

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT: INDIAN
CONTEXT.
WHERE DO WE STAND?

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*The ultimate power to change is--and has always been-- in the heads,
hands, and hearts of the educators who work in the schools.*

SirotnikandClak (1988)

The Destiny of a nation is being shaped in its classrooms.

Kothari Commission (1964)

Introduction:

Education is the basic indicator of the development of any Nation. It is the key factor for the social, political , economical , cultural , moral , ethical development of the country. Therefore developing nations have put in lots of efforts for improving the quality education system. India as a developing country, has also been working in this direction immediately after independence. Several Commissions, committees and Educational Policies have been commissioned and based on their recommendations several programmes have been induced to cater the large educational needs of people in the country. Over and above, the challenges posed as a result of globalization, privatization and liberalization, the educational institutions tend to be revitalized and to be strengthened to stand at par with the world standards.

Education System in India is one of the largest systems in the world today. Education has always been occupied the highest place in the Indian society. Though the initiations for educational development were made in British colonial era, the significant

developments of education in India took place during the post- Independence period. It has been guided by the national goals and aspirations as embodied in the Indian Constitution. Education has been identified as a powerful instrument of social, economic and political change. With more than 4000 communities, 18 constitutionally recognised languages and hundreds of dialects, more than six major religious and hundreds of sects and more than 800 million people, India presents a very complex, plural culture which very nearly permeates every aspect of living from patterns of belief and values to hundreds of forms of creative articulation, from costumes and foods to enormous subtleties of refinement and participation. Nothing in India can possibly escape the impact of its culture, be it politics, technology, education or development. Even the long colonial subjugation had a distinctively Indian hue while it shared many aspects with similar colonized countries. (MHRD, Govt. of India, 2000).

This phenomenal change in the system of education is demanding certain operational changes for its sustainable development. The contemporary policy perspectives in education have been taking care of such emerging issues and designing standards for quality education in India. A thorough look into the historical development of education in India, at this juncture is essential to understand the necessity of decentralized management system in India.

University Education Commission (1948) suggested reforms in higher education followed by secondary education commission in 1952-52, which had reviewed the education system in the post independent era covering every aspect of education and emphasized on uniform educational structure i.e. 10+2+3 in all the parts of the country. The Kothari commission (1964-66) revamped the overall education system in India. The report emphasized adoption of common school system of education; appropriate language policy; promotion of national consciousness and international understanding; development of proper interest, attitudes and values; and building up of essential skills etc. To pursue the mission and vision of the education commission Government of India came out with NPE (National Policy on Education-1986), which had called for restructuring of Indian education. It also emphasized on uniform educational structure i.e. 10+2+3 in all the parts of the country. Under this pattern, provision of general education

with undifferentiated courses were recommended in view of need of majority of students who leave the system after completion of secondary education. (www.nic.in).

Looking in to the quantitative expansion of educational institutions and the corresponding financial allocation to the various levels of education is another interesting area through which the need of decentralization can be understood. The number of institutions (seen from the table:1) have increased enormously along with the increased enrollment at various levels over a period of time. But if we see the allocation of funds there is decline in the budget allocation to the educational institutions across levels over the years as indicated in table 2..

Table 1 . Growth in Number of Institutions and Enrolment

| Year | Number of Institutions | Boys | Girls | Total |
|----------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1950-51 | 7416 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 1.5 |
| 1955-56 | 10838 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 2.6 |
| 1960-61 | 17329 | 2.7 | 0.7 | 3.4 |
| 1965-66 | 27614 | 4.4 | 1.3 | 5.7 |
| 1970-71 | 37051 | 5.7 | 1.9 | 7.6 |
| 1975-76 | 43054 | 6.5 | 2.4 | 8.9 |
| 1980-81 | 51573 | 7.6 | 3.4 | 11.0 |
| 1985-86 | 65837 | 11.5 | 5.0 | 16.5 |
| 1990-91 | 79796 | 12.8 | 6.3 | 19.1 |
| 1991-92 | 82576 | 13.5 | 6.9 | 20.4 |
| 1992-93 | 84076 | 13.6 | 6.9 | 20.5 |
| 1993-94 | 88411 | 13.2 | 7.5 | 20.7 |
| 1994-95* | 92252 | 16.0 | 8.4 | 24.4 |
| 1995-96* | 98134 | 16.1 | 8.8 | 24.9 |
| 1996-97* | 102183 | 17.2 | 9.8 | 27.0 |
| 1997-98* | 107100 | 17.08 | 10.10 | 27.24 |
| 1998-99* | 112438 | 17.26 | 10.50 | 27.76 |

