

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR HANDLING PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

By

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### ABSTRACT

*Leadership is the process of influencing others to get the work done. It involves motivating, influencing, and directing individuals towards the attainment of long term organizational goals. A leader remains in the limelight. The success or failure of an organizational endeavour is attributed upon its leader. School leadership includes any individual in the school who has a decision-making role. These roles typically require an advanced degree, experience and some skills. These positions are the top paid positions in a school, but they also come with the most responsibility. These people are ultimately responsible for the successes and failures within their realm of administration. This paper helps you to define the term leader and leadership and it discusses about leadership in Educational administration. The main purpose of the study is to describe the nature and ways of leadership with special reference to the implications of school leadership for handling day to day practical administrative problems.*

*Keywords: Leadership, Management, Education, School Administration.*

### INTRODUCTION

"The quickest way to change an institution is to change its leadership". (New York State Regent's Advisory Committee on Educational Leadership)

While most readers require little persuasion concerning the significance of school leadership, there are those who argue that our confidence in leadership as a pillar of organizational effectiveness is misplaced. It has been referred to as the "romance of leadership." Thus it is important to ask whether the value typically attributed to educational leadership is actually warranted by the evidence. Five types of empirical evidence speak to this question. One type is primarily qualitative case study evidence. Studies providing this type of evidence typically are conducted in exceptional school settings. These settings are believed to be contributing to pupil learning significantly above or below normal expectations, as for example, effective schools research based on "outlier" designs. Studies of this type usually report very large leadership effects not only on pupil learning, but also on an array of school conditions as well, even lacking from this evidence is "external validity".

The second type of research evidence about leadership

effects is large-scale quantitative studies of overall leader's effects. Several reviews conclude that, the combined direct and indirect effects of school leadership on pupil outcomes are small, but educationally significant. While leadership explains only 5 to 7 percent of the variation in pupil learning across schools, this is actually about one-quarter of the total across school variation (12 to 20 percent) explained by all school-level variables, after controlling for pupil intake or background factors. The quantitative school effectiveness studies providing much of these data indicate that classroom factors explain more than a third of the variation in pupil achievement. (Fiedler, 1967)

A third type of research about leadership effects, like the second type is large-scale and quantitative in nature. Instead of examining overall leadership effects, it inquires about the effects of specific leadership practices. Evidence of this sort can be found sporadically in the research alluded above. A fourth source of research on leadership effects has explored such effects on pupil engagement. In addition to being an important variable in its own right, some evidence suggests that school engagement is a strong predictor of pupil achievement. At

least 10 mostly recent, large-scale, quantitative, are similarly designed. Studies in Australia and North America have assessed the effects of transformational school leadership on pupil engagement and all have reported these to be significantly positive.

Finally, the leadership succession research provides an interesting source of evidence about school and district leadership effects. Unplanned principal succession is one of the most common sources of schools failing to progress, in spite of what teachers might do. Studies in Canada by Macmillan (2000) demonstrate the devastating effects of principal succession, especially on initiatives intended to increase pupil achievement. A frequent change in head teachers is a common occurrence in many schools. In the course of three years, seven of the original ten principals are moving for one reason or another. And the school improvement initiatives they had underway, with one exception, withered and died. On the other hand, the appointment and retention of a new head is emerging from the evidence as one of the most important strategies for turning around struggling schools or schools in special measures. (Bass, & Stogdill, 1900)

The conclusion from this evidence, as a whole, is that leadership has very significant effects on the quality of the school organization and on pupil learning. As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization. Those in leadership roles have a tremendous responsibility to "get it right."

### Meaning and Nature of Educational Leadership

The meaning of leadership varies amongst people. Leadership can be defined by many different but similar meanings. The term "leadership" is a recent addition to the English language. In fact, the word did not come into usage until the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Although the words "lead" and "leader" have a much longer history, they are usually referred only to authority figures. The dictionary meaning of leadership is given as 'the act of being in the van of an enterprise' or 'the act of directing the activities of those

organized to achieve a given goal'. Both these dictionary meanings emphasize that, leadership relates to the assumption of the responsibilities for directing. (Garg, 2012)

Leadership is

- A Process of influencing people toward group objectives.
- Interpersonal influence towards attainment of institutional goals through communication process.
- Leadership is a function of the leader, the follower and the other situational variables.
- Power, authority and influence help in changing the group member's behaviour.

