

# Competencies of Authentic Educational Leader Dealing with Challenges of 21st-Century Educational Landscape - A Conceptual Review in the Indian Context

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## Abstract

This paper aims to provide a conceptual review of the competencies required by authentic educational leaders to effectively address the multifaceted challenges in the Indian educational context, especially in higher educational institutions. In the rapidly changing landscape of 21st-century education, authentic leadership has emerged as a critical factor for educational leaders to steer complex challenges and changing needs of 21st-century learners and educators. Drawing upon existing literature, this paper synthesizes key concepts related to authentic leadership, identifies inherent difficulties in the contemporary educational landscape, and proposes a framework of competencies essential for authentic educational leadership in India. The synthesis highlights the importance of integrity, relational transparency, moral purpose, and collaboration as foundational elements of authentic leadership. Additionally, it explores the significance of adaptability, innovation, cultural intelligence, and digital literacy in addressing specific challenges such as globalization, technological advancements, cultural diversity, and socio-economic disparities. By elucidating these competencies, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of authentic leadership in the Indian educational context and provides insights for educational policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. This paper describes the background and applicability of authentic leadership in the present educational landscape in India especially for the implementation of the new educational policy (2020) and summarizes evidence of its effects on the functioning of educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Authentic Leadership, 21st Century Educators.

## 1. Introduction

Educational leaders must be capable and possess competencies both as individuals and professionals. Educational leadership, especially in the context of higher and professional education, is changing due to the diversity of roles and administrative workload statutory

compliances and governance issues. As a result, educational leaders usually adopt the “management of compliance” style of leadership and act as firefighters and site managers rather than authentic educational leaders who are visionary and can take up the challenges of the changing needs of 21st-century learners and educators.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) point out that globalization in education has led to a paradigm shift toward the quality of education and the curriculum. Therefore, Educational leaders have to be capable both as individuals and as professionals. They must be able to effectively use their knowledge, skills, and competencies confidently with good judgment and wisdom to solve complex problems of 21st-century learners as well as educators in the changing circumstances and context. Froneman (2003) communicates his apprehension about the management penetration in educational leadership. He agrees with Pretorius (in Froneman, 2003) that the need for managing change in Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) is huge, because management in higher education institutions concentrates mainly on structural changes needed, ignoring challenges posed in the 21st century.

### 1.1 Background

The educational landscape of the 21st Century is characterized by increasing complexity, disorder, intense competition, and hyper pace of change. This means that challenges for an educational leader are inevitable in such a landscape because of the confluence of all these factors. Therefore, educational leaders have to learn to manage these challenges and embrace complexity if they and their institutions have to prosper and survive in this competitive environment.

A vast and varied literature is available on leadership theories, styles and skills in managing challenges. Various contemporary theories and styles of leadership have emphasized on the mental, emotional, moral & ethical competencies of leaders in general, but how these theories and styles apply to leaders managing the 21st-century educational landscape is a question to be explored.

### 1.2 Rationale for the Study

Diversity, socioeconomic inequities, and fast technical breakthroughs are important components in the quickly changing educational scene of the 21st century, which poses several problems for educational leaders, especially in India. Competencies that foster authenticity, flexibility, and a profound comprehension of intricate educational contexts are increasingly necessary for educational leaders in today's schools, going beyond conventional administrative duties. More and more, people are realising that the key to overcoming these obstacles is authentic leadership, which is defined by honesty, ethics, and true relationships with others. The purpose of this research is to identify the skills that genuine educational leaders in India need to adapt to these changing times. Through an analysis of cultural diversity, digital technology integration, and the urgent need for inclusivity and equity in India's educational context, this conceptual review aims to shed light on how educational leaders can promote sustainable change, increase teacher and student engagement, and contribute to the overall development of educational institutions through authentic leadership. In light of India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020's dedication

to educational reform, this research is very pertinent. NEP 2020 stresses the significance of creative leadership in attaining educational excellence in many contexts.

### 1.3 Objectives

- To define and explore the concept of authentic leadership within the context of educational leadership.
- To analyze the need for authentic educational leaders in addressing the changing educational landscape of the 21st century.
- To identify and evaluate the essential leadership competencies required to navigate and address challenges in the 21st-century educational landscape.
- To assess the effectiveness of authentic leadership practices in mitigating the specific challenges faced by educational institutions in the 21st century.

