Home or Community Schooling in India

1) Introduction

- The concept of community schooling can be traced back to ancient India.
- Social institutions like Ashram, Gurukula, Pathasala, Vihara, Vidyapeeth, etc. existed and still do exist which promote community schooling.
- In community schooling, besides education, the all-round cultural development of the person, and formation of integrated moral character were the aims and objectives of educational processes.
- Gandhiji advocated close integration of the process of education with the life and work in the community.

2) Advantages of Community Schooling

- Community schools are run by local communities. Therefore, the possibility of corruption gets reduced greatly.
- The selection of teachers will be merit based and the teachers will be under continuous monitoring by the community.
- There is a high level of accountability which comes inherently along with the concept of community schools.
- The needs of the children are the highest priority in community schools because it is largely parents or neighbours or relatives of the children who will be running the school.
- Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.
- Students attend school consistently; students are actively involved in learning.
- Students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment, and communities are desirable places to live.
- The individual attention that the children get in these schools is incomparable with other regular municipal schools.
- Home-schooling also allows blossoming of a child's creative side.
- Decentralization of authority from Government and making the community responsible for their own development is considered as the hallmark of “people’s empowerment”
3) Features of community schooling

- Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving.
- Schools become centres of the community and are open to everyone— all day, every day, evenings and weekends.
- Community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities.
- Families are increasingly involved with their children's education.
- Community schools are more akin to smart phones. Schools and communities connect, collaborate, and create.
- Communities and schools leverage their shared physical and human assets to help kids succeed.

4) Demerits of Home or Community Schooling

- With too much individual attention, the child does not develop stamina for frustration, for adapting to the contingencies of life.
- The biggest disadvantage to home schooling is the child's lack of socialization as he gets his educations at home which restricts his social circle and interact with other children.
- Homeschooling kids get education in their house which can make them isolated, passive or ill-equipped to handle situations where interaction is required.
- All parents are not the trained teachers so it becomes difficult for them to teach their kids in a way like the teachers do in school.
- Parents need to maintain the balance between their own time and time for their kid's study which is really very difficult.
- Usually one of the parents has to sacrifice his/her career to give better education to their kids at home.
- Makes it difficult for the govt. to formulate policies for the larger benefit as such students do not get accounted for in School based surveys.
- Chances that biasedness (Cultural, social, religious etc) of Parents/Community could affect holistic growth as they are most likely to design the course content.
- Absorption in colleges/universities at later stages becomes difficult as it is yet to be recognised. Acceptability is still in nascent stage.

5) Examples of Community Based Education
• Muktangan
  a) Muktangan, founded in the year 2003, is a community-based education model, operating within the mainstream school educational system.
  b) Being more inclusive and child centric in nature, it is offering quality education to children in poor communities
  c) An equally important aspect of Muktangan is the focus on involving the community women in the teaching process
  d) The education at Muktangan schools is at par with some of the best English medium schools in Mumbai
  e) Its innovative education programs could indeed be the beginning of a change in India’s education system

• Global Pathways School
  a) Village Community Schools opened Global Pathways School right in the heart of the village of Chettipalayam, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
  b) It helps in building a new model for sustainable education and development.
  c) Children are taught using activity based learning (ABL) techniques.

6) Way Forward

• Civil Societies and NGOs can help the communities to undertake community schooling much more efficiently

• For implementing the programme of compulsory primary education, educationists have visualized a close cooperation of the school and the community

• School teachers should play a dynamic role in community education and adult education