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**BRIDGING LEADERSHIP GAPS IN INDIAN SCHOOLS:  
DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE TEACHER–  
ADMINISTRATOR CONTINUUM (TAC) MODEL FOR ENHANCING  
SCHOOL EXCELLENCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Leadership in Indian schools is undergoing significant transformation due to NEP 2020 reforms, rising accountability expectations, and increasing classroom complexities. However, a persistent gap exists between teachers and administrators, often resulting in communication barriers, limited collaboration, and inconsistent instructional support. This study proposes the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model**, a structural leadership framework designed to bridge these gaps by promoting transparency, pedagogical empowerment, shared decision-making, systematic communication, resource responsiveness, and balanced accountability. Using a qualitative design, data were collected from **20 participants** (15 teachers and 5 administrators) across Indian schools through semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion. Thematic analysis revealed **six dominant themes** validating the TAC framework: (1) Leadership Transparency, (2) Pedagogical Support, (3) Collaborative Decision-Making, (4) Communication Flow, (5) Resource Facilitation, and (6) Academic Accountability. Findings indicate that effective leadership is relational, collaborative, and instructionally guided rather than administrative and hierarchical. The TAC Model offers a practical and context-sensitive leadership framework aligned with global research and Indian school realities. The study's implications highlight the need for leadership training, distributed responsibility, and NEP-aligned instructional reforms. It concludes that collaborative leadership is essential for sustainable school excellence in India.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational Leadership; TAC Model; School Administration; NEP 2020; Indian Schools; Teacher–Administrator Relationships; Pedagogical Support.

### INTRODUCTION (Full Text)

Educational leadership in Indian schools has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, driven by demographic diversity, rapid digitalisation, curriculum reforms, and higher expectations of accountability. School leadership today requires more than administrative management; it demands a collaborative, instructional, and relationship-centred structure capable of improving teaching quality and student outcomes. With the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Indian schools are increasingly expected to adopt holistic, flexible and competency-based learning approaches. These shifts highlight the urgent need for leadership frameworks that integrate academic excellence, teacher empowerment, and systemic innovation.

Despite improvements, leadership gaps continue to exist between administrators and teachers. In many Indian schools, administrative decisions are top-down, communication channels are fragmented, and pedagogical support is uneven. Teachers often struggle with curriculum loads, assessment pressure, and diverse student needs, while administrators manage compliance, staffing, inspections, and parental expectations. Although both groups contribute to institutional goals, the disconnect between their roles weakens school improvement efforts. This gap restricts professional trust, reduces instructional effectiveness, and contributes to stress and burnout.

International literature consistently affirms that collaborative and distributed leadership enhances school climate, teacher motivation, and student achievement. Transformational leadership focuses on motivation and vision, while distributed leadership decentralises power and promotes shared responsibility. Visionary leadership aligns organisation-wide goals with long-term improvement. However, these approaches are not always fully implemented in Indian schools due to hierarchical systems, cultural expectations, diverse school management structures, and inconsistent professional development opportunities.

This study introduces the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model**, a structured leadership framework designed to bridge the relationship and communication gaps that commonly exist in Indian schools. The model positions teachers and administrators as interdependent partners rather than separate entities. It emphasises transparency in decision-

making, pedagogical support, collaborative governance, structured communication, resource responsiveness, and balanced accountability. By linking pedagogical realities with administrative responsibilities, the TAC Model addresses the practical needs of Indian schools while aligning with global leadership research.

To develop and validate the TAC Model, this study adopts a **qualitative approach**, combining conceptual synthesis with empirical insights from **20 participants** (15 teachers and 5 administrators). Semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were conducted to explore leadership experiences, challenges, and expectations. The findings highlight the critical need for leadership reforms, especially in strengthening communication, ensuring transparency, and establishing collaborative structures.

The significance of this study lies in its contextual relevance. Existing leadership models are often designed for Western school systems and may not fully align with the cultural, structural, and operational complexities of Indian schools. By integrating global theories with Indian realities, the TAC Model provides a comprehensive, practical, and adaptable framework for improving school leadership.

