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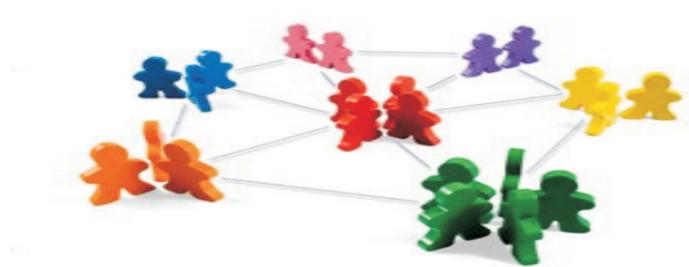
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SOCIAL CAPITAL: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PERSONNEL OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



Nivedita¹ and ²Megha Khattar

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, India.

²Ph.D student, Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, India

ABSTRACT

“Social capital refers to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993, pp.35). Educational institutions are highly clutched in the social mesh. And here, social capital has been considered a kind of door – way to the development of the individuals working in institutions. This conceptual paper will discuss the relationship of social capital and of personnel of educational institution regardless to any particular educational level. And Robert Putnam’s theory will be followed to develop a general conceptual framework, in order to identify the benefits of social capital to the personnel of educational institutions.

KEYWORDS :Social capital, Personnel, Educational Institution.

INTRODUCTION

Education has always repeatedly and intentionally been associated with higher levels of social capital at both the individual and aggregate levels (Hall 1999; Putnam, 2000; Bynner and Egerton, 2001).

“In a school rich in social capital, the high levels of trust generate a collaborative culture and strong networks among the organization's members and stakeholders, High levels of social capital in a school strengthen its intellectual capital.” (Hargreaves, 2001, pp. 5-6)

In the social science researches, many studies have been conducted to find out the importance

and impact of social capital on the children. Recently, some educational specialist have begun to think about the role that social capital fulfils in the life of personnel of the educational institution – in other words, the social networks among staff or faculty and their administrative or authority (David Halpern, pp.158). The fact cannot be denied that work has always been an important part in an individual life whether they are working in any company, firm, mall or in any educational institution. Every working organization has an indispensable effect on the social and personal life of the worker. Putnam (2000, pp 86) mentions few of the social scientists in his book “Bowling alone” to prove that most of the networks are built easily at the work place such as, Jeremy Toole, Georgia estimated that works places provides the 90 percent of the social relations and networks to the individuals. Hamilton, Oklahoma, “*I think people’s lives revolve around their work. They make their friends at work, they do their community service through work.*” And Massachuatts added, “*I feel very much like I belong to a community of work...to a community with my own office, with my own company, within my own industry.*” **And Russell Hochschild** further says that, the minority of the people in America, living in their families like with wife and kids, likes to stay at work place for most of the time because it is like sanctuary to them from the tensions of marriage, kids and household chores (Putnam 2000, pp.86)

Today's work organizations try to stimulate social capital by ideal conditions which can bring them closer and could generate the regular collaborative and cooperative relations among workers. Many people enjoy close and rewarding friendship, have feelings of togetherness among colleagues and avails the benefits of mutual obligations, help and reciprocity at their work places (Putnam 2000, pp. 87). People have shifted their friendship, civilian conversions, and social ties from the front porch to the water cooler (Putnam 2000, pp.85). As the Cox stated (1995) the exact cause of this relationship, is not fully understood. Most straightforwardly, it may be that the institutes, like the family and friend circle, plays an important role in creating social norms, ties and the skills of reciprocity. Workers' life get affected directly or indirectly by social trust, solidarity, communication, participation, communication through their friends which provides and receives back care, fondness, membership acceptance and involvement in a significant social group. The healthy social relationship can reinforce the staff. They get motivated and feel personally satisfied and give his full contribution in the development of the institution. In contrast, case studies of exemplary schools have identified, among the factors that enable such school to excel, trust among school personnel, a collaborative stance towards learning, and an atmosphere of mutual support that enables personnel to take risks (S.A Wolf et al.,2000 quoted by David Halpern, 2005). Hargreave quoted an analysis of the math teachers in the USA, Germany and Japan implicates teacher – to – social capital in the higher educational achievements of the Japanese (Stigler and Hiebert, 1999). In Japan, teachers participate in professional development groups that provide mentoring and also a collective forum within which teachers can develop and test new teaching techniques. Teacher develop ‘research lesson’ that they then carry in to effect collectively. Teachers observe each other at school and evolved a common language which they use to discuss their ideas. And finally, they criticize one another but without offending each other. It comes out with productive results. In short, teachers actively and routinely collaborate to innovate, transfer and share knowledge for development, and it pays considerable educational dividends to understand the relation of social capital and life of personnel of educational institutions, so it is very necessary to comprehend the term social capital intensively (David Halpern, 2005).