The study aims to answer four major questions:

- a) What is authentic leadership in relation to educational leadership?
- b) Why authentic educational leaders are required in the changing educational landscape?
- c) What are Leadership Competencies in dealing with the challenges of the 21st-century educational landscape?
- d) Do authentic leadership practices have significant effects on mitigating the challenges of the educational landscape of the 21st century?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study on the competencies of authentic educational leaders in navigating the challenges of the 21st-century educational landscape in India is grounded in three interconnected domains: Authentic Leadership, 21st-Century Educational Challenges, and the Alignment of Leadership Competencies with Educational Needs. Authentic leadership emphasizes self-awareness, transparency, ethical decision-making, and relational integrity, all of which are essential for fostering trust and collaboration within educational settings. In the context of the 21st-century educational landscape, leaders face numerous challenges, including rapid technological advancements, increasing diversity and inclusion needs, disparities in access to quality education, mental health concerns, and shifts in educational policy, such as India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. To effectively address these complexities, educational leaders must embody specific competencies that align with contemporary needs, such as visionary thinking, collaborative leadership, cultural competence, adaptive problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. By integrating these elements, the theoretical framework highlights how authentic educational leadership can serve as a transformative force in overcoming obstacles, promoting equity, and enhancing the overall educational experience for students and educators alike in the Indian context.

## 2.1 Authentic Leadership: Conceptual Underpinnings

Authentic leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes genuineness, transparency, and ethical behavior, focusing on building trust and fostering meaningful relationships within organizations. Its conceptual underpinnings are rooted in several key dimensions:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Authentic leaders possess a deep understanding of their values, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses. This self-awareness enables them to lead with confidence and integrity, making decisions that align with their core principles. By being mindful of their own emotions and behaviors, they can also better understand and respond to the needs of others.
2. **Relational Transparency:** This dimension emphasizes the importance of open communication and honesty in leader-follower relationships. Authentic leaders share their thoughts and feelings appropriately, fostering an environment where stakeholders feel safe to express themselves. By promoting transparency, they build trust and encourage collaboration among team members.
3. **Balanced Processing:** Authentic leaders engage in fair and unbiased decision-making by considering multiple perspectives and seeking input from others. This involves reflecting on information and feedback without being swayed by personal biases. By practicing balanced processing, authentic leaders demonstrate respect for diverse viewpoints and enhance the inclusivity of their leadership approach.
4. **Moral Perspective:** Authentic leadership is grounded in strong ethical values and a commitment to doing what is right. Authentic leaders prioritize ethical behavior and accountability, setting a positive example for their followers. Their moral compass guides their actions and decisions, influencing the organizational culture and promoting a shared sense of purpose.
5. **Empowerment and Support:** Authentic leaders focus on empowering their followers by fostering a sense of ownership and encouraging personal growth. They provide support, resources, and guidance to help individuals develop their skills and achieve their goals. By creating a culture of empowerment, authentic leaders enhance engagement and motivation among team members.
6. **Vision and Purpose:** Authentic leaders articulate a clear vision and purpose that aligns with the values of their organization and its members. This shared vision inspires collective effort and commitment, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation among followers. By anchoring their leadership in a meaningful purpose, authentic leaders can navigate challenges and drive positive change.

In summary, the conceptual underpinnings of authentic leadership highlight the importance of self-awareness, transparency, ethical behavior, and relational integrity in fostering trust and collaboration within organizations. By embodying these principles, authentic leaders are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern educational landscape, inspire their followers, and drive meaningful change.

## 2.2 Challenges of the 21st Century Educational Landscape

The challenges of the 21st-century educational landscape are multifaceted and dynamic, necessitating adaptive and innovative leadership. One significant challenge is the rapid advancement of technology, which requires educators and institutions to integrate digital tools and resources effectively into teaching and learning. This integration often demands continuous professional development to ensure that teachers are equipped to utilize these technologies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, the increasing diversity of student populations presents another challenge, as educators must address varied cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, necessitating inclusive teaching practices that promote equity and access for all learners. Furthermore, the emphasis on mental health and well-being has grown in importance, with rising concerns about student stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues requiring educational leaders to implement supportive policies and create safe learning environments. Alongside these issues, educational institutions are also grappling with significant policy shifts, such as those introduced by India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to transform the educational landscape through reforms that emphasize holistic and multidisciplinary approaches. Together, these challenges call for authentic educational leaders who can navigate complexities, foster collaboration, and implement strategies that promote resilience, inclusivity, and adaptability within their institutions.

