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THE INFLUENCE OF A WHOLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ON THE VALUE ORIENTATION OF A HEAD TEACHER IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF GILGIT BALTISTAN, PAKISTAN

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Introduction

The pivotal role of head teacher's personal values in educational leadership and administration is an incontrovertible reality. As captain of the ship, the head teacher has to accommodate and stabilize the value-complex environment of a school in order to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency. In dealing with the values and value-laden conflicts of the other stakeholders, the head teacher's own personal values come into action. In this regard, Johnson, Mac Creery and Castelli (2000) maintain that, "Headship can clearly be seen not as some technical exercise but as being about social, moral and educational values and their playing out in action" (p. 400). Indeed, many would further argue that values act as powerful motivators or filters (Law, Walker and Dimmock, 2003) which predispose head teachers toward seeing situations in certain ways and taking certain courses of actions.

In the developing countries like Pakistan the technological squeeze of the world has given birth to a situation where on the one hand, these societies desire to uphold the identities passed to them by their early generations and on the other hand they fancy getting maximum benefit out of the global market economy (Sapre, 2000). Gilgit Bultistan, in Pakistan, is one such region which is situated in the middle of the world's mightiest mountain ranges of Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindukush, consequently making life difficult and remote for the local inhabitants. The population resides in the scattered villages alongside the various glacier waters and pasture lands and make their living from subsistent farming. Elaborating on the peculiar socio- cultural environment of this region, Wood (2006) maintains, "Identities and solidarity which are so important as ingredients of survival in these remote areas, are also featured of kinship, clan and language. Thus alongside these differences of sect (and some villages can be mixed between different sects), linguistic grouping are significant" (p. 35). Hence, in the overall societal culture a high premium is placed on ethical and moral values firmly grounded in religion, kinship, clans and linguistic identities. Mass education only came within reach of the contemporary generation for this multi dialectic, and multi cultural mountain community. Despite being illiterate, the older age generation is exceedingly serious about educating the younger generation. As all of these villages do not enjoy the privilege of having higher schooling facilities, consequently, a majority of the

parents send their children to the central town of Gilgit and surrounding schools like the one in which this study has been conducted.

Arguably, deeming values as social construct, new knowledge and experiences can change value patterns (Johansson, 2004) in accordance with the culture and context of the school in which the principals exercise their leadership and management. In this sense the dynamic nature of these principals' personal values cannot be neglected. Pirsig's (1991) as cited in (Begley, 2001) elaborates on the conception of dynamic and static values in the novel *Lila*. Building on the example of the individual, who hears a piece of music and increasingly likes it day to day, Pirsig illustrates the dynamic nature of a value. This dynamism in personal values transpires in a social context. Indeed some would further argue (Begley, 2001) that values emerge within the individual's psychology as well as from his/her interaction with collective groups, organizations and societies. In this sense, profession is one such area where a person's personal value orientation is shaped and reshaped.

Perhaps, the professional development and leadership improvement initiatives ultimately influence the personal value acquisition and orientation of the school principals. Huber, (2004) maintains that, "In a world of changing values and a broad range of different values, the development for educational leadership must not be subject to a technocratic management-oriented paradigm, but should be based on a value-centered paradigm" (p 679). Plausibly, one such school improvement program is the Whole School Improvement Program (WSIP), a school based intervention program of Professional Development Centre North (PDCN), aimed at enhancing the quality of school education in the remote mountainous regions of Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan. This program has been employed in nearly hundred schools of this mountain region for the last decade with outstanding success stories. It chiefly focuses on six major components of school improvement namely: quality of teaching and learning, leadership, management and administration, curriculum enrichment and staff development, community participation, building, accommodation and resources and social and moral development and health education. This integrated intervention in the target schools continues for a full academic year. The head teacher of the target school plays a vital role in the WSIP intervention as the agent of change and the leader of future improvement initiatives. Hence, the enhancement of leadership and management capacities and capabilities of such head teachers is considered as an integral component of this program.

Lord and Hall's (2005: 592) as cited in Branson, (2007) claims that there is little leadership research into 'how surface features like behavior and deeper structures like values can both be changed, and together drive skill development' (p227).

