

REVIEW

Community Engagement in Management of Public Secondary Schools: A Systematic Comparative Review of India and Tanzania

Gervas B.P. Karoli * , Amar Upadhyaya 

Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh 786004, India

ABSTRACT

This systematic review examines the role of community engagement as a governance mechanism in the management of government secondary schools in developing countries, with a comparative focus on India and Tanzania. The review synthesized evidence from 61 current and relevant peer-reviewed literature sources published between 2015 and 2025, identified through systematic searches of ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, UNESCO, and government repositories. The main focus was on exploring the contributions of community engagement in the management of government secondary schools in India and Tanzania. This helped recommend further studies on challenges and ways of community engagement in schools managed by the government. Using a thematic synthesis approach aligned with PRISMA principles, the review analyses patterns across governance structures, accountability mechanisms, and school-level outcomes. Findings indicate that community engagement contributes to improved resource mobilization, enhanced transparency, better school facilities, and stronger school-community trust, while challenges include political interference, elite capture, and uneven stakeholder capacity. The key contribution of this review lies in its comparative governance of education in elementary government institutions, which demonstrates how differing decentralization architectures in India and Tanzania shape the effectiveness of community engagement. The study proposes a Community–State Partnership Framework to guide policy and practice, emphasizing that community engagement should complement rather than substitute for state responsibility in education governance.

Keywords: School Management; Community Engagement; Academic Achievement; Quality Education

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Gervas B.P. Karoli, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh 786004, India; Email: bihogorakaroli31@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 20 November 2025 | Revised: 5 January 2026 | Accepted: 17 January 2026 | Published Online: 21 January 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jiep.v9i1.12595>

CITATION

Karoli, G.B.P., Upadhyaya, A., 2026. Community Engagement in Management of Public Secondary Schools: A Systematic Comparative Review of India and Tanzania. *Journal of International Education and Practice*. 9(1): 33–47. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jiep.v9i1.12595>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2026 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

1. Introduction: Educational Background in Developing Countries

In many developing countries, the formal education system faces persistent challenges related to access, quality, and governance. Despite substantial progress over the past two decades in expanding primary school enrollment, UNESCO Institute for Statistics^[1] estimates indicate that roughly 258 million children and youth globally remain out of school, with the majority residing in low- and lower-middle-income countries. Low completion rates, coupled with uneven learning outcomes even among those enrolled, reflect systemic constraints such as insufficient infrastructure, teacher shortages, and limited instructional materials. Such structural impediments underscore the pressing need for complementary strategies that can enhance school effectiveness in resource-constrained environments. Developing countries continue to face persistent challenges in providing equitable and high-quality secondary education, particularly in relation to governance, accountability, and resource adequacy^[2]. While access to schooling has expanded, learning outcomes and completion rates remain uneven due to infrastructure deficits, teacher shortages, and weak institutional capacity. In this context, community engagement has increasingly been promoted as a complementary governance strategy aimed at strengthening accountability, improving school management, and mobilizing local resources. This review examines how community engagement operates within government secondary school management systems in India and Tanzania, two developing countries with distinct decentralisation and governance traditions.

Against this backdrop, community involvement has emerged as a promising approach for enhancing school management and promoting accountability. Research indicates that when parents and local stakeholders engage in school decision-making through parent-teacher associations, school-management committees, or other participatory bodies, schools tend to exhibit higher rates of teacher attendance, greater transparency in resource allocation, and improved student learning outcomes^[3,4]. Randomized trials in rural Pakistan and India have demonstrated that modest investments in training community members to monitor teacher performance can yield significant gains in student test scores^[5]. Such findings suggest that activating latent

social capital at the community level can partially compensate for shortcomings in formal accountability mechanisms, and also leads to the provision of quality education in government schools.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of community participation is contingent upon contextual factors, including local governance capacity, social cohesion, and regulatory frameworks^[6]. In setting active participation of the community in school management, these become obstacles: high poverty/social stratification, and marginalized groups may be excluded from decision-making processes. Additionally, issues that cause inequities in decision-making in schools^[7]. Moreover, without clear guidelines and support from central authorities, community bodies risk becoming venues for local elite capture rather than genuine partners in school improvement^[8]. These considerations underscore the importance of examining not only whether communities participate in school management but also how institutional design and implementation modalities shape the quality and inclusiveness of that participation.

1.1. The Concept of Community Engagement

In contemporary societies, community engagement in education is understood as a collaborative, reciprocal process whereby schools, families, and wider community stakeholders jointly contribute to decision-making and resource mobilization^[9]. Also, the co-creation of learning opportunities to improve school effectiveness and equity^[10]. UNESCO's most recent framework defines community engagement as an inclusive partnership that leverages local social, cultural, and economic assets, extending beyond mere parental involvement to support governance, accountability, and the holistic development of learners^[11].

The Concept of Community Engagement in the Management of Government Secondary Schools

Community engagement in the management of government secondary schools is understood as a collaborative process through which parents, local organizations, and other stakeholders actively partner with school authorities to shape educational policies, resource allocation, and pedagogical practices. According to Whittemore and Knaf^[12], the framework of "school, family, and community partnerships"

characterizes engagement as a continuum of six types of involvement, ranging from parenting and communicating to decision-making and collaborating with the community, each aimed at fostering shared responsibility for student learning and well-being. Alexander^[13] further elaborates this concept within its “new social contract for education,” emphasizing that genuine participation requires inclusive governance structures that break down barriers between schools and their communities, thereby ensuring that education is both experienced and governed as a common good. By integrating local knowledge, social capital, and voluntary service into formal schooling, community engagement not only enhances accountability and transparency but also cultivates solidarity, democratic participation, and the relevance of education to learners’ lived contexts^[14–16].

1.2. Why Study Community Engagement in Schools’ Management

Studying community engagement in government secondary schools in developing countries is crucial for several reasons.

First, such engagement constitutes a promising mechanism through which schools can enhance accountability and transparency, particularly in contexts where state capacity is limited. Research from India demonstrates that informing communities about their roles in school governance through targeted campaigns led to improvements in student learning outcomes; reading scores rose by 14–27% in some treated villages^[17]. This underscores how community involvement can effectively complement public systems to improve educational quality.

