



## Nurturing Sustainable Teachers' Leadership Culture: Possibilities, Challenges, Stakeholders' Behavior Analysis in the Context of Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

*In the current era, educational leadership is gradually being shifted from individual heroism to collective, shared, distributed leadership styles. It is believed that the role of a teacher should not be limited to the classroom only, but teachers' interest in leadership role isn't appreciable for their effective contribution during preparation of schools' plans and policies. Similarly, the stakeholders' behavioral approaches also create many challenges that include; the schools' organizational structure, the silence of the literature to highlight the exemplary shared leadership practices, the culture of internal and external capacity building that supports the development of shared leadership over time, a set of applicable suggestions about distribution of school-based daily activities among teacher-leaders and existing leadership. The stated gaps should be bridged to promote teachers' leadership culture through their empowerment and may form a*

*discussion forum initiated at state level for integration of shared leadership practices in the states' managed and other educational institutions in the country such as Pakistan. Since, the schools in Pakistan are highly diversified. Due to the variation in the nature and type style of educational management of each type has its own set of problems, challenges and strengths. These stakeholders are not yet realized that shared leadership approaches are far better than the idealism and heroism. For this purpose, some initiatives are being suggested for nurturing the sustainable teachers' leadership culture in the educational institutions that include; the legislation in the Organizational Registration Acts, a comprehensive study of the current practices of public & private schools' systems and preparation of a strategic plan for gradual nurturing of the shared leadership in Pakistani schools.*

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers Leadership, Education, Teaching, Schools, Educational Institutes



## INTRODUCTION

The recent contributions by the researches have given a new dimension to teacher's role as, it is believed now that the role of a teacher should not be limited to classroom only, and instead it has to be aligned with larger goals such as whole school development, social and national goals. The School leaders and teachers are working in the close coordination and collaborating with each other implementing concluding democratic values in leadership practices and create a vibrant, progressive teaching-learning which also helps in the collective capacity building of the personnel.

In the current era, educational leadership is gradually being shifted from individual heroism to collective, shared, distributed leadership styles and organizational responsibility, stretched over the school's social and situational contexts (Harris, 2008). Throughout the Globe, cultivating the culture of teacher's effective participation in educational leadership has to come across many hurdles before making it a reality.

Although, the leadership functions and practices may vary from school to school but the ultimate result of every function is based upon raising the standard of education, enhancement in the quality of teaching-learning process, and sustainability of the improved practices.

Teachers can also play vital role as a pedagogical leader to improve the current leadership practices about personality development of the students. Similarly, as a pedagogical leader, teacher is a most relevant individual who can bring change the classroom practices in vertical direction. However, teachers' interest in leadership role isn't appreciable for their effective contribution

in developing the strategies or forming of the policies. The said gap should be bridged to promote teacher leaders through empowerment.

Many research studies including Carson, J. B., Tesluk, P. E. & Marrone, J. A., (2007); Crowther F, Ferguson M & Hann L 2009; Grant C., Gardner K., Kajee F., Moodley R & Somaroo S. 2008 ; Hallett, (2007); Richard B. (2007); Youngs, H. (April, 2013) highlight that the school management including principals, Districts Education Officers, Departments of Education and other policy makers individuals and institutions have to develop the teachers to prepare them for leadership position for sustainable educational development. The capacity- building sessions may enable the teachers for professional development activities. These initiatives may reflect that all stakeholders are interested to distribute and share the authority among the teachers. This article focuses to highlight the challenges which are being faced by all stakeholders in order to cultivate the shared leadership culture. The current educational structure is also discussed to know opportunity and threats for nurturing of shared or distributed leadership.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literary meaning of the leadership is that one or more people leading a group of people or institution. There is no agreed single definition of the leadership. While, Richard B. (2007) also explaining the leader that "a leader shapes and shares a vision which gives point to the work of others (p.5)." Similarly, the role of the school leader is described effectively by Richard B. (2007) that leaders are those who consistently make effective contributions to social order and who are expected and perceived to do so. But,



the sustainable teachers' leadership is directly proportional to institutional culture and acceptance of teacher's new role outside the classroom. However, most of the cases; it is only possible through re-conceptualization of the role, responsibilities and working relationships among the teachers and existing management.

Richard B. (2007) also identifies this aspect very clearly that "educational leadership is a form of reflective action however; it requires a re-conceptualization of the relationship between theory and practice" (p.4). Crowther *et al.*, (2009) agreed that through collaboration new forms of understanding and practice could contribute to school success and the quality of the school community in the long term.

