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RESEARCH PAPER

Overarching Goals on Quality Education: Study of Perspective Shift by Management Development Facilitators in the State of Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

There is no unanimity on the understanding of perspectives among the educational functionaries with respect to quality of school education in India. Diversity of context and stakeholders coupled with 'multiple policy intentions and programs' make it more difficult to arrive at comprehensive understanding on quality education in India. Present study was designed to elicit the factors which determine a 'relative perspective shift' with respect to inputs for quality and leadership by middle level educational functionaries in the state of Karnataka. These functionaries were selected to be part of management development programme of 36 days duration spread over six months and split into 4 stages. Training-Application and Coaching (TAC) methodology was adopted to embed better perspectives on inputs for quality and leadership in education. Mixed method analysis was used to assimilate, compartmentalize, and complement the factors elicited during data collection process. Increasing trend lines with respect to leadership and management helped to define holistic overarching goals of management development programme in Karnataka.

Key words: Education, leadership, Effectiveness, Management development, Perspective shift

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DEVELOPING OVERARCHING GOALS ON QUALITY

Policy Planning Unit (PPU) is established in 2003 as a strategic think tank for department of education in Karnataka. It evolved as a 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) model between Government of Karnataka and Azim Premji Foundation with committed efforts to build administrative and technical capabilities of the educational functionaries. Since last seven years, PPU has evolved and designed policies relating to training and capacity building of the educational functionaries thorough its unique management development programmes, community connect initiatives etc., by focusing on quality in elementary education.

During the initial years a study was commissioned by PPU with the help of 'PricewaterhouseCoopers' to examine the management aspects of Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in the state of Karnataka. This study recommended policy changes as well as interventions that would support the initiatives of the education department towards achieving the goal of reaching 'quality education for all'. Along with several other interventions, the need to improve leadership and managerial functions in the system was identified as critical to impact the inputs for quality improvement.

Management Development Program (MDP) was conceived jointly by PPU and Azim Premji Foundation during 2006 in collaboration with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to address the need for improving management and leadership to middle level educational functionaries. Center for Leadership and Management in Public Services (C-LAMPS) and Canara Bank School of Management Studies (CBSMS) created the contents and transacted the course. MDP is operational in Karnataka since February 2007 with a purpose of enhancing the capabilities– namely attitudes, perspectives, knowledge and skills related to managerial functions of the leaders and managers at the grassroots level (Divakar, 2010). Management development programme was designed on the foundations of Constitution of India, National Policy of Education, Right to Education Act and National Curriculum Framework 2005. In order to achieve the aspirations of these policies through MDP there was need realized to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the education department personnel on management and leadership skills in a planned and systematic manner. Hence, it demanded a collaborative understanding among educational functionaries regarding education management and leadership perspectives. MDP as a holistic mission comprised of Training-Application and Coaching (TAC) methodology to realize the aspirations embedded in its visioning.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. Persons holding positions as Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs), Block Resource Persons (BRPs) and lecturers of District Institute of Education Training (DIET) drawn from different geographical locations of Karnataka were selected through an elaborate and structured selection process for MDP. Several rounds of capacity building and training programmes conducted for 120 specially selected participants in four different groups.
2. The core of the MDP composed of 36 days of training cycle, split into 4 phases (10+10+10+6) structured as-
Phase 1: Introduction to the programme, MDP- why, what and how, Education perspectives, aims of education, NCF 2005, simple UNICEF model of Quality Education Model, discussion on quality, self-analysis, service orientation and leadership, quality tools.
Phase 2: Stakeholders' participation, quality tools, Circle of Influence (COI), Circle of Change (COC), team and leadership, work plan review, giving and receiving feedback, project scoping.
Phase 3: Project experiences, module development, test delivery, facilitation, project review.
Phase 4: Report and Review of pilot delivery, certification process including personality test. Group discussion and interview, plan of action and way forward (Divakar, 2011).
3. Each group underwent a rigorous process comprising of 11 cycles with specific breaks. There was specific set of development modules created and transacted for this purpose according to need of each Phase.