## 2.3 Alignment of Authentic Leadership with Educational Challenges

Educational leaders practicing authentic leadership can effectively manage the 21st-century educational challenges because of rapid advancement in technology, diverse culture in student population, and developing role of education in present society especially in the Indian context. Organizational complexity is mediated by leaders' genuine character, including self-reflectiveness, principled, and communicative. For instance, authentic leaders can promote a culture of tolerances for staff and students as well as help students and staff manage demands of learning in globalization. Further, they are well placed to champion change and innovation, key in creating positive technological adoption while at the same time embracing ethical technological usage. They also have a great responsibility in managing mental health issues as they bring voices together to fight and share, and devise solutions that make the physically and mentally struggling feel welcome and advocated. In the Indian context especially where education policy such as New Education Policy 2020, suggests reforms in education focusing on experiential and skill-based learning, there is a need for authentic leadership to ensure that the educational institutions go through change management processes positively and transform policies, practices and outcomes. The present paper has identified several approaches to foster authentic leadership and transform education institutions to tackle current and future challenges optimally, and they include the promotion of resilience, establishment of high ethical standards and spirit of continuous improvement.

### **3. What is authentic leadership about educational leadership?**

The term authentic leadership was coined by Bill George, a professor at Harvard Business School, in his bestseller *Authentic Leadership* (2003). The aestheticism that George Bill has projected in a leader is a person who must be authentic that is to say a true reflection of a person's own basic views and values, rather than a carbon copy of another's persona.

Authentic leadership as a leadership style exhibited by individuals who have high standards of integrity, take responsibility for their actions, and make decisions based on principle rather than short-term success. They use their inner compasses to guide their daily actions, which enables them to earn the trust of their employees, peers, and shareholders—creating approachable work environments and boosting team performance. An authentic leader strives to create a meaningful relationship with their team as they work toward goals related to their organization's mission and purpose—not just its bottom line. (Harvard business School online business insights)

Authentic leadership is an approach to leadership that emphasizes building the leader's legitimacy through honest relationships with followers which value their input and are built on an ethical foundation. Generally, authentic leaders are positive people with truthful self-concepts who promote openness. By building trust and generating enthusiastic support from their subordinates, authentic leaders are able to improve individual and team performance. Authentic leadership as an alternative to leadership style, where emphasis is on achieving objectives and profits over people and ethics. (Wikipedia)

Authentic leadership is a pattern of leader behavior that promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to develop greater self-awareness, an assumed moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, nurturing positive self-development." (Walumbwa et al., 2008 p. 94).

This approach to leadership focuses on the ethical dimensions of the relationship between follower and leader and describes those behaviors that result in a trusting relationship. Authentic leaders have a positive outlook on life and are truthful and open in their interactions with others. They build trust with their subordinates and generate enthusiasm for the project which enables effective individual and team performance. The authentic leadership approach advocates for ethical standards rather than a focus on profit (Garner, Coglisier, Davis & Dickens, 2011). When people work alongside a truly authentic leader, they'll often give their whole hearts and minds to the cause. In these situations, a spirit of teamwork and loyalty can spread throughout an organization, resulting in high morale and producing extraordinary results. Authentic leaders inspire trust in their teams. The core components of authentic leadership theory include self-awareness and self-regulation and authentic leaders create positive ethical climates and nurture genuine and sustainable performance in organizations (Gardner & Avolio, 2005).

The roots of authentic leadership come from ancient Greek philosophy that focuses on the development of core, or cardinal, virtues. These virtues are prudence (fair-mindedness, wisdom, seeing all possible courses of action); temperance (being emotionally balanced and in control); justice (being fair in dealings with others); and fortitude (courage to do the right thing).

