THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a theoretical overview of educational leadership especially the leadership styles of heads of the educational institution and a brief history of the primary education in Kerala.

The Review of theoretical background of the problem is an important aspect of any investigation. A proper study of related literature would enable the investigator to locate and go deep in the problem. According to Mouly (1970) “the survey of related literature is a crucial aspect of planning of the study and the time spend in such a survey invariably is a wise investment.” it provides opportunity of gaining an insight to the methods, measures, subjects, and approaches employed by other research workers which in turn will lead to significant improvement of his own research design. The chapter is organized under the following heads.

A. Leadership
B. Characteristics of Leadership
C. Quality of Leadership
D. Tasks of a Leader
E. Portraits of a Leader
F. Theories of Leadership
G. Leadership Styles
H. Leaders of a Primary School
I. Primary Education in India
J. Primary Education in Kerala
A. Leadership

Leadership is the most important aspect of educational administration and management. The history of administration and management can be traced back as far as 1300 B.C., when the Egyptians were spreading their culture throughout the world. They had a system of large-scale administration. The Greeks introduced democracy into administration when it placed government in the hands of all men. It recognized such basic facts as: all men are equal before the law; a citizen should be interested not only in his own personal affairs, but also in the affairs of state; all citizens have a responsibility for deciding public policy; and full discussion of important public issues is an essential to good government. The Romans showed their ability in large-scale management, which included the administration of their own affairs as well as the affairs of their subjects. They established a paid system of civil service under Augustus about 25 B.C.

Educational administration is concerned with dealing and coordinating the activities of groups of people. It is the dynamic side of education. Educational philosophy sets the goal; educational psychology explains the principles of teaching and educational administration deals with the educational practices. It is planning, directing, controlling, executing and evaluating the educative process. Current research has emphasized the significance of the concept, stating that effective schools should have leaders who articulate with the community.
Any institution requires a leader to run the institution. Everything which happens depends on the type and nature of the leadership. Leadership is the ability and readiness to inspire, guide and direct or manage others. Haskell (1994) defines leadership “as a relation between persons such that the ideas (will) of the person are being accepted and followed by other persons”.

Davies (1994) defines educational leadership as “that quality which evokes from co-workers their voluntary, active participation in assuming responsibilities which contribute to growth in relationships, attitudes and activities of the group.”

Zeieny (1994) defines a leader as “a group member whom others follow because he has demonstrated mastery of the social relationships in the group, and as a consequence becomes its ‘centre of living.’”

Leadership is the interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process toward the attainment of a specific goal or goals. It is an influence, a positive influencing act directing a group and making difference among groups.

Leaders are agents of change as persons whose acts affect other people more than other people affect them. A leader affects the group by initiating action, facilitating communication, establishing structure and implementing his own philosophy in the manner in which he leads.

According to Culberston, (1994) effective leadership involves responsibility and authority, and the main leadership acts are,
planning, initiating, managing, delegating, coordinating, decision-making, communicating and evaluating. In solving any problem, a principal might use one or several of these acts of leadership. An effective leader has to perform a number of functions, they are: -

1. Co-operating in the identification of common goals.
2. Motivating individuals, making decisions, taking actions and evaluating the work of the group.
3. Developing favourable and healthy climate for individual and group effort.
4. Guiding individuals and groups for immediate and long-range activities.
5. Becoming a friend, philosopher and guide from time to time.
6. Coordinating the efforts of others.
7. Carrying out effectively any responsibility for actions that have been accepted and expected of him by the group.

B. Characteristics of Leadership

The American Association of School Administrators gives the following characteristics of leadership in the field of educational administration.

1. It sets the pattern and guides the outcomes of cooperative action.
2. It guides the educational programme but relies on shared decision.
3. It gives common understanding to common purposes.
4. It produces cohesiveness without which cooperation is impossible.

5. It communicates throughout the school personnel a sense of mutual understanding and mutual loyalty to the ideals of education.

