
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: THE REFLECTIONS OF TOP MANAGEMENT IN PUNJAB PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The chief drive of the phenomenological research was to investigate the reflections of the top management on School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) in improved efficacious practices of leadership of school heads with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudes in public sector schools of Punjab. The sample was selected considering the geographical distribution i.e. central, southern and northern Punjab. Through purposive sampling Director General of SLDP, Course Coordinator of SLDP and seven principals of district QAEDs having direct experience were selected. The semi-structured in-depth interviews were steered after securing prior participants' consent. The self-developed instruments were validated from five experts and at the same time a Mock interview practices were conducted. The data was collected personally by the researchers and themes were generated. The findings expounded that SLDP is an inseparable and pivotal practice in improving school leadership development and improved leadership practices. The study recommended that SLDP should be continued aligned with certain improvements in order to more efficacious results in future.

KEY WORDS

School Leadership Development Programme, School Practices, Punjab

INTRODUCTION

School Leadership Development Programmes are offered across the world to school leadership in order to improve leadership practices of the school-leaders. The nations around the globe are investing and spending extensive amounts in the milieu of leadership development keeping in view transforming and harvesting better leaders to have more effective school organizations (Bush, 2009). The pedestal of School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) was offered to School-Heads across Punjab in public sector schools. The SLDP included soft skills and technical skills embraced to enhance and develop knowledge, skills and attitudinal development of school heads for improved leadership practices. The salient features of SLDP as ensured by QAED, Punjab were soft skills and technical skills respectively as follows:

- **Soft Skills:** involves effective leadership skills, efficacious communication skills, presentation skills, motivational skills, improved change behavior and social cohesiveness
- **Technical Skills:** based upon Training Need Analysis (TNA) and drove in rendering duties and tasks connected with job description of educational leadership, administration and management.

There is an imperative need to ascertain which components as part of a leadership development programme can make principals prepared for school leadership and to what extent those components can be efficacious and effective (McIntyre, 1979). The prerequisite of each principal differs keeping in view their level of experience, understanding of curriculum, ability to build relationships, operational and management skills, parental involvement and the skills required to bring improvement in a failing school (Gentilucci, Denti, & Guaglianone, 2013). In Pakistan school head teachers are affianced in various tasks i.e. administrative, academic and financial but majority of school-heads do not know how to perform it effectively. Consequently, it is essential to engage them in professional development programmes for refining their skills and competencies. Therefore, the public and private sectors have commenced professional development programmes for effective school leadership and effective management skills. It ensures their schools as 'learning' or 'leadful' schools, which are promised in escalating their capacity (Memon, 2003). Therefore, there is a pressing need of time to inspect the extent to which group support, school leadership, school culture, human capital and strategic operations influence on effectiveness of principals as leaders of school within a school district. Resultantly, in this effort to minimize this literature gap, the drive of the study propounded what kind of professional development training for school-heads leads towards efficacy and effectiveness in improved school leadership practices.

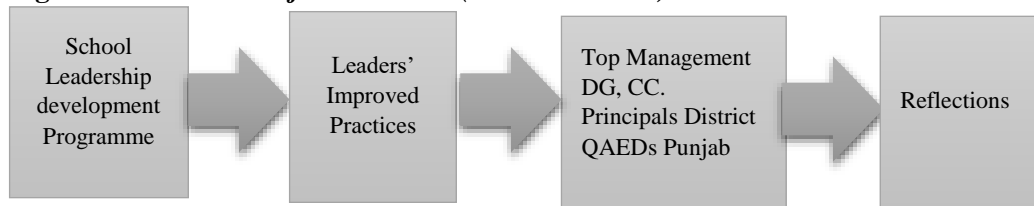
The school leadership development programmes are well-recognized and well-thought-out as central for sustaining the school effectively. The importance of coordinating with the

personnel in the process of improvement in emerging internal climate, speeding up professionalism and upholding the responsible attitude and work-conducive environment and school culture requires mutual coordination (Walker et al., 2007). The activities and actions of school heads are central to school climate, school culture and school personnel morale (Morris et al., 2019).

The world is in a thrust to get better and fully managed schools with effective and improved leadership practices under the sun. The school-heads in Pakistan are tangled in numerous tasks completions i.e. financial, administrative and academic but the majority of school-heads are uninformed to complete it effectively and efficiently. Consequently, it is essential to involve school-leaders in professional development programmes to confirm escalation in skills and competencies. Therefore, public and private sector is affianced in effective school leadership through effectual skills management. Actually these capacity building initiatives increase potentialities of school-leaders and spot schools as “leadful” that magnifies capacities (Memon, 2003).