Source : MHRD p-xxiv , GOI.(2000)

Table 2
Intra Sectoral Allocation of Plan Expenditure for Education in the Five-Year Plans

| Five Year Plan | Elementary | Secondary | Higher | Total plan outlay for education | %age to total plan outlay |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| First | 85 (56) | 20 (13) | 14 (9) | 153 | 7.86 |
| Second | 95 (35) | 51 (19) | 48 (18) | 273 | 5.83 |
| Third | 201 (34) | 103 (.8) | 87 (15) | 589 | 6.87 |
| Fourth | 239 (30) | 140 (18) | 195 (25) | 786 | 5.17 |
| Fifth | 317 (35) | 156 (17) | 205 (22) | 912 | 3.27 |
| Sixth | 883 (30) | 736 (25) | 530 (18) | 2943 | 2.70 |
| Seventh | 2849 (34) | 1829 (22) | 1201 (14) | 8500 | 3.50 |
| Eighth | 4006.6 (47) | 1538 (18) | 1055.8 (12.8) | 8521.9 | 2.00 |
| Ninth | 16364.8 (65.7) | 2603.5 (10.5) | 2373.5 (9.5) | 24908.5 | 2.90 |

Source : Five Year Plans, Analysis of Annual Plan, MHRD.(2000)

(Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage to the total outlay for education)

From the table 2, the plan allocation for education has increased substantially from plan to plan, but the share of education shows a declining trend from 7.91% in the first five-year plan to 2.7% in the sixth five-year plan. However, there has been a insignificant increase in subsequent period and the percentage share of education in total plan outlay turn out to be 3.9% in the ninth plan. The increase in the number of institutions and the corresponding increase in the financial allocation at various levels of education show the importance of community involvement in managing the system at certain levels.

There is a considerable increase in the plan expenditure on elementary education with little or no much increase in the total plan outlay for the entire education sector. It seems that the increase in plan outlay for elementary education took place at the cost of expenditure on secondary and higher secondary education. As cited earlier though it is clear that Universalization of Elementary Education is prime concern of our country at this moment, yet improvement of other sectors is also equally important because all the sectors of education are linked to each other.

The ever increasing number of institutions and in sufficient financial provisions on the part of the government have accelerated the process of adopting decentralized

management in education. Various committees and commissions have categorically highlighted the need and importance of decentralization of Educational Management in India.

Policy framework for Decentralized Management of Education: Indian Context

In the area of Education, initiatives on Decentralized Management goes back to the Hunter Commission Report (1882), where the Local Self Government Act of 1883 transferred education to the municipalities in the urban areas and to the district boards in rural areas. The State Education Department was expected to look after the administration and the technical management, while the education board set up education committees to supervise the educational facilities in the schools.

The freedom movement provides several instances of mass awakening and social mobilization. Mahatma Gandhi used this 'strength' of mass awareness and mobilization for the freedom movement of the country. In a comparative sense it could be said that the freedom movement provided a genuine and true form of community participation than any preceding or subsequent movements/mass programs in the post-independent India. (Ambast 1999)

The B.K.Kher Committee (1953) focused the importance of decentralization of management and community involvement at the grass root levels. It highlighted the involvement of all types of local bodies to promote and manage education in the interest of mass education. Subsequently the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) recommended that primary education should become the responsibility of the Panchayats. While the question of standards remained with the Department of Education, financial and administrative aspects of management were transferred to Panchayati Raj bodies. Some significant gains were noted as a result of such a move. Decentralization in matters of administration and supervision of education received support from this report. However, decentralization of curriculum development was not delegated to these bodies

on grounds of insufficient expertise. Therefore, local relevance of the curriculum remained a dream.

The Dongerkar Committee (1971) viewed education as an instrument of social change and stated that education cannot function in isolation with the social forces. The village schools have an important role to play in creating a proper environment in rural areas in their individual capacities. Therefore, the local people must be associated with the working of these institutions so that they could exercise a wholesome beneficial influence. This Committee recommended transfer of more functions to Panchayati Raj bodies including transfer of teachers, academic administration and supervision of the school. Recommendations of Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) also advocated transfer of substantial power and responsibilities in education to the Zilla Parishad. These powers and responsibilities included transfer of teachers, monthly transfer of salary funds from State and composition of a Board of Education for maintenance of quality and standard of education.

