

A Female Professional Development Teacher's Journey in the Northern Areas of Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper presents a learning journey of a female Professional Development Teacher (PDT) in the context of Northern Pakistan. This journey highlights difficulties for a female PDT in constructing her image as a leader or a change agent in a traditionally male dominated society.

The major challenge was difficulty of putting the theory of leadership into the realities of the context. However, the supporting factors enabled her to establish herself as a leader. Supporting factors were guidance from the Head of Professional Development Center, North (PDCN), family support, continuous theory into practice, relationships, reflection on action, and colleagues' support. Carrying out PDCN's pragmatic activities provided her a leadership role. She led a diversified group of people and her empathetic approach at the grassroots level, her democratic leadership style, her reflective practice, and interpersonal skills gradually proved her ability in the society and showed that females can also be good leaders.

From this experience she draws the processes and strategies for a female leader in a rural male dominated society, which could help others to learn. Based on her learning she gives recommendations to future female PDT's and other institutions which are striving to develop female leaders in the region.

Introduction

I am Safida Begum, from the upper part of Hunza called Gojal, near the Chinese border and one of the very remotest areas of Northern Areas. I was born and brought up in the area.

Northern Areas is geographically isolated and climatically very cold. The high Karakoram mountain range naturally divides the region into different valleys and makes it difficult to access information, communicate and interact with other regions of Pakistan. The cold weather and snow in winter makes the place icy and freezing. That delays transportation and easy movement within the region and to other parts of the country.

If the Karakoram Highway is blocked and the weather remains cloudy (as mostly it does in fall and winter) accessing goods and necessities of life from the down part of the country becomes dreadful for the people in the region. The supply of gas, vegetables, flour and other necessities of life becomes difficult (as the area lacks variety of production). Interestingly, the prices of remaining goods get higher so it creates a clash between the nature and human beings, and life becomes harsh and challenging. These harsh realities of the context have also added to the difficulties of developmental processes in education, health and social mobility. The area is lacking in many aspects of life such as good institutions, industries, organizations and tourism corporations to meet the needs of the majority of the people in the region and for promoting social, educational, health and economical development.

Females are the most affected population in terms of 13% literacy rate, indoctrination from male counterparts, lack of involvement and participation in the decision-making process, treatment at home and social stigma in the society. Men make decisions and lead women in the society in terms of providing their basic needs and requirements at home. Ultimately, it makes women dependent and hence they lack skills in facing the real situation. They get fewer opportunities to enhance skills and confidence in proving themselves in the society.

Consequently, they have low status in the society, and they face “social stigma” and “gender discrimination” along with harsh attitudes towards them. Moreover, they get less attention for their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs so they remain underprivileged. (Mian, 2000, p. 21). Discrimination starts from food distribution within the family, where the girls eat at the end, especially in rural Pakistan. In most cases, “women are not encouraged to leave home, let alone pursue higher education” (Ali, 2005, p. 3). Research indicates that more girls than boys die infancy. Moreover, Pakistan’s poor position internationally is seen in UNDP’s gender related Development Index (GDI) 2000, where Pakistan currently ranks 135 out of 174 countries.

Likewise in Afghanistan, ethnicity is a critical issue and has further strengthened the controversy over female education as respective leaderships take up various positions on this issue ((Purzand, 1999, p.90). Furthermore, the male leaders meet in *loya jirgas* (tribal councils) to debate and decide about important local and national issues and they are historically very conservative in their approach to the role of women in the society.

In contrast, in other parts of the world Leathwood (2005, p. 387) says, “The future is female and that has become a slogan of our times in the UK. Changes in the global economy, the demise of the UK manufacturing industry and the rise in service occupations have dramatically changed the nature of the labor market in this county, and opened up new opportunities for women in the workplace”.

The above information indicates that there is a genuine issue of females and their leadership roles in our society for not being able to participate in decisions making, strategic planning, leading institutions, discussing issues, resolving conflicts and solving problems. As a result, female leadership roles are neither accepted nor realized and their skills are underestimated.

