

"Teachers' capacities to deal with change, learn from it, and help students learn from it will be critical for the future development of societies".

As work sites became larger and complex with the industrial revolution, Fredrick Taylor envisioned a new class of employees whose primary responsibility was to maximise output from given human ('workers') and material resources, giving birth to 'scientific management'. Management is increasingly considered a body of knowledge and practice, a process comprising of planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling². Large school systems have come into being, which present complexities, requiring considerable energies on administration or management³ activities at both school and system levels. A 'school head' thus is seen to need management skills – how to make school plans, organize required resources to implement these, assess implementation and feedback for planning the next period. This skill set is seen as a full time specialisation distinct from 'academic' tasks like teaching learning, preparing to teach, teacher support etc. Many schools suffer poor management, which affects institutional effectiveness - absence of rigorous long term and short term (annual) planning impacts focus and alignment of work of teachers, poor organising impacts implementation, poor monitoring and feedback mechanisms affect the school's learning from its work/experiences which in turn affects planning. Thus every school needs a good manager.

While we accept that management is essential to a school's functioning, whether it is adequate for the school head to be a manager who does not need deep involvement in the academic aspects of school functioning is a separate question. As a teacher is not a 'minor technician'⁴ who implements goals and methods designed elsewhere, a school head's role is not merely to implement plans designed externally, but rather to help create a shared vision amongst the members of the school about its purpose and lead collective energies towards its achievement. The school is a unique social institution – it is society's primary tool for directed yet evolutionary change on a systemic scale, through inter-generational transfer of cultural resources, mediated by visions for the future. Educational aims include creating citizens who would be conscious of their rights and responsibilities, live harmoniously with one another and with nature. The school head needs

a deep understanding of such educational philosophy to set direction for the school's activities.

Secondly, a school needs to have a deep connect with its immediate community and larger society. Our schools tend to be highly detached from their environment, which is one of the reasons for children dropping out of schools as they are not able to easily make meaning of education for themselves. Linking school to the larger societal context has become even more critical given the complexities of modern society. Thirdly, education is an experiential process and the teacher helps the learner construct knowledge in her / his mind. Since 'acculturation' is a key part of such knowledge construction, the teacher needs to highlight, by personal example, a moral purpose and compass. For instance, if democratic processes is something that a child needs to learn, the teachers need to be able to demonstrate its practice consistently, and the school leader needs to be a role model for teachers. Thus every school leader needs to be well versed in the 'basic areas' of philosophy of education, sociology of education and educational psychology, to be able to meaningfully shape the vision of the school. If the school head is only a manager and seeks this understanding from others, there is a danger that the priorities arising from administration would override



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goals deriving from these basic areas.

Bush and Glover who studied definitions of education leadership and management state: *"Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate their vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share this vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the schools are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision"*⁵. Rosemary Webb in 'Leading Teaching and Learning in the Primary School'⁶ suggests three models of school leadership – educative leadership, instructional leadership and pedagogical leadership. While 'educative leaders' involved themselves in the regular teaching learning in their schools, with much higher workloads relating to the implementation of centralised strategies (government plans/schemes), this is no longer possible. 'Instructional leadership' model focuses on the implementation of the central strategies, towards pre-set benchmarks/standards. However it fails to provide "moral purpose, relationship building and knowledge creation"⁷ that pedagogical leadership provides by investing

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in developing a deep understanding of educational aims and contexts and their school's needs. This enables them to "accept or resist compliance to centrist demands in order to realize the vision they had for their schools".

Note that for business management, the idea of 'shared vision' is relatively new and rare; the vision for business organisations is usually decided by senior management which is answerable primarily to the shareholders; its rank

and file has little role in fashioning this vision. Instructional leadership parallels this business management method of centralised vision. Whereas in educational institution settings, leadership needs to be much more deliberative, reflective and knowledge based (deeper shared understanding of educational aims and processes would serve as the basis for a shared vision) and this means that school leadership also needs to be decentralized and collaborative⁸, rather than centralized in a single person. By this we do not mean that the school leader needs to be an expert in all the subjects or disciplines. That may not be possible for one person, what is essential is a deep understanding of the basic areas - educational aims, role of schools in society and processes of cognition along with knowledge of one any of the disciplines. This enables the school leader to relate to the needs of the school, hold the 'creative tension'⁹ between the 'vision' and 'current reality' well enough to be individually resourceful and also help colleagues collaborate in resolving issues towards their vision.

In India most of the discretionary expenditure / plan investment is through centrally sponsored schemes, including DPEP, SSA/RMSA, mid day meals etc. These schemes have detailed and rigid 'norms', making school leader (as well as leaders at state, district, block and cluster levels) implementers of pre-designed programs. Secondly, the leader of the education system in states in India, is usually an Indian Administrative Services (IAS) official, mostly without a specialisation in education, whose focus is usually more on broader administrative goals than on qualitative/richer academic goals. The increasing emphasis on 'management' has also influenced the notion of a school leader as primarily a manager. These factors have perhaps made 'instructional leadership' the norm in Indian schools. The school head is immersed in maintaining registers, providing information for MIS and updates for the BEO and 'higher-ups', supervising construction, managing the mid day meal logistics, ensuring compliance to myriad rules and regulations, answering audits, participating in block level meetings etc. and has little time either for teaching (educative leadership) or for involving fully in teacher support processes and interpreting the norms based on local needs and larger educational aims. Of course there is hardly any time for investing in her/his own learning and professional development as a pedagogical leader.