Becoming an authentic leader is not easy. It takes a great deal of self-reflection (getting to know oneself), and the courage to do the right thing. It involves a degree of selflessness. In a world full of morally corrupt and dysfunctional leaders, authentic leadership theory has become quite popular as people search for the “good” leaders. (Psychology Today Blog: Cutting-Edge Leadership)

The research on authentic leadership suggests that there are four major components, they are- self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and strong moral code

**Self-Awareness (“Know Thyself”)-**An authentic leader shows self-awareness through reflecting on their own strengths, weakness and values. An authentic leader truly knows themselves and values their gifts and recognizes their limitations. They also show their real selves to their followers. They do not act one way in private and another in public; they don’t hide their mistakes or weaknesses out of fear of looking weak. They also realize that being self-actualized is an endless journey, never complete

**Relational transparency-** Authentic leaders demonstrate relational transparency, they openly share their own thoughts and beliefs yet do not overly display their emotions to followers; they maintain a good balance.

**Balanced Processing-**They are balanced in their approach because they solicit opinions from subordinates and welcome opposing viewpoints and consider the value of these viewpoints in a fair manner. This involves being honest and straightforward in dealing with others. An authentic leader does not play games or have a hidden agenda.

**Strong moral code-** Authentic leaders also display a strong moral code that they demonstrate in their relationships and decision-making; this ethical foundation resistant to external forces. **Internalized Moral Perspective (“Do the Right Thing”).** An authentic leader has an ethical core. They know the right thing to do and is driven by a concern for ethics and fairness. The other qualities which emerge from the model described above are as under-

Authentic leaders are mission driven and focused on results. They are able to put the mission and the goals of the organization ahead of their own self-interest. They do the job in pursuit of results, not for their own power, money or ego.

Authentic leaders lead with their heart, not just their minds. They are not afraid to show their emotions, their vulnerability and to connect with their employees. This does not mean authentic leaders are “soft.” In fact, communicating in a direct manner is critical to successful outcomes, but it’s done with empathy; directness.

Authentic leaders focus on the long-term goals and vision and while doing so they encourage Teamwork display strong mental and emotional competencies, Business Acumen, Strategic Thinking, Professionalism, Communication and Collaboration and a zeal for Developing Others.

To achieve the kind of tasks appropriate competencies are must for leadership position in educational sector. The educational institutes must first of all should understand and value the importance of appropriate leadership within institutions. This requires continuous tasks

analysis, experimentations, reflection as well as a degree of integrity, initiative and imagination within the educational institutes. Therefore, to regain the initiative and to establish pride and trust in education and to shape change within and outside institutions, requires competent educational leadership.

Educational leadership needs capabilities and competencies to respond positively to changing circumstances and changing educational landscape. Capable and competent educational leaders who can be also called as authentic leaders need to possess certain qualities like-

- 1) Ability to initiate positive changes that improve people and their context.
- 2) To act as an initiator for capacity building force for learners, educators as well as organizations.
- 3) To be a good communicator, listener and emotionally intelligent.
- 4) Non-Judgmental, Self-Confident and capable of conflict management.
- 5) Must have high moral and ethical standards, values
- 6) To have the wisdom for critical reflection and future vision.
- 7) Efficacy to deal with changing and unfamiliar situations.

#### **4. Why authentic educational leaders are required in the changing educational landscape.**

In the present context and situation, many teachers or educators are promoted to leadership position only because of their seniority or they have joined a particular educational institute earlier than others without having any mental, emotional, moral and ethical competencies to lead. Further, they lack behavioral skills and requisite mental ability. The key challenge for educational leadership is that people occupying leadership positions lack competencies' which are required for accomplishing the tasks which are so diverse and ranges from institutional building, capacity building, administration to research and consultancies.

Authentic educational leaders are required in the changing educational landscape of 21st century because of the following reasons-

- 1) Authentic educational leaders help infuse educational practices with higher purpose and meaning.
- 2) They focus on mental and emotional competencies in dealing with situations and people.
- 3) They focus on ethics and morality in their actions and interactions with people.
- 4) They encourage 21st century educators to strive for quality in teaching-learning process and provide support and resources by developing teams for innovative and collaborative teaching approaches.