In response to this challenge, this study reckons schools as value-laden even value-saturated places, and explores how the professional development initiative of WSIP influences the personal value orientation of the head teacher in the particular culture and context of Gilgit Bultistan of Pakistan.

Literature Review

The contemporary literature highlights the critical importance and influence of values on educational leadership. Leithwood and Steinbach, (1991) maintain that, "What principals do depends on what they think. And what they think is a product of interactions between their environments and their unique intellectual biographies, beliefs, values, dispositions, and traits". Johansson, (2004) considers values as the mental map that guides an individual's actions and thoughts and affects actions, which in turn, influence the thoughts and actions of others. Others would further argue, (Norberg and Johansson, 2007; Hodgkinson, 1999; Law, Walker and Dimmock, 2003) that values are an integral component and a critical necessity for any successful head teacher which ultimately act as filters through which they, see and perceive the situations in their schools and probably steer actions taken and, in turn, have an impact on how the leadership profession is performed.

Apart from this unequivocal influence of values on leadership practices, Richmon (2003) poses an important question by maintaining that, while "Values have entered the collective conscience of scholars of educational administration and leadership, what values are and how they should be studied remains a disputed issue" (p. 45). Reflecting on Richmon's point of view, a pertinent question arises – how are these values acquired, shaped and reshaped in the personality of an individual? In response to this question, Begley, (2001) maintains that, "Values are perhaps predominantly acquired from more collective sources: family, friends, peers, acquaintances, a profession, organizations and formal associations, the community, social culture, and through the transcendental" (p. 363). In this regard he suggests an onion model to elucidate the various sources of values. It illustrates how values can be derived from multiple external and internal environmental sources. This model is fundamentally based on the argument that values are predominantly acquired from more collective sources which he calls "the arenas of administration". According to Begley (2001), "These are the interactive environments within which valuation processes and by extension, administration occur" (p. 362). There are also important interactions that take place within these seven identified arenas.
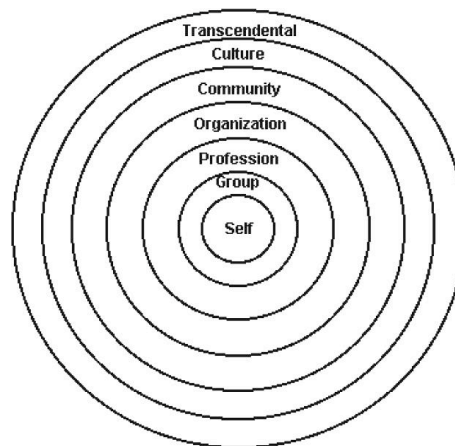

Figure 3: Begley's "Onion" Metaphorical Model

The individual as a separate entity is placed at the centre of this "onion" metaphor. It explains the importance of the individual in exerting a potentially unique influence within the social or organizational context. It also represents the potentially deepened influence of one individual when he or she is a leader. The second ring signifies the arena of groups, which comprises of various collectives such as the family, peers, friends and other connections. The third ring corresponds to the profession, a more formal arena of administration that is closely related and relevant to school administration. The fourth ring represents the arena of organization, one of the most important areas to academics and practitioners in the field of educational administration. Further outward are the arenas of the greater community, society, and culture. A final seventh ring is included to accommodate notions of the transcendental. The spiritual dimension is significant and sensitive for a leader to understand the motivation of the followership.

Begley, (2001) further elaborates how the values acquired in one personal or social context can have a general influence on the attitudes and actions of the same individual or group when exposed to another context. He gives the example of a head teacher whose attitudes towards children in the school might change when he or she becomes a parent. Arguably, if values are influenced to this extent by social and personal context, then it is equally possible that a deliberate alteration in any of the above mentioned arenas of administration may also influence the values of an individual in the same context. Profession is one such arena mentioned by Begley in his onion metaphorical model which has been explored by other researchers (Law, Walker and Dimmock (2003) as one of the prominent sources of values. Any change, addition or deletion of something in this arena of head teacher's personal values through professional development and school improvement initiatives can also influence their value orientations.

