

Role of Head Teachers in Selected Dimensions of School Improvement As Perceived By Government Secondary School Teachers in Sindh Pakistan

¹Nadir Hussain Bhayo, ²Dr. Shahid Mughal, ³Gul Muhammad Rind

¹Ph.D Scholar (First and Corresponding Author), Northeast Normal University, China
Email: nadir@nenu.edu.cn

²Associate Professor (Co-Author), Department of Education, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan,
Email: Shahid.mughal@iba-suk.edu.pk

³Lecturer (Co-Author), Department of Education, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan
Email: gulrind@iba-suk.edu.pk

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a study, which sought to elicit government secondary school teachers' views about the role of head teachers in selected aspects of school improvement such as school policy making, instructional leadership and community mobilization. The study also looks at the challenges head teachers face in attaining the objectives of school improvement. The study is descriptive in nature. The population of the study includes government secondary school teachers working in district Shikarpur; Pakistan. Two hundred fourteen (214) teachers were selected randomly from secondary schools. A tailor made questionnaire was used to elicit the views of teachers about effectiveness of head teachers' role. The data was analyzed by using mean and standard deviation. Major findings of the study reveal that majority of secondary schools do not have a policy documents on admission, curriculum implementation, discipline and assessment. This trend shows that schools are working without any documented policy. Teachers were of the opinion that head teachers unable to maintain school environment favorable for learning. Teachers mean score in items relating to feedback and professional development advocates their discontent from the role of head teachers. HTs rarely support teachers in their professional grooming and provide them supportive feedback. Regarding professional relationship, teachers mean score indicated their discomfort. School management committee is not so active and empowered to take decisions in school. In the light of the findings the study suggested to formulate job descriptions (JDs) for head teachers and rigorous training and exposure in different aspects of school improvement.

Keywords: Head Teachers, Role, School Improvement, Government Secondary School.

I. INTRODUCTION

The education system in Pakistan is working on three tiers i.e. elementary, secondary and university. After 18th Constitutional Amendment, provinces are responsible for running the affairs of education. The education system is structured on the model of top-down approach. The Provincial Department of Education is responsible for running the affairs of education in the province of Sindh. Under this department there are five regional directorates, 23 district education management offices and a large number of subdivision educational offices. The elementary schools work under sub divisional level education management and high schools under district level education management. Head teachers work under the administrative control of these offices. The appointment of head teachers at all level of education is done from Provincial Department of Education. The elementary school head teachers (HTs) are appointed by district

department of education on the basis of seniority cum merit. Head teachers' seniority is calculated on the basis of working experience and age. The more you are old the more chances of getting a headship position in Pakistan. This is the dilemma of education system that head teachers are not promoted on the basis of performance. No clear job descriptions (JDs) are available for HTs in the department of education. Due to this reason education management is suffering and our schools are far from achieving the purpose of school improvement. Nevertheless the role of HTs is very prominent in achieving the objectives of school improvement (SI). Majority of scholars and practitioners in the field of educational leadership and management agree that school leadership play a significant role in improving the school system. (Harris, 2014). School leaders (head teachers (HTs and principals) supposed to perform number of functions. These tasks include from performing their role as an instructional leader to financial manager, community mobilizer, and human resources manager. The integrations of all these skills pave the way for better schools and improved students' achievement. Better students' achievement has become a dream and Herculean task in a Pakistani government school context. The government schools in Sindh Province have been suffering in terms of low quality of education. Cheating is rampant in examination. Although students who graduate from high schools have very good grades yet in actual students demonstrate very poor content knowledge, communication skills, and problem solving abilities and confidence level when they join further level of education (Colleges or universities). On the other hand several studies have been conducted to assess the learning levels of students. These studies confirm students low learning levels. The questions pop up in minds, who is responsible for this deteriorating situation of education? Community and civil society blame government for this situation. Government's interference in teachers appointment, transfers and postings have made the situation alarming. On the other hand, teaching in government schools is considered as a lavish job because teachers enjoy huge salaries, promotions and perks. Sorry to say, teachers give very low return on their services to their profession. Civil society point finger on government, education department official, head teachers and teachers and believe all of them equally responsible for this mess in education.

Among many reasons of low quality of education in government schools, one of the reason is head teachers poor leadership skills. HTs are unaware of their different roles. No doubt the domain of school improvement is very broad. It is very challenging to investigate all aspects of schools improvement. Government Schools have no black and white policy documents, curriculum implementation framework, monitoring and evaluation plans. Looking at all these aspects, a study was planned and executed. The study purpose was 'how secondary school teachers believe about the head teacher role in performing selected aspects of school improvement? What challenges HTs face in achieving the objectives of school improvement?

