

## THE CHANGING APPROACHES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ABOUT THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Education is the major source of development in the society socio economic growth of the country. Education generates physical, mental and spiritual changes in the development as well as collectively in the society. Management is a process for achieving organizational objectives. School Principal should have sufficient knowledge of management and its strategies. The objectives of the study were: To assess the changing approaches of school principals about their roles and responsibilities; to identify the issues which prevent the principals to bring highly effective change in their roles; to offer guidance to the relevant organization in formulating system and procedures for the changing roles and responsibilities of the school principals in our country;. to suggest ways that will encourage the secondary school principals to use their skill, creativity and experiences to bring necessary change in their schools to make them real learning institutions.*

**Keywords:** changing approaches, Leadership, secondary school, management strategies, conflict management.

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership in our schools needs to be as much dynamic as it is in western countries. Majority of our secondary school principals lack adaptive capacity. The world around them has changed and is changing rapidly but they lack the required skill to change themselves according to the changing scenario. They need to have the qualities required for regular and erratic change. They are required to have an updated knowledge of the new roles and responsibilities of the school principals in the new millennium. It is impossible for a principal to lead the school of today successfully unless s/he has an updated knowledge of the current literature on school leadership skills. A principal without proper leadership skills is just like a captain who sets out on a voyage without having proper navigational appliances. Now the safe journey of the ship will depend entirely on sheer luck and captain's navigational skills (Ruqebetu, 2008)

Quality leadership plays an important role in achieving the goals of any organization. It promotes the vision of the organization, enables people to act towards common goals, make leaders of the followers and leaders as torch bearers of change. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). A good leader is determined and a big source of inspiration and motivation for his followers. He uses his ability and skills to make his followers use their potentials for moving the organization towards its established goals and help them in adjusting themselves to the changing environment of the organization. (Green, 2001) S/he is dependable, visionary, courageous, competent and adaptable (Kouzes and Posner; 2002). Highly effective leaders always go in the front, walk in the middle, and motivate those left behind speed up and catch up (Ruqebatu, 2008)

The school principal serves as the educational leader and is the centre of the school's social system. S/he is responsible for processes like administration, organization, budgeting, staffing, planning, supervising, evaluating, conflict handling, maintaining the quality of education, working with community and solving day-to-day problems in the school. She is to make sure that all these activities are directed towards effective and efficient teaching learning in the school, so as to achieve high student' achievements. She is responsible for the success or failure of the school. She is always busy in creating effective, peaceful, loving and problem-free environment for teaching and learning. She is skillful enough in maintaining positive, cooperative and mutually supportive relationships with staff, students and parents. S/he has a clear understanding of the needs of the people working with them i.e. staff, students, teachers and parents. S/he has the ability to establish an emotional affinity with students and with staff that has their respect. S/he accepts responsibilities willingly and shows pride in his/her career and encourage all teachers, to do the same (Sakulsumaopol, 2010; Jacobus, 2005; Ruqebetu 2008).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Principals can be referred to as “change agents” because they are responsibility for bringing innovation and improvement in school. They plan for future in the light of their past experiences. No doubt, the roles and responsibilities of a school principal are many, but that of bringing change and innovation is the major role. It is evident from the vast literature on school improvement that quality leadership is must if a school is to make progress (Blasé and Blasé, 2000; Anderson, 2008) and effective improvement will take place only if condition in the school are conducive for teaching and learning process. The principal's major role is to motivate teachers, create a strong school atmosphere, establish collegial working relationships and ensure high student achievement (Skulsumpapol, 2010)

The principal of today is expected to demonstrate more democratic attitude as compared to the principal of the past. He is no more an autocratic and authoritative person in the school milieu. In this changing world, the principal of a school is expected to develop human relationships and observe a cooperative, friendly, appreciative, democratic, objective, realistic and optimistic attitude towards his co-workers. He is required to confine himself not to his office alone but to come out in the open and friendly atmosphere impose his decisions on his fellows but let them participate in the decision-making process. He encourages his staff members to share their thoughts and thus more creative solutions to problems are reached at.

