practice, and resources.

Usually, community participation in the affairs of schools through School Councils/Parent Teacher Association/ School Management Committees, etc. provides answerable school policy forum to parents and students to interact and share ideas with the management of a school (Habib, 2014; Ayub, 2001). Research studies reveal that the ties between Schools and Communities in the majority of developing countries of the world are not functional. Lack of CP in primary school functioning negatively influences the quality of education and consequently enhances the rate of dropout. As a result, many primary-age children are out-of-school in the majority of Asian and African countries (Okenwa & Igbo, 2013; Okwor, 2008; Cole, 2007). According to the 2017 Global Education Monitoring report, there are 16 million children who do not have access to primary education, and in sub-Sahara Africa, only 59% of children complete their primary education. According to UNESCO (2007), 50% of primary school students worldwide even don't know how to read and write.

Parental involvement in children's education was effective and functional in Madrassa (Muslim schools) and Petshala (non-Muslims schools) before the arrival of the British in the sub-continent. Well-off community members provide financial assistance to madrassa and Petshala and also realize the importance of education. In this context, the role of the community did exist in the running of educational institutions (Sajjad, 2006). Democratization of education and provision of equal opportunity of basic education for all citizens has put extraordinary pressure on the professionals and also on the national exchequer. Consequently, parents are invited to become more involved with schools as volunteers, helpers in classrooms, and as members of school boards and committees.

CP in schools formally promulgated in 1994 in Pakistan via implementation of Social Action Plan (SAP) in the form of School Management Committees (SMCs). With the formulation of new education policy 2009, School Council (SC) replaced SMCs with new guidelines and responsibilities: monitoring the performance of school teachers, use of school funds, raising local resources, purchasing furniture, enhancement in enrolment, and reduction in dropouts, develop, implement, monitor and review the school plan, collaborate with the other school advisory committee; conduct annual needs assessment; establish an annual meeting calendar; schedule training for members to learn about their roles. Khan (2003) discovered that to make participation effective in primary schools; public sector reforms are needed to be carried out to

build a framework of relationships among parents, teachers, and government officials that is missing in schools. The study also revealed that SC in majorities of schools exists on paper and severely lacking in performing their academic, administrative, supportive role for the effective functioning of primary schools in District Rawalpindi (Khan, 2003).

Ahmad and Ullah (2014) revealed that the extent of CP in the provision of school plants in public primary, secondary schools in District Rawalpindi is low. Community representatives also by and large are not contributing positively to the functioning of school activities and take it merely a formal activity. Lack of awareness, in-time communication, democratic and accountable school policy are the major challenges that affect the performance of CP in schools in Pakistan (Habib, 2014; Ahmed & Obaid-Ullah, 2014; Sajjad, 2006; Hussain & Naz, 2013). Performance of SCs in girls' primary schools located in Rawalpindi district is also found worse about parenting skills, in assisting families about child-rearing, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children. Parents play a significant role in helping primary age children to reach school in time, and also teachers may guide families to support the child in homework is almost missing on the part of schools and community in the primary schools of Rawalpindi district (Bibi, 2011).

Communication between home-to-school and school-to-home is also nonexistent because of parents' engagements in job and agriculture activities; and also on the perceptions of teachers that communication of school policies and practices to parents may create administrative and official problems. In this way, the learning problems of the students that demand their participation in form of continuous communication flow are missing (Sajjad, 2006). Families and parents may grant volunteering services in an academic, administrative and logistic matter to support the school that was also found nowhere. This disconnect between school and community is also affecting the performance of primary schools located in the Rawalpindi district. The reasons for disconnection between community and school have not been focused On in the previous studies.

The above-mentioned scenario demanded to dig deep by choosing the convenient area for studying the extent and problems of community-school partnership in improving the functioning of elementary schools through the agency of SC. It will be a step forward to increase the retention rate of students, improving literacy, and provision better places at schools for the teacher to work. The main question of the study is how do school and community partnership support each other in dealing with the challenges faced by primary schools in their effective operation?

2. Theoretical framework

Epstein (2010) presented the framework for school, family, and community partnership consisting of six factors: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The framework is on the conflation of activities that together represent effective parental involvement in their children's schooling that is also used by Adams *et al.*, (2009). In this study, the context of parental involvement means a situation in which parents are perceived as active partners in the process of educating their children. It is awareness of, and achievement in, school work, an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013; Mncube, 2010). Similarly, according to Domina (2005) and Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* (2001)

parents' participation is helping their children with homework, holding parent-teacher interviews, conducting parent nights, having special consultations on the child's problems, teaching for understanding, volunteering in classroom and outside activities and holding parent councils. Empirical evidence reveals an important link between parental involvement and the educational achievement of children based on the Episteme framework (Sheng, 2012; Studsrod & Bru, 2009; Symeou, 2007; Damle, 2006; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

- 2.1. Parenting: Schools need to help families and assist them with those parenting skills that may guide them to know better about their child, understand the developmental needs of the child and also of adolescence. Schools assist families so that they create such an environment at home where their children can learn better.
- 2.2. Communicating: Schools need to assist families and communicate with them to share school programs and their children's progress. The creation of two-way communication is necessary between school and home.
- 2.3. Volunteering: *Schools* enable community members to volunteer and participate in training activities and to support the school for the betterment of students.
- 2.4. Learning at Home: Teachers can design homework, tasks, and activities for students so that they can learn at home. Parents need to be encouraged so that they get involved with their children in academic learning at home.
- 2.5. Decision Making: School councils, improvement teams, school community committees, and parent organizations need to develop through which parents need to be involved in decision-making regarding school governance and advocacy.
- 2.6. Collaborating with the Community: School and community need to coordinate with each other, especially in terms of resource provision to each other including business, cultural and civic organizations.

