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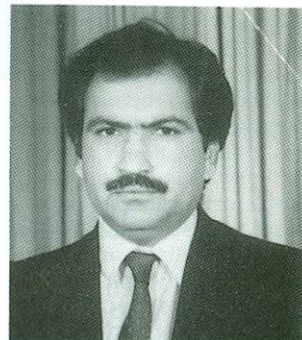
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RESEARCH PAPER

THE FUTURE OF HEADTEACHERS AS EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN PAKISTAN: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

Literature on educational management and leadership (e.g. Leithwood et al., 1994, Grace, 1995 and Segiovanni, 1998) suggests the significance of the role of headteachers as educational leaders in the western context. Whereas in the eastern context generally and particularly in Pakistan, the role of headteachers as educational leaders of the future is not yet fully understood and recognized. The current practice of headteachers in Pakistan seems to focus on supervision, monitoring and evaluation of teachers and students work, underpinning the style of 'bureaucratic / mechanistic leaders'. At present, headteachers spend most of their time on maintaining status quo through administration manoeuvring which does not allow them to question and critically reflect on their management practices and styles to seek further improvement. In this paper an attempt is made to describe the factors that led the Institute for Educational Development (IED), The Aga Khan University (AKU), Karachi to initiate a one year field-based modular professional development programme in school management and leadership for IED's cooperating schools. The programme has been embedded in the conceptual framework i.e. transmission, transaction and transformation orientations described by Miller and Sellers, (1985) and Leithwood (1984). The ultimate purpose of the programme is to equip the headteachers with new knowledge, skills and competencies that will help them to become instructional / pedagogical leaders (Greenfield, 1987, and Sergiovanni, 1998) for the future in order to cope with the increased demands of the next millennium. Initial feedback received from the course participants indi-

cates that the programme has enabled them to conceive their role as pedagogical or instructional leaders for transforming their schools as social or learning organizations and enhancing students' learning outcomes. Furthermore, many candidates felt the programme created a useful structure and vision for school development.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries including Pakistan have several myths about educational leadership. The most popular 'myth', being that 'educational leaders are born rather than developed'. Educational leadership has therefore, neither received its full recognition nor has any significant effort been made to produce effective educational leaders at the school level in many countries. Literature on educational change in the context of both developing and developed countries suggests that the success of any school improvement initiatives will depend on the commitment, charismatic qualities and styles of headteachers as educational leaders. Major studies in school improvement and effectiveness have underlined the importance of the role of headteachers as educational leaders in making schools effective (Dalin, 1993 & Baker, 1995) since they play their role as 'catalysts' in the whole process of school development (Dalin et al., 1994). Headteachers, as educational leaders, provide a vision for achieving the mission of their schools. This suggests that without the leadership of headteachers, the schools cannot become effective. The professional development of headteachers, therefore, becomes essential in enhancing professional and managerial competencies and intelligences that makes them effective

educational leaders. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, no systematic efforts have been made for the professional development of either working or aspiring school headteachers. This issue has yet to be addressed in the national educational policies of Pakistan in order to give importance and recognition to the role of school headteachers. Leithwood and his colleagues (1994) argue that schools need continuous improvement; they need 'expert' leadership that has to be reconceptualized in its contextual perspective. I agree with Barth's (1990) and Fullan's (1997) theses that we urgently need to explore new notions of educational leadership to deal with its complex and multifaceted tasks. In order to prepare headteachers as educational leaders to cope with the increasing demands and challenges of their multidimensional role, there is a strong need to develop context-sensitive professional development programmes geared towards developing headteachers' professional perspectives, knowledge, skills, competencies, intelligences and attitudes. School headteachers have to learn how to work as effective educational leaders in the schools as learning organisations (Handy, 1986).

Black and his fellows (1993), in the context of the developing countries, suggest that there is a need of formal and focused professional development programmes for headteachers to ensure centrality of their role which is pivotal in guiding the direction of school improvement. Bacchus (1995) in his report on the role of the Institute for Educational Development, The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan also highlights the importance of the role of professional development of headteachers and others who are involved in decision making. This

view is also corroborated by the findings of a study on "understanding headteachers' role in Pakistan" jointly conducted by the faculty of the Institute for Educational Development, The Aga Khan University, Karachi and the faculty of the School of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, England (see Simkins et al. 1998 and Memon, et al. 1998).