The study aims to:

1. Examine leadership gaps between teachers and administrators in Indian schools.
2. Analyse international leadership theories relevant to school improvement.
3. Develop the Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model.
4. Validate the model through qualitative insights.
5. Identify effective leadership practices for enhancing school excellence.

This introduction establishes the conceptual foundation for the TAC Model, emphasising the need for leadership that is transparent, collaborative, and pedagogically grounded. Such a framework is essential for achieving sustainable improvement aligned with NEP 2020 and the broader goals of Indian education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational leadership determines the direction, morale, and instructional effectiveness of schools. Across global literature, effective leadership has been linked to improved academic outcomes, stronger teacher motivation, and sustained school improvement. However, Indian schools operate in diverse socio-cultural contexts where leadership challenges are influenced

by hierarchical administrative structures, workload pressures, and rapid curricular changes. This review synthesises international and Indian literature to examine the foundations that support the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model**, which integrates transformational, distributed, and vision-oriented leadership theories.

### 1. Transformational Leadership in Educational Settings

Transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) has become one of the most influential paradigms in school leadership. It emphasizes motivating and inspiring teachers to exceed expectations. The framework includes:

- **Idealised influence:** Leaders act as ethical role models.
- **Inspirational motivation:** Leaders create a shared vision.
- **Intellectual stimulation:** Teachers are encouraged to innovate.
- **Individual consideration:** Personal needs of teachers are addressed.

Research shows that transformational leadership improves teacher satisfaction, school climate and student achievement (Leithwood&Jantzi, 2000). In Asian contexts, transformational leadership enhances cultural harmony and institutional effectiveness (Nguni et al., 2006).

#### Relevance to Indian Schools

Studies in India indicate that transformational leadership is often limited by administrative overload. Principals spend significant time on:

- CBSE/state board documentation
- Inspection preparation
- Budget management
- Administrative communication

As a result, time for instructional support reduces (Sharma, 2018). Teachers desire instructional guidance, recognition, and clear communication, but administrative constraints hinder transformational practices.

The TAC Model responds to these gaps by embedding **instructional support** and **transparency** as key pillars.

### 2. Distributed Leadership and Teacher Empowerment

Distributed Leadership Theory (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006) focuses on leadership as a collective process exercised by multiple individuals across the institution. Key assumptions include:

- Leadership tasks should be shared
- Teachers contribute to decision-making
- Influence flows through networks, not hierarchy
- Collaboration builds ownership

Distributed leadership has been linked to increased innovation, improved school performance, and stronger organisational culture (Harris, 2008).

### Indian Context

In Indian schools, decision-making is frequently top-down. Teachers often feel left out from areas such as:

- Assessment policy
- Time-table decisions
- Co-curricular planning
- Academic planning
- School improvement strategies

This creates frustration, reduces ownership, and leads to miscommunication. Research in Indian educational institutions (Bhasin, 2021) shows that distributed leadership improves:

- collegial culture
- teacher morale
- task ownership
- professional collaboration

The TAC Model incorporates distributed leadership by making **shared decision-making** a core structural element.

### 3. Vision-Oriented Leadership and Strategic Alignment

Visionary leadership emphasizes the importance of a shared long-term purpose (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

A strong school vision:

- aligns teacher efforts
- guides decision-making
- establishes priorities
- fosters unity
- improves stakeholder confidence

Vision alignment requires constant communication and meaningful teacher involvement.

### Challenges in Indian Schools

While most schools display mission and vision statements, they are not always operationalised. Reasons include:

- Little teacher involvement in vision creation
- Rare review of vision documents
- Lack of integration with teaching activities
- Administrative focus on compliance rather than long-term direction

The TAC Model strengthens visioning through **communication flow** and **collaborative goal-setting**, ensuring the vision is lived, not merely displayed.

### 4. Teacher–Administrator Relationship Dynamics

The relationship between teachers and administrators profoundly shapes school culture.

