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Be ethical and social: Key attributes for green school principals to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs)

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Abstract---Purpose –The profession of School leadership has changed and improved significantly in past few decades. Educators need to develop an in-depth understanding about how and in what ways, school leadership may contribute in students improved learning experience. This research explores the leadership styles adopted by school principals working in Government and private green schools in Northern India. Provides an insight about how their leadership style helps in performing various roles/tasks like facilitate teachers, ensure their participation in decision-making process, allocation of resources in an efficient manner, create productive and safe teaching and learning environment, formulate suitable policies for positive outcomes, making teaching and learning a remarkable experience for teachers and students in an exemplary manner with their leadership practices. Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative research based approach was adopted using the questionnaire method to collect the primary data. A questionnaire, comprised of choice-based self-explanatory statements was prepared for a sample of 75 schools principals from various Govt. and private Green schools who were performing various leadership roles for at least 5 years. For analysis and interpretation of collected data, Likert Type rating scale was used. Findings – This study revealed that Reflective professionalism is essential for attaining the sustainable development goals of any green school. Unless the schools have an ethical and sociable leadership to strictly follow green practices, the noble concept of green school cannot be transmuted into reality. The present study throws light on

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the attributes of ethicality and sociability of principals and examines the relationship between these two leadership attributes and sustainable development in green schools. Implementation of these attributes by principals of Green schools' helps to expedite and support learning processes in these schools, also the findings of this research showed that these approaches become varied under different circumstances and situations. Research limitations/implications –The study is limited to Govt. and private Green schools of Northern India therefore, findings cannot be generalized. Research implication indicates that in the premises of the Green schools, these attributes of ethicality and sociability of principals and relationship between these two leadership attributes and sustainable development in green school leadership were seen efficacious in bringing positivism in the teaching and learning environment. Practical implications – This research suggests and advocates that comparative studies using similar perspective may be conducted at national and global level to create better understanding of this context to devise suitable plans for Green schools and other educational sectors for creating a symbiotic, conducive and sustainable school culture. Social implications – The results of the study are useful in highlighting the importance of Leadership styles appropriate in promoting effective work culture in educational settings. By prioritizing our comfort and economical growth only, we have compromised with the nature and environment and consequently instigated disturbance in our lives all across the world in different ways. Success is too expensive if achieved at the cost of health and the environment. The significance of the environment needs to be recognized and addressed. In this direction, the concept of green schools has emerged that focuses on an approach towards creating awareness about healthy life through education with a more sustainable future by balancing our well-being and environmental impact. This research is based on various leadership styles implemented by School leaders of Govt. and private Green schools in Northern India from the perspectives of their school in a specific situation and can be extended further to study the perception, involvement and contribution of parents and other stakeholders towards enhancing green school leadership. Originality/value – This paper provides an understanding of how attributes of ethicality and sociability of principals and relationship between these two leadership attributes and sustainable development in green schools' executed by School leaders in Green schools of Northern India is an exemplary practice to create a conducive teaching and learning environment in a school.

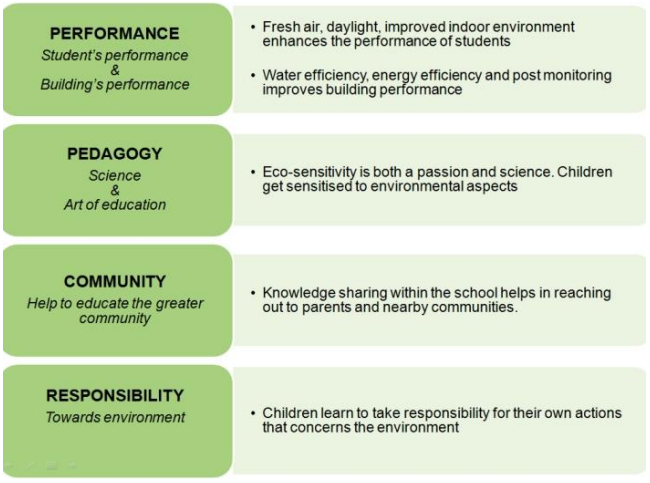
Keywords---green schools, school leadership, educational leadership, ethicality, sociability, sustainable development.

