

Leadership challenges in creating inclusive and equitable quality education for all: the possibilities in public schools in Chitral, Pakistan.

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Glossary

AKESP	Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan
ASER	Annual Statistical Education Report
BPS	Basic Pay Scale
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DEO	District Education Officer
EFA	Education for All
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SST	Secondary School Teacher
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Declaration

I declare that:

This dissertation entitled: *Leadership challenges in creating inclusive and equitable quality education for all: the possibilities in public schools in Chitral, Pakistan*, presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

To the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

Kousar Ahmed Hasan

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Dedicated to:

My daughter (Eliana Ali Hasan) for inspiring me at each step to achieve this goal.

My husband (Ahmed Hasan) for making this journey possible.

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of female educational leaders in attaining the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal-4 (SDG-4), ensuring inclusion and equitable quality education in the context of Chitral, Pakistan. Pakistan is a signatory member to the UN global agenda for Sustainable Development Goals; however, Pakistan is still some way from reaching a satisfactory level of sustainability, particularly in the field of education. The country ranks in the top three worldwide in out of school children, most of whom are girls. It is important therefore to investigate the phenomenon of educational inclusion through the experiences of educational leaders (school head-teachers) who are in the frontline providing access and quality education. This research was undertaken with two female public-school head-teachers in the District Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. The experiences of these head-teachers are important because in the broader context of Asia, gender is under-researched in educational leadership. The head-teacher experiences uncover many barriers that limit the inclusion and quality of education for children, specifically girls in Pakistan. A qualitative case study approach was employed to investigate the phenomenon of educational inclusion. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone and document analysis also undertaken. The findings of this study indicate that these head-teachers are trying to incorporate a relational focus to their leadership role to bring about social transformation in girls' education. To do so, these women seek to create inclusion and quality in education by developing relationships with the wider school community, leading advocacy and awareness initiatives, improving institutional practices and encouraging a culture of collaboration. However, their challenges include social and gender stereotyping, early marriage, a lack of facilities and educational resources and administrative policies. These challenges hamper their efforts in achieving inclusion and quality and so there is a need for sustainable collective efforts to rethink policies and practices in the context of leadership and education Pakistan.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Chapter one introduces the need to explore and investigate the public-school head-teachers' leadership practices and beliefs in the context of Chitral in northern Pakistan, to attain the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This specifically includes SDG-4 which aims to, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all by 2030” (UN, 2016). Although Pakistan has had 73 years of independence, the country continues to underperform in the field of education (Benz, 2012). Various factors contribute towards that underperformance including access to and quality of education across Pakistan. Around 25 million children aged 5 to 16 are currently out of school, of which the majority are female (Bibi & Ahmad, 2019; Siddiqui, 2019). The opportunities for girls' education and leadership are limited in that context and has been undermined by successive governments. To understand this complex issue, the study has investigated the experiences and perceptions of two female head-teachers of the public schools in district Chitral, Pakistan. These school leaders are working at the grassroots level of girls' education and have deep experience of the context of the education of females in that country. The experiences of those head-teachers are critical for our understanding of the agenda of inclusion and quality education because they lead and manage the educational interventions at the frontline. To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative study approach was used. To understand the phenomenon of inclusive education, interviews were conducted with two female secondary school head-teachers in Chitral. Telephone interviews collected the primary source of interview data and that followed with document analysis. This chapter discuss the study's; Background; Problem statement; Rationale; Aims; Research questions; Key terms and, Structure.

Background

The UN SDG-4 targets the broader phenomena of inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all however, this study focusses on a narrower rendering of SDG-4 to explore and understand inclusion, in depth, through the experiences of school leaders in the context of District Chitral, Pakistan. The study's aim is to understand the social and cultural practices which present in relation to the inclusion of education and how that influences the attainment of education for all children. This is particularly in relation to education for girls. In doing so this study highlights the experiences of two female school leaders in attaining the global agenda of inclusion and equitable quality education for all children in that district.

To understand educational leadership practices and beliefs, we must first study the context. It is a general putative phenomenon that leadership is exercised differently in different contexts (Jackson & Parry, 2011). It is also understood that educational leaders perform differently in different societies (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Leadership is formed by the mutual efforts of the leader and the followers within a specific context (Gronn, 2016). It could be argued that 'leadership' requires a number of elements including; situation, time, events, people, and a place to develop and shape how leadership potentially unfolds within a given society (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Therefore, different patterns of leadership are exercised at different times and by different people across because each society has a unique culture embedded in its everyday activities. Culture is attributed to the beliefs, values, languages, rituals and artefacts of any context or organization (Schein, 2010). Further, the culture of an organization or society influences the way people work and construct the image of leaders in that context.

There are considerable differences in the standard and quality of education in different schools in Pakistan. This is due to various education systems in place across the country. Pakistan's

schooling system is categorised into three major school types: public schools, private schools, and madrassah (educational institutions for Muslims). These are further divided into sub-types, primarily based on the curriculum, textbooks, examination systems, nature of governance and management and the languages of instruction (Lynd, 2007). The majority of children are enrolled in public schools and various studies indicate that those students usually perform poorly when compared to students at the private schools (Asadullah, 2009; Awan & Zia, 2015). Research has further identified reasons for the poorer performance of public schools in Pakistan, primarily including incompetent and/or weak school leadership and management (Quraishi & Aziz, 2016; Rizvi, 2008).

In Pakistan, primary and secondary education falls under the mandate of the provincial government whereby education (and its related aspects including the SDG-4) is the major responsibility of that governing authority. In contrast, the federal government controls, facilitates and provides policy and direction to its provincial governing authorities. However, despite the significant legislative, financial and administrative autonomy given to the provincial bodies, there are challenges in providing inclusive and equitable quality education to all (Umar & Asghar, 2017). The challenges are many for implementation at the provincial level but, within the existing system of education, where there are many schools, thousands of teachers and supporting services there are nonetheless considerable grassroots opportunities to facilitate the enhancement of education quality, inclusivity, and equitability. While major changes are mandated at the federal level by policy makers, some key changes can come from the grassroots when embraced and implemented by head-teachers and their staff.

Statement of the Problem

It is important to know how leadership, particularly leadership in the context of education, understands and plays a role in bringing children to school and providing quality education in different cultures and societies. For this reason it is vital to investigate how culture and belief systems can shape leadership practices (Simkins, Sisum, & Memon, 2003). The concepts, theories and practices related to educational leadership have evolved in context under the influence of particular cultural and belief systems (Shah, 2010; Simkins et al., 2003). Further, these layers of are often overlooked, rather than explored within a context, to gain an in-depth understanding of the educational issues central to particular situations.

Little is known about the influence of culture in relation to educational leadership practices in Pakistan, especially in relation the school settings that affect achieving inclusive and equitable quality education. Not all children have access to education, since a large population of the children in Pakistan do not attend or are ‘out of school’. This is an important challenge for the social and economic development of the country (Siddiqui, 2019). The literature identifies that a principle purpose in the provision of access to education for all children, especially young girls in Pakistan, is associated with the values, beliefs, and resources in that society (Latif, 2009) Even though the country is a participant to the UN Education for All (EFA), Pakistan lags behind the satisfactory level of education provision, especially in rural regions (Zaman, Zaman, Hussain, Amin, & Faiz Rasool, 2019).

A major contributor to poor educational outcomes in Pakistan is the lack of access to education and the non-availability of education-related resources. About 44% of the total population of Pakistan, between the ages of 5 to 16 years does not attend school (Benz, 2012; Nauman, 2020) – the second highest country in the world. The issue of out of school children is closely linked with the number of schools ‘drop outs’. Not all children enrolled in school complete their

education and those who drop out – leave school – increases as students transition from primary to secondary level (Bibi & Ahmad, 2019). Data indicates that, around 72% of the total number of enrolled students drop out before they complete grade 10 in secondary school (Syed, 2020).

There are many challenges in Pakistan, particularly for women in educational leadership roles arising from social and cultural restrictions (Shah, 2010). The issue of balance between personal and professional responsibilities, the practice of early marriage of girls and, a lack of education and awareness of the community are some of the issues these female school leaders must overcome. Moreover, political will is also vital for the development and implementation of transformative social policies aimed at bringing about a real educational reform. Unfortunately, however, political will is lacking (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016; Benz, 2012). Viewed from this perspective, the voice of educational leaders and managers have a key part in achieving the targets of SDG-4.

This research seeks to investigate therefore the ‘on the ground’ realities through the experiences of the school head-teachers by exploring the social and cultural practices of Pakistani society, and especially how those practices can influence educational outcomes. The experiences of these leaders working in schools and at the grassroots level, are necessary for our understanding in this context of education.

Rationale for the Study

This study aims to contribute to the research on women’s educational leadership for inclusion and quality education in Pakistan. In educational leadership scholarship, studies have been dominated by research undertaken in the English-speaking countries (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Sinclair & Wiersma, 2008). However, significantly less research can be found in educational leadership by females in developing countries (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Pan,

Nyeu, & Chen, 2015). By investigating women's educational leadership in the context of Chitral, Pakistan, a region that is under-developed, this study aims to fill this research gap.

A further important consideration for this study includes cultural differences between societies and their different contexts and, how those differences shape the provision of education and leadership, particularly for girls and women. The reasons for this include the following notions:

- Leadership is a socially constructed phenomenon which evolves and changes with the context and is rooted in culture of a particular context (Jackson & Parry, 2011; Shah, 2010). Thus, studies conducted in other cultures may be inadequate in their explanation and understanding of the phenomenon of leading inclusion and quality education by the women educational leaders in public schools in the northern part of Pakistan.
- There are also various factors that support and limit women's education and leadership in different societies. Culture also has different manifestations, depending on the context (Bellou, 2011; Malik, 2011). Thus, a country analysis, in particular a remote region analysis should be conducted in Pakistan.

This study has thus adopted a qualitative case study approach for investigating two public school head-teachers' experiences and perceptions in Chitral, Pakistan.

Aims of the Study

This study explores and analyses the experiences and perceptions of two female school head-teachers as they aim to achieve inclusion and quality education for all children – SDG-4 – in female public schools. Through those head-teacher experiences this study contributes our understanding of the:

- experiences and perceptions of educational leaders (Head-teacher/ Principal) about the roles they have been practising in their position.

- cultural practices that hinder and create barriers to achieving SDG-4 in the education sector in Pakistan and,
- leadership opportunities that may possibly apply in the context of these school leaders.

Research Questions

This study examines the following research questions:

- i. How do school leaders (Head teacher and/or Principals) in public schools perceive their role in relation to SDG-4 of education in Chitral, Pakistan?
- ii. What are some of the challenges and possibilities in leading and managing inclusion and equitable quality education in public schools in Chitral, Pakistan?

This study has utilised several key terms discussed below.

Key Terms of the Study

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDGs, also known as ‘Global Goals’, were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as a universal ‘call to action’ to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (UN, 2016).

SDG-4: Has been defined to, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2016).

Inclusive: All students attend and are welcomed by the schools and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of life (Webb, Holford, Hodge, Milana, & Waller, 2017). In this study inclusion refers to the right to education for each girl, completion of their formal education and, access to educational opportunities for the purpose of their life-long learning.

Equitable: Equity perspective relies on the fair or equal distribution of educational inputs and processes among all student participants (Engel & Rutkowski, 2014).

Quality Education: Understanding the concept of quality in education involves the careful analysis of the context. Quality education is understood as an acceleration to enhance equity, mobility, greater social cohesion and increased economic developments (Engel & Rutkowski, 2014). This study aims to explore how quality education is being led in public schools in the context of Chitral, Pakistan.

Educational Leadership: The idea of educational leadership lies in determining the aims of the organisation by involving different stakeholders in achieving a common purpose (Bush, 2008). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how leadership has been constructed, understood and practised in public schools in Pakistan.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The first chapter introduced the study. It explained the study background, problem statement, rationale, aims, research questions and key terms. Chapter Two presents the literature review in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals with emphasis on SDG-4 for inclusive education in the context of Pakistan. It provides a background of Pakistan's education system, studies conducted in relation to school leadership and, SDG-4 to shape the structure of the overall dissertation. Chapter Three is the contextual chapter introducing Chitral; its geography, climate, status of women, education, and leadership and, positions the education department data for that District. Chapter Four discusses the methodology of the study and explains the case study approach. It also includes the methods for data collection, analysis techniques, limitations, and ethical considerations. Chapter Five discusses the main findings arising from the interviews. It focuses on the head-teachers'

understanding of their leadership role, their priorities and, the challenges they face in attaining the global agenda of education that District. Chapter Six discusses the head-teachers' leadership practices and the influence of culture on women in leadership through a document analysis and literature. Finally, Chapter Seven provides and expands upon the research conclusions, its implications, and recommendations.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has discussed the overall status of the education system in Pakistan, where the system has failed to attain the inclusion and equitable quality education, especially for girls. In the rural parts of Pakistan, the situation is far worse, as it is a place where most girls are deprived of their basic right to education due to social roles and cultural practices. With this in mind, the role of school leaders and head-teachers becomes vital because they are leading and managing the front-line educational interventions. Those school Principals understand and can experience this exclusion first-hand because they interact with the broader school community. By investigating the implementation of inclusive and equitable quality education through experiences of these leaders' in public schools, this study provides a potential contribution to SDG-4 and, in particular, how that takes place in Chitral, Pakistan.

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of conducting a country specific analysis, due to differing sociocultural constructions and reproductions of gender specific issues of education and leadership. I now turn to Chapter Two, to provide a brief introduction to SDG-4 in terms of education and female leadership so as to create a broad contextual map for the study.