- 5) They create an environment for authentic learning approach by not only keeping new knowledge and skills to oneself but helping others by imparting new knowledge and skills for transforming the student's potential and abilities (Duignan & Bezzina, 2004)
- 6) They display their capability of Curriculum and Pedagogical knowhow by developing authentic pedagogy, whereby students are encouraged to generate new meanings and deeper understanding of complex issues related to the subject, and teachers are encouraged to use disciplined inquiry approach in teaching for developing higher order thinking skills of the learners.
- 7) Focuses on educational outcomes and accountability.
- 8) Understands the needs of 21st century learners, as being more student centric, have a holistic approach, and adapts to changing curriculum requirements, changing student's learning styles etc.
- 9) Foresees enormous potential in newer ICT tools, web technologies, Apps, LMS to serve changing student's needs.
- 10) They are able to focus on the changing needs of higher education, like preparing techno-savvy and independent learners, interdisciplinary research, economic contribution, intellectual capital development, national and international competitiveness etc.
- 11) They can play multiple roles simultaneously as visionary teacher, moderator, facilitator, mentor, referee, role model, communicator, collaborators, and reflective thinker and risk takers and so on.

The points put forth above try to give the requirements of authentic leaders in the changing educational landscape. To meet the requirements of the changing educational landscape the educational leaders need to possess certain competencies that are vital for taking up the challenges of the changing landscape especially in higher education in the Indian context.

## **5. What are Leadership Competencies in dealing with the challenges of 21st century educational landscape.**

### **5.1 Mental Competencies and Authentic Educational Leadership**

WHO (2001) defines "mental health is a state of well-being in which the individuals realize his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community.

The mental health focuses on the ability of a person to balance the desires and aspiration to cope with life stresses and to prepare him for a psychosocial well-being. A mentally healthy person is also characterized by proper insight and understanding of themselves through self-adequate knowledge and also self-evaluation. (Self-Awareness)

Mentally healthy people have three major features from the view point of psychology. They are calm, have high self-esteem, and are able to see others point of view. Mental health is one of the most important aspect of an individual behavior that may influence his emotional intelligence and self-concept. The self-concept and emotional intelligence are important elements of an individual's mental health. Jadish and Srivastava (1983) described mental health in terms of: Positive self-evaluation- which includes self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-identity of one's potentialities. (Self-Awareness). Singh and Gupta (1983) described six indices of mental health. They are: Emotional stability, Overall adjustment, Autonomy, Security-Insecurity, Self-concept: Intelligence. According to Hilgard, Atkinson, and Atkinson (1971), "a mentally healthy person has a philosophy which gives direction to his life while keeping in view the demands of the changed situations and circumstances. Bhatia (1982) considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions, and ideals in one's daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life. (Relational transparency and Balanced Processing)

Thus from the literature cited above various mental competencies like proper insight and understanding, correct decision making, cope with problems, understand and to share other people's emotions, self-directing, self-governing, responsibilities and capacity for adjustments, freedom from fear, apprehension or anxiety, thinking rationally emerge, which are important to be an authentic educational leader.

## 5.2 Emotional Competencies and Authentic educational leadership- A conceptual review

Emotional competencies include emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions to discriminate among them, and use this information to guide ones thinking and action (Solvay & Mayer 1990). Goleman (1995) believed that being able to deal with people effectively is central to the social success of any person.

Emotional intelligent leaders are aware of their own emotions as well as of others and are able to challenge, inspire and motivate teams into productive work. Emotional intelligent people are trained to detect and control the brain's natural tendency to over-ride reason with emotion; this skill basically includes two sub-competencies, i.e. Self- awareness and Self-regulation

The members of emotionally intelligent teams cooperate and collaborate with each other and have good coordination and communication, which brings team effectiveness (Barczak, Lassk and Mulki, 2010). Many past studies have statistically proved that EI improves conflict management skills and promotes team building (Jordan et al, 2002). Moreover, emotionally intelligent team members deal with emotions in effective way and sustain favourable interpersonal relationships, which in turn facilitate team cohesion. Various studies have shown that superior EI is very likely to lead to effective leadership, which ultimately build good interpersonal relationship and leads to team building.