6. It generates enthusiasm for a project and inspires work towards its solution.

7. It resolves the differences, which frequently arise in growing organizations.

C. Quality of Leadership

A leader is expected to take initiative, to have a “preferred outcome” in terms of group goals. At the same time, he or she is expected to maintain the organisation in good enough shape that it can continue to function. The five key facets of quality of leadership are as follows:

1. Focus

Effective leaders stay focused on the outcomes they wish to create, and do not get too married to the methods used to achieve them. They provide this 'outcomes focus' for their organization by emphasizing the mission, vision and strategic goals of their organization and at the same time building the capacity of their organizations to achieve them. This capacity building emphasizes the need to be flexible, creative and innovative and avoid becoming fossilized through the adoption of bureaucratic structures, policies and processes.
2. **Authenticity**

   Leaders who are authentic attract followers, even leaders who are viewed as being highly driven and difficult to work for. Simply put, they are viewed as always being themselves and therefore followers know what to expect from them and can rely on them, come thick or thin. Authenticity provides the leader with the currency to obtain 'buy-in' from key stakeholders, because it builds and maintains trust.

3. **Courage**

   The challenges facing leaders are immense, and require great courage to overcome. Leaders are constantly being challenged by others, be it their own team, customers, the public or other stakeholders. Standing firm in the face of criticism, and having the courage to admit when they are wrong are hallmarks of courageous leaders. For example, shifting an organization from being introspective to becoming customer focused requires courage when people pay lip service to the new direction it means calling people on their bluff.

4. **Empathy**

   Effective leaders know how to listen empathetically. Thus legitimizing other’s input. By doing so, they promote consensus building, and build strong teams. They coach others to do the same, and so create a culture of inclusiveness. But they do not get bogged down in overly complicated dialogue.
5. Timing

The single most critical facet is in knowing when to make critical decisions and when not to. All of the other facets must be viewed as subservient to getting the timing of critical decisions right. There is a time to be focused, authentic, courageous and empathetic, but get the timing wrong on critical decisions and everything else is nullified. Great leaders move with appropriate speed. They do not believe that everything must be done immediately. They know how to prioritize, and how to get their team to prioritize. As well, they engage in timely follow through to ensure actions that are committed to happen in a well coordinated and timely way.

D. Tasks of a Leader

A good leader has to face a number of problems, when he deals with the group activities. The effective tackling of these problems is the major task of any leader. The following are the major tasks of a leader.

1. When group decision is made, the group members may disagree with each other at the problem-identification stage or at the problem-solving stage. In such cases, the leader will provide his service and arbitrate between them to resolve the differences by providing guidance.

2. An effective leader believes in team concept. He therefore, seeks and gives suggestion. This is essential to have group cohesiveness, as members feel a sense of participation.
3. A leader sets not only his own objectives but also helps his subordinates in setting realistic objectives. He clarifies group objectives and makes sure that these objectives are rational and useful to the organisation.

4. A leader is often required to encourage his group members to work effectively. Thus, he works as a catalyst and spurs his subordinates to action.

5. By ensuring a supportive face-to-face relationship and developing a positive attitude, he develops an environment conducive to work. By providing a sense of security and belongingness, he motivates the group to work effectively.

E. Portraits of a Leader.

An excellent leader in education has so many qualities. Portraits of a Leader are as follows:-

1. He sees education in relation to society.
2. He has a balanced view of education in the professional sense.
3. He is a specialist in the process of inspection.
4. He has superior mental ability.
5. He is socially and emotionally matured.
6. He is robust in health.
7. He has technical skills.

In order to improve human relationships, the educational leader will bear in mind the following factors.
1. Increased respect for human personality: Superiors should have respect for their subordinates and vice versa,

2. A sense of high purpose, which overrides material self-interest: The individual should be willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of the group.

3. Free and responsible participation: People give their best when they do thing voluntarily.

4. Appreciation for leadership: A group should show its appreciation for the ability and good work of its leader.

5. Respect for authority: This is necessary in any group, except where autocratic power prevails.

F. Theories of Leadership

The area of leadership gained much significance because of the rapid growth of the management concepts in the day to day activities of human being especially in the field of business and education. Studies initiated by Ohio state university turned the style and dimension of leadership studies and many types of innovations emerged in this field of study thereafter. All the studies have its own significance in that area and each theory explained much about leadership keeping its own point of view.