THE NOTION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

A substantive body of literature on educational leadership describes its various dimensions. Sergiovanni (1998) mentions three types of educational leaderships that include 'bureaucratic', 'visionary' and 'entrepreneurial' leaderships. According to him bureaucratic leadership aims to achieve the school goals and engages in supervision, evaluation and incentives. The visionary leadership provides vision, motivates and inspires school to change. The entrepreneurial leadership encourages healthy competition for improving the quality of instruction. Eventually, school leadership provides enhancement of student learning outcomes that contribute to school improvement.

There is a general perception among headteachers that they are being overloaded with new tasks under the guise of school improvement what Fullan (1994) terms an 'impossible task' that create a sense

of 'dependency' (Fullan, 1997). There is a need to create an environment of empowerment and interdependency for which we need to reconceptualize the role of headteachers as educational leaders in the future so that they are able to help teachers in their curricular and pedagogical matter. This is a new role of headteachers as pedagogical leaders where headteachers should have a balanced view of various tasks. Sergiovanni (1998) maintains that a new concept of leadership of headteachers should be dedicated to the social, academic and intellectual development of students. We, therefore, need to search for a 'paradigm shift' in leadership, what Sergiovanni (1998) calls 'pedagogical leadership'. To him 'pedagogical leadership' invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capital for students and intellectual and professional capacity for teachers (p. 38). He further maintains that capital development should not be confused with economic investment but it adds value by developing various form of human capital. He defines capital as 'the value of something when properly invested, produces more of that thing which then increases overall value' (p.38).

Capital development provides the conditions necessary to improve the level of student learning and development through pedagogical leadership. Hence, capital development serves as an intervening variable between pedagogical leadership and value added to students. The future leadership should pay its full attention to the capital development of students. Headteachers as pedagogical leaders should also develop capacity of schools as learning communities for their capital development. Sergiovanni (1997) mentions that pedagogical leadership develops capital by helping schools become caring (social capital), focused (academic capital) and inquiring (intellectual capital) communities within which teachers work together as members of learning communities.

In order to become 'pedagogical leaders', the headteachers should not to just have technical competence (how to manage schools) but also, they should acquire emotional, intellectual, intuitive, physical, (Postle, 1989), professional and managerial intelligences (Whitaker, 1997). Bellah et al. (1995) refer to

two types of responsibilities of headteachers which include 'standards of technical competence' and 'public obligation'. This suggests that the headteachers are no longer 'gatekeepers' but they are 'levers of change' in promoting schools as 'learning organizations'.

Sergiovanni (1996) mentions ten tasks of pedagogical leadership. These include purposing, maintaining harmony, institutionalising values, motivating, problem solving, managing, explaining, enabling, modeling and supervising. The headteachers being the central figures in determining the quality of education, need to incorporate the above tasks in their role.

CURRENT PRACTICE OF SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS AS EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN PAKISTAN

Since the independence of Pakistan, education has been a weaker sector in the social development owing to several reasons that include financial constraints, lack of cohesive planning etc. Pakistan inherited an educational system from Britain that aimed to impart an official knowledge to the younger generation which would enable them to get either white or blue-collar jobs in the market. Thus the purpose of education was a cultural reproduction rather than the production of critical thinkers and problem-solvers in the society. In order to replace this type of education the Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, emphasized the need for relevant and meaningful education for the nation. In his message delivered in the First Educational Conference held at Karachi in 1947 he states that "Under foreign rule for over a century, sufficient attention has not been paid to the education of our people and if we are to make a real, speedy and substantial progress we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world..." (p.5).

Efforts were made to restructure the educational system in line with the above guidelines followed by six educational policies in the years 1959, 1969, 1972, 1979, 1992 and

1998. However, the proposed educational reforms were introduced through a 'top-down' approach, which brought about little substantive change in the educational system. Huge financial investments were made for teachers' professional development in the government sector under these policies, but the significant results could not be achieved. There is a generally held opinion that the amount incurred on teacher education would have been much better spent on the expansion of primary education so as to enhance the literacy rate in the country. The most significant contributory element of education are the headteachers who were not the direct beneficiaries of the above policies. As a result, the policy reforms received active resistance from the schools. Headteachers who are pivotal in making school reforms successful, need to be professionally developed as 'reflective pedagogical leaders' to enhance their understanding of their role and its related dynamics. This will enable them to create situation of active democratic involvement of all stakeholders who eventually influence educational policies and practices.