Chapter Two: Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Educational Leadership in Pakistan

Introduction

The UN Sustainable Development Goals represent the call for action for the world to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the quality of lives for people everywhere. To achieve this aim, 17 diverse goals were adopted by the UN Member States in 2015. These development goals, as part of the 2030 global Agenda for Sustainable Development, are set out across fifteen years to achieve the outcomes. Before the commencement of the SDGs in 2015, world leaders at the UN had initiated a vision to eradicate poverty in its many dimensions, particularly in developing countries. That vision was converted into eight goals called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which led development initiatives from 2000 to 2015.

It is recognised by global leaders that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an essential requirement that needs constant effort and planning (Jamshaid & Ramzan, 2019; Madeley, 2015). Therefore, it is considered a collective journey for all countries and stakeholders to act collaboratively to shift the world towards a sustainable and resilient path. To embark on this journey, seventeen SDGs were proposed as the new universal agenda for countries around the world. Those SDGs were to be achieved in the period between 2015 and 2030. Those goals build upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to fulfil the gaps which were not achieved by the MDGs. The SDGs are effectively integrated and aim to balance the three important dimensions of sustainable development which includes the economy, society, and the environment.

Sustainable Development Goal- 4

Notable progress has been in the field of education since the establishment of the EFA and the MDGs in 2000. However, many elements of educational attainment were incomplete by 2015

as per the MDG deadline. Therefore, a continuous effort is required to accomplish the desired agenda for education (Madeley, 2015). SDG-4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The goal indicates the direction for educational developments to be achieved in the period from 2015 to 2030.

The SDG-4 explicitly talks about the access and quality of education available to every single child wherever they are (UNESCO, 2016). In doing so, SDG-4 intends to maintain gender equality in classrooms by enrolling all girls in schools and some considerable progress has been made to achieve the target of universal primary education. The enrolment rate has increased in some developing countries and the number of out of school children (the dropout rate) has decreased by almost half (Desa, 2016; Sabir, 2008). The proportion of girls in schools is now higher than ever before. However, progress has been slow or, in some developing regions invisible due to elements such as; extreme poverty, conflicts, and emergencies (Madeley, 2015; UNESCO, 2016). These elements have increased the number of out of school children, the majority of which are girls (Exley, 2014; Mizunoya, Mitra, & Yamasaki, 2018).

Education aids social development and is a key contributor to poverty eradication. The goal of education is to develop processes, knowledge and skills that enable the individuals to support and contribute positively towards human capital (Lange & Topel, 2006). In line with this, achieving inclusive and quality education affirms sustainable development. Hence, SDG-4 ensures that by 2030 all boys and girls must be able to complete free primary and secondary education. SDG-4 also aims to provide equal and affordable access to vocational training and to enable individuals to be lifelong learners. This may contribute towards the important dimension of SDG's and further, improve the quality of life for many people.

As a demonstration of political commitment and ownership, Pakistan was the first country to integrate the sustainable development plan into its National Development Agenda in 2016. A

national SDGs agenda was launched in 2018 in Pakistan to implement the national plan, vision, and strategies for implementation (Jamshaid & Ramzan, 2019). The government also extended its support to prioritise and localize the education agenda at every level (Farah & Rizvi, 2007). Taskforces at national and provincial levels have since been established to review and support the implementation of the development initiatives under the SDGs.

The government while planning the action plan for SDGs, realised the need to decentralise the education and health sector at the district level to improve the delivery of public service and implement the global SDG agenda (Farah & Rizvi, 2007). The government has since conducted a post-MDGs consultation with all stakeholders to strengthen and better implement efforts across both the federal and provincial levels.

To improve inclusion and quality education, the government focuses on improving physical infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum, and examination reforms (Farah & Rizvi, 2007; Siddiqui, 2019). However, a considerable gap still exists between the current and overall improved quality of education. Pakistan's public expenditure on education is estimated to be around 2.3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the period 2019 to 2020. This rate is the lowest in South Asia. Further, the budget allocated for education in Pakistan has the lowest priority for the government and represents only 4% of national GDP (Karim , Khalil, & Ayesha, 2016; Nauman, 2020). Considering the global agenda of education, SDG-4, it is important to note that there are challenges for Pakistan due to its limited financial resources and the inattention of government on education as a priority.

Education in Pakistan

Education in Pakistan is delivered by different education providers. The largest number of school-going students are enrolled in public schools which follow a bureaucratic model; that is, controlled through a centralised system of policies and decision-making. Policies and plans

are formulated under the Federal Ministry of Education with the provincial government operating as an agency that implements those policies. Public schools in Pakistan face a continuous challenge of providing quality education due to limited resources (Ahmad, 2014; Lynd, 2007). Furthermore, school head-teachers are required to follow policy decisions rather than being actively involved in the decision-making process which aims to improve the quality of education in their schools (Memon, 2003; Simkins et al., 2003). It is therefore the case that policies and decisions made centrally but implemented locally, may not always address the actual and the real challenges for school leaders.

According to the Human Development Report (HDR, 2019) Pakistan is ranked 152 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index ranking in the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP). When compared to the neighbouring regional countries, Pakistan's progress is less than satisfactory in terms of key educational indicators such as literacy rates, gross enrolment ratios and, expenditure on education. The current literacy rate in Pakistan is 57% which is well behind other countries in that region (Latif, 2009). The rate of dropouts at primary school is 22.7% which is alarming, given the critical nature of primary school learning as a developmental phase. Further, in Pakistan almost 40% of the population is illiterate which also limits opportunities for acquiring skills and gaining technical knowledge for higher competencies and earning compatible incomes (Nauman, 2020; Siddiqui, 2019) Hence, according to those criteria, Pakistan has made limited progress in terms of enhancing educational outcomes.

Raising the education level of girls in Pakistan is an important element that can help increase prosperity and move towards attaining the UN's SDGs. Thus Pakistan has committed to improving the education for females and extends its support to all stakeholders in bringing girls to school and making this goal achievable (Jamal, 2016; Latif, 2009). However, resistance to

girls' education has in the past been a persistent problem for Pakistan due in many ways to its culture of traditional families and tribes. As a result there has been low enrolment rates of girls at primary and secondary schools (Latif, 2009; Siddiqui, 2019), which in turn limits the inclusion of girls in the broader development process (Jamal, 2016).

Without doubt the root cause of gender disparity and gaps in education is multifaceted and complex in nature. Poverty, lower status of women in society, sociocultural issues, inaccessibility, lack of resources, lower numbers of female teachers are but some of the many crucial elements that constrain girls' education (Jamal, 2016; Karim et al., 2016; Latif, 2009) and especially in Pakistan. In addition, war and conflict in the history of Pakistan magnifies the issue of education and in particular, girls' education by introducing extremism, cultural and religious ideologies all of which help shape the educational processes. Existing research in this context have suggested women, as a group, are barred from decision making in the patriarchal society that is Pakistan (Jamal, 2016; Karim et al., 2016). Such are these cultural and societal practices that they influence every aspect of life and, education is no exception.

Educational Leadership in Pakistan

Leadership is defined as a process to influence others and occurs in a context, by the people and for the people (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Jackson & Parry, 2011). It is believed that effective educational leaders and managers valued for improving educational outcomes for the learners. The global economy is changing, and countries expect a skilled workforce to move their economy forward efficiently (Bush, 2007). To develop a skilled workforce, nations need competent educational leaders who can lead, manage, and formalise the process of education.

Jackson and Parry (2011) argue that leadership is formed by the mutual effort of the leaders and the followers within a specific context. Leadership requires conditions, time, circumstances, people, and context in order to evolve and form the leadership capabilities

required within a society. Thus, every society has a unique form of leadership which is shaped by contextual circumstances and needs. The idea of leadership is also influenced by the dominant culture and the particular context in which leadership is exercised (Schein, 2010). Further, cultural values and beliefs also influence the way of doing and forming the notion of leadership. Similarly, in Pakistan, the idea of educational leadership is deeply influenced and inspired by the Islamic teachings and beliefs derived from the Quran (Shah, 2010).

According to the Islamic teachings, people with high knowledge are considered nearer to God than others. The first word revealed to the Prophet was “Iqra” which means to read, to educate oneself. Therefore, people with that kind of knowledge are ranked highest in Muslim societies (Muhammad, 2015; Shah, 2010). This effectively means that those people cannot be questioned and in turn become ‘untouchable’ because of the respect shown to them and their position. Teachers, school leaders or religious leaders are seen to possess power and authority over people because of their knowledge and their education. Moreover, in the Pakistani society a collective approach is followed whereby value is given to relationships rather than outcomes (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016). Such practices often lead people to focus on developing good relationships, and avoiding open discussions, accepting whatever the leader decides.

Educational reform in school leadership in Pakistan is a new movement (Rizvi, 2008) and many of the public schools in Pakistan follow the traditional view of leadership. This points to the position and authority assigned to school principals as a leader, a role that enjoys power and authority with limited or no shared responsibility in the school’s context. Such practices in schools do not appreciate the culture of collaboration and inclusion among the school community and the importance of those collaborative and inclusive processes for bringing about change. Hence, this may result in lack of agreement, commitment and poor performance of the students and school staff (Rizvi, 2008; Simkins et al., 2003).

A large part of the literature on educational leadership and management in Pakistan describes leadership incompetence, political involvement, and bureaucratic cultural practices (Khan, Khalil, & Iftikhar, 2015; Memon, 2003; Rizvi, 2008) as being the major factors hindering effective leadership. A study conducted with head-teachers in Pakistan revealed that the vast majority of government school principals fail to exhibit effective leadership skills (Nishat & Shahida, 2017). That (2017) study further mentioned that school principals rarely visit classrooms to observe teaching and, further, cannot evaluate teaching strategies because they lack understanding of the content knowledge and pedagogy. Moreover, public school head-teachers do not have sufficient control over their management of school staff (including salary, recruitment, and discipline). The study further confirmed that head-teachers in Pakistan are pressured by political leaders to make changes according to government policy (rather than community needs) and to use the systems to grant favours because of their power (Jawas, 2017; Mansoor, 2015; Memon, 2003). Further, political demands vary from student enrolment outside the official catchment area to favours for certain teachers regarding transfers or promotions (Memon, 2003; Simkins et al., 2003).

There is increased pressure on head-teachers and senior staff of the management team to make schools more inclusive. To meet that demand, a head-teacher is required to develop strategic leadership skills, planning, evaluation, and advocacy to match the required standards and needs of the context (Bolam, 1997; Dimmock & Walker, 2005). As Gronn (2016) argues, we need to step back and understand what is happening in the field in different contexts to study leadership. There is a need to identify how leadership is produced and how it functions in different societies. Jackson and Parry (2011) contend that the vast knowledge and research on leadership has limitations in national and local contexts. Therefore, to achieve the global agenda of an educational framework by 2030, developing countries need to understand both the potential

and the challenges specific to the educational leadership terrain, if SDG-4 is to provide all children with education which is both inclusive and equitable.

Studies on SDG-4 in Pakistan

In Pakistan, few studies have been done to understand the implementation of SDG-4 in education and, moreover, those studies have also different scopes and purposes. A study in higher education institutions examines the integration of SDG in existing courses offered at universities in Pakistan (Mughal, Qaisrani, Solangi, & Faiz, 2011). That (2011) research identified that different themes such as environmental education, peace education, human rights education should be included in education programs to promote sustainability and quality in higher education i.e., universities, where degree programs in Pakistan which integrated the concept of sustainability in tertiary curricula.

Another study was conducted with schoolteachers in Lahore, Pakistan to analyse their role in achieving the SDGs (Jamshaid & Ramzan, 2019). That (2019) study revealed that many teachers were unaware of the term ‘sustainability’ but worked for it in different ways without knowing. The major challenges identified by the participants in providing quality education is the lack of resources, training and support from management and the community. Jamshaid and Ramzan (2019) sought to understand the teachers’ perspective and so their study was not focused on secondary school and the leadership and management practices to understand the inclusion of SDG-4 in their teaching and learning. Given there is limited research available relevant to educational leadership of SDG-4 in Pakistan, my research aims to contribute to that area. Before I detail my research design, I will identify elements which are unique to rural Pakistan in the following chapter.

Conclusion

The study of educational leadership and management is relatively a new domain in the context of developing countries, including in Pakistan. The key ideas regarding leadership and management predominantly come from the West, mostly influenced by the western philosophy of individualism. However, leadership can also be understood as a socially constructed idea which varies depending on contextual needs, values, and societal belief systems.

The studies conducted in the context of Pakistan in relation to educational leadership are largely focused on professional development in educational leadership, bureaucratic culture in educational settings and political influences in the system. Moreover, the literature suggests that there are very few studies exploring the SDG-4 targets, and these are limited to higher education institutions. I could not find studies that explain how educational leaders understand their role in attaining the SDG-4 in the context of Pakistan, and what challenges and possibilities there are to meet this target in the given timeframe. Thus, there is a need to gain greater insight into the inclusive and equitable quality education from the perspective of the school leadership and/or head-teachers those individuals are working at the coalface in schools where policy is implemented. I now turn to Chapter Three, to discuss the context, education, and women leadership in the context of Chitral, Pakistan.

Chapter Three: Context of the Study

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study context to understand the society and the conditions in which the female school head-teachers perform their role as education leaders. It discusses district Chitral, a remote and mountainous region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), a Province in Pakistan and provides information on literacy, the education system, and the education of women in Chitral. The last section talks about the leadership of women in that district.