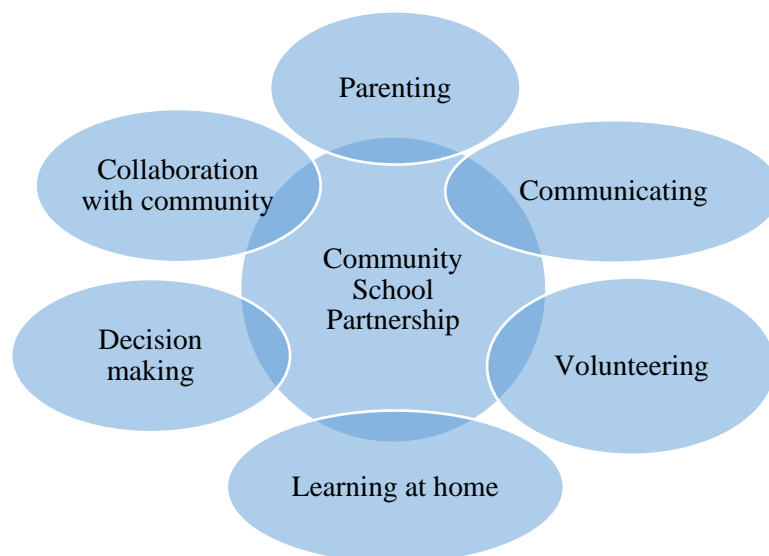


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

3. Methodology of the study

3.1. Method of the study

An integrated case study with a survey method was applied to investigate the problems and the extent of community and school partnership in the functioning of elementary schools through

the agency of SC. According to Cresswell (2013), descriptive-survey research defines what exists in a natural setting. Mix method was used to gather data to address the research questions of the study relating to the community and school partnership.

3.2. Design and instruments

There were two phases in the study; in the first phase, the researcher collected quantitative data by using five points Likert scale and checklist. The rating scale is attached in the annexure. It was also validated by the experts and pilot tested before administration. Reliability indicates the consistency of the relationship between items of the scale. Reliability of individual factors identified that each category had a different number of items with a high level of consistency (0.92). A checklist was used to examine the building condition, student-teacher ratio, dropout-rate, and missing facilities. It was finalized after studying the checklist used by Zepatou *et al.* (2016), and also consultation with the working teachers.

Based on quantitative results, the researcher decided to conduct semi-structured interviews of teachers and community leaders to crosscheck the quantitative data and comprehend the holistic picture of elementary schools and community partnerships. A formal letter on the behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and three follow-up visits were made to get permission for the collection of data from Executive Education Officer Rawalpindi. The volunteer was trained to visit schools to collect the data.

3.3. Population and participants

The target population of the study was the heads and teachers of primary schools, notable community members, and parents of the students studying in the primary schools of UC Chountra. One UC (Chountra) as an integrated case out of 120 UCs of Tehsil Rawalpindi was selected for the interventions of the study. Reasons for the selection of UC were that it is a backward area of the Tehsil, and the researcher also belongs to this area that may help in getting the support of the schools and community to carry out the study. The notable people of UC are quite familiar with the researcher because of living in the area of parents and grandparents for a long time and also primary schooling in the same UC.

A senior staff member who was designated by head of the school filled the checklist. There were thirteen schools in the UC and in this way the data relating to Checklist was collected in five visits. 56 teachers and 20 community members/parents responded on the rating scale. Teachers were the head and most senior members of the school. The academic qualification of teachers was from graduation (14 Years) to MA (16 Years) with a Certificate of Teaching or B.ED or M.ED as a professional qualification. Five teachers and five community members were interviewed to cross-check the data. Two of the teachers were BA, B.ED, two were MA, B.ED and one of them was MA, M.Ed. Gender-wise, there were three male and two female teachers. Male community members were interviewed having different qualifications, ages, and professions.

4. Analysis of the data

Quantitative data were analyzed by calculating frequencies, percentages, and mean. To determine the effectiveness/significance of the statements on the Likert scale, the cut-off score method was used. The qualitative data was collected with semi-structured interviews were

recorded, transcribed, coded, and refined. Trustworthiness was checked by sending back the interview script to the respondents again. Thematic analysis was done for the qualitative data. The thematic analysis aimed to identify themes in the study which are relevant to the study and interest the researcher (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2013).

4.1. Demographic information and school profile

The data was gathered by using a Checklist regarding *school building, classroom situation, school furniture, computer facilities, basic needs facilities, use of learning material for teaching, and learning environment*. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and presented in the form of tables and graphs. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers and five community members and audio recorded. The duration of each interview was 30-35 minutes.