This study is confined to investigate the role of HT in selected aspect of schools improvement. These aspects include school policy, instructional leadership and community mobilization.

The following research questions have guided the study:

1. How government secondary school teachers perceive the role of head teachers in selected aspects of school improvement (i.e. policy, instructional leadership and community mobilization)?
2. What challenges HTs face in achieving the objectives of selected aspects of School improvement?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

School effectiveness (SE) research has gaining acceptance in the arena of educational management in developing countries as well. It is noteworthy to mention that SE is viewed differently in developing and developed world. The focus of SE in developing world is looking at infrastructure and availability of resources while the preference in developed countries is on students' features and their family background. No matter what is the focus of SE, the important thing is that in SE the role of HTs is very clear and important. There are different approaches and models to gauge school effectiveness. Cheng (1996) has identified 8 different models of school effectiveness. He used different indicators to measure the effectiveness of schools. The eight models are goal model, resource-input model, process model, satisfaction model, legitimacy model, ineffectiveness model, and organizational learning model and total quality management model. Among eight models, the principals and head teachers' leadership is one of the strongest features of an effective school.

School leaders have important role in the process of four principal areas: Leading the way in innovative practice, transferring their motivation to school teachers, and the wider community to move toward change in their attitude and

values, creating a new school structure, and supporting the staff community to direct their achievement in improving student learning outcomes through their involvement in their professional learning teaching community and inclusive practices (Fullan, 1985)

A. Head Teacher as an Instructional Leader:

The Role of Instructor leader is a new concept, which emerged in early 1880s. This had shifted the idea of school head from administrator to being an instructional or administrative leader. The rationale is to raise the morale of teachers and meet academic standards (du Plessis, P. (2013). The Study has further mentioned that Positive learning community will only happen when teachers feel empowered, secure, collegial relationship, and better relationship with the instructional leader or school head. Glickman (2009), mentioned that school culture can be improved through providing differentiated developmental supervision based on teachers' individual motivation and expertise, teachers' guiding their own professional development and collegial supervision between supervisor and teacher.

Glickman (2009) prefers collegiality over hierarchy, teacher growth over compliance. Study further suggests that School head should assume a role of instructional leader where he or she continuously provide instructional support to teachers in their development. Glickman suggested the clinical supervisor for teachers where school head sits together with a teacher and work on classroom instruction improvement. After observing classroom, school head prepares a growth plan for the teacher. This practice will enhance teachers' motivation in school and result in better teacher and school head relationship.

B. Role of Head Teachers in Collegiality and Teacher Relationship:

Study shows that the conventional approach of getting work done from the teacher through strict supervision and accountability posed threat to teachers' creative approach in teaching and learning. Collaborative, democratic approach to curriculum development encourage ownership of the changes, so that effective translation of policy into practice is more likely conversely, an over-prescriptive curriculum and an instrumental, directive management style can inhibit the process of development (Little dyke, 1997).

Effective professional relations among school staff (teaching and non-teaching contributes towards proper implementation of school policies regarding admission, curriculum. School and community relations are not so strong to work for school improvement.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. The main objective of descriptive research is 'description of the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2004, p.3). The survey method was employed for data collection.

A. The Population and sample of the Study

All government secondary school teachers working in secondary schools of district Shikarpur. Shikarpur is one of the oldest districts in Pakistan. In pre-partition days (Before the independence of Pakistan in 1947) this district was famous for its educational facilities. The teachers were selected (N= 214) randomly out of 959 secondary school teachers. According to Sindh Education Management Information System Census (2014-15) the total number of secondary schools in District Shikarpur are 54 and total number of teachers working in these schools is 942. All teachers responded the questionnaire because the researchers themselves visited the schools. Both male and female teachers were part of the sample. The included in the sample were junior school teachers (JSTs) high school teachers (HSTs), senior teachers (First assistant). The JSTs teach classes from 6th to 8th, HSTs teach classes from 9-10th.

B. Data Collection

Before the development of the research instrument, a comprehensive review of literature on school effectiveness and improvement was carried out. There are lot of dimensions of school improvement; here only three dimensions were selected. These dimensions include school policy, instructional leadership and community mobilization. Based on these dimensions a questionnaire was designed to elicit views of government schools teachers about different aspects of school improvement. The data was collected between January 2016- May 2016.