Continues 'open ended' responses were elicited through four structured questions from the participants on overarching goals of MDP related to management, leadership development and personal effectiveness to improve quality. These responses were intended to trace the cyclical development of 'perspectives on quality', 'influence of leadership and management on quality', involving 'self' and 'others' to enhance the effectiveness of the system. This purposive iterative process helped in construction of overarching goals for MDP, derive an exhaustive set of 'factors' and 'components' on quality, leadership, management, effectiveness and also helped in addressing the need of refining the training modules.

Present paper is an attempt to bring out the 'incremental shift' in perspectives of educational functionaries with respect to inputs for better quality of school education, viz., embedding leadership, management development and overall increase in effectiveness. This was achieved by a series of 'structured content analysis' of the responses followed by 'limited quantification of qualitative responses' in order to demonstrate trends and show patterns in perspective shifts on inputs for quality, leadership, management and effectiveness. The specific objectives were to-

1. Understand the ways of improving the Quality of education in Government Schools of Karnataka from the Management Development Facilitators (MDFs)' perception during MDP.
2. Establish a linear relationship between leadership and management to enhance quality of education in Karnataka.
3. Analyze the improvement in overarching perceptions of MDFs related to their influence in increasing the effectiveness of education system.
4. Study the strands of 'self' and 'others' in influencing quality.

METHODOLOGY

Four questions incorporating the above stated 4 key objectives were repeatedly asked over 11 cycles in four stages to same set of participants distributed across four groups. Varied patterns of responses in 'open ended' answer format was elicited from the participants; they were encouraged to write their own thoughts in as many words as they like. This process demanded clear understanding of the context and processes of quality improvement along with the key processes of leadership development and management perspectives.

SAMPLING DESIGN

There were 120 respondents comprising of 91 male & 29 female members. A total of 946 varieties of responses were received from 4 groups of MDP: on an average 86 varieties of responses were spread across 11 cycles were analysed to understand the perspective shift of each member on overarching goals. The analysis helped to understand the integration of diversity in perspectives of the MDPs on overarching goals related to quality, leadership development, and effectiveness with managerial perspective

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of responses

S.No.	Gender	Number of respondents	Total number of Responses elicited
1	Male	91	702
2	Female	29	244
Total		120	946

Table 2: Groupwise and Gender wise responses

Group	Number of Responses Elicited	Break up %	Male		Female	
			Number of responses	Break up %	Number of responses	Break up %
A	218	23	175	24.9	43	17.6
B	221	23.4	150	21.4	71	29.1
C	255	27	166	23.6	89	36.5
D	252	26.6	211	30.1	41	16.8
Total	946	100	702	100	244	100

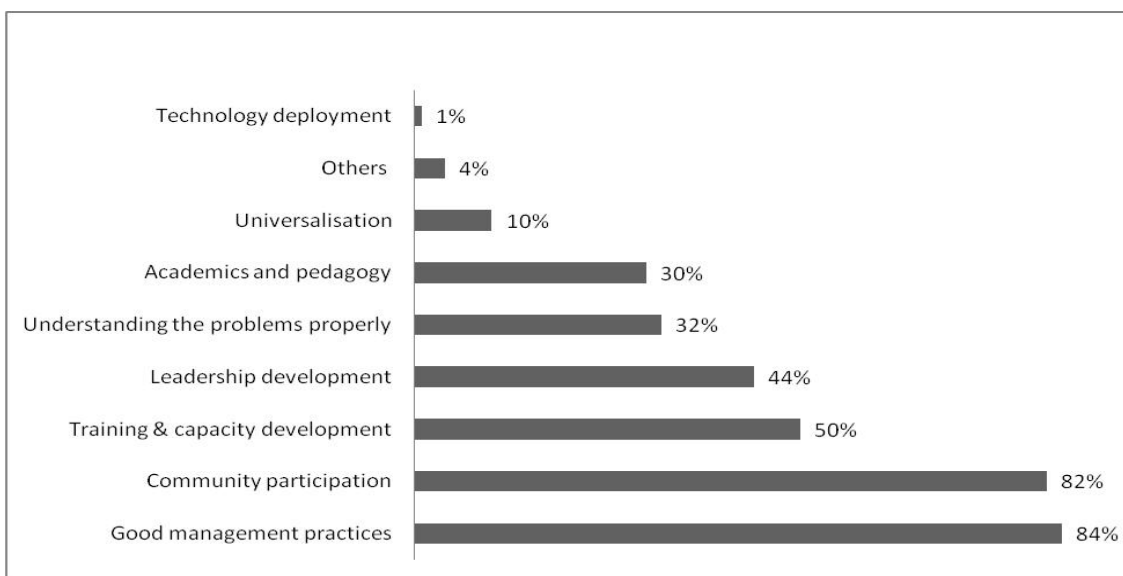
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