Community participation has been acknowledged as one of the effective strategies of achieving goals of education in any given community or society. Such recognition has been noticed in the work of various Commissions/Committees on education for over a century now. But community participation has been interpreted as community's contribution rather than community's involvement in planning and management. This phrase is still to be interpreted as the community coming forward in an organized manner to 'own' the development effort.

In the Constitutional context, Article 40 of the Constitution enjoins States to "Take steps to organize Village Panchayats and endow with such powers and authorities as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government." This provision, read with other articles forming part of the Directive Principles and Article 243, enunciates a Constitutional vision of Gram Swaraj with power to the people. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution have also envisioned the concept of people's self-rule. The Eleventh Schedule has stated mandatory areas for such self-

government. The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution has facilitated a revitalized role for Panchayati Raj Institutions ; they are expected to undertake responsibilities of local self-governance through a Gram Sabha, establishments of panchayats at village, intermediate and district levels through elections and through reservations of SC/ST in proportion to their population and women to the extent of one-third of the seats in the Panchayati Raj bodies. This amendment supports transfer to planning and management of education of Panchayati Raj bodies. It over-rules earlier hesitations with regard to estimated lack of local capacities, maintain standard in education, recruitment of teachers and formulation of curricula responsive to nationally cherished values and locally relevant curriculum. Inclusion of health, education and family services among the list of twenty-nine assigned functions to the Panchayati Raj bodies has made it possible to achieve convergence of such services at the village level. It may be worthwhile to recall that low universalisation of educational opportunities have been stated to be the result of lack of convergence of such service. (CABE Committee Report, MHRD, Govt. of India, 1993)

It may be noted that there has been a perceptible change from the pre-independent experience of spontaneous participation to ‘organization’ and ‘participation’ of the people in decentralized planning and implementation. It assumes a structural entity operating on stable basis. In the past such structural entity as Parent Teachers’ Association, School Development Committee and even the Village Planning Committee have lacked the statutory recognition and mandatory charter of powers and responsibilities.(Ambast 1999). ‘Community participation’ is considered as one of the facilitating conditions contributing to the quality of education. Lockheed and Levin (1991) clubbed community participation with school based professionalism, principal’s initiative, teacher collegiality, organizational flexibility, pedagogical flexibility and accountability as facilitating conditions. They have recognized, for example, that the “criteria” for monitoring and evaluation of school performance needs to be expanded to include accountability to its local clientele, if the cycle of dis-empowerment of marginal communities is to be broken. School education has also been viewed as “socialization” within the framework of the dominant value system of the nation

Thus, the historical development suggests that several efforts and measures have been put in terms of increase in the schooling facilities, number of institutions, recruitment of teachers etc., let us find out to what extent these measures have brought impact on the overall functioning of the education system and practicability of these recommendations.

Indian education system is getting reshaped and revitalized by incorporating various innovations in the instructional processes and also structural changes in administration and management on the grounds of decentralization. However, the effective functioning of decentralized management system of education requires core competencies on the part of micro level policy makers as well as the functionaries.

What Research Say?

Several research studies have been conducted in this regard and found that the effective decentralization of management largely depends on efficient leadership. In the context of the school, effective Principals provide leadership in the implementation of change in the school program. They successfully resolve disciplinary problems and give advice and direction to teachers in solving such problems in school (Sharma 1982). There are several research studies conducted in India related to the professional development of the school principal's, leadership style, institutional climate and its effect on the institution's performance. Dhulia (1989) showed the positive correlation of school climate with teachers job satisfaction. Vasantha (1989) studied the modern management techniques in school administration and found that there was no awareness and encouragement for the application of the modern management technique in school administration.

Chakraborti (1990) studied the importance of open climate in schools, ways of creating congenial climate and effects of leader's personality and his behavior in forming favorable climate. Subudhi (1990) showed the importance of management training to principals to enhance their capacity and changing their attitude to bring about desirable

changes in their respective institutions. Sharma (1991) studied the administrative behavior of principals as perceived by teachers in relation to job satisfaction of teachers and student achievement in junior college, found a positive relationship between administrative behavior and teachers job satisfaction and educational attainment of teachers.

A Study conducted by Govinda and Verghese (1991) found that “The operational setting in which the schools function provides the internal environment in the schools and is reflected through; (i) the infrastructure facilities available; (ii) the human resources especially the teachers and the administrators; (iii) the teaching-learning process to take into account the way curriculum is transacted; (iv) the learner achievement reflecting outcome will be influenced by the other three sets of factors and hence, learner achievement can be considered as an indicator of quality of education”.