Table-1: Demographic information about schools (UC Chountra)

S.#.	Establishment Year	School Name	Number of teachers	Number of students	Number of private schools
1	1800-1900	GBES Chountra 1804(1989)	16	347	3
2	1901-1947	GBPS Bhall 1917 (1988)	6	164	3
		GPS Adhawal 1927 (2007)	5	128	7
3	1948-1970	GGPS Mohra 1962 (2012)	7	118	2
		GPS Salmon 1967	6	214	1
		GPS Chak Saghuo 1970	3	83	Nil
4	1971-2000	GBPS Mohra 1972	2	56	1
		GPS Parri 1973	4	39	1
		GGPS Chokar 1979	3	62	Nil
		GPS Dhok Mirza 1980	4	74	Nil
		GPS Ghalwal 1987 (1991)	2	27	Nil
		GPS Hoon	5	90	2
		GES Hoon	9	77	2
5	1800-2017	13	72	1479	22

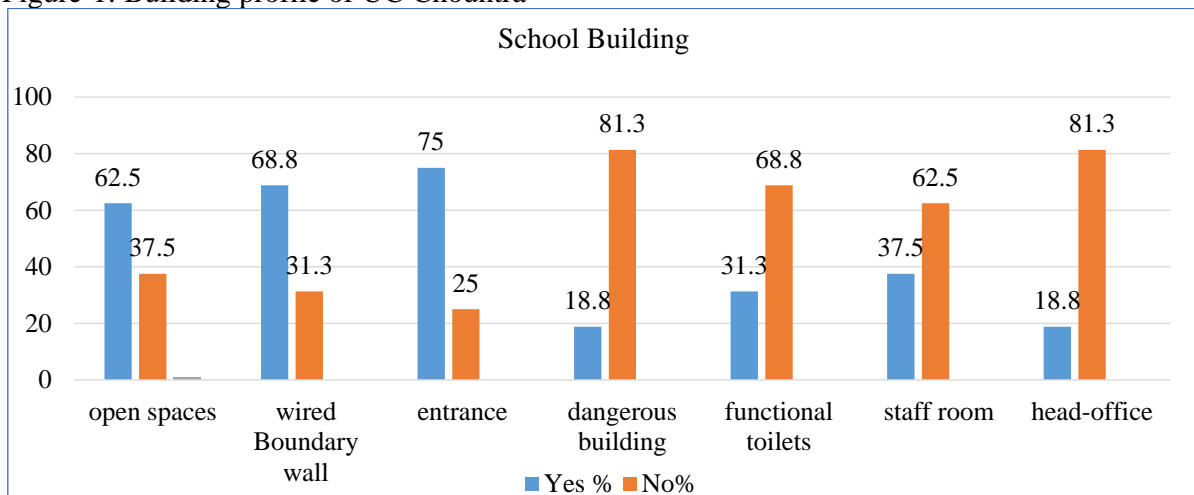
The data revealed that there were 13 schools, 72 teachers, 1479 students in UC Chountra along 22 private schools. The first school in the UC Chountra was established in 1904. The teacher-student ratio was 1:21.

Table-2: Overall Teacher-student and teacher school ratio

Schools	Teachers	Students	Teacher-student ratio	Teacher school ratio
13	72	1479	1:21	1:6

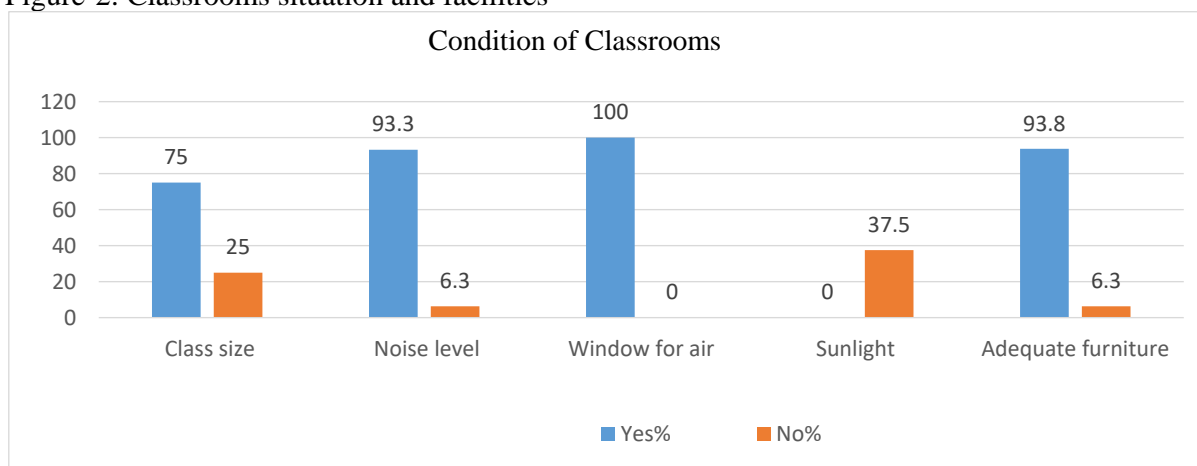
The figure-1 shows the percentage of responses regarding the condition of the school building in UC Chountra. 81.3% of respondents said that there is no separate office for the head of school and 67% said that toilets are not in working condition, 37.5% respondents viewed that there is a lack of open spaces, 31.3% respondents expressed the unavailability of wired boundary wall in their school, 25% held the opinion that school entrance is not identifiable, 18.8% respondents agreed that the school building is declared dangerous and 62.5% viewed no staffroom for teachers.

Figure-1: Building profile of UC Chountra



The figure-2 illustrated the condition of the classroom in UC Chountra. It is deduced from the graph that there are airy windows in the classroom with 100% response. As the graph depicts, 25% of respondents said that the class size is not appropriate, 6.3% viewed there is no control of noise, and 37.5% of respondents highlighted the unavailability of sunlight. However, the overall condition of classrooms is adequate. Qualitative data reveals that, the majority of participants of the study were not satisfied with the condition of the school building due to few and bad conditions of toilets. They agreed that the majority of the schools have no proper playground for students, staff room for teachers, and office for the head of the institution. Majority of the participants were of the view that although there are airy windows in the classrooms, however, it is difficult to teach two classes in one room. One of the participants said that it creates disturbance and produces noise while teaching. They also viewed that certain buildings are not in appropriate conditions.