In order to begin to overcome this problem, AKES, P initiated sending females to different institutions. The Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development (AKU- IED) is one of the major players in capacity building through its innovative M.Ed. program and I was one of the female candidates to get admission to the university.

By the end of the two year intensive M.Ed. program, as a graduate of AKU-IED, I was labeled as a PDT (Professional Development Teacher) so my journey starts from the there.

Journey of a female PDT

My turbulent life

The last module in the M.Ed., ‘Re-entry’ was very interesting though confusing, because I was closer to a destination that gave me happiness, but was not confident about implementing new ideas and teaching strategies. It raised lots of questions for which I had to seek answers and that created turbulence in my mind.

For example, I observed a great motivation among our faculty members at AKU-IED. They used phrases like ‘*PDTs as change agents*’; ‘*problems are our friends*’; *change is a slow process*’ and ‘*believe in process not the product*’. Moreover, observing Michel Fullan on video, his enthusiasm and his talking about change and improvement, and reflecting back on my experiences were all confusing moments for me. It sounded like we are all in a hurry to bring about a quick change, so I felt something was going to happen or everything was going to change.

There were other two confusions: 1) Initiating the theory of leadership into the practices of a leader in the realities of the context, and 2) Constructing a new image of female leadership in the traditional area.

Moving towards destination

When we left for the airport, each one of us had a great expectation, confidence, faith and enthusiasm but at the same time we were confused about the complexity of the context. There was a great fear to initiate change in the rigid and traditional

leadership culture and practices in the society. But on the other side of the picture, we were excited and proud of our achievements e.g. coming together to achieve something and leaving together after achievements. That positive feeling got stronger when the driver said, “*Dr. Baker (Director of IED) told me, to drive smoothly and carefully because it is our precious group as we have spent lots of money to develop them*”. This comment made us fly without wings to overcome our fear and we developed confidence that we were in safe hands wherever we would go. It emotionally bonded us together as a team.

Stepping stones for change

Personal life

When we reached home, my younger daughter came to meet us. I went to my eldest daughter at Aga Khan Academy, Karimababd, 35 kilometers away from home. She was keen to go home but she was not allowed as she had to follow the rules to avail the weekends or holidays. She kept on crying and I did not know what to do. So my frustration with the realities had started and I had to face and deal with them.

Gradually, I found I could not work in Gilgit because my family was suffering and my husband did not allow me. So I reflected, how can I resolve this issue as a PDT? Suddenly, I remembered the PMI strategy (plus, minus and interesting). So I worked on both options such as working in Gulmit or Gilgit, and shared with my husband. He looked at me as he was surprised that I knew the positive and negative things in advance. He allowed me to take the decision about where to work which was good, but he kept a condition not to disturb the children and him, rather stay with his relatives in Gilgit and go on weekends because he wanted to have his authoritative role as a leader of the house.

So I felt an ease that the PMI had worked well, that gave me a confidence but I had to think, what to do next because I was taking a risk to shift my family. There were constraints concerning physical, social and emotional security. However, staying with relatives was also problematic for the kids’ education and me. For instance, once I was going to leave for Gilgit after a weekend, so I found my 9 years old son on the road waiting for a van before me. This forced to take the risk of shifting my family. However, it took six months to re-assemble my family, each step was hard, and I had to play an advocacy role to motivate my mother, husband, kids, relatives and other relevant people in the society.

Professional life

Coming to my professional life, I involved myself with the team of PDT’s to initiate the ‘Needs Analysis Survey’ (NAS). Facing different people in different circumstances, familiarizing myself with the geographical and climate conditions in different regions and interacting with different people in different cultures enabled me to find my way. For example, once we (three female PDT’s) wanted to go to Chupurson Valley but the head of FEO did not allow us, saying, “*Wahan jana ooratoon ke bus ki bath nahey*” (going to that place is impossible for females). When we insisted he said, “*If*

you give me in writing, I can allow you otherwise, I can't". So we gave in writing that we are taking the risk for a professional reason. These experiences taught me the common problems for female PDT's, taking risks for a leadership role and handling the people and the natural constraints. I realized if I have to survive and make a difference, I have to play an active role.