Geography of Chitral

Chitral is the largest district of the KPK Province in Pakistan. It is geographically remote with an economically poor scattered population. Chitral observes harsh winters with heavy snowfall from November to March. In summer, it is regularly affected by landslides and flash floods. Chitral is spread over an area of about 14850 square kilometres, surrounded by three of the highest mountain ranges in the world including the; Kush, Hindu Raj and Karakorum ranges (Tajik, Nawab, & Khan, 2019). Chitral enjoys a strategic location, beautiful valleys and mountains and a unique and diverse culture and traditions. However, due to poor infrastructure and harsh climatic conditions it remains cut off for months from its neighbouring regions and within the region. Chitral connects to the rest of Pakistan through the Lawari Pass in the south that is around 3118 metres high, and in the east the Shandur Pass that is 3734 metres high (Pardhan, 2005; Tajik et al., 2019). It borders Gilgit-Baltistan in the northern east, Afghanistan in the north and west, and with Swat and Dir districts in the south, a narrow belt of the Wakhan Corridor separates it from Tajikistan.

The total population of the Chitral district as per 2017 census is around 450,000 (Tajik et al., 2019; Wali, Sirajud, & Akhtar, 2017). In 2008 the government of Pakistan approved the

bifurcation of the KPK province's largest district Chitral into two regions, Upper Chitral and Lower Chitral. Access to schools in the valleys and villages of Chitral is always a challenging journey for the school officials, teachers, and students. Due to the heavy snowfall in winters and landslides and floods in summers, which results in damaged roads and bridges, mobility within the valleys becomes hard (Pardhan, 2005).

Culture

The local language of Chitral is Khowar (also referred to as Chitrali) which is spoken by most people. While more than 10 other languages and dialects are spoken in Chitral, some languages are spoken by only a few people (Tajik et al., 2019). The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, also a language of instruction in schools and is spoken and understood by many. English has become a popular language, particularly in private schools and other departments as a language of communication and instruction.

Chitralis are predominantly Muslim by religion; two-thirds of whom are Sunni and one-third are Shia Ismaili. Around 4,000 people in Chitral belong to the indigenous Kalash (pagan religion). The vast majority of the population relies on farming for their livelihood. A network of roads connects valleys to small villages, but they are poorly developed and not maintained. Cold and harsh weather, lack of agriculture land, inadequate infrastructure, low standard health facilities and accessibility have made human life challenging (Pardhan, 2005; Tajik et al., 2019). Women to be specific, face many challenges because of difficult weather conditions as they are mostly responsible for performing household chores including, cattle rearing, field work on farms, collecting fodder and caring for their families and extended family relations. Many young girls often do not attend school because they help their mothers in the house and look after their younger siblings.

Education and Literacy in Chitral

Until 1937 there were no schools in Chitral (Tajik et al., 2019). Formal schooling was introduced in the district after 1947. To support and supplement the public sector for the provision of education in Chitral, Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKES, P) launched its educational institutions and programs in 1980 (Pardhan, 2005; Tajik et al., 2019). The AKES, P is the largest provider of education in Chitral after the government (Nawab, 2011, 2017). Today Chitral is comparatively ahead in many of the education indicators compared to many other districts across the country.

The literacy rate is about 62%, the net enrolment rate is 56% at primary level, 31% at middle level and only 8% at matriculation level. It is estimated that anywhere between 16 % to 18% children in the district dropped out of school (TRIBUNE, 2016). Key educational issues for that district include there being a lack of schools and also in some cases a considerable distance for students to travel, single-teacher schools, and many schools require multi-grade teaching (Nawab, 2011; Pardhan, 2005; Zada, 2014). In some areas, students get up at 5:00 am to walk to school because of the limited access to transport and poor condition of roads. In addition, in relation to girls' education there are considerations including socioeconomic factors, poor physical infrastructure, an unstable political situation and cultural barriers to women's education, all of which have contributed to the out of school rates (Nawab, 2017; Pardhan, 2005).

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan, 2018, in Chitral, for every 34 primary school students, there is one teacher and 30% of primary schools have only one teacher. At least 69% of schools are without electricity, 40% are without boundary walls and 40% are without water. The education department is also concerned about the lack of

computer laboratories and specialist computer teachers where laboratories have been provided. There is also a shortage of school operational budgets.

Women Education and Leadership in Chitral, Pakistan

For the last few years, government and non-government organisations have been working to improve the quality and access of education in Chitral, particularly to increase access to girls' education (Pardhan, 2005; Tajik et al., 2019). Even so, females are still at a disadvantage compared to males and that has considerably affected the position of women in different sectors. There are social, cultural, and political factors which have all resulted in females being more marginalised than males in terms of opportunities for education and leadership (Pardhan, 2005). The position of women remains vulnerable within the patriarchal and hierarchical structure of the country (Latif, 2009) and that is reflected by the lower rate of participation in education for females than males.

Given Pakistan's patriarchal social structure women and girls continue to be marginalized across many domains politically, socially, and economically (Malik, 2011). Women's autonomy in the everyday activities in terms of decision making, mobility and access and control over family economic resources has always been constrained. In many families in Chitral, the choices related to education, marriage and even dress codes are influenced and decided upon by men and based on traditional cultural and belief systems (Pardhan, 2005). Such practices limit the opportunities for females to embark on their personal and professional journeys and prevent them from becoming an active member of society.

Female leaders strongly believe nonetheless that employment is important so that women can achieve financial independence but, many women are overburdened by domestic responsibilities and care of children (Daraz, Naz, Khan, & Hazirullah, 2014; Malik, 2011). There are no government-supported child care centres in rural areas to assist working women

in Chitral, nor can women travel easily by public transport. Either that transport does not exist or, it is extremely hard for women to access because of the lack of related facilities including taxi stands, terminals or even specific places from which to catch busses and other forms of public transport. Even where access is available in many instances there are no seats in waiting areas nor departure times for vehicles. These are practical issues that impede the possibility for transportation from one place to another and which further preclude women from participating as actively as men in society.

Women in leadership positions also struggle to balance their personal and professional lives. They must consider and value their family relationships above any professional positions they may have. The disparity between the roles of males and females in society and the cultural norms surrounding the role of women in Pakistan also affects decision-making by parents, in terms of their child's schooling.

Beyond the primary school, the dropout rate for girls from schools continues to be high. This is due to an absence educational opportunity, resources, mobility issues, and cultural expectations constraining girls' and women access to higher education, especially in rural and remote areas (Iffet, 2019; Mughal, 2020; Qureshi & Niazi, 2011). Given the situation of girls' education in Pakistan, the government has prioritized their education through various international commitments including the SDGs and is making efforts at federal and provincial levels of government to promote equity, inclusion, and quality in all spheres of development (NEP, 2018).

Conclusion

This Chapter provided contextual information about the geography, culture, and women's education and leadership status in Chitral, Pakistan where, due to its geographic isolation and the lack of political commitment provincial and federal levels, the district remains

underprivileged and under-developed. Chitral's rural and remote society is predominantly patriarchal – women and girls are very much disadvantaged compared to men and boys. Females' decisions and choices are therefore largely influenced by those cultural and contextual circumstances whereby they are expected to be family oriented and subservient to males. It is important to investigate all these factors during the study, as leadership is socially constructed, and the practices of the school head-teachers are indivisible from the cultural and social values associated with this context. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology used to investigate the experiences and views of the school head-teachers.

Chapter Four: Research Design

Introduction

Head-teacher experiences of leadership seeking to ensure inclusion and equitable quality education for all children in Chitral, Pakistan is the focus of this research. Thus, it is critical to examine how those leaders make explicit their inclusive practices in relation to quality and equity. Further, this research seeks to analyse the challenges and cultural influences as they impact on those head-teachers' practices. For the purpose of this research telephone interviews with two public school head-teachers from the district of Upper Chitral, Pakistan was undertaken as well as a document analysis.

My Position as a Researcher

This current investigation is of relevance to my future role as an education leader in Pakistan. Being a student of Master of Education, with a specialisation in Leadership and Management, and potentially a future education-sector leader, it is important to understand what is happening in the field – that is, the site where implementation of policy is shaped and takes place. This investigation seeks to reveal participant's 'real world' experiences because these experiences are shaped by cultural, social, and political interests. This study is, therefore, a continuation of my journey and will be a contribution in educational leadership and management so as SDG-4, as required by the 2030 UN timeframe can be accomplished and adopted by Pakistan.

In this research, I position myself as a 'learner', in seeking new insights and perspectives. Thus, I tried to set aside my existing knowledge and help the participants reveal how they understand and experience the world around them (Blaikie, 2007). Following the social-constructivist approach, I understand that realities are contextual and depend on individuals and groups of people who experience them (Punch, 2014). This approach draws me towards the qualitative paradigm to explore the perspectives of the significant stakeholders of education, the school

head-teachers who are working at the ‘grassroots level’ that is, engaging with students and implementing policy. That point of interaction is central to this study.

The context of the study reinforces the justification for qualitative approach whereby ideas emerge and unfold through participant experiences (Punch, 2014). In the analysis and data interpretation, I have been mindful of ontology as the study undertakes the constructivist approach (Blaikie, 2007). I acknowledge my status as a novice researcher striving for coherence and depth of thought rather than being drawn into the paradigm division of methods (Punch, 2014). By applying this approach, I strive to make a meaningful contribution to research by exploring the experiences and understanding the head-teacher interventions.

Methodology

The methods applied in the research process should be influenced by the nature of the study problem (Creswell, 2012; Punch, 2014). Hence, I have employed a case study approach within the qualitative method. That approach is defined as a tool to study any fact or event within a context (Baxter & Jack, 2008) which helped me to work with the participants to reveal how they conceptualize and understand the phenomenon of interest to me (Blaikie, 2007). I accept that realities are contextual and specific bonds are constructed based on individuals or the group of people practicing them (Punch, 2014). Similarly, this study focuses on the public-school leaders i.e., two female head-teachers to understand their leadership role and explore cultural and social challenges they encounter in Chitral, Pakistan to achieve inclusion and equity as per the UN SDG-4.

A case study methodology was best suited to explore head-teachers’ experiences because little is known from the viewpoint of the participants about those experiences (Creswell, 2012). Case studies are an in-depth inquiry into a specific and complex phenomenon in a specific

context. The approach is not limited to one case and allows the researcher to examine the interaction between the case and its context (Yin, 2018). Similarly, the study with the school head-teachers does not only explore their experiences but it also includes their interactions and connections with the broader school community.

This is one of the few studies in the context of Pakistan, particularly in Chitral which aims to investigate how head-teachers perceive their leadership role in the attainment of SDG-4. The methodology enables me to gather and develop new knowledge and also informs the process of forming social realities based on the philosophical and theoretical ideas and assumptions in the participants' own society (Blaikie, 2007).

Method

According to Creswell (2012) the process of qualitative data collection includes development of forms that are called “protocols” (p. 17) for data recording purposes. The study used semi-structured interviews and an interview guide using major questions which were then modified at the interview stage so that questions could be added based on participant responses. This enabled me to explore the phenomenon in greater detail. The study also included document analysis to collect data and answer the research questions. These documents are the education reports, and school related texts which were used to examine the central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2012).

Semi-Structured Interviews

I employed a purposeful sampling method for the selection of the participants which refers to the deliberate selection of the individuals with relevant experience and information informing

the study (Creswell, 2012; Liamputtong, 2010; Patton, 2002). The relevant individuals are two female public-school head-teachers.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to elicit the information from the participants based on prepared questions and then probing them to gain clarity and a greater depth (Liamputtong, 2016; Merriam, 1998). Similarly, Creswell (2012) reinforces how semi-structured interviews provide flexibility to the researcher to adjust the questions for the participants without being constrained by the researcher's perspective.

The recruitment process aimed to select experienced local education leaders who could relate their experiences with the dynamics of this study. These participants were expected to have rich experience and an understanding of the local issues and possibilities in relation to SDG-4 and implementation by 2030. Given the limited scope and size of the dissertation, the interview sample size was limited to two individuals.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants plays an important role in research ethics (Creswell, 2012) thus, I ensured this was foregrounded throughout the study and while documenting their responses. Given the small sample size, I have not mentioned the names of the individuals in the comments because it may highlight their identity and I also used pseudonyms to refer to them in the research findings and report. The interview transcript was also shared with the participants so that they could add or remove any statement prior to writing the final report (Creswell, 2012).

Bearing in mind time constraints and the scope of this dissertation as part of my Master of Education course, I conducted interviews by telephone from Australia with participants in Pakistan. Creswell (2012) indicates that telephone interviews can take place when the study

participants and the researchers are geographically distinct and are unable to connect at one location for interview purposes. Thirty-minute interviews were conducted on two occasions with each head-teacher and those timings were discussed and finalized by mutual decision-making.

Each interview was recorded to save the data for analysis and reporting. In this regard, the developed interview protocol, 'Interview guide' that contains a few questions which address the field of this study (Attached Appendix-H) was used. I ensured that all the questions in the Guide were related to the main research questions. The national language of Pakistan, *Urdu* was used because that allowed the participants and the researcher to talk in depth to extract richer data. The interview guide was translated from English to Urdu and is attached (Appendix-I).