Introduction

Our prosperity is influenced and controlled by nature in different ways. The growing population and excessive exhaustion of limited resources given by nature such as soil, forest, air, water, and energy have caused adverse impacts on society and Earth by disturbing life-supporting biological systems. Considering the importance of sincere efforts to save Earth, it is time to take a call for a global awareness to conserve and protect the Earth's resources. We need to change our attitude and behavior towards sustainability. Since education is an inherent component of sustainable development and a decisive facilitator to empower it, it must be included in our education system at all levels. Governments and educationalists have also started encouraging Green Movement and environmental education.

Green Schools: Ideal Place for Sustainable Development Practices

Sincere and collective efforts are needed to address the massive challenges of population, poverty, food security, environment, human resource, and energy. Thanks to the continuous efforts of governments and National/International agencies, the awareness of environmental education and sustainable development is disseminating among education systems all over. Several educational institutes are shifting to green schools. Upholding the noble objective of accomplishing environmental sustainability goals, the concept of Green School has been adopted by countries across nations as per their educational and cultural perspectives. The categorical focus is placed on designing the entire concept to develop personal & professional attitudes toward optimum usage of natural resources. It is conceptualized with the perfect concern of fulfilling the current generation’s requirements without negotiating with upcoming generations. COVID pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives; economy, technology, health, and the environment however it gave us a lesson that sustainability is the key to survival. Schools and society have numerous direct or indirect advantages from green schools; reduction in water and energy consumption is the most obvious benefit whereas the indiscernible benefit is a sustainable future. Presently, the Indian Green Building Council (Part of the Confederation of Indian Industry- CII) is offering dedicated assistance and reviewing all Green Schools in India. IGBC has classified advantages of Green Schools under the following categories i.e. performance, pedagogy, community, and responsibility:



Source: India Green Building Council (www.igbc.in)

IGBC Green Schools Core Committee provides a rating system to address schools that are inclined to green practices. These practices fall under the classification of Campus Selection and Eco-Friendly School Material, Health & Well-being of children, Quality Green Education, Energy/Water/Waste Management, and Indoor air Quality.

Educational leadership

Earlier the school principal was commonly supposed to be the school administrator only, in the late 20th century, with the escalating demands for higher academic achievement, and sheer answer-ability, the concept of education or school leadership emerged. It was experienced by the educationists that only administration, management and control are not enough. Educational leadership as a substitute for educational administration is the need of the hours. As result, the school administrator's role has been modified in many developed countries, this role has been rephrased and more non-directional tasks have been added. In India also, the study of educational leadership has been in light and placed as an academic discipline in schools, colleges, and universities. The educational leader of the school influences the climate and progress of the school; all educational activities spin around him/her. The principal not only facilitates the essential requirements but also motivates and inspires the school towards achieving the ultimate goals. To be a successful leader, the principal must understand educational sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Leithwood (1999) suggested six major educational leadership styles, *"Moral, Participative, Instructional, Strategic, Managerial, and Transformational approaches"* which seem to have reasonable relevance to the educational leadership, especially to the green school environment. Green School leadership is different from conventional leadership because practicing and modeling sustainability by the transformation of leadership attributes requires specialization in Eco-centric administration and the vision of long-term ecological sustainability.

Ethicality & Sociability as Essential Leadership Qualities of Principal

There has been a rigorous attempt to examine and determine the basic ingredients of good leadership by social psychologists. A principal is expected to possess a modest personality and extraordinary attributes to fit into this job of great accountability. His/her status should have grace along with the qualities like intellectual, passionate and empathetic. An environmental leader should incorporate ethics and moral value system which integrate hi/her with social justice. Reflection of mutual respect and impartiality in resources, rights, and treatment for entire society irrespective of racial, cultural, or religious orientation is a must. Ethicality plays a significant role in educational leadership style. Though it does not influence anyone directly yet puts an enduring effect. It is purely grounded on the value system of any individual. Ethicality contains numerous sub-attributes such as principles, determination, originality, high morale, dignity, truthfulness, and transparency. The ethical leader follows their code of conduct comprising of creditability and integrity. He/she believes in "*Honesty is the best policy*." They are nature lover who believes that nature is God's gift to all of us and we must give our best returns to it. They never compromise with values and are against the manipulation of actual results and the performance of students.