Second, community engagement helps mobilize local resources, financial, material, and human, to bolster schools in underserved regions. In Tanzania, a study of public secondary schools in the Kilimanjaro region found that community involvement in school activities contributed to increased resource availability and stronger support for teaching and learning processes^[18]. In resource-constrained systems, such mobilization can help bridge equity gaps in schooling infrastructure and support services.

Third, engaging the community fosters ownership and local relevance of schooling processes. When parents and community members are meaningfully involved in planning and decision-making, schools are better able to align with

local cultural, economic, and social realities. In India, scholars have argued that transitioning from formal “participation” to genuine “engagement” necessitates school leadership to proactively facilitate community-school partnerships, thereby making education a shared endeavor rather than a delivered service^[19]. This relational dimension enhances the sustainability of reforms and strengthens the democratic legitimacy of schools.

Fourth, community engagement is directly linked with improved student retention, attendance, and psychosocial support, which are foundational for learning. A study in Pakistan found a significant positive correlation between community participation and access, retention, and attendance at the secondary level^[20]. Although this is not specific to the secondary government school sector in India or Tanzania, it illustrates that community linkages matter across developing contexts. Past research suggests that when families and communities are invested, students stay longer in school and are more likely to engage with their learning.

Fifth, the examination of community engagement is imperative for policy design and reform in these countries. Both India’s national policy frameworks^[21] and international agendas (like the Sustainable Development Goals) emphasize local governance and community participation as key levers for achieving inclusive and quality education^[22]. However, empirical evidence on how this plays out in secondary schooling management in developing countries remains uneven. Rigorous studies across India and Tanzania are needed to inform how local bodies, school leadership, and community actors can effectively collaborate to improve schooling governance and student outcomes.

In conclusion, studying community engagement in government secondary schools in developing countries is essential for understanding how local participation can drive educational transformation. The reviewed evidence suggests that when communities are empowered to participate in school management, accountability improves, resources are better utilized, and learning environments become more responsive to local needs. However, the effectiveness of such engagement depends on supportive policy frameworks, sustained capacity-building, and inclusive participation that represents all social groups. By deepening research in this area, policymakers and educators can design evidence-based strategies that integrate community efforts with systemic reforms, en-

asuring equitable, sustainable, and high-quality education for all learners. Therefore, studying community engagement in government secondary schools in developing countries is not merely an academic exercise: it offers a pathway to strengthen school management, resource mobilization, local ownership, equity, and learning outcomes. Given persistent challenges in those systems, such as teacher absence, infrastructure deficits, weak governance, and low learning levels, the role of engaged communities emerges as a potent, context-sensitive lever for systemic improvement. Research in this domain contributes to understanding what works, for whom, and under what conditions, thereby allowing policy-makers, practitioners, and academics to refine strategies for sustainable educational development.

1.3. Inclusion and Exclusion

The researchers used documents written from 2015 and later when reviewing for this current paper. The documents included published and unpublished papers and books. A total of 61 documents were systematically reviewed to inform the current study. Irrelevant documents and those that were written before 2004 were excluded from the review during the preparation of this work.

1.4. Conceptual Framework

Community engagement and its activeness in management’s participation in schools always depend on the following framework (Figure 1):

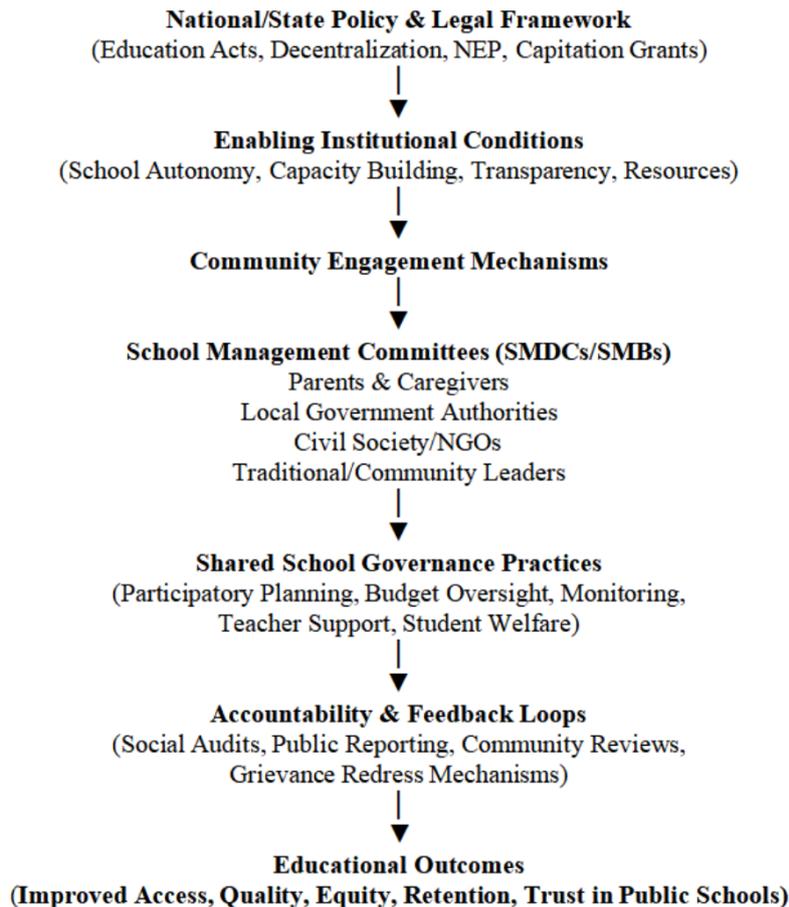


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

Source: Modified from Anohita (The Power of Collaboration, January 19, 2025).

2. Literature Review

Governance and Accountability: Across India and Tanzania, community engagement is most frequently linked

to improved school-level accountability through participatory governance bodies such as School Management and Development Committees (SMDC) and School Management Boards (SMB), respectively. Evidence suggests that where

roles are clearly defined and supported by policy, these structures enhance transparency and oversight^[23].