Document Analysis

Throughout this dissertation, various government and non-government education reports and school related documents that addresses the issues and possibilities specific to the research were used and discussed. I undertook a critical analysis of the documents to understand the central phenomena, as these are considered valuable sources in the qualitative studies (Creswell, 2018). That analysis also supported me to triangulate the data collected from other sources i.e., Interviews (Glesne, 2006), ASER documents, the National education plan (NEP), and the Annual statistical report of government schools, KPK (ASRGS, 2018). The documents shared by the school head-teachers were school development plans, teachers' and students' data of the specific schools and school activities related to community participation. The document analysis involved various steps including reading the texts to make meaning, dividing the texts into segments, labelling the segments using colour codes, examining the

codes for overlapping ideas and then grouping these into broader themes addressing the research questions (Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process commenced along with the data collection because Creswell (2012) highlights how data analysis in qualitative research occurs simultaneously, so as to identify major ideas. Participant interviews were recorded on a smartphone and the interviews then transcribed. After verbatim transcription, the data was translated into English from Urdu. After transcription and translation, the data was labelled using codes to identify and group information and assist with categorisation to better understand the relationship between the data and the research focus (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The coding scheme was completed in three phases including; open, axial and selective coding (Creswell, 2018). It was then processed by applying open coding in which all the statements of the participants were highlighted using colour codes with summary notes. In the second phase, axial coding classified and grouped the sets of codes used in the first stage. This process led to the identification of a variety of themes from participant responses. In the final stage, selective coding was used, selecting relevant codes from the second phase for reporting.

Participants' Details

Participants were recruited based on predetermined criteria. The leaders should have at least three years of experience as school head-teacher in a public school in district Chitral and further their participation in the research was voluntary. Head-teachers who met those criteria and who had agreed to participate, were invited into this study.

To approach participants, a formal channel of communication was used. Permission for any intervention in the public school in Chitral comes under the domain of the District Education Officer (DEO). A study permission letter inviting the potential participants to be involved in the study was emailed to the DEO Female (Appendix E&F). The email included a letter of introduction (Appendix B), information sheet (Appendix C) and consent letter (Appendix D) for the participants. The DEO forwarded the email and the attached documents to six potential participants. The two head-teachers who agreed to take part in the research contacted the DEO and formal approval, along with the details of those participants, was emailed back from the DEO office (Appendix G). The study followed the ethical procedures, owing to participant consent being the most fundamental principal for ethical acceptability (Creswell, 2012). The ethics approval was gained prior to this (Appendix A).

Research Participants

Head-teacher 1:

Ms. Gul Shireen (Pseudo name) holds two Master's degrees: one in Economics and the other in Education. She has also completed several professional certificate programs in Teaching. Ms. Gul has 13 years' experience as a school teacher and four years of leadership experience as a school head-teacher in Chitral. She started her career as a primary school teacher in a private school in Chitral. Later she joined a public middle school and, after a few years, qualified as a Secondary School Teacher (SST), enabling her to teach in a government high school. Currently, she is a school head-teacher in a village named "Sun Light" (Pseudo) in district Chitral, Pakistan.

Head-teacher 2:

Ms. Gul Bibi (Pseudo name) is a high school head-teacher in a public school in Chitral, with five years of leadership experience. Ms Bibi has a Master's in Political Science and a Master's in Education. She also has undertaken certificate courses to gain a teaching position in government schools. After completing her bachelor's degree studies, Ms Bibi started her teaching career in a public school. She is currently working as a head-teacher in a government high school for females in a village named "Moon light", approximately six hours drive from her home. She resides during the week in a rented facility near the school along with her 2-year-old daughter and visits her home on weekends.

Ethics

The application for the human research ethics was submitted to the Flinders University Research Ethics Committee and has been approved (Attachment-A). To complete this process procedures were followed in the process of contacting and gaining approvals from the research participants, by sharing the study information sheet, the letter of introduction from the supervisor, consent letter that informed the voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any stage (Creswell, 2012). The information sheet declared the details of the study purpose, its objectives and process of data collection. It also informed participants that the study findings will be used for academic purposes. The letter further ensured their protection of confidentiality and anonymity.

The DEO for Females in Chitral was contacted seeking approval to conduct this study with secondary school head-teachers of the public schools in that district. The approval letter (Appendix G) to conduct interviews by phone and access school related documents is attached.

Interviews were conducted by telephone from Australia to Pakistan. In the process there were no potential emotional risk to participants however, the sense of discomfort or inadequacy because of the long phone call was kept in mind. Therefore, the process was managed by agreeing with the participants on a suitable time and day for them. They were free to withdraw from the study at any time and could omit any question/s during the interviews. Pseudonyms were used and written information collected during the interviews did not contain any identifiable information about the participants. Interviews were recorded using a smartphone and then uploaded to a laptop ensuring that all transcriptions and recordings were kept safe with a password. Participants were not identifiable in any reports or documents.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was conducted in a specific geographical and cultural context in Pakistan and therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalised. However, the knowledge and meaning created through these findings can be useful for the people to understand similar phenomena of educational leadership in their own context. The research could have been an ethnographic or longitudinal case study but, that was not possible due to the geographic distance between the two countries and the short time allocated for this Master's in Educational Leadership. Arguably it would have been easier to build connections and develop trust when meeting face-to-face and so the method of telephone interviews also limited the scope to observe the attitude and the body language of the participants. Nonetheless, relationship-building was managed by constant communication and follow-up with the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed how a qualitative case study approach was employed to explore the experiences and views of two female public-school head-teachers. In terms of method, qualitative interviews and secondary data documents for data collection, thematic analysis, and

discussion were used. In addition, research ethics was observed throughout the study. Chapter Five follows on and discuss the experiences and views of the female head-teacher participants in relation to SDG-4 in the current context. After that, Chapter Six discusses and examines the study findings with data supporting interviews and document analysis to contribute to the existing area of the educational leadership.

Chapter Five: Findings

Introduction

The sections below explore the three major themes drawn from the interviews which includes firstly, an identification of the participants' roles and responsibilities in relation to inclusion and quality education. It then examines the challenges identified by the head-teachers and their priorities to address those challenges.

Each theme further revealed the following sub-themes.

(1) Identification of roles and responsibilities:

- Head-teachers' understanding of their leadership role;
- Leadership as a shared responsibility and,
- Balancing between personal and professional responsibilities.

(2) Challenges to inclusion and quality education:

- Cultural values and practices in rural communities;
- Challenges of rural settings and,
- Poor quality of primary education.

(3) Priorities established so as to attain inclusion and quality in education:

- Building collaborative relationship with families/communities;
- Improving teaching and learning practices in schools and,
- Increasing students' participation in extra-curricular activities.

Identification of their roles and responsibilities by school Head-teachers to achieve inclusion and quality in education

The Head-teachers' understanding of their leadership role

When asked about their understanding of their role as a leader, the head-teacher's responses were mixed. For example, suddenly stepping into a new head-teacher role made them feel uncomfortable, in terms of the broader sense of responsibility which they felt. That is to say, as teachers their previous roles were confined to the design and delivery of lessons and interactions with students – activities with which they were very familiar. However, the head-teacher role considerably expanded their sense of position responsibility beyond the classroom and they keenly felt the pressure the new position brought with it. As one head-teacher mentioned:

When I became the head-teacher I felt that all the burden of the school was on my head (shoulders)..... Previously I was responsible only for my class and students but (being head-teacher) I was responsible for all the students studying in the school. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

You just imagine it is like someone has put the whole world on your head (shoulders). (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

There was also some anxiety around increased workloads because, in many schools in Pakistan responsibilities are not shared among colleagues. One person only is responsible for the management, success, and failure of the school's daily routine. As a head-teacher Gul Shireen remarked:

Everything became my responsibility. Now, even if I find one "wrapper" on the school playground I feel stressed as this is also my responsibility. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

Once they settled into their new positions these individuals tried to find meaning their new role. Leadership, as understood by the head-teachers involved challenges as well as a sense of

achievement. The participants were aware that, being a leader provided them with a unique opportunity to inspire and motivate others in the school and the broader community.

I want to be a leader who inspires others so that they come to school and get education. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

There was also greater freedom and autonomy with these new roles but there were also limitations. They did not have the authority to change how the system (including implementing policies and practices) even within their own school because the public school system has a bureaucratic structure and minimum authority is given to the head-teacher. The education department has responsibility for the engagement of all personnel and teachers could be posted and/or transferred without the head-teacher's involvement. The principal can support their teachers in enhancing teaching and learning but, other factors such as remuneration, rewards and compensation is beyond their control and capacity.

If we think about the school head-teacher, it is a very strong position. However, we do not have any authority, or I can say power over things (policies, practices). (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

We have no authority over teachers, their performance, salary or reward system and we cannot even complain about the teachers if they are not performing well. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

The Annual Statistical Report 2017- 2018 of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shows that majority of the school leadership positions filled by males. As per the data, there are 39 male head-teachers in the public schools in Chitral and 17 female head-teachers: approximately 1.5 times more males than females. For Pakistan in the public sector and in education, Women's leadership is new especially in remote areas like Chitral. However, the number of female leaders has been increasing and that is expected to positively impact the attainment and access of girls' education in rural communities.

Leadership as a shared responsibility

When it is a shared responsibility, leadership can enable everyone in an organisation to contribute, take initiatives and lead others. Giving everyone that opportunity can enhance the morale of the organisation and contribute to its overall efficiency because owing to a feeling of ownership to all individuals. When asked about shared responsibility the head-teachers talked about creating a team environment.

As a head-teacher we must create environment for the teachers to collaborate (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020).

I have also designated some teachers as the head for each section. For instance, for middle level I have designated one teacher as the head, for science section, for arts section and for senior grades including 9, 10, 11 and 12 I have a head responsible for each section. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

We also have clerical staff in the school who are equally important to me. I strive to consider them and collaborate with all of them while working as the head of the school., because they know many things which I might not know or fail to notice. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

Sharing responsibilities between the academic and non-academic staff may help head-teachers fulfil their leadership responsibilities and achieve the desire targets.

I work along with my teachers. We have, together, made a 3 years' plan for school development. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

The head-teachers also collaborate with the school community including students' parents, and other representatives as this may ensure inclusion as those groups and individuals can play a key role in bringing more girls to school; minimising absenteeism and, reducing dropout rates.

I invite parents and community members in the school activities and engage them to bring a positive change. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Balancing between personal and professional journeys

Quality of Life (QoL) largely depends on the ability of individuals to have a balance between the personal and professional lives. For professionals, including head-teachers a lack of QoL could result in stress and in turn impact upon their performance and may further impact negatively upon quality education and inclusion. Women in Pakistan are responsible for caregiving of children and the broader family, including in-laws and yet, even if they are employed, those women are expected to cook, wash, and take care of all members of their household. The participants think that is sometimes unfair, but they nevertheless accept it as their responsibility.

I need to manage both, my child as well as my responsibilities at school. But in the case of men, it is not like that. I (being female) must look after my kids, their studies, their health issues. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Being a female head-teacher and male head-teacher, we can see quite a big difference. (Gul Shireen, Interview, July, 2020)

My husband is also a schoolteacher, but we have different opportunities, responsibilities, and expectations. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

I have the responsibility of my men as well. I am supposed to manage the food and the household responsibilities. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

These head-teachers believe that married women in Pakistan will always have those dual responsibilities while the men are only expected to work outside of the house.

Married women have dual responsibilities (laughs). She must manage both her personal and professional lives. In the case of men, it is not the same. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

When he returns home, he sleeps and takes rest. But I have a lot of work to do when I return home from school. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

I am the cook in my home, I am the gardener, I am the washerman, and I am the gatekeeper... my responsibilities are too many (laughs). But I am happy with these responsibilities. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020).

Leaving either of the duties (professional or household) may not give them the satisfaction and peace that they are after and this must influence how they perform as a professional. Thus, these head-teachers strive to ensure one aspect of their life is not affected by the other. Despite working in a distant village, one participant ensures she can effectively perform all her duties as effectively as possible.

I had a small kid to look after so I talked with the community about it and then I shared my responsibilities with the local teachers to look after the school when I was not physically present there. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

As for government teachers and head-teachers it sometimes becomes difficult to perform their duties regularly when they transfer to different government schools that are far away from their home. Currently I live like a traveller (running after official and domestic duties). (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020).

These head-teachers also mentioned how policy matters are beyond their control and therefore some sacrifices have to be made in relation to their family life so that their professional responsibilities are not compromised.

The bureaucratic structure in Pakistan poses many challenges for these women. One issue involves the transfer policy for teachers which these head-teachers deem as inappropriate. This is because transfers take place far frequently than required and adjusting to new norms and school systems for new teachers is time consuming. In talking about the transfer policy one participant said:

When teachers are transferred to other schools, they take time to adjust themselves. When they start getting involved in the school they are transferred to another school. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020).

There is also poor infrastructure and transport between these villages, and it is proposed that postings could be better managed.

When I was selected as a head teacher there were 4 vacant positions of the head-teachers in nearby schools in my locality. However, the department

posted me to a far-off area in Upper Chitral which is around 6 hours' drive from my hometown. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Clearly, with dual personal and professional responsibilities it is more difficult for females if they have to travel or live remotely. One of the women highlighted this, underling the need to investigate the emotional wellbeing of both teachers and head-teachers.

I have one teacher in my school who comes from a very far area in Chitral. She is always upset because she could not find a proper place to stay. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

It is difficult for the teachers to teach properly if they are disturbed. They must leave their homes and stay to other places where their transfer has made. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Transfer public sector transfer policy in the public sector creates hurdles for school leaders and this can disrupt continued services and connections with students and the community. In turn issues such as this hinder progress towards inclusion and quality education.

The best thing is that the transfer policy needs to be reconsidered. We should allocate the duties near to our homes so that we can live with our families. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

This school is very far from my home, so I must live here for weekdays and return to my home during weekends or holidays. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

These findings reveal that, although head-teachers face challenges resulting from policy matters, they try to effectively manage those challenges. They are not only aware of the issues related to some policies but they are also voice their and so it would be advantageous for the education department to investigate and revise transfer policies to help maximise inclusion and quality in education.

