CONTRIBUTION OF DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP TO SUCCESSION PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

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Abstract - Succession planning and capacity building, in organizations, have been topics of interest in the research world for many years. How any organization copes with turnover of staff and the impact of this phenomenon on the performance of the organisation have intrigued researchers for a long time. The purpose of this study is to explore some of the different variables that influence capacity building in organisations, with context of a school. It questions the importance of a leader's role in this matter. The study aims to figure out the relationship, if any, of distributive leadership and capacity building in schools. In other words it aims to answer the question, how distributive leadership contributes to succession planning and capacity building in schools? It also attempts to explore how this phenomenon affects the performance, culture and morale of the school and its staff. The study explores various dimensions of this topic, especially the need to develop creative leadership teams to cater to capacity building and succession planning.The exploration with an interpretivist inclinationis carried out through discourse analysis, non-participant observations and interviews. Observation and interview of the heads of schools are taken while focused group sessions in the shape of semi- structured interviews are conducted for the teachers. Three schools are included in the research, one elite private school, the second one, an army run school while the third, a public school run by an NGO. This ensures triangulation of information from various contexts and therefore helps identification of conclusions from different lenses. The participating teachers are from the same section of the various schools, i.e. students of ages 11 to 13 years of age (Middle schools). The true essence of distributive leadership is found to be somewhat missing and the need to spread leadership amonst the various tiers in a school is felt throughtout the course of the research.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research aims towards establishing the contribution of distributive leadership to capacity building and succession planning in schools. It explores the work of the leader in the school and how their vision, role and strategies can facilitate a smooth transition of roles as well as to prove to enhance skills of existing staff by enriching their present jobs and providing opportunities for professional growth. As mentioned above, the research moves around distributive leadership in particular and its contribution to the development of creative leadership teams. The term distributive leadership was coined to explain the practice of leadership in education in particular. It is about the thought processes of leadership and how it is turned into actions rather than the roles and responsibilities of leaders. It evolved primarily from educational research but has eventually been applied to other domains as well.

1.1 Background Situation/ Need Analysis

In February, 2016, district heads of a well-known elite, private school system, were rotated. This exchange was planned to bring about improvement in the functioning of schools of each district by removing any chances of complacency, which might have developed by working in the same district for a long time. As Fry (2003), states that leadership is a very useful and most impactful tool which can ensure growth and development of skills of people in an organisation, irrespective of its size or nature. Kotter (1996) reiterates the same by emphasising that employee motivation is impacted by leadership strategies, hence in depth understanding of both must be developed.

1.2 Problem Statement

Hence, the research focus was chosen and research questions were drafted:
'How does distributive leadership contribute to succession planning and capacity building in schools?'
The sub questions to further delve into the focus were also put into place:

- Why do schools and school systems need to develop creative leadership teams?
- How can this help in capacity building and succession planning?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership and Creative Teams

It is no longer a matter of opinion that the efficacy of a leader is reflected in their school, its culture, performance, motivation levels of staff and students and the environment. (Leithwood and Jantzi 2000). Contemporary educational pathways lay a considerable emphasis on the educational leader to maneuver performance of that school. In the USA for example, the district administration moves school heads around according to their performance, giving good leaders a chance to improve failing schools. (Macbeath&Dempster, 2009) This is an important aspect which resonated with the rationale for rotation of district heads in the private school, which proved to be the stimulus for this research. Educational

leadership has therefore seen several new avenues and its journey of evolution continues. (Macbeath&Dempster 2009)

The concept of distributive leadership is not a new one although the name was coined around 1999, explains Bolden (2010). He further explains that the concept has similarities to other notions of leadership like shared, co-leadership, collaborative leadership, emergent, collective to name a few. In different eras of human existence it has taken various forms but was masked by the prevalence of the traditional leadership culture in which a charismatic leader was 'sent from above' (Pearce &Conger; 2003b). It is important to consider here that while there might be people, in fact there is no denying there are people who have risen to a moment and achieved mammoth tasks, which is not possible by everyone but what must be kept in mind is that in such situations too there may be several other factors playing in synchronised harmony to make things happen. Being at the right place at the right time. (Bolden; 2010)Hence, this right moment is the outcome of a lot of other supporting factors which are created and maneuvered more times than coincidental.