Branson, (2007) argues that the professional development of leaders needs to be focused on reviewing the formation of their inner Self over a lifetime. Such professional development should aim at bringing about coherence among their inner Self, their personal values, and their leadership behavior. He further argues that structured self-reflection can offer a very important contribution towards the professional development of authentic leaders.

As mentioned above, the WSIP school improvement initiative offers a year-long professional development opportunity for the head teacher and ultimately attempts many alterations in his/her value arenas of profession and organization. Hence, based on Begley's arenas of administration and remaining within the milieu of this academic thought, this study intended to explore how the WSIP school improvement initiative of PDCN influences the personal value orientations of the concerned head teacher.

Methodology

Research Design

Many researchers in the field of values (Leonard, 1999; Begley, 1999) highlight the methodological issues involved in studying values because of their elusive and intrinsic nature. In order to cope with such methodological challenges, a qualitative research method has been considered by a good number of researchers (Roche, 1999; Law, Walker and Dimmock, 2003; Begley, 1999) as the most appropriate way of studying the values. Rosman and Rallis (1998) state that, "case studies are exploration of a single entity or phenomenon or event, process, organization, group or individual" (p. 89). In this study, the head teacher of the school which was part of the WSIP has been taken as a case to explore the influence of this school improvement initiative on the personal and professional value manifestation of the head teacher. Hence, a case study method within the qualitative research paradigm was employed as the most appropriate and relevant strategy.

In order to gather rich and in-depth data, this study employed multiple tools of data collection such as semi-structured interviews, observations and reflective journals. Creswell (2003) has considered such a wide spread collection of data as the backbone of qualitative research.

Exploring values and their dynamic orientation requires comprehensive and in-depth interviews to probe the thoughts, perceptions and perspectives of the principals (Willington, 2000). Therefore, many studies of values (Campbell, Gold & Lunt, 2003; Law, Walker & Dimmock, 2003; Leonard, 1999; Roche, 1999) have used semi-structured interviews as the main data generation tool. In order to ensure that the interviews are exclusively collecting the perspectives of the participant head teacher, this study employed semi-structured interviews before and after the WSIP intervention. At the beginning of WSIP in October 2009, three interviews were conducted and the same protocol of three interviews was employed at the end of the WSIP intervention in June 2010. Each interview, conducted in Urdu language and lasting approximately one hour, was audio taped and personally transcribed by the researchers. Later, these transcriptions were translated into English and given back to the participant to ensure that there is no conceptual change or misinterpretation of data in the process of translation. After getting confirmation from the research participant, the data was used for analysis.

Gray (2004) maintains that, "Observation involves the systematic viewing of people's actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour" (p. 239). As a faculty member of PDCN, one of the researchers was leading the WSIP initiative and consequently, and on average, spent four to five hours in the school environment throughout this period. In order to explore the difference of behaviour, attitudes and actions of the participant before and after the WSIP initiative, particular areas for observation were identified, including: the organizational culture of the school; relationships with the students, teacher and parent community; and her on-going time commitment to leadership initiatives. This observation was unstructured and intended to encompass only the critical incidents, prominent and unusual interactions, and newly taken initiatives by the participant head teacher. Eventually, it was an ongoing process and not confined to some particular time period or number of days. Before the WSIP intervention, a base line survey was in process for a month to identify the improvement needs of the school. Therefore, the pre-intervention observation for this study continued for a period of one month alongside that WSIP survey. After the intervention started the observation again

continued up to the end of this school improvement initiative. In this way both post- and pre-intervention observation continued as a prominent data collection method for this study.

As part of the WSIP intervention the head teacher maintained a reflective journal elaborating her learning from the program and alternative solutions sought to overcome the challenges encountered during this intervention. This reflective journal of the head teacher provided important insights about the value orientation of the head teacher before and after WSIP intervention. This journal was used as one of the main sources of data and included in themes. Reflective journals played a vital role in the data collection process of this research. Throughout the WSIP intervention the researcher maintained a reflective journal to inscribe the personal insights, recurring words or phrases during the interviews as well as observations, ideas, thoughts, questions, concerns and decisions made during the research study. The information from this journal was used to clarify, support and analyze the data gathered from the other main sources.