Resource Mobilization: Community engagement has been shown to facilitate the mobilization of financial, material, and human resources, particularly in infrastructure development and the provision of learning materials. However, reliance on local contributions risks reinforcing inequalities between communities with differing socio-economic capacities^[23,24].

Equity and Inclusion: The literature highlights persistent concerns regarding elite capture, gender exclusion, and limited participation of marginalized groups. Inclusive design and capacity-building are therefore essential to ensure equitable engagement^[24].

Capacity Constraints and Political Interference: Limited managerial capacity among school leaders and committee members, alongside political interference, constrains the effectiveness of community engagement in both contexts^[24].

Different governments in developing countries continue to struggle to provide all the necessary resources for students to achieve their best academic performance. Moreover, governments often fail to implement effective strategies for enhancing community engagement, thereby limiting their ability to fully control school operations. The governments in developing countries recognize that the community plays a crucial role in enabling government schools to perform at their best. However, community engagement in secondary management makes a significant contribution to school achievement, as evidenced by various scholars. The results indicate that in schools where community engagement is high, students face fewer academic challenges. Teachers, school administration, and the school environment are crucial for a conducive teaching and learning process, compared to those schools where community engagement is low in management^[25]. According to Paul and Criado^[26], when the community is engaged and made aware, it offers its skills, money, and time to address all problems found in the particular schools, thereby improving the academic and social well-being of its children^[27]. Heads of schools do not encounter difficulties in managing the school because all community members collaborate positively and maximally, resulting in increased yearly school performance.

According to results found by Kanaan et al.^[28], teach-

ing materials were supplied depending on the number of students in each school, sourced from the community and non-governmental organizations^[29].

Therefore, community engagement is inevitable because running schools requires many resources, and the community believes that all resources and services needed in schools should be supplied by the government. Knowledge is essential to be shared with all community members so that they may understand the importance of utilizing all resources to provide quality care for their children. Additionally, skills and more knowledge should be provided to school heads, enabling them to handle community engagement effectively. This, in turn, will increase the community's willingness to support their children's education by working collaboratively with the government.

Community engagement in school management has been widely recognized as a crucial lever for enhancing governance, accountability, and educational outcomes in low- and middle-income contexts. The literature converges around the idea that formal structures, including School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and ward- or community-based school boards, create institutional spaces for local actors to influence resource allocation, monitor teacher attendance, and support school improvement planning. Across various settings, scholars note that the quality of this engagement, rather than its mere existence, determines whether communities translate interest into measurable improvements in access, retention, and learning^[30].

In India, rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental studies have examined targeted interventions aimed at strengthening SMCs and community-based governance. Cluster-randomized trials and program evaluations report that capacity-building for SMCs increases meeting frequency, the completion of school improvement plans, and certain management outputs (for example, monitoring teacher attendance and implementing small infrastructure repairs). Where interventions coupled SMC strengthening with accountability tools and teacher-support activities, there is evidence of modest gains in school functioning and occasional improvements in student outcomes; however, the effects on learning outcomes are mixed and often contingent upon complementary teacher- and curriculum-level reforms. These findings underscore that community engagement can alter

management practices but does not automatically produce large learning gains without addressing core instructional constraints^[31].

Tanzania's literature reveals similar dynamics with contextual variations. Recent field studies and district-level investigations in regions such as Kilimanjaro, Bunda, and coastal areas have documented active forms of community participation in school construction, fundraising, and the oversight of locally recruited staff. Several case studies show that community engagement has helped mobilize material and human resources where central funding is limited, and has increased local accountability for school finances and infrastructure projects. Yet, authors also document constraints in participatory decision-making: political patronage, uneven representation of marginalized groups, and limited technical capacity of community actors constrain the depth of engagement and its persistence over time^[32].

Mechanisms by which community engagement affects school management are described across studies as (a) resource mobilization (cash, labor, materials), (b) monitoring and oversight of teachers and administration, (c) localized decision-making for small-scale investments, and (d) social accountability, the capacity of parents and local leaders to demand better service delivery. Policy documents and government initiatives in India and Tanzania encourage decentralization and community involvement as core features of school governance reform, but the implementation pathways differ: India's emphasis on legally constituted SMCs under various national policies contrasts with Tanzania's more hybrid ecosystem of ward-based schools and community secondary school structures. These institutional differences shape the specific levers available to communities^[33].

Common challenges limiting the potential of community engagement cut across both countries. First, capacity constraints among committee members, limited familiarity with budgeting, procurement, or pedagogical issues, reduce the effectiveness of oversight. Second, gender and socio-economic exclusion within communities can result in decision-making being dominated by local elites rather than representative groups. Third, where community efforts substitute for state provision (for example, local fundraising for teacher incentives), there is a risk of entrenching inequities between wealthier and poorer localities. Finally, political interference or ambiguous accountability lines between com-

munity bodies and district or national education authorities can stymie sustained improvements. These challenges repeatedly appear in field surveys and qualitative analyses^[34].

The study done by Asim et al.^[35] showed that comparative evaluations suggest that the strongest, most durable impacts on school management occur when community engagement is embedded within multi-component interventions. Interventions that combined SMC strengthening with teacher support, data-driven monitoring, and modest conditional grants produced larger changes in managerial processes and some downstream teacher behavior than stand-alone community-capacity programs. Evidence from randomized evaluations in India indicates persistent increases in management activity (more meetings and planning) and some improvements in inputs when communities were provided both training and small, flexible funds; however, learning improvements required explicit instructional support. This comparative evidence suggests the complementary role of state actors and external programs in facilitating community influence to translate into pedagogical change.

According to the findings reported by MoEVT^[36], community participation can increase responsiveness to local needs (e.g., safety, sanitation, midday meals) and improve retention by addressing barriers specific to each community. At the same time, several Tanzanian and Indian studies warn that without safeguards, community-driven resource mobilization can exacerbate disparities between communities with differing socio-economic capacity to contribute. Studies therefore advocate for state mechanisms that match or top up local contributions and protect the poorest schools from being left behind. These policy recommendations are recurrent in program evaluations and national reviews.