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital and education seem to have close relationship. To explain the significant role that

social capital plays in education, it is valuable to have a clear understanding of the term.

Lyda J. Hanifan, (1916) referred to,

“Those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit....The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself....”

Putnam had defined it as *“features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions”* (Putnam 1993, pp.167). Like Putnam, Lin (2001) also perceives these social connections as, *“the social relationships between individual actors, groups, organization, communities, regions, and nations that serve as a resource to produce positive returns”* (pp.6). Wellman & Frank (2001) further puts emphasis on the network design which highlights the size, heterogeneity and density of the connections which does not merely provides a kind of flow to the information but also support to the social actors. In general terms, if we define social capital, it is productive and a kind of instrument to the processes such as obligations, information channels, trustworthiness, networks, expectations and understandings. These social connections are the worldly links like friends, family, work mates and neighbors and so on. These resources help in the enhancement of the status and wellbeing of the individuals in the society. Because these understandings, reciprocity and obligations not only grow trust but also encourages individuals to work collaboratively as well.

Personnel come with their various needs to the institution and assume to enjoy a sense of healthy work environment in the organization. A healthy work environment can be envisioned by the elements like faith, dedication and commitment with the bosses and colleagues at their organization (Requena, 2003). The major point is that social ties/relations and networks contain a greater value. But it intensely requires investment of the time, trust, hopes and energy to serve as a form of social capital. At the workplaces, workers have to rely on their colleagues for particular information, suggestions and support at the time of trouble. Therefore, the term social capital denotes to the summation of the goodwill and forceful resources accessible to the people generates from the web of social relationships (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The more people will invest, the more will be the benefit (Putnam 2000, pp.19). In broader terms, social capital affects to organizational end product which helps in finding jobs, propel the interchange and mixture of intellectual capital, generates the interaction, enhances the chances of education at higher level, affects the learning and also influences the exchange of resources and product (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) are thus, highly important for effective organizational functioning. (Granovetter, 1973, Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993, Uzzi, 1996, Kraatz, 1998, Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998)

PUTNAM'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

According to Kurt Lewin 'there is nothing as practical as a good theory' (Lewin, 1952, p. 169) In the popularity of current concept social capital, actually owes much to the writings of Robert Putnam, which has received a greater publicity. With the arrival of the masterpiece 'Making Democracy Work' penned down by Robert Putnam with Leonardi and Nanetti, (1993) and his book 'Bowling alone: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy', Putnam has stood out most widely famous proponent of social capital. As Putnam claims;

“Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. (ibid. 2000, p. 19)

Social networks are important. It harbors the rules of conduct in the community (Putnam 2000, pp.20). Individuals are linked with each other through interlode social framework- which seizes everyday communication, salient co-operation, mutual understanding i.e. how we behave with each other. Or it can be said that social structure gets highly affected with how and whom we communicate and cooperate (David Halpern, pp.3). As Claude Fisher, a social scientist of friendship, *“Social networks are important in all our lives, often for finding jobs, more often for finding a helping a hand, companionship, or a shoulder to cry on”* Yogi Berra defines reciprocity in more subtle words, *“If you do not go to somebody's funeral, they would not come to yours”* (Putnam 2000, pp.20). It seems quite pertinent that organization with trustworthy personnel, reciprocal attitude, collaboration and norms is considered to have a high form of social capital. But however, as Putnam says, the existence of mutual cooperative density of groups will enhance the competence of the members which helps in reducing the opportunism and to cooperate for interpersonal profit.

Further, Putnam does not merely mentions public face/ public good but also equally emphasizes the private face/ good of social capital (individual and collective aspect of social capital). It is explained as;

“The central of social capital, in my view, is that networks and associated norms of reciprocity have value. They have value for the people who are in them (Putnam 1995, pp. 1).

Further, he also pays his attention to the aspects of horizontal and vertical relations, here horizontal associations denotes to the people having equal prestige and power in the society while vertical relations is about unequal actors in asymmetric associations of rank and dependence. In an institution, horizontal relations and associations seem to have greater trust towards one another, norms of reciprocity and a shared sense of responsibility for collective efforts and endeavor than to the vertical associations. His theory presumes that success of the communities and organizations highly relies on the bonding of the horizontal relations and their co-operations and moreover their protracted associations produces the cohesion that not only generates the benefits to the society but also reduces the crime rate and amplifies the happiness and healthy environment and economic prosperousness to the societal people (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993, 2000, 2003). Horizontal association includes the relation of the professor to professor or teacher to teacher whereas vertical relations are management or authorities' relation to the teaching staff or to non-teaching staff. Such as clerks which is characterized by more dependency than mutuality. Vertical associations possess more power and which are real decision taker and sometimes dismisses the mass action which is encountered by the members of the horizontally fabricated group. And Putnam says (1993) that for prosperity of the wider community, it is very necessary to have a mutual cooperation and acceptable decisions to make active participation in the social associations but much of their power of building social capital is robbed by the vertically framed/ structured group.