In the present educational landscape, a competent and devoted academic teams plays a very important role in developing and sustaining a good academic institution and in this cause the role of authentic leader is unquestionable.

### 5.3 Moral competencies and educational leadership-

Personal and moral values are essential to educational leadership as they enable leaders to make correct ethical decisions that will be of value to students, teachers, and the society. In the educational context moral competencies are integrity, ethical judgment and profound responsibility for the formation and development of a positive moral environment for learning. Moral competencies are fully understood and practiced by leaders who are fully aware of the importance of conforming to the principles of organizational fairness, openness, and integration.

They also have well-defined values and beliefs, on which their leadership vision and action plans are grounded: such leaders may have personal and organizational missions aimed at upgrading social justice and positive human growth for students. The key point is that being a morally competent leader and making right decisions, a leader defines the proper ethical behavior, which means that regarding herself as the role model to follow, she provides the members of her community with a clear ethical standard, so everyone feels protected, valued, and encouraged to study and train at their best. Also, these leaders are attentive to everyone within the educational framework mainly because they maintain a strong focus on Diversity, equity & inclusion, member's mental health, and available resources. Lastly, moral competencies enable educational leaders to deal with emergent issues ethically and make decisions that are likely to create a virtuous educational organization and impact the society, positively.

### 5.4 Ethical Competencies and educational leadership.

Ethical competencies are critical for educational leaders because they form a foundation from which an educational leader can make fair, clear and values-based decisions that shape the educational institutions' strategic directions and norms. These competencies include professionalism, compliance with the highest ethical standards like integrity, adherence to proper standards of conduct involving candor, equity, accountability, and courtesy. Ethical competencies are particularly important for educational leaders because they often find themselves in situations that involve making decisions that present a conflict of interest and which affect multiple stakeholders, students, faculty, and the wider society.

The main ethical competency, which is displayed is the readiness of educational leaders to demonstrate ethical modeling based on ethical standards, thus creating a positive image of the Institution for others to emulate. They uphold policies as well as practices of fair treatment of the students so as to avail to them similar or equal chance on the necessary needs and resources. These leaders are also fully aware of responsibility for creating safe space where both ethical issues can be addressed and where every member of the community can feel welcomed and heard. In addition, they make decisions with an understanding that these decisions have an impact extending in time, for individuals and society as well. Through deontological approach the leaders foster accountability and respect within the educational environment as the form of learning that needs to promote students' knowledge as well as ethical development.

## **6. Authentic Educational Leadership Competencies**

### **6.1 Integrity and Ethical Decision-Making**

The concept of being credible and exercising proper performance in practice is critical for education leadership and management since principals are supposed to maintain integrity of organizations. It plays the decisive role in building the Institute's authority and setting a moral tone in the academic environment in case of addressing the problematic situations requiring making decisions.

### **6.2 Relational Transparency and Trust-Building**

Relational transparency means being specific about ideas and feelings, and this affects trust with the faculty, students, or stakeholders. Being authentic and friendly likeable and receptive also make the perfect world for education to thrive since everyone would feel that their views matter and should be respected.

### **6.3 Moral Purpose and Visionary Leadership**

Authentic leaders should therefore have favourable attitudes towards the moral purpose behind leadership and a visionary orientation to influence. In education this means having clear values such as learner success, social justice and lifelong learning. These leaders envision and communicate a clear purpose that is in harmony with the mission of the institution to encourage the attainment of the highest standards in order to bring about constructive changes to society.

### **6.4 Collaboration and Team Building**

School administrators who are effective in interpersonal relation foster excellent teamwork hence develop a collaborative and united community where everyone has a portion to play. This competency is essential for creating a feeling of togetherness, as it helps diverse groups to pull together in tackling various challenges or exploiting opportunities on behalf of the institution.

### **6.5 Adaptability and Change Management**

With the educational environment changing more and more it becomes important to become adaptable and foster change management. Real leaders therefore have to be very dynamic and adaptable in their dealing with the institutions in the course of development since they have to address issues to do with transitions while at the same time ensure that the institutions' stability and morale in transition are not compromised. They engage stakeholders and assist them to adopt change, informing them of the gains of change and what to expect as the organization embraces change, new ways or technology, for example.