Hands et al.^[37] found that while several rigorous impact evaluations exist (particularly from India), much of the Tanzanian literature remains descriptive or case-based, underscoring the need for larger-sample quasi-experimental or experimental studies to estimate causal effects on learning and retention. Qualitative work has been valuable in unpacking local power relations and understanding how committee dynamics operate in practice; however, comparative cross-country work connecting governance processes to measurable educational outcomes remains limited. Future research should prioritize mixed-methods designs that link process indicators of community functioning to student-level out-

comes.

The current body of research across India and Tanzania suggests that community engagement can significantly reshape school management processes, enhancing planning, oversight, and local resource mobilization; however, the impact on learning outcomes is conditional. Effectiveness depends on (1) the institutional design of participatory bodies, (2) capacity-building and access to modest discretionary funds, (3) complementary support to teachers and pedagogy, and (4) attention to inclusion and equity safeguards. For policymakers and practitioners, the evidence suggests that community engagement should be embedded within broader school improvement packages rather than being treated as a standalone remedy^[38].

Therefore, the reviewed literature demonstrates that community engagement plays a pivotal role in enhancing the management efficiency of government secondary schools in both India and Tanzania. While it fosters transparency, accountability, and localized decision-making, its impact on student learning outcomes remains contingent upon adequate capacity-building, institutional support, and equitable allocation of resources. The evidence underscores that community participation alone cannot overcome systemic challenges in education management; rather, it is most effective when integrated within broader school improvement strategies that align community governance with teacher development, state funding, and inclusive policy frameworks to sustain long-term educational progress (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Summary of Literature Review.

Theme	Key Focus	Main Insights from Literature
Governance and Accountability	Participatory governance structures (SMCs, School Boards)	Clearly defined roles supported by policy frameworks enhance transparency, oversight, and school-level accountability in India and Tanzania.
Resource Mobilization	Financial, material, and human resource contributions	Community engagement facilitates infrastructure development and learning materials provision but may reinforce socio-economic inequalities between communities.
Equity and Inclusion	Participation of marginalized groups and gender equity	Elite capture, gender exclusion, and limited representation of disadvantaged groups persist, highlighting the need for inclusive design and sustained capacity-building.
Capacity Constraints and Political Interference	Leadership capacity and governance environment	Limited managerial skills among school leaders and committee members, combined with political interference, constrain the effectiveness and sustainability of community engagement.

2.1. Community–State Partnership Framework

The Community–State Partnership Framework aligns with India’s National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes school-based management, participatory governance, and community ownership of education. NEP 2020 states that to improve accountability and learning outcomes, School Management Committees (SMCs) need to be strengthened, parents need to be more involved, there must be greater transparency, and planning should occur at the local level. Within this framework, community engagement is conceptualised not merely as consultation but as co-governance, where empowered local bodies participate in school development planning, monitor teacher attendance and performance, and support contextualised learning environments. The framework also resonates with NEP 2020’s emphasis on capacity building among stakeholders, digital transparency, and convergence between schools and local

self-government institutions to enhance equity and inclusion.

In the context of Tanzania’s decentralisation-by-devolution policy, it aligns with the legal and administrative empowerment of School Committees and Ward Education structures under local government authorities. Tanzania’s education governance reforms emphasise community participation in planning, budgeting, and overseeing primary and secondary schools as a means of improving service delivery and accountability. The proposed framework situates community engagement within this decentralised governance architecture, highlighting the importance of institutional clarity, participatory accountability mechanisms, and state-supported capacity development to avoid elite capture and unequal participation. By foregrounding co-production rather than cost-shifting, the framework reinforces the state’s central responsibility while recognising communities as legitimate partners in school management, thus offering a comparative policy lens applicable across developing countries.

2.2. Differences between India and Tanzania

The findings and policy context highlight significant differences in how community engagement operates in India and Tanzania, particularly in terms of institutional capacity and the nature of participation. In India, under the NEP 2020, community engagement is more explicitly framed as co-governance through strengthened School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs), with a clear emphasis on transparency, capacity building, and convergence with local self-governance institutions. This policy orientation aligns with findings that community engagement can improve infrastructure, learning resources, discipline, and student motivation when roles are clearly defined and school leaders possess adequate skills. However, Indian studies also suggest that community participation is closely tied to expectations of curriculum relevance and employability outcomes; where education is perceived as disconnected from labour market needs, communities may become reluctant to contribute actively. Thus, in India, community engagement is increasingly shaped by aspirations for skills development, accountability, and long-term socio-economic returns, supported by policy-led digital and administrative reforms.

However, Tanzania's decentralisation (by-devolution policy) situates community engagement more strongly within local government authority structures, with School Management Board/Committees (SMB) playing a central role in planning, budgeting, and school oversight. The reviewed literature from Tanzania highlights tangible contributions by communities, including classrooms, hostels, teaching materials, and support for utilities, but also reveals persistent challenges associated with limited leadership capacity and low community involvement in certain districts, including Tabora municipality. Unlike India, Tanzania's more structured policy pushes for capacity building. Tanzanian findings highlight unsatisfactory preparedness of school heads and the absence of active community involvement processes, which lead to conflict, mistrust, or ineffective participation. Consequently, while community engagement in Tanzania demonstrates strong potential for infrastructure development and shared responsibility, its effectiveness remains highly dependent on government-supported trainings, institutional clarity, and mechanisms to prevent politicization, underscoring a more implementation-oriented challenge compared to India's governance and reform-driven model.

2.3. Rationale of the Study

A robust rationale underpins the investigation of community engagement in the management of government secondary schools in developing countries. First, despite widespread recognition that participatory governance can enhance school accountability and learning outcomes, empirical evidence remains unevenly distributed across contexts and educational levels, with secondary education in resource-constrained settings particularly understudied^[39]. Second, while primary-level interventions have demonstrated that community monitoring reduces teacher absenteeism and boosts student performance^[40], it is unclear whether similar mechanisms operate effectively at the secondary level, where governance structures and stakeholder dynamics differ markedly^[41]. Third, prevailing frameworks^[42]. Community Engagement Framework emphasizes inclusive partnerships that leverage local assets for governance and holistic learner development; however, practical guidelines for implementation in secondary schools remain vague^[43]. Finally, studies from India and Sub-Saharan Africa highlight challenges of elite capture and social exclusion in school management committees, underscoring the need to identify enabling conditions that ensure equitable participation^[44]. By addressing these gaps, the present study aimed to generate actionable insights into how community engagement can be effectively structured to strengthen the governance and educational outcomes of government secondary schools in developing country contexts.