This study followed the grounded theory approach by reading and re-reading the data to extract themes (Merriam, 1998). It employed the process of organizing, general sense making, coding, drawing themes, and, finally, interpreting and making meaning out of the collected data (Cresswell, 2003).

Research Site and Participant Selection

The research site of this study was a secondary school in a village of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan where the WSIP intervention remained in action for the academic year 2009-10. In order to gather credible and relevant data, the research participant was purposefully selected (Patton, 1990) according to the following criteria:

- The participant must have attended the WSIP program from the start to the end of the intervention as head teacher of the target school.
- The participant demonstrates earnest desire to take part in the study.

Ethical Considerations

Aga Khan University Pakistan as an international institution upholds certain ethical codes and policies governing interactions with both research participant and the collection of data (Glesne, 2006). To ensure the ethical aspect of the study, the research participant was informed about the nature, purpose, time and methods involved in the study. Also, the participant was a voluntary participant in the study. Furthermore, she was given the right to see the interview transcripts both in original Urdu and translated English form for any clarification or adjustments to the views she expressed in the interview. In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms for the participant and her school are used in this study.

Data Analysis And Findings

A variety of values, major and minor, emanated from the data collected through various sources. Based on our year-long observations, interviews and frequent interactions with the head teacher, it can be claimed that the head teacher's thought

processes and school improvement-related actions were inextricably connected with her value orientation. In fact, her sense of morality, the principles she voluntarily adhered to and enjoyed, and the purpose of her life seemed to uninterruptedly influence and steer both the personal and professional dimension of her life. On many occasions her personal value orientations were found to be influenced by the year long school improvement program (WSIP) in her school.

The five major values identified from the date that bring the head teacher's personal and professional self to light are described in the following sections:

Dedication and Commitment

Even at the early stages of data collection it dawned on us that Shirin is extraordinarily focused on her goals, be they short or long-term, and works tirelessly to achieve those goals. Despite numerous challenges faced in her daily life, she is firm and motivated not to give up. Dedication and commitment, therefore, emerges as one of the most prominent values that characterize Shirin's personality. Numerous excerpts from data highlight dedication and commitment as one of Shirin's significant values. Here is how she articulated her value of commitment in one of the pre-intervention interviews:

> "From the very beginning of my career I highly value the commitment and dedication to my profession. Whatever task were delegated to me I tried my level best to perform at my best capacity…Thanks to God, in my entire professional career I have successfully completed many challenging tasks just because of dedication and commitment. Whoever I am today and whatever I have been able to achieve is because of my hard work, dedication and commitment" (Interview, 20/09/2009).

Her professional album of pictures kept in her office contains many photos which show her traveling by foot for many kilometers in some of the remotest mountainous villages of Gilgit-Baltistan (Observation, 24/03/2010). She ventured to visit these places as Assistant District Inspector in the education office, which shows her commitment and dedication to the profession. In another interview Shirin elaborates on the hardships she faced in life for getting her own education and considers her commitment and dedication as an instrument for her success. She maintains:

> "Since my student life I had an inner commitment to move ahead in life on personal strengths and hard work…I went to many people for seeking help in my education and struggled a lot in this regard. But it was my sheer commitment that kept me going" (Interview, 10/09/2009).

After the WSIP intervention, Shirin continued her emphasis on the value of commitment and dedication but the reasoning for this value changed from an individualistic to a more collective approach. In a post-intervention interview she argues:

> "This is my personal interest! Whatever I get from anywhere to learn I try my level best to avail that opportunity. When I

acquire new learning I share it with teachers. The example of such new learning opportunities is the school improvement programs like WSIP which offers valuable learning chances which we must avail and share with each other" (Interview, 14/06/2010).

Shirin's value of commitment and dedication seems to continue even after the WSIP intervention. The paradigm, however, shifted from her being the focus in the pre-intervention stages to a focus on others at the post-intervention stage of WSIP. The data repeatedly confirmed that after the intervention she emphasized a commitment and dedication for her entire team of teachers rather than for herself alone.