Although, the headteachers' professional development has received much attention in western countries, the eastern countries including Pakistan have not yet recognized the role of headteachers in school improvement and effectiveness. Leithwood et al. (1994), Grace, (1995) and Fullan, (1997) mention that schools need strong leadership since new constructs of educational leaders are growing in prominence. A group of researchers including Symth (1989), Rizvi (1989) and Bates (1992) argue that school leadership should not be confined to one aspect but rather, should include sharing, transforming, empowering and pursuing of democratic enterprise. School leadership has to be understood in the school context as well as more generally in a wider society which enables headteachers to develop their indigenous school leadership practices.

In the government sector, most headteachers' induction takes place through promotion on seniority-cum-merit basis from among the senior teachers who may be good teachers but not necessarily good headteachers. Since they are not exposed to any professional development programmes in school management

they tend to react as situations arise. In many parts of the world, there is a legal binding for the induction of trained headteachers in schools but this practice is not strictly followed in Pakistan. On the other hand, in the hierarchy of the educational system of Pakistan, school headteachers are considered to be a low category of employers. The supervisory personnel who have a relatively high status in the hierarchy also significantly dominate the headteachers' role. Hence, the headteachers are deemed to be 'servants' of the system that influences their role. Therefore, they have to follow the system. Within this environment, headteachers' primary responsibility is to be an agent of cultural reproduction (i.e. maintaining academic standards) rather than an agent of cultural transformation (Grace, 1995).

Musgrove (1971) in the context of Britain mentions that headteachers are empowered in the cultural, professional and pedagogical sectors of their work of school leadership but they are under empowered in managerial autonomy. This is equally applicable with the headteachers in Pakistan. But the real dilemma is that the majority of headteachers in Pakistan do not have clarity of their role with respect to curriculum and pedagogy. A study conducted in Pakistan suggests that the headteachers tend to be actively involved in administration rather than in curriculum and instructional matters (Simkins et al. 1998).

DEVELOPING HEADTEACHERS AS PEDAGOGICAL LEADERS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

The majority of the headteachers in Pakistan (and elsewhere) tend to perform their role as administrators (Simkins et al., 1998 and Memon et al., 1998) what Sergiovanni, 1998 terms 'Bureaucratic Leaders'. Literature on school improvement and effectiveness suggests that headteachers should not have only knowledge of curriculum and instructions but that they should have the ability to guide the teachers in the curricular and instructional matters in their schools. In order to develop headteachers as pedagogical leaders, a field-based modular one year professional development programme was launched at IED in July 1997. The ultimate purpose of the programme was to develop head-

teachers as pedagogical leaders, the notion underpinning the philosophy of transformational leadership (see Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985, Bennis and Nanus 1985, Coleman and LaRocque 1989, Foster 1989 and Sergiovanni 1990) who deal with the aspects of curriculum and pedagogy. Leithwood et al. (1994) mention that the "central purpose of transformational leadership is to enhance the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members to achieve the school goals". Bennis and Nanus (1985) maintain that these leaders shape and elevate the motives and goals of followers. Foster (1989) describes transformational leadership as involving considerable social skills of advocacy, inter-group relations, team building and inspiration without domination (quoted in Grace 1995, p. 54). Immegart (1988) alerts us that leadership has a multidimensional nature and that the pedagogical dimension is one such dimension, that will initiate school improvement and effectiveness efforts.

One year Field-based Modular Professional Development Programme for Headteachers

The one year modular field-based professional development programme focuses on a blend of academic and professional practical experiences of the headteachers. There is a substantial use of case studies, seminars, workshops, cooperative learning, peer coaching learning, action learning, action research, mentoring and problem solving strategies. A 'sandwich' like approach is used to facilitate headteachers in employing new knowledge and skills in their management practices. The programme aims are to:

- reflect critically school management practices and explore possibilities to enhance the vision of their management practices as pedagogical leaders;
- develop headteachers' understanding of the organizational dynamics of schools as learning organizations;
- develop action research and inquiry skills to undertake small scale research projects;
- develop on-the-job professional development programme for staff;

- collaborate with other schools in the wider community; and
- develop skills for managing educational change for school improvement.