### **6.6 Innovation and Entrepreneurial Thinking**

An authentic leader fosters creativity and innovation because both are important for being a 21st-century organization. Hiring managers particularly target institutions that embrace a culture of innovation in learning and development by supporting educators and students to test and implement innovation and improvement opportunities in teaching and learning, tackle risks systematically and advance learning engagements.

### 6.7 Cultural Intelligence and Diversity Management

Cultural intelligence and diversity management help leaders to deal and capitalize with a diversity of cultures available in learning institutions. Authentic leaders foster diversity and they go further to embrace and support cultural diversity while serving students with culturally sensitive services.

### 6.8 Digital Literacy and Technological Integration

Embracing and a model of digital literacy and technology integration is crucial for leaders in the current education organization. This means that leaders themselves must be not only accepting of the use of information technology themselves, but also helping the people under their charge, namely members of the faculty and students, to accept the use of information technology. As such, they improve ways of teaching, functions related to administrative work, and students to fit into a world run by technology.

Based on the qualities displayed by an authentic leader, the same can be also applicable to authentic educational leaders, because of which they will be able to take up the challenges of changing educational landscape of 21st century.

## **7. Do authentic leadership practices have significant effects on mitigating the challenges of the educational landscape of 21st century.**

In the present study, the findings revealed that authentic leadership practices have a positive impact on alleviating the hindrances of the present-day learning environment. Since education continues to expand to meet the growing technological revolutions, internationalization, and changing human needs, authentic leadership offers a map that can help in guiding education through the changes with the right strategies and without compromising the noble values of education. Locally embedded, close-to-people, individually oriented, value-committed and effectively responsible genuine authentic leaders are specifically qualified to handle such multifaceted issues.

Thus, the first, I believe, is to willingly establish mutual trust that is instrumental in catering for diversity in today's more cosmopolitan learning organizations. They respect cultural differences and foster a community where everyone, or anybody, should feel welcome. It assists educational institutions in getting closer to culture and catering for the diverse needs of students within institution.

Also, authentic leaders focus on ethical standards and moral ethos for the efficient tackling of such ethical issues and the integration of technologies. They are strongly ethical, acting as per organizational and student' and staff' benefits instead of short-sighted gains. This is particularly crucial in determining the right approach towards some of the existing matters that include data protection, equality in access to digital resources as well as kinds of use of technology in learning.

Authentic leadership also fosters innovation and improvement or organizational flexibility. Authentic leaders again involve the faculty and students in solving the problems; this means that

they facilitate a relaxed environment that encourages the use of innovative teaching methods and technology. Thus, they contribute to the development of the organizational culture which supports creativity and persistence, which is critical for continuous evolution since the world is changing at an incredible speed.

In sum, the principles of the educational leadership analyzed may solve particular problems occurring in the educational environment as well as create the conditions contributing to its constant enhancement. Through promoting trust, ethical behavioural standards, flexibility and incorporating others, authentic leaders construct a highly adaptive organisational culture in education for success in meeting the increasing challenges of the twenty-first era.

## 8. Conclusion

To sum up this paper, it is established that AL is essential to solving the various known issues confronting 21st-century education in India and other parts of the world. As educational organizations experience rapid technological development, growing cultural diversity, and emerging and dynamic learning requirements, authentic leadership provides an appealing theoretical model by which these challenges can be addressed with professionalism, flexibility, and strength.

Ethical, relationally transparent, purposeful, and values-based authentic leaders are extremely well placed to gain and facilitate trust, voice and voice, and creativity in educational contexts. Not only do they encourage the values of openness and ethical behavior, but also share problematic solving, as well as accept change, which will have a positive effect on the educational process for all the parties involved.

It is within these competencies that genuine leaders support the conditions necessary for planned developments in education for educators and students while addressing uncertainty and change. This study has implications for the promotion of authentic leadership qualities among the current and future leaders in education because the changes taking place, especially in school education require meaningful and sustainable improvements. In conclusion, authentic leadership acts as a foundation on which effective implementation of constructions of a more resilient framework for schools with the capabilities of effectively delivering the education needed in the 21st century is posited and with positive contributions to the overall societal needs.

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