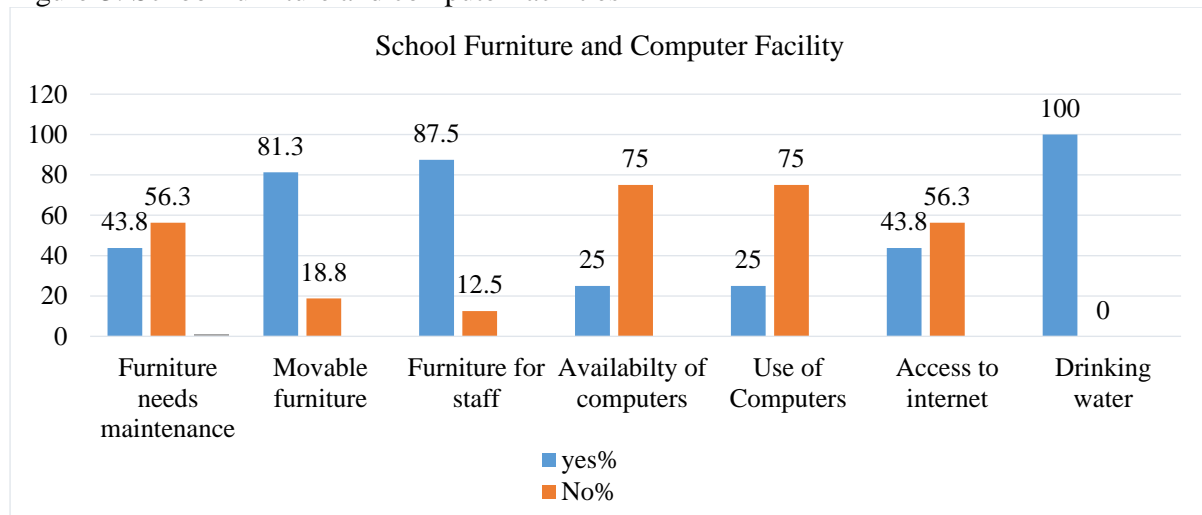
Figure-2: Classrooms situation and facilities



The figure-3 illustrated the condition of school furniture and availability of computer facility in UC Chountra. About 43.8% of the respondents agreed that the furniture need maintenance, 18.8% showed that furniture was not moveable. Around 12.5% of respondents held the view that furniture for staff is not adequate, and 75% of respondents stated that there is the unavailability of computers for instructions and 56.3% stated about the lack of internet access. However, all 100% of respondents were agreed that clean drinking water is available in their

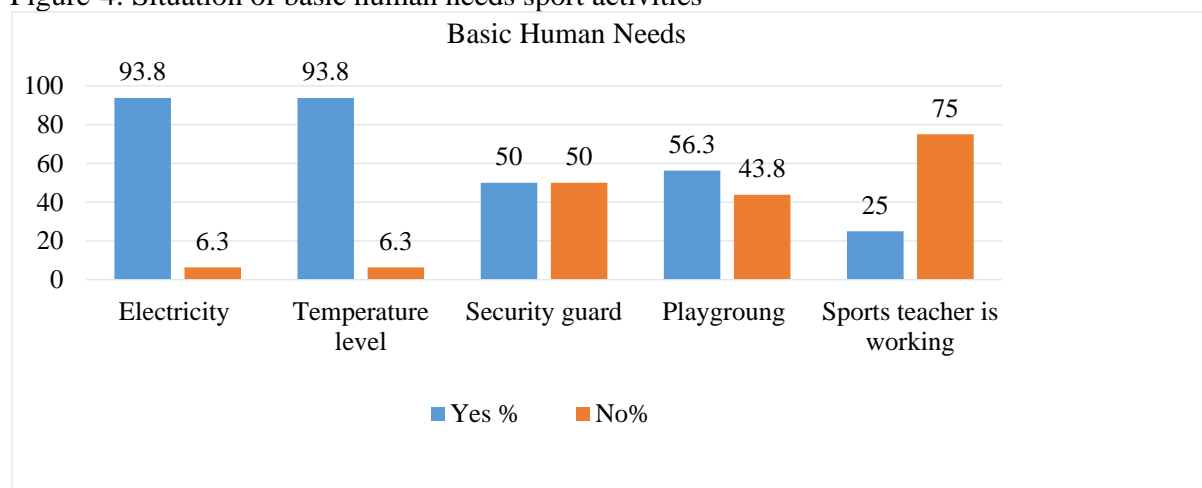
school. Participants of the study were asked in interviews to share their views regarding school furniture and computer facilities. Three of the participants shared the same views that furniture need maintenance, however, all of them were agreed that furniture is not moveable and cannot meet the need of special students. All the participants were of the view that they have just a few computers in their school and they are not utilizing them for instructional purposes. Participants also agreed that they have no internet facility in their school.

Figure-3: School furniture and computer facilities



The figure-4 illustrated the availability of basic human needs in UC Chountra. About 50% of the respondents said that guard is available for security while 25% said that sports teacher is working in school and 75% respondents highlighted that sports teacher is not working in their schools. Around 43.8% responded that there is no availability of well-managed playgrounds.