The programme contains ten modules of 400 contact hours including 112 contact hours for the practicum. Modules one and two each of five days (30 contact hours), are conducted in the two weeks of summer vacation (July) and module three is conducted in the winter vacation (December). After completion of three modules, the headteachers return to their schools and apply new knowledge and skills directly in their management practices. The IED instructional team visits them regularly in order to carry out follow-up activities and ensure implementation of new knowledge and skills. The remaining seven modules are completed on alternate Saturdays with each module containing five days. However, each module requires a practicum equal to 20 contact hours to apply new knowl-

edge, reflect critically for internalization. The details of modules are as follows:

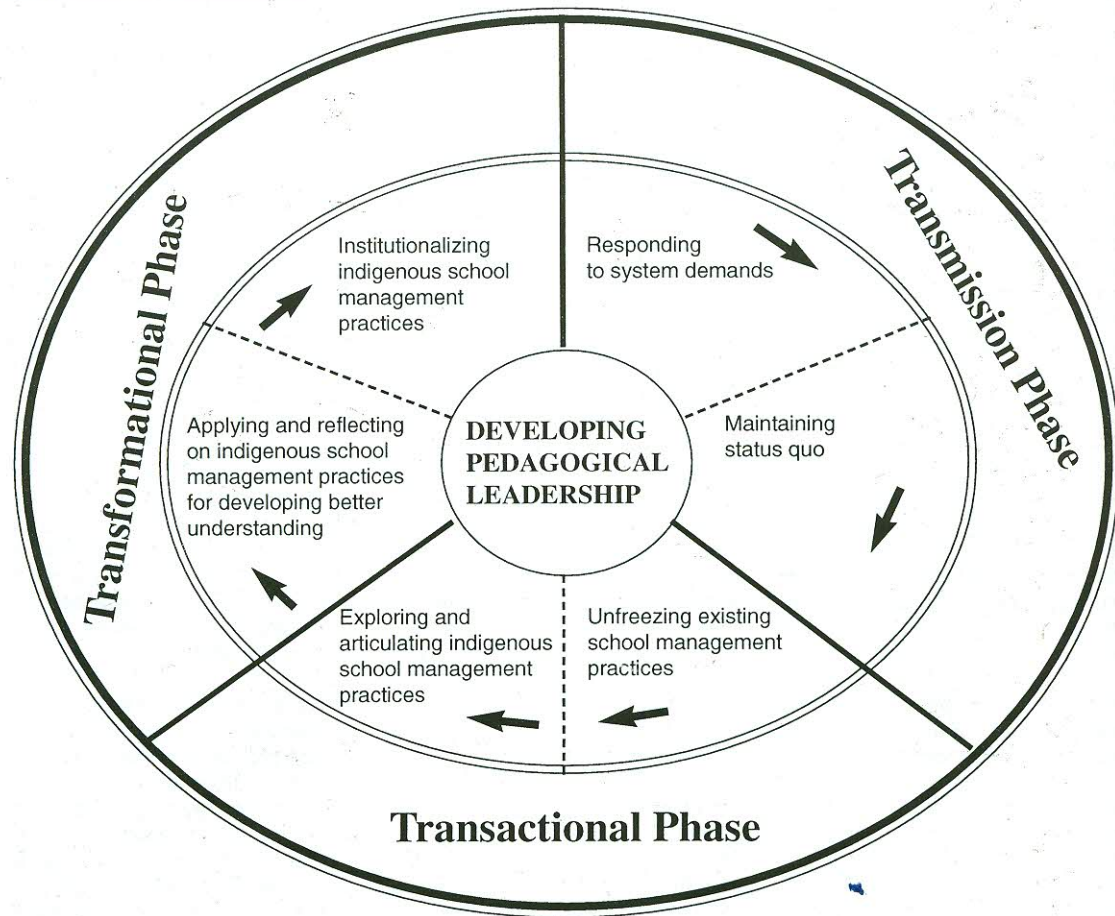
- Module 1: Reconceptualization of Headteachers Role
- Module 2: School Improvement and Effectiveness
- Module 3: Conducting Small Scale Research in Schools
- Module 4: Effective School Management Practices
- Module 5: Headteachers as Pedagogical Leaders
- Module 6: Managing Staff Development
- Module 7: Mentoring / Peer Coaching
- Module 8: Monitoring School Performance
- Module 9: Managing School-Community Relationships
- Module 10: Managing School Development Plans