2.4. Objective

The objective of this study is to explore the contributions of community engagement in the management of government secondary schools in India and Tanzania.

3. Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology to synthesise empirical and conceptual literature on community engagement in the management of government secondary schools. The review followed established systematic review principles, aligning with PRISMA guidelines in terms of transparent search, screening, and synthesis procedures, although a flow diagram is not presented due to space con-

straints. A total of 61 records were initially identified through database searches. After title, abstract, and full-text screening, 47 studies met the inclusion criteria and were retained for analysis. The inclusion period was limited from 2015 to 2025 to capture recent policy-relevant evidence, while earlier sources were used only for conceptual framing. Data were analysed using thematic synthesis. Codes were developed inductively from the literature and grouped into higher-order themes relating to governance, accountability, resource mobilisation, equity, and implementation challenges.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings from the reviewed literature reveal several effects of community engagement in secondary school management, including improved book and computer supply for teaching and learning, hostel and classroom building, reduced truancy, increased school-community collaboration, and improved student discipline. Moreover, stable power supply, Internet connection in schools, awareness of educational needs, an increase in knowledge of intellectual thoughts, an increase in funds to run school academic and management activities, and motivation of students from school and community were found to be some of the positive effects of active involvement of the community.

Nishimura^[45] showed that community engagement in school management has many positive effects and should go hand in hand with engaged educational institutions as holistic systems locate, coordinate tasks, align resources along lines of expertise, and processes. However, it is not necessary to align with institutional lines of knowledge. The collectivism that gets involved in community-oriented engagement provides some space for the coexistence of planned and spontaneous performance, as well as the alignment of leadership functions across different sources.

Kobayashi et al.^[46] investigated the contributions of the community in school management. It was revealed that school heads/principals are key individuals in enhancing community engagement in schools to achieve optimal performance. The study found that the readiness of secondary schools' principals in implementing School Community-Based Management is unsatisfactory. Hence, training is very important for heads of schools, as they are the implementers of the community engagement process in school

management.

Puri and Chhetri^[47] researched the implementation of community engagement in government schools. The study employed a qualitative approach, and the results indicated that community engagement is often conducted without a proper process due to the limited skills of school heads in community engagement. Some heads responded that the community made no positive contributions to the school, instead complaining and interfering with teachers' work. The current study found that if heads have the right knowledge of the importance of community engagement in government schools management, it will help to increase the activeness of community engagement in school management, which will bring more achievements to government schools in developing countries, where the government can handle all responsibilities that require a lot of money and can help those countries minimize taking loans from developed countries and the World Bank.

Asim et al.^[48] in the study titled Impact of Community Involvement in the Development of Secondary Schools in Tunduru District, Tanzania. Empirical data were collected through questionnaires and structured interviews to investigate the involvement of communities in the development of secondary schools. The findings revealed that poor community involvement in schools affected students' performance, administration, school buildings, and other teaching and learning materials. The study emphasized the importance of effective community involvement for school development. The results concur with those obtained in the studies conducted by Santhakumar, Abbas et al., and Cahyani et al.^[49-51].

Kambuga^[52] conducted research on school-community partnerships. The study's results indicated that, apart from positive outcomes, the community demands some reforms, which are found to be a burden on governments, as curriculum reforms require financial resources. They demand reform to improve schools' content for students' skills, which will enable them to thrive after completing their education, even without relying on government employment. This was one of the reasons why communities do not participate actively in school management, even after being engaged. When their children finish secondary education, they often wait for employment. The community needs to participate in the management of schools^[53-55]. The knowledge they

acquire does not help them find employment, which makes communities in developing countries reluctant to contribute to quality education^[56].

Baquedano-López et al.^[55] researched the impacts of school management with Community engagement. The data collected from published documents in reputable journals found that effective community engagement with school management led to the advancement of infrastructure, laboratories, libraries, classrooms, sports pitches, and the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials, as per results found by Gonjo et al., Shalowitz et al., and Wardani et al.^[57–59]. To clarify the responsibilities of both the community and the government in school education management. Sompron^[41] investigated the effects of community engagement in school management in Nepal, and it was found that quality education, education reform, achievement of students in performance, and reduction of burden on the government in running schools.

Moreover, the results indicated that the community was given priority in school management, and improvements were noted in all spheres of education. Improvements were made in academic, social, and other areas of education, including the supply of teaching and learning materials, which were enhanced. The improvement was due to engaging the community in all management areas, which increased their sense of service to schools in terms of both physical resources and soft skills that support their children's performance.

The assigning of a special role to the community in schools managed by the government, including understanding all challenges facing their children's quality education, so that they may play a crucial part collaboratively with the school leaders and government at large to ensure that the education provided in the schools is of quality and relevant to the contemporary societies in which they are living.

Also, maintained that positive effects are only found where the community engagement is active, but on the other hand, in areas where the engagement is low, the community seems to have no positive effects, rather than negative effects. Instead of collaborating with school management, some community members become obstacles to school development plans.

Academic programs and food are some of the contributions that the community makes to government schools. Field trips for academic purposes are also activities supported by

the community in different schools. Committed parents and responsible committees that involve community members struggle to ensure the rise of schools' academic performance. By engaging the community. Through community and government collaboration, children's dreams become true, and vice versa.

However, undesirable outcomes of engaging the community in the management of government schools were found in research conducted by Aoko Ndolo and Simatwa^[24], including political misconceptions, principals transferring unnecessarily, and failure to reach final decisions on some schools' plans due to differences in ideas between parents and teachers. Failure to implement all plans due to unimplementable programs that were set by community members who were not knowledgeable or professional in the education sector, such as teachers. Therefore, to avoid conflicts in managing schools, the researchers in the particular study suggested proper education.

