

J&K, Leadership School Building Competencies for School Complex Leaders in J&K: A Transformative Model

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Expected Learning Outcomes

- Appreciate efficient resourcing and effective governance through school complexes/clusters
- Rationalize what, Why and how of school complexes/clusters
- Trace the policy perspective of complexes/clusters
- Compare the present role of complex Heads and their perspective role.

Reflection:

1. From your personal experience, can you think of instance/s when you were really happy with, your posting in a school?

2. What was there in that school which worked and what went well particularly in terms of physical and human resources.

3. Do you agree that poor and unequal distribution of resources is a hindrance in achieving the desired quality education? Also, discuss the problems faced by the stakeholders of the schools having poor physical and/or human resources.

One of the common criticisms against the development of education in the post-Independence period is that there has been a fall in standards, and two main illustrations are given to support it: the increase in the number of sub-standard institutions of general education, and the increase in the number of students with sub-standard attainments.

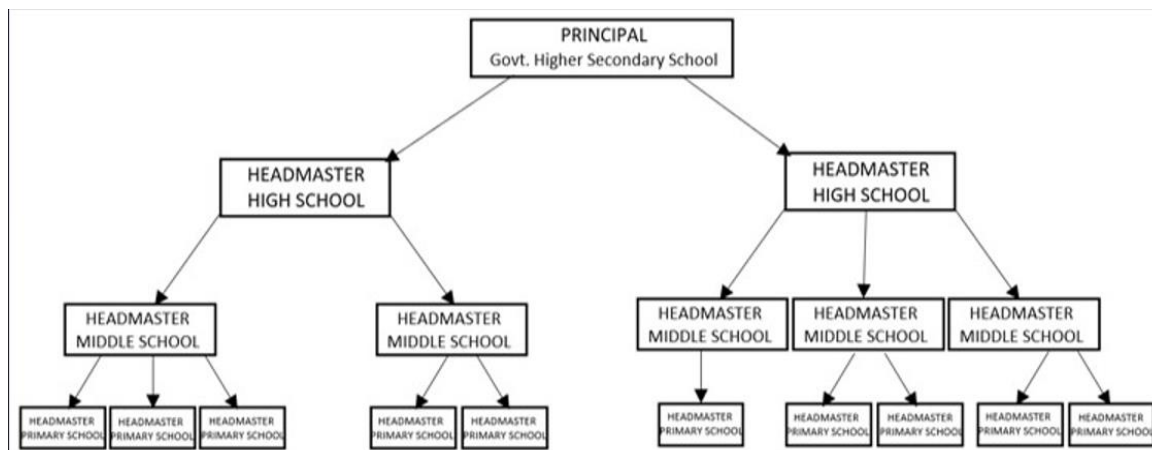
Even where the standards have risen, the rise has not been adequate and better results would have been possible if the existing facilities had been intensively utilized.

Taking a clue from the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), Cluster Head System has been in the system of Education in Kashmir Division during the period of 2015-17 while as Complex Head system has been there, much before with restricted domain on conduct of examinations for the class 8th, which was subsequently enhanced to include examination of classes 5th to 9th. A cluster head would mean a Principal of Higher Secondary School

(HSS)having an academic authority over the schools that would fall in the catchment of this Higher Secondary School. The catchment schools would include Primary Schools, Middle Schools & High Schools. Cluster head was made the mentor of these schools.

But since, some Principals of Higher Secondary Schools felt little overburdened, it could not be continued. Also, proper structure and guidelines were not followed at the time.

The initiative of cluster type academic monitoring was launched in 2015-2016 by the school education department. The sole motto of the initiative was to strengthen the academic arrangement and to make accountability thereof. The academic monitoring was a ladder type with principal of a government Higher Secondary School at the top.



The Principal HSS was heading the cluster by monitoring High / Middle / Primary Schools. The Headmaster HS was monitoring Middle / Primary Schools and Middle School Headmaster was monitoring Primary schools within their catchment area.

This was a wonderful exercise wherein the responsibilities were decentralised and the problems faced by the academic institutions were addressed at the gross root level. The teachers were made accountable and academic monitoring was carried on to the lowest level.

The initiative failed to deliver the goods as some principals of Higher secondary Schools failed to submit the monitoring reports and recommendations thereof to the district level. Some Principals took it as an extra burden. Moreover, some of the principals took decisions unilaterally without taking into confidence other counterparts. Due to lack of proper guidelines, somewhere, the role of Zonal Education Officer was made zero. The lack of coordination between the principal, zonal education officer and the headmasters made the initiative an utter failure.

However, if the same initiative will be introduced in future a proper mechanism should be followed. All the stakeholders should be equally made responsible. The role of resource groups at the Zonal / District level should also not be ignored.

Aijaz Hussain
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Case Study:

Case Study of Khrew Cluster Zone Pampore Pulwama

After declaration of Cluster System by Government in the year 2016-17, a novel initiative, the principal of the said Cluster framed *Modus Operandi* in order to raise the academic standards of the cluster viz. Primary Schools, Upper Primary Schools and High Schools which fall in the cluster.

The attendance of the teachers was made compulsory and leave accounts of the schools were checked and all were directed to attend schools with mission zeal which yielded good results. The derelict incumbents were warned of dire consequences.

In the second run the academics were checked at all levels with tools framed by the principal in order to check basic English, Mathematics, Urdu.

The Primary Schools were directed to seek solutions out of box in raising basic numeracy and literacy. Some basic tools of Math/English were shared with School Heads and teachers and monitoring mechanisms were framed in order to check the work behavior and impact of these tools. After the gap of one month, after applying pressure cooker theory on Hols/ teachers, some wonderful achievements and results were arraigned by the Principal/Cluster Head.