The programme is offered to those headteachers / deputy headteachers who meet the programme criteria. These include; (a) Bachelor's

degree from a recognized university with at least five years teaching and administrative experience; (b) a training certificate or degree in education preferably B.Ed. from any teacher education institutions; (c) a high level of commitment and leadership qualities; (d) acceptable level of proficiency in English language; and (e) willingness to execute bond to serve their institution for three years.

The nature of the programme is field-based, therefore, effort is made to encourage the headteachers to critically reflect on their existing management practices / style and to explore alternatives for improving their practices. The course participants complete three major and two minor written assignments. In addition, they share and present their experiences and challenges while implementing new ideas for improving their management practices. They are encouraged to maintain a 'reflective journal' regularly and share insights with the instructional team for feedback. The first cohort

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of IED's One year Field-based Modular Professional Development Programme for Headteachers.



of twenty-four headteachers from the government and non-government sector schools participated and successfully completed their programme in June 1998. Another cohort of thirty headteachers from the above sectors are presently participating in the programme.

Conceptual Framework of One year Field-based Modular Professional Development Programme

Sergiovanni's (1998) notion of pedagogical leadership embedded in three educational orientations — transmission, transaction and transformation described by Miller and Sellers (1985) and Leithwood (1986) has served as a conceptual framework for the professional development programme. The framework as based on a cyclic approach that begins with transmission and ends with a transformation orientation. During the transmission phase of their professional development, the headteachers are concerned with maintaining the status quo and responding to system demands rather than planning to change themselves. The transactional phase helps the headteachers to unfreeze their existing school management practices and explore and articulate indigenous management practices that might help them to develop understanding of their role as pedagogical leaders. The transformational phase allows headteachers to apply and reflect on their indigenous management practices embedded in pedagogical leadership for their institutionalization. These three major phases are linked with the professional learning cycles described by Barth (1990). These are further outlined in figure 1.

Implications of Headteacher's Role for Pedagogical Leadership

Headteachers do their practicum in schools under the guided supervision of an instructional team. The team focuses on the following;

- a) shadow the headteachers on their jobs and monitor the change process at a personal and institutional level;
- b) provide feedback and professional support as a result of monitoring changes; and
- c) understand the dynamics and dilemmas of headteachers' extended role as a pedagogical leader in their school.

A separate study is presently being conducted to assess the impact of the professional development programme on the headteachers' role as pedagogical leaders. In this paper, a shared perception of the headteachers as pedagogical leaders is discussed which is gathered through headteachers 'reflective journals', formal/informal conversation and observation of the instructional team. The data indicates that as a result of this programme the headteachers seemed to have departed from their traditional role (administration) to a new role (pedagogical leadership) in order to help teachers in curricular and instructional matters. However, they seem to need a continued professional support for better understanding of their new role. It is worth mentioning here that most of the headteachers prior to joining this programme tended to have a shallow understanding of curriculum and instructional matters. After the programme they thought that they were better able to understand their new role as pedagogical leaders, thus enabling them to become aware of students' academic, intellectual and social development. While shadowing the headteachers, it was found that they were all intensively involved in discussing the curricular and instructional issues with teachers and stakeholders. One of the headteachers stated, "On my induction as a headteacher, I was never told about my role, whether I was supposed to deal with curriculum and instructional matters. My predecessor never initiated any change related to curriculum. I know we have a national curriculum which comes from the federal government, but as a headteacher, I must play an active role in its enrichment and effective delivery". (Non-government school headteacher). The headteachers from both government and non-government schools after taking this programme have started initiating the enrichment of the existing curriculum and have been better able to guide their teachers in pedagogical matters.

