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NEED FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEAD TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PAKISTAN

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1947 several educational changes in the education sector were introduced by the successive governments through their National Policies, Commissions, Task Forces, Long, Medium and Short Term Plans and Programmes for the quantitative expansion as well as the qualitative improvement in Pakistan. Most of these changes were externally imposed to the educational institutions. As a result, some changes even could not take off at the grass-root level. This indicates a sheer waste of human and non human resources in Pakistan being a less economically developed country. The reasons have already been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Memon, 1996). The history of education in Pakistan reveals that an issue of school management and leadership was not given a high priority in the educational reforms that indicate the lack of awareness of the policy makers and planners about the importance of such critical issue in the area of managing education change.

The head teachers of primary and secondary schools are never considered as curriculum and instructional leaders and levers of change in Pakistan, therefore, they acted according to the instructions of their superiors. Hill (1989) argues that the quality of leadership provided by the head teacher is the single most important factor in determining the effectiveness of the school, hence the head teacher is central to the success or failure of school. This has been endorsed by many research studies conducted in the western context. Moreover, the school culture and learning milieu in Pakistan is different from the western countries; we need to develop an indigenous knowledge based school management theory that could guide the people responsible for designing professional development programmes in Pakistan. Harber and Dadley (1993) alert us that the professional development programmes might fail if they are not geared towards meeting the needs and demands of the clientele. The head teachers must be adequately trained and empowered to develop their school vision that might help them in bringing about any change in the schools. This paper argues about the need for professional development of the head teachers in secondary schools in Pakistan.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEAD TEACHERS

The importance of the professional development of head teachers cannot be over-emphasized for managing schools effectively and efficiently in any schooling system of the world. In many parts of the world there is a legal requirement that only trained and qualified head teacher should be recruited in the schooling systems which does not exist in Pakistan. In Pakistan, 75% secondary school head teachers in the public sector are promoted from among the senior secondary school teachers on the seniority-cum-merit basis who might be good teachers but not necessarily be good administrators or managers or leaders. And 25% secondary school head teachers are appointed through direct recruitment by the Education Department or the Provincial Public Service Commission, however, the latter is not a regular feature in the education system. Thus the professional training of head teachers is not considered as an entry qualification for the headship in secondary schools. In order to train the secondary school head teachers in Pakistan, there is a demand (see Bacchus 1995; Black 1993) to diagnose the needs of the head teachers and understand what sort of skills, knowledge and competence are required for them in the area of school management. The literature on education change suggests that the success of any major school improvement efforts will depend on the motivation, commitment and administrative/managerial skills of the head teachers and others who are involved in the school management activities.

Holmes (1993) mentions that the school leadership is not a new concern, it deals with the application of reason, logic, values and political will and professional commitment what Leithwood (1992) labels it ‘transformational leadership’ or ‘leader of the leader’. A substantive amount of research has been done in the context of Europe and North
America to understand the issues of the school management and leadership but only a few attempts are made in this regard in the context of the developing countries generally and particularly in Pakistan (see Simmons and others 1996). Hurst and Rodwell (1985) mention that very little systematic study of training needs of the clientele is carried out and any effort in this behalf was usually done by the trainees who frequently had either little or no research background.

Thus efforts need to be made to understand the role of head teachers in the schools of Pakistan and to know what sort of knowledge, skills and attitude is required for the head teachers for becoming effective school leaders and reflective managers. Holmes (1993) has rightly mentioned that in the past schools were able to survive with a very low key profile to the task of leadership which is now much more complex and demanding and schools need sufficient thought and commitment to meet the challenges of the 21st century. He further mentioned that successful leadership is not a peculiar style but consistent commitment, and a vision for formulating principles and practices to run schools effectively. Thus the head teachers should be aware of the vision, purpose of schooling, students' learning needs and practical challenges to manage the people, professional ethics for creating a climate for educational change for quality. A successful leadership needs to adopt a wide range of cultures and practices from the relatively autocratic to the democratic style, to meet the increasing demands of their multidimensional role.