C. The Instrument

In the light of three dimensions of school improvement, a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire comprised of 20 items. The number of items according to each dimension: School Policy four items, Instructional leadership fifteen items

and community participation one item. The instrument used likert five-point scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and strongly agree). The instrument was pilot tested on the same group of teachers. After incorporating the feedback of teachers it was ready to administer.

The instrument reliability was calculated and it is shown below

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.77	20

Data was analyzed in mean and standard deviation. SPSS a statistical software latest version was used to calculate the reliability of questionnaire and mean and standard deviation of the items of questionnaire.

D. Analyses of Questionnaire

Table 1: Teachers views about school improvement selected aspects

S.No	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Teachers' ideas are given value regarding admission matters in school.	4.25	0.524
2	While making timetable of the school, teachers are consulted.	4.16	0.594
3	Teachers' voices and concerns are incorporated in policy matters.	4.18	0.642
4	My school has proper admission, disciplinary, curriculum and assessment policies.	2.24	0.796
5	Teachers are empowered to take decisions in curriculum implementation at classroom level.	4.17	0.638
6	Head teacher imposes his/her decisions in teaching-learning improvement.	4.2	0.564
7	The environment of school is friendly for discussing educational matters.	2.43	0.935
8	Teachers have enough space and time to discuss professional matters in school.	4.21	0.538
9	Head teacher regularly monitor and assess students' performance in classroom.	2.93	1.16
10	Head teachers support teachers in their continuous professional development.	2.37	0.909
11	Head teachers give professional feedback to their colleagues for teaching-learning improvement.	2.24	0.79
12	The level of acceptance of head teachers' feedback is encouraging.	2.8	1.091
13	Teachers comfortably try out new ideas on teaching-learning improvement in classroom without any hesitation.	2.79	1.104
14	School administration has been taking initiatives in making school culture conducive for students learning.	2.33	0.859
15	Head teacher is well aware of the emerging trends of school improvement.	2.56	1.027
16	I believe my potential is known well by my head teacher and utilized well by school management.	4.18	0.52

17	Head teachers and teachers enjoy good working relations among them.	2.56	1.027
18	I believe there is a team spirit among teaching and non-teaching staff.	3.72	1.036
19	Resources are shared in school among staff.	3.79	0.973
20	School management committee is active and empowered to take important decisions in school.	2.43	0.936

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of present study is to elicit government secondary school teachers' views about role of HTs in selected aspects of school improvement and to identify challenges for HTs in improving schools. The findings of the study suggests that majority of teachers in government secondary schools of District Shikarpur Sindh Pakistan were of the opinion that head teachers give weightage to their voices in policy matters such as admission and time table. However, majority of secondary schools do not have a policy documents on admission, curriculum implementation, discipline and assessment. This trend shows that schools are working without any documented policy. This also shows lack of seriousness and interest from the department of education about schools. Findings suggested that teachers could take decisions to implement prescribed curriculum in classroom. The findings reveal two facts either head teachers have no concern what or how teachers are teaching in the classroom or they teachers own understanding about the concept of 'empowerment' is poor. Teacher views suggest that head teachers impose their point of views on them about teaching-learning. Teachers were of the opinion that head teachers unable to maintain school environment favorable for learning. Findings further reveal that teachers in secondary school have sufficient time for discussion of professional matter. Teachers mean score in items relating to feedback and professional development advocate their discontent from the role of head teachers. HTs rarely support teachers in their professional grooming and provide them supportive feedback. Teachers do not agree the idea that they are free to take new initiatives in the classroom. Neither HTs have taken any effort for school improvement nor they have grasped the meaning of school improvement, this has been disclosed by teachers. Regarding professional relationship, teachers mean score indicated their discomfort. Teachers responses indicated that their potential have been recognized and utilized by HTs. Team spirit exist among teaching and non-teaching staff secondary schools of District Shikarpur. School management committee is not so active and empowered to take important decisions in school, teachers' responses revealed.

International and national studies (Although very few) in the domain of school improvement support the findings of present study. There is consensus among researchers and practitioners in the area of school improvement that effective head teachers move their schools towards excellence. Schools leadership always matters. According to Singh (2008), there is a significant correlation between teacher job satisfaction and principal's behavior in the school environment. Research further mentioned that a principal with collegial behavior always develops emotional intelligence toward employees. In addition, the study mentioned that teachers strongly believe they would be satisfied in school if principal create a collegial environment in school and develop healthy relationship, effective communication, empathy and trust. Golman (2004) mentioned that effective leaders are emotionally intelligent and they possess abilities of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These abilities help them to control and manage their emotions and emotions of others. Further they develop an environment of empathy and social skill, which helps them to understand the real, needs of employees and help them possibly and create a collegial environment to get work done in a fruitful way. As cited in Hellinger (2016), school with a lower level of the trust has no chances to grow, on the contrary school with a higher level of social trust almost better chances to improve academically and students learning.