Many theories have been emerged to explain the specific qualities and behaviours that differentiate the leaders from the group. These theories can be grouped under four major categories as follows:
1. Trait theory
2. Behavioural theories
3. Situational theories
4. Transformational leadership

1. Trait Theory of Leadership

The first systematic attempt to study the leadership quality was trait approach. These theories are called ‘Great man’ theories because they focused on identifying the innate traits and qualities possessed by great social and political leaders. (Eg. Gandhiji, Lincoln, Lenin etc.). It was on the basis of the concept that a man is born with or without some specific traits. The traits that characterises the leaders from his followers are in two categories: 1. Inherent personal qualities. 2. Acquired tendencies.

The research of this period focused on identifying the specific traits that clearly differentiated leaders from followers. Barnard (1938) explains the traits or qualities for effective leadership; they are: physique, skill, technology, perception, knowledge, memory, imagination, determination, persistence, endurance and courage.

Stogdill (1948) analysed and more than 124 trait studies that were conducted between 1904 and 1947. This survey identified a group of important leadership traits that were related to how individuals in various groups become leaders. The finding of the analysis reveals that the average individual in the leadership role is different from the average group members in the following ways: (i) intelligence, (ii) alertness, (iii) insight, (iv) responsibility, (v) initiative
(vi) persistence, (vii) self-confidence, and (viii) sociality. Thus the traits that leaders possess must be relevant to situations in which the leader is functioning. Leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in another situation.

Now a days the influence of personality traits on leadership behaviour is widely discussed and a number of studies conducted in this area.

Hence, the trait approach is still significant. It began with an emphasis on identifying the traits of great persons: then shifted to the situations on leadership and most currently, it has turned back to restore the critical role of traits in qualitative leadership.

2. Behavioural Theories of Leadership

Behavioural approach in leadership is based on observed behaviour. It gives emphasis on how the leaders actually behave as observed by subordinates. According to this view leadership is composed of two general kinds of behaviours: task behaviours and relationship behaviours. The first one is concentrating on goal accomplishment; they help group members to achieve their goal. The second one that is the Relationship behaviours let the subordinates feel free and comfortable with themselves, in their activities. Thus the essence of behaviour approach is to explain how leaders integrate these two kinds of behaviours to influence subordinates in their efforts to achieve the goal.
Research studies in behavioural approach gained much significance during the period of 1960’s and 1970’s. Group dynamic studies by Cartwright and Zander, (1960) X and Y theory by McGregor, (1960) Likert’s (1961) management system, are notable efforts in this area. But the most important contributors in this field were the Ohio State University studies, Michigan University studies and the Blake and Mouton leadership studies. The above three groups gives a comprehensive picture regarding the behavioural approach to the leadership studies. A brief description of these categories are given below.

a) Ohio State University Studies

The Bureau of Business studies and research wing of Ohio State University initiated a series of leadership studies in 1945. A research team consists of researchers from Sociology, Psychology and Economics developed leaders behaviour description questionnaire (LBDQ). Using this tool the Ohio group identified two major dimensions of leadership i.e. Initiating structure and consideration. Halpin, (1959) explains that the Initiating structure refers to the leader’s behaviour in delineating the relationship between himself and members of the work group and in endeavoring to establish well-defined patterns of organisation, channels of communications, and methods of procedure. On the other hand, consideration refers to behaviour indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and the members of his staff.
High scores in both two dimensions shows the better is the leadership behaviour. Scores having high initiating structure manifest the behaviour of the leader who clarifies goals, and organises for the completion of specific task. This type of leadership behaviour can be called as more institution-oriented. A leader, who gets high score on consideration, is more person-oriented. If the leader has low score on both the dimensions, he is the less effective leader.

The result of further studies in this field reveals that the high–high leaders (high scores in both initiation and consideration) is considered as the high achievers in their organisation. The Ohio State Studies suggested that the high-high style generally resulted in positive outcomes.

b) Studies of Michigan

The survey research centre of the Michigan University initiated their studies of leadership behaviour concentrating on the impact of leader’s behaviour on the performance of small groups. They identified two types of leadership behaviour, (a) Employee Orientation and (b) Production Orientation.