Professional concerns and uneasiness

The NAS made me a critical thinker, reflective, stronger and more confident. The findings gave me a real picture of the area and its educational needs. I realized the area requires enormous attention for educational change from teachers to head teachers, heads of FEO, ADEOs (management), directors and heads of institutions, community and parents because bringing about change in a classroom situation could look like change for a while but it cannot be sustained. Fullan is famous for saying "All change is not improvement but all improvement is change".

For instance, schools were working in isolation focusing on covering the annual syllabus, passing examinations and reporting to the director, office or education department. The focus of school visits from management side was to identify weaknesses and transfer the staff to far flung areas as a punishment, rather than for improvement. The way of dealing with subordinates was a 'bosship' approach rather than a pedagogical or transformational leadership that scrutinized their creativity and openness for cooperation and collaboration.

Though AKES, P had decentralized administrative and academic power, still the head of FEO had little autonomy. This reflected gaps at the infrastructure level in public and private sectors. Similarly, dealing with the staff by the head teachers itself was threatening, and generally authoritative and status conscious. They found problems but did not demonstrate an effective way of dealing with them, which hindered the development of human relationships and respect at the workplace. In order to join all these strings together and bring about a real change and improvement, we needed a broader perspective of change. We needed strategic planning for quality leadership to initiate change for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. For that we needed to try out different strategies and ideas and see what works along with why and how to influence the educational policy.

Institutional role

The first initiative taken from PDCN was the 'Stakeholders' Conference' in 1999. The head of PDCN gave us major roles in dealing with the higher authorities from government, private and AKES, P management and heads. The directors from AKU-IED and the head of PDCN's friendly behavior, delegating tasks, discussing issues and respecting our self-esteem, portrayed us as people who were important. It gave us a leadership role to lead with conference, which was a hallmark in my career in terms of my motivation, interest, commitment, devotion, determination and confidence for change as a change agent in the real context. So later, whenever I started taking initiatives I forgot I am a woman, rather I tried to work as a professional.

Combination of WSIP and CEM (CE:ELM)

My prior experience as a head teacher led me to take the facilitator's role in the Certificate in Educational Management (CEM) program from 2000 to work with the senior faculty of AKU-IED, Karachi. The main purpose of this program was to develop head teachers' "indigenous leadership and management practices". Gradually, I took over the responsibility for coordinating the course from 2002 onwards in terms of planning, developing the handbook, implementing the program, monitoring, following up CPs in the field, providing them further support and evaluating at the end of the year.

Similarly, I had to work for the Whole School Improvement Program (WSIP) in schools (see Appendix A for a summary of schools I worked with). I worked with students, teachers, head teachers and parents as follows:

Students in the real classroom situation to demonstrate different approaches to teaching and learning;

Teachers on co-planning, demonstration, observation, feedback and resource development in schools;

Head teachers on facilitating CE:ELM and practically helping them on their indigenous leadership and management practices such as facilitating in conducting staff meetings, encouraging to discuss on issues in the school, managing human and physical resources, building teams, and reflecting on practices; and

Parents and communities for mobilizing parents and communities to participate in the school development plans.

I initiated mothers/parent days and in the evolving process we found that the children in nursery/ kachi classes were the most neglected students in terms of lack of attention to their social, moral, emotional and intellectual developmental needs. The head of PDCN provided physical support and enhanced my interest, capabilities and creativity in handling and teaching small children through the concept of 'One Class One Teacher'.

I also conducted about 25 workshops every year on generic aspects of teaching (e.g. how do children learn, multiple intelligences, assessment), and subject areas such as language (English and Urdu), social studies etc.