We live in the age of rapid change. A thing updated today is outdated tomorrow. The environment around us is changing and we need to adapt to these changes. Change is universal and unyielding forcing itself on us at every turn (Fullen, 1993), the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of knowledge and education. To enhance learning of the learners in an educated society, various ways and channels can be used for the advancement of information and knowledge. Such means and channels can be utilized to enact individuals' competencies and potentialities, bring to light their creative powers and motivate them to start a new journey toward viable change. The movement to a knowledge society clearly has a deep effect on school (Hargreaves, 2003b). The society of Pakistan is no exception. It is exposed to all kinds of political, social, economic and global changes. Since independence in 1947, every political and military government has introduced new educational policy in order to go shoulder in shoulder with the ever changing environment. As compared to the principals of two decades back, the principals of the today's world face new responsibilities and changes. They are required to equip their students with skill and expertise which will enable them to face the world full of multidimensional problems.

We live at a time of historical change which requires new ways of thinking and new approaches to apprehend reality. The age of the systematic universe which preserves an immovable structure of predictability and control is leaving way for changes and continuous innovation. And we are not ready to see the world from a different angle (Smyre ud). Politicians and senior education administrators accept that education system in Pakistan needs to change but none of them tries to realize the real problems of school. Incapable to introduce more effective change within the school, they impose more standardized testing and accountability measures (Department of Education, Science and Training 2004, Kohn, 2002, Moos, 1999; Riley, 2000; Wildy, 1999). In so doing, they often fail to realize the real purpose of education and the prevailing model of schooling (Deherty, 2004b; Forbes, 2003, Jaivin, 2002, Kohn, 2002; Riley 2000) or pursue an economic realistic agenda, 'pushing schools to operate like businesses and to pursue the educational equivalent of profit maximization (MacBeath & Macdonald 2000, p.28).

### **Objectives of The Study**

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To assess the changing approaches of school principals about their roles and responsibilities.
2. To identify the issues which prevent the principals to bring highly effective change in their roles?
3. To offer guidance to the relevant organization in formulating system and procedures for the changing roles and responsibilities of the school principals in our country.
4. To suggest ways that will encourage the secondary school principals to use their skill, creativity and experiences to bring necessary change in their schools to make them real learning institutions.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions of students and teachers towards the managerial performance of principals of public sector school?
2. How effective are principals in carrying out their management duties in the school?
3. What strategies can be developed to enhance the managerial performance of principals?

### **Delimitations of the study**

The study was delimited to the following aspects.

1. Investigations were restricted only to the principals (both male and female) of the secondary schools in district Mardan.
2. 60 principals of secondary schools (22 governments and 38 private) were selected randomly.
3. Only one questionnaire with 24 items was development for all sixty principals.
4. The researcher himself visited all the 60 principals three to four times to distributor the questionnaire among the principals and then collect it from them.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As the study was descriptive in nature, only one questionnaire consisting of 24 items was devised to collect data from all the 60 sampled heads of the secondary schools regarding the changing roles of the secondary school principals in district Peshawar. Five open-ended questions were asked for collecting individual perceptions of the principal's. According to Good and Hatt, (1952) questionnaire is the principal instrument used by the researcher to collect needed information from the respondents.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table 1. Appreciation to your staff members for their hardworking**

| Options           | Gender   |          | Total    |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|                   | Male     | Female   |          |
| Strongly Disagree | -        | -        | -        |
| Disagree          | -        | -        | -        |
| Undecided         | 1(1.7)   | 1(1.7)   | 2(3.3)   |
| Agree             | 12(20)   | 14(23.3) | 26(43.3) |
| Strongly Agree    | 17(28.3) | 15(20)   | 32(53.3) |
| Total             | 30(50)   | 30(50)   | 60(100)  |

Values given in the brackets are percentages of the sampled population whereas those in the column and rows of the table are frequencies. Chi-Sq=.279, DF=2 and P-Value=.870

Thirty two out of sixty respondents (both male and female) strongly agreed that they appreciated their staff members for their hard work. Here male principals are in majority as compared to their female counterparts. The total number of the agreed principals (both male and female) is twenty six. In their category, females are more than the males. One male and one female principal remained undecided. The number of the strongly disagreed and disagreed principals is zero. On the basis of the chi-square test, no significant association could be developed between the two variables ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Principals and Education Authorities**

For the smooth running of a school, the education authorities should extend all the possible support to the principals well in time. The school principals should be provided with enough funds so that all the essential elements in the school can be obtained without any delay. There is no doubt in the fact that the objectives contained in various education policies of Pakistan have never been achieved due to the inadequate funding of the educational institutions, especially, secondary schools. The dilapidated buildings of schools and the lack of the basic facilities there are clear manifestations of poor funding of the system (hasstrup 2010, Administering secondary schools in Nigeria...

