

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Educational Leadership is identified as an important factor for quality education and developing countries have focused on this important factor and implemented systematic training and development programs for their leaders. Moreover, the latest educational policies advocate decentralized educational management, which has brought both benefits and problems in a number of countries. However, these initiations are far away from the expectations. Any educational reform will not be successful without both an evolution of institutional structures and specialized training and development programs for education professionals. One strategy for achieving these goals is found in School Based Management (SBM), a model of decentralized school administration that provides clear guidelines and has been successfully introduced in a number of countries. This paper focuses on the principles and practices of School Based Management for school effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate power to change is--and has always been-- in the heads, hands, and hearts of the educators who work in the schools.

Sirotnik and Clak (1988)

Education is a key factor in all-national development, whether it be social, political, economical, cultural, or moral. For this reason, development of well-managed quality education has been strongly advocated by UNESCO and made

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the focus of efforts in many developing nations. A variety of policies and program perspectives have been developed to meet educational needs of particular countries, helping them to move toward educational parity with the developed world.

Organized participation in decentralized educational planning has become increasingly important in these reform efforts. In the past, entities such as Parent Teachers Associations, School Development Committees, and even the Village Planning Committees have functioned without the statutory recognition that would make possible a clear charter of powers and responsibilities. (Ambast 1999). Community participation, however, has been identified as a central facilitating condition for quality education, on a par with professionalism of teachers, principals' initiative behavior, teacher collegiality, organizational flexibility, pedagogical flexibility and accountability (Lockheed and Levin, 1991). These authors have recognized that if the cycle of disempowerment of marginal communities is to be broken, the criteria for monitoring and evaluating school performance need to include accountability to local clientele.

What Research Says?

Several research studies have found that the effective decentralization of management largely depends on efficient leadership. In the context of school management, effective principal has to provide leadership in implementing changes in school programs. Principals can successfully resolve disciplinary problems and give advice and direction to teachers (Sharma 1982) and several research studies conducted in India found a relationship between the effectiveness of the school principal's leadership style and overall institutional climate

and school performance. Dhulia (1989) found a positive correlation of school climate with teachers' job satisfaction. On the other hand, Vasantha (1989) found lack of awareness of and encouragement for the use of modern management techniques in school administration on the part of school leaders.

Chakraborti (1990) found that the open climate in schools, ways of creating congenial climate largely depends on the leader's personality and his behavior. Subudhi (1990) showed the importance of management training to principals to enhance their capacity for changing their attitude to bring about desirable changes in their respective institutions. Sharma (1991) studied the administrative behavior of principals as perceived by teachers in relation to job satisfaction of teachers and student achievement in junior college. The author found a positive relationship between administrative behavior and teachers job satisfaction and educational attainment of teachers.

Govinda and Verghese (1991) found that "The operational setting in which the schools function provides the internal environment in the schools and is reflected through; (i) the infrastructure facilities available; (ii) the human resources especially the teachers and the administrators; (iii) the teaching-learning process to take into account the way curriculum is transacted; (iv) the learner achievement. Learner achievement is considered as an indicator for education. Jayajothi (1992) studied the organizational climate and leadership behavior of principals in relation to teacher morale in central schools and found that the open climate related best to the perception of leadership behavior of principals by the teachers. Kak (1992) studied the cybernetic approach to the school administration and found the necessary conditions for creating congenial conditions for

work in schools were autonomy, immediate reward, opportunity to exert, immediate awareness, interaction and manageability. Autonomy was found to be the function of security, stability and freedom to perform. Sense of responsibility was found necessary for self-actualization. Opportunity to exert was found essential for liberating perceptive effort, which was found to be crucial for creative performance.

School Based professional development is the vital concern today in most of the schools. Ministries of Education in developing countries have been encouraging schools to design and develop their own professional development plans for teachers. School Based Management is a potential model, which highlights the various processes of strengthening institutional capacity for quality education.

School-Based Management (SBM) Model:

It is an approach to improve the quality of education by relocating significant decision-making authority from state and district offices to individual schools. SBM model fosters principals, teachers, students, and parents to have greater control over the education process by giving them responsibility for decisions about the budget, personnel, and the curriculum. Through the involvement of teachers, parents, and other community members in these key decisions, SBM can facilitate in generating more effective learning environment for students. The core components of SBM are decentralization of administration, participation by staff, parents and the community in the school, making schools more competitive, and using action research to make schools more effective. Delegation of power and authority is considered to be a significant factor in SBM model

that leads to commitment, trust, and a sense of ownership.

