

Impact Assessment of the School Leadership Development Programme in Andhra Pradesh: A Comprehensive Study

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Abstract- Effective school leadership is a cornerstone of educational transformation, shifting the traditional administrative role of school heads to one of instructional and transformational leadership. This study assesses the implementation and impact of the School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) in the YSR Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh (2022–2025). Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, data was collected from 138 head teachers and principals across primary, upper primary, and high schools using a structured, bilingual questionnaire. The study evaluates the programme's effect on leadership competencies, school learning culture, instructional supervision, and community engagement. Findings indicate that 72% of respondents now prioritize setting a strategic vision, while 74.4% emphasize fostering a joyful, student-centric learning environment. Chi-square analysis revealed that while most leadership perceptions remain uniform across age and gender, significant variations exist based on professional designation and school management type. The study concludes that the SLDP has successfully cultivated reflective, collaborative, and equity-focused leaders, though challenges such as time constraints and a lack of post-training mentoring persist. Recommendations for policy alignment, continuous professional development (CPD), and technological integration are proposed to sustain leadership transformation.

Index Terms— Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Educational Administration, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, School Leadership, SLDP, Transformational Leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

The historical context of school leadership in India has predominantly been viewed through a bureaucratic and administrative lens. However, with the advent of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, educational leadership has been redefined as a catalyst for academic excellence, teacher motivation, and holistic student development. School heads are

no longer mere institutional managers; they are expected to function as instructional leaders shaping the pedagogical direction of their schools.

Recognizing this critical shift, the State of Andhra Pradesh, in collaboration with the National Centre for School Leadership (NCSL), NIEPA, SIEMAT, and Samagra Shiksha, implemented the School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP). The SLDP was conceptualized to systematically prepare school heads to become transformational leaders, operating on the philosophy: "Every Child Learns, Every School Excels." Despite these state-wide capacity-building efforts, empirical evaluations measuring the on-ground translation of SLDP training into school-level practices remain limited. This study addresses this gap by undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the SLDP's implementation within the YSR Kadapa district. By assessing post-training behavioral changes, instructional supervision practices, and community engagement strategies, this research aims to provide evidence-based insights to inform future policy and leadership development frameworks.

A. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the changes in leadership competencies and vision-setting abilities among school heads post-SLDP training.
2. To evaluate the role of school heads in fostering a positive, inclusive, and student-centric learning culture.
3. To assess the impact of SLDP on academic supervision, teacher commitment, and continuous professional development.

4. To identify challenges in SLDP implementation and propose data-driven suggestions for policy enhancement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern educational leadership models—such as instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership—emphasize collaboration, innovation, and equity. Bush (2018) argues that educational leadership is no longer limited to administrative efficiency but now includes building strong school cultures and inspiring teachers. Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2017) reaffirm that leadership is second only to classroom instruction in impacting student achievement.

In the Indian context, the implementation of NEP 2020 and initiatives by the NCSL have laid the groundwork for competency-based leadership. Rajput & Wadhwa (2017) evaluated early SLDP rollouts and found improvements in the articulation of vision and community engagement, though gaps in mentoring remained. Similarly, Sharma & Jain (2020) highlighted the necessity of peer learning groups. However, systemic barriers, including heavy administrative workloads and limited digital literacy among school heads, continue to restrict the full realization of leadership potential (Khullar, 2017; Azim Premji Foundation, 2018).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive survey research design of a non-experimental nature to explore the effectiveness of the SLDP framework.

- Population and Sampling: The population comprised head teachers and school leaders serving in government and aided schools across the YSR Kadapa district, Andhra Pradesh. A purposive sampling technique was employed, resulting in a final sample of 138 school leaders (Primary: 44%, UP: 13.6%, High School: 38.4%, Senior Secondary: 4%).
- Tools for Data Collection: A structured, bilingual (English and Telugu) questionnaire was developed and validated by subject experts. It consisted of two sections:

demographic profiling and a 25-item leadership and program impact assessment aligned with SLDP core components.

- Data Analysis: Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test of independence using SPSS) to examine associations between demographic variables and leadership perceptions.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A. Demographic Profile

The gender distribution of the 138 respondents was highly balanced, with 52.8% female and 47.2% male school leaders. A significant majority of the respondents (73.6%) were aged 46 and above, reflecting a senior workforce. Urban schools represented 64% of the sample, while rural schools accounted for 32%. All respondents (100%) had participated in the SLDP, ensuring uniform exposure to the training program.

