

Series Editors: *Rashmi Diwan and Charu Smita Malik*

Module 1

LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS TO CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PACKAGE

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Setting the context: Significance of School Leadership

Globally, there is a greater responsibility placed on schools to develop spaces and sites for contestation and learning, with the school leader acting as the driver for change and transformation. A school leader provides direction and exercises influence, two important functions outlined by Leithwood and Reihl (2003), implying that the leader works with others to develop a shared sense of purpose and creates conditions for others to be effective. The professional practice of a school leader is also a critical mediator to enhancing teachers' professional practice, building learner competencies and improving quality of schools (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins 2020; Hallinger 2011; Robinson et.al. 2009). In the much-acclaimed research "revisit" on seven claims about school leadership, it was yet again found that school leadership is considered as second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins 2020). Despite the teacher being the primary determinant of student learning, "the effects of formal leaders are felt because...they create the conditions in which teachers are able to perform well in their classrooms" (Leithwood and Seashore-Louis 2011). Other strong claims on school leadership establish its influence on teacher motivation, work commitment and teachers' professional development; a far greater influence on schools and students if it is widely distributed and involves practices that emerge as responses to the contexts in which schools operate. Interestingly, one of the claims point to the fact that almost all successful leaders draw on same set of basic leadership practices, significant being building a shared vision, providing support to staff, developing a collaborative culture etc.

Hence, research points to well-evident corollaries of an effective school leader who can demonstrate deep understanding of change management and individual- and team-development processes for leading school improvement and improving student learning. The new-age expectations from a school leader are many. Essentially, the leader must be equipped

with competencies that help h/him to collectively identify concerns, define priorities, harness available resources, engage in continuous dialogue and professional associations with fellow colleagues and teachers, design, implement and monitor change initiatives for school improvement. These efforts must certainly build both student and teacher competencies. In a broader perspective, the school leader must also be able to deal with multiple expectations from all stakeholders- such as the system level officials, parents, community and the civil society; at the same time upgrading oneself on all professional standards.

Continuous Professional Development: A Conceptual Framework

School-based change is a long and arduous process that requires rigour of professional practice of many individuals and coverage of multiple functions- setting direction, revisiting goals in light of implementation, creating a facilitative environment, providing academic leadership at all levels, and development of key attributes in self and others such as a positive mindset, consistency and resilience. The understanding that “the effective change leader actively participates as a learner in helping the organization improve” becomes the mainstay of any organizational change. This change can be initiated as a self-directed process; however, its sustainability requires a vast repertoire of epistemic, attitudinal and application-based understanding on the part of the leader. This repertoire can be codified into ‘professional development.’ In the context of a school leader, professional development can be carried out through various modes, but necessitates a process of collaborative, inquiry-based learning to address real, immediate and complex school-based problems. Through professional development, school leaders benefit from exposure to new ideas and learning opportunities that have direct relevance to their own concerns. In fact, the benefits of professional development have placed it at the centre of school leadership preparation programmes across the

world, arguing for not a one-time but a ‘continuous’ phenomenon.

Hence, in its broadest sense, ‘continuous’ professional development of school leaders can be seen as interlinked to- and within- the framework of lifelong learning which includes both formal and informal means of acquiring learning opportunities, embed in both knowledge and practice (UNESCO 2021; Erdogan and Ayanoglu 2021; Roche 2018; Roche 2017; Burnes-Bolton and Bromley 2001; Berman 1981). Lifelong learning encompasses a continued association of an adult practitioner with the process of not only “learning through text” but also through “immersion in on-site” processes. This dynamic relationship between theory and practice, aids in a reflective and dialogic process through which meaning making is attempted, independently as well as collaboratively. In the context of teacher education, Du Plessis and Muzaffar (2010) found that a teacher, when engages in learner-centred and dialogic reflection, develops as an adult learner. Further, professional development that scaffolds inquiry, individual and collaborative reflection enables educators to become professional reflective practitioners. It also supports the creation of networks, communities of learning and communities of practice that can act as successful models of professional teacher (also read as school leader) education and development (Darling Hammond 2011; Du Plessis and Muzaffar 2010; Arun 2007). Such programmes enable teachers and school leaders to maximize their capacities as key determinants in achieving educational goals and exercising effective change agency to enact educational reform.