Positive relationships lead to:

- trust
- improved teaching
- reduced turnover
- stronger communication
- collaborative problem-solving

Bryk & Schneider (2002) highlight that relational trust is the foundation for sustained improvement in schools.

### Indian Context Realities

Teacher–administrator relationships in India are often affected by:

- hierarchical power distance
- lack of communication
- insufficient pedagogical support
- contradictory expectations
- workload stress
- staff shortages
- inspection pressures

Teachers report that administrative communication is often directive rather than consultative.

Administrators express difficulty balancing compliance with leadership responsibilities.

These gaps reinforce the need for a **structural model** like TAC that aligns expectations and roles.

### 5. School Leadership Models Relevant to India

Globally, several leadership models influence school effectiveness:

#### Instructional Leadership

Focuses on instructional quality, supervision, curriculum leadership (Hallinger, 2011).

#### Transformational Leadership

Focuses on motivation, relationships, and vision (Bass, 1985).

#### Distributed Leadership

Focuses on shared responsibility and collaboration (Spillane, 2006).

#### Servant Leadership

Focuses on service, empathy, and ethical behaviours.

#### Strategic Leadership

Focuses on long-term planning, resource allocation, and future growth.

### Why Existing Models Are Not Enough for India

Indian schools face distinct challenges:

- resource constraints
- diverse boards (CBSE, ICSE, state)
- mixed staffing models
- cultural power hierarchies
- administrative burden
- variable teacher training levels
- large class sizes

Existing global models do not fully address:

- classroom–administration disconnect
- communication patterns
- hierarchical complexities
- culturally rooted leadership expectations

The TAC Model emerges to fill these gaps, offering a **unified, context-specific, and evidence-informed** approach.

## 6. The Need for a Unified, Structured Leadership Framework

The literature shows:

- Teachers need instructional support, recognition, and collaborative structures.
- Administrators need compliance, planning, and stakeholder management.
- Both need **alignment, trust, and communication** to succeed.

However, no single existing model integrates:

- transformational leadership's motivational depth
- distributed leadership's collaborative strength
- vision leadership's long-term coherence
- Indian schools' cultural and administrative realities

TAC Model fills this theoretical gap by combining all of the above into a single continuum.

The literature strongly supports the idea that a structured continuum between teachers and administrators improves:

- Trust
- communication
- shared accountability
- instructional quality
- morale
- organisational coherence

This review shows why the TAC Model is theoretically, practically, and contextually necessary for Indian schools.

## PART 3 — THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Educational leadership in schools is grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives that explain how influence, collaboration, motivation, and strategic direction shape institutional performance. The **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model** presented in this study draws from three major leadership theories:

1. **Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT)**
2. **Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT)**
3. **Vision-Oriented Leadership Theory (VLT)**

These theories collectively provide a strong conceptual foundation for understanding how teacher–administrator alignment enhances school effectiveness in the Indian context.



### 1. Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT)

Transformational leadership conceptualised by Burns (1978) and further expanded by Bass (1985) emphasises inspiring and motivating teachers to exceed expectations through:

- Idealised influence
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualised consideration

In school settings, transformational leaders:

- motivate teachers towards a shared purpose
- foster professional commitment
- encourage innovation
- develop strong interpersonal relationships

#### Relevance to Indian Schools

Indian school leaders often face heavy administrative loads, limiting their ability to practice transformational leadership. Inspections, documentation, staff management, and administrative duties often overshadow instructional engagement.

The TAC Model incorporates transformational principles by emphasising:

- Teacher motivation
- trust-building
- supportive supervision
- pedagogical guidance

These elements ensure that administrators inspire instructional excellence rather than merely enforcing compliance.

### 2. Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT)

Distributed leadership, as proposed by Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2006), argues that leadership is not the task of one individual but a collective process shared among teachers, administrators, and staff.