V. CONCLUSION

Schools in Pakistan have been suffering in terms of quality education. Many factors hinder the quality of education in schools. The traditional role of a school head teacher in Pakistan confines only to carry out some selected academic, supervisory and financial tasks. These roles head teachers have been performing since last many years but unable to make school an ideal institution. Nevertheless the role of head teachers is significant. Achieving the objectives of School improvement without giving HTs autonomy is impossible. In order to make the role of head teachers'; as instructional leader it is suggested to delegate power and resources to schools. Head teachers should be provided rigorous training in

educational leadership and management. Training should be job embedded. During training HTs be provided opportunities to visit private schools. Mid-level education management needs to be restructured or eliminated partially from the education system. SMCs are working as an instrument, in order to make SMCs more effective, it is suggested to give them financial autonomy. Instead of appointing HTs through promotion, it is suggested to appoint them through Sindh Public Commission or through other notable organizations such as Sukkur IBA. HTs should be made responsible for students' performance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Benigni, M. D. (Ed.). (March 2007). *The Compassionate Leader*. American School Board Journal.
- [2] Cheng, Y.C. (1996), 'School effectiveness and school based management a mechanism for development, London.
- [3] Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap... and others don't*. Random House.
- [4] Corral Granados, A., & Kruse, F. (2011). Implementing changes in the head teacher role: Adaptation of strategic leadership style in inclusive school settings. *International Journal of Leadership in Public Services*, 7(4), 287-303.
- [5] Davis, S. H., & Leon, R. J. (2014). Developing a leadership brand: The heart of effective school leadership in turbulent times. *Planning and Changing*, 45(1/2), 3.
- [6] Du Plessis, P. (2013). The principal as instructional leader: Guiding schools to improve instruction. *Education as Change*, 17(sup1), S79-S92. doi:10.1080/16823206.2014.865992
- [7] Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2012). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Pearson Higher Ed.
- [8] Goleman, D. (2004). What makes a leader? *Harvard business review*, 82(1), 82-91.
- [9] Granados, A. C., & Kruse, F. (2011). Implementing changes in the head teacher role. *The International Journal of Leadership in Public Services*, 7(4), 287-303. doi:10.1108/17479881111194170
- [10] Guramatunhu-Mudiwa, P., & Scherz, S. D. (2013). Developing Psychic Income in School Administration The Unique Role School Administrators Can Play. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(3), 303-315.
- [11] Hadar, L., & Brody, D. (2010). From isolation to symphonic harmony: Building a professional development community among teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1641-1651.
- [12] Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Brundrett, M. (2008). Collaboration, collegiality and leadership from the head: The complexities of shared leadership in primary school settings. *Management in Education*, 22(2), 11-16.
- [13] Harris, A. (2014), *Leadership Matters*, Corwin Press, Distributed
- [14] Harris, D. L., & Anthony, H. M. (2001). Collegiality and its role in teacher development: Perspectives from veteran and novice teachers. *Teacher Development*, 5(3), 371-390
- [15] Kothari, C., R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Dehli: New age International(P) Limited Publishers.
- [16] Li, L., Hallinger, P., & Walker, A. (2016). Exploring the mediating effects of trust on principal leadership and teacher professional learning in Hong Kong primary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(1), 20-42
- [17] Nadim, M., Chaudhry, M. S., Kalyar, M. N., & Riaz, T. (2012). Effects of motivational factors on teachers' job satisfaction: A study on public sector degree colleges of Punjab, Pakistan. *The Journal of Commerce*, 4(4), 25-32.
- [18] Nawab, A. (2011). Workplace learning in Pakistani schools: a myth or reality? *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 23(7), 421-434.
- [19] Owen, S. (2005). The power of collegiality in school-based professional development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(1), 1.

- [20] Price, H. E. (2012). Principal–teacher interactions: How affective relationships shape principal and teacher attitudes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(1), 39-85.
- [21] Rizvi, M. (2008). The role of school principals in enhancing teacher professionalism: Lessons from Pakistan. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 36(1), 85-100.
- [22] Salfi, N. A. (2011). Successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement: Some evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(4), 414-432.
- [23] Singh, P., & Manser, P. G. (2008). Relationship between the perceived emotional intelligence of school principals and the job satisfaction of educators in a collegial environment. *Africa Education Review*, 5(1), 109-130.