After the WSIP intervention, Shirin's value of commitment and dedication was additionally manifested through her aspirations for gaining the intrinsic motivation of the teachers towards their school responsibilities and inculcating a positive attitude in them. She desires to set an example for them with her own attitude and level of motivation. This value became prominent only after the WSIP intervention. She maintains:

"Without motivation it is very difficult to successfully accomplish any task in the teaching and learning process. Sometimes it happens that there is no pressure from the higher authorities, from the parent community or from the students for the accomplishment of an important task. In such cases you need to enhance and avail the commitment and motivation of teachers. The teachers who have commitment and motivation work at their best no matter if there is pressure or not" (Interview, 06/06/2010).

"Sweet words with honesty can contribute a lot, sometimes far better than reward and punishment. It is a good way of motivating others which is very important" (head teacher's reflective journal, 04/06/2010). She aspires to set examples through her own positive behavior and attitude.

This addition to her value of commitment and dedication emerged only after the WSIP intervention. Shirin did not mention anything about positive attitude and motivation in any of her pre-intervention interviews whereas, in her post-intervention interviews at times she emphasized this aspect.

Role Modeling

This value refers to the concept of setting a good example for others. The leader seeks to create standards of excellence and to set an example for others to follow (Kouzes and Posner 1997). The pre-intervention interviews repeatedly highlighted Shirin's belief in and her aspiration for becoming a role model in her personal and professional aspects of life for others. To use her words:

"First of all one has to be a role model for others. Without first doing ourselves what we ask others to do, we cannot align and motivate people to achieve the goal.… Until and unless we do not perform something in front of teachers we cannot expect them to be motivated for doing a job. This is something our rich culture also tells us" (Interview, 10/09/2009).

After the WSIP, Shirin continued emphasizing the value of role modeling. At times she highlighted the importance of setting positive examples for her teachers and in turn expected them to do so for the children and parent community. In a post-intervention interview she maintains:

"It is 100% true that children try to copy the character of their teachers. If a teacher possesses a good, sound moral character, good behavior and polite attitude, children imitate his or her personality… If I adopt positive things and keep on learning the teachers and students will follow me by doing so. Even people out there in the parent community will also learn from my character" (Interview, 06/06/2010).

In her reflective journal, she says, "I am the leader of my team, not only the team of teachers in the school but also the community. Therefore, it is essential to set appreciable examples by my own behavior and character" (head teacher's reflective journal, 17/05/2010). The data revealed that the value of role modeling constantly remained prominent before and after the WSIP intervention. Shirin continued with this value with the same zeal and enthusiasm even after the school improvement intervention.

Holistic Nurturing of Children

The value of nurturing refers to the efforts of Shirin in bringing about a positive change in the behaviours of the others (Lazaridou, 2007). Holistic nurturing, therefore, refers to the sustained desirable impact on the various inextricably connected dimensions of a person's life. The data consistently reflected the fact that Shirin strongly believed in positively influencing and inspiring her students, teachers and community members to demonstrate improved performance in their respective domains. Her care for others and sincerity to cause were frequently mentioned and commended by the teacher and parents alike. Hence, "holistic nurturing" emerged as a distinct value characterizing Shirin's beliefs and practices as the school head teacher. In her pre- intervention interview she said:

"When we talk about the development of children it has implications for how the child behaves with his or her family members at home, with his peers and teachers in the school paying attention to student's attitude towards others is as significant as learning content in the school. I frequently say this to my own children at home that if they don't have these qualities they are not good students no matter how good they are in learning contents at school. I always share this with my teachers in the school and ask them to pay more attention towards this aspect of child development. This is even part of our religious teaching so I consider it the most important part of a student's learning package (Interview, 20/09/2009).

"Shirin and some of her senior teachers deliver lectures on ethical, moral and academic development of students in the morning assembly every day. There are golden sayings written on all the visible parts of the school premises conveying messages of holistic development" (Observation, 14/11/2009). Shirin feels

that teachers play a vital role in the overall nurturing of the children. She feels that any desirable or undesirable attitude and behavior acquired by students is a resultant product of teacher's own character. To use her words:

"Children learn many things from school. Ethical nurturing is an important part of that learning. If a child develops an undesirable character definitely a teacher is responsible for that. Similarly, if a child has a good character there must be a teacher who has acted as a facilitator to the child. As a teacher we contribute to their total personality development" (Interview, 10/09/2009).

