

"Education department should motivate teachers to understand the potential of community contribution to students' learning. By strengthening the partnership with panchayats and community based organizations in the community, school leaders can enhance students' achievement and success."

-Bella Shetty, Deputy Director of Public Instruction,  
Davanagere.

It is true that leadership qualities are hidden in each of us and they come out only when the situation demands it. In Namma Shale program, the pressure percolated into every village, thus bringing out the hidden leadership qualities in teachers and Head teachers.



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"Teachers never get quality time to address issues relating to teaching and learning happening with in the classroom; let us to teach and let us be just teachers".

-Nagesh, Head Teacher, Manuganahalli. Gavdagere cluster.

Teaching English has been one of the consistent demands from the parents. Many are opting out of Government schools only on that ground. Immediately after the exposure visit to Kerala to understand the quality of education, parents and teachers decided that they should strengthen English teaching in their schools. Nagesh, Manuganahalli headmaster, took the first step in this direction. His daughter was studying in a private school. He studied her English books and understood that they were far more child friendly and easy to teach. Second aspect he learnt was that apart from text books, the children used a lot of workbooks to help learning. He shared this learning with parents of his school and told them that the approximate cost of such books would come to Rs.150/- per child. The parents agreed to bear the expenses. He took some of the parents to Mysore,

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Namma Shale is an initiative started in 4 clusters of Karnataka to strengthen school community connect through establishing a communication web among various stakeholders. For this purpose, Namma Shale program identified children, teachers, parents, School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Gram Panchayath (GP), and education managers as the seven stakeholders that affect Quality Education in government schools. The assumption was that by establishing a communication web covering all these stakeholders (Rainbow of stakeholders), we can improve the quality of education in government schools and influence the performance of teaching fraternity in Government schools. Started in 2007, as a joint collaboration with the Government of Karnataka (GoK), Department of Public Instruction and Azim Premji Foundation, Namma Shale involved formation of cluster facilitation team of 3 to 4 members in each cluster who were appointed and monitored by a local NGO. State Implementation Units (SIU) were established to undertake research, documentation and outsource people from Karnataka State Trainers' Collective (KSTC) to provide technical guidance to all those who are involved in the program.

surveyed the market and selected suitable supplementary reading materials. He learnt how to use these materials and designed lesson plans. As a result, most of the children have started learning English very fast and many of them now talk in English among themselves.

Now, Nagesh the Head teacher says, "I too have studied in Kannada medium school and I started learning English at the age of ten; I don't want my students to face similar fate. So I am making sure that children in my school should learn English early on". A promising foresight, an explorative school leader, pragmatic as he strategically involves the community Nagesh has many qualities that other school leaders like himself can easily imbibe.

### **It takes a whole community to mentor a school leader**

.....Namma Shale program's founding principle.

The experiences of Namma Shale program have proved that school leadership is effective only when it is coupled with better 'community partnership' at the local level. Hence, a strong partnership is crucial. This can be done by strengthening the 'school-community connect' and subsequently establishing a strong communication network among the two. In this context, the Namma Shale program

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did not see 'School leadership' as a byproduct of the school-community connect; but imagined it as a 'complementary impact' of novel communication tools designed to bring the 'rainbow stakeholders' to interact in a symbiotic process.

The opinions gathered during the intervention and at the end of consolidation phase of Namma Shale program have helped practitioners involved in the implementation process to arrive at a theory of 'mutual empowerment' of both community and teachers. From its inception 'Namma Shale' has made a continued effort to develop school leadership on a sustainable basis. In the various discussions, it has emerged that the Head teacher can provide good leadership, acceptable to the community, only if he/she is ably assisted and supported by community. The department rules and procedures often hinder teachers from taking decisions related to school governance. Namma Shale provided the backend support to the school teachers by actively involving the communities in school governance processes. Local communities under the Namma Shale program are now taking proactive steps to provide additional resources required for the schools; they help in monitoring the learning of their children, midday meal program, protect the school infrastructure, mobilize funds for school development. Youth and community organizations have also joined hands with teachers to deliver better quality education in schools. Similarly, 'Namma Shale' team has designed novel training programmes and empowerment strategies to enhance the confidence of the teachers.

During the impact analysis of 'School-community leadership' training programme conducted by College for Leadership and Human Resource Development (CLHRD) - Mangalore, the Head teachers were requested to provide their understanding about 'School-community leadership'. Thirty Eight Head teachers expressed the their ideal school-community leader would be one who:

- Visualizes the school building as nested within a larger community structure
- Cares for the community needs and vice versa
- Loves to spend quality time with the 'rainbow stakeholders' such as parents, teachers, children, SDMC members, members of Community Based Organizations, Gram Panchayat members and education administrators
- Carries out participatory planning and action (PPA)

of the school activities with active involvement of the community members

- e. Shares his ideas about the school improvement related to academic and non academic activities and also mobilizes the non-parent community in the resource mobilization process.

In Namma Shale program the sustainability of the 'school leadership' has two important considerations.

- It strategizes the micro-politics of educational change and re-culture the school leadership processes; both are highly prone to politicization. Hence, care should be taken while creating SDMC networks.
- Re-design of local school environment according to the

aspirations of Right to Education (RTE) act.

In Namma Shale program, 'school-community leadership' was deeply rooted in community empowerment process. Community accepts and supports teachers assuming leadership of school, once the teaching fraternity lends itself to community demands and reciprocates to the demands of the community at large. The community is normally willing to share its responsibility in the non-academic tasks of teachers; teachers must capitalize on this as it will give them more time to deliver their academic responsibilities. Such a concept of school leadership suggests a shared responsibility for a shared purpose of school development. When shared leadership is embedded in the school community as a whole, there is a much greater potential for long-term social-sustainability.

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