Going back to the case of distributive leadership, strangely a search of Google on 5th October, 2017 showed 411 000 results to explain the concept of distributive leadership and more than 9000 books on the subject. It is interesting to note however, that more than 60% of this literature is about school management and leadership practices in schools. As Bennett et al (2003:3) explain that it must not be considered as an act of an individual or a set of individuals to the organisation but a group activity that is led by the interplay of relationships of individuals. Two aspects of this leadership state that the leader in situational practice is the leader and not the designated leader and that it is not about practices of leaders but of signs of leadership in everyday practices and management. This concept reinforces the need for capacity building by school leaders to be able to create the situations in which all staff can rise in a situation to be the leaders. Observation hence can be a way of recording these leadership practices. (Bolden 2010)

2.2 Importance of Developing Creative Teams

What is of value here is the consideration of the reasons leading to this paradigm shift. The recent advent of global interdependence, increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion, complex job requirements and organisational structures as well as rise in cross-functional teams have led to a greater need to make distributive leadership a part and parcel of the organisation. (Bolden, 2011) It does not mean that leaders can be replaced or are not required but simply means that the unwanted focus and reliance on one individual's intellect, skills and decision making abilities is reduced and spread over the entire organization.

Harris et. All 2013 indicate very vividly that school improvement, which essentially means rise in standards of teaching and learning of students, is critically dependent on the school leadership. Harris et al.emphasise that the prerequisite of this is a culture of collaboration and team work which the leader develops and nurtures through consistent support and encouragement.
According to them this leader has to function in the following domains:

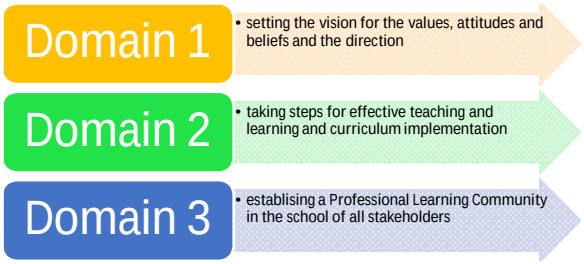


Fig. 1 Domains of an Instructional Leader

It can safely be assumed that an instructional leader has to practice distributive leadership to envisage and execute the kind of school improvement and school culture that is mentioned above. Hopkins (2001) also supports the notion that vision and practice of the leader to work with their team is at the heart of school improvement. Joyce & Showers (1998) reiterate that sustained and visible professional development of staff rests on the premise that not only are there interventions through formal training sessions but also collaboration coupled with peer coaching through structured pathways. Again this calls for the leader to put together teams to bring about the effectiveness in student learning that is at the heart of the existence of a school. This leader needs to therefore come out of many 'traditional' ways and move towards the kind of leadership which requires an active role in planning as well as execution of the vision.

Literature has substantial evidence that in many ways the change in leadership style is partially a result of change in the learner and their needs. This is an interesting concept of 'backward mapping' which is mentioned in MacBeath&Dempster (2008). The learning needs of the 21st century learner guide the pedagogical practices and they in turn create the need to change the leadership culture.

2.3 Positive School Culture and Role of Leadership

Hence, devolution of power, authority and decision making have resulted in increased diversification of tasks and specialisation of skills with one skill developing universally and that is of leadership at all levels. It can therefore rightly be said safely, that

even a teacher in a classroom is a leader in their own right. As an offshoot of distributive leadership they can take decisions for their domain and exercise their power of good judgment as a result of the autonomy given and the culture developed. What Harris (2005) says cannot be denied in terms of the increasing role of teachers in leadership roles and the increasing need for a paradigm shift to distributive leadership. Various researchers have inferred that the appropriateness or viability of a leadership model is largely affected by the external factors and context of the school especially in relation to global educational reforms. (Hallinger; 2010)As argued that this interplay is contextual some patterns may emerge due to the similarities and yet differences of the context. (Harris et.al.2013)

In creative leadership teams what is interesting is that activity may occur with or without the head as team members take ownership of the tasks at hand. (MacBeath and Stoll, 2001 in MacBeath and Dempster, 2009). Researchers clarify that a leader's job is not then to delegate duties to staff members on the team as part of a bigger task to be accomplished in fact on the contrary, the leader merely creates the culture for innovation and creativity. The culture of such creativity requires collegially, understanding the difference between "power to" and "power over"—exercising a leadership conducive to making mistakes, rather than commanding explanations. (Sergiovanni, 1992).Next is the eureka moment in which the connections give rise to a new idea and lastly the idea becomes a reality when it is tried and tested. (Tomlinson; 2000)