The notion of distributed, shared or parallel leadership is promoting the culture of democracy, equity, equality and teacher ownership discussed in a research study by Villiers. E.D. & Pretorius. S. (2011) Crowther explains the desired outcomes of teachers' leadership, "process whereby effective teacher leaders and principals work collaboratively to build school capacity" (p.576). Crowther, et al. (2009), The characteristics of teacher leadership in the school, is establishing a link between the school-based leadership and the improvement of school learning outcomes by presenting a model to explain the dynamics of that link.

The possible areas of teachers leadership as Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo (2010) suggested that, "always focus at least four areas in which teacher leadership occurs, namely in the classroom, outside the classroom working with teachers and learners in co-curricular activities, outside the classroom in whole school

development activities and leading between neighboring schools in the community".

## CHALLENGES & STAKEHOLDERS' BEHAVIOR

There are many emergent challenges, as obstacle for moving forward the vehicle of teachers' leadership and in which most of the challenges are not yet discussed clearly in the literature. Firstly, the changing school organizational structure for sustainable teachers' leadership, on the other hand it also highlighted by Singh HD 2007 (as cited in Villiers. E.D. & Pretorius. S. 2011) that "the role of school management teams in developing teacher leadership and how educators can lead beyond the classroom not clearly defined" (p.574). Furthermore, Sergiovanni (as cited in Duignan, P. & Bezzina, M. (2006) suggested that teachers would know more and become more skilled which depends on the support they get from policies and context (p.12). Similarly, in addition to these views, Katzenmeyer & Moller, G 2009; Murphy, 2005 (as cited in Villiers. E. D. & Pretorius, S. 2011) stated that "the literature emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development of a whole staff component, which includes formal and informal leaders, as it unifies staff in working collaboratively towards achieving a shared vision and purpose" (p.577). Moreover, Singh, HD 2007 (as cited in Villiers. E.D. & Pretorius. S. 2011) stated, "although these policies and systems create the opportunity for teacher leadership to emerge in schools, they do not clarify what teacher leadership entails, nor do they provide guidelines on how teacher leadership should be introduced in schools" (p-574).



Secondly, literature shared leadership is completely silence about the provision of more financial benefits or incentives to the teachers when allowing them as a leader without any financial benefit the teacher ownership could not be enhanced.

Thirdly in the research study, no concrete capacity building initiatives are discussed in order to enable the teachers for taking part in school based policy matters as an effective leader. while Carson, J. B., Tesluk, P. E. & Marrone, J. A. (2007) discusses the importance of internal and external capacity building that, “The first condition is an internal team environment that supports the development of shared leadership over time, and the second is the level of supportive coaching provided by an external leader”(p.1222).

Fourthly, there isn't any set of applicable suggestions being proposed about distribution of work of school-based daily activities among teacher-leaders and existing leadership including vice-principal and principal in varied context around the globe.

Subsequently, there is no discussion initiated for the orientation of shared leadership practices in the State's managed Educational institutions, which are almost 75% of the institutions in the country such as Pakistan. Similar observations are also shared by Thorpe, R., Gold, J., & Lawler, J. (2011) that a review of 61 different studies of distributed leadership published in the period 2003-2011, relating particularly to the context of schools, reveal that there is no one way of trying to define what distributed leadership is. Rather, leadership stretches over formal and informal aspects of an organization and arises in-between or as a result of, the

interactions that take place between individuals or groups.

Similarly, Khumalo, 2008; Singh, 2007; Rajagopaul, 2007;(as cited in Villiers.E. D. & Pretorius. S. 2011) shared the findings that “supported the notion of principals and or school management teams as barriers to teacher leadership, by controlling decision-making processes and being afraid to delegate authority” (p.577).

Finally, there is a dire need of the gap as no specific general criteria and suggestions like Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the categorization of teachers about delegation of authority and decision-making. At the same time, due to absence of clear terms of reference (TORs) the idea of teacher leadership, may causes, conflict of interest especially, if the existing principal and organizational leaders are not ready for the delegation of authority practically.

However, Hallett, T. (2007) stated that authoritative capital is distributed and arranged through individual roles and teams across an organization, known also as the division of labor or jurisdiction. He explains further that in a school hierarchy, the role of the principal has the largest individual deposit of authoritative capital. Meanwhile, writer Youngs, H. (April 2013) explains that the organizational forms are based on people accessing authoritative capital. Irrespective of what type or types of capital have been accessed, the resultant authority, symbolic power or a mixture of both, is then experienced by others as influence, where influence is defined as “the ability to affect another's judgment and decision-making, by word or action” (p.16). In addition, if those who experience influence



expect and accept it, then they are likely to label this influence as ‘leadership’ in a collective sense and a person as a ‘leader’ in an individual sense (p.16).