Contextual challenges faced by the school leaders in creating the inclusion and quality education for children

Cultural values and practices in the rural communities

Rural areas are defined as an isolated and remote area, often lacking basic facilities and in need of advanced infrastructure with limited economic opportunities (Budge, 2006). They are also defined as non-urban; rich in culture, values, and traditions (Lewis, Ketter, & Fabos, 2001). People in rural communities tend also to have strong relationships and as discussed previously, leadership practices are influenced by social interaction and cultural values. In rural Pakistan therefore, word can spread quickly in small villages and neighbouring areas. Thus, if an event or activity contradicts local norms, traditions, or values there can be consequences for both the head-teacher, school management and even the students. School leaders are aware of this and believe that respecting the local culture and norms goes a long way to increasing girls' access and participation in education.

I always advise my teachers to consider the community before arranging any event in the school. For example, if they organize any new event then you know these people will discuss about it everywhere. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Even if a small activity is deemed inappropriate in the local context and it takes place in the school, it will become a topic of discussion everywhere and that can have a negative impact on the school to attract or retain new students.

It will become a hot topic for discussion and the people then start discussing about the school in local shops, in the mosque and other places in the village. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

There is the need to be particularly cautious because these head-teachers are at a girl's school. At a previous event, young school girls sung and danced and that activity was not deemed suitable by the broader community.

We had a function in the school that was planned by the students of the grade 9 and 10. So they sang songs and danced in that event. As this was not appreciated in the community. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

The school activity plan below shared by the head-teachers also reveals that girls in Chitral face social and cultural challenges that restrain their participation and access to education. The school leaders understand these issues and work with their teachers to build leadership capacity of the girls as the text below reveals.

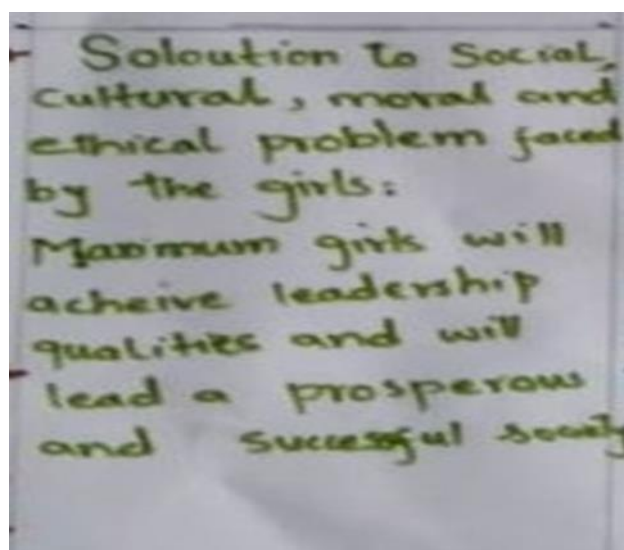


Figure 1: Excerpts from School Development Plan

Challenges of rural settings

Being geographically remote and isolated, Chitral head-teachers do not have easy access to each other. Where there is no regular transport when an emergency or unforeseen situation occurs can be both expensive and difficult to manage.

For females it is difficult to travel and arrange transport in case of emergency, because the transport system is not good in the rural areas. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

Especially in the month of December when we have harsh winter and snowfall our teachers and students feel it difficult to attend the school as some of them must travel on foot for hours. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

I take my baby with me to the school. So, when she got sick with pneumonia due to cold weather, I had to literally sleep in the back of the vehicle, travelling on bumpy road for hours. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Another challenge in Chitral is that basic technology such as computers and the internet are not supported. This is a real issue for ensuring equity, inclusion, and quality in education in an age where there is an increased focus on technology.

We do not have the facilities for our teachers and students. For example, transport facility, computer, and internet connection etc. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

If we have internet, we can learn new ideas of teaching and teachers can enhance their knowledge and skills. But we only rely on textbooks. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

We forget how to use computer and other applications to perform simple tasks because we do not have the computers and internet in our schools. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

In a crisis such as the current Covid-19 Pandemic, the reliance on the internet and computers in education has increased. The education system has come to a halt in some areas in Pakistan. These leaders believe that internet and related facilities have become immensely important resources for education and so is important to harness technology so students can remain connected to schools. The two respondents made the following observations:

Now in this pandemic situation we cannot do anything. We ask some other people who know how to use online materials for help. We give money to people and get our work done for us. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Schools are shut down due to COVID-19. And we do not have resources to connect effectively with our students. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

Data from the ASER 2018 report of KPK revealed encouraging findings related to school facilities including clean drinking water, toilets, and boundary wall facilities. However, facilities in relation to teaching and learning including school library resources, computer labs

and playgrounds are limited in elementary and high schools. In primary schools they are non-existent. Below table shows the school facilities in the government schools in KPK.

School facilities (% schools)				
	Government schools			
	Primary	Elementary	High	Others
Rooms used for classes (avg.)	4	3	4	8
Useable water	84.0	94.6	92.1	91.9
Useable toilet	88.1	100	98.7	96.8
Playground	31.2	24.3	27.6	66.1
Boundary wall	88.3	94.6	97.4	96.8
Library	0.0	10.8	82.9	64.5
Computer lab	0.0	5.4	42.1	51.6

Figure 02: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Schools' Facilities. (ASER, 2018)

According to that study, compared to public schools' private schools have better facilities including teaching and learning resources and advanced technology. The current pandemic has stalled some students access to education during this period.

Poor quality of primary education

The Pakistani government has tried to enhance the quality of education at secondary however, at the primary level the quality of education is poor due to the government's concentration on other areas. As a result, there are consequences for secondary school teachers and administrators because students lack an understanding of primary-school level concepts.

They only have 2 teachers in primary school for 5 classes. So, teachers use half blackboard for one grade half for the other. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

The participants in this study suggest that the solution is for secondary school teachers, to focus on reading and writing. However, that comes at the expense of other parts of the curriculum.

Many of them do not even recognize the alphabets. They do not know which are the small letters and which are the capital one. (Gul Shireen, interview, June, 2020)

We have no choice but to work on their basic reading, writing, and speaking skills from the beginning in the secondary grades. (Gul Shireen, Interview, July, 2020)

The Annual Statistical Report 2017- 2018 of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Government of KPK indicates that teaching staff in government primary schools is 1,415 out of which 1,023 are in boys' schools and 392 in girls' schools. Hence, boys' schools have approximately twice as many teachers as girls schools. The insufficient number of female primary school teachers in the district is also one of the challenges that hinder the inclusion of girls' primary school education and quality.

At primary level we have 1 or 2 teachers for all primary section. These teachers get over burden and we miss (the quality) what is important for our children. (Gul Bibi, Interview, June, 2020)

Priorities established by the school head-teachers for attaining inclusion and quality in education

Building collaborative relationship with families/communities

Community and school partnerships are extremely important and proven to be useful in various developed societies (Houser, 2016). Partnerships involve collaborative activities involving school management, teachers, and parents and/or other student family members. In Pakistan, this partnership exists in private schools in various forms, however, in the public sector it is neglected. Effective school and the community relationships require mutual trust and respect and, a shared sense of responsibility, especially in close communities such as in rural areas.

When involving the community or working closely with them to benefit the institution the head-teacher is responsible and is the focal point for all interactions. One participant considers it a key priority to involve the local community in school affairs.

My second priority is that I should build and maintain a close relationship with the community in which I am working. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

It is also important to keep the parents involved in student attendance and school performance. This includes ensuring girls do not drop out from school after an early marriage, so these head-teachers try to keep in touch with the parents and in-laws, even visiting the students' homes if they live nearby and are frequently absent:

It is important for me to maintain good relationship with the students' parents. I remain in contact with the girls and with their in-laws after they get married. I request them to send their daughter-in-law to school so that they can complete their studies. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

I call their family members and ask about the reasons (if they are absent or drop out). And if students are living near to school, I ask my teachers to go in pair to the student house and identify the reasons of their absence from school. (Gul Bibi, Interview, June, 2020)

In the public schools in the KPK province of Pakistan, each school has a parent-teacher committee which is made up of the head-teacher, members from the local community and teachers. This committee helps mobilise the community and works closely with the school management to help improve staff and student performance and is considered very useful to these participants:

In government schools we are bound to work with the community. We have representatives from the community in a committee called the Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) for each school. This involves parents, teachers, head-teacher and other community members. (Gul Shireen, Interview, July, 2020)

The development plans reveal how these head-teachers work collaboratively with the community when challenges arise to hinder quality and access to girls' education. The plan

demonstrates that the parents' and community should be involved in school activities to enhance learning opportunities.

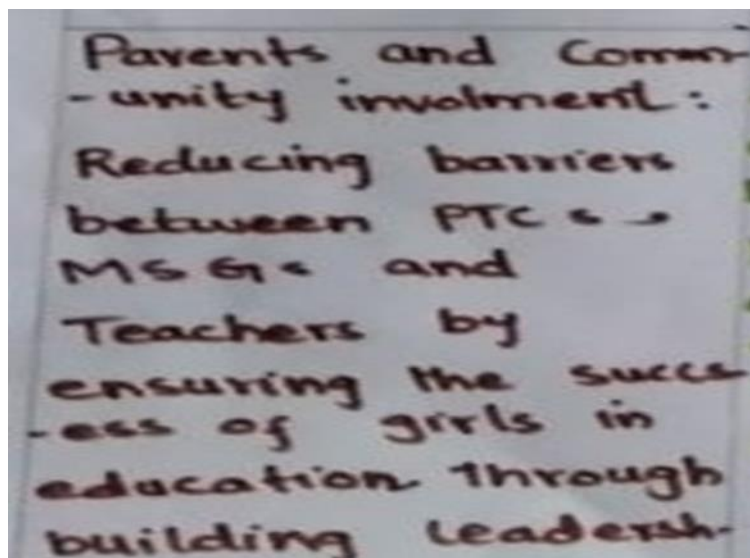


Figure 03: Excerpts from School Development Plan

The participant head-teachers try to maintain relations with the community and parents to raise awareness of the importance of education and regular attendance. A main area of concern is that girls can be married at a young age and if that occurs the head-teacher will engage with parents and community leaders to enable those girls can finish their schooling:

We also involve the parents who are representatives of this school PTC to mobilize the community and give awareness about education and other related issue. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

I visit them and talk to their parents to hold this marriage until they pass their exams and complete their education at least till grade 10th or grade 12th. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

We try our best to build connection and strong relations with the community so that our students may be able to complete their schooling. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

These head-teachers also invite stakeholders to contribute to the school's development providing a sense of inclusion, motivation, and shared-responsibility. There is an inherent scepticism regarding a positive role of the local community in school affairs and so head-

teachers work hard to change that perception by demonstrating a resolve, commitment, and optimism to work alongside the community:

I invite them to come to the school and ask for their support and cooperation in school development activities. They become happy (when invited for the first time). (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Community always supports us when we need any help, for instance, arranging transport for me (if I need to travel). (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Public schools in Pakistan provide free education and those especially in the KPK province have developed a strong meritocratic system to hire teachers. That involves a monitoring system to ensure schools are run according to the set standards. However, this is only recent and previously the public-school perception was more negative and one of the head-teachers gives considerable importance to this approach:

I can work out a plan to change the negative perception about the government schools. It is doable and it comes under my responsibility. I must build strong connection with the community. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Parents must be engaged in school activities to ensure they understand the government's vision, to see the facilities being provided to their children and, care about the effort towards their children's education. That approach may in turn change the negative perception regarding the public schools but it needs constant effort and commitment by the head-teachers:

I will invite the parents and community members in the school and engage them in school activities to change their mindset. (Gul Shireen, Interview, July, 2020)

Improving teaching and learning practices in schools

Head-teachers play a critical part in improving teaching and learning practices in schools. Understanding the gaps in teaching learning and introducing new strategies are important features of effective leadership. The instructional objectives need to be relevant and be clear

so that teachers and learners can achieve better outcomes. Whether these head-teachers understand their role in matters of enhancing teaching and learning was explored during the interviews. Participants said that they regularly observe the teaching practices and ask students if they are satisfied with the teacher, the teaching methods, and the learning environment. Both participants regularly observe classes because they believe that observation can make teachers more aware and focus on their teaching practice.

I also visit classes and observe the lessons. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

And in the break time I talk to students and ask if they are satisfied with the teaching. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

I believe, through classroom observation and supervision, teachers are becoming more conscious and they are working to improve themselves. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Regarding challenges, classroom teachers are also given the opportunity to share their problems and experiences in staff meetings.

For teachers I can say I should not burden them. They should properly take their classes without feeling or having any burden. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

I call them (teachers) in my office and sit with them and discuss where they are facing problems. Also, I have other teachers who teach the same subjects, so I ask them to collaborate and learn together. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

There is also now a system in public schools for making complaints and so students can share their opinion about teachers and teaching practices. Thus, these head-teachers communicate formally and informally with students to hear about classroom experiences and about the teachers. If there is a complaint, the head-teacher tries to address it without the teacher knowing a complaint has been made and to minimise any conflict between the teacher and the student.

(Regarding complaint about a teacher) I cannot ask directly or tell her about the complaint as it affects the relationship and image of the teacher and student and as well as with me. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

To enhance the teaching and learning experiences the head-teachers also come up with their own initiatives. For instance, they team teachers of the same subject together so that the more qualified or experienced teacher helps the other. Further, for teachers who have studied in a different language (Urdu) if they are facing difficulty with English, it can also help them to be mentored by their colleagues.