Continuous professional development opportunities lead to building competencies among school leaders and teachers so that they can lead change in their professional practice and initiate positive outcomes in the school (Kelley and Pavlakis 2016; Huber 2013). The results of a randomized control trial on 100 school principals, assessed the impact of a school leadership preparation programme to find out how professional development influenced school leadership (Miller et.al.

2016). The results showed that the programme resulted in “gains in majority of knowledge, beliefs and behaviour outcomes of principals with the largest impact on principal’s sense of efficacy for instructional improvement, reported ability to bring about change and strengthening of norms for teachers’ instructional practice” (also see Owen 2020). Thus, effective leadership is seen as closely linked to leadership development as a continuous professional engagement today than ever before, “developing school leaders requires a clear definition of the leaders’ responsibilities, access to appropriate professional development throughout their careers, and acknowledgment of their pivotal role in improving school and student performance” (Schleicher 2012). Professional development paves way for school leaders in acquiring skills and competencies to initiate, innovate and develop the schools in parity with the changes taking place in this modern era. Leadership development initiatives offer professional support and application of skills through such methods as capacity building programs, reflective practice, coaching and mentoring, action learning, and developmental assignments.

Research points to the impact of professional development on broad school-level outcomes as well as on improving personal capacities in values, assumptions, beliefs, practices and knowledge of school leaders (Huggins et.al. 2016). Professional development can enable leaders to become critical literacy leaders who are able to “critique unfair social structures and practices and design more sustainable futures” (Rogers et.al. 2021). The result of professional development can also be seen in school leaders developing adaptive expertise in “the ability to apply meaningfully-learned knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in different situations” (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012). The significance of continuous professional development for school leaders cannot be undermined. Engaging in same, can place school leaders on different career possibilities and open opportunities for promotion. Continuous professional development, thus, not only signifies different learning

approaches but also how these are conceptually linked and how this linkage is implemented and then experienced by participants. This linking is what makes a difference in the learning of adults, in this case, of school leaders. Hence, within the overarching framework of lifelong learning, engaging in continuous professional development can enable school leaders to learn and apply, and develop competencies to lead and transform. Exploring further, there can be different pathways to approach professional development on a continuous basis.

School Leadership: Policy and Implementation in India

In India, the 12th Five Year Plan was instrumental in laying the foundation of a professional cadre of school heads, within the framework of professional development, who would develop as leaders within and outside of the school. The Plan also mandated the establishment of a National Centre for School Leadership in NUEPA (presently, NIEPA) which was to be entrusted with building leadership capabilities of school heads of the government education system in India. The National Centre for School Leadership at NIEPA, for the first time in India, conceptualized and implemented School Leadership Development as a systemic, nationwide continuous professional development programme for Educational Leaders including School Principals and Administrators in leadership positions. Ever since its inception in 2012, the National Centre for School Leadership has provided a platform to school leaders and systemic administrators for ongoing professional dialogue, learning opportunities and cross-sharing. The Centre has aimed at developing professional learning communities of school leaders networked across States/UT, regional, districts and block levels interconnected to each other as well as aligned to the central vision. The Centre also develops a bank and repository of relevant education resources for school leaders including process-based learning materials that can be used in face-to-face,

blended and online modalities. Unlike the usual short-term programmes on school leadership, the Centre has designed leadership development activities that ensure continuous engagement and long-term development of school heads and systemic administrators.

Continuing with large-scale education reforms, the Government of India, introduced the National Education Policy in 2020 as a policy roadmap covering aspects of both school and higher education. The changes envisaged as part of school-based reforms revolve around the central argument of student learning and quality education. In its thrust on continuous professional development of school leaders and teachers, the NEP 2020 expects school complex leaders and school principals to undergo modular leadership and management workshops, avail of online development opportunities and various platforms to continuously improve their own leadership and management skills and share best practices with each other. School leaders are expected to participate in 50 hours or more of Continuous Professional Development modules per year, covering leadership and management, as well as content and pedagogy with a focus on preparing and implementing pedagogical plans based on competency-based education (para 5.16). As an implementation roll-out, SARTHAQ (GoI 2021) has also visualized school leadership development as a critical initiative in context of quality education.