B. Key Findings on Leadership Practices

Vision and Strategic Thinking: A dominant 72% of respondents perceived "setting a vision and strategic direction" as their primary role. Furthermore, 51.2% identified vision and strategic thinking as the most critical competencies for effective leadership, indicating a successful conceptual shift from administration to strategic oversight.

Learning Culture and Student Outcomes: When asked about promoting a positive learning culture, 74.4% of leaders prioritized creating a joyful atmosphere with student-centered activities. To positively influence student learning, 73.6% of respondents emphasized ensuring quality teaching time by building strong teacher-student relationships, rather than relying on external interventions.

Teacher Development and Academic Supervision: For academic supervision, 51.2% identified effective communication regarding academic calendar implementation as the essential skill. To foster teacher commitment, 40% of school leaders believed in encouraging teacher autonomy and confidence-building, while 28.8% focused on providing

opportunities for professional growth and recognition.

Community Engagement and Equity: The SLDP's focus on inclusivity was reflected in the data: 40.8% of leaders prioritized providing physical infrastructure for Children with Special Needs (CwSN) and ensuring their participation in all activities. Regarding general community engagement, 28.8% favored community-based learning and organizing national festivals with parent coordination.

C. Inferential Analysis (Chi-Square Testing)

Hypotheses testing via Chi-square analysis yielded the following critical insights:

- **Gender and Age:** Leadership perceptions remained largely consistent across gender and age groups ($p > 0.05$), indicating that professional maturity did not create marked differences in how SLDP roles were interpreted.
- **School Category:** A significant association was found regarding the role of an academic leader ($p = 0.029$). Secondary and senior secondary heads demonstrated a stronger emphasis on instructional supervision compared to primary school heads.
- **Designation:** Significant differences emerged regarding the leader's influence on student learning ($p = 0.029$) and the importance of being a reflective practitioner ($p = 0.008$). Regular Principals and Headmasters exhibited a deeper awareness of their instructional roles compared to In-charge HMs.
- **Management Type:** Institutional management structures significantly affected financial management competencies ($p = 0.004$) and approaches to teacher-student connections ($p = 0.000$).

V. FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Discussion of Major Findings

The SLDP has catalyzed a positive shift in the YSR Kadapa district. School heads increasingly view themselves as transformational change agents. The overwhelming emphasis on vision-setting (72%)

aligns with Leithwood et al.'s (2017) assertion that setting organizational direction is foundational to school improvement.

Furthermore, the focus on distributed leadership is evident, as leaders are actively empowering teachers (40%) rather than relying solely on hierarchical monitoring. However, a critical gap was identified in data-driven decision-making. Nearly 48.8% of respondents felt leaders could make financial and administrative decisions without heavily depending on student data, suggesting that while intuitive leadership is strong, evidence-based planning requires substantial reinforcement.

B. Implementation Challenges

Despite the program's successes, several systemic bottlenecks restrict the full realization of SLDP objectives:

1. **Time Constraints:** Heavy administrative and clerical workloads prevent school heads from dedicating adequate time to instructional leadership.
2. **Lack of Follow-up:** The absence of structured post-training mentoring leads to a drop in the implementation momentum of School Development Plans (SDPs).
3. **Digital Divide:** A subset of leaders, particularly in rural zones, struggle with integrating ICT and digital tools into school governance.

C. Suggestions for Policy and Practice

To ensure the sustainability of leadership transformation, the following interventions are recommended:

- **Institutionalized Mentoring:** Establish a robust follow-up ecosystem involving DIETs and School Leadership Academies to provide on-site coaching and peer-network support.
- **Contextualized Curricula:** Tailor SLDP modules to address the specific socio-economic and infrastructural realities of rural, tribal, and special category schools.
- **Data Literacy Training:** Integrate specialized modules on utilizing assessment data (NAS,

SLAS, FA/SA) for financial planning and remedial pedagogical interventions.

- Integration with CPD: Link SLDP outcomes directly to performance appraisals and career progression pathways to incentivize leadership excellence.

VI. CONCLUSION

The School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) has proven to be a vital intervention in professionalizing school leadership in Andhra Pradesh. The study confirms that SLDP effectively cultivates strategic, reflective, and inclusive leadership competencies among head teachers. The transition from compliance-oriented administration to learner-centric, visionary leadership is well underway in the YSR Kadapa district. However, for these gains to be sustainable, the educational ecosystem must provide continuous mentoring, reduce administrative burdens, and strengthen data literacy. By treating leadership development not as a singular event, but as an ongoing professional journey, the state can ensure that every school is guided by a competent and transformative leader capable of realizing the ambitious goals of NEP 2020.

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