Another non-government school headteacher mentioned "although I was aware of my role as a manager, now I have redefined my role as a pedagogical leader to deal with curriculum and instructional matters. I thought I should not deal with the curriculum matters since the curriculum is developed by experts and my role is to get it implemented. Now I

realize that I can enrich the existing curriculum for its effective implementation". This indicates a paradigm shift in the headteacher's role that may help improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have introduced innovations such as higher order questioning skills, cooperative learning and problem-based learning in the schools. They have started providing support to their teachers in making these initiatives successful. They have also started allocating more time to academic matters such as curriculum improvement and instructional strategies. However, their focus of intervention is to improve students learning outcomes. As one government school headteacher said, "I never gave much attention to academic matters since my teachers are doing very well. To me administrative matters were more important than any thing else. But, now I have started providing professional support to my teachers to guide them in curriculum and instructional matters." This also indicates change in the headteachers' thinking and practice.

Data also suggests that headteachers seemed to have numerous challenges including the high expectations of stakeholders and financial constraints (especially in the government schools). It was further found that headteachers tended to use reflective practice in their day-to-day school matters. As one of the government school headteachers mentioned in her reflective journal "prior to this exposure, I was not clear about my role. I was just copying my predecessor. I never questioned my practice nor did any body ask me why I was doing it in that way. But, now I am able to articulate my role and responsibilities. I am no more their boss in the school. I am just a member of the team and every body works collaboratively for the improvement of school." This suggests, that the programme helped the headteachers in reconceptualizing their roles as pedagogical leaders. They seem to be more concerned about the students' overall development and are committed to the enhancement of their students' learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In the context of Pakistan, the modular professional development programme is the first systematic effort to help develop headteachers as pedagogical leaders underpinning

the transformative orientation of education. Blase and Anderson (1995) maintain transformational leadership involves fundamental change and it is largely concerned with promoting shared values of learning communities. Headteachers must play a significant role in shaping schools as learning organization; its structures and procedures therefore need to be redefined. Today, schools are no more stable states, they have to respond creatively and intelligently to the changing realities of society. The headteachers have to change their concept of their roles; they are no more administrators have to change their concept of their roles; they are no more administrators or autocratic masters (Jones, 1984), but they are shapers of a school vision, a mission and the values necessary to enhance students capital development. Thus, the headteachers' role as pedagogical leaders becomes more crucial in improving the quality of instruction in schools.

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SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION KARACHI

Aims & Objects

- To espouse the cause of education and to propagate Islamic ideology in our modern approaches to education.
- To work for the re-orientation of education with particular reference to the promotion of scientific and technical education in order to build up the character of our future generations.
- To establish, organise, acquire, maintain and administer educational institutions, madrasahs, schools, colleges and vocational training centres for the benefit of our young citizens.
- To set up adult training centres in order to combat illiteracy in our society.
- To organise lectures, seminars, symposia, local and international conferences, workshops and exhibitions etc. which may help promote education in our country.
- To print, publish and circulate literature, folders, bulletins, brochure, souvenirs, books and periodicals etc. for the advancement of education.
- To organise, maintain and administer library or libraries, auditoriums, laboratories, computer centres etc. for the benefit of our society.
- To set up and administer trust or foundation in order to provide necessary assistance, financial or otherwise, to those needy and deserving in the pursuit of education.
- To grant stipends, scholarships and loans to those needy and deserving in the pursuit of education.
- To establish rapport and/or co-ordinate activities with such local and international organisations whose objectives in whole or part are consonant with the aims & objects of the Society.
- To invest the funds of the Society in such securities, bonds or properties as may be considered beneficial from time to time by the Managing Committee.
- To receive, hire, purchase, take on lease or loan or otherwise acquire any movable property or properties and any rights and privileges whatsoever, and to build, construct, alter, demolish and maintain buildings, houses or other constructions so acquired for any of the objects of the Society.
- To sell, improve, manage, develop, lease, sub-lease, mortgage, gift away or otherwise dispose of or deal with all or any of the properties of the Society.
- To borrow moneys from banks, financial institutions, Government or any other source, local or international for the furtherance of the aims & objects of the Society on such terms as deemed fit by the Managing Committee.
- To accept moneys and things on gratis as voluntarily offered by any individual or organisation, local or foreign.
- To secure, receive, accept and manage funds, donations, grants, endowments and any other movable property or properties from lawful sources within the country and to utilize them for furthering and promoting the aims & objects of the Society.
- To do any other act or thing that may help in or be conducive to the promotion of the aims & objects of the Society.