I ask the senior teachers who have higher qualification like master's degree in physics and maths to sit with the new or the weak teachers and help them in their understanding of the content and the methods to teach the difficult topics. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

Our senior teachers have studied in Urdu medium and now they feel difficulty in teaching as the medium has been changed to English. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

Improving teaching and learning practices is seen as a priority by the head-teachers but they also acknowledge this process is not immediate.

We are trying to improve the teaching and learning practices, but it will take time. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020).

The head-teachers are optimistic about the fact that teaching and learning processes will improve. Previously, they said that knitting sweaters and socks while sitting in the classroom was more the norm.

Increasing students' participation in the extra-curricular activities in schools

Head-teachers are also aware that extra-curricular activities also plays key role in students learning and development. One participant, in consultation with teachers, has developed a three-year program to ensure there are enough extra-curricular activities for the students. As well, they have created student committees to develop leadership skills among students.

We planned to build student committees where they can develop leadership skills. Other extra-curricular activities were also part of that school plan. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

In some instances, schools collaborate with neighbouring schools organising broader-scale activities to motivate students and create inter-school competition.

My priority is to create an environment of learning. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

We collaborate with other neighbouring schools to organise activities like sports competition, debate competition and other extra-curricular activities to provide exposure to the students wherever possible. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

There is realisation among the head-teachers that engaging students in different activities apart from the classroom lessons is key to creating a sustainable and long-lasting process of learning.

Extra-curricular activities are important to engage and involve the students in the learning process. (Gul Bibi, Interview, July, 2020)

These examples show the importance given to extra-curricular activities for improving inclusion and actively involving different stakeholders throughout the community.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the understanding and experiences of two female school head-teachers working to achieve inclusion and quality education in the public schools in Chitral, Pakistan. The findings indicate that school leaders are trying different ways to include a relational focus in their leadership practices given the challenges of their contextual realities. These leaders are striving to bring about social transformation by building positive relations involving the values, and beliefs of the school and the community.

Chapter Six: Discussion

This study investigated the experiences and perceptions of two female school leaders in attaining the UN SDGs, specifically SDG-4 to, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all by 2030” in the context of Chitral, Pakistan.

In this chapter the contributions of the study are discussed. The findings suggest that leadership in this context is largely represented by social and cultural identities. These women strive to include a relational focus to their leadership practices, to bring about inclusion and quality in education for all children, especially girls. The relational approach to leadership by the two women school leaders helps promote a foundation for educational leadership in developing countries, including Pakistan. This foundation helps understand, analyse, and imagine leadership ideas that are culturally and contextually sensitive and appropriate. The chapter presents the key ideas emerging from the experiences of these school leaders and discusses, in relation to the equity and quality education literature, the broader purposes of inclusion for all children. This leads to an analysis of how social and cultural values create challenges for the participants and how they focussed on relational leadership building.

Women in leadership creating inclusion and quality in education through developing relationships

Relationships play a critical role in leading and managing people and, more broadly, the organisation. Leaders and managers need to work both strategically and technically to involve and manage people and organisations (Gronn, 2016). In this particular rural context, knowledge about the people and their expectations is vital because effective and successful leadership practices occur when there are quality relational interactions (Budge, 2006; Giles,

2018). Thus, understanding the contextual realities and expectations of people can improve the capability and capacity of leaders. The study revealed that these head-teachers try to maintain good relationships with the wider school community. Furthermore, they endeavor to maintain a healthy relationship with teachers to facilitate a more inclusive environment for learners. For instance, one head-teacher said that she believed in respecting and caring for her teachers so that they listen to her and show respect in return. A study conducted in Malaysian schools revealed similar findings, where frequent interactions and mutual respect among school head-teachers and teachers contributed significantly to effective school practices (Musah, Abdul Rahman, Tahir, Al-Hudawi, & Daud, 2018).

Relational leadership has relevance in the rural context where people share common values, beliefs and culture and, where relationships are considerably more important and valued over individuality (Budge, 2006). The notion of relational leadership is critical in that context and is more responsive towards relationships (Giles, 2018). Therefore, to achieve inclusion and quality in education, educational leaders and managers in rural contexts must develop good relations with the broader school community including parents, community leaders, and other organisations (Giles & Morrison, 2010). Leadership is strongly associated with the greater social structure where relationships play a significant role in shaping and changing educational processes (Fine, 2016). Potentially therefore, by focussing on developing and enhancing these kinds of relations, in the context of rural Pakistan, head-teachers may find that similar behaviour can foster inclusion and improve educational outcomes.

Concepts in education such as; collaboration, trust building, community partnership, and the understanding of the contextual needs, reflects the relational approach required of those in leadership positions (Giles, 2018). Hence, there is a need to engage teachers and the broader community in the processes of developing strong relationships across all education stakeholder

groups (Bunker, Hall, & Kram, 2010). During interviews the participants commented that they needed to be very flexible dealing with teachers because being overly strict can affect both performance and relationships. These leaders are reluctant to be overly assertive with their directives because that may affect established relationships. Studies reveal how positive relationships play a vital role in the school context, maintaining and sustaining the inclusion of educational opportunities for all children (Crouch, Keys, & McMahon, 2014; Solberg, Edwards, & Nyborg, 2020). These participants tended to agree on establishing with their many stakeholders' common standards for governance, school culture and teaching and learning approaches to maintain healthy relationship so they could achieve their desired goals.

The relationship between school and the community is an important concept in the context of Pakistan because that relationship influences the educational practices and is based on relational interactions (Tajik et al., 2019). Importantly, this study determined that head-teachers consider that community endorsement can be critical if they are to achieve their goals as education leaders – a commitments towards girls' education. Further, this study suggests that these school leaders understand the importance maintaining strong ties with the community so that that when required, the school's leadership can seek their support. A collective approach prevails in the wider Pakistani society and value is given to the relationships rather than the individualist approach more prevalent in western societies (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016; Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Hence, these women build strong connections with a broad range of stakeholders and those connections assist them to manage their head-teacher role more effectively.

Women in leadership creating possibilities for girls' education through advocacy and awareness

Leadership is often associated with the terms like change, influence, or vision. It is developed in a context, where followers have certain expectations, needs, beliefs, values, and aspirations (Fine, 2016; Jackson & Parry, 2011). Leadership can also be defined as an interactive process to influence others through ideas, activities, and behaviours to bring about change. Similarly, as the findings of this study suggest, these two educational leaders in Chitral play a crucial role in overcoming the obstacles that prevent girls' access to education. Educational leaders deal with the school functions and other educational institutions to achieve common purposes (Bush, 2008).

Due to the social and cultural biases that limit women's access to opportunities, men are dominant in leadership positions across all areas in Pakistan. This includes the education sector in Chitral. According to the Annual Statistical Report 2017- 2018 of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there are 39 male head-teachers and only 17 female head-teachers in Chitral. This is indicative of the many cultural biases which exist in Pakistan because, even though girls outnumber boys, women in leadership positions are represented by less than half the number of men in similar positions. The notion of patriarchy – males favoured over females – is built into institutional practices. Female head-teachers in public schools understand this situation and strive to provide advocacy and awareness to tackle these challenges by bringing more girls into schools and preparing them for future leadership positions in Chitral, as suggested by participants in this study.

According to ASER Report 2018, regarding opportunities for education, girls remain particularly disadvantaged. Forced marriages at an early age hinder girls' schooling and in turn they become marginalized. Many contributing factors for early marriage include poverty,

cultural and social values, and existing belief systems (Daraz et al., 2014). This study suggests that early marriage as a cultural barrier contributing to girls especially, discontinuing their education. Parents want their daughters to marry as soon as possible, due to social pressures including cultural and religious beliefs and wanting to fulfil that cultural obligation as soon as possible. These understandings are consistent with studies conducted in Pakistan that reveal that illiteracy, deeply rooted social and traditional practices and economic issues lead to early marriages (Bibi & Ahmad, 2019; Daraz et al., 2014). According to one head-teacher participating in the study:

Many people believe that there is no use giving higher education to the girls. They prefer to enrol their sons to schools first.

The two participants in this study are trying to foster inclusion and quality education for girls and, since they belong to the same society and have been brought up in that district, they are very aware and understand the challenges arising from community pressure. Therefore, if social transformation is to take place, changes must come from community insiders, rather than outsiders. Having created a mechanism for advocacy and awareness within the community to bring more girls from the community into the school system, they try to minimise absenteeism and dropout rates. They make teams of their teachers and send teachers to students' homes to encourage the family to send their girls to school. Also, they involve other community leaders so as to reach out, motivate and raise awareness in the broader community about the importance of girls' education.

I remain in contact with the girls and with their families after they get married. I request them to send their daughter-in-law to school so that they can complete their studies. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

I visit my students' homes and talk to their parents to hold this marriage until they pass their exams or complete their education. (Gul Shireen, Interview, June, 2020)

The study supports other research suggesting that the geographical situation worsens the condition of inequality arising from socio-economic disparities (Devkota & Upadhyay, 2015). For example, the isolation and remoteness of the rural setting creates difficulty for access and safety of girls due to poor infrastructure. Being remote prompts uncertainty and fear in parents', and can result in the interruption of girls schooling (Bibi & Ahmad, 2019). To deal with such situations, school leaders in Chitral constantly follow through the complaints and solve issues through the teachers committee which is voluntarily set by the school head-teachers.

I encourage girls to share their experiences with the school teachers if they feel threatened or frightened while their way to reach school

Studies suggest that female leadership positively influences the overall attainment of education processes and makes schools more gender inclusive (Carrell, Page, & West, 2010; Hoffmann & Oreopoulos, 2009). Therefore, in Pakistan a social transformation is required which can be done by involving more women leaders at the grassroots level to help change and reshape the educational practices if inclusion and quality in girls' education is to be achieved. More women in leadership positions would be instrumental in changing the cultural practices that hinder the participation of girls and deny them equal access to education.

Women in Leadership create possibilities for inclusion and quality in education through improving institutional practices

As previously stated, a major challenge facing leaders in Pakistan is the education of all children, especially girls in rural areas. These two head-teachers understand how their leadership practice can play a important role in steering their school towards inclusive values which may bring about sustainable change. Given their limited resources they nonetheless foster an inclusive culture in their schools which they achieve by focusing on improving teaching and learning practices.

My priority is to create an environment of learning. Where there is a proper mechanism of teaching and learning took place.

Research reminds us that leadership which focuses on improving teaching and learning has a significant impact on the overall student learning outcomes (Thompson, 2020).

Findings of this study indicate that the head-teacher's establish goals involving their staff and others in the processes, plan and evaluate teaching, seek regular feedback and, ensure an orderly and supportive environment in school. Studies suggest that this kind of involvement can lead to more effective organisational conditions and that kind of leadership increases teachers motivation and performance at school (Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011). These participants try to ensure that new teachers receive training and support while working with the senior colleagues to gain experience and improve their teaching skills.

I also visit classes and observe the lessons. And in the break time I talk to students and ask if they are satisfied with the teaching.

Jackson and Parry (2011) argue that leadership is formed by the mutual efforts of leaders and the followers within a specific context. Leadership needs conditions, time, circumstances, people, and place to emerge. Each society has a unique culture which is attributed to the beliefs, values, languages, rituals and artefacts of any context or organization (Schein, 2010). These values influence the way people work and construct the image of leaders and managers in that context. The priorities set by these head-teachers in Chitral in relation to access and quality of education to all children is reflected in their school activities. The study findings suggest that their activities seek to involve all students to take part in academic and extra-curricular activities.

The school leaders seek to develop leadership abilities among girls so that they become more confident while informing them of their right to education. One of the components of the school

activity plan developed by school teachers under the guidance of head-teacher, as listed below, shows that girls attending these schools face social and cultural challenges that can limit their participation and access to education. However, the school leaders work with their teachers to build leadership capacity by planning and organising numerous activities. The text below by the head-teacher suggests ways in which to promote girls' participation.

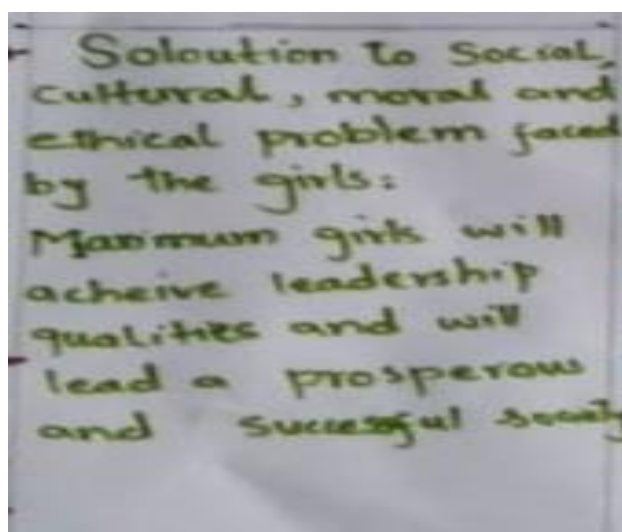
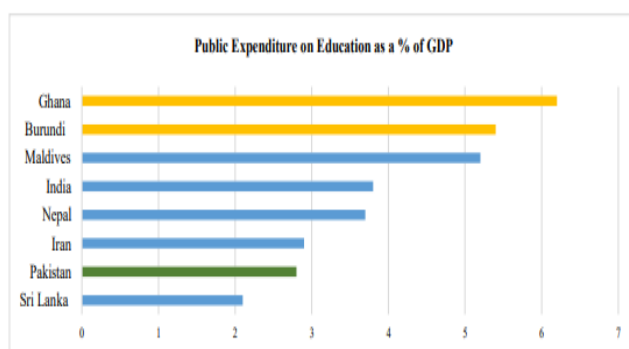


Figure 04: Excerpts from the School Activity Plan

In Pakistan, the role of the leader is vital in reforming current practices in schools to make it more inclusive and improve the quality to achieve the global agenda of education. Leadership is required to strengthen the educational processes through social transformation (Fine, 2016). The possibility of social change arises when school leaders in the rural context understand and work as an advocate for girls' right to education at different level through changing the teaching and learning practices and the attitudes of society through awareness and inclusion. Social transformation then comes from the 'ground up' not 'top down'. That is what (Yadav, 2016) argues about social transformation taking at the micro-level. The leadership in public schools in Chitral plays a role in promoting and sustaining women's education by changing practices to including more girls in school learning opportunities.