Leadership in Education means, directing the activities of those engaged in the training of minds towards the achievement of the goals set by those persons who have organized themselves for the same. An educational leader is always trying to get others to accept his decisions or his objectives, or encouraging them to join him in some common purpose. His skill like that of any other leader rests on his ability to make significant judgments and to encourage others to accept those judgments. The author has identified three types of educational leaders:

- The administrator
- The teacher
- The educational statesman (a widely known, respected and experienced human-resource)

A successful Educational leader is,

- Sensitive to the feeling of others while being at once considerate, helpful, responsive, and friendly.
- Loyal to his ideals and ideas and respectful of the beliefs, rights and dignity of others.
- Consistent, generous, humble, honest, modest and fair in dealing with others.
- Strong in his/her feelings of self-confidence and the ability to identify easily with co-workers.
- Takes interest in improving the group, while also possessing the ability to get the work done quickly and economically.
- Understands the need to avoid envy, jealousy, and is willing to take blames for own mistakes.

- Firm but not proud or stubborn/determined in making judgments and decisions.
- Straightforward, approachable, easy to talk, to alert, to get the best out of people without aggressiveness.
- Ready to give others the benefits of doubt and/or advantages whenever possible.

## Characteristics of Leadership

- Leadership is given, not assumed itself.
- Group is required for leadership to act.
- Leadership is a product of interaction and not a status or position.
- Leadership cannot be structured in advance.
- Leader in one situation cannot be leader in another.
- Leadership depends on perception of group.
- Leadership also depends upon the perception of the leader about his/her own role.
- There can be more than one leader in a group.
- Leadership fosters positive sentiments.
- Leadership protects the critical group norms.
- Leadership can be autocratic/democratic/laissez-faire.
- Effective leadership is a key factor in the life and success of an organization.
- Leadership transforms potential into reality.
- Leadership is the ultimate act which brings to success all of the potential that is in an organization and its people.
- Leaders propose new paradigms when old ones lose their effectiveness.
- Leadership is a personnel quality.
- Leadership is a dynamic and continuous process of behaviour.

For the most part, Educational leadership researchers are exclusively concerned with leadership in school organizations. While they occasionally draw on evidence collected in other settings, they rarely show any interest in extending their own work to those other settings. In contrast, leadership researchers working in non-school contexts have typically worried quite a bit about how well their

theories and evidence travel across organizational sectors.

A series of related research summaries have described the central elements of 'core practices' or 'basics' of successful school leadership (Leithwood, 2005). The four broad categories of practices identified in these research summaries include:

1. Setting Directions;
2. Developing People;
3. Redesigning the Organization; and
4. Managing the Instructional (teaching and learning) Programme.

Each of these categories, further refined for the purposes of this review, encompasses a small number of more specific leadership behaviors. The bulk of available evidence indicates that these categories of practice are a significant part of the repertoire of successful school leaders, whether working in a primary (elementary) or secondary school, a school or an educational district, a school in England, or India. Many of our core practices have their genesis in several different models of transformational leadership. Considerable work with this approach to leadership in educational district and school contexts has led to the current formulation (Menon, 2014).

The recent studies tell us a good deal about their relative contribution to organizational improvement and student learning. Core practices are not all that people providing leadership in schools do. But they are especially critical practices known to have significant influence on organizational goals. Their value lies in the focus they bring to what leaders attend to.

## Principles of Leadership

- Know yourself and seek self-improvement.
- Be technically proficient.
- Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.
- Make sound and timely decisions.
- Set the example.
- Know your people and look out for their well-being.
- Keep your workers informed.
- Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers.

- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.
- Train as a team
- Use the full capabilities of your organization

## Purpose of the study of Leadership

Our view of administration is a general one (i.e., it is applicable to any social group or institution) but, this is developing a perspective on administration which is particularly relevant to education as an institution. Fundamentally, administration means "to serve." The question, "Service to what end or purpose?" immediately comes to mind. The answer to that question is supplied by the broader theoretical and philosophical context out of which our theory of administration has been developed.

The central purpose to be served by educational administration is releasing human potential of both children and staff by facilitating them as becoming competent learners (i.e., fully able to teach their own selves by knowing how to arrange environments and how to guide their own interactions among them). The function of administration is to mobilize resources to achieve purpose as efficiently as possible. To do that involves accumulating the experience of the system from the past, bringing what is stored in its "collective memory" to bear upon the cutting edge of the present while at the same time providing for foreseeing its future. Therefore it is proposed that, administration is comprised of two basic functions: management and leadership. Management refers to the utilization of the "immanence" of the system-the cumulative experience of the institution-by bringing it to bear upon the achievement of purpose in the present. Leadership concerns the shaping of present actions in terms of what the system might become in the future, thereby guaranteeing that the institution or system itself makes a perpetual creative advance into novelty, and releases its potentialities as a system. (Dunn, & Brasco, 2006)

To survive, all systems must strike a balance between "permanence" and "flux/change" or stability and change. The management aspect of administration is largely-responsible for maintaining continuity and stability, while the leadership function of administration introduces novelty

and change. Management has its roots in immanence, whereas leadership arises out of transcendence. To exercise one function at the expense of the other is to reduce the viability of the system, though at different periods in development, either may require emphasis over the other. Leadership presupposes a balanced emphasis on management as its indispensable counterpart.