In this regard (from studies analyzed, on the community participation in schools' management), it is concluded that if the community and government work collaboratively in running and operating schools, quality education with a conducive environment for teachers and students to teach and learn, respectively, will be smoothly done, and hence all necessary resources will be made available in all schools that are under government management. Additionally, the education will be relevant as it will equip students with both soft and practical skills that will enable them to lead a fulfilling life, whether in government/non-governmental organizations or through self-employment.

So, the synthesis reveals consistent patterns across the reviewed studies. Community engagement makes a positive contribution to school management processes, particularly in infrastructure development, monitoring, and student welfare. However, impacts on learning outcomes are conditional upon state support, leadership capacity, and instructional quality.

5. Recommendations

This paper recommends various actions that different education stakeholders can take to enhance community engagement in public secondary schools.

- a) The Ministry of Education and other educational stakeholders at different levels should put more effort into

guiding the community to engage in government secondary schools, which will lead to more school improvement, such as addressing students’ needs and providing students’ meals, as well as the construction of school infrastructure and the distribution of grants.

- b) State or Regional Administration and Local Government should be requested to strengthen local community engagement in education through local authorities. Currently, the local authorities are reluctant to mobilize community engagement in education. This loophole has led most parents and other community members

to refrain from supporting educational programs.

All school management members who make decisions and manage schools should also be given regular managerial seminars to update their knowledge for the betterment of the schools. This will also help to mitigate some conflicts found in schools where there is a difference in viewpoint between the school administration and board members.

6. Policy Implications

Table 2 presents the policy implications.

Table 2. Synthesis of Community Engagement Outcomes in Secondary School Management.

Dimension	Positive Effects Identified	Key Challenges Identified
Governance & Accountability	Improved transparency, participatory decision-making, monitoring of school resources and staff	Political interference, unclear accountability lines
Resource Mobilisation	Infrastructure development, provision of learning materials, community fundraising	Inequities between wealthy and poor communities
Equity & Inclusion	Enhanced parental voice, local ownership	Elite capture, marginalisation of women and disadvantaged groups
Capacity & Leadership	Stronger school–community trust, collaborative planning	Limited managerial skills among school leaders and committee members

This framework advances existing participation models by explicitly integrating governance, accountability, and equity safeguards. While grounded in evidence from India and Tanzania, it is applicable to developing countries with decentralised education systems, offering policymakers a structured guide for aligning community engagement with

state responsibility. Figure 2 presents the Community–State Partnership Framework developed through this review. The framework advances existing models by explicitly positioning community engagement as a complementary governance mechanism operating within state-led education systems.

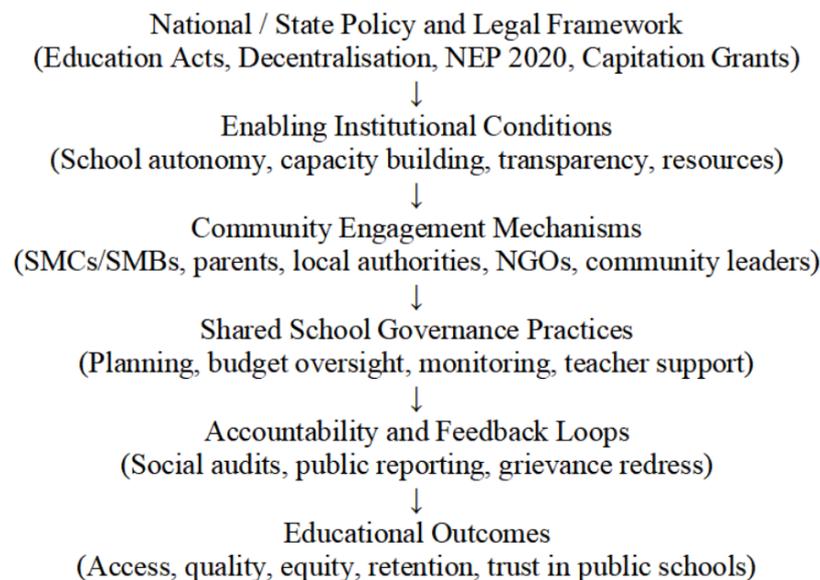


Figure 2. Community–State Partnership Framework for Secondary School Governance.

Innovation and Contribution

This review contributes to the literature by offering a systematic, comparative analysis of community engagement through a governance lens. The India–Tanzania comparison demonstrates how decentralisation structures shape participatory effectiveness, moving beyond generic participation narratives. The proposed framework provides a transferable tool for policymakers and researchers in other developing country contexts.

7. Conclusions

The review concludes that community engagement can strengthen school governance, accountability, and resource mobilisation in government secondary schools when embedded within supportive state frameworks. Community engagement should be viewed as a complementary mechanism rather than a substitute for state responsibility. Policy efforts should prioritise capacity-building, inclusive participation, and clear accountability structures, while future research should employ mixed-methods designs to link governance processes with student outcomes.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; methodology, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; software, G.B.P.K.; validation, A.U.; formal analysis, G.B.P.K.; investigation, G.B.P.K.; resources, G.B.P.K.; data curation, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; writing—original draft preparation, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; writing—review and editing, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; visualization, G.B.P.K. and A.U.; supervision, A.U.; project administration, G.B.P.K. and A.U. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

No funds received for this study.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the current study were obtained from secondary sources, including published papers in reputable journals, books, and reports.