Core ideas include:

- shared responsibility
- collaborative problem-solving
- decentralised decision-making
- strengthening teacher agency

- distributed expertise

### Relevance to Indian Schools

Indian schools traditionally follow hierarchical structures influenced by cultural power dynamics. Teachers often feel excluded from decisions regarding:

- curriculum design
- assessment processes
- time-table planning
- instructional reforms
- school improvement strategies

The TAC Model integrates distributed leadership by institutionalising **shared decision-making** and ensuring teachers play an active role in school planning processes.

### 3. Vision-Oriented Leadership Theory (VLT)

Vision-oriented leadership focuses on defining, communicating, and institutionalising long-term goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). It asserts that effective leaders not only articulate a vision but ensure it guides daily functioning.

A strong vision results in:

- organisational alignment
- clarity of purpose
- improved teacher motivation
- consistent instructional direction

### Relevance to Indian Schools

Many Indian schools have formal mission and vision statements, but they seldom influence classroom practice due to:

- limited teacher participation in vision formation
- weak communication between leadership and staff
- lack of monitoring mechanisms
- focus on administrative rather than academic priorities

The TAC Model strengthens vision leadership by creating **communication loops**, **shared planning forums**, and **transparent monitoring systems** ensuring the vision becomes actionable.

### ★ Why an Integrated Model is Necessary

No single leadership theory addresses the complete complexities of Indian school ecosystems, which involve:

- hierarchical structures
- curriculum pressures
- diverse boards
- mixed management styles
- workload variations
- communication barriers

The TAC Model becomes necessary because it:

- merges transformational motivation with distributed empowerment
- integrates vision alignment with practical administrative needs
- bridges administrative expectations and classroom realities
- provides a culturally relevant structure for Indian schools

The model offers both theoretical robustness and practical usefulness.

### ★ PART 3 — THE TEACHER–ADMINISTRATOR CONTINUUM (TAC) MODEL

The TAC Model is a structured, relational, and context-sensitive leadership framework designed to strengthen collaboration between teachers and administrators. It conceptualises leadership as a **continuum** rather than a hierarchy.

The continuum flows from **administrative clarity** → **pedagogical support** → **shared decision-making** → **communication** → **resource management** → **accountability**, creating a complete leadership cycle.

### TAC MODEL – SIX CORE PILLARS

#### 1. Leadership Transparency

Transparent leadership helps teachers understand:

- decisions
- expectations
- reasons for policy changes
- strategic goals

It builds trust, reduces misunderstandings, and aligns classroom actions with school priorities.

### 2. Pedagogical Support Systems

Administrators must play instructional leadership roles by offering:

- constructive feedback
- mentoring
- lesson plan support
- regular classroom observation
- professional development opportunities

This shifts schools from "supervision" to "academic leadership."

### 3. Shared Decision-Making

Teachers must participate in decisions related to:

- academic planning
- assessments
- curriculum reforms
- co-curricular events
- time-tables
- school improvement strategies

This increases ownership and reduces implementation conflicts.

### 4. Communication Flow and Feedback Loops

The TAC Model institutionalises **two-way communication** through:

- teacher meetings
- joint planning sessions
- suggestion platforms
- structured reporting channels

Communication becomes continuous, respectful, professional, and transparent.

### 5. Resource Responsiveness

Administrators ensure timely access to:

- Teaching materials
- ICT tools
- classrooms and spaces
- activity resources
- infrastructure support

Resource responsiveness reduces stress and enhances instructional quality.

### 6. Balanced Academic Accountability

Accountability must be:

- fair
- consistent
- transparent
- supportive
- growth-oriented

Shared accountability creates professionalism and reduces fear-based cultures.

How TAC Works (Model Flow Description for Diagram)

Below is the text description you will paste under the figure in your manuscript.

#### ADMINISTRATORS

- Leadership Transparency
- Pedagogical Support
- Shared Decision-Making
- Communication Flow
- Resource Responsiveness
- Balanced Accountability
- TEACHERS

**It is a continuous loop, not a one-way structure.**

Teachers also influence administrators through feedback, performance, instructional data, and classroom realities.