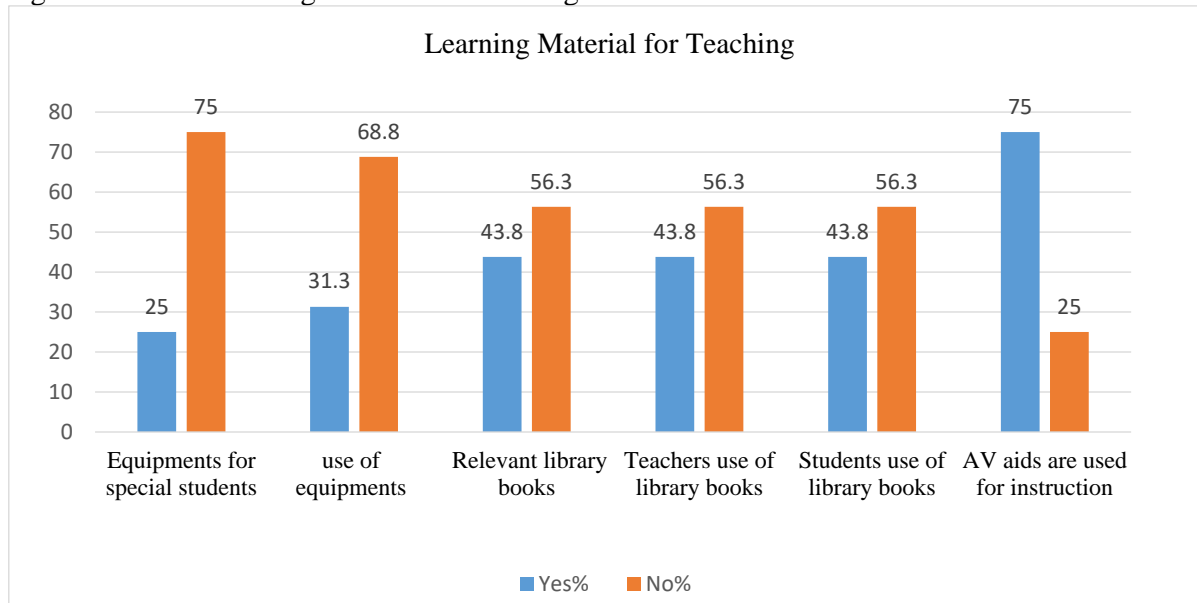
Figure-4: Situation of basic human needs sport activities



The figure-5 illustrated the usage of learning material for teaching in UC Chountra. About 75% of respondents said that facilities are not available for special students, 68.8% said that special equipment is not used to teach students with special needs. 56.3% said that library material is relevant and used by teachers and students. In qualitative data, majority of the participants were of the view that the school had no facility to meet the needs of the students. There is no special equipment and AV aids in the schools that could be used for special students. One of the

participants viewed that “students with special needs not be adjusted in the mainstream schools because we have to cover the syllabus and show the results and usually suffer because of these students” Four of the participants said that there is no setup of the proper library that teachers or students can use in the teaching-learning process. All the participants highlighted that classroom walls are adequate to display students' work, however, they were of the view that there is not enough space in classroom for conducting any activity that is why they just focus on teacher-centred teaching method.

Figure-5: Use of learning material for teaching



4.2. Community school partnership

Likert scale was used to identify community-school partnerships. The questionnaire consists of different constructs that include: *parenting and awareness about the role of SC, volunteering, learning at home, the role of school for community development, and community-school collaboration*. Descriptive statistics were applied to calculate the percentage and mean score. Based on the scores on the scale which were from 1-4, it was estimated that on a continuum from 1 to 4 mean 3 or above shows a high level of agreement and acceptable while below 3 shows a low level and is not acceptable. The table-3 reveals that respondents are aware of the functions of SC, and it is also operative in school. Its meetings are organized regularly and minutes are recorded. The mean value of all the items is above 3 that is acceptable.

Table-3: Awareness about the role of school council

S.no	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
1	Aware of the functions of SC	6.3	00	31.3	62.5	3.50
2	SC is operative in our school	6.3	00	00	93.8	3.87
3	SC meeting are regularly conducted	00	00	18.8	81.3	3.81
4	Meeting minutes are recorded	00	00	6.3	93.8	3.93
5	The aggregate mean of the table relating to awareness about SC					3.8

4.2.1. Awareness about the role of SC

The participants of the study were asked whether they were aware of the role of SC. Three of

the participants shared that they even do not know about any SC working in their school. All the participants shared the same view that they even not got any training to perform the role for SC. Participants also agreed that no meeting of SC held in their school on regular basis. According to the views of participants, SC needs to be restructured and they need training. The table-4 shows that respondents of UC Chountra were of the view that they need training as the aggregate mean value was found 2.5. The lowest mean value was 1.93 that required restructuring of SC according to the views of respondents.