The rationale behind the School Leadership Development Programme was to adopt and adapt to the vibrant universal vision and changing scenario. The chief persistence of SLDP was to develop the efficient and effective leadership equipped with knowledge, skills and discerning ‘leadership behaviors’ endorsing best success in the dispensation of school and liberating of duties affluently. To divulge this endeavor distinctive content as modules was advanced to clutch the essential skills by divulging the magnifying the certain administrative and managerial capacities and areas. The study immersed in the effectiveness of SLDP while the effectiveness means the notch in which something is successful and prosperous in producing an estimated and predicted success and results.

Figure 1: Research Objective Model (Source: Author)



This Phenomenological exploration inspected the reflections of SLDP top management having undeviating experience and further, exposed the processes and ways that may be reserved to enlarge its modus operandi, implementation and future orientations. The crucial role of director general, course-coordinator and principals district QAEDs is of utmost importance having exclusive nature and responsibility of rendering duties in this endeavor. Although, SLDP primarily is conducted in the

development of leadership practices yet most organizations are unaware of the triumph of their efforts? Subsequently, it is requisite to comprehend the complete range of efforts at the prime stage to identify and foresee the future of SLDP without wasting of resource, efforts and time particularly in the native perspective. The study investigated the SLDP role in effective and efficacious practices of school leadership. The reflections of top management envisioned about the process, product and the better ways to grow in future particularly in the native perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An efficacious principal of school essentially necessitates and prefers the professional development as an established component to envision with the insightful execution of their complex roles as a school-heads (Goss, 2015). It is necessary to improve the potentialities of school-heads to initiate change as surely skillful and effective school leadership can ensure the achievement of school goals (Zbar, 2013). Surji (2015) has enunciated the leadership of an individual may influences on the attitude, conduct and thoughts of group of people.

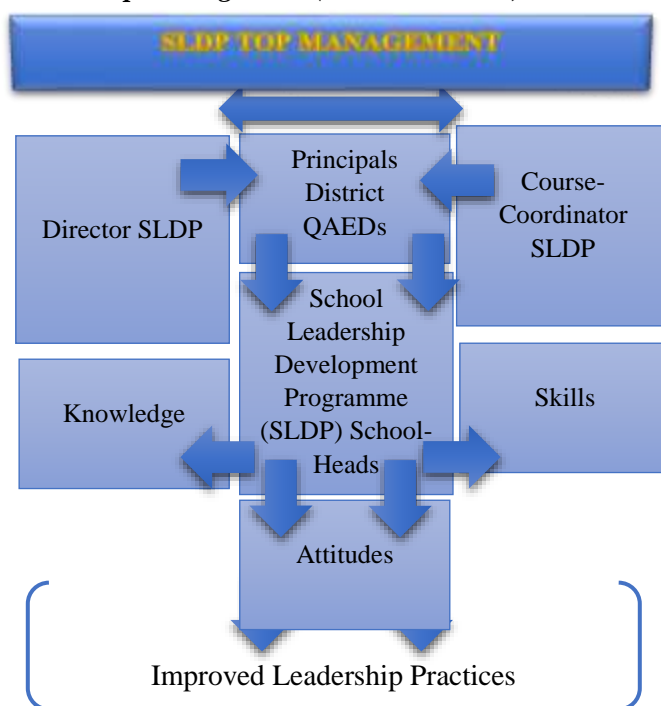
The educational leadership has been undertaking various diversifications under prevailed scenario of globalization due to changing requirements and expectations or prospects of the educational stakeholders. This accelerates the requisite for professional development of educational leaders to accomplish their duties and roles. Educational leaders are key agent to shape the school environment and culture, students learning, school improvement and achievements. Therefore, their professional development is crucial to their unrelenting and continued success as leaders. Therefore, it is supposed that educational leaders' participation in professional development programs apprise and improve their knowledge and ultimately their performance in accomplishing the school tasks by smearing new skills and knowledge to implement the finest school educational practices. That is why the policymakers and scholars have diverted their consideration to educational leadership improved practices due to the vital and indispensable nature (Şenol, 2020).

Morrison (1998) declared the five key works of leaders in educational institutions are setting goals, leading through examples, supporting and respecting the associates, making and nourishing the school culture, understanding and positioning a mission and vision statement towards accomplishment. A successful leader leads and takes others to live, lead, inspire and encourage ultimately this assistance take people towards success (Mckee, 2016). Rizvi (2008) extended that trainings may add better management in Pakistan to understand the teaching and learning process improvement. Unpromisingly, in our native context there are not much openings of trainings for principals to receive professional development. It is essential to provide transparency of duties and job description for head-teachers and teachers (Khan, 2012).