So the combination of CE:ELM and WSIP provided me the opportunity to facilitate teacher learning and reflect on my prior practices as a head teacher. It also caused me to modify my perception and practice in the school to bring about more effectiveness in my approaches. For instance, the baseline data enabled me to identify the problems and remaining in the school for the whole day, involving myself with the daily routines of the school, enabled me to explore the genuine issues and take actions.

Once I was observing a teacher and I found a student in the classroom was not only mentally disturbed but also disturbing the others. The teacher tried to deal with the

child politely but he never stopped, and the class was over so she left for another period. It developed my curiosity to see what the child did in another teacher's classroom, and how that teacher dealt with it. Interestingly, I found the same issue. I wondered what could be done to improve the situation in the classroom so it could provide an enabling environment for the child. However, I decided to explore why the particular child was disturbed even though he seemed quite normal physically. The teachers also seemed to be very polite as it was a private community school and physical punishment was illegal. But when I moved to another classroom, I heard the teacher's saying loudly, "Kioon parashan kertay ho (why do you disturb me?), meanwhile, I also heard slapping the child.

I learned the differences between teachers' beliefs and practices. I wanted to explore the issue and found out that there are so many reasons related to the family, culture and attitudes. So it really required a leadership role to resolve the issue. Therefore, I had to take it as one of my first priorities and work on that which gave me great success. It gave the staff, the parents and community a hope that somebody listens to their concerns and helps them. Comer et al., (2004, p. 55) rightly says, "If people have no hope, they will not even notice that the current situation can be changed". Working on the issue, the head teacher, and the staff started realizing the importance and gradually started identifying other issues related to teaching and children's learning outcomes. I worked as a critical friend, showed sensitivity to the culture, respected individual's personal and professional issues and diversified attitudes. I guided them and shared my own personal examples in overcoming problems. So developed a trusting relationship among us and slowly I became an important member of their staff and part of the school culture. Despite not being a staff member, I was one of the important people in the school. This experience in the first year of WSIP and CE:ELM gradually helped me gain confidence and practical experience.

I also felt a gradual proving of my abilities and capabilities in the specific society with a diversified group of people because the facial expressions and the tune of parents changed. Mothers met with me warmly, kissed my hands according to the local culture and prayed for me and my family. Similarly, the community members and BOG (board of governors) appreciated my commitment and motivation for change, the staff did not hesitate sharing their professional issues to seek help in planning, developing and delivering the content. So I played a multiple role as a teacher, a guider, a facilitator, initiator, problem solver, decision maker and a role model among them. It developed a trust relationship among us to work together. I learned to develop teams, share information, communicate effectively, manage time and human and physical resources, monitor the progress and critically reflect and plan.

At every step of WSIP, I learned from the context, the staff and their needs and tried to incorporate this in the program. So I noticed creativity in my approaches for working in all 32 schools.

The theoretical input and the practical work in the school provided me occasions to put the theory into practice and link the practice with the theory. For instance, we taught in the CE:ELM program about how to conduct effective meetings, develop teams, deal with conflicts, plan, monitor and evaluate the progress. I tried to facilitate the meetings with the head teachers in developing agenda, circulation of minutes in

advance, and leading or facilitating, delegating task for notes taking, prepare reports for meeting and after decisions, I encouraged taking responsibility for action. Then I encouraged the head teachers of the schools to play the same role, which helped them to see and practice. Gradually, I let the head teachers take decisions and have meetings and share if they faced any problem. That not only helped them to enhance participation but it also gave them empowerment and an autonomy to continue practicing and reflecting. Moreover, it changed their style of leadership from authoritarian to democratic and reduced the status quo culture in the schools.