Therefore the leader of a creative learning team need not be very creative. The notion of creativity is not for the leader but the team members. In fact their job is to create the fertile ground that can ease innovation and success, the proper ambience for the four stages of creativity and then be able to channelise this in an effective manner for the organisation. (Baumgartner, 2007). An environment of self-esteem of each team member; where they feel challenged yet supported and ready to work together towards a shared goal. (Spillane; 2008)

2.4 Change Management and Capacity Building

It is needless to say that for any organisation to survive and then succeed in the present highly competitive, forever changing business dynamics, successful change management is key. Even though this is an important phenomenon, the plethora of theories and approaches do not seem to be in harmony and often contradict each other, in the absence of substantial evidence in support of any one or a few. (Todnem; 2007).Having said that Harris et. al.(2013) emphasise that capacity building in a school through a process of continuous change is based on bringing together resources, structure, culture and skills of the organisation. Mitchell &Sachney (2000) believe that synergy within personal, interpersonal and organisational structures results in the true essence of capacity building. This way improvement in one will itself trickle down to the others and pull them up too. They reinforce several times that the individual holds a significant, most central place in any team and the leader must focus on individuals for an overall change and capacity building. According to Hadfield in Harris et. al. (2013) , the following elements must be considered by leaders for dealing with individuals, so that capacity building is achieved over a period of time through a gradual process of change.

What does capacity building require of School Leaders?

The devolved model of leadership has to be adopted for effective change management to the core. Jorgensen, Walsh &Niesche(2009) explain that relationships between administrative and teaching staff have been identified as one layer in this devolved model. This led to the focus of the research.

2.5 Identifying the Gap

After extensive reading it became somewhat evident that most research on educational leadership is from the perspective of the school leader. Researchers have taken the points of view of leaders in schools and used that information as the source of determining effective leadership styles for educational leaders. This has more or less the same pattern.

It was also noticed that in most cases leadership studies feeds into improvement of teaching and learning. The focus of researches was the impact of the processes and outcomes of interventions by teachers and interactions with students.

Keeping these areas in mind, a research to establish the nature of contribution of distributive leadership to succession planning through capacity building was found to be necessary. Also, keeping in view that perspective of previous research had been somewhat one sided as Harris (2005) puts it, emphasising that only the leader's' side of leadership practice has been explored mostly, a research which could serve to triangulate information before coming to a conclusion seemed inevitable. Hence, in this research it is thought that along with interview of the head, focused group sessions with the staff and non-participant observation of the head will also be considered as means of collecting data.

Two important areas of study came out of the initial investigation and reading:

- Why do schools and school systems need to develop creative leadership teams?
- How can this help in capacity building and succession planning?

Considering gaps between skills, knowledge and attitudes of leaders and teachers in a school and how this impacts learning and performance, the research will be utilised to work out a way forward to curb this negative effects of this phenomenon.
The outcomes will hopefully help to devise a way forward to reduce transitory concerns of turnover of leaders.

2.6 Leadership for Learning

This research is aimed at providing insight into the roles of leaders in developing skills of staff and resulting in succession planning. It also attempts to explore how this phenomenon affects the performance, culture and morale of the school and its staff.

The mood of the research is of relationships of individuals, teams and their environment. Crotty(2005) believes that the way we are socialised with each other affects the way we think, perceive and behave. Our interpretations of the world rest on these perceptions. Our VABS are a byproduct of these perceptions in our contexts in which we grow and live. To link this to the life in a school it seems appropriate that constructivism is the epistemological notion. (Crotty in MayeleMamwasi, MalekiMondele, 2016) 17

To explain this notion further, this type of perspective focuses on the philosophies which are the underpinning. Researchers become silent observers of the environment and take in meanings of various individuals involved about the same phenomenon, adds their own value to it, identifies patterns and positions of participants with regards to each other and their context, informs the change that might follow. Andrew, P.S., Pedersen, P.M. &McEvoy, C.D. (2011)

With extensive reading three aspects to the research work began to emerge. These define the perspectives and dimensions of the research study. These include the following broad categories:

2.6.1 How is Leadership Envisioned in the School and how it is Perceived?

It may be worth considering that whether there is a difference between the vision and perception. It is also of interest to find out the roles and responsibilities which form the attributes of the leader in a given context. As Moller (2009:11) states that in an experiment about leadership and learning they asked each school they visited the following mandatory questions about leadership:

- How do staff members understand leadership?
- What are the strategies for making it understood and promoting it?
- What in their perspective is the relationship between leadership and learning?