After the WSIP intervention, Shirin still continued to place a high premium on valuing the holistic nurturing of children. No change in this value was observed between the pre-and post-WSIP intervention views of the head teacher. In her post-intervention interview she maintains:

"During the process of schooling if there is no positive change in children's attitude and behavior, I feel the purpose of their education is not fulfilled. I think an education which does not bring positive changes in the attitude and behavior of students is useless. In addition to the learning content it is equally important that children should know how to behave with young and old, and how to behave with their class fellows, how can they help each other and how they behave in the overall social environment"(Interview, 06/06/2010).

She feels that the process of education must facilitate people to achieve the goals of knowledge acquisition, skill development and behavioral and attitudinal change. Therefore, education is the process of nurturing the entire personality of a person. To use her words:

"For me, education has three main broader objectives: Students learn knowledge, improve their skills and acquire desirable behaviors and attitudes. They must possess attitudes and behaviours which contribute to their personality, to their families, relatives and to the wider society. If a student is pursuing these three main objectives, for me they are on the right track towards acquiring right kind of education" (Interview, 14/06/2010).

Compliance to the Higher Authorities
During the data collection process of pre-intervention, Shirin's sense of loyalty to her institution and respect for those who steer the affairs of the institution was very evident. Despite her belief in shared leadership, Shirin also seemed to be a proponent of respecting the chain of command in the department and, therefore, complying with the instructions coming from the higher authorities. Her value of compliance to higher authorities could also be attributed to the fact that she spent four years as an assistant district inspector of schools in the district management office.

However, Shirin, as a head teacher, works in close coordination with her higher authorities keeping them informed

on the success and challenges of her school. The following excerpt from a pre-intervention interview data illustrates how Shirin maintains her linkages with higher authorities:

"While making a school related decision at my end I make sure that I follow the principles of impartiality and merit in the decision making process. But when people cross the limits, I forward such cases to the higher authorities for proper action. For this sometimes I do it orally and sometimes in written form." (Interview, 10/09/2009).

Shirin also seems to be a good image builder for her institution. For instance, she aspires to demonstrate and publicize the contributions made by the system authorities to the physical development of the school. She maintains:

"I wish to keep the physical environment clean and tidy because when parents and other community members enter the school the environment should reflect that we have efficiently and effectively utilized the money received from our higher authorities in terms of grants." (Interview, 10/09/2009).

However, she did not mention anything about this value in the post-intervention interviews. In this sense an alteration was observed in her value orientations before and after the WSIP intervention.

Working and Learning Together
This value is concerned with Shirin's desire for gaining consensus of all stakeholders before making a decision and cultivating a collegial environment where teachers learn and share their learning with their colleagues. This value appeared prominent only after the WSIP intervention when times and again she referred to this value as one of her future aspiration.
One of the key aspects of Shirin' belief in working with others related to her decision making process. The data characterize Shirin as someone who makes decisions with, rather than for, the people. She seemed to be highly skilled at giving the sense of ownership to others. The following excerpt delineates her beliefs about decision making:

"Before taking a decision I try to win the trust and confidence of my teachers for the proposed decision. In doing so, I seek the opinion of my teachers before making a formal decision. If the issue under discussion is complicated I consult my school management committee and other stakeholders like system authorities and parents. I do not take a decision just at my own sweet will without involving others. Recently there was an issue for which I called the school management committee and our system authorities and we made a collective decision" (Interview, 18/06/2010).

"It was interesting to note that she has changed her attitude of warning others to forward their cases to the higher authorities. She has started bringing all the stakeholders to one table and deciding things in a friendly environment" (Observation, 02/05/2010). Shirin emphasized sharing of experiences and

demonstrated her commitment for initiating a system where teachers can have the opportunity of learning from each other's knowledge, skills and experiences. She maintained:

> "We need to conduct weekly or monthly sessions; I am arranging a system for that. This is very important. We have people with us like the subject coordinators and other experienced teachers, with good understanding of different subjects like English, Urdu, and Science etc, who can conduct sessions for others and share their learning. In this way we can learn and grow together" (Interview, 06/06/2010).