Jayajothi (1992) studied the organizational climate and leadership behavior of principals in relation to teacher morale in central schools , found that open climate related best to the perception of leadership behavior of principals by the teachers. Kak(1992) studied the cybernetic approach to the school administration found the congenial conditions for necessary and sufficient to make the system in-built and self evolving were autonomy , immediate reward , opportunity to exert, immediate awareness, interaction , manageability. Autonomy was found to be the function of security , stability and freedom to perform , sense of responsibility was found necessary for self actualization. Opportunity to exert was found essential for liberating perceptive effort which was found to be crucial for creative performance.

Upasani et al.(1991) studied some model of efficient and inefficient administration and management at secondary school level in Pune district. The study revealed a significant difference between efficient and inefficient schools with respect to

- Planning and implementing co-curricular and curricular activities
- Efficiency and enrichment of teaching staff
- Scholastic and other achievement of students

- Administration
- Relationship with community

The studies conducted in India at various levels of education have revealed the importance of administration and management techniques and lack of professional training among school principals (Vasanth 1989, Sharma 1989, Subudhi 1990, Upasani et al. 1991, Kak 1992). While a positive relation has been shown between the leadership style and organizational climate which in turn affects the performance of teachers and students has been shown by Chakraborti (1990) and Jayajothi (1992).

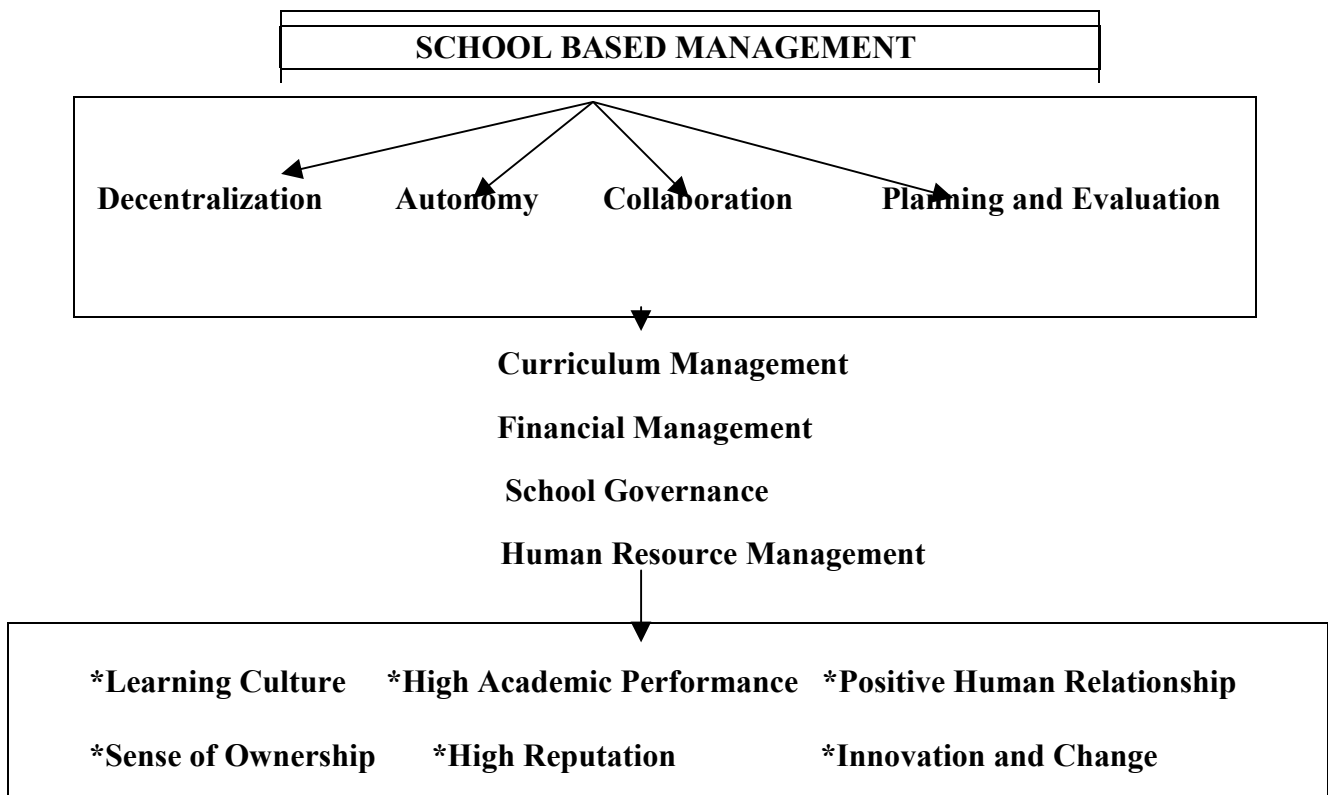
Professional leadership at institutional level is the greatest concern in the present Indian Education System. There is no specific formal professional preparation for educational managers in India. By the virtue of seniority in the Institution, people are offered the management positions and the institution runs on the trial and error methods. In the recent past there are few institutions at national level offering short term in-service professional leadership programmes, however, the nature and scope of such programmes needs thorough evaluation. School Based Management is a potential process of quality school management and it can be successful only if the internal human resources are strengthened.