2.6.2 The Second Dimension deals with Involvement of Various Stakeholders in the Organizational Decision Making.

Are teachers and students empowered? Is a bottom up approach preferred to a top down approach? How does this impact performance? Is a change of culture probable in the given circumstances?

As was attempted to establish earlier, that distributive leadership is about leadership of all stakeholders. Therefore, many studies claim a strong connection between leadership and learning. As a step towards developing capacity of staff and students in a school, they must be given opportunities to develop and exercise their leadership skills. Thus strengthening the connection between leadership and learning. (Furman and Starratt 2002, Spillane 2006 in Moller, J. 2009).

This step in schools of including staff in decision making processes is a form of empowerment for them. However, it is interesting how conveniently this term is misinterpreted or misunderstood in real contexts in schools. School leaders tend to have various notions of empowerment to suit their own contexts. Renihan and Renihan (1992) provide an interesting and pertinent explanation of what empowerment is not. They believe that it is crucial that we are clear about the parameters of empowerment and which activities, no matter how much we believe they are, actually are not empowerment.

According to them empowerment envisages a real contribution of staff and students and other stakeholders in strategic decision making and policy formulation. It also refers to developing professional development communities as a platform for sharing of ideas, providing opportunities for discussions so that shared goals, shared vision, shared failures and shared successes are achieved in the learning community. The leader in this case must have the confidence to let staff utilise their leadership skills in real life situations, which matter so that they truly develop and evolve. That is the true essence of empowerment, which is an offshoot of leadership and learning. (Renihan and Renihan 1992: 11 in Day, C. 2005:7) In real life situations how much of these are practices, and how feasible it is to implement all of them in their true essence will be explored as a result of this research. Hence, how ideal are ground realities is yet to be explored.

2.6.3 Another Dimension Considers the Practices already underway to fill gaps caused by Turnover of Staff.

How is a smooth transition ensured? How is the most competent candidate selected? Is the candidate already ready to immediately take place? All these questions require attention to minimize impact of this

transitional phase of turnover. Tolhurst (2010:210) explains how distributed leadership knitted into the thread of the school ethos and culture can result in a "flatter, linear and horizontal leadership structure." Such a structure ensures that everyone is part of the leading and managing role and these skills are no longer restricted to the 'boss' or the 'charismatic leader.' According to him, it is quite visibly evident that new teams are keen to develop their own skills of leadership and management and only believe the 'designated leader' to have the role of a guide. They no longer wish to accept a 'telling boss' and in their first opportunity, wish to move into more significant leadership roles. (Tolhurst, 2010:210).

We need to hence venture into leadership for learning and distributed leadership to delve further into capacity building through creative teams. How much have we actually digressed from the traditional approaches of leadership practices in schools

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives of Research

This research aims at providing insight into the roles of leaders in developing skills of staff and resulting in succession planning. It also attempts to explore how this phenomenon affects the performance, culture and morale of the school and its staff.

3.2 Research Questions

Based on the objective mentioned above the research question was drafted to address the impact of turnover, how the leader needs to function to cater to the impact of staff turnover and how distributed leadership can be used to the benefit of the organisation.

The research set out to essentially answer the following question.

'How does distributive leadership contribute to succession planning in schools?'

The research catered to the following dimensions in depth to further understand the dynamics of distributed leadership and learning in schools.

- Why do schools and school systems need to develop creative leadership teams?
- ´How can this help in capacity building and succession planning?

3.3 Research Paradigm

The nature, procedures and techniques of this research were governed by an inclination and orientation towards constructivism while the methodologies were governed by interpretivist approach to research. Based on Piaget's theory of learning, constructivism clearly and basically talks about the process of learning of people. It states that experiences govern the knowledge and understanding of the world of the people who live them. As the reflections of these experiences vary from person to person due to diverse prior knowledge and perspectives, hence, the learning constructed is multifaceted and individual. The process of creating our own knowledge is very intriguing. It is actually about coming to terms with new information by either reconciling with prior experience or creating new knowledge. This may result in modification of our existing ideas or by keeping the old knowledge and refuting the new. The route to this reconciliation is through exploring, inferring, assessing and concluding. (Andrew, Pedersen, &McEvoy 2011)

As soon as you include human mental activity in the process of knowing reality, you have accepted constructivism" (Elkind 2004)

What is integral to this epistemology is that even for the same phenomenon, constructed knowledge will be different for similar interactions of different individuals. Hence, there is no absolute reality but our interpretations of it. Theoretical perspective closely linked to constructivism is interpretivism.