Hence, school leadership preparation programmes need to take cognizance of continuous professional development, if school leaders are expected to develop competencies for taking their role forward as change agents, in the current scenario of education reforms and thrust areas identified by the National education Policy 2020. The National Centre for School Leadership is also engaged in developing and offering new avenues of continuous professional development for school leaders in the ambit of its mandate.

Leadership Pathways for Continuous Professional Development: Way Forward

Given the above context, the National Centre for School Leadership defines leadership pathways as a learning trajectory of School Principals to begin their journey towards professional development and learning. This will help them in developing competencies to drive the process of school improvement. Drawing on research evidence, the nature of programmes designed by the Centre, and a rich experience of the field, one can identify five leadership pathways to continuous professional development of school leaders in the Indian context. School leaders can choose one or more leadership pathways to strengthen their professional practice of leadership.

Leadership Pathway 1: Recognizing and Understanding Context

Research on school leadership has provided evidence that success of school leadership rests on the choice and combination of different leadership styles, as well as specific situation and context underlying those combinations (Brauckmann and Pashiardis 2011; Hameiri and Nir 2014; Brezicha et al. 2015). This evidence points out that there is a deep influence of context on school leadership and therefore school heads need to be empowered with well-designed context specific school leadership development programmes to enable school improvement. Thus, professional development of school leaders must be context specific that include an emphasis on process variables leading to student learning (Brauckmann et.al. 2020; Hallinger 2018; Bush and Glover 2004). Further, the identities of school leaders and their roles carry specific historical, cultural and political contexts, which school leadership programmes need to consider. This also implies that leadership knowledge acquired during the leadership preparation programme must be available for actual use on-site by school heads,

made possible only if professional development is practitioner-centric and based on real-life complex challenges of the school. A well-designed professional development dovetails the context of everyday professional practice of a leader (Webster-Wright 2009).

Leadership Pathway 2: Acquiring know-how and skills

If leadership role and pedagogical excellence are vital to principalship, then what must be the knowledge- and skill- content of professional development for school leaders? In a study conducted by Tingle et.al. (2017), majority of school principals indicated that human capital, executive leadership, school culture and strategic operations had an influence on their development as school leaders. Examining the perceptions of newly appointed principals from secondary schools, Shun-wing Ng et.al. (2016) found that they expected to be equipped with administrative skills of human resource management such as empowering middle managers and handling underperforming staff, building capacities of curriculum and instructional leadership. In addition, they attributed networking with peers and working with mentors as invaluable experience and support for early years' principalship. Increasing expectations from new-age policies and demands of community and parents have resulted in complex school organizations. To address the complexity and constant flux of school processes, it is not only important for the school leader, but also for each member of the school to build upon the repertoire of individual strengths, skills and experience ---in this context, communication strategies and skills such as listening, verbal and non-verbal behaviour, openness and empathy to encourage shared leadership and thereby build human and organizational capacity. School leaders may learn to use communication skills and strategies as a pathway to building leadership capacity (Slater 2008). Know-how and skills with reference to school-based coaching, mentoring, peer

networking mechanisms and leadership for learning are now considered as critical pathways for leadership development for school leaders (Hallinger 2018, 2014, 2011; Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002).

Leadership Pathway 3: Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning denotes a process by which school leaders reflect on their professional practice and design their own learning trajectory for professional development. This includes deconstruction and reconstruction of leader's existing knowledge through reflection on leadership activities situated in school context (Huggins et.al. 2016). Other means for self-directed learning can encompass wide range of reading, building on experience, documenting insights from professional practice, accessing open education resources and availing of online programmes on school leadership development etc. In self-directed learning, it is important to reconceptualize professional development as "authentic professional learning". This concept focuses on developing an active learning trajectory for the professional based on experience and integrating both formal and informal opportunities keeping the learner at the centre who leads his/her own learning (Webster-Wright 2009). The context of everyday professional practice is also critical to drive self-directed learning. In fact, the current Package which has curated a set of Self-Instructional Modules on School leadership Development fall into this category of self-directed learning.