Another remarkable characteristic of an educational leader in the sense of social responsibility. His/her sociability plays a critical role in previewing the realistic picture from the follower's viewpoint. An educational leader should interact with a group of children, parents, and teachers full of empathy and humanity. Parents' concern regarding their children's studies and career goals must be addressed with proficiency and gratitude. The leaders should have social affiliation with welfare, corporate and political groups, and their participation and involvement in social activities enhance their social image in the community. An environmental leader should have a passion for supporting and respecting the environment within the school campus and outside as well.

Review of Literature

Choudhuri, S (2019), conducted a systematic review of 40 articles related to sustainable development in India from 2014 to 2019. This study revealed that there is still a lot of scope for research in the field of sustainable development in the country and many of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) have been unexplored by the researchers. Helen Kopnina (2020) also suggested that numerous challenges are still unaddressed in lines of SDGs, they may be resolved by inclusive economic growth. Filho, W L, Brandli L L, Salvia, & Platje J(2020), attempted to throw light on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2019) throws light on transformations of knowledge towards sustainable development and recognizes existing areas where transformational change is required. Kapoor at el. (2021) highlighted various Indoor Environment Quality (IEQ) parameters related to school education in India. Prashant Thote, and Gowri. S. (2020) studied green schools and emphasized the importance of green schools in the modern Indian education system to encourage and strengthen students' sense of responsibility towards

sustainable environment goals. Sharma (2016), compiled 23 case studies on practices on the greening of schools under Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the book was published by NCERT. Taneja I & Tiwari S (2020) investigated various challenges and limitations faced by school principals regarding leadership qualities, practices and school environment. Khan, S. (2003) studied the impact of certain behavioral and managerial characteristics of school principals on the organizational health of schools.

Research Methodology

The diversified nature of the study required applying an appropriate methodology to study the leadership attributes of green school principals, their leadership styles, and specific practices to meet the objectives of the green concept and sustainable development in schools. To investigate the selected attributes', relationship and impact on sustainable development practices in green schools, the questionnaire method was opted for primary data collection. A questionnaire, comprised of choice-based self-explainable statements was prepared to assemble the required data. To describe the problem and to study the related research work already done in the field of educational leadership, green school concept, and sustainable development, various research papers, and articles were considered by the researchers.

A sample of 75 green schools private and government school principals of North India was taken for the study. These schools were randomly selected out of the best performing green schools in Northern India. The questionnaire was circulated online among 75 principals of selected green schools. Out of distributed 75 questionnaires, only 60 responses were received and found correct; a net of 60 responses were used for analysis. In the first part of the questionnaire, 20 different statements, having a Likert Type rating scale (scored 1 to 5), related to leadership attributes of Ethicality and Sociability (10 statements to each attribute) were given to the respondent green school principals for their opinion. The respondents' perception of themselves or any other principal such as emphasizing the importance of ethicality, the green mission of the school, code of conduct, passion for nature, his/her belief system in social values and integrity, their opinion on honesty in the current education system, were noted. The respondent’s perspective on how the principal thinks about social responsibility, his/her role as a problem solver, conflict resolver, guide, counselor, and welfare organizer; how they sustain a father/mother figure whom everyone listens to and feels confident to approach without any worry for personal and social issues.

In the later part, 10 different statements related to the sustainable development practices in their respective green schools were given to respond. Ethicality and sociability ensure effective implementation of the green concept and sustainable development practices. To study the functional efficacy of sustainable development in green schools, 10 statements related to the sustainable development practices were presented to the respondents. The mean score of all the statements was referred to as Sustainable Development Practice Score for analysis. To analyze the significance of ethicality and sociability and their relationship with sustainable practice in schools, null hypotheses were

conceptualized, and these hypotheses were tested with the help of statistical tools.