A full exploration of the meaning of leadership is not possible without a detailed discussion of the meaning of transcendence. According to Philip Phenix (1971), the term "transcendence" refers to the experience of limitless going beyond any given state or realization of being. It is an inherent property of conscious being to be aware that every concrete entity is experienced within a context of further relationships and possibilities. All experiences are characterized by an intrinsic dynamism that in principle breaks every bound of rational patterning or practical convenience that may establish. Closely associated with the notion of transcendence is the idea of "infinite" which concerns a never-ending stream of possibilities arising out of numberless contexts of experience within which any organism may become related. Another notion is that of "spirit" which, finds its "exemplification more in the yearning impulses of feeling and in the innovative projects of will than in the settled conclusions of intellect." According to Whitehead, the becoming and creative advance into novelty depends upon our reaching towards an ideal. This reaching for an ideal constitutes the 'principle of unrest' associated with all creativity. Thus transcendence always includes the notion of idealization.

A number of qualities of life are correlated with transcendence-qualities which have to do with the creation of expectations which are critical to the development of individuals and institutions alike. We define expectation as reserving energy for investment in an event anticipated in the future. One of the chief subjunctive manifestations of reserving energy for a future event is anticipated with pleasure as hope, without which there is little incentive for "becoming." Loss of hope on an individual level leads to depression and ultimately suicide. Loss of hope within an institution leads to very low morale and loss of staff. The word leadership comes from a root

word which is similar in meaning to the Latin word from which education is derived. Both mean to "draw out" or "lead forth." To lead means, to be out in front and presumes the following which is being taken in a particular direction. That direction is established by the objectives and purposes of the institution or organization which is being administered. Thus one of the critical functions of leadership is to articulate purpose with lucidity and to paint with vivid colours the visions of possibilities implicit in the general purpose of the institution or the system. From the articulation of purpose comes perspective. Perspective determines relevance and makes possible the establishment of priorities in terms of sub-goals and in terms of allocation of resources.

Under such circumstances, decision making is the very important function of administration which has all arbitrariness removed from it. Under such circumstances, decisions have a rationale which is clear to all members of the system. Clarity of rationale for decisions establishes the grounds for their acceptability which in turn presupposes willingness to comply. Such wide-spread willingness coupled with a sense of hope emanating from the transcendent function of high purpose and continual feedback provides information when purposes and objectives are being achieved that constitutes the essence of morale. When the system is characterized only by management which focuses on the past and the present only, it is easy for members of the system to become primarily concerned with salaries, fringe benefits, overtime, unionizing (i.e.) the materialistic aspects of participation in the workings of an institution or social system.

### **Implications of the Definition of Leadership for Handling Practical Administrative Problems**

Just as our theory of development stresses learning as the key factor in the release of potentialities of given human beings, learning is being defined as the ability to differentiate, integrate, and generalize to see a parallel set of processes related to the drawing out of the potential of any social system. Following are the number of practical issues faced by all administrators. The definition of leadership has implications for how each of these practical

issues can be understood and dealt with effectively:

- Creating appropriate staffing patterns,
- Staff selection, training, promotion,
- Conflict resolution,
- Distribution of decision-making power: problems of authority and obedience,
- Evaluation and feedback, and
- Accountability.

### **Distinguishing educational leadership and management**

The concept of management overlaps with that of leadership, a notion of great contemporary interest in most countries in the developed world. However, despite these developments, management remains the dominant term in the debate about aspects of school organization. Cuban (1988) links leadership with change, while management is seen as a maintenance activity. He also stresses the importance of both dimensions of organizational activity. The author means leadership as influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals. Leadership takes much ingenuity, energy and skill. Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is towards maintenance rather than change. Both managing and leading attach no special value to either, since different settings and times call for varied responses.

### **Conclusion**

In practice, principals in their day-to-day work are rarely aware of whether they are leading or managing; they are simply carrying out their work on behalf of the school and its learners. However, the nature of that work should reflect the school context and, in particular, its needs at any one time. For example, underperforming schools require a greater emphasis on basic management, making the organisation functional, rather than a visionary approach. This may involve ensuring regular and timely attendance by learners and educators, maintaining order and discipline in classrooms, and providing adequate resources to enable learning to take place. Once schools are functional,



leaders can progress to develop vision, and outlining clear aims and policies, with the confidence that systems are in place to secure their implementation. Of all the factors that contribute to what students learn at school, present evidence has led us to the conclusion that leadership is second in strength only to classroom instruction. Furthermore, effective leadership has the greatest impact in those circumstances in which it is most needed. This evidence supports the present widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful implementation of large-scale reforms.

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