Leadership Pathway 4: Peer networking and learning communities

Networking among school leaders can provide a platform for continuous dialogue, problem solving and sharing of best practices as a means of continuous professional development. Such platforms can be available in the form of face-to-face professional learning communities, developing

communities of practice, online groups or mobile apps. These platforms can be an outcome of attending a leadership preparation programme or formed as a voluntary association. Exchange of ideas, feeling inspired and designing action based on gains in knowledge and insights can be important features of discussions ensuing in such professional associations (Du Four et. al. 2010). A study by Admiraal et.al. (2021) on interventions carried out by 14 secondary schools for establishing professional learning communities in their schools were characterized into five sets of activities. These were shared school vision on learning, professional learning opportunities for all staff, collaborative work and learning, change of school organisation, and learning leadership. It was found that the more these activities were integrated into the school culture, the more influence these had on creating and sustaining a culture of professional learning and collaboration within the school. Hence, being an active member of professional learning communities can provide a pathway for leadership development of both school leaders and teachers.

Leadership Pathway 5: Leaders as facilitators in preparing next generation leaders

School leaders can also become facilitators for continuous professional development of middle managers and teachers who are aspiring and prospective leaders. Two approaches are discussed here: one, distributed leadership and two, succession planning. Once the school leaders' personal and organizational capacities are built, they can support distributed leadership in schools. Principals can develop personal leadership capacities of adult learners, or middle managers who already possess relevant expertise within the school. Huggins et.al. (2016) defines four pathways to develop professional capacities of others, such as appreciating strengths not weaknesses; facilitating thinking versus providing solutions; inquiry-guided reflection versus experience-guided

reflection and assessing leadership learning in context versus assessing responses to verbal feedback. Distributed leadership, through its various methods, develops capacities in others so that they develop as next generation leaders. Hence, in this way, a school leader can become a facilitator for continuous professional development of other aspiring leaders.

Linked to the above is the second approach, that of succession leadership. This is essentially a process of familiarizing the new leader with changes that have traversed through years, within the school (Diwan 2022). This method of professionally developing the next generation leaders' rests on preparation of a succession plan, to ensure sustainability in change efforts of one school leader to the next in succession. A succession plan involves a complete cycle of induction programmes, periodic training, and continuous professional development within the school to develop others as leaders of future. Successive leadership thus acts as an important leadership pathway for nurturing prospective and aspiring leaders.

Anchoring the Modules: National Curriculum Framework on School Leadership Development

The Centre has developed the current Package on self-instructional Modules that cover a wide range of themes on School Leadership Development to cater to the leadership challenges that have emerged from field interactions with school leaders across the country. The package contains 14 modules. A unique feature of these modules is that these are rooted in theoretical and conceptual frameworks interspersed with activities that are practical and based on real-life complex school situations. These modules, designed as self-learning material, are wide ranging and cover a broad spectrum of areas conceptualized in the National Curriculum Framework on School Leadership Development (NCSL 2015). These modules present learning opportunities that are

largely knowledge centred and will assist the school leaders in their journey of continuous professional development. However, this knowledge-centred content is generative in nature, in that it can be used flexibly in variety of situations through application. These modules have been curated especially for school leaders, keeping in mind the five themes identified in leadership pathways described above and thrust areas identified as part of the National Education Policy 2020. The list of modules can be seen in Appendix 1. The modules have been placed under different key areas of National Curriculum Framework on School Leadership Development which provides the overarching vision for professional development of school leaders.

Key Area: Perspective on School Leadership

The first key area -Perspective on School leadership seeks to develop an understanding of leadership and its influence on school improvement. This central area of the school leadership curriculum encompasses various themes such as developing school as a learning organization, school as a site for continuous experimentation and change, creating a collaborative vision for the school, transforming the work ethos, putting the child first and outlining guiding principles for school transformation. This package contains four modules under this key area. The first one is “Change Leadership for School Improvement: Redefining the Role of School Principals in India” by Rashmi Diwan and Ronish Gothwal. This module sets the direction of the Package by situating the role of school head in the context of leadership, wherein, the school head/principal is viewed as a change leader. The argument in favour of change leadership is based on an extensive review of research and inclusion of case studies to understand the role of a school principal in bringing effective changes towards school improvement. This module will help school heads in reflecting on their role as a leader, motivating them to initiate processes and practices to bring effective changes in the school.