Acknowledgments

The researchers acknowledge library workers for allowing researchers to use the available books, soft copies, and hard copies, including online and non-online materials, that were used for this study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. One Year into the Sustainable Development Goals: Progress towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All (UIS Fact Sheet No.66). UNESCO: Paris, France.
- [2] Aziza, M., 2025. Inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Asia Conference on Governance and Accountability Studies (ACGAS). 1(1). Available from: <https://proceedings.goodwoodconferences.com/index.php/acgas/article/view/304>
- [3] Evans, D.K., Popova, A., 2016. What Really Works to Improve Learning in Developing Countries? An Analysis of Divergent Findings in Systematic Reviews. *The World Bank Research Observer*. 31(2), 242–270. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkw004>
- [4] Bruns, B., Filmer, D., Patrinos, H.A., 2011. Making Schools Work through Accountability Reform. In *Making Schools Work*. The World Bank: Washington, DC, USA. pp. 211–251. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1596/9780821386798_CH05
- [5] Muralidharan, K., Singh, A., Ganimian, A.J., 2019. Disrupting Education? Experimental Evidence on Technology-Aided Instruction in India. *American Economic Review*. 109(4), 1426–1460. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20171112>

- [6] Pandey, P., Goyal, S., Sundararaman, V., 2009. Community participation in public schools: Impact of information campaigns in three Indian states. *Education Economics*. 17(3), 355–375. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645290903157484>
- [7] Epstein, J.L., 2018. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*, 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429493133>
- [8] Shelton, A.J., 2016. Implementing community engagement projects in classrooms. *Journal of Higher Education Concept and Practice*. 16(1), 78–81. Available from: <https://articlearchives.co/index.php/JHETP/article/view/1973/1952>
- [9] Alghazo, Y., Alghazo, R., 2015. The effect of parental involvement and socioeconomic status on elementary students' mathematics achievement. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. 1(5), 521–527.
- [10] Rudo, Z., Dimock, V., 2017. How family, school, and community engagement can improve student achievement and influence school reform. Available from: <https://cursoslared.com/recursoslibre/Final-Report-Family-Engagement-AIR.pdf> (cited 20 October 2025).
- [11] Lowe, K., Harrison, N., Tennent, C., et al., 2019. Factors affecting the development of school and Indigenous community engagement: A systematic review. *The Australian Educational Researcher*. 46(2), 253–271. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00314-6>
- [12] Whittemore, R., Knafl, K., 2005. The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 52(5), 546–553. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x>
- [13] Alexander, P.A., 2020. Methodological Guidance Paper: The Art and Science of Quality Systematic Reviews. *Review of Educational Research*. 90(1), 6–23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319854352>
- [14] Liang, J.G., Sandmann, L.R., 2015. Leadership for community engagement—A distributed leadership perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. 19(1), 35–63. Available from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1061871.pdf>
- [15] Vally, G.V.S., Daud, K., 2015. The Implementation of School Based Management Policy: An Exploration. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 172, 693–700. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.421>
- [16] Bartz, D.E., Rice, P., Karnes, C., 2018. Community engagement: A key ingredient for public schools gaining stakeholders' input and support. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*. 36(4), 7. Available from: <http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Bartz,%20David%20E%20Community%20Engagement%20NFEASJ%20V36%20N%204%202018.pdf>
- [17] Kapinga, A., Nyangarika, B., 2020. Impact of community involvement in development of secondary schools in Tunduru District Council. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*. 6(4), 418–430.
- [18] Lema, P.R., Mwila, P., 2022. Community Involvement in School Activities: Its Effectiveness in Promoting Quality of Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Hai District, Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. 6(9), 613–620. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2022.6928>
- [19] DePetris, T., Eames, C., 2017. A Collaborative Community Education Model: Developing Effective School-Community Partnerships. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*. 33(3), 171–188. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/ae.2017.26>
- [20] Levin, M.B., Bowie, J.V., Ragsdale, S.K., et al., 2021. Enhancing Community Engagement by Schools and Programs of Public Health in the United States. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 42(1), 405–421. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-090419-102324>
- [21] Nishimura, M., 2017. Community Participation in School Management in Developing Countries. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- [22] Taniguchi, K., Hirakawa, Y., 2016. Dynamics of community participation, student achievement and school management: The case of primary schools in a rural area of Malawi. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. 46(3), 479–502. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2015.1038500>
- [23] Adan, M.A., Orodho, J.A., 2015. Constraints of Implementing Free Secondary Education in Mandera West Sub-County, Mandera County, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6(9), 102–111.
- [24] Aoko Ndolo, M., Simatwa, E., 2016. Impact of free Secondary Education Policy on Primary to Secondary Education Transition Rate in Kenya: A case study of Mbita and Suba Sub-Counties. *Educational Research*. 7(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14303/er.2016.126>
- [25] Shukia, R., 2021. Fee-free Basic Education Policy Implementation in Tanzania: A 'Phenomenon' Worth Rethinking. *Huria Journal of the Open University Of Tanzania*. 27(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61538/huria.v27i1.871>
- [26] Paul, J., Criado, A.R., 2020. The art of writing literature review: What do we know and what do we need to know? *International Business Review*. 29(4), 101717. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2020.101717>
- [27] Lame, G., 2019. Systematic Literature Reviews: An Introduction. *Proceedings of the Design Society: International Conference on Engineering Design*. 1(1), 1633–1642. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/dsi.2019.169>
- [28] Kanaan, D.Z., Qin, H., Gonzalez Castro, M., 2023. The importance of community in public school suc-