The top management includes the director who mostly at the driving and steering position. The director training in the entire program remained connected with decisions and consulting with administrative issues. While the executive Council will take reports from the Director, adds advice or direction as may be the case. The Leadership Development Officer leads the program as an administrator and responsible person or in aspects of the program.

The role of director general, course-coordinator and principal district QAEDs is central and conclusive that permits the researchers to explore diversified aspects of the phenomenon within a real-life experience encompassed diversified and native context or perspective.

Figure 2: SLDP and Top Management (Source: Author)



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the perceptions of director training and course coordinator about the SLDP effectiveness in leadership development with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes of school-heads
2. Explore the perceptions of principals, district QAEDs about the SLDP effectiveness in leadership development with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes

of school-heads

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The phenomenological transcendental approach was employed by the researchers that is also recognized as Husserl's philosophy. The phenomenon in this approach is dealt through "consciousness" and this is also called that words reality's real source is consciousness. The transcendental phenomenology deals with the concept of 'lived experience' of the individuals and takes the lived experience as reality (Koch, 1995). In this way, it explicates the experiences of individuals in depth about the phenomenon. Phenomenology intends to comprehend the crust of lived experiences and its interpretive research nature perceives the as phenomenon as perceived by the participants (McMillian, 2004). The phenomenological exploration involved the 01 director general, 01 course-coordinator and 07 principals district QAEDs selected through purposive sampling. The sample was based upon the geographical distribution of the Punjab province i.e. central, southern and northern; a) Central Punjab - Kasur, Jhang, Gujranwala; b) Southern Punjab - Multan, Bahawalpur; and c) Northern Punjab - Jhelum and Rawalpindi.

The population of the study was 01 director general SLDP, 01 course-coordinator SLDP and 36 principals of district QAEDs of Punjab. These stakeholders from top management of SLDP come up with reflections on knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes of school-heads' improved practices.

Research Instruments

Three semi-structured self-developed in-depth interview protocols were employed by the researchers. These were based on two portions i.e. the first part was comprised of demographics of the participants whereas the second part was consisted on relevant questions and under each question further probing questions were modeled in order to discover the phenomenon in depth. The nature of queries in each category of instrument protocol contained various areas. For example, in the director general queries included views about the effectiveness of SLDP in improved practices of school-leaders, what kind of knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes are required particularly in Pakistani perspective, efficacious aspects of SLDP for school teachers and school, relevancy of the offered modules of SLDP, suggestions for further improvement in SLDP initiative, mechanism of follow-up, role of master trainers, continuity of SLDP in future, role of ideology and culture and further improvements peculiar in native perspective were added. The course-coordinator interview protocol included: unfolded the nature of SLDP and its efficacious aspects regarding knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes in improved practices of school leadership, the mechanism of follow-up, reflections about SLDP and its efficacious aspects for school teachers and students, relevancy of offered modules with knowledge, skills and

attitudes, activities and conduct of SLDP, essentiality and continuity of SLDP in future, the valuable nature of SLDP in Pakistani perspective, reforms and future orientations of SLDP and key benefits of SLDP.

The principal district QAEDs interview protocol included: reflections about SLDP and efficacious aspects of it for school-heads, retrospective and future orientation of SLDP, key benefits of SLDP and utterance of school-heads about the SLDP experience, relevancy of modules and conduct of SLDP, modules and its relevancy with knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes, essentialities and follow-up requirements, continuity and future reforms on SLDP. The appreciative perspective queries were specifically designed to dig out the emerging status of SLDP in improved leadership practices peculiar to native context were addressed.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The three instruments were validated from five experts from the field comprising two faculty members of IER, University of the Punjab and further mock interview practices were made to ensure validity and refinement. The research ethics were observed throughout the conduct of research. The prior consents of the participants were secured and confidentiality and anonymity were observed at all levels of research in order to uphold the trustworthiness of the research.