Similarly, I sat with the teachers during tea breaks or free periods to co-plan, discuss, prepare materials from the low and no cost for teaching and reflecting on the sessions. It always kept me engaged in thinking, reflecting and modifying plans to bring effectiveness in my practices. So the practice went on in a cyclical way. It not only gave me confidence in relating the ideas and practices with the literature but also motivated me in gaining knowledge, skills and modifying attitudes.

My practice in schools was focused on six areas of improvement to provide a conducive learning environment for children for their holistic development;

1. teaching and learning,
2. leadership, management and administration,
3. community participation,
4. resource development and usage,
5. curriculum and staff development,
6. social, emotional and moral development and children and health education

Similarly, Comer et al., (2004) also suggests, 'Six developmental pathways' (such as physical, cognitive, psychological, language, ethical) for incorporating in planning for change and improvement. So in order to develop children socially, emotionally, physically and morally, the leadership plays a significant role to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Reflective sessions

Connectivity

The head of PDCN visited schools and supported us in terms of demonstration, observation and feedback. Moreover, she arranged reflective sessions to discuss issues and strategies that enabled me to work, reflect, and find solutions. It also gave me a realization that all of us as a team are learners and all of us have strengths and areas for improvement. For example, each one of the PDT's had different positions in schools and institutions, taught different subjects so we were facing difficulties in teaching other subjects, and some in teaching a different level of students. That difference brought variety in our reflective sessions and we gave suggestions to each other according to our area of interest. This experience brought us together under one umbrella. So we were connected to each other to learn and improve ourselves.

Contribution for other countries

Learning within the realities of the school context also enabled me to facilitate CE:PE (Certificate in Education: Primary Education) for Dhaka, Bangladesh and Khorogh, Tajikistan through AKU-IED's platform. It facilitated me and gave me an exposure to practice my learning in these contexts, which enabled me to reflect on my strengths and areas for improvements. The low cost and no cost materials and my practical work exhibited a good image of leading the teams and facilitating according to their contextual realities.

International visiting scholar

This richness in my experience also enabled me to obtain an international visiting scholarship fellowship program at the University of Kansas, USA. My sponsor Mr. Wint A Winton and his family did not only looked after me but also facilitated me to get an access to six lower primary schools and study a research on school leadership, attend board and district education's meetings. Moreover, I attended masters' and Ph.D classes such as staff development and evaluation, American reforms, and school finance to gain some theoretical insights. I also gave presentation to the faculty, staff and students of KU on, "*Education is everything; A Woman's Journey in Pakistan*".

These experiences gave me a meaning to understating different cultures, and share my own experiences in a multicultural setting. I learned, as human beings we are biologically different from each other but one common thing among us is our feelings and emotions. We develop positive feelings when we use acceptable social and moral values. Moreover, this experience enhanced the horizon of my thinking to look at things in a broader perspective as a female leader.

Challenges

Challenges are part of life generally and professional life specifically. I faced lots of personal and professional problems as follows:

- **Male dominated leadership.** It was very difficult to change people's perception about change and improvement. Many times, people challenged me e.g. giving examples from the failures of innovations of other institutions such as AKES, P and Government department, argued for minor issues, and debated for unnecessary point of view. For instance, once we conducted an excellent workshop for the head teachers, and heads of FEO and EDO, and everybody appreciated it. When it was time for suggesting further improvement, some CP's suggested the female PDT's should wear '*dopatta*' (scarf to cover the hair).
- **Resistance.** Interestingly, different forms of resistance were visible in working with the multicultural settings. For example 'burning out' or when I talked about change and improvement, 'keeping quiet' and 'ignoring', 'gigging and 'excusing'. While some showing interest for learning, others 'followed quietly'

In order to deal with them, I had to use diplomacy and interpersonal skills to avoid conflicts and find my ways to move ahead.