- cess: Community engagement and high school performance in Florida. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 1–20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2023.2184693>
- [29] Ezema, V.S., Okenyi, E.C., Ugwuanyi, C.S., 2021. Assessment of the Extent of Community Involvement in the Funding of Primary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, Implications for Further Research. *International Journal of Mechanical and Production Engineering Research and Development*. 11(1), 91–98.
- [30] Ngui, K.-S., Voon, M.-L., Lee, M.-H., 2017. Integrating community engagement with management education: A case study of ENT30014 Social Innovation Internship. *Education + Training*. 59(6), 579–589. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-04-2016-0078>
- [31] Reimer, L.E., 2015. *Leadership and School Boards: Guarding the Trust in an Era of Community Engagement*. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD, USA.
- [32] O’Neill, M., 2020. Increasing community engagement in collective impact approaches to advance social change. *Community Development*. 51(1), 17–35. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2020.1714684>
- [33] Mabeyo, J.E., 2016. *Improving Academic Performance in Primary Schools through School Committees in Nzega District, Tanzania [PhD Thesis]*. The Open University of Tanzania: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Available from: https://repository.out.ac.tz/1555/1/DISSERTATION_-_MABEYO_FINAL_KABISA.pdf
- [34] Medina, M.A., Cosby, G., Grim, J., 2020. Community engagement through partnerships: Lessons learned from a decade of full-service community school implementation. In *Reviewing the Success of Full-Service Community Schools in the US*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA. pp.128–146.
- [35] Asim, A., Nasrullah, Yasmin, T., 2025. Strengthening School Governance: Assessing the Impact of School Management Committees on School Administration in Public Schools of Pakistan. *Regional Lens*. 4(2), 58–64. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62997/rl.2025.42055>
- [36] Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), 2014. *Education and Training Policy of Tanzania*. MoEVT: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Government Report No.19-2023, 14 June 2014. Available from: <https://www.moe.go.tz/sw/nyaraka/sera-ya-elimu-na-mafunzo-ya-mwaka-2014-toleo-la-2023> (in Swahili)
- [37] Hands, C., Kurucz, E., Spencer-Mueller, E.K., et al., 2025. Beyond School Newsletters and Memos: Family Engagement in Planning, Developing, and Delivering an Innovative STEM Program. *Education Sciences*. 15(6), 665. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15060665>
- [38] Longkumer, I., Rao, B.V., 2025. Community Engagement for Educational Transformation: An Empirical Study in Mokokchung District, Nagaland. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Research*. 7(1), 335–340. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26649799.2025.v7.i1d.163>
- [39] Matete, R.E., 2022. Forms of decentralization and their implications for educational accountability in Tanzania. *Heliyon*. 8(5), e09436. Available from: [https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440\(22\)00724-1](https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440(22)00724-1)
- [40] Pandey, P., Goyal, S., Sundararaman, V., 2008. Community Participation in Public Schools: The Impact of Information Campaigns in Three Indian States. World Bank: Washington, DC, USA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-4776>
- [41] Sompron, T., 2024. Community Engagement in Educational Management: Building Strong Partnerships. *Journal of Asian Multicultural Research for Educational Study*. 4(3), 31–38. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47616/jamres.v4i3.460>
- [42] Malik, C.S., 2018. From community participation to community engagement: The call for school leadership in the Indian context. *Journal of Indian Education*. 44(1), 158–172. Available from: <https://ejournals.ncert.gov.in/index.php/jie/article/view/2439>
- [43] Arifin, Z., 2024. Community participation in education management for improving the quality of education. *DIA: Journal of Administration and Public Management*. 14(2), 179–196.
- [44] Government of India, 2020. *National Education Policy 2020*. Government of India: New Delhi, India. Available from: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
- [45] Nishimura, M. (Ed.), 2020. *Community Participation with Schools in Developing Countries: Towards Equitable and Inclusive Basic Education for All*, 1st ed. Routledge: London, UK. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429057472>
- [46] Kobayashi, T., Ogawa, K., 2025. Community and parental participation in Ugandan public primary education: A mixed-method analysis. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 113, 103225. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2025.103225>
- [47] Puri, P., Chhetri, D., 2024. A Systematic Review of the Role of School Management Committee for the School Performance in Nepal. *Education Journal*. 13(3), 97–107. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.edu.20241303.12>
- [48] Asim, A., Nasrullah, A., Yasmin, T., 2025. Community Participation and Pedagogical Change: Assessing the Impact of School Management Committees on Teaching Practices in Pakistan. 2(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.15813692>
- [49] Santhakumar, V., 2019. *Community Participation in School Management: Reasons may not work in India*. Available from: <https://practiceconnect.azimpremjuniiversity.edu.in/community-participation-in-school-management-reasons-may-not-work-in-india/> (cited 25 October 2025).

- [50] Abbas, T., Anwar, M.N., Khizar, A., 2025. Exploring the Contribution of School Councils and Community Engagement in Enhancing the Quality of Education in Punjab's Public Schools. *The Knowledge*. 4(3), 22–31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55737/tk/2k25c.43074>
- [51] Cahyani, A.D., Arbarini, M., Mulyono, S.E., et al., 2025. The Influence of Management Innovation, School Ethos and Community Involvement on School Quality. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*. 9(2), 320–332. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23887/jipp.v9i2.86827>
- [52] Kambuga, Y., 2013. The role of community participation in the ongoing construction of ward based secondary schools: Lessons of Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*. 1(7), 1–10. Available from: <https://www.ijern.com/journal/July-2013/18.pdf>
- [53] Shibuya, K., 2020. Community participation in school management from the viewpoint of relational trust: A case from the Akatsi South District, Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 76, 102196. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102196>
- [54] Maed, G.Z.T., Male, K.K.S.L., Escarlos, G.S., 2025. Reframing School Stakeholder Engagement through the Lens of Critical Theory: A Systematic Review of Governance and Leadership Perspective. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*. 9(10), 5280–5299. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000433>
- [55] Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R.A., Hernandez, S.J., 2013. Equity Issues in Parental and Community Involvement in Schools: What Teacher Educators Need to Know. *Review of Research in Education*. 37(1), 149–182. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459718>
- [56] Tellen, D.N., Besong, B.J., Emmanuel, N., 2025. The role of community involvement in enhancing infrastructural support and its impact on the quality of public primary school pupils' education in rural areas in the South West Region of Cameroon. *GPH-International Journal of Educational Research*. 8(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.15103335>
- [57] Gonjo, B., Mushi, P.D., Nihuka, K., 2025. Challenges of Community Participation in Government-Funded School Projects in the Morogoro Region. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*. 6(3), 9–14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47505/IJRSS.2025.3.2>
- [58] Shalowitz, M.U., Isacco, A., Barquin, N., et al., 2009. Community-Based Participatory Research: A Review of the Literature With Strategies for Community Engagement. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*. 30(4), 350–361. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1097/DBP.0b013e3181b0ef14>
- [59] Wardani, E., Ariyani, R., Hambali, et al., 2025. Community Participation Management in Developing The School Plan at State Vocational High School. *CBJIS: Cross-Border Journal of Islamic Studies*. 7(1), 134–141. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37567/cbjis.v7i1.3780>