The next module “School as a Ground for Learning and Development” by Kashyapi Awasthi revolves round the concept of school culture and school climate that promotes continuous learning opportunities for all stakeholders involved. The module presents relevant case studies and action points that can help school leaders in developing a positive school climate in their school. The next two modules are based on equity as a guiding principle for school transformation. These are titled as “Guiding Principles for School Transformation: Equity as a Concept” and “Guiding Principles for School Transformation: Equity as a Tool”, developed by Charu Smita Malik. The module on equity as a concept attempts to understand the concept of equity by itself and in relation to other concepts such as equality, inclusion and diversity. It also positions the idea of deficit-mindset versus an equity-mindset which allows school leaders to question their own as well as other’s beliefs on what can be regarded as equitable practices for the school. The module on equity as a tool outlines identification of equity groups and tools for classroom observation and an equity audit for the school. Taken together, these four modules can help school leaders develop a perspective on school leadership and pave the way for a principle-based shared vision for the school.

Key Area: Developing Self

The focus of this key area is to help school leaders develop a positive self-concept with respect to capabilities, attitudes and values. It assists the leader in identifying areas of self-improvement through reflective exercise and relational aspects, in the context of self and the other. The module in this key area has been designed around an important leadership skill- “Empathy: A Critical Skill for Professional Development of School Leaders” by Sunita Chugh and Monika Bajaj. Empathy is regarded as an ability to understand and comprehend emotions, experiences, perspectives, feelings and behaviours of others. There are

many types of empathy that are discussed in detail in the module. Equipped with an Empathy questionnaire, the module seeks to develop this skill among the school leaders which will help them in becoming aware of others' needs and in developing effective interpersonal relations with others.

Key Area: Transforming Teaching-Learning Processes

This key area revolves around teaching-learning processes of the school. To become an effective instructional leader, a school leader needs to possess capabilities to collaboratively design learning processes in the school, involving teachers, parents and students. The school leader is also visualized as a coach and a mentor, deft in academic supervision and leading learning outcomes in school. Considering the importance of this key area, the package contains five modules, keeping in mind the themes identified in the National Education Policy 2020. The first module “Education for Critical Thinking” by Subitha G.V describes what is critical thinking and how can school leaders and teachers create spaces and opportunities for developing this skill among all stakeholders, child being at the centre. Importantly, the module also discusses different methods for enhancing critical thinking. It is believed that skills such as these will help in improving learner competencies, not just fulfilling the mandate of completing the syllabus. The next two modules are based on Inclusion. The first “National level Policies on Inclusion w.r.t. CwDs” by Veera Gupta discusses the policy context of education of Children with Disabilities. The module delineates the provisions of the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 which are applicable to CwDs so that school leaders and educational administrators can implement it in spirit and letter as per the government orders issued by the State/UT governments. It further discusses various incentives available to CwDs under different centrally sponsored schemes. The next module “How do I create Inclusive

Classrooms” by Veera Gupta and Bharti takes the concept of inclusion into the classrooms. This module guides school leaders and teachers to first map and document different learning styles of students, their impairments and characteristics of school environment, to understand multiple ways to create an inclusive classroom. It takes the school leaders and teachers through designing Individualised Education Plans and provides insights on how to adapt school curriculum to inclusive classrooms.

An important parameter of a thriving learning culture in school is creation and sustenance of professional learning communities (PLCs) among teachers and school leaders. PLCs offer a platform to share knowledge, best practices and competencies so that leadership and teaching as professional practice can be improved. The module on “Establishing and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities for Academic Excellence in School Education” by Sunita Chugh provides insights into this aspect of professional development. The last module in this key area highlights an emerging need of secondary school graduates, that of vocational education. The module on “Vocationalisation of Education: Leading Learning for Employability Skills” by Puja Singhal and Sunita Chugh explores the area of vocationalisation in school education, prompting school leaders to integrate vocational education into the school curriculum. It explicitly discusses the linkages between vocational education and employability skills as well as opportunities.