All the four questions triggered high ended responses from the MDFs; the concepts and information emerging out of these four questions were assumed to be fundamental to the progress of the participants in fixing their goals for improvement in function and in turn impacting the quality of education. Understanding of these questions became critical for impacting the long term vision for improving the quality of education in government schools of Karnataka by MDFs.

1. FACTORS FOR IMPROVING QUALITY:

MDFs in their responses have come out with diverse set of response on the ways of improving the quality of education. These factors and components are mainly inputs to create better quality outcomes from the present system. During each training cycles MDFs came up with integrated perspectives and responses were a brief description of the context and showed empathy for the stakeholders. The integrated approach proposed by MDFs on inputs for better quality included, inter alia, academic, pedagogic practices, management skills , community partnerships, training and capacity development of teachers, embedding leadership skills, ensuring good quality of infrastructure, technology deployment etc. These ways to improve quality substantiate the views of National Curriculum Framework 2005.

Fig. 1: Factors for improving quality as observed by MDFs



1.1. Good Management Practices:

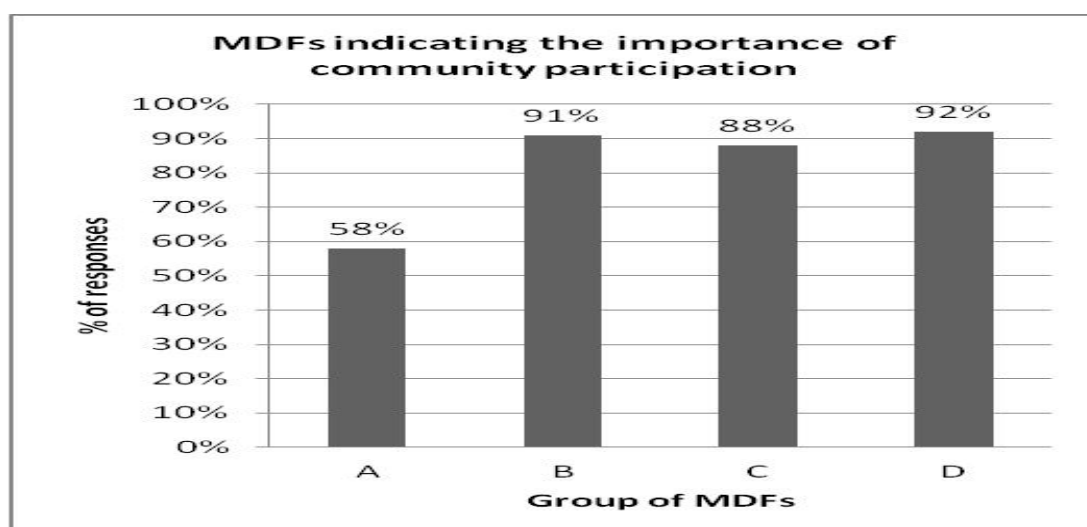
84% of the MDFs perceive that, good management practices forms the key to improve the quality in government systems. Efficiency and effectiveness of administration, technical performance of the functionaries are derived from good management practices. They feel that, using improved process for project planning, implementation and monitoring brings best results in terms of quality. Team work, participatory quality improvement projects, right feedback mechanisms, rewards, time management practices ,increase in circle of influence, practicing innovations, transparency with clear vision building processes forms the key drivers of good management practices in their perception for improving quality.