**Principal’s role in the preparation of school curriculum**

To achieve excellence in education, a quality curriculum is a must, principals can play a key role in the development and interpretation of curricula because they have a basic knowledge of curriculum and learning theories more than anyone else (Stacy Marlow and Norman Minehira). Giathom and Jailall 2009, wrote, curriculum making is constructed process between districts and schools, and it is a high value activity into which the principals, as curriculum leader, must extent strong influence (p.62).

**Political interference in education**

There is no denying the fact that education system in Pakistan has been badly affected by political interference. With a change of Govt. there is a change in syllabi due to political interference. The political interference has different shapes. It destroys educations by compromising its autonomy and management. Political interference always pollutes the holy waters of educations.

**Table 2. Disturbance in education due to political interface**

| Options           | Gender   |          | Total    |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
|                   | Male     | Female   |          |
| Strongly Disagree | 1(1.7)   | 2(3.3)   | 3(5)     |
| Disagree          | -        | -        | -        |
| Undecided         | 1(1.7)   | 1(1.7)   | 2(3.3)   |
| Agree             | 12(20)   | 16(26.7) | 28(46.7) |
| Strongly Agree    | 16(26.7) | 11(18.3) | 27(45)   |
| Total             | 30(50)   | 30(50)   | 60(100)  |

Values given in the brackets are percentages of the sampled population whereas those in the column and rows of the table are frequencies. Chi-Sq=1.831, DF=3 and P-Value=.608

The table revealed that 26.7% male and 18.3% female out of 45% respondent principals strongly agreed that political interference has disturbed the education system. Similarly, 46.7% principals (20% male and 26.6% female) agreed to above stated opinion. Only one male and two female respondents strongly disagreed to the mentioned problem. The number of the undecided principal was two, one each male and female. On the basis of the chi-square test, no significant association could be developed between the two variables ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3. Name some major changes suggested for the school**

| Options  | Gender   |          | Total    |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Male     | Female   |          |
| Authentic education policy                       | 13(21.7) | 12(20)   | 25(41.7) |
| Develop cooperation among teachers and students  | 3(5)     | 2(3.3)   | 5(8.3)   |
| Free hand to principals to bring positive change | 6(10)    | 10(16.7) | 16(26.7) |
| Provision of enough funds                        | 1(1.7)   | 1(1.7)   | 2(3.3)   |
| All of the above                                 | 7(11.7)  | 5(8.3)   | 12(20)   |
| Total  | 30(50)   | 30(50)   | 60(100)  |

Values given in the brackets are percentages of the sampled population whereas those in the column and rows of the table are frequencies. Chi-Sq=1.573, DF=4 and P-Value=.814

Twenty five out of sixty principals 13 males and 12 females opined that in order to bring changes in the schools, authentic education policy needs to be promulgated. 3 male and 2 female principals believed that the mentioned change could be ensured by developing cooperation among the teachers and students. 16 principals 6 males and 10 females' contended that the mentioned change could be brought by giving free hand to the school principals. Only two principals one each male and female went in favor of provision of enough funds to the principals. The total number of the principals, who favored all of the above mentioned opinions. Was 12 (7 males and 5 females).the chi-square test was applied to ascertain whether the variables were dependable or not. It indicated no significant association ( $P > 0.05$ ) between the two variables.