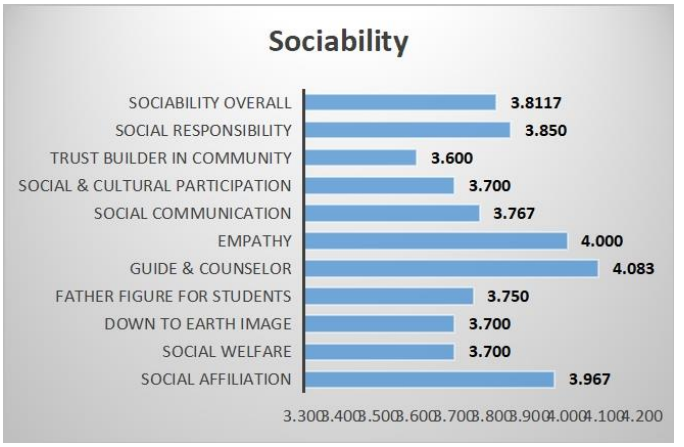
Analysis and Discussion

The mean, SD, and variance of each component regarding the role of ethicality and sociability in an educational leadership style of a principal have been given in the following Descriptive Statistics table and graph.

Ethicality			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Green Mission Statements	3.867	1.1270	1.270
Respect Nature	4.017	1.0167	1.034
Believe in Ethics and Moral Duties	3.750	1.0354	1.072
No Compromise with Social Values	3.683	.9296	.864
Humanity	3.467	1.0809	1.168
Truthfulness and Transparency	4.100	.5431	.295
Self Code of Conduct	3.783	1.1213	1.257
Honesty	3.550	1.1112	1.235
Integrated Social Justice	3.917	.8294	.688
Role Model for Community	3.500	1.1861	1.407
Ethicality Overall	**3.7633**	**.42064**	**.177**

As per the ethicality descriptive table, most of the mean scores are more than 3.5 and the Overall Ethicality mean score is 3.7633 with SD=0.4206, which is high enough to advocate that the Ethicality is significant and determinant attribute of any educational/school leader for sustainable development.

Sociability			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Social Affiliation	3.967	.8227	.677
Social Welfare	3.700	1.0625	1.129
Down to Earth Image	3.700	1.0464	1.095
Father Figure for students	3.750	1.0354	1.072
Guide & Counselor	4.083	.6187	.383
Empathy	4.000	.6378	.407
Social Communication	3.767	.7890	.623
Social & Cultural Participation	3.700	1.0135	1.027
Trust Builder in Community	3.600	1.2101	1.464
Social Responsibility	3.850	.6846	.469
Sociability Overall	**3.8117**	**.40634**	**.165**



As per the sociability descriptive table, most of the mean scores are more than 3.7 and the Overall Sociability means the score is 3.8117 with SD=0.4063, which is high enough to suggest that Sociability is perceived as an important quality of any school leader.

Sustainable Development Practices in Green Schools

The role of certain leadership attributes in all kind of leadership styles is always significant and ultimately influence their behavior. Ethicality and Sociability may contribute to green school principals' leadership behavior. This behavior eventually stimulates their actions towards sustainability and the environment concerns. The status of sustainable development can be measured by the practices and performance in their respective green schools, it also reflects the impact of certain leadership attributes. In this direction, as per the guidelines/standards of IGBC, selected major parameters have been taken into account to model sustainable development practices in green schools. Some of these parameters include Environment Conservation, Green Curriculum/Calendar/Activities, Green Training, Water/Electricity/Fuel/Energy Conservation, Plantation, Ban on Chemical Fertilizers/Pesticide/Plastic, Eco-Friendly Transportation, Waste Management, etc. Statements based upon these parameters were given to respondents to give their opinion on whether these are

followed and exercised in their schools and if yes! then to what extent? The mean score of each statement was calculated and summed up to find Sustainable Development Practice Score.