The cluster head along with his team of lecturers/Masters/Teachers also shared best practices with the schools of the cluster. Therefore, it is inferred that Cluster System is a viable, pragmatic solution of ills of Education Sector at Government/Private sector.

Mohd Amin Beigh
Principal HSS Lar Ganderbal

Schools provide a platform to children where they acquire social skills and knowledge of multitude of subjects. Successive governments have relentlessly worked to establish primary school, upper Primary, secondary and higher secondary schools with the radius of 1km, 3km, 5 km and 7km respectively across the state under the centrally sponsored schemes. Although these efforts have helped to ensuring near-universal access of schooling, it has also led to the development of numerous small schools in terms of enrolment and physical & human resources.

These small schools have rendered it economically unviable and operationally complex to provide quality education, in terms of deployment of teachers as well as the provision of critical physical resources. Teachers often teach multiple grades at a time, and teach multiple subjects, including subjects in which they may have no prior background. Key areas such as music, arts and sports are often simply not taught and physical resources, such as lab and sports equipment and library books are simply not available across schools.

The isolation of small schools also has a negative effect on education and the teaching-learning process. Teachers function best in communities and teams and so do students. Small schools also present a systemic challenge for governance and management.

**Data to be Added from UDISE, for
visualization**

Reflection:

4. In your opinion what is the solution for making these small schools economically viable and operational.

5. Why governance of school via a cluster is an important event in NEP 2020?

As per some opinions the answer to these problems lies in the consolidation of schools by way of complexes/clusters. However, it must be carried out very judiciously so that there is no impact on access.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly endorses the idea of the school complex/cluster. The aim of these school complex/cluster will be greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance and management of schools in the cluster. The execution of complexes/clusters is perceived as a very timely and important step towards successful implementation of NEP 2020.

Most of the Educationists are sure that the establishment of these school complexes/clusters and the sharing of resources across complexes will have a number of other benefits as a consequence. For example, there will be an improved support for children with disabilities, more topic-centred clubs shall be set-up and multitude of events pertaining to diverse fields of academics, art, crafts and sports shall be organised across the school complexes which will enhance cooperation and positive synergy among students. Subjects like art, music, language and other subjects will better be incorporated in the classroom through the sharing of teachers in these subjects within the complexes. The usage of ICT tools shall also be encouraged to conduct virtual classrooms whenever possible. Also building such larger communities of schools would energize and empower the schooling system in a resource-efficient manner. With the successful implementation of the complexes/clusters we will be able to transform our education sector for the greater good of our children.

If we embrace the concept of school complex wherein a collection of schools from a self-sufficient school complex/ cluster then the implementation of NEP 2020 is likely to be better and easier. It is a very innovative idea, if implemented properly. Interdependencies and very smart use of technologies can make this happen better than without. The practice has

been in vogue in J&K during 2015-16 and 2016-17 as an innovation for the purpose of monitoring and accountability but without the sharing of resources within cluster. The practice had yielded good results as far as accountability is concerned. But the practice was discarded due to the disliking of some Higher Secondary School Principals, who were feeling overburden due to the assignment as no extra human or financial support was provided to them. Some Zonal Education Officers and teachers were also annoyed with this dual control system as no proper guidelines were issued by the higher authorities.

For proper implementation following suggestion may be considered.

1. Every district shall be divided into manageable School Complexes / Clusters.
2. Every School Complex / Cluster shall have one Higher Secondary School and all the High Schools, Middle Schools and Primary Schools which fall under catchment area of the HSS shall be part of the Complex / Cluster.
3. The Complex / Cluster can have schools from adjacent zones also.
4. The Principal of HSS shall be the head of the Complex / Cluster having administrative control of all school falling in the Complex / Cluster.
5. If the number of total schools in a Complex / Cluster is large or the schools are scattered over a greater distance especially in hilly areas, the Complex / Cluster can be divided into 1 to 2 sub clusters looked after by High School headmaster for better monitoring. However, the overall responsibility shall remain with the head of the Complex / Cluster i.e., the principal of HSS.
6. Adequate human and physical resource be placed at the disposal of every Complex / Cluster head.
7. At least one classroom and one teacher for every class be provided to all schools of the Complex / Cluster besides sharing the other human and physical resource within the cluster.
6. For achieving the objective of one classroom and one teacher for every class, different schools functioning within a locality (village /ward) or small radius can function as a single cluster school, running a **particular** class at one location only. Suppose in a village we have 1 High School, 1 Middle Schools and 2 Primary Schools, instead of classes 6th, 7th& 8th function at two locations (HS & MS), a particular class may be made functional only at one location. Similarly, a particular primary class may be managed a one place instead of being managed at 3 locations presently.

Reflection:

7. What is your suggestion regarding the formulation and functioning of the clusters?

8. What is your suggestion regarding the internal functioning of the complexes/clusters in view of NEP 2020?

Tentative time schedule for the transaction of Building Competencies for School Complex Leaders in J&K: A Transformative Model

A) Stand alone, 1-day workshop

Date & Day	Time	Event	Facilitator
	30 Minutes	Registration	By Participants
	15 Minutes	Introduction	DNO / Coordinator
	15 Minutes	Tea	
	1 Hour and 30 Minutes	Efficient resourcing and effective governance	Initiation by the expert and group activity and its presentation by the participants
	1 Hour	Lunch	
	1 hour	What, Why and how of school complexes/clusters sharing of case studies	Expert and Participants
	30 Minutes	Policy perspective of complexes/clusters	Expert
	1 hour	Compare the present role of complex Heads and their perspective role	Expert and Participants
	15 minutes	Valediction	

B) Part of a multiday workshop

Date & Day	Time	Event	Facilitator
	1 Hour	Transaction of modules in parts	Expert
	1 Hour and 30 Minutes	Activities	By Participants