BONDING AND BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Various social scientists have put forth different views through different definitions of the bonding and bridging forms of social capital. Some sociologists have interpreted it in the terms of external and internal social capital. Woolcock resonance these terms by opposite or intra-society/ community connections, is mentioned as bonding and the extra community / society connections and relations are called linkage or bridging. He also articulated, how different combinations of these connections and ties in society characterize various forms of society (David Halpern 2005, pp 22). While these definitions are similar in their ideas. As Bourdieu ascribed external social capital, *“the sum of the*

resources, actual or virtual that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition” (1992, pp 9)

Bridging social capital is actually connections among socially diversified groups. It makes free heterogeneous groups to interchange their ideas, information, and valuable knowledge. It is exclusively important on personal, economic and political fronts. It brings more democratic attitude among society people.

And bonding, Knoke defines *“the process by which social actors create and mobilize their network connections within and between organizations to gain access to other social actors resources”* (1999, pp.18). As a kind of resource of social capital, in bonding, main attention is on collective actors' internal characteristics. Bandura (1997) remarked that people prefers to take action collectively if they find themselves in strong relations and posses a higher social status. Like in the strong neighborhood social relations sometimes people can move beyond their self interest for the benefit of the whole society. Fukuyama (1995, pp.10) *“the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations”*. Bonding builds a strong connection among people. It helps them in the time of need, provides emotional support and valuable suggestions to move out of the difficult circumstances. It brings a collective co-operation and leads to the fulfillment of collective aims. Further David Halpern (2005, pp. 21) stated one recent finding that had been made by Putnam – at least within the USA – in USA, He found a positive correlation between bonding and bridging social capital. Many had expected that an individual rich in bonding is rich in bridging social capital. But, Burt (2002) found a quite reverse result, that bridging social capital is decaying faster than bonding social capital.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL

According to Robert Putnam, Social capital is a multi-facet or a multi-disciplinary approach. Putnam put forth three major components- networks, norms and trust. He believes that trust is an important factor of the norms and reciprocity which results from the social networking. He argues that the term social capital to *“features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1995, pp.664-665.* In his book, *“Bowling Alone”* Putnam (2000) argued that *“the core idea of social capital is that social networks have value...social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups (pp. 18-19).”* Intimacy among social networks is necessary to bring the transaction of the implicit and explicit information. Moreover, it is accepted by almost all the social scientists working on social capital that these are the major information resources, which are critical for making use of the job opportunities (Hendry et al. 1991, pp.16; Mulholland 1997, pp.703-6). But it highly depends on the individuals and their designation, which helps them to make to use more and less social capital in that social phenomenon. It is accepted by some researchers that weak ties at the work place, provide explicit information whereas dense relations provide access to the implicit information. Secondly, Putnam has given his special attention to the norms of generalized reciprocity. These are the unwritten rules of conduct. *In other words, “I'll do this for you without expecting anything immediately in return and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favor”* (Putnam 2000, pp. 134). It makes the people learn to be kind, helpful, good, fair, law follower, careful to each other and work for public benefit. As Knack and Keefer (1997) says that these two components are intrinsically intermingled which leads people towards trustworthiness and guides public behavior too. Thirdly, Trust is inward activity. It's a kind of confidence, which an individual has in the reliability of the others

character. Its highly risk taking, because actions of the man is entirely unpredictable. Because, it is somehow also rely on the selflessness and self-interest situations. That's why, it is linked with the quality of our relations with each other and related to our different happy or sad experiences in our relations. At the level of the institutions, governing bodies create certain norms, regulations, rules and sanctions for the workers to encourage them to act in faithful manner. As, It is already mentioned above that Robert Putnam sees trust as a factor - one of those "*features of social organization*", along with norms and networks - that enhances the potential of society by facilitating cooperative and coordinated action" (Putnam 1993, pp. 167). Fukuyama, in contrast to the Putnam, considers it a kind of condition of the social capital. And Organizational trust, unlike family trust, is based on many things like reputation, designation and experience of the particular person as well (Cohan, 2001). According to Dasgupta (2000), it is not easy to establish the faithfulness and trust among personnel, groups and organizational/ institutional trust. All these aspects shows that a teacher needs to be trustworthy to himself, to their colleagues and to the organization because a teacher is the nation builder his behavior does not affect merely to his own life, also impacts to the life of generation whom is he teaching. Trustworthiness makes teachers to be frank in sharing their problems, weaknesses and strengths to each other and moreover the implicit information can easily be transferred to each other. The trust worthy attitude of the staff affects to the administrative or management of the institution also. Work environment gets healthy and it can bring a positivity among workers.