On the other side, it was differentiated that shared/ distributed or parallel leadership forms are based on people accessing human, cultural or social capital or any combination of these (Youngs, H.,2013).however, if senior management or top-level policy makers had firm belief on Youngs’ views and be motivated about impact of teachers’ leadership . Subsequently, the possible way could be find out to encourage the teachers’ role in school-based decision. Here, a runway of teacher-leadership suggested in some researches.

## STATUS OF TEACHERS’ LEADERSHIP IN PAKISTANI SCHOOLS

The Schools in Pakistan are highly diversified. These schools can be placed in three broad based categories 1) Public Sector Schools 2) English Medium Private Sector Schools and 3) Arabic Medium Schools. Each category may further be divided into sub categories. Due to the variation in type; the nature and style of educational management also varies. Each type has its own set of problems, challenges and opportunities. For example, the management of schools more inclined towards profits or quality of education or both.

In case of Public Sector School, the existing organizational structure of Departments of Education (DOE) is purely bureaucratic. Generally, this school of thought believes on dualism of identity between teachers and leadership at district or higher level. The term ‘dualism’ was further defined by Crevani, L., Lindgren, M., & Packendorff, J (2007,) that

“dualism of identity” that traditional leadership models contribute to the institutionalization of a dualism of identity between leaders and followers in society –a dualism identity construction (p.50). Furthermore, it assumes that teaching is something else and teachers unable to lead as a leader.

Another side, most of the private school’s management has been taking strategic decisions without any deliberation with the faculty. The impact of the said practice is a cause of decreasing teachers’ ownership and percentage of efforts for innovations. Sergiovanni (as cited in Duignan, P. & Bezzina, M. (2006) realized effects of these practices and says, “In many places, teaching is undervalued, and this situation has consequences for the life world of teachers and schools” (p.12).

For this purpose initially the following initiative may help for nurturing the sustainable teachers’ leadership culture: (a). comprehensive study practices of public & private school system and on the basis of the said studies necessary decision could be taken including necessary legislation. (b).motivational and professional development sessions for principal and management of school. (c).shared, parallel and distributed leadership practices could be included in pre-service education degree program.

Finally, the success stories of shared, parallel or distributed leadership should disseminate for awareness rising in order to encourage the school management or policy maskers in rest of school in the country. Meanwhile, a source of concrete suggestions, tips and guidelines must develop in order to facilitate all those principals and teachers who are interested to start the practices of shared /distributed leadership culture.



Nevertheless, they are still facing challenges because of unsolvable matters including division of assignments, authorities and responsibilities.

## CONCLUSION

The importance and affect of context and careful generalization that the importance of context raises the question to what extent are findings of the research studies transferable or generalizable. Most patterns of leadership distribution were different according to historical leadership practice, the histories of individuals, leadership work arrangements and the education policy environment where each study was situated (Thorpe, R., Gold, J., & Lawler, J. 2011 (as cited in Youngs, April 2013, Pp.4-5). Therefore, when we discuss about the possibility for nurturing of shared leadership, thus the sharing of leadership activities should be planed according to the ground needs of country's historical perspective including socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic conditions. As Richard B. (2007, p.4) discussed that every theory is not equally suitable for every context especially in educational leadership or management scenario.

Since, the study of current organizational structures of public and private sector educational institutions also provide marvelous support for introducing of shared leadership culture at large scale for the masses.

Further more, as Youngs, H. (April 2013) highlighted that "developing shared purpose through collaborative decision-making incorporates the merging of hierarchical and heterarchical structural arrangements, as well as the socio-cultural-political contexts that exist" (Pp.4-5).

Finally, it has been summarized that the culture of shared or distributed leadership is directly proportional to capacity building of each level of academic and non-academic personnel of the schools. Huber, L. et al., 2008 (as cited in Villiers, E. D.& Pretorius, S., 2011) also argued that shared, distributed and parallel leaderships are inextricably linked to democracy, teacher professional /capacity building, personal/professional growth of teachers, sense of responsibility/accountability, continuous assessment, whole school development/improvement and enhancement of student learning outcomes (p.574).

There is no harm to conclude that the idea of comprehensive strategic planning could helpful for nurturing shared leadership practices gradually in Pakistani schools. Because, it is far better than the idealism, which based on some unobvious recommendations of the irrelevant studies being conducted by developed countries.

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