Sustainable Development Practices			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Green Curriculum and School Green Calendar	3.917	.6712	.451
Green School Infrastructure and Design	4.183	.5365	.288
Green Activities	3.967	.8431	.711
Reduction of Waste Generation and Recycling.	3.933	.9181	.843
Water Conservation	3.750	.8562	.733
Electricity/Fuel/Energy Conservation	3.683	.9654	.932
Plantation	4.133	.5031	.253
No Chemical/Plastic	3.883	.8654	.749
Environment Training	3.800	1.1760	1.383
Eco-Friendly Transportation	3.950	.9284	.862
Sustainable Development Practices	**3.9200**	**.39264**	**.154**

As per the Descriptive Statistics table, we analyze the mean, SD, and variance of various Sustainable Development Practices in green schools, the mean score of SD Practices varies between the wide ranges of 3.6 to 4.2, most of the mean scores are more than 3.8 and Overall Sustainable Development as Social Responsibility mean score is 3.920 with SD=0.39264, this means sustainable development practices are performed exceptionally well. Though the concept of Sustainable Development may not get due attention among the general public as it deserves however, it is perceived and practiced effectively by green school principals.

Relationship between Ethicality & Sociability of Principal and Sustainability Development in Green Schools

The Ethicality and Sociability of green school principals may contribute to leadership behavior and eventually may stimulate their engagements in

sustainability and environmental activities also. We need to find out is there any association or correlation between the principal's leadership attributes of ethicality/sociability and sustainable development practices in Green Schools? To study the relationship between these two, the following null hypotheses Ho1 and Ho2 were formulated (with alternate hypotheses) and tested/verified with descriptive analysis and Bivariate Pearson's Correlation Analysis.

Ho1- There is no positive and significant correlation between Ethicality and Sustainability Development in Green Schools.
Ho2- There is no positive and significant correlation between Sociability and Sustainability Development in Green Schools.

The Bivariate Pearson's Correlation Analysis statistics are given in the table below:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Ethicality	60	3.7633	.42064	.177
Sociability	60	3.8117	.40634	.165
Sustainable Development Practices	60	3.9200	.39264	.154

To examine the correlation between leadership attributes of Ethicality and Sustainability Development in Green Schools, Bivariate Pearson's Correlation test was applied.

Correlations b/w Ethicality & Sustainable Development

		Ethicality	Sustainable Development Practices
Ethicality	Pearson Correlation	1	.312*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015
	N	60	60
Sustainable Development Practices	Pearson Correlation	.312*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	
	N	60	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As per the correlation analysis table, the p-value (0.015) of the significance 2-tailed based on 60 non-missing observations (N=60) is less than the standard value of $p<0.05$. Pearson Correlation Coefficient r* between Ethicality and

Sustainability Development is 0.312, positive (0.25 < | r | <=1) relationship has been found between Ethicality and Sustainability Development, thus the hypothesis Ho1 has been rejected, it indicates that there is significant correlation which is positive however the relationship is found to be weak. It may be claimed that the educational leaders having ethicality are inclined toward the sustainable development and execution of environmental practices more effectively.

Correlations b/w Sociability & Sustainable Development			
		Sociability	Sustainable Development Practices
Sociability	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	60	60
Sustainable Development Practices	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	60	60
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

As per the above correlation analysis table, the p-value (0.000) of the significance 2-tailed based on 60 non-missing observations (N=60) is also below 0.05 ($p<0.05$) and Pearson Correlation Coefficient r* between Sociability and Sustainability Development is 0.468, positive (.4 < | r | <=1). So the hypothesis Ho2 has been disqualified at a 0.05 level of significance and a positive relationship has been found between Sociability and Sustainability Development. It implies that there is a positive moderate correlation between Sociability and Sustainability Development in green schools, these two variables tend to increase together.

The summary of correlation analysis has been tabulated as given below:

Correlation Summary					
	Pearson Correlation	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Significance**	**Hyphothsis**	**Relationship**
Ethicality	.312	.015	Yes	Rejected	Positve Weak
Sociability	.468	.000	Yes	Rejected	Positve Moderate

Conclusion

The correlation analysis and hypothesis testing and outcomes of the study suggest that ethicality and sociability influence principal's leadership behavior which leads to dedicated and structured actions toward environmental practices in green schools to achieve sustainable development goals. Ethicality motivated principals to believe in their value system and trust in nature and earth; producing truthful and satisfactory outcomes. Sociability stimulates a sense of responsibility towards society. Being social with belief in ethics and values is the key for all green school leaders to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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