School-Based Management (SBM) Model:

It is an approach to improve education by relocating significant decision-making authority from state and district offices to individual schools. SBM model fosters principals, teachers, students, and parents to have greater control over the education process by giving them responsibility for decisions about the budget, personnel, and the curriculum. Through the involvement of teachers, parents, and other community members in these key decisions, SBM can facilitate in generating more effective learning environment for students. The core components of SBM are decentralization of administration, participation by staff, parents and the community in the administration of the school, making schools more competitive, and using action research to make schools more effective. Delegation of power and authority leads to commitment, trust, and a sense of ownership. Shared decision making, school empowerment, shared governance,

decentralized authority, school-site autonomy, school-based decision making, school-site management, responsible autonomy, the autonomous school concept, administrative decentralization, are the key characteristic features of the school-based governance.

The very purpose of school based management is to strengthen the school as a system by accelerating its structures, process and personnel for creating learning organization, where learning is considered as a value, establishing high academic standards, maintaining positive human relations, developing a sense of ownership, fostering high reputation in the society and accepting innovation and change. Such a vibrant institution can contribute effectively for the development of mankind and also society at large. The following figure explains the concept of school based management.



The dominant expectations, at the school level, for SBM appear to be:

- Involvement of staff in decisions about programs and organization;

- Involvement of parents and others in the community in the school;
- Efficient and effective allocation of resources, based on a school budget;
- Strong instructional leadership and a focus on educational concerns;
- An environment supportive of professional growth and collaboration;
- Long term academic improvement;
- Positive attitudes toward, and support for the school demonstrated by staff, students, parents, and the community; positive behavior, modeled by the staff; and
- The school should be successful and effective in meeting its goals.

(Caldwell, B. 1990) (Herman, J., & Herman, J. 1993) (Murphy, J., & Beck, L.1995) (Neal. R. 1991) Reeves (1992).

SBM facilitates the school as a community to work independently with need based perspectives plans. The state and center's role would be to assist the decisions made at the school level, and provide technical assistance when a school has difficulty in translating the nation's vision into high-quality programs. State will have the responsibility to take initiatives in developing student and staff performance standards and evaluating the schools. The allocation of the funds would be decided by the state as per the nature and type of school. The school will be given an autonomy to spend the money as per their requirements. The state would spell out curricular goals, objectives, and expected outcomes while leaving it up to the schools to determine the methods for fabricate the desired results. There would be school management councils at each school that include the principal, representatives of parents and teachers, and, in some cases, other citizens, support staff, and students. The council would conduct a needs assessment and develop a plan of action that includes statements of goals and measurable objectives, consistent with school board policies.

This means the principal has to perform a host of challenging tasks. This would also mean the necessity for acquiring additional skill and training in such areas such as

decision-making, problem solving, group dynamics, institutional planning and effective communication.

Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of SBM Model Indian Context:

SBM plans are most successful in improving performance of those that not only *empowered* people at the school site to make decisions, but also *trained* people at the school site for their new roles, provided *information* to guide decision-making, and *rewarded* people for performance. Thus, the research literature in SBM highlights that most successful principals were effective in moving four resources – Delegation of power, Professional development through training, Information Management and Motivational devises.-- to teachers and community members.

1. Delegation of Power

Successful school leaders believe to diffuse power throughout the school organization to solidify and increase commitment to the organization. The schools had vertical and horizontal work groups that involved nearly all teachers in the school and often times community members and parents. Work groups typically were created by principals and tended to be structured formally, with assigned members and regular meeting times. Sometimes the groups had binding authority; other times their powers were to advise the principal or the school-site council. The recent programmes especially to achieve the Universalisation of Elementary Education, the Govt. of India had focused on the establishment of decentralized structures and diffused powers. These structures are even reached to the micro levels- Block Resource Centre (BRC). Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), Village Education Committee (VEC). Principal of the school has a vital role to make these bodies function effectively and efficiently.