It is worth mentioning here that in Pakistan, neither the head teachers of the secondary schools nor the head teachers of the primary schools are exposed to the dynamics of the role related to school improvement, leadership and decision making as head teachers for understanding the issues of school effectiveness or improvement. For the school improvement task, the active support of the head teachers would be needed since they are usually the key facilitators of change in their schools. For the performance of their role as a "facilitator" or "change agent" the head teachers have to be effective leaders and decision makers, who are prepared and equipped to respond effectively to the needs of the students, the demands of the parents and the teachers and the political, educational, economic, social and cultural challenges posed by their communities and the society at large. They also need to better understand how they can perform their roles as instructional and supervisory leaders, managers, facilitators and catalysts for initiating, managing and institutionalizing educational change in their schools.

In the context of Pakistan, Bacchus (1995) has considered head teachers training as an essential element for their professional development as well as for the school development. He emphasizes the importance of the head teachers training for having a sound management, leadership, decision-making and supervisory skills. He argues that if the head teachers are well trained they can provide supportive and collaborative environment to their teachers and others in implementation of any innovative ideas. He further mentions that due to the lack of effective professional support from their head teacher in some cases it seems difficult for the teachers to achieve the desired outcomes. Black and his colleagues (1993) in the context of Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKESP) network also makes a similar argument that there is a need for formal and focused training of head teachers to ensure the centrality of their role which is pivotal in guiding the direction of changes that have to be made. Keeping in mind the importance of the role of head teachers in the change process for school improvement, they need a wide range of skills, knowledge and competence to deal with the multidimensional roles which are expected to perform for improving their effectiveness as educational managers, curriculum and instructional leaders.

**PROCESS OF DIAGNOSING NEEDS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEAD TEACHERS**

In order to diagnose the needs of the head teachers of secondary schools in Pakistan for developing a professional development programme, a detailed survey questionnaire was developed in the light of literature on head teacher's role in the developing countries (see Harber and Dadey 1993, Leithwood et al 1994). The purpose of using the questionnaire was two-fold. Firstly, to know about their needs as head teachers and what they do in their schools. Secondly, how much time they spend on each activity. The questionnaire was personally administered to 89 head teachers of public and private school systems in a 'head teachers forum' in Karachi and completed questionnaires were collected back from their schools after two weeks. On the whole 84% head teachers responded to the questionnaire that seems quite a positive and encouraging trend towards expressing their 'felt needs' for their professional development.

The data was analyzed and the needs were classified into seven main categories which are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>NO. OF HEAD TEACHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of head teacher's Role</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Enrichment</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relationships</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Professional Development</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Professional Development</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The seven categories of 'felt needs' were considered to be relevant by the head teachers for their professional development so that it might help them to make effective, transformational leader in their schools. These needs seem to be in line with Deal and Peterson (1994) study in which they suggested that the head teachers must possess both technical traits (analytical, rational, problem solving capabilities) and symbolic traits (sensitive, expressive touch of an artistic and passionate leader). Brandt (1992) cities Sergiovanni's work that the head teachers do not need any body to check them or push them or lead them, but they should be trained in a way that they are compelled within themselves.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the head teachers were involved in the matter of school administration matters (administrivia) such as teachers punctuality, teachers and students dresses and absenteeism, meeting with the parents and the educational officers or educational managers, doing work for...
the board of examinations, school discipline, cleanliness, school maintenance, correspondence with the various people etc. This appears a more or less typical scenario of the head teachers role that has also been cited in Harber and Dadey (1993) in the context of Africa. In the context of North America, Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) identified four levels of effectiveness of the head teachers of schools — administrators, humanitarian, programme manager and systematic problem solver. The present study does not fit in this framework, however, the pattern of data analysis suggests that most of the head teachers tend to perform their role as administrators in their schools.

However, a small number of head teachers were involved in the academic matters (academia) such as timetabling, sending teachers for short courses, classroom observation, conference with teachers and students, reviewing syllabus, checking students written work, discussing students progress with teachers and parents, organizing co-curricular activities and students remedial work etc. Mortimore et al (1988) call them as "purposeful activities". There was hardly any sign of the school's relationships with community for involving them in the education process of the children. The majority of the head teachers from government schools thought that they needed a prior approval of the competent authority to involve community in the school affairs, however, the parents teachers associations happened to meet infrequently to discuss the school administration problems. But the head teachers complained about the poor attendance and passive participation of the parents in these meetings. Landers and Myers (1977) quoted in Hill (1993) mentioned that there is no one style that is universally effective in every situation, nor any style is always better than another, however, various styles are effective in various situations; there is no ideal style. This suggests that the effective head teacher should use a repertoire of his or her styles adjusting to the tasks and situations.