Table-4: Training to perform functions of school council

S.no	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
6	Got training to perform my role effectively in SC	37.5	12.5	12.5	37.5	2.50
7	Duration of training was sufficient enough	31.5	00	37.5	31.5	2.68
8	Topics covered in training are need of the participants	31.5	00	31.5	37.5	2.75
9	The resource person was competent to conduct training	25	00	25	50	3.00
10	SC need to be restructured	50	12.5	31.5	6.3	1.93
11	Aggregate mean of the table relating to training					2.5

Table 5 shows that majority of respondents were of the view that the community did not provide any support in the provision of books (mean value: 1.87); in the provision of furniture (mean value: 1.43); provision of building material (mean value: 2.00); in the provision of funds (mean value: 2.12); in teaching different subject (mean value: 1.37); in running library (mean value: 1.31), in the provision of accommodation (mean value: 2.2). Aggregate mean (2.22) showed that there is no support of the community and school council for academic and development activities of schools. Qualitative data support quantitative data as, one of the participants viewed that “majority of parents do not contact school because of repeated calls from the school side because of job engagements or agriculture work activities.”

Table-5: Community and SC support for academic and development activities of schools

S.#.	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
12	Observed positive changes after establishment of SC	6.3	00	25	68.8	3.62
13	Members of PTA/SC create administrative problems	62.5	12.5	18.8	6.3	1.68
14	Teaching process is affected during PTA/SC meetings	81.3	6.3	12.5	00	1.31
15	Community support in provision of books	56.3	6.3	31.3	6.3	1.87
16	Community support in provision of furniture	75	12.5	6.3	6.3	1.43
17	Community support in provision of building materials	43.8	18.8	31.3	6.3	2.00
18	Community support in provision of funds	37.5	18.8	37.5	6.3	2.12
19	Community support in teaching different subjects	68.8	25	6.3	00	1.37
20	Community support in providing scholarship	50	18.8	18.8	12.5	1.93
21	Community support in running the school library	81.3	6.3	12.5	00	1.31
22	Com. support in providing accommodation to teachers	50	6.3	37.5	6.3	2.00
23	Com. support in monitoring and supervising teachers	18.8	12.5	18.8	50	3.00
24	Community support in maintaining school discipline	00	12.5	56.3	31.3	3.18
25	Community support to encourage their children specially girls to get education	00	12.5	37.5	50	3.37
26	Com. support in provision of counselling to students	25	00	25	50	3.25
27	Aggregate mean of table related to community and SC support for academic and development activities of schools					2.22

The percentage of participant responses and aggregate mean (3.2) shows in table 6 that they are satisfied with the role of school playing for community development except with the statement that School allows the community to make use of their playgrounds for games (2.43)

and cultural activities (2.50). The community members were asked about the role of school in community development. They shared that the school did not allow using of their playgrounds for games and cultural activities. Four participants said that school is neither playing any role to educate parents about daily living skills nor giving any information to parents on creating a “learning-friendly” environment at home. All the participants highlighted that School did not educate the community about important special issues (Child labour, child abuse, harsh behaviour, drug addiction, etc.).

Table-6: Role of school for community development

S.#.	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
28	School allows the community to use school playground for games	37.5	12.5	18.8	31.3	2.43
29	School allows community to use school building for cultural activities	31.3	18.8	18.8	31.3	2.50
30	School educates community about important and special issues (child labour, child abuse, harsh behaviour, drug addiction etc.)	00	6.3	18.8	75	3.68
31	School educates parents about daily living skills	6.3	6.3	18.8	68.8	3.50
32	School consults parents about learning difficulties of students	00	6.3	18.3	75	3.68
33	School gives parents ideas and information on creating “learning-friendly” environment.	6.3	6.3	18.8	68.8	3.50
34	Aggregate mean of table related to role of school for community development					3.2

Table-7 shows that respondents were satisfied with the communication held between school and community. Respondents agreed that School-community schedules parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress. It was further identified that schools inform parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day to talk about their child’s learning. The mean value of all the items is above 3 that is acceptable. However, respondents highlighted the need to train school staff on the value of and need for building effective communication between parents and the community (2.93). The respondents agreed that the school-community did not schedule parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress. Four of the participants shared that the school did not give families information about skills required for their children in each subject.

Table-7: Communication between school and community

S.#.	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
35	School-community schedules parent-teacher-student conferences	00	00	25	75	3.75
36	Inform parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day	00	00	43.8	56.3	3.56
37	Provides ways for parents to share school programs and activities through mobile and oral communication	00	6.3	31.3	62.5	3.56
38	Train school staff on the value of and need for building effective communication	6.3	25	37.5	31.3	2.93
39	Aggregate score of table related to communication between school and community					3.45

Table-8 shows that respondents agreed with the statements about school support for learning at home. Respondents were of the view that school provides families information about how to keep track of, discuss and support schoolwork at home (3.56); school gives families

information about skills required for their children in each subject (3.75). The mean value of all the items is above 3 that is acceptable.

Table-8: School support for learning at home

S.No.	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
40	School provides families information about how to keep track of, discuss and support schoolwork	6.3	6.3	12.5	75	3.56
41	School gives families information about skills required for their children in each subject	00	00	25	75	3.75
42	School makes families aware of resources and programs in the community that promote learning	00	12.5	25	62.5	3.50
43	The school staff is open to suggestions from community to promote learning	00	00	50	50	3.50
44	Aggregate score of table related to school support for learning at home					3.6

Table-9 shows that respondents agreed that parents play their role to improve school results (3.81) and increasing the admission rate (3.00). The mean value of all the items is above 3 that is acceptable. However, it is identified from the data that Parents are not playing their role to check the dropout rate (2.62).