1.2. Community Participation:

There is varied quantity of responses with respect to community participation by different groups. On an average 82% of the MDFs realize the importance of community

participation in schooling processes over 11 training cycles (Fig.2). In 'Group D' 99% of the MDFs recognize the importance of community participation in education. 41% increase can be seen from Group A to Group D. MDFs in the initial stages feel that, community and parents should be involved indirectly, i.e. For resource mobilization, construction activities, infrastructure development, help the school for resource mobilization. Hence more emphasis and focus of the MDFs of involving community was on non-academic activities in initial cycles. But slowly MDFs in the later cycles (particularly after Cycle 5) graduate to value of involving the parents in academic and extracurricular activities. This trend demands for broadening level of mere 'supply oriented community participation activity' to 'demand driven community partnerships' in educational processes.

Fig. 2: MDFs indicating the importance of community participation



1.3. Training and Capacity Development:

MDFs emphasise the importance of continuous training and capacity development of educational functionaries along with teachers. The practice for developing teachers if applied to them also will form a critical element in achieving the desired quality. Training and capacity development helps in incubation of essential skills, attitudes and garnering better perspectives over a long duration of time. 50% of the MDFs have identified good training programmes such as MDP will help in building long term perspectives related to quality education. MDP has helped MDFs to develop discourses and arrive at participatory notion of quality and its components through a continuous training and capacity development cycle.

1.4. Understanding the Root Cause of Problem:

On an average 32% MDFs have identified the utility of finding the root cause of problem. The criticality, means of solving the problem using different tools indicates the influence of training contents on the perspective development of MDFs. Analysing problems from different perspectives and logical solutions are stated to be the determinants of inputs for better quality.

1.5. Academics and Pedagogy:

Use of better teaching and learning methodologies coupled with right perspectives derived from NCF helps the teachers to focus on right quality and effectiveness for a long duration of time. 30% of the MDFs perceive better teaching methodologies in the form of

child friendly teaching methods, sessions on creative teachings will help in enhancing the teacher related capability

1.6. Universalization:

10% of the MDFs feel that, Universalization of school education in terms of better access, retention, enrolment, reduction in dropout rates will demand for better quality of education as diversity will naturally demand quality. This entails further need to broaden the relationship between 'universalization' and 'quality'. Further, the agenda of 'Universalization with quality demand' is critically reflected.

1.7. Other Quality Stabilizers:

Factors such as decrease in corruption, bringing more transparency and accountability, implementation of better governance systems, lowering the burden on teachers from non-academic functions, strict adherence to professional ethics etc., were perceived to be important contributors to determine the quality of education by 4% of the MDFs. Similarly 1% of the MDFs indicated the integration of technology in education and large scale ICT deployment at different levels in education system.

3. ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:

"Every education functionary is a leader and a manager in her own role within the system irrespective of the rung of the ladder that she is on within the system."SuparnaDivakar

There are 16 factors (refer Table 3 for details) identified by the MDFs in determining the role of leadership and management in improving the quality of education. The average score of these factors ranged from 18 to 2.18, MDFs expressed involvement of 'self' in the process of quality improvement as one of the key factor. Hence, factors such as self-analysis, leadership development of the self, problem solving abilities, resource mobilization, team work, cooperation and coordination, expanding circle of influence, developing positive thinking are the majority responses related to role of leadership and management in improving quality of education in government schools.