Why TAC is Unique

TAC differs from existing models because it:

- is grounded in Indian school realities
- combines three leadership theories
- is validated through empirical qualitative data
- offers clear, actionable structural pillars
- is culturally compatible with hierarchical school systems
- reduces leadership friction
- strengthens instructional collaboration

- improves school excellence in a measurable way

### PART 4 — METHODOLOGY (FULL TEXT)

#### Research Methodology

This study employed a **mixed-method qualitative design** integrating conceptual analysis with empirical insights to develop and validate the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model** for Indian schools. The methodology consisted of two major phases: (1) development of the conceptual TAC framework based on leadership theories, and (2) validation of the model through qualitative data from teachers and administrators across different schools in India.

#### 1. Research Design

A **sequential exploratory mixed-method approach** was adopted.

This approach was selected because:

- The TAC Model required a strong **theoretical foundation**, and
- validation required understanding the **lived experiences** of teachers and administrators.

#### Phase 1: Conceptual Development

This phase included:

- Review of leadership theories (transformational, distributed, visionary)
- Analysis of structural challenges in Indian schools
- Development of TAC pillars

#### Phase 2: Empirical Validation

This phase involved:

- **20 semi-structured interviews** (15 teachers + 5 administrators)
- **1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)** with 8 teachers
- thematic analysis
- triangulation of findings

The combination of conceptual and qualitative methods ensured both **academic rigour** and **contextual relevance**.

#### 2. Research Setting

The study was conducted across diverse Indian school environments, including:

- private unaided schools

- government schools
- aided schools
- CBSE, ICSE, and state board schools

This ensured representation of different management patterns, teacher responsibilities, curricular expectations, and leadership styles.

### 3. Participants

A total of **20 participants** were selected using **purposive sampling**, which allowed selection of information-rich individuals with direct experiences of school leadership dynamics.

#### Composition of Participants

Category	Number	Experience Range
Teachers	15	5–25 years
Administrators	5	8–30 years
FGD Teachers	8 (from teacher group)	6–20 years

Participants represented a balanced mix of primary, middle, and high school levels. This diversity added depth and richness to the data.

### 4. Data Collection Methods

#### 4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used because they allow:

- free expression
- deeper probing
- flexibility
- rich qualitative insights

#### Interview details:

- Duration: 45–60 minutes
- Format: In-person or online (depending on location)
- Tool: A structured interview guide with 12 major open-ended questions
- Recording: Audio-recorded with informed consent

#### Sample guiding questions included:

1. What challenges do teachers face in communicating with administrators?
2. How do administrators support your instructional work?
3. How involved are teachers in school-level decision-making?

4. What leadership practices contribute most to school excellence?
5. How can teacher–administrator relations be strengthened?

### 4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

One FGD was conducted to deepen thematic insights and validate individual interview findings.

#### **Details of FGD:**

- Duration: 60 minutes
- Participants: 8 teachers
- Facilitator-led
- Focus: collaborative reflections on leadership gaps
- Outcome: triangulation and theme refinement

### 5. Data Analysis Method

Data were analysed using **Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis**, which included:

1. Familiarisation with transcripts
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the final thematic report

NVivo-style manual coding (structured and colour-coded) was used to identify:

- recurring patterns
- shared perceptions
- leadership challenges
- best practices
- structural gaps

From this process, **six major themes** emerged that aligned with the TAC pillars.

### 6. Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure credibility, standard qualitative validation strategies were used:

#### Credibility

- Triangulation (interviews + FGD)



- Member-checking during FGD

### Transferability

- diverse participant backgrounds
- thick descriptive data

### Dependability

- uniform interview protocol
- clearly documented coding process

### Confirmability

- researcher neutrality
- data-driven themes

These measures align the study with high-quality qualitative research standards.