BENEFITS OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL

It is estimated that social capital is declining in the life of the present generations. With the advancement of technology, where people seems to be coming closure through social networking sites, on the other hand, seems to be going away from the dense relations and are leading more artificial lives. But, the value of social capital cannot be neglected at all. Making contacts are important in social context but maintaining social contacts is more important. It does need investment of time, flexible attitude, sacrificing and understanding nature, kind attitude, trust, reciprocity, honesty and more importantly have respect and dignity for the common human being. It needs to be more focused in educational scenario. Moreover, we are aware with the fact that most of the countries in the world are exclaiming a major goal that "no child should be left uneducated". And as a result, schools are required and are building on great scales in almost all the developed and underdeveloped countries. Most of the responsibility has come on the shoulders of the community of educational specialists to tackle the situation of the social capital at the institutional levels. To maintain the strong social capital at the educational institution, personnel should have full awareness towards their duties, moral responsibilities and how to execute them in the organization. All staff should flourish and maintain their effective network for their personal and institutional benefits. Because, Educational organization's actual potential performance depends highly and intrinsically on the collaborative and cooperation and concerted endeavor of the teaching and non-teaching staff which includes management, administrative staff and the leadership staff as well. Workers should also try to give their time for community services and should contribute potentially in team work at their institutions. Putnam claims that that "where trust and social relations flourishes, individuals, organizations, neighborhoods and even nations prospers" (2000, pp. 319).

All are joined by the organizational aims and are connected to fulfill their own purposes. In general sense, teachers are connected formally with their colleagues at their work place but it depends on the understanding, cooperation, attitude of the employees, if they are able to outbid to informal ties

or prefer to maintain it to formal links. And when they get connected informally with some of their colleagues that it turns in to dense ties and they provide implicit information as well as help at the time of need like if they are sick or do not know how to handle the particular situation in the institution or can be a good company while going to an event like conference, seminar or lecture. They merely do not get outside information of their institution but also get the information of approaching opportunities and possibilities to move ahead.

Except its powerful effect on work aspects, it has a great influence on the health and wellbeing of the personnel of the institutions also. It generates the mutual understanding, emotional support, and helps each other in need and also helps in sharpening the skills. Putnam (2000, pp.327) has also shown that social capital affects to the health of the workers. It evolves tangible material assistance, which not only decreases tension but also strengthen the healthy norms. Moreover, communication may help in encouraging the body's immune system. Further, Social capital also can have a strong effect on the mental health of the teachers. Putnam also suggested that social networks can help to reduce the mental stress, which would be an indicator of the positive association with mental health.

The research carried out by Whitehead and Diderichsen (2001, pp.67) also and found that there is close association between health and social relationship; people who possess strong social capital have shown a lower rate of mortality and people with weak social ties or lack of supportive relationship is likely to suffer more with coronary disease. A healthy working environment encourages to the educators to work effectively in the institution whereas a stress full relations of the colleagues and with the management generates stress and anxiety. They can feel work as burden, may not be able to give their full contribution to work. And are likely to change their jobs or leaves the institutions. Social capital brings healthy competition among the staff, forces them internally and externally to do hard work. Employees may get deeply affected with the work style, knowledge and other relative qualities of the other workers if they have strong ties with their competent teachers. Strong social capital at the work place cultivates a strong personality among the individuals and can help in bringing discipline in life of the workers.

CONCLUSION

Strong social capital plays a most important role in maintaining the smooth school system. It enhances the chances to access the different resources for the teachers at the school. Healthy networks, norms, trust and reciprocity brings the attachment among the staff and leads them to work for the welfare of the organization. Moreover, personnel receive more accurate knowledge and information which enhance their efficiency. Reliability in the colleagues brings a kind of satisfaction among all the workers. And, the connection between teachers and social capital concedes that generating the networks and contacts not only benefits the staff but also favors the progress of the institution. Putnam writes "*Building social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work*" (Making Democracy Work 1993, 185). In the same way, it can work as progress elevator for the organization but it is not easy to generate. So, to find out the easy and accurate way to improve the social capital in the school system, more researches about the social capital and teachers need to be carried out in the future.

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