Data Collection and Themes

The researchers personally collected the data online under prevailed situation of COVID-19. The data was collected keeping in view the context of SLDP i.e. skills, knowledge and attitudinal changes in improved leadership practices. The data was analyzed and themes were generated through the rigorous procedure. The structure of essentialities of meaning was explicated as follows:

Table 1: Themes Emerged from the Data Analysis of Director General, Course-Coordinator and Principals District QAEDs Punjab

Sr. No	Themes Director General	Themes Course-Coordinator	Themes Principals District QAEDs Punjab
1.	SLDP is an effective and good programme in improved leadership practices of school-heads	School-heads valued the efficacious initiative of SLDP and admired it as prerequisite and an effective mode in improved leadership practices	School-heads valued SLDP and declared it as an elixir in improved leadership practices

2.	School leaders have the efficacious capacities and potentials that has the ability to change the school	The need of follow-up mechanism is essential	School-heads declared SLDP as an efficacious prerequisite in improved leadership practices with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes
3.	The dimension of Master Trainers is crucial in transferring and disseminating the knowledge, skills and attitudes	Discussions with school teachers about SLDP showed that over-burdened and irrelevant tasks assignments to school-heads impede progress and in the same way coercive commands ruin quality	SLDP requires improvement and reforms although well-implemented but improvements reforms are required with the passage of time
4.	There separate cadre of trainings with incentivized and round the year ongoing mode of training is highly efficacious and recommended	SLDP requires future reforms and separate cadre of training is prerequisite with full time availability of master trainers	An astute assortment of SLDP paraphernalia and efficacious conduct of SLDP well-aligned with modules is required
5.	Good leadership essentialities are awareness of rules of regulations, stronger communication, accountability and confidence of job	The SLDP modules were well-aligned with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes	SLDP is a key to open up new horizon of improved Leadership practices
6.	The upright character the charisma of power to influence and Islamic ethics, ideology and philosophy are vital parts of professional development	The continuity of SLDP is highly recommended for long term benefits	The follow-up is prerequisite for the smooth conduct and effective future orientation
7.	Follow-up is an essential part of SLDP and capacity building is	SLDP empowered school heads and imparted strength and	SLDP imparted vision, strengthen motivation and imparted skills in

	an integral part of professional development	confidence to school-heads	improved leadership practices
8.	An effective leader has the capacity to uplift even the collapsed school	SLDP is a Professional training and hereby requires to be a continuous process	SLDP needs to be initiate as a continuous process in future

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The director training of SLDP declared that SLDP is an effective and good programme in improved leadership practices of school-heads. The trainings are a constant mode of capacity building that always enhanced and increased the potentialities of school-heads or educational leadership. He further, added that school leaders have the efficacious capacities and potentials that strengthen the ability to change the school. “I have observed having vast experience that when any collapsed school was handed over to the skillful school-head; the school transformed and come up with admirable stature”.

The dimension of Master Trainers is crucial in transferring and disseminating the knowledge, skills and attitudes in any SLDP programme. The expertise of Master Trainers always played a key role in transferring knowledge, developing skills and developing attitudes in a positive side. Director training suggested that ongoing/round the year incentivized mode of training mode to be highly efficacious and recommended. Because it will encourage constant training and all concerned may take advantage out of it generously. Director training come up with highly wisdom though as “the upright character and ethics is the charisma of power to influence”. The right person with steadfast faith and conduct wins the heart and generate followers towards right path that becomes an essentiality and charisma of personality.

The good leadership essentialities are awareness of rules of regulations, stronger communication, and accountability and confidence of job. At the same time the departmental rules and regulations always transform the leadership in a powerful. The modules and SLDP should follow Islamic ethics, ideology, and philosophy as these are vital part of good leadership and school environment. The follow-up was declared as an essential part of SLDP and capacity building is an integral part of professional development. Because an effective leader has the capacity to uplift even the collapsed school and SLDP is an integral part that promotes healthy leadership.

The Course-Coordinator enunciated that school-heads have valued the efficacious initiative of SLDP and admired it as prerequisite and an effective mode in improved leadership practices. “Yes, I have a huge friend circle of school heads and many times

interacted with them about the effectiveness of SLDP in improved leadership practices in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes”. The course-coordinator enunciated that “They were strongly convinced and admitted that SLDP was an effective and organized programme in leadership training and they are still waiting to initiate it again”. The need of follow-up mechanism is essential because without follow-up there is no future orientation. The follow up paves the way towards betterment and improvement. The another aspect that emerged and sound as a n avant-garde that certain discussions with school teachers about SLDP were conducted that showed that over-burdened and irrelevant tasks assignments to school-heads impede progress and in the same way coercive commands ruin quality. The positivity comes with positive steps that require continuity of actions to amend and repair things that are downed and drowned. The SLDP requires future reforms and separate cadre of training is prerequisite with full time availability of master trainers. Because, durability and continuous mode of remedial work will strengthen this side and continuity will bring positive drastic changes in future. The SLDP modules were well-aligned with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes and these modules were developed through a systematic procedure.