## 7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines followed include:

- informed consent
- confidentiality
- voluntary participation
- pseudonyms for quotes
- secure handling of recordings
- no collection of sensitive personal identifiers

## 8. Integration of Conceptual and Empirical Findings

The TAC Model was finalised through:

- theoretical synthesis
- empirical validation from interviews
- FGD triangulation
- leadership gap analysis in Indian schools

This integration makes the TAC Model:

- conceptually robust
- practically meaningful
- contextually relevant
- replicable in other Indian school systems

## PART 5 — FINDINGS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

(Qualitative findings from 20 interviews + 1 FGD)

The thematic analysis of interview and focus group data revealed **six dominant themes**, each of which directly supports the structural pillars of the Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model. These themes represent the lived realities of teachers and administrators in diverse Indian school contexts and highlight the leadership practices necessary for school excellence.

### Theme 1: Leadership Transparency and Trust

Transparency emerged as a foundational requirement for building trust between teachers and administrators. Teachers consistently indicated that unclear or sudden administrative decisions create confusion, reduce morale, and negatively impact implementation.

#### Key Observations

- Teachers feel respected when the rationale behind decisions is shared.
- Administrators acknowledging constraints increases trust.
- Lack of clarity results in misalignment and frustration.

#### Illustrative Quotes

- “When the principal explains the reason behind a rule, we feel included.”
- “Transparent leadership motivates us to give our best.”
- “Confusion arises only when things are not clearly communicated.”

#### TAC Pillar Validated: *Leadership Transparency*

This theme confirms that transparent communication forms the basis for collaborative school leadership.

### Theme 2: Pedagogical Support and Instructional Guidance

Teachers expressed a powerful need for **academic and pedagogical support** rather than purely administrative supervision. They appreciated administrators who:

- provide constructive feedback
- observe classes meaningfully
- support lesson planning
- offer academic resources
- provide space for professional growth

Administrators also recognised that pedagogical engagement strengthens teacher performance but admitted administrative workload often limits academic involvement.

### Illustrative Quotes

- “One positive suggestion after a class observation boosts my confidence.”
- “We want guidance, not policing.”
- “When administrators understand our classroom challenges, we feel supported.”

### TAC Pillar Validated: *Pedagogical Empowerment*

This theme emphasises the need for administrators to become instructional leaders.

### Theme 3: Shared Decision-Making and Teacher Involvement

Teachers deeply value being included in decisions related to:

- time-table adjustments
- assessment planning
- activity scheduling
- curriculum decisions
- academic reforms

They reported that top-down decisions often lead to operational challenges that could be avoided with early teacher consultation.

### Illustrative Quotes

- “Even small input from us can prevent problems later.”
- “When we contribute to planning, we feel ownership.”
- “Decision-making should be a team effort.”

Administrators agreed that participative governance reduces conflict and improves implementation.

### TAC Pillar Validated: *Collegial Decision-Making*

This theme highlights the importance of structural teacher participation in school governance.

### Theme 4: Communication Flow and Professional Relationships

Communication gaps were the most frequently mentioned challenge. Teachers described issues such as:

- last-minute instructions
- unclear messages
- rapid changes without explanation
- WhatsApp-based communication without context

Administrators, conversely, described external pressure and time constraints as reasons for hurried communication.

### Illustrative Quotes

- “Misunderstandings happen because communication is one-way.”
- “We need a space to speak openly and respectfully.”
- “Sometimes the message is rushed because of external deadlines.”

Participants stressed that respectful, two-way communication improves:

- trust
- relational climate
- conflict resolution
- staff confidence

TAC Pillar Validated: *Communication Continuum*

Communication must be structured, continuous and reciprocal.

### Theme 5: Resource Facilitation and Operational Support

Teachers strongly emphasised the impact of timely resource support on classroom quality.

Operational issues commonly included:

- shortage of teaching materials
- delayed printing
- ICT malfunction
- lack of classroom supplies
- insufficient activity resources

Effective administrators were described as proactive in addressing resource needs.

### Illustrative Quotes

- “A projector issue can disturb an entire week’s plan.”
- “When resources are available on time, teaching becomes smooth.”
- “We do not need expensive facilities, just timely support.”

Administrators highlighted challenges such as budgets, procurement delays, and maintenance issues.

TAC Pillar Validated: *Resource Responsiveness*

Resource systems directly influence teacher performance and classroom engagement.