PROPOSAL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEAD TEACHERS

Harber and Dadey (1993) argue that the professional development of head teachers has to be considered in the wider context of national educational policy together with general attitudes within society to schools and schooling. The course should enable the head teachers to handle uncertainty, respond creatively to new demands, generate a self enabling capacity within their schools needs, maintain credibility and forge relevant and effective relationships with the clients they seek to serve. In order to facilitate the change process in the schools and bring about an improvement in quality of their work, the data suggests that there is a need to initiate a formal training programme in school management for the head teachers or deputy head teachers in Pakistan which can help them to update their knowledge, competence and skills in order to manage schools effectively.

The programme should be embedded in the theory and practice and focus on combining academic studies and supervised practical experiences of the head teachers and others. Substantial use may be made of case studies, seminars, workshops, group work and other related skills such as action research, peer coaching and mentoring should also be taught. Furthermore, the instructional programme should use a "sandwich-like" approach in which the participants, after completing some parts of course, try under supervision and with advice from their instructors or mentors, to put into practice the main ideas which they have acquired during the course. Taking into consideration the head teachers' 'felt needs' the professional development may be developed in four main domains vis-a-vis schools as context of change, effective school leadership, action learning and research and whole school development based on the following 'cyclic approach'.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

1. Context of change
2. Developing a shared understanding about changes in schools
3. Sharing new experiences and knowledge
4. Whole school development
5. Applying new knowledge / skills and competence
6. Reflecting on new knowledge, skills and competence

The details of the proposed professional development programme are spelt out below:

SCHOOLS AS A CONTEXT OF CHANGE

During the professional development programme, the head teachers should be allowed to reconceptualize the school as a context of change and develop a shared understanding of the process involved in the planned and unplanned change at the system or school level and identify the school culture and the key stakeholders influencing the school policies and practices. To deal with them, the
head teachers must develop a workable mechanism based on the shared understanding and consensus that might help make innovation sustainable in their schools. The head teachers should be encouraged to develop their understanding about the issues of educational change that affect the implementation of any planned change in schools. They should examine and discuss the organizational culture that act as a facilitating or hindering force in bringing about change in school and share with the colleagues and suggest ways how school culture can work as helping factor in the change process. The understanding about the change process at school and personal level should be discussed so that they can get their clear perception that how can they play their role as change agent or levers of change in their school improvement. Extensive discussion on school based changes drawing from their experiences of introducing changes in schools and from the literature on change in schools should also be discussed. To meet the above demands the topics such as school as a social organization, educational change issues and school improvement process should be included in the course.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The head teachers should be encouraged to share their understanding of leadership in general and their role as head teacher in Pakistan context in particular. They should also be encouraged to identify their working management and leadership styles and critically look at them and share strengths and weaknesses with the group. Techniques that include questionnaires, time diaries and critical incidents analysis should be used. This will help them to reflect on their personal experiences and achievements in the school. Thus, they will also be exposed to various approaches so that they are able to use a versatile style on their work. This area should include topic such as head teacher as a curriculum and instructional leader, school community relationships and managing staff appraisal and development.

They will be provided with the current literature on the role of head teacher (e.g., curriculum and instructional leader, personnel director, assessor of the students performance, resource provider, process helper, evaluator of school performance and liaison officer etc.) in their school. These roles will be discussed both from the participants' experiences and from the literature. This might help them to reconceptualize their role and apply in their practical life as head teachers. This will help the head teachers to critically examine their relationship with the parents and community and their involvement in the school affairs. This might serve as "thought provoking" exercise to develop their awareness about the importance of their relationship with the community.

They should also be provided opportunity to work on the scope of the participation of the community in the education process that might lead towards the school improvement. The participants should also be exposed to various approaches and strategies through which they could involve the parents and the community at large to generate resources for the school development and improvement. They should also be able to know how to pool these resources and use them in accordance with the school needs. They will be able to develop their closer relationship between school and community required for effective school management. The head teachers will develop possible ways and means to work with the stakeholders who influence the school policy and plans and seek their input in the affairs of school so as to become the part of the school development plan. The participants will learn about the practical strategies that can help bridge the existing performance gap between the school and the stakeholders.

