

Pallikkutam, The Education Observer

Jan 2026



Cover Story

Sustainable Leadership in the Age of Actualisation



 **January 2026**

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP IN THE AGE OF ACTUALISATION

Sustainable leadership focuses on agility, teacher satisfaction, and purpose in the Age of Actualization.

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Shift from managing systems to empowering people. Sustainable leadership focuses on agility, teacher satisfaction, and purpose in the Age of Actualization.

"Let's be honest: The educational landscape we are navigating today looks nothing like it did five years ago. With the rapid acceleration of Artificial Intelligence and the shifting demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the "wait and see" approach is no longer a safety net- it's a liability," according to Eric Shenerger, a US-based award-winning school principal, best-selling author, and international keynote speaker.

In India, teacher capacity building was the primary focus in education for a long time. In recent years, new research has highlighted the significant role played by principals in influencing the

educational outcomes of students and in enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

Various models provide a foundation for understanding how leadership practices can enhance teacher job satisfaction and student achievement.

Three common models are: 2. Instructional Leadership: focused on teaching and learning 2. Transformational Leadership: emphasising vision, motivation, and change, and 3. Distributed Leadership (sharing responsibilities across staff).

"The leaders who will thrive in 2026 and beyond aren't the ones with the most authority; they are the ones with the most agility. They don't just manage systems; they empower people. We have to shift from a mindset of compliance to one of contribution. We need to stop preparing kids (and staff) for something and start preparing them for anything," according to Eric Sheninger.

Sustainable Leadership - aims to create enduring value, work practices, and systems that go beyond short-term gains and performance outcomes without sacrificing current organisational goals and needs. Sustainable leaders strive to leave a lasting impact and legacy from day one. It enables organisations to transition away from traditional controlling leadership practices toward more relational, collaborative, and participatory approaches.

Sustainable school leadership is crucial for students' psychological and academic development as well as educators' professional growth. School principals and teachers work together on building capacity for continuous learning, collaborative practices, shared decision-making, and leadership responsibilities.

Note on Age of Acceleration and Age of Actualisation

The first quarter of the twenty-first century may justly be remembered as the Age of Acceleration. Knowledge, computation, communication, and creativity all accelerated at a pace unmatched in human history, culminating in the AI revolution that rendered knowledge abundant, instantaneous, and endlessly generative. Yet acceleration, by its very nature, is indifferent to direction. Speed magnifies capacity, but it does not confer purpose. As the century enters its second quarter (2026–2050), humanity confronts a deeper civilizational task: not to generate more, but to become more. This transition marks the emergence of the Age of Actualization.

Actualization here must be understood in a dual sense—self-actualization and world-actualization. The former concerns the fulfillment of human potential in an age where intelligence is no longer scarce; the latter concerns the realization of humane, sustainable, and meaningful worlds made possible—yet not guaranteed—by accelerated intelligence. If acceleration was about what could be done, actualization will be about what ought to be done and what can endure.

References: [A Principal's Reflections: Leading Without a Net: Why Fearless Leadership is Your Only Option](#)
[A Principal's Reflections: Leading Through the Noise: 5 Non-Negotiable Skills for 2026 and Beyond](#)

[School leadership matters: Evidence from TIMSS on teacher job satisfaction and students' academic outcomes - ScienceDirect](#)

[Educational leadership in the digital Age: An exploration of Technology's impact on leadership practices - ScienceDirect](#)

 **Sreekumar Raghavan**



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