Women in Leadership rising the tides of inclusion and quality education through culture of collaboration

The concept of developing countries are generally used for the nations with low level of economic advancement (Aycan, 2002). Pakistan is a developing country with an under-developed education system. For example, political instability, expanding terrorism, sectarianism and social violence has directly or indirectly weakened the education system (Siddiqui, 2019). In rural Pakistan there is high unemployment, low access to educational facilities, poor infrastructure, sanitation problems and poor health facilities. The Pakistan National Education Policy Framework (2018) indicates that Pakistan's expenditure on education is low as a percentage of GDP compared to neighboring South Asian countries. Education is not a priority for the government and that has gradually weakened quality and access to education. The chart below illustrates expenditures in education by various countries.



Pakistan National Education Policy Framework Report 2018

Despite the lack of various basic teaching and learning resources in the public schools in Chitral, these school leaders are, nonetheless, striving to improve access and quality of teaching and learning. The findings reveal how teachers and students are encouraged by their leaders to work in collaboration with other nearby private schools that have more resources compared to

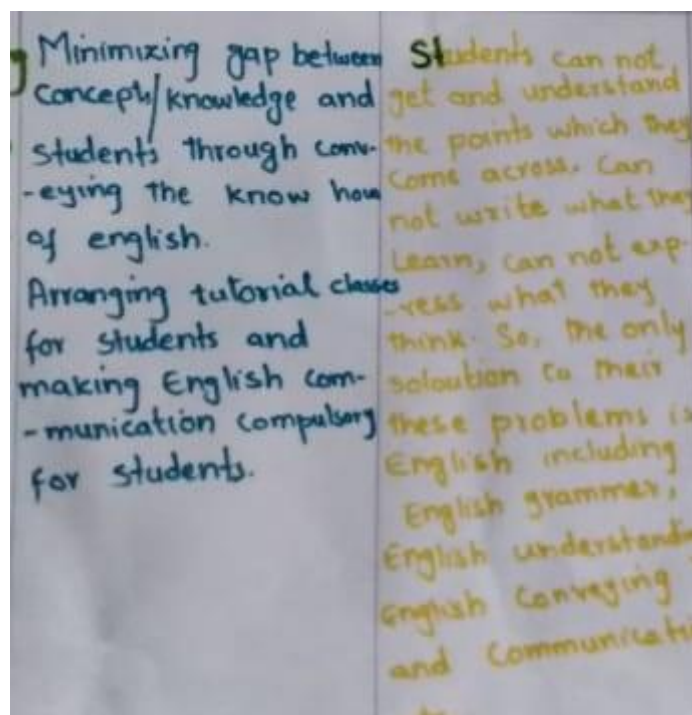
public schools. Such encouragement can help to increase access to educational opportunities and improve girls' motivation.

We worked with neighbouring private schools to promote learning. We encourage our students to attend activities and get exposure wherever possible.

These head-teachers are encouraging initiatives like this because schools working in collaboration with others can initiate inquiry, improve skills, and ensure quality of the teaching and learning for students (Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010).

A further challenge for these head-teachers in ensuring quality of education is limiting the practice of a 'rote' learning culture. Such learning is promoted where more emphasis is given to textbooks only. The lack of teaching resources and other basic facilities in schools hinders students' learning. Moreover, the image of public schools is not positive in the eyes of the public in Chitral due to low quality of teaching and learning and, inadequate school facilities. Therefore people who can afford it, prefer to send their children (generally their sons), to private schools. This makes the situation worse for the children from low economic backgrounds, as the negative image of public schools gives parents a reason to encourage their girls to drop out of school and have them do household work instead. Poor academic performance of the schools is considered one of the indicators that effect the rate of student dropout (Mughal, 2020; Yi et al., 2012).

However, in this case, school head-teachers try different ways to increase the quality of education and improve access by working with their teachers to design and plan teaching strategies. For example, the image below is of a teacher's lesson plan for improving students' language skills featuring how they share ideas and design strategies to improve their teaching practices.



A note from teachers' lesson plan designed under the guidance of school head-teacher

Through collaboration these leaders engage with teaching and non-teaching staff to achieve their inclusion and quality objectives.

I have to consider and collaborate with all of them while working as a head of the school. Because they know many things which I might not know or notice.

Further this kind of collaborative interaction highlights how the two school leaders are exercising a relational leadership approach (Giles, 2018). Their approach attempts to resolve some of the challenges that hinder inclusion and quality of education in Chitral. Collaboration can have thus have a positive impact on the public sector leadership and governance in addressing the social issues (Ramadass, Sambasivan, & Xavier, 2018).

Clarke (2011) also suggests that improvement in current leadership practices needs contextual interventions to bring improvement in the overall educational experience for girls. For this purpose, a relational approach to leadership is required to achieve education targets. Key

stakeholders such as school leaders, teachers, parents, and community have the shared responsibility to bring about social change at home and at school level. Addressing the socio-cultural practices that restrict girls and women from exercising their basic rights and promoting positive societal values for overall progress should be of prime concern (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

Conclusion

This study highlights how, even though there are many social and cultural challenges to girls' education in Pakistan, the educational leaders in this study are seeking ways to include a relational focus in their leadership practises with an view to improving inclusion, equity and the quality of education for all –UN SDG-4 – and, in particular as these goals relate to the education of females. The study examined the participant's key practices for that goal, in the context of public schools in the district of Chitral, Pakistan. The participant's practices include developing relationships with multiple stakeholder groups, advancing girls' education through advocacy and awareness, improving institutional practices and, collaborating across teaching and administrative school teams to achieve inclusive practices.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This study explored and analysed the experiences and perceptions of two female school head-teachers in relation to the UN SDG-4 to identify the challenges and opportunities in public schools in the district of Chitral, Pakistan. The themes emerging from the experiences and views of the school leaders were discussed in the light of literature on the broader purposes of inclusion and equitable quality education for all children. The study contributes to the research on women's educational leadership in terms of inclusion and quality education. To achieve that, the research questions presented were focused to collect and analyse the relevant data. This led to discussion of how particular social and cultural practices could present barriers for these leaders in that educational context.

Overview of the research and findings

This study investigated the experiences and perceptions of two public school head-teachers in their role as educational leaders. The implementation of the UN SDG-4 (inclusion and equitable quality education) in rural Pakistan was the context in which this research was undertaken. The findings highlighted the challenges facing these school head-teachers and the ways in which they resolve and respond to the many challenges they encounter as advocates for change in their education community.

Below is a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions of the study:

- I. How do school leaders (Head-teacher/Principal) in public schools perceive their role in relation to SDG-4 of education in Chitral, Pakistan?

The study participants are trying to provide girls right opportunities through quality education in public schools. To achieve that, these women have adopted a relational approach to leadership with their teachers.

Relational leadership has relevance in the context of Pakistan to make possible transformational change in public schools. These head-teachers work in collaboration with their teachers and the wider school community to change the social and cultural practices at a grass roots level. This reflects their collective approach to including others in decision-making.

II. What are some of the challenges and possibilities in leading and managing inclusion and equitable quality education in public schools in Chitral, Pakistan?

These head-teachers attempt to manage the many social, cultural, and contextual challenges which limit girls' participation and access to education in this region. Nevertheless, these women are trying to include a relational focus to their leadership to bring about social transformation in relation girls' education. The major practices identified in the study can be summarised as:

- 1) The maintenance of good relations with stakeholders including teachers, parents, and the broader community in leading and managing the change process. This is important because in this rural context, personal relationships are highly valued. Furthermore, these head-teachers display a caring attitude towards their teachers. In doing so they wish to avoid confrontation by tactfully managing conflict and complaints so that relationships are strong and enduring.
- 2) In Pakistan girls' education is often interrupted by the practice of early marriages, and these are tied to cultural beliefs. These kinds of practices in traditional societies are very hard to break down. In response to this, as insiders these female school leaders can be seen

as agents of change. This kind of change can be transformational, but it takes time and it only occurs through education of families and awareness raising in the broader community.

- 3) The study suggests that these head-teachers seek to enhance the quality of teaching and learning by improving institutional practices. They work together with their teachers to develop lesson plans, do classroom teaching observations, and seek feedback from students and teachers. Their aim is to enhance the learning process which may in turn improve students' outcomes. They also support new teachers through mentoring and training with the guidance of senior teachers. This helps to build a sense of shared responsibility for education within the school community.
- 4) The participants also acknowledged that a lack of educational and local resources can negatively impact upon the values of inclusion and quality of education. For example, across the district there is a lack of available resources such as computer labs, the Internet, libraries, and teaching materials in many public schools. This can compromise the quality of teaching and learning. An unavailability of advanced resources to the schools makes the teachers and head-teacher ineffective as in such situations they rely only on textbooks. Moreover, at the local level, electricity and transport facilities are insufficient making efficient and effective teaching and management challenging. Higher authorities do not always respond to suggestions by head-teachers but in the meantime they find solutions by collaborating with private schools and encouraging teachers and students to access private-school facilities. They also encourage students to participate in the activities to increase access to other educational opportunities and improve girls' motivation.

Implications

This study has diverse implications including for me as a future educational leader in Pakistan, for government policy makers, in education departments and, for school leaders and managers.

The focus of the study was to explore the challenges and possibilities for school head-teachers in public schools in Chitral, to achieve inclusion and quality education for all children. The study found that various cultural and contextual challenges limit girls' access to education and affect public school teaching and learning quality. Despite the challenges these women school leaders build relationships, are agents for cultural change and, implement changes to institutional practices to maximise opportunities and ensure there can be quality in education for girls.

As a future educational leader in Chitral, Pakistan, this study has provided a foundation for that role in leading and managing the change process in education. The findings suggest that social change requires constant attention and consideration of the contextual and cultural practices that help to shape new practices in any society.

At the policy level, school transfers, a lack of facilities and educational resources, geographical isolation and administrative issues can deter the school leaders' efforts. Nonetheless these findings may help raise awareness for policy makers of the importance of having culturally sensitive and context specific policies to transform the education of girls in Pakistan. Some school leaders may also find helpful the ideas discussed around the relational leadership approach for everyday school practices. Finally, it may be helpful for working towards the UN global agenda of education whereby all children are entitled to a quality education.

Conclusion

The focus of this research was to explore the experiences and views of the head-teachers and school leaders who work at the grassroots level in providing education in schools. The findings and recommendations support a range of stakeholders to implement the global agenda of education by improving inclusion and equitable quality education for all children in Pakistan. It is clear from the study findings that these head-teachers understand and practice effective

leadership. However, gender roles and responsibilities, the challenges of living in rural area, and traditional societal practices create hurdles for girls and school leaders so there is a need to rethink the policies and practices if the goal for inclusion and quality in education is to be achieved in Pakistan.

Recommendations

In the light of the research findings and literature review, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1) Increase the number of women in education leadership positions because women can be strong advocates for girls' education and, as decision-makers women leaders can leverage the opportunity to implement institutional policies which are more supportive of girls.
- 2) Develop a culturally sensitive and context specific policies at the government level and in all education departments to ensure a transformative education agenda.
- 3) Encourage education leaders to be culturally sensitive and responsive towards the contextual needs of the communities they are working with, to support social transformation. For instance, the tradition of early marriages which results in girls dropping out of school is a culturally acceptable norm which can be reduced subtly.
- 4) Ensure the collective responsibility of all stakeholders is highlighted so that all children can be enrolled in school and complete their education. Here the role of school leadership could be vital, however, greater autonomy, support and resources should be made available to them by the education department.
- 5) Raise government awareness so that educational resources and facilities (libraries, computer labs etc.) are available as inclusive learning environments for all children.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

8623 ETHICS approval notice (17 April 2020)

Human Research Ethics <human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au>

Fri 4/17/2020 10:53 AM

To:

- Kousar Khan <kousar.khan@flinders.edu.au>;
- Bev Rogers <bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au>

Dear Kousar,

Your conditional approval response for project 8623 was reviewed by the Deputy Chair of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) and was **approved**. The ethics approval notice can be found below. Please also note the important information regarding COVID-19 Virus below.

COVID-19 Virus Considerations

The minimisation of risk and harm to human research participants is paramount, in line with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#), where risk is defined as a potential for harm, discomfort or inconvenience, including physical harms including injury, illness or pain. Flinders researchers must operate at this time with a heightened consideration of doing no harm.

Where possible, avoid face-to-face testing and consider rescheduling face-to-face testing or undertaking alternative distance/online data or interview collection means. Ethics approval for a modification to your protocol may need to be sought for these changes.

Avoid contact with vulnerable people, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, elderly and immune-deficient people and people with disabilities or certain mental health problems. New permission to access these populations in the current climate must be sought from the appropriate institution.