This is equally true for leadership at other levels. DIET

principals or BRC coordinators are essentially academic leaders. Yet, despite having qualifications in education, many lose touch with regular academic practice – reading, writing, critical thinking, reflective practice, dialogue /argument etc. With their lack of specialisation in education (which the NPE demanded through a distinct IES cadre), many leaders are unable to support the creation of such an academic culture in the schools and the school system. The education system is caught in an existential dilemma – are schools and support institutions academic institutions where autonomy, focus on learning, academic specialisation, spaces for deliberation and reflection are necessary and provided; or, are they just any other government department, where the focus is on compliance, being generalists (one person fits all positions), meeting financial targets and pre-determined time lines. While a state like Karnataka does have a separate education cadre (KES), academic support personnel lack structured possibilities for continuous learning. DIET faculty see their primary role as 'program implementers' of training modules designed at SCERT, and not as academic faculty having a collective responsibility of assessing and supporting the learning needs of their teachers.

Emphasising the 'government servant' identity of the teacher, the school leader and the official in the education system, extends the notion of a 'minor technician' across the system. Experienced officials at district/block levels are largely expected to adhere to norms laid down at central and state levels, rather than collaborate with peers in designing local norms. Instructional leadership also limits focus on academic aspects, with government orders as sole basis for functioning, upward accountability replacing accountability to children, parents and community and the calling of profession. This model prevents schools from becoming autonomous learning institutions, which is necessary for educational excellence, even as instructional leadership sees 'lack of adequate compliance' as the cause for 'poor quality of education'. At a policy (policy is a reflection of educational vision) level, we see rapid and often disjointed changes, sometimes with a change in leadership and 'policy borrowing', a practice in which policies are borrowed from other locations without adequate understanding about their relevance. Rich conversations ('dialogue') at various levels in the education system, could ensure an evolutionary model of 'policy-practice' connection. Relevant and consistent feedback from the field requires both decentralization and

prioritisation on academic aspects in the system which instructional leadership fails to provide.

Unfortunately, we seem to be moving further towards instructional leadership. The current focus on 'business management models' for systemic improvement, emphasising assessment driven / metrics based programs, 'soft skills-building to address attitudinal issues', etc discounts the deeply academic nature of the issues faced by our education system. This is also a global phenomenon, where the problems of inherently public spaces are sought to be solved through management solutions, that may have worked in the business world. For instance, recently, Cathleen P. Black, the chairwomen of Hearst Magazines, was appointed as the new chancellor of the New York City School System for her "extraordinary qualifications as a manager¹⁰," and "marketing prowess". Lamenting this, Giroux writes, "... In this view, management is divorced from any viable sense of leadership and the connection between schooling and the public good is replaced with a business model of schooling that disregards both the social and any vision not defined by the crudest forms of power, instrumental rationality and mathematical utility, ... which eviscerate from public schooling any vestige of public values, democratic modes of governance, teacher autonomy, critical thinking and a vision of schooling as a space in which to teach students to be critical thinkers and engaged citizens".

Finally, management and academics is not an 'either or' issue, managerial responsibilities are important and management skills are required in school leadership. However, these are trivial in comparison to the complexities of teaching learning and teacher support. In a learning organization, goals established (collaboratively) by the school leader reflect the shared vision of the school and administrative skill though important from the perspective of efficiency does not by itself provide relevance or meaning to the schools purpose. Such 'learning centred leadership'¹¹ is embedded in continuous and collaborative, individual and systemic learning.

As the head of the 'Education Management' function in Azim Premji Foundation, I used to think that 'education management' specialists did not need a deep understanding of education and that expertise in management tools or applications like spreadsheets which help make complex planning and monitoring an easy task, were sufficient. I

now define Education Leadership and Management as a sub-domain of education, which seeks to apply principles of leadership and management to educational contexts based on educational aims and priorities, for which clear educational perspectives are essential.

I once visited a large government school in Trivandrum, which had two HMs – with distinct academics and administration responsibilities. The roles of VC and registrar of universities too are often similarly patterned, with the

registrar taking a larger load of the administrative aspects to allow the VC to focus on academic matters. With increasing load of administrative tasks, educational system must consider having capable administration person(s) to support pedagogical leaders, rather than reducing the school head to a manager. This requires much higher levels of investment and commitment from all of us, but since education is about the lives of our children and their future, which is in a way the future of humanity, this is the minimum we need to demand of ourselves.

Footnote

1. FULLAN, MICHAEL G. 1993. Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform, cited in <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2483/Teacher-Learning-Communities.html>
2. From the popular primer on business management – Koontz and O'Donnel. Essentials of Management, An international perspective.
3. I have treated these two terms as largely synonymous for the purpose of this article – comprising of activities that lie outside academic activities that form the core of the education system.
4. "The transmission model of education coupled with the drive for increased efficiency tends to foster the view of the teacher as a minor technician within an industrial process" - Reason and teaching by Israel Scheffler
5. In Early and Weindling, D. "From management to leadership, a changing discourse"
6. Rosemary Webb 2005. Educational Management Administration and Leadership, SAGE
7. Fullan 2001
8. In institutions of higher education, like universities, leadership positions such as Head of Department are sometimes assumed on rotational basis by faculty of the same experience/position
9. Peter Senge, Fifth Discipline
10. Henry A. Giroux. Business Culture and the Death of Public Education: The Triumph of Management Over Leadership . <http://www.truth-out.org/business-culture-and-death-public-education-the-triumph-management-over-leadership65083>
11. Southwest 2003

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