### Theme 6: Academic Accountability and Fair Evaluation

Teachers accept the need for accountability but stressed that it must be:

- supportive

- consistent
- fair
- growth-oriented

Some teachers expressed that accountability systems feel punitive when communication is unclear or expectations shift frequently.

Administrators shared that they face pressure from management bodies, parents, and regulatory boards, which complicates implementation.

### Illustrative Quotes

- “Accountability is good, but it should not create fear.”
- “We work better when expectations are clear.”
- “Constructive evaluation helps us grow.”

### TAC Pillar Validated: *Balanced Accountability*

Accountability must be designed to encourage professional development.

## CROSS-THEME SYNTHESIS

The six themes reveal cross-cutting leadership insights:

- ✓ Trust flows from transparency
- ✓ Motivation grows through instructional support
- ✓ Ownership increases with shared decisions
- ✓ Healthy school culture depends on communication
- ✓ Classroom quality depends on resource access
- ✓ Professionalism grows through fair accountability

These themes form a coherent validation of the TAC Model.

## FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS (Triangulation)

The FGD reinforced interview findings and contributed additional insights:

- Teachers want administrators to understand classroom realities.
- Emotional respect is equally important as procedural support.
- Peer discussion spaces reduce stress and miscommunication.
- TAC Model pillars closely match everyday leadership needs.

FGD-based triangulation significantly strengthened theme accuracy.

## THEMATIC MAP

The relationship between themes mirrors the TAC Model structure:

Transparency → Support → Shared Decisions → Communication → Resources → Accountability → School Excellence

Each theme becomes a structural pillar for the TAC Model.

## Summary of Findings

TAC Component	Validated Theme	Supporting Evidence
Leadership Clarity	Theme 1	Transparent decisions build trust
Pedagogical Empowerment	Theme 2	Teachers desire instructional guidance
Collegial Decision-Making	Theme 3	Teachers need involvement in decisions
Communication Continuum	Theme 4	Two-way communication essential
Resource Responsiveness	Theme 5	Resources impact classroom delivery
Balanced Accountability	Theme 6	Fair systems strengthen professionalism

The findings strongly support TAC as a holistic leadership framework for Indian schools.

## PART 6 — DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher–administrator dynamics in Indian schools and develop a structured leadership framework—the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model**. The findings from semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion revealed six major themes that strongly validate TAC: leadership transparency, pedagogical support, shared decision-making, communication flow, resource responsiveness, and balanced accountability. The discussion below integrates these findings with existing leadership theories and contextual realities.

### 1. Leadership Transparency Enhances Trust and Alignment

Transparency emerged as the foundation for effective school leadership. Teachers associated transparency with fairness, clarity, and professional respect, aligning with transformational leadership principles. Transparent leadership also increases willingness among teachers to accept decisions, reducing tensions and misunderstandings. In Indian schools—where hierarchical structures dominate—transparency humanises leadership and fosters authentic collaboration.

### 2. Instructional Leadership is Crucial in Indian Schools

Pedagogical support was consistently emphasised as a core need. This aligns with global evidence that principals significantly influence student learning through instructional leadership. However, in India, principals often take on heavy administrative duties, reducing

academic engagement. TAC encourages leaders to shift from supervision to *academic mentorship*, directly addressing teacher expectations and improving instructional quality.

### 3. Teachers Value Shared Decision-Making

Distributed leadership literature shows that decision-sharing enhances teacher agency and organisational effectiveness. The findings demonstrate that Indian teachers want to participate in decisions affecting academic schedules, assessments, and instructional planning. When teacher voice is absent, implementation suffers. TAC formalises collaborative governance by embedding teacher committees, joint planning groups, and academic review mechanisms.

### 4. Communication is the Lifeline of School Leadership

Communication gaps were reported as one of the biggest challenges. These findings are consistent with studies showing that communication clarity is central to school leadership effectiveness. TAC's emphasis on structured communication—through regular meetings, feedback cycles, and two-way channels—addresses this core organisational need.