Key Area: Building and Leading Teams

Building and leading teams is an important role of a school leader. This area covers skills required to build and sustain teams, addressing concerns along the way such as effective communication, conflict resolution and ensuring continuous professional development of all stakeholders. The module on “Building and Leading Teams: Professional dialogue among Team Members” by Puja Singhal and Monika Bajaj

focuses on various types of professional dialogue within the work culture of the school and how it can be a determining factor in improving team effectiveness and school improvement. It will also help school leaders in developing effective and ethical communication skills to lead professional dialogue.

Key Area: Leading Partnerships

This key area outlines the need for developing meaningful relationships between school and parents, community members, officials in education department and other schools in the neighbourhood. The module on “Partnership for School Improvement with Stakeholders” by Mona Sedwal practically covers all the stakeholders with whom the school leader needs to converge her/his efforts to be able to provide quality education to each child. It delves deeper into the role of each stakeholder, be it the system administrators, private sector, NGOs, parents or the community. The modules establishes that there is strength in partnership with each stakeholder; it is the cumulative efforts of each which contributes to school improvement.

Key Area: Leading School Administration

The last key area of the school leadership curriculum is pertinent as it takes cognizance of the fact that to become an effective leader, one must be an excellent administrator and an efficient financial manager. Within this area, a rather relatively less-researched theme in the Indian context, emerges to be school-based succession planning. This theme is skilfully articulated in the last module “Leadership Succession for School-based Transformation” by Rashmi Diwan. The purpose of this module is to equip current school leaders to improve schools of today and prepare prospective leaders to meet challenges of the next-millennium schools. This module is significant in that it explains the concept of leadership

succession in sustaining changes in the school, after the leader exits.

Conclusion

Effective school leadership is a product of many factors- personality characteristics, situational contexts, developmental processes and team effort. It is a well-established fact now, that it is not just the school leader but other stakeholders too, who together constitute the school leadership team. Despite involvement of all, the role and importance of a school leader never diminishes. A school leader sets the direction, develops a shared vision, plans for school development, executes, course corrects and achieves learning of all. In this trajectory of school development, a school leader also deals with many impending challenges, addresses the aspirations of students and parents and fosters a collaborative learning space within the school. The complexities of the school and multiple expectations of stakeholders demand extraordinary professional expertise from a leader. To emerge as a competent and effective school leader, one must embark on a continuous journey of professional development. This self-instructional package of well-designed and thoughtfully crafted modules would help school leaders and teachers to chart a pathway for self-directed professional development. Equipped with this package, school leaders will be able to lead their school as dynamic professionals, towards change, improving student learning and providing quality education to each child.

List of Modules

Module 1	Leadership Pathways to Continuous Professional Development: An Introduction to the Package	Charu Smita Malik and Rashmi Diwan
Key Area – Perspective on School Leadership		
Module 2	Change Leadership for School Improvement: Redefining the Role of School Principals in India	Rashmi Diwan and Ronish Goyalwal
Module 3	School as a Ground for Learning and Development	Kashyapi Awasthi
Module 4	Guiding Principles for School Transformation: Equity as a Concept	Charu Smita Malik
Module 5	Guiding Principles for School Transformation: Equity as a Tool	Charu Smita Malik
Key Area – Developing Self		
Module 6	Empathy: A Critical Skill for Professional Development of School Leaders	Sunita Chugh and Monika Bajaj
Key Area – Transforming Teaching-Learning Processes		
Module 7	Education for Critical thinking	Subitha G.V.
Module 8	National Level Inclusive Education Policies w.r.t. CwDs	Veera Gupta
Module 9	How do I create Inclusive Classrooms?	Veera Gupta and Bharti
Module 10	Establishing and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities for Academic Excellence in School Education	Sunita Chugh
Module 11	Vocationalisation of Education: Leading Learning for Employability skills	Puja Singhal and Sunita Chugh
Key Area – Building and Leading Teams		
Module 12	Building and Leading Teams: Professional Dialogue among Team Members	Puja Singhal and Monika Bajaj
Key Area – Leading Partnerships		
Module 13	Partnership for School Improvement with Stakeholders	Mona Sedwal
Key Area – Leading School Administration		
Module 14	Leadership Succession for School-based Transformation	Rashmi Diwan

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