- **High expectations.** Traveling in a white Land Rover and working under the umbrella of AKU-PDCN enhanced my status in the society. It created a pride and ownership for having such opportunity for a female, but on the other hand it invited jealousy. For example, when I tried to motivate stakeholders, I got responses such as: *'You come to school in 100,000 rupees Land Rover so you feel it is easy but actually it is not easy to change'*, *'You have got high salary so you can afford time and resources but how could we manage as we get only ----- (Rs. 500 – 4000)*, *'You have got funds now, when it will finish you will also forget talking about change and improvement'*. However, these powerful comments led me to critical thinking in continuing the practices for change. Similarly, it also raised family and relatives' expectations, which I could not afford. These comments always pressurized me but I had to keep in mind the institutional mission and targets so had to listen, smile, keep quiet or persuade and advocate.
- **Higher officials' perception for change.** It remained a constant constraint in dealing with the higher academic responsible people. Their narrow vision and lack of professional understanding for quality of teaching and learning, never allowed them to take the change in a broader perspective. They always took the change on ad hoc basis e.g. transferring teachers and head teachers remained one of the major issues. This reflected a huge gap in the infrastructure of the school system in bringing about improvement.
- **Lack of support.** I found it very difficult to leave behind my children. Whenever, I remained on field based support or other official tasks, I remained under pressure with children after my Mom's death but my children supported me in fulfilling my tasks.
- **Financial crisis.** When I compared the amount of work with my financial needs I found less fairness. I could not afford to take my children for any sort of outing, nor could they go to visit friends or relatives and most of the time, it was difficult to feed them properly. So it limited their positive thinking and respect for my institution.
- **Geographical and climate conditions.** It remained a natural barrier on my way to improvement. I traveled for 13–20 hours to Islamabad, 6 for Skardu, 2-3 for Hunza but the difficulty increased whenever the road was blocked or the weather changed. Schools lacking heating facilities also affected my health. For instance, once I was observing a Kachi class for the baseline survey. The door and window were closed, and 60 students were sitting on small local made individual benches in the filthy environment. I could not interrupt because it was a baseline study. It was windy and very cold with the door open and this made me sick for three days.
- **Religious clashes.** Believing in diversity, I always encouraged my children to behave well and make friendship with other communities but I found it very difficult when my son's friends threatened him to discontinue his relationships with other communities. Moreover, the religious clashes generated political clashes and a curfew, so were to stuck at home without proper food and other necessities of life.

Learning

The physical appearance, social status and natural emotional attachment with children, family and relatives make a woman leader weaker in the society. This hinders her ability and confidence but if she gets some physical and moral support she can boost her confidence. If trusted then she is likely to give extra commitment, devotion and determination because she feels honored and that leads her to higher motivation, positive competition and clearer vision. Once that vision develops she tries her best to transform herself and the society.

Exposure from grassroots to national and international levels enables the PDT's to initiate, internalize and sustain the change process. The exposure of M.Ed. at IED picks them up to a different level where they get aspirations and find role models, which helps them to make linkages from the theory to practice and practice to theory such as the realities of school context to the literature. It always keeps their mind engaged in reflection, planning, implementation, observation, reflection and modification of planning. So this cyclical way of reflection on action and in action, makes the PDT's professionally stronger. Once the PDT grows stronger in professional life she feels confident in leading others in that direction with her high spirit. Therefore, change and improvement becomes possible and her image as a female leader generates change in peoples' notions, perspectives and social norms in society.

Personal values. Personal values also count in a leadership position because in a leadership role one has to deal with human nature. We need to learn individual differences, their attitudes and their moral values. In order to have a pedagogical leadership role one has to show flexibility, honor colleagues, appreciate small successes, provide practical support and have sharing and caring attitudes. Moreover, showing sensitivity to the local culture, taking self responsibility and delegating tasks or empowering others enables team to make a shared decision that leads to trust building among teams. When that happens, the door for cooperation and collaboration never closes. It leads to an empathetic approach towards human beings, you love working with them and they love working with you. So the two-way process enhances respect for each other and enjoyment for learning that leads to schools as learning communities.