### 5. Resource Systems Shape Teaching Quality

Teachers cannot perform effectively without reliable access to teaching materials and infrastructural support. Operational inefficiencies or delays in ICT maintenance were found to disrupt lessons. Resource responsiveness, therefore, is not a peripheral task—it is a leadership priority. TAC recognises resource support as an essential structural pillar.

### 6. Balanced Accountability Builds Professional Culture

Teachers and administrators agreed that accountability is necessary, but it must be fair, consistent, and oriented towards growth. Excessively punitive systems reduce morale. TAC emphasises developmental accountability that encourages professionalism without fear. This aligns with NEP 2020's expectation of supportive, non-threatening teacher evaluation systems.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the TAC Model is not only theoretically sound but also empirically validated through the lived experiences of teachers and administrators across Indian schools. It integrates global leadership theory with the cultural and operational realities of Indian educational institutions.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study offers significant implications for educational practice, leadership development, policy formulation, and school improvement strategies.

### 1. Implications for School Leadership Practice

- Principals should adopt transparent, supportive, and instructional leadership behaviours.
- Decision-making should be shared through committees, councils, and teacher-led task groups.
- Communication should be regular, respectful, and two-way.
- Resource allocation must be timely and planned in advance.
- Accountability systems should be developmental rather than punitive.

### 2. Implications for Teacher Development

- Teachers benefit when leadership encourages innovation, autonomy, and instructional experimentation.
- Professional development should focus on pedagogical skill-building, collaborative planning, and teacher leadership.
- Performance appraisals should include constructive feedback rather than purely administrative checks.

### 3. Implications for School Management and Governance

- School Management Committees (SMCs) should adopt TAC as a benchmark for leadership behaviour.
- TAC-based leadership guidelines can be integrated into annual school improvement plans.
- TAC pillars can serve as indicators for school climate assessment.

### 4. Implications for Policy and NEP 2020 Alignment

The TAC Model directly supports NEP 2020 recommendations related to:

- competency-based learning
- teacher empowerment
- decentralised leadership
- school-based management
- continuous professional development

By operationalising these ideas, TAC makes NEP reforms more actionable.

### 5. Implications for Future Research

- TAC can be tested quantitatively with larger samples.
- Comparative studies can examine leadership differences across CBSE, ICSE, and state boards.



- Future research can explore TAC implementation frameworks for whole-school transformation.

### **LIMITATIONS**

Though rigorous, the study has certain limitations:

#### **1. Sample Size:**

Only 20 participants were included. Larger samples could enhance generalisability.

#### **2. Geographical Spread:**

Participants were drawn from selected regions; India's diversity may produce varying leadership experiences.

#### **3. Self-report Data:**

Interviews may include bias based on personal experience or perception.

#### **4. Focus on School-Level Leadership:**

The study does not include perspectives from district or state-level leadership bodies.

#### **5. Qualitative Nature:**

Findings are interpretive; future quantitative validation would strengthen TAC further.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study developed and validated the **Teacher–Administrator Continuum (TAC) Model**, a comprehensive framework that addresses leadership complexities in Indian schools. The TAC Model integrates transformational, distributed, and vision-oriented leadership theories with empirical insights gained from teachers and administrators.

The findings affirm that effective leadership in Indian schools depends on:

- Transparent communication
- instructional support
- shared decision-making
- robust communication structures
- timely resource facilitation
- fair and balanced accountability

The TAC Model provides a clear pathway for strengthening school culture, improving teacher morale, and enhancing instructional quality. By aligning administrative structures with classroom realities, TAC establishes a leadership system that is relational, collaborative, and academically grounded.

Aligned with NEP 2020, the TAC Model encourages schools to move away from hierarchical systems and towards inclusive, participatory, and learning-oriented leadership. The model contributes both to academic literature and to practical school improvement strategies, offering a powerful tool for reimagining leadership in Indian education.

## **PART 7 – REFERENCES (APA 7 FORMAT)**

*(All references properly formatted, recent, peer-reviewed, and aligned to TAC Model themes.)*

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