Affection with Community

Shirin's value of affection with community refers to her aspirations for bringing the inside-school world and the outside-school world closer to each other. In her pre-intervention interview she maintains:

> "The community is not very active here because there is lack of educational awareness in this area. They feel like they are only responsible to send their children to school. They feel that once the children are enrolled in the school, teachers are totally responsible for the education of their children. There are very few parents who come to school and discuss the progress of their children with the teachers (Interview, 28/09/2009).

Despite Shirin's realization of the significance of working with the community for school improvement, she encountered numerous challenges in bridging the widening gap between school and community. The Aga Khan University –Professional Development Centre North mentors leading the WSIP in her school took several practical initiatives to increase the community's involvement in school affairs. Shirin acknowledged the significant insights gained from her mentors' approaches for community's involvement in school. Here is how she narrates her learning on community involvement gained from WSIP experiences: "It is really surprising and to be honest a pleasant surprise, to see the community taking keen interest in the affairs of the school. They have started even contributing financially to the cause of school improvement which is really valuable" (head teacher's reflective journal, 14/06/2010).

The WSIP experiences provided depth and breadth to her knowledge and skills of working and learning with the inside-school and the outside-school community. The following excerpt from a post-intervention interview sums up her staunch belief about working with the school community to achieve the school improvement goals:

> "With out the involvement of community it is very difficult to achieve success. We tried our best to involve parents in the affairs of the school through inviting them in various programs. The parents have to play a vital role in the development of their children so their involvement is extremely important. A school that enjoys support and cooperation of community has a better chance of success" (Interview, 18/06/2010).

Shirin maintains, "It is really surprising and to be honest a pleasant surprise to see the community taking interest in the affairs of the school. They have started even contributing which is really valuable" (Head Teacher's Reflective Journal, 14/06/2010). It gives the impression of a notable change in Shirin's valuing community involvement in the school affairs. She is now more positive about the contributions and involvement of the community in the school life.

Conclusion

One of the key features of these communities is their affiliation with and living in extended families, including the joint families, tribes and clans, where the elderly become role models and sources of safely and protection for the young. People, especially mothers and grandmothers often share with children narratives of the family, tribe or the clan-heroes. These narratives are meant to inspire children to show reverence to and follow the footsteps of these role models. Likewise, working together and extending helping hands to those in need, characterize the essence of cooperative living of the mountain communities. It is this group dynamics which also reflects and requires the need of following the advice of those who have the authority and status at home or in the tribe. Lastly, it is the sense of belongingness, care and consideration that not only the parents but the entire family and tribe take part in the upbringing and welfare of their children. Therefore, a person's wider tribe and community is akin to his/her immediate family (Baig, 2010).

Understandably, the five overarching values which characterize Shirin as an effective head teacher are constantly influenced and shaped by the aforementioned contextual realties of the mountainous, rural, isolated and climatically harsh Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. Precisely speaking, Shirin's personal background and her initial grooming in this particular culture have far reaching effects on her value orientation (Baig, 2010).

Due largely to the influence of this peculiar mountain culture, Shirin exhibited an unwavering commitment for the values of love for her job as a head teacher, leading peoples by personal examples, working with (and respecting) others, and the deep-rooted belief in the overall personality development of children. Notably, some of these values were not entirely new for Shirin at the time of WSIP intervention; her understanding, however, became richer, broader and deeper in these values as a result of the enabling environment she experienced during the entire year. The alterations in her value orientations before and after the WSIP intervention were quite evident in this study. Some values became less important and others emerged more prominently as a result of the WSIP school improvement initiatives. These understandings mirror the arguments in favor of the dynamic and changing nature of the personal values that are inclined to alter under the influence of any professional development or school improvement initiative.

To this end, the data revealed that some of the personal values that are comparatively grounded in profession exhibit the tendency to be influenced by the school improvement and professional development initiatives. Other values, which are mostly grounded in culture and religion, are so intense that they are hardly influenced by any professional improvement initiatives.

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