2. Professional Development Through Training

Principals in actively restructuring schools promoted school-wide staff development to improve the capacity of the whole school. If the school could not afford to train all

staff, then a small group were trained with the expectation the teachers would share their new knowledge and skills with the whole faculty. Effective principals also encouraged on-site, continuous staff development and not the one-shot, "go and get" variety, which is more fragmented in nature.

A continuous and comprehensive system of professional development through training has been created to train the teachers in pedagogical as well as managerial dimensions of the school . These programmes are named as “ Capacity Building Programme”.

3. Management of Information

The principal's role in information sharing was to distribute information liberally and frequently. Strategies focused on information sharing within the school, as well as keeping stakeholders outside the school informed. Another focus included bringing information -- ideas and research -- into the school from outside sources. Effective principals in schools used a variety of strategies to share information among participants, particularly at the school site.

Principals worked with staff to develop a clear vision for the school and then worked to ensure the vision was communicated school-wide to all constituents. Principals also disseminates information about the school activities and student performance through newsletters to the whole school community. Schools also share their learning experiences across schools within the same district. Special provision was given to the teachers to conduct action research and promote innovative pedagogical practices.

4. Motivational Devices

As staff members took on more responsibility and spent more time in managing the school there is a system for sustaining the motivation of teachers and community

members through reward system. Principals frequently writes thank you notes and publicly recognized staff at faculty meetings. Some principals rewarded the whole school community rather than individuals, believing such an approach -- that avoided distinguishing between winners and losers -- contributed to a sense of community. However, where principals rewarded efforts, a support system was established for teachers. Building on the intrinsic motivation of teachers was a useful mechanism for principals to encourage people to use their capabilities to achieve school goals. Principals achieved this by creating a school atmosphere that supported teacher involvement in decision-making and curriculum and instructional innovations.

The above strategies are the outcomes of the successful DPEP schools, where the actual policy of decentralization is being translated in to different programmes. Even then, a large number of schools have seen the structural changes with limited operational changes. The reasons for such unsuccessful experiences are plenty, but the prominent factors are;

- Lack Of Knowledge Of School Operations: Members of newly formed councils--teachers, non-teaching staff, and perhaps parents and students--generally possess little knowledge of school budgets, facilities, personnel, policy issues and other matters about which they are expected to give input and/or make decisions.
- Lack of Professional Leadership of the School Principals: As the Principal is the key person in mobilizing the resources and efforts of all stake holders, his/her professional competencies are very much important. However, very few of them have leadership qualities and undergone management training programmes.
- Lack Of Group Process Skills. Members are likewise often deficient in the skills of group decision making, conflict resolution, problem solving, and others required for effective functioning. Lack of clarity of their roles is one of the fundamental issues.
- Along with insufficient time, training, and/or latitude, another obstacle frequently encountered in schools is the lack of adequate financial resources. This

may take the form of insufficient release time for planning and/or insufficient resources to implement plans once they are made.

- Lack of community participation and awareness is found to be the most acute difficulty faced by the functionaries of the DPEP. Politicization is also considered as one of the difficulties faced at the village level.
- Repetition of the training programmes by various bodies State, District and Block level for teachers, lack of facilities in the training programmes and the frequently changing text books and methods of teaching are found to be difficulties by the teachers in the DPEP Schools.
- It was found that there has been a need to have a well organized monitoring and evaluating system by specifying roles at District, Block and Village levels for the sustainability of the programme in an integrated manner. **(Pushpanadham.K (2000))**

Conclusion:

Professional Leadership is the necessary factor for successful implementation of decentralized management of education at all levels. Professional leadership is required by all the stake holders who are directly or indirectly involved in school based decision making and other activities. At this juncture, what is required is that a systematic and need based professional preparation of Principals, teachers, parents and members of the community. Decentralized structures at micro level of school management allowed the people to take part in various school programmes. Some times they are silent and partially present in programmes or take undue interference in all the unnecessary and unwanted programmes of the school. There by schools become battle grounds for local politics and loose the track of quality education. Therefore, at every level of decentralized structure, there is a dire need to build the capacity of stake holders to make the school based management successful. The role of government at this juncture is to prepare the context and conditions in which the desired goals can be achieved. A sudden change in the administrative structures do not guarantee the accomplishment of the objectives. Therefore along with the

changes in administrative system, changes are needed in professional orientation of principals, teachers and community at large.

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