- For fieldwork and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, please note that the Northern Land Council and the Northern Territory Government are halting any non-essential travel to these communities.
- Note that the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, requires ongoing consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal organisations and communities as to their wishes and responses to research.
- Avoid entering hospitals, hospices, aged care facilities, medical centres etc.
- People with mental health problems may be prone to infection (e.g., eating disorders), while others are prone to fears about infection (e.g., OCD, anxious cohorts). Maintain strict health and mental health strategies. Honours, Masters and HDR projects should be reassessed in the light of this advice.

Where participants do attend a data collection session:

- Contact participants prior to data collection activity by phone or email to confirm they have no COVID-19 symptoms or are not in a required period of self-isolation.

- Ensure all equipment is cleaned in line with the appropriate techniques to avoid the spread of COVID-19 disease. Safe practices such as ensuring social separation and hand washing must be applied.

APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:

8623

Project Title:

The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan

Principal Researcher:

Ms Kousar Khan

Email:

kousar.khan@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date:

17 April 2020

Ethics Approval Expiry Date:

31 December 2021

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided with the addition of the following comments.

Additional comments:

Permission Letter:

The Deputy Chair notes that the permission letter only mentions interviews, it doesn't mention access to the participant documents. If further permission is required for those from either the District Education Officer, or the specific schools the interviewees work for, SBREC requires copies of these permission/s before the researchers can be given access to the documents.

Kind regards

Rae

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction



Dr Bev Rogers
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Bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au
Web: address@Bevrogers
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

7th April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is to introduce Kousar Khan who is a Master of Education Student in the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work at Flinders University.

Kousar is undertaking research leading to the production of a dissertation on the subject of "The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan."

She would like to invite you to assist with this project by agreeing to be involved in two interviews, for 30 minutes each time by telephone. The timing for the interviews will be decided with mutual agreement. In addition, she may require documents related to school (i.e. school development plan, national education plan, etc) for the study purpose. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and every effort will be applied to reduce the likelihood that you will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, *of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.*

Since Kousar intends to make an audio recording of the interviews, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interviews, to use the recording and a transcription in preparing the dissertation, report or other publications. The permission is sought on condition that every effort will be made for your name or identity to not be revealed, and the recording will not be made available to any other person. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, which outlines the requirement that your name or identity not be revealed, and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on +61 8 82013445 or e-mail bev.rogers@flinders.edu.au

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Bev Rogers

Lecturer/researcher Educational Leadership
Coordinator of MEd Coursework Project and Leadership and Management Specialisation in MEd
College of Education, Psychology & Social Work

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8623). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix C: Information Sheet



Kousar Khan
kousar.khan@flinders.edu.au
Tel: 0466386305
College of Education, Psychology and
Social Work-Education
Sturt Road
Bedford Park SA 5042
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

INFORMATION SHEET

Title: The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan

Researcher

Ms Kousar Khan
Master of Education Candidate
College of Education, Psychology and Social Work-Education
Flinders University

Supervisor

Dr Bev Rogers
College of Education, Psychology and Social Work-Education
Flinders University
Tel: +61 8 82013445

Principal Researcher's Introduction:

Kousar Khan has worked as a researcher for five years in Pakistan from 2013 to 2018. During this period, she was affiliated with Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development as a student and then as a researcher in educational projects. From 2015 she joined Sindh Education Foundation- Government of Sindh as a research officer and worked in that role until she commenced her studies as a Master of Education student in 2019 in Flinders University, South Australia.

Description of the study

This study is part of the project titled *The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan*. This project will investigate school leaders' experiences and perceptions about their leadership positions they are practicing in Pakistan. Furthermore, it provides for a greater understanding of the cultural and social constraints that are influencing their role towards educational leadership to attain Sustainable Development Goal -4 (SDG) which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education for all. This project is supported by Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this research project is to identify and analyse the challenges and opportunities for educational leadership of public schools in District Upper Chitral in northern Pakistan, in realising their roles for ensuring quality and inclusive education for all (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to be involved in a one-on-one interview by telephone where you will be asked a few questions regarding your views about the role of school leaders in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education in the context of Chitral, Pakistan. In addition, you may ask to share any documents related to school (i.e. school development plan, national education plan, etc). Participation is entirely voluntary. The interviews will be held on two occasions with mutual agreement of time because of the time difference in both the countries. Each interview will take about 30 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder to help with transcribing the results. After the transcription the data will be shared with the participants through email to review and suggest any changes that they would like. Once reviewed and edited, the interview data files will be stored (in laptop and online drive) with password protected security.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will provide evidence of how public schools' educational leaders in Chitral, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPK) in Pakistan, promote inclusion and quality education for all children. This will be one of the few studies in the context of Pakistan particularly in Chitral district that gives insights to help identify the challenges and possibilities for education 2030 framework to achieve SDG- 4 in Pakistan. This interaction and co-construction with participants could enrich the researcher's knowledge for reflecting and further research.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

It is possible that you will be identified in the research, but every effort will be made to anonymise your responses. Any identifying information will be removed, and your comments will not be linked directly to you. All information and results obtained in this study will be stored in a secure way, with access restricted to relevant researchers.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

The researcher anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study, however, given the nature of the project, some participants could experience emotional discomfort. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the researcher.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form and send it back to me at kousar.khan@flinders.edu.au.

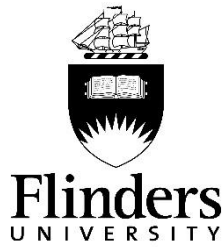
How will I receive feedback?

On project completion, outcomes of the project will be given to all participants via email or social media app (WeChat).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 8623). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix D: Consent Letter



**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
(by telephone interview)**

The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan

I

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the interview for the research project with the title listed above.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I agree to share educational documents for the study purpose (i.e. school development plan, lesson plan, national education plan, etc).
5. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
6. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - Participation is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time; and can decline to answer some questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my participation will not be anonymous; however, any information I provide will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my current employment.
 - I may ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
7. I understand that only the researchers on this project will have access to my research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....Date.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name: Kousar Khan

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

NB: Two signed copies should be obtained. The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for authorisation of Item 8 as appropriate.

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my interview participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (**Project number 8623**). For queries regarding the ethics approval of this project, or to discuss any concerns or complaints, please contact the Executive Officer of the committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au*

Appendix E: Permission Request Letter

Kousar Khan
kousar.khan@flinders.edu.au
0466386305
College of Education, Psychology and
Social Work-Education
Sturt Road
Bedford Park SA 5042
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Permission Request Letter (District Education Officer Upper Chitral)

7th April 2020

Dear District Education Officer

How are you.

I am writing this letter to seek your permission to allow me to send research invitation email to six of the female secondary school head-teachers of District Upper Chitral to join my research as a case study. I seek your permission to conduct interviews by telephone from Australia, with two of the secondary school head-teachers who will agree to volunteer for this study. Furthermore, I request your permission to allow me access to school documents (i.e., School Development Plan, Academic Plan) as may be relevant to this study.

I am undertaking a Master of Education study at Flinders University in Australia now. My interest is the role of public school head-teachers in Chitral and the title of the research is The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan. I aim to identify and analyse the challenges and opportunities for educational leadership in public schools in District Upper Chitral of northern Pakistan, in realizing its role for ensuring quality and inclusive education for all (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

To do it, I aim to investigate two female secondary school head-teachers as a case study. Data collection is going to start this April 2020 and your head-teachers will be invited to attend two one-on-one semi-structured interviews by phone. Each interview will take about 30 minutes. I will ask a few questions regarding their views about the role of school leaders in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education in the context of Chitral, Pakistan and view the secondary school policy documents which relate to inclusive and quality education. The interviews will be audio recorded for preparation of the thesis, report or other publications.

Participation is voluntary, and everyone is free to stop the interview at any time or to refuse to answer particular questions. However, it is possible that participants will be identified in the research since their role is particular in secondary schools, but every effort will be made to anonymize the participants' responses.

Sharing of experiences by the school head-teachers is beneficial for providing the evidence of how people in the field respond to the challenges and possibilities for education 2030 framework to achieve SDG- 4 in Pakistan. Participants' involvement will benefit the research outcome and help understand the changing role of the school head-teachers in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education in the remote areas of Pakistan.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. A reply is needed in writing mentioning approval for the research as stated in the letter above.

Kindly regards

Kousar Khan

Appendix F: Email Text for Study Permission

Dear District Education Officer,
Elementary & Secondary Education
Chitral, Pakistan

I am writing this letter to seek permission for my research study in public schools in Chitral, Pakistan. I am a Master of Education student doing specialisation in Leadership and Management in the School of Education at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. Being an international student from Chitral, I am keen to undertake a research project that leads to the production of a dissertation and publication on the subject “The Need for Change: Leadership Challenges and Possibilities in Public Schools in the Context of Chitral, Pakistan”.

To carry out the study, I would like to conduct interviews by telephone from Australia with two of the female secondary school head-teachers in Chitral. In addition, I would require access to the relevant educational documents of the schools. Therefore, I request for your kind approval allowing me to send an invitation email about the study to six of the head-teachers and interview any two of them who are willing to volunteer for this study. Two interviews, about 30 minutes each, will be held with both the head-teachers. The timings of the interviews will be decided with the mutual preference of each participant and the researcher.

I have attached the study information sheet, letter of introduction by my supervisor and the consent letters for the participants.

Your permission and support are vital for this study. I look forward to hearing your response if possible, within the next two weeks.

Sincerely,

Kousar Khan

Appendix G: Study Approval



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
(FEMALE) UPPER CHITRAL
PHONE NO.0943470363



PERMISSION CERTIFICATE

Reference to the application, **Mst. Kousar Khan**, student at **Flinders University Adelaide Australia**, is hereby permitted to send her research invitation emails to six of the female Secondary School Head Teachers of District Upper Chitral. She is hereby directed to select two schools; **GGHSS Warijun** and **GGHS Mastuj**. The undersigned allows her to conduct telephonic interviews with two of the Secondary School Head Teachers and to access the following school documents for the fulfillment of her research of Mater Program.

1. Academic Documents. *(Teachers)*
2. Teachers' Attendance Register.
3. Students' Attendance Registers.

(GHAZALA ANJUM)
District Education Officer
(Female) Upper Chitral

Endst: 1597-98 / FNo. EB (F) D/P-01

Dated Upper Chitral the 11 / 05/2020.

Copy forwarded to the:-

1. Principals GGHSS Warijun and GGHS Mastuj.

(Signature)
District Education Officer
(Female) Upper Chitral

Appendix H: Interview Guide



(Semi-Structured Interviews with School Head Teachers)

Biography

1. Can you tell me about your professional background, journey, history? How did you come to this role? How long you have been a leader in this school?

Philosophy and Ethos

2. How do you imagine yourself as a leader? What are your philosophy/ethos, leadership aims, aspirations? What is your style of engaging with the different stakeholders (students, teachers, community, organisation)? How do you want to be seen a leader in the community?

Technical Dimensions

3. What are some of your key priorities for your school/students? Why these priorities are important for you/school?
4. How do you pursue your priorities (priority 1, 2, 3,) or what do you do to achieve your priorities/targets?
5. What are some of the factors that support you in achieving these targets (e.g., target/priority 1, 2, 3.....)?
6. Is your schools open for all students regardless of their background?

7. What types of challenges do you face while try to ensure quality and inclusive education for all?

Appendix I: Urdu Translation of Interview Guide

انسٹریو گائیڈ

(سکول ہیڈ ٹیچرز کے ساتھ نیم ساختہ (semi-structured) انسٹریو یوز)

بایو گرافی

۱۔ کیا آپ اپنی پیشہ وارانہ زندگی، سفر اور ہسٹری کے بارے میں بتا سکتے ہیں؟ آپ کو یہ ڈیڑھ دہائی کیسے ملی؟ اور آپ اس سکول میں ہیڈ مس کے فرائض کب سے انجام دے رہے ہیں؟

فلسفہ اور اخلاقیات

۲۔ آپ اپنے آپ کو کیسا رہنما (لیڈر) تصور کرتے ہیں؟ ایک رہنما کی حیثیت سے آپ کا فلسفہ، اخلاقیات کا بیانیہ، اہداف اور اولین مقصد (vision) کیا ہیں؟ آپ مختلف حصہ داروں (stakeholders) بشمول طلبہ، اساتذہ، کمیونٹی اور سکول انتظامیہ کو کیسے مشغول (engage) رکھتے ہیں؟ اور آپ معاشرے کی نظر میں اپنے آپ کو کیسا لیڈر دیکھنا پسند کرتے ہیں؟

تعمیلی نقطہ

۳۔ آپ کے سکول اور طلبہ کے لیے آپ کی سب سے بڑی ترجیحات کیا ہیں؟ یہ ترجیحات آپ کے لیے اور آپ کی سکول کے لیے اہم کیوں ہیں؟

۴۔ آپ کے ترجیحات کی ترتیب (۱، ۲، ۳، ۴) کیا ہے؟ اور آپ اپنی ترجیحات یا اہداف کو حاصل کرنے کے لیے کیا کرتے ہیں؟

۵۔ وہ کونسے عوامل ہیں جو آپ کو یہ اہداف حاصل کرنے میں معاونت دیتی ہیں (مثلاً اہداف یا ترجیح نمبر ۱، ۲، ۳، ۴)۔

۶۔ کیا آپ کے سکول میں تمام طلبہ کو انکی خاندانی پس منظر سے قطع نظر خوش آمدید کہا جاتا ہے؟

۷۔ تعلیمی معیار اور جامع تعلیم (inclusive education) کو یقینی بنانے کے لیے آپ کو کونسے چیلنجز درپیش ہیں؟