ACTION LEARNING AND RESEARCH

The head teachers should learn about the process of action learning, research and reflection with the support of their 'learning set' working on any problem with the intention of getting things done. This process will help the head teachers to take an active stance towards real problem and work collaboratively with their colleagues to solve it. They will also work together on their continuing professional development with the structured support and challenges of others using action learning. This will lead to focus on problem-based learning. They should be exposed to various forms of learning such as experiential, action, peer learning and peer mentoring. The head teachers would identify various research issues and identify peer group in the course and develop plan for peer mentoring so that they could be responsible for their learning. The course tutors will facilitate their mentoring process in their schools. They should also be exposed to various forms of educational inquiry and encouraging them to get 'hands on experience' in developing case studies based on action research and problem-based learning in order to develop their understanding about the issues being encountered by the heads in the schools. They will be encouraged to work together on the same issues and evolve a possible strategy to overcome their common problems in schools.

The programme will also enable the participants to develop their understanding about the nature and importance of the school performance. The school performance indicators will be developed and the participants will be encouraged to use these indicators in their schools and report back to the group for discussion and further improvement. The head teachers will use the portfolio approach to draw on their learning experiences from the head training programme, reflect on them and present them in the report form. This will also help them to do the self evaluation what they have learned and develop further action plans for the future. This domain will deal with peer coaching/mentoring and monitoring school performance.

WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

The head teachers are directly responsible for the development of their schools. The course participants will develop the long, medium and short term strategic plans based on their new experiences and knowledge for their school development. They will also be able to learn how to implement these plans in their schools for achieving the desirable results. This programme will help the course participants to critically examine the school management issue that affect the overall performance of their schools, and share their strategies, if any, they adopted to overcome them. This will enable the participants to learn from each others experiences regarding school management styles, curriculum, assessment etc. and develop a
"conscious awareness" of their own actions to facilitate their ideas or theories in action that shape their management styles and school culture. The head teachers will work in pair and serve as a "critical friend" to evolve a workable mechanism that can help improve the exciting scenario of state-of-the-art education being offered in the schools. The head teacher based on their new learning experiences, will carry out a need analysis in their respective schools and develop their school development plans and implementation and evaluation strategy. The purpose of this project will be to provide them hands on experiences or activities to learn how to develop plans and implement them in their own context with full confidence. This domain will cover topics such as school management issues and school development plan etc. in the course.

CONCLUSION

The proposed course of the professional development for the head teachers in Pakistan will help them to develop their understanding about their role as curriculum and instructional leaders. They will be able to examine their management, leadership and decision making styles and share their understanding about these styles and see which of these are likely to be effective or ineffective in their day-to-day work and what justifications they have for using their preferable styles and their impact on the over all performance of their schools. They will be having an access to related literature on the head teachers as curriculum and instructional leaders and school management, leadership and decision making styles and discuss the various approaches relevant to their context. They will be able to apply a theoretical understanding of such role to their practical situation, reflect and share with the peers accordingly. The participants will also be exposed to some strategies of staff appraisal and development, examine the current appraisal and staff development approaches prevalent in their schools and share strengths and weaknesses among the groups. They will also be exposed to various approaches to staff appraisal and development and encourage them to develop their own appraisal and staff development system and introduce in their schools. Thus, they will be able to conceptualize the importance of staff development that will help them in improving the ability, knowledge and skills of the managers.

The participants will also be able to critically analyze their existing programmes of staff development and further develop their competence and skills to formulate the coherent staff development school based programmes and deal with the implementation issues. While developing staff development plan they will be encouraged to make link between the staff development and students learning. The factors such as content, process and context that affect the staff development will also be discussed at length. Thus, the head teachers will learn to know how to develop such professional development programmes for their teachers and staff and share their experiences which are essential for their professional growth and performance for them. The programme will help them to develop a collegial environment where they can work with each other and help each other. The head teachers will work in small peer coaching / mentoring group to share the learning process. The head teachers will undertake one or more action research projects in their own schools supported by action learning sets and peer mentoring group. They will be able to conduct series of workshops / seminars focusing on key aspects of management among themselves. Themes such as managing curriculum and learning, staff development, parents and community, monitoring and evaluation of school performance will be identified by the participants for general discussion. This process will enable them to continue their efforts for the school improvement and effectiveness.

REFERENCES