ABSTRACT

Studies, on teacher-styles, have suggested that teachers, like most organisational leaders adopt either the task-oriented style or the relationship-oriented style with the students (Fiedler, 1967; Flanders, 1970; Rosenshine and Furst, 1973). Sinha's (1980) work on social and cultural values of a group revealed that the effectiveness of a leadership style depends to a large extent on the subordinate disposition, resulting from the learned social and cultural values. Sinha found the nurturant-task style effective in the Indian context. This style combines concern for task with nurturant orientation which Sinha found effective among Indians displaying low work values, need for comfort, need for dependency and personalized relationship. Support for Sinha's theoretical model has been obtained in industrial, bureaucratic and academic organisations. In the academic context, such a teacher initiates, guides and directs his/her students to work hard, creating a climate of purposiveness and goal-orientation, combined with affection, interest in their well-being and commitment to their growth. Evidence for effectiveness of nurturant-task teachers was generally obtained through student ratings. In the present study an attempt has been made to see whether nurturant task teachers are effective in increasing the intellectual commitment and college adjustment of students.

The general objective is to examine the relationship of teacher
styles - authoritarian, nurturant task and participative - with intellectual commitment and college adjustment of students and to see whether certain individual and group factors mediate and influence this relationship. Among the individual variables, are included certain student variables, like, gender, socio-economic status, educational level and need dispositions. The group factors include college-type, college environment, group atmosphere and family-peer interactions. The student sample consists of 450 male and 450 female students coming from six colleges (3 male and 3 female) of Delhi University, divided into three categories of high, medium and low (one male and one female college selected from each category). This division is based on certain structural characteristics of the colleges, like, academic facilities, examination results, teacher-student ratio, per capita annual expenditure and the like. The data is analysed using the 2x2x3 factorial design, having two levels of sex (male/female), two levels of education (B.A. IIInd year/B.A. IIInd year) and three levels of college type (High/Medium/Low). The statistical analysis employed are Pearson and Rank Order correlations, t test, analysis of variance, stepwise regression analysis, factor analysis and cross-lagged correlation. The results indicate that among the three teacher styles, the nurturant task style has significant positive correlation with intellectual commitment of students \((r = .07, P < .05)\). The participative style does not show
significant relationship, while the authoritarian style indicates significant negative correlation \( r = -0.09, P < 0.01 \). Among the individual-group factors, a few student variables, like, gender and need dispositions of students are seen to emerge as important variables affecting intellectual commitment and college adjustment of students. On the side of group variables, college type emerges as the most powerful influence in determining the intellectual commitment and college adjustment of students. It is also found to act as a strong mediator in the relationship between teacher styles and the criteria variables. The predictive value of nurturant task style is found to increase tremendously when it interacted with college type. Such a finding seems to suggest two things: (1) A teacher who joins a college high on structural characteristics, puts in all his/her effort in meeting the academic demand through his/her instructional style, academic effort, improvement of qualifications and the like, and thus is able to improve the level of commitment and adjustment in students, and; (2) A teacher who is placed in a college which is low in terms of structural characteristics, likewise, adjusts to the minimum and low quality demands of the college and students, resulting from lack of facilities and motivation and therefore is of little help to the students.

The implications of the study are threefold. First, at the student level, an awareness should generate among the students,
especially of medium and low colleges, to demand better facilities, better teachers and better working conditions in the colleges. Only a demanding body of students can create an awareness in the academic staff and other academic bodies to sincerely think and work for their welfare. Secondly, the teachers should try to improve the situation in the medium and low colleges by improving their classroom behaviour strategies in terms of frequency and mode of interaction with students, providing adequate incentives to them and adjusting their method of teaching to the student requirements. Thirdly, at the institutional level, teacher training programmes need to be employed to train fresh entrants to develop such skill and style considered beneficial for the growth of students.

It thus seems that an all round student-teacher-institution development programme ought to be formulated to increase the effectiveness of teacher interaction style in the total improvement of student outcomes.