Table-9: School support for volunteering services

S.#.	Items	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE	Mean
45	Parents play their role to improve school result	00	00	18.8	81.3	3.81
46	Parents play their role to increase admission rate	00	37.5	25	37.5	3.00
47	Parents play their role to check the dropout rate	18.8	25	31.3	25	2.62
48	School schedules events at different times of the day and evening so all parents can attend	6.3	12.5	25	56.3	3.31
49	School trains volunteers so their time is used effectively	6.3	6.3	43.8	43.8	3.25
50	School recognizes volunteer for their time and efforts.	00	6.3	37.5	65.3	3.50
51	School encourages families, students and community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways.	6.3	6.3	43.8	43.8	3.25
52	School provides opportunity to work with local business, parks, museums, libraries and civic groups to enrich students and adult learning and skills.	00	6.3	37.5	56.3	3.50
53	Aggregate mean score					3.28

4.2.2. Causes of dropout

Teachers elaborated that poor infrastructure, insufficient teaching staff, corporal punishment are the problems faced by government schools that are the cause of the dropout. Few teachers mentioned that migration of families toward city areas and poverty is also one of the causes of leaving school. Other problems include lack of clean drinking water, teaching and learning aids, and cooperation from parents are the major problems of government schools.

The teachers suggested that there should be door-to-door visits to convince parents to send their children to government schools. They also suggested the provision of sufficient teaching staff, subject specialist teachers, cooperation of parents and the community to increase the admission rate in government schools. They suggested that government should provide the necessary learning facilities and equipment in government schools so the parents and children may be attracted to take the admission and stay there.

5. Discussion and findings

Quantitative and qualitative results are corroborated to discuss the problems and the extent of community-school partnership and conditions of elementary schools in UC Chountra. It revealed that toilets were available but mostly not in working condition. Separate office for the school-head and staffroom for teachers were also not available. Unavailability of the resources are recognized, it is the responsibility of the government and also guaranteed in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan to work more diligently in the provision of the required accessories to the primary schools, but it could not be materialized due to financial crunch and education as the least priority (UNESCO, 2007).

Community support and partnership in facilitating schools in the provision of books, furniture, and funds were also missing. It is confirmed by the studies conducted by Gregoric (2013); Okenwa & Igbo (2013); Epstein (2010); Aguba (2009); Okwor (2008); Cole (2007) that efficient functioning of primary schools without parental and Community Partnership (CP) is not possible. The Well-being, education, and proper development of a child depends on the engagement of the community that is missing in the primary schools of Pakistan. It is a big challenge for academic, managerial, and financial matters of primary schools that consequently affects the improvement of primary education.

The respondents also emphasized the need for a sports teacher and functional playgrounds for the exercise and physical development of the students. It is a famous saying that a sound body has a sound mind. The rush of communities to cities in the majority of the developing countries has left very little space for the playgrounds (Nasira, 2010; Khan, 2003; UNESCO, 2007). It may negatively influence not only the physical but also intellectual development of the primary grade students, and consequently increase the rate of children dropout from schools (Okenwa & Igbo, 2013; Okwor, 2008; Cole, 2007). Pakistan has yet to achieve the target of universalization of primary education and almost 20 million primary age children are out of schools (Economic Survey Report, 2019).

The availability and use of library books were also contradicted at the qualitative phase in comparison to the quantitative analysis of the study. Teachers and students are not found visiting the libraries for reading books. The community support is neither harnessed nor done in the provision, managing, and utilization of library resources. Volunteering role on the part of SC and community to collect books from individuals and organizations for the school library and organizing seminars to promote reading culture in teachers and students were also missing. According to Gregoric (2013) and Epstein (2010), training for volunteering services for the SC and community is essential that establish confidence-building measures for the community to participate in the academic and administrative activities of the school. It is almost non-existent in primary schools of Pakistan because teachers and community are at the opposite end of the partnership and severely lacking confidence in each other.

Reasons for leaving government schools are lack of trust of parents due to teachers' absenteeism, incompetency, lack of cleanliness, and use of corporal punishment, migration of families toward cities, and teachers' lack of commitment. These facts and figures signal the neglect of the rural schools in terms of the provision of basic infrastructural needs from the Government side. Apart from the government support, sustainable school improvement is not possible without the participation of the local community and stakeholders in decision-making in the best interest of children (UNESCO, 2007). According to Epstein (2010); Georgiou,

(2007); Adams *et al.* (2009), parental involvement means active participation in the process of educating their children. It is awareness of, and achievement in, school work, an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress. It may help to check teacher absenteeism, learning difficulties, and corporal punishment (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013; Mncube, 2010). Lack of participation on the part of the community in primary schools may bring forth teacher absenteeism, poor parenting skills, unawareness about child developmental needs and learning difficulties.

The quantitative data established that the SC is operative in conducting regular meetings, and also SC members are trained and competent enough to perform their role in facilitating school in academic, logistic financial support activities. However, at the qualitative phase, participants shared that they even don't know about any SC working in their schools. They viewed SC is required to be restructured and staff is required to be trained. According to Epstein (2010), when SCs are in existence for three years and supported with training, they increase the community involvement in school and thus influence the quality and quantity of family and community connections in the school. The schools are representative of the community and a positive relationship between the both has utmost importance for their development (Cole, 2007; Okenwa & Igbo, 2013; Okwor, 2008). The same type of situation has been identified in some Asian and African countries where policies and program initiatives exist only on paper not on the ground (World Bank, 2006).