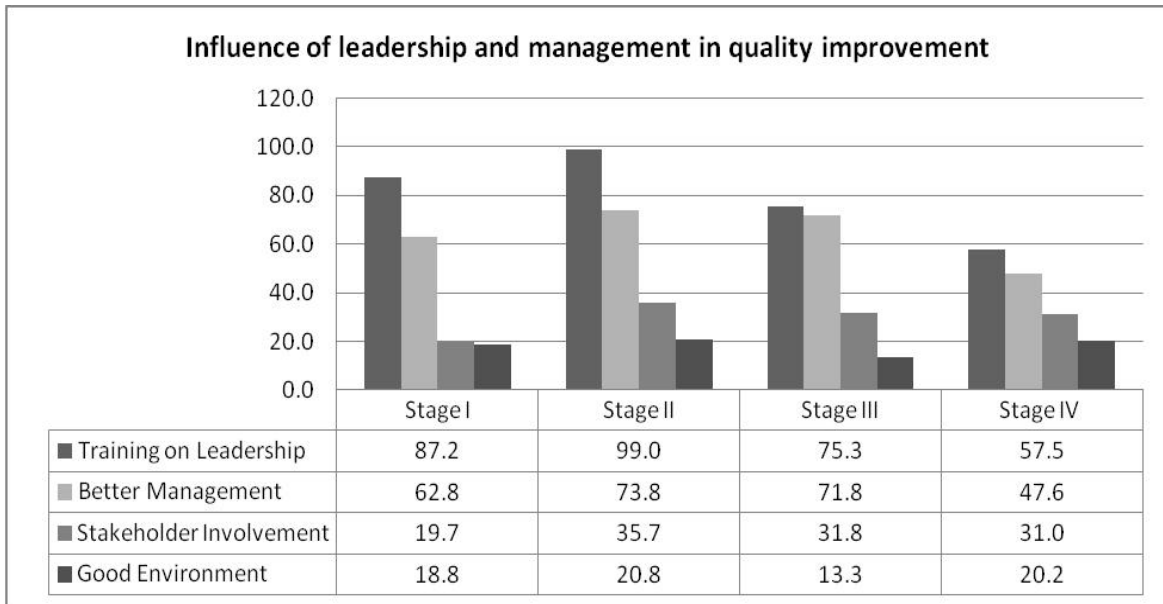
Table 3: Factors identified by MDFs

S.No.	Role of leadership & management in quality Improvement	Average score of 11 cycles
1	Self Analysis	18
2	Better school Environment	17.45
3	Leadership Development	17.45
4	Problem Solving	14.72
5	Resource Mobilization	12.72
6	Team Work	11.45
7	Cooperation & Co-ordination	10.63
8	Expanding circle of Influence	8.3
9	Develop positive thinking	8.09
10	Helps in creating better teachers	4.81
11	Inter Personal Skills	4
12	Knowledge improvement	4
13	Better facilities for schools	4
14	New Initiatives	3.8
15	Good management practices	2.3
16	Good relationship	2.18

Figure 3, demonstrates the stage wise perception development of MDFs on influence of leadership and management in quality improvement. In all the four stages training on leadership and better management is expressed as key influencing factors. These followed

by participants' aspiration to improve stakeholder involvement and school environment factors perceived as supporting factors.

Fig. 3: Influence of leadership and management in quality improvement



3. INFLUENCE OF MDFS ON INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS:

Table 4: Factors of enhancing the effectiveness

S.No.	Factors of enhancing the effectiveness	Total of 11 cycles
1	Leadership training	621
2	Embedding good management skills	448
3	Help in teamwork	422
4	Help involving stakeholders	281
5	Better social relationship	227
6	Good administration / management	155
7	Training and management	112
8	Human resource development	110
9	Taking responsibility	108
10	Time management	108
11	Good environment creation	105