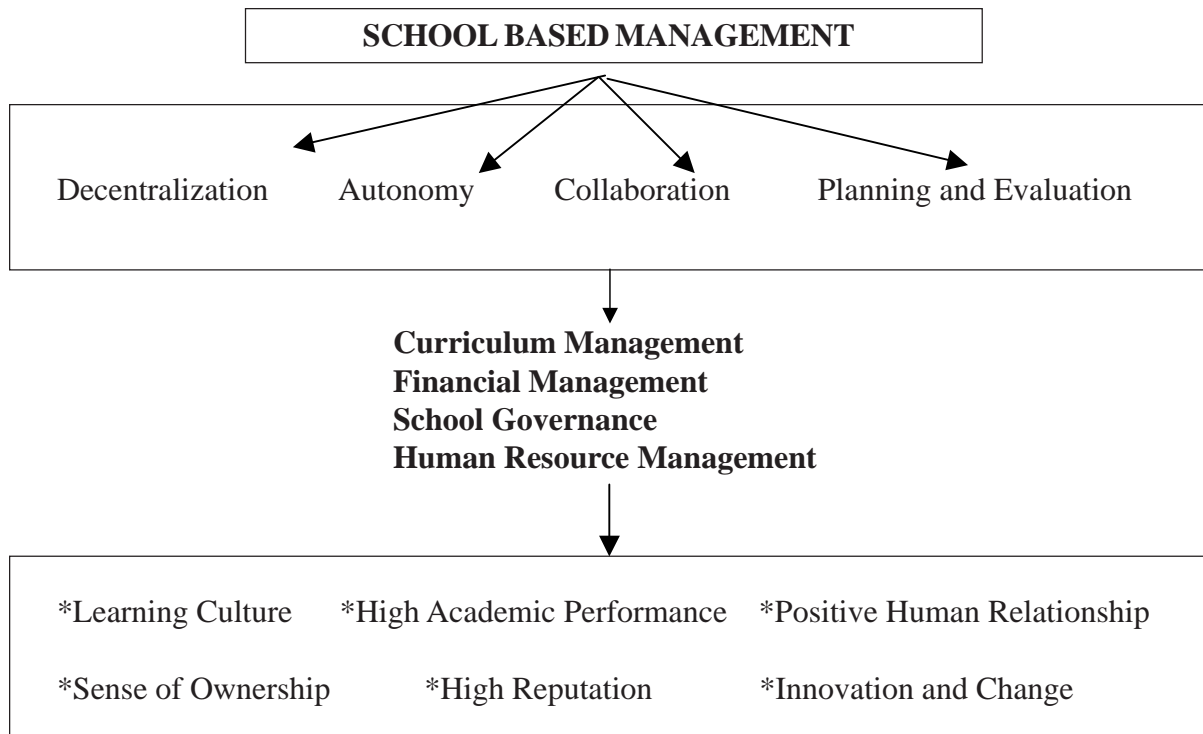
The very purpose of school-based management is to strengthen the school as a system by accelerating its structures, process and personnel for creating learning organization, where learning is considered as a value. Establishing high academic standards, maintaining positive human relations, developing a sense of ownership, fostering high reputation in the society and accepting innovation and change are the key features. The following figure explains the concept of school-based management.

The dominant expectations, at the school level, for SBM appear to be:

- Involvement of staff in decisions about programs and organization;
- Involvement of parents and others in the community in the school;
- Efficient and effective allocation of resources, based on a school budget;
- Strong instructional leadership and a focus on educational concerns;
- An environment supportive of professional growth and collaboration;
- Long term academic improvement;
- Positive attitudes toward, and support for the school demonstrated by staff, students, parents, and the community; positive behavior, modeled by the staff; and
- The school should be successful and effective in meeting its goals.

(Caldwell, B. 1990) (Herman, J. & Herman, J., 1993) (Murphy, J., & Beck, L.1995) (Neal, R. 1991) Reeves (1992).

SBM facilitates the school as a community to



work independently with need based perspective plans. The state and center's role would be to assist the decisions made at the school level, and provide technical assistance when a school has difficulty in translating the nation's vision into high-quality programs. State holds the responsibility to take initiatives in developing student and staff performance standards and evaluating the schools. The state provides the curricular goals, objectives, and expected outcomes while leaving it up to the schools to determine the methods to accomplish the desired results. The school management councils at each school that include the principal, representatives of parents and teachers, and, in some cases, other citizens, support staff, and students, conduct the needs assessment and develop a plan of action that includes statements of goals and measurable objectives in consistent with school board policies. This means the principal has to perform

a host of challenging tasks.

Leadership for Improving the Effectiveness of SBM:

The research literature in SBM highlights that most successful principals were effective in moving four resources - Delegation of power, Professional development through training, Information Management and Motivational devises.-- to teachers and community members. Therefore, specialized leadership training for school leaders focusing on the above dimensions is the essential requirement prior to the implementation of the SBM model in schools.

