

FEMALE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP IN RURAL AREES OF PAKISTAN



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Lahore

2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By the Grace of Allah I have completed my Masters Dissertation paper. I am deeply grateful to my teachers who helped me, guided me and were a constant source of support throughout my learning experience. I am thankful to all the teachers who shaped me, moulded me for the better and guided me so that I would run my rural schools in a better way and transfer the knowledge I gained from this course all the way to the rural area of District Okara.

I am grateful to Sir Dr. Usman Khalil for encouraging me to enroll in the M.A. E.L.M program. It was indeed a wonderful opportunity that I had the honor to learn from Dr. Usman Khalil's immaculate ocean of knowledge.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Khalid Rasheed, whose words of wisdom coupled with his vast international educational experience made every lesson a unique one and every lecture more interesting than the last one.

I owe a bigger debt of gratitude to Sir Sajid Masood, Chairman of Department of Education, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, the supervisor of the present research study, who guided me at each and every step with devotion and sincerity of heart. It is from Sir Sajid Masood that I learnt what discipline, punctuality and maximum learning time means, even at university level !

I am thankful to Madam Farhat Munir for her brilliant way of teaching, which inspired and motivated me . She is one of those teachers who leave a positive mark on a student's life forever !

I am thankful to my friends and colleagues in the M.A.ELM course, whose insight, thought-provoking questions and valuable input during the lessons made the learning experience more interesting. I thank my friends, Zarina, Ayesha , Zainab, Amir sb , Razzak sb , Haider and Mohammad Imran sb, who were a part of this wonderful journey in the quest for knowledge .

Last, but not the least, words fail me as I express my gratitude to my husband Moazzam Wattoo , who always supported me and stood by my side in this academic endeavor. I cannot thank him enough for understanding when I had to give my time to complete assignments or prepare for exams, the occasions when I was busy in my own schedule and he took my responsibilities. My wonderful boys Ahmad Jamal and Hassan Kamal, my deepest gratitude is for you , your silent understanding when I neglected your duties and had to concentrate on my own education .

My family, my in-laws and my friends, whom I relied on for support and encouragement throughout this Masters program, I thank you from the core of my heart.

It would not have been possible without your love and support !

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Dissertation Paper to my father Javed Umer Khan. I owe my achievements to you, my dear Abu as you always believed in me. It is the love and confidence that you gave me that encouraged and motivated me in challenging times.

As I complete my Masters in Educational Leadership and Management, attaining Merit awards in all semesters, I wish you were here but I know you must be proud of me up in the Heavens too. I wish and pray all daughters were as fortunate as me to have such a loving, supportive and inspiring father !

Abstract

The conceptual debates and empirical studies have persistently stressed upon the role of school leadership in school effectiveness and school improvement. It is known, "Scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership" Leithwood, K.A. and Riehl (2003). This statement suggests that the success or otherwise of any school totally depends upon the school leadership practices.

This study aims to find out educational experiences of female leaders in schools of rural areas of Pakistan. This research is an attempt to explore the barriers and constraints in the working of female educational leaders in the rural community.

In the rural environment many obstacles need to be overcome for female head teachers to reach levels of professionalism and recognition. Exploring the leadership practices in the private schools of rural context would be helpful in identifying the best practices which might assist the newly emerging schools in improvement and effectiveness.

This research has been conducted in qualitative paradigm to measure behavior and construct of female school heads in rural area. The sample selected for qualitative research was purposive. Respondents were four female school heads, selected from the rural area of District Okara, Punjab Province, Pakistan. The tool employed was interview with open-ended questions so that valid and reliable data is collected for research purposes by face-to-face interview technique.

It was observed that in Pakistan, particularly in the rural areas, the educational leadership among females is a challenging job. Lack of professional training for school heads, societal pressures of preconceived notions on the behavior of women in a patriarchal society, juggling home and work, accompanied by other barriers for females hinder the progress of women in work environment.

Pressures from feudal lords and influential politicians in work place, transport problems, religious extremism are additional factors that negatively affect performance.

The current study was intended to explore the challenges faced by the female heads of schools in the rural areas of Punjab, their experiences and their perceptions about the gender discrimination. Two female leaders from government Secondary schools and two from semi-government Secondary schools have been selected. An open ended interview schedule was employed to interview four female Head teachers of the sampled schools. The study was Ethnographic in nature. The respondents were given chance to respond to the interview schedule freely. There were 12 questions in the interview protocol, covering the various dimensions of women leadership, especially the female heads of rural schools.

The major findings that came up were that the women took up the nature of their duties as a challenge, they wore the dress that suited their position they held, they identified their official and domestic tasks, the discriminating scenario does exist but does not hinder or hamper the duties to be discharged.