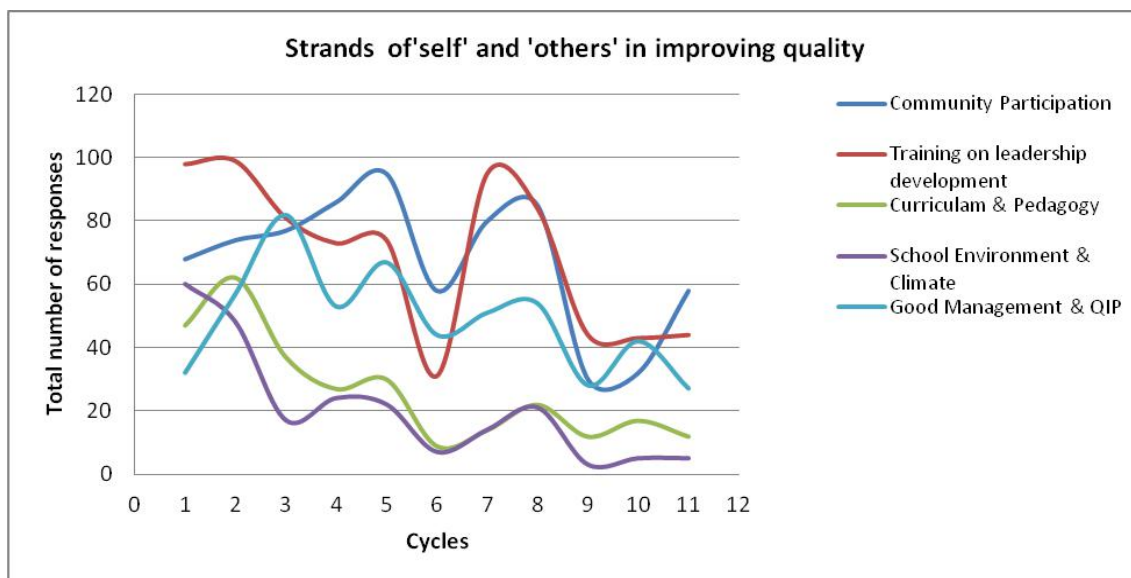
The effectiveness as defined by the MDFs is "improving the leadership in order to influence management, team work, social relationship, and time management, social relationship at both personal and professional level". The compositions of influence of MDFs in increasing the effectiveness along with total responses are presented in table-4. Leadership training, embedding good management skills, team work, involving stakeholders, increasing social relationships are the major factors showing higher inclination compared to administration and human resource development factors.

4. INVOLVING 'SELF 'AND 'OTHERS': PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:

"The individuals holding the roles make all the difference. Without them the institutions would be simply abstract entities. They would be structures without the soul".

MDFs see the 'role' of 'self' and others in a participatory framework. They identify fourteen strands which further can be clubbed into five major strands (Figure 4). They feel that, there is need for integrated approach to improve the school environment, curriculum, leadership of the school. This process has to be visualized in consultation with the stakeholders. Five strands comprising of community participation, training on leadership development, curriculum, school environment and management were observed to be complementary to each other in all the 11 training cycles across four groups.

Fig. 4: Strands of Self and Others in Improving Quality



CONCLUSION

The realization about potential of 'self' is essentially needed to be tapped into quality performance and further nurtured to expand the horizons of overarching goals. Gradual perspective shifts during MDP overarching goal formulation has initiated a grassroots vision about quality of education and helped in exploring further linkages with leadership, management and effectiveness. This process has generated equal curiosity among academicians, policy makers and practitioners. The positive and gradual perspective shift sets direction in which improvement needs to take place through 'vision' and 'culture' as described by right blend of perspectives. A series of perceptions elicited during management development process has helped in terms of informing body of knowledge in a cyclical manner; the data sets indicate the emergence of 'continuum' related to leadership, management and effectiveness factors influencing quality. Prior to undergoing MDP, educational functionaries in spite of having understanding about quality education were not able to apply themselves: but once they got the exposure and opportunity during various cycles through the process of training, they became confident in expressing the informed views on quality, leadership and effectiveness spontaneously. These findings demonstrate the essential ingredients and further demand for undertaking a detailed empirical research for understanding the quality in education, leadership and its effectiveness from managerial lenses. Further studies can validate these qualitative set of indicators demonstrating the perspective shift with the help of large scale quantitative enumeration. Further this process can establish linkages with field level performance and use of skills by MDFs in an effective manner.

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