**Table 4. Problems confronted by the Principal during changes**

| Options  | Gender   |         | Total    |
|--|----------|---------|----------|
|  | Male     | Female  |          |
| Lack of fund   | (0)      | 2(3.3)  | 2(3.3)   |
| Political interference   | 7(11.7)  | 12(20)  | 19(31.7) |
| Lack of cooperation among principal, education department and society at large | 5(8.3)   | 3(5)    | 8(13.3)  |
| Lack of efficient and devoted teachers   | 8(13.3)  | 8(13.3) | 16(26.7) |
| All of the above   | 10(16.7) | 5(8.3)  | 15(25)   |
| Total  | 30(50)   | 30(50)  | 60(100)  |

Values given in the brackets are percentages of the sampled population whereas those in the column and rows of the table are frequencies. Chi-Sq=5.482, DF=4 and P-Value=.241

Only two female principals were the view that lack of funds was a main hurdle which prevented principals from bringing about effective changes in the schools. Nineteen out of sixty principals 7 male and 12 females termed political interference as the main obstacle which did not allow the principals to bring the desired changes in the intuitions. Five male and three female principles held lack of cooperation among the stakeholders responsible for the mentioned changes. An equal number male and female principals, was of the view that could not bring changes because of the lack of the devoted and efficient teachers, whereas ten male and five female opined that all of the above mentioned problems were the hurdles that they faced in brining effective changes. On the basis of the chi-square test, no significant association could be developed between the two variables ( $P > 0.05$ )

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

Research findings testified that a school principal plays a pivotal role in bringing change and an effective principle can smoothly lead the change in the school framework. Scholars like kotter (2002) Plierce and stapleton 2003, and Masci, Cuddapha and Pajak 2008, also support this opinion and propose that for bringing and effective change in an organization, effectiveness of the principal is a key factor. In the present circumstances it is very difficult to bring the schools in line with schools of the developed countries but the principals are expected to continue their efforts for bringing desirable changes. There is no denying the fact that excellence in school cannot be achieved without excellent leaders (ONEC), 2000) in order to lead the education reform, the school principal needs to posses sufficient knowledge and capabilities. Managing school change effectively is one of the most complicated jobs faced by the leaders of schools. He is required to ensure such a change which is useful and meaningful for teachers, students and the society as a whole. Change is the essence of any organization and educational institutions are no exceptions. In order to cope with problems of future, it is inevitable to review the current education system and revise the curriculum to make it more appropriate to the cultural and socio-economic needs which is paramount in moving forward towards a social change. (Streads, 1983). Education system in Pakistan needs to be re-structured to meet the ever increasing needs of the today's societies. Principals are required to motivate human minds and lead them on such healthy lines of progress that may help to achieve the national goals (AEPAM, 1994)

In Pakistan all the secondary schools are managed according to the laws and regulation formulated by the provincial Government. The role of the federal Government is to coordinate and facilitate the provincial government so as to ensure standards of education



across the entire federation. School principals, especially in Government school, are entrusted with no powers regarding hiring of teachers, construction in schools and making budgets for their respective schools. School principals, who can well interpret the provincial Government's rules and regulation, may employ them to form a mechanism for the improvement of the school. However such an approach needs to possess essential understanding, skill and courage. All the government schools are facing serious problems such as strict bureaucratic rules, less involvement of parents, incompetent and less qualified teacher, uninterested school heads and using traditional methods and techniques in teaching learning processes. (Kapusuzoglu, 2007)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The result of the study revealed that majority of the principals agreed that the role and responsibilities of the secondary school principals had changed. It is, therefore, recommended that principals training centers should be established on the analogy of PMA, etc, where principals shall acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to run the schools in line with the schools of the developed countries.
2. In Pakistan, every government frames rules and laws which unluckily, remain unimplemented due to the change of the government. It is, therefore, necessary that such policies and plans are formulated which is long term, realistic, practical, consistent, flexible and well related to the needs of the society.
3. Political interference should be diminished to the minimum level. Merit and laid down rules should be strictly followed in the appointment of both the teachers and administrators, nepotism at all levels should be discouraged in the education administration system.
4. In order to ensure better performance and understanding to their role and responsibilities, the EDO's DDO and principals be given special course training in management. To enhance the management capabilities of the school principals, strict accountability system should be implemented.
5. Collaboration and coordination between the school community and the community at large should be strengthened through mutual understanding. It will help the school principals in bringing effective reforms and changes.
6. The opinion of the principals should be asked for while bringing any change in the curriculum. It will make the principals feel valued and important.

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