According to Crotty (1998:67) interpretivism is interpretation of the world embedded culture and history of the context. There is no direct, one-to-one relationship between ourselves and the world. The world is interpreted through the classification schemas of the mind. (Williams and May 1996)

As the interpretivist approach applies to social phenomena, therefore it is crucial to keep the diversity of people and their circumstances in mind. The purpose is to decipher the meaning of the issue and a variety of methods can be applied to achieve this. As it is about personal interpretation there is great room for subjectivity and this is the prime disadvantage of this perspective of research. There is great room for bias on behalf of the researcher and this hampers the reliability of the data. As a result generalisability of results is undermined because researcher's own viewpoints heavily impact the nature of the results.

On the other hand, one major advantage is that due to interpretivism, research on matters pertaining to organizational ethics, organisational cultures, leadership and factors governing or influencing it can be explored with more insightful inferences. As primary data gathered is considered to be more trustworthy it is therefore more valid. The human element is a major aspect of this type of research as researchers interpret the information based on their own facets of understanding.

Because causation in human affairs is a result of interpretations, back in the 1980s, positivist and behaviourist approaches to research failed to understand or develop acceptable results for dynamics of a school environment.

Hence, the interpretivist research on teaching came into play to explore meanings created by interactions and interplay of students, teachers and educational leaders in schools. Interestingly, no matter how small the differences or findings were in their contexts, they proved beneficial to learning, teaching and educational leadership.

The methodologies in this research were governed by a combination of a phenomenological and symbolic interactionism. Phenomenological research study attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation embedded in their special experience of that reality. Hence, phenomenology insists that we lay aside our prevailing understanding of phenomena and revisit our immediate experiences of them in order that new meanings may emerge. Current understandings must not adulterate our ability to understand phenomena. The result may give birth to new meaning, it may alter the existing meaning or enhance or enrich it. Hence phenomenology can be explained as a means to understand the prevalent culture based on the personal understandings of individuals experiencing it. As their experience based interpretations vary so do their responses to any phenomenon. According to phenomenological perspective behavioural uniformities are then identified.

As symbolic interactionism is a means to develop meaning of social interactions of people and how they view symbols embedded in their culture, it also governed exploration of the school head's understanding and actions as a result of this blend and synthesis. This involves a continuous growth and evolvement of one's self and the role the school head plays in developing capacity of its staff is studied by digging deep into her context.

3.4.1Sampling

Participants were selected through heterogeneous purposive sampling. They consisted of the heads of the schools as well as the teachers under the supervision of the same head of school. Three schools from three different strata of the society were selected to gather well rounded data. The staff were from an elite private school, an army run school and an NGO. The staff consisted of male as well as female members, so there was no gender differentiation. The staff all belonged to schools of children between the ages 7- 13 years. There were an average of 8 teachers in each session in each school. One head of each school was interviewed and observed.

Gathering information from culturally, socially, academically and economically different educational institutions helped give a holistic image of the role of a school head in a school as well as perception of the school staff. This helped get perspectives of schools with varying backgrounds and contexts.

3.5 Nature of the Research

Considering that the research had to study the perceptions, values, mindsets, feelings and thought processes of those involved, it was decided that a qualitative research would be conducted as opposed to a quantitative one.

3.6 Qualitative/Quantitative

As this research studied social interactions and contextual cultures and their interplay a qualitative research was opted for. All methods and tools of data collection helped collect in depth information about the leader's role in succession planning and capacity building and its impact on their staff members. It also explored the perspective of the staff and how they envisaged the impact of the head in developing a culture of growth and development for them in their context. The interpretations of the subjects of this research were studied to identify the behavioural patterns and uniformities within the dynamics of their institutions. The approach of the study via cultures of three different schools helped triangulate the information and develop an insight through various angles and lenses.

3.7 Research Methodology and Design

The basic design of the research methodology consisted of three basic methods which were used in all three sample schools. These included focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations.

Focused group discussions were conducted with groups of 8-10 teachers on average, in each of the 3 schools. These were semi-structured sessions where although some questions were pre planned, to be used as probes, most of the discussions was led by the participants and their input. The participants of the sessions spoke in a very candid manner and shared their honest opinions about their work environment. The discussions lasted for about 30 to 45 minutes. They were then transcribed and information collated for patterns.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in addition to the focused group sessions with the heads of the respective staff members. These interviews which lasted for about 45 minutes were recorded and then transcribed for interpretation. The heads were very cooperative and spoke openly about their understanding and perspectives of educational leadership. They shared the strategies they conduct to build skills, knowledge and attitudes of their staff. They also shared how they attempt to build capacity of their staff and identify the capabilities of those working under them.