Identification of potential in females. I learned that the ground realities for females at home are still similar rather than a drastic change. The current scenario, created from donor agencies and other NGOs working on gender, has threatened the less educated husbands. When potential is noticed in their wives, instead of providing support, they are indoctrinated to remain in their social and emotional roles, which they never ever come out from. Ultimately it hinders their abilities and skills. So in order to crystallize their abilities, enhance human and social capital, one needs to have a critical eye and contextual knowledge and skills in identifying those females for their development.

Patience for change. We believe that change is a slow process. Therefore, change requires a lot of patience to achieve the organizational and personal goals. Dealing with diversified human nature is always challenging so one has to keep that in mind for initiating change.

Recommendations

Based on my individual learning, as a female leader in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, I suggest the institutions and organizations that are eager to develop female leadership should consider the following:

- **Develop capacity:** develop females' professional understanding through an intensive professional course (e.g. M.Ed or Ph.D). When they return, it might be a good idea to provide her a platform to practice her learning in order to gain practical experience. Apart from that she should also get exposure to the current educational changes through national and international conferences, seminars to re-charge her abilities, and skills to sustain her motivation.
- **Empowerment:** very few females contribute in leadership positions. It might be good idea to give her status and position to continue her practices and sustain her motivation because generally females are not considered nor accepted as leaders so it becomes difficult to handle her status at home, workplace and in the society.
- **Fair mindedness:** male counterparts have been heading the majority of the organizations and institutions. When the donor agencies provide funds for gender equity, they also feel a threat. Therefore, I noticed that they lie in stating that 'there is no potential female candidate'. So it might be a good idea if PDC's encourage females in their courses to develop their professional expertise so the females could be able to take part in open competitions for admissions, rather than depending on only the institutions to reduce favoritism.

Conclusion

My journey from a PDT to a professional female leader was challenging and difficult but at the same time, interesting and rewarding. Being a female from a male dominated society, I had less confidence and faith in my abilities, skills and capabilities. However, the institutional support enabled me to take risks, face challenges, integrate my learning before and during M.Ed. and practice those in the context enabling me to contextualize, internalize, and institutionalize the theories and practices.

My constant reflection, critical thinking and practices made me stronger day by day and enabled me to prove myself as a female leader in the context. The close attention, celebrating our small successes and encouragement from my institutions (PDCN and AKU-IED) and collective reflection and shared decisions helped me to prioritize the institutional goals and mission. So I worked with a high spirit to translate the vision of PDCN into the realities of the school context, which did not only help me to develop myself but it also made a difference in the projects schools of WSIP.

The combination of CE:ELM and WSIP programs enabled me to get exposed to the current theories of leadership and running the WSIP program helped me to practice the theory into practice. Moreover, it also provided me a vehicle to develop professional understanding, speak with confidence and give examples from the

literature which depicted a professional approach in the society to influence peoples' or stakeholders' thinking.

So finally, I would like to thank PDCN and AKU-IED for giving me the confidence and the faith which I value as a treasure. It might have been difficult for me in that the traditional leadership approach under-values females' expertise. If your constant encouragement, professional support and guidance would have not been there I would not have succeeded. I hope you will enable me to continue my journey to another destination.

Thanks.

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Appendix A

Summary of my Contribution for WSIP Schools

S.No	Systems	Numbers	WSIP year 1 /Follow up 2	Year	Duration
1	Private	01	WSIP pilot program	1999	3 months
	Government	02			
	AKES, P	01			
2	Private	01	WSIP Year 1	2000	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	01			
3	Government	01	WSIP + follow up year 2000 school	2001	1 year
	AKES, P	01			
4	Private	01	Follow up	2002	1 year
	Government	04			
	AKES, P	02			
5	Private	01	WSIP	2003	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
6	Private	01	Follow up and support	2004	5-6 months
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
7	Private	01	Coordinated WSIP	2005	03
	Government	06			
	AKES, P	01			
	Total schools	32		1999-2005	