Quantitative data revealed that school administration through the platform of SC communicate and arrange parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress, inform parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day to talk about their child's learning. However, qualitative data highlighted that schools did not provide ways for parents to share school programs and activities through mobile messages and oral communication. The phenomena presented in the study about the communication blockade among the community, parents, and school does not only exist in Pakistan but also the grim realities of the majority of the developing Asian and African countries. It is required to be addressed by taking realistic policy measures supported by follow-up supervisory and monitoring mechanisms (World Bank, 2006).

Moreover, the participants said that school is neither playing any role in educating parents about the daily living skills nor giving any information to parents on creating a "learning-friendly" environment at home. It is required that the community leaders (parents, religious leaders, local body's representatives, PTA) and teachers may realize the importance of community resources and input for the effective functioning of the school plant, and cooperate for the wellbeing, education, and proper development of the child. According to Aguba (2009); Ngoka (2003); Nwangwu (2007); Okwor (2008); without building partnership between school and community that may enhance parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community; effective functioning of primary schools will be very difficult that consequently creates problem in the process of development and well-being of students.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The study concluded that schools are not fully successful in increasing the retention rate for the universalization of elementary education. The reasons behind leaving government schools

are mainly lack of trust of parents due to teachers' absenteeism, incompetency, lack of cleanliness, use of corporal punishment, migration of families toward cities, and teachers' lack of commitment. These facts and figures signal the neglect of the rural schools in terms of the provision of basic infrastructural needs from the Government side. The study also concluded that, apart from government support, sustainable school improvement is not possible without the participation of the local community and stakeholders in decision-making in the best interest of children. Parental involvement is mandatory, it means that, active participation of parents in the process of educating their children. Parents must have the awareness of, school work, an understanding of the interaction, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress. It may help to check teacher absenteeism, learning difficulties, and corporal punishment. Lack of participation on the part of the community in primary schools may bring forth teacher absenteeism, poor parenting skills, unawareness about child developmental needs, and learning difficulties.

The findings of the study recommends that SC may be restructured to utilize formal and informal channels of communication in bringing school and community closer to each other for the efficient functioning of primary schools and promoting education of communities. The sensitization campaign and seminars are suggested to be arranged frequently to find out the ways to enhance parenting, communication, learning at home, and volunteering for building effective collaboration and partnership between primary schools and universities. For this purpose, immediate policy measures are suggested to be taken, and its implementation may be ensured through collective social participation of the community, parents, teachers, and community representatives.

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Annexure: Survey Questionnaire

School Name: _____
 UC Name: _____ Village: _____
 Respondent status: (A) Teacher (B) Community member (C) Parent
 Profile of Respondent:
 Age: (A) Between 20-25 (B) Between 25-30 (C) Between 30-35
 (D) Between 35-40 (E) 40 and above
 Gender: (A) Male (B) Female
 Academic Qualification: (A) BA/BS (B) MA (C) MPhil (D) PhD (E) Continued ____
 Professional Qualification: (A) _____ (B) _____
 Profession: (in case of community member): _____

S.#.	Item description	NAA	VL	TSE	TGE
Awareness about the role of school council					
1	I know the functions of school council				
2	School council is operative in our school				
3	School council conducts meetings regularly in my school				
4	Meeting minutes are regularly recorded				
5	I have got training to work in school Council				
6	Duration of my training is sufficient enough				
7	Topics covered in the training are need of the participants				
8	Resource person was competent enough to conduct training				
9	I felt changes after the establishment of PTA/School council?				
10	Members of PTA/school council create administrative problems				
11	The teaching process is affected during PTA meetings				
12	School councils need to be restructured				
Contributions of community in school development					
13	Community support in provision of books				
14	Community support in provision of furniture				
15	Community support in provision of School building- materials				
16	Community support in provision of funds				
17	Community support in teaching different subjects				
18	Community support in providing scholarship to students				
19	Community support to run school library during working hours				
20	Community support in providing accommodation to teachers				
Contributions of community in maintaining discipline					
21	Community support in monitoring and supervising teachers				
22	Community support in maintaining school discipline				
23	Community support to encourage their children specially girls to get education				

24	Community support in provision of counselling to students				
Contributions of schools for development of community					
25	School allows community to make use of play grounds for games				
26	School allows the community to make use of their play grounds and building for cultural activities				
27	School educates community about important social issues (Child labour, child abuse, harsh behaviour, drug addiction, and etc.)				
28	School educates parents about daily living skills				
29	School consult parents about learning difficulties of students				
30	School gives parents ideas and information on creating a “learning-friendly” environment at home.				
Communication					
31	School-community schedules parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress				
32	Informs parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day to talk about their child’s learning.				
33	Provides ways for parents to share school programs and activities through mobile messages and oral communication				
34	Train school staff on the value of and need for building effective ties with parents and the community.				
Learning at home					
35	School provides families information about how to keep track of, discuss, and support schoolwork at home				
36	School gives families information about skills required for their children in each subject.				
37	School makes families aware of resources and programs in the community that promote learning.				
38	The school staff is open to suggestions from parents and the community to promote learning				
39	Parents play their role to improve school result				
40	Parents play their role to increase admission rate				
41	Parents play their role to check the dropout rate				
Volunteering					
42	School schedules events at different times of the day and evening so all parents can attend				
43	School trains volunteers so their time is used effectively				
44	School recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts				
45	School encourages families, students, and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (tutoring, assisting with activities, giving talks, etc.)				
46	School provides opportunity to work with local businesses, parks, museums, libraries, and civic groups to enrich student and adult learning and skills				

NAA: Not at all

VL: Very little

TSE: To some extent

TGE: To great extent