The Principal district QAEDs enunciate that school-heads values SLDP and declares it as an elixir in improved leadership practices of school-heads. The principal district QAEDs’ confirmed that being part of this system they are well-acquainted with school-heads and during discussions and feedback it emerged. One of the principal districts QAED enunciates that “The school-heads acknowledged and affirmed the importance of School Leadership Development Training Programme (SLDP) in increasing knowledge, developing skills and changing attitudes towards improved leadership practices”. The school-heads declares SLDP as an efficacious prerequisite in improved leadership practices with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes.

The SLDP requires improvement and reforms although well-implemented but improvements reforms are required with the passage of time. The SLDP programme is encouraged, admired but gradually reforms are an integral part of any initiative hereby SLDP also needs to be improved and revised over the period of time. Therefore, an astute assortment of SLDP paraphernalia and efficacious conduct of SLDP well-aligned with modules is required. The integrated parts of SLDP require well-integration that interconnects each and every part of this endeavor to strengthen its efficacy and effectiveness. The SLDP is a key to open up new horizon of improved Leadership practices because trainings and capacity building always plays a key role in improving and increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

The follow-up is prerequisite for the smooth conduct and effective future orientation of SLDP. The follow-up is a remedial work that is always gathered to improve weak

areas and strengthen the weak and vulnerabilities of the programme. The feed-back from SLDP needs to be an essential part to move forward in order to get better results and efficacy.

DISCUSSION

The reflections of the SLDP stakeholders affirmed the effectiveness of SLDP in school leadership development and improved practices of school-heads with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudes. The role of SLDP in school leadership dispensation is indispensable, cohesive and effective. The participants' unfolded novel horizon in a manner that played its key role in filling the research gap in this orientation because this field is lacking in attention and not much work has been initiated in this regard. In a nutshell the improved leadership practices are obscured in SLDP. It is revealed that continuous learning and progress of school-heads is considerably vital for application of policies, learning of teachers, students and developing cooperative and sound school environment (Rowland, 2017). The follow-up of SLDP was declared as a needed area without which the efficacy and future positivity cannot be achieved. The drive of the researchers was to seek the perceptions of SLDP stakeholders about the SLDP experience enclosed diverse aspects of SLDP to pen down the real picture of the experiences. The radical zeal was involved to SLDP aiming at learning, relearning, growing, getting enriched and unfolding the actual prosperity of educational institutions. Eventually the interlinked prosperity of SLDP is interlinked with all society and stake-holders and for upcoming generations virtuously in vernacular and native perspective. The massive and enormous sustenance was voiced and established that integration of SLDP with improved practices of leadership is deep-rooted and inseparable.

The massive support and interlink of confirmation was reflected by the entire sets of data that SLDP is a solution and indispensable for improved school leadership practices with reference to knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes. The teachers and students also confirmed the implementations of SLDP in public schools. The certain impressive reforms were proposed with reference to future orientation as separate cadre, incentivized mode of training and round the year ongoing training was encouraged in order to get optimal benefits. The burdens of irrelevant tasks were negated and discouraged and the voice was raised that if proper efficacy of SLDP is required then school-heads should be engaged with teaching and learning only. The all data sets shed light on the emergent need and importance of training and hereby it can be deduced that without training prosperity is no way. The superfluous and futile task allocations to school heads was condemned and urged to remove it in order to improve the teaching and learning scenario of public schools specifically in our native perspective. The continuous and incentivized separate cadre of training is vital to bring reforms in real sense in native perspective.

In a nutshell extensive effectiveness emerged and it could have been many times more effective if certain assorted and integrated paraphernalia are sought out. The continuity of SLDP and follow-up is strongly demanded but certain demands were extended in order to get resultant results in future. The orifice emerged during the study is to lesser the futile burdens from the school-heads and increasing the implementations of SLDP up to the hilt effectiveness and efficacy. The continuity of SLDP is demanded and refinement of assorted of paraphernalia is uttered to get fullest benefit out of SLDP such as follow up, expertise of master trainers (MTs), adding cultural examples in modules and proper arrangement of SLDP is prerequisite. The training time and aspects of discipline needs to be checked for proper conduct and learning. The accommodation of district QAEDs requires proper facilities for proper SLDP conduct and accelerating learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The additional and superfluous tasks of school-heads such as Dengue, election duties, binding in attending unnecessary political-oriented meetings etc. should be withdrawn as these are impediments that creating barrier in effective implementations to get the fullest benefits out of SLDP.

There should be separate cadre of training that offers trainings round the year with incentivized mode of training.

The SLDP should be a continuous segment of improved leadership practices.

The public schools need to uplift the facilitation of students and there should be less number of students in the classes.

The district QAEDs requires raising the structure of facilities for the trainees of SLDP.

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