Focus areas for Leadership Training:

- The development of a culture of continuous improvement

- Increased innovation and creativity
- Enhanced skills and understandings
- Improved commitment and energy
- Improved capacity to adapt to changing circumstances
- Greater responsiveness to the external environment
- More effective school, parish, and community partnerships
- Quality of student outcomes

In the present scenario of development education, the leaders are not merely leaders but they are the agents of transformation. A suitable model for leadership training for school heads must focus on the following:

Such leadership development programs certainly enrich the skills, attitude and knowledge of the school leaders and thus the following important components for effective school leadership can be nurtured.

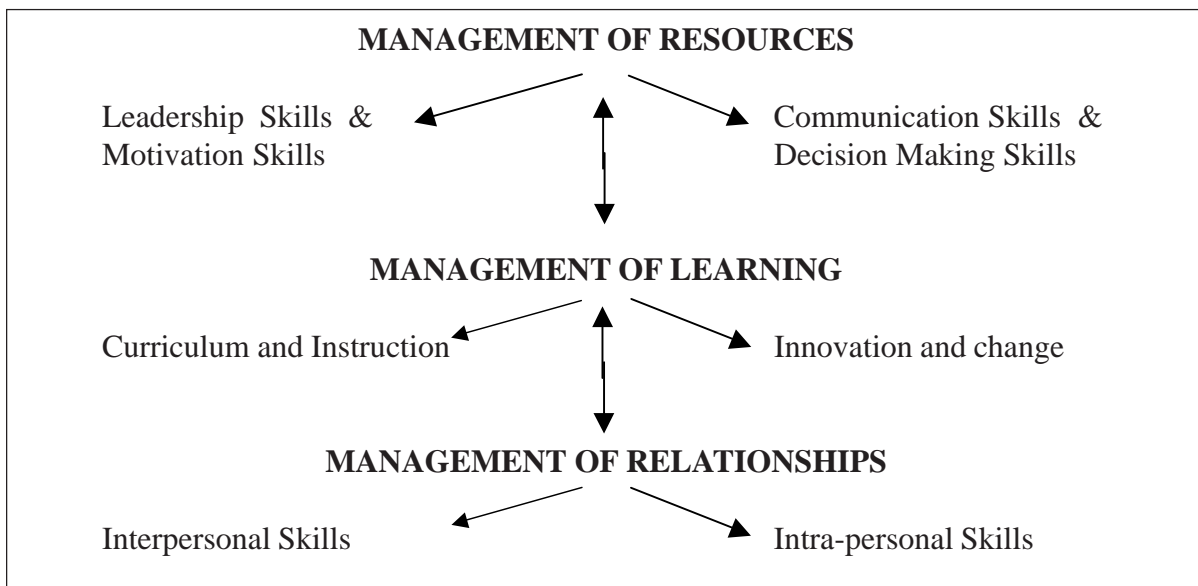
1. Delegation of Power

Successful school leaders believe to diffuse power throughout the school organization to solidify and increase commitment to the organization. Schools must promote vertical and horizontal work groups that involve nearly all teachers in the school and community members and parents. Sometimes the groups can have binding authority to advice the principal or the school-site council.

2. Professional Development Through Training

Principals must promote school-wide staff development programs to improve the capacity of the whole school. If the school could not afford to train all staff, then a small group can be trained with the expectation these teachers would share their new knowledge and skills as master trainers with the other teachers. Effective principals also encourage on-site, continuous staff development of the staff and not the one-shot, "go and get" variety, which is more fragmented in na-

Figure 1: A Model for Development of Educational Leaders



ture. A continuous and comprehensive system of professional development through training can be created to train the teachers in pedagogical as well as managerial dimensions of the school .

3. Management of Information

The principal's role in information sharing is to distribute the information liberally and frequently across the school. Strategies must focus on the information sharing within the school, as well as stakeholders outside. Another key area is to bring the information -- ideas and research -- into the school from outside sources. Effective principals in schools use a variety of strategies to share information among participants, particularly at the school site. Principals must work with staff to develop a clear vision for the school to ensure the vision is communicated school-wide to all constituents. Principals also must disseminate information about the school activities and student performance through newsletters to the whole school community.

4. Motivational Devices

Sustaining motivations among teachers and parents is vital in SBM Model. Principals may write thank you notes and publicly recognize staff at faculty meetings. Building the intrinsic motivation of teachers is a useful mechanism for principals to encourage teachers and community to use their capabilities to support school goals.

CONCLUSION

Professional Leadership is the necessary factor for successful implementation of decentralized management of education at all levels. At this juncture, a systematic and need based professional preparation of Principals, teachers, parents and

members of the community is needed. SBM Model and Decentralized Management Structures at micro level of school management allow people to take part in various school programs. Therefore, at every level of decentralized structure, there is a dire need to build the capacity of stakeholders to make the school based management successful. The role of government at this context is to prepare the conditions of work through which the desired institutional goals are achieved.

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