Finally non- participant observations of the school head to analyse their role in capacity building of their staff on a day to day basis were conducted. These helped triangulate the information collected through interviews and focused group discussions. They helped dig deeper into the thought processes of the staff. The nature of the phenomenon involved in the whole process was studied at length and with deep insight.

3.8 Research Instruments

The research was conducted by using semi-structured interviews, i.e some questions were planned while others developed along the way in the discussions based on responses of the school heads. The questions mainly focussed on whether the head believed in the concept of capacity building and what were the strategies or actions taken to achieve this. Also how is the impact of these measured in their context.

Similarly, focus group discussions were also loosely structured with only a few probes planned for the participants who were school teachers. The teachers were asked what the head's vision was for capacity building and how they feel their skills have improved over a period of time. Also if they feel motivated to grow professionally. These were some of the directions taken during the discussion. All the sessions were recorded and then transcribed.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The dimensions, purpose and audience of the research were shared clearly with the 3 schools as well as the participants of the research. All details of the research including objectives, aims and purpose and utilization will be shared with the participants of the research so as to exclude any ambiguities or apprehensions and to ensure full participation in an honest and candid environment. Consent letters were signed by all.
In addition to that they were ensured that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all levels and any material or information shared will not be used in any form or in any way other than what had been specified to them.

Apart from these procedural considerations reflexivity was kept in mind at all stages of the research. The art of stepping two steps back to question ourselves, 'What do I know?' and ' How do I know it?' as a researcher. (Jenkins 1992 quotes Bourdieu) It is interesting to note how Harding (1986, 1987 and 1991) clearly states that as researchers our cultural, political and ethical beliefs influence our thought processes and hence every step of the research we undertake. From the theoretical perspective, to the methods we choose or don't choose, the questions we ask or don't ask, the sample size, audience of the research, everything are actually fragments or outputs of our own ways of thinking and constructing knowledge. It is therefore very crucial to be reflexive and reflective at all steps of the research and keep questioning our own subjectivity. This aspect of research was strictly considered throughout the process of this research.

RESULTS

As mentioned earlier, three strategies were used to collect data for this research question, exploring the contribution of distributive leadership to succession planning and capacity building?

Firstly, semi- structured interviews with school heads of three different schools of three strata of the society. These were followed by focused group sessions with teachers in groups of 7-8. These were also semi-structured.

As is the case with semi-structured interviews, some questions were plannewhile others were developed during the course of the interview, to probe further and deeper in the perspective of an individual. Hence, some of the queries are specific to samples and are not in all the interviews.
Lastly, non-participant observations of the same head teachers to identify leadership activities in their domains were carried out.

Positive attitude and supporting behavior results in a motivated staff.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the research was an opportunity to learn about the real and applied meaning of distributive leadership and its impact on teaching and learning. While it answered many questions, it also opened further avenues for research and exploration, making the entire concept even more interesting and worth pursuing. In a flashback, it aimed to find the contribution of distributive leadership to capacity building and ultimately to succession planning and how the role of a distributive leader can impact the efficacy of the school.

Another important learning was that the triangulation of information through the methods selected. As mentioned in the literature review it was found that most researches pertaining to distributive leadership were about the leader's perception and style of implementation, hence there was the need and the niche to conduct a research which explored the concept not only from the teacher's verbal point of view but also had the opportunity to observe the heads to see the actual practice of their perceptions. Teachers still believe the head is to a great extent the ultimate epitome of knowledge, skill and intelligence. Although this does not imply in any way that they should not be given the due respect as a school leader or there should be an air or rebellion for whatever they say but what is important is that teachers should be included in strategic planning for learning for the students and vision building of the school, if not in other aspects such as budget allocations etc.

Conclusively, this research has been a journey of new learning and reinforcement of certain presumptions and perceptions. Although the concept of distributive leadership in theory has been convincingly found to

be best way to build capacity from existing potential for enhanced and enriched student learning, its implementation in the true essence seems to be a long and arduous journey from the destination. Having said that, even though it seems an uphill task, traces of insight found in the interviews of leaders and their staff indicate that it is very much possible with more awareness and inclination towards this notion. A step in the right direction with the right vision is a prerequisite and this seems to be the start of another exciting study as every end leads to a new beginning!

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