Employee orientation is based on the strong human relations with subordinates. They are considering the worker’s individuality, and give special attention to their personal needs. Actually Employee orientation is very similar to the Consideration Structure of Ohio State Studies. Production orientation emphasis on the technical and productive aspect of a job or a profession. According to production
orientation, workers are viewed as a means for getting work accomplished. (Bowers and Seashore, 1966).

c) Managerial Grid

The managerial grid, model appeared first in the early 1960s and since then a number of revisions took place on the same model (Blake and Mouton, 1964, 1978, 1985). Managerial grid has been used especially in organisational training and development. It explains how leaders help organisations to reach their goal through two factors; (a) Concern for Production (b) Concern for People. Managerial grid is also known as leadership grid.

Concern for production refers to whatever the organisation is seeking to accomplish. It includes variety of activities, such as policy decisions, new innovations, new product and process, work plan, etc.

Blake and Mouton, (1964) explains that, Concern for people refers to how a leader attends to the people within the organisation who are trying to achieve its goals. This concern includes building organisational commitment and trust, promoting the personal worth of employees, providing good working conditions, maintaining a fair salary structure, and promoting good social relations.

3. Situational Theories of Leadership

1950’s Social psychologists initiated for another turn in the leadership studies that is the role of situational variables that had impact on leadership roles, skills, and behaviour.
Situational Leadership focuses on leadership in situations. The basic theory of situational leadership is leaders are adopting different styles according to the situation demands. In short an effective leader adopt his or her style to the demands of different situations. A number of studies emerged in this area. Some of the important attempts are briefly discussed below

a) Fiedler’s Contingency Theory of Leadership

Fiedler (1967) is considered as the father of Contingency Theory of Leadership. He has conducted a number of studies on different types of leaders worked in different context. After analysing the styles of hundreds of leaders who were both good and bad, Fielder and his colleagues suggests that three major situational variables seem to determine whether a given situation is favourable to leaders:

i) Leader member relations refer to the extent to which the group trusts the leader and willingly follows her directions.

ii) Task structure refers to the degree to which the task is clearly defined.

iii) Position power means the extent to which the leader has official power to influence others.

If all the three dimensions are high, the situations are favourable to the leader. That is, followers generally accept the leader. If the dimensions are in low position, the situation will be very unfavourable
for the leader. Hence the favourableness of the situation in combination with the leadership style determines effectiveness.

**b) Path-Goal Theory**

The relationship between the leader’s style and the characteristics of the followers is the most important aspect when we consider the leadership style or behaviour. Path – goal theory gives emphasis on this aspect. Actually the basis of this theory is derived from expectancy theory, which suggests that subordinates will be motivated if they think they are capable of performing their work.

House (1971) explains four major types of leadership on the basis of Path – Goal theory. They are:

i) **Directive**: the leader tells employees what he expects of subordinates, and shows them how to do it.

ii) **Supportive**: the leader shows concern for the well being of his employees by being friendly and approachable.

iii) **Participative**: the leader involves employees in decision making, consults them about their views of the situation, asks for their suggestions, considers those suggestions in making a decision.

iv) **Achievement oriented**: the leader helps employees to set goals, and encourages them to assume responsibility for achieving the goals.
Another popular theory in situational leadership is Reddin’s 3-D theory. According to this theory a manager has to look at the five situational elements namely (i) Organization, (ii) Technology, (iii) Superiors, (iv) Co-workers and (v) Subordinates (Reddin, 1970). Here, Organization refers to all those factors which influence behaviour within a social system that are common to essentially unrelated positions. Technology refers to the way work may be done to achieve managerial effectiveness. Superior, Co-workers and Subordinates are concepts which are used in the generally accepted sense. These elements make demands on the manager’s style. A manager has only to exhibit these elements in order to make a comprehensive situation diagnosis. Leaders control the situation and by doing so, they have to first control themselves.

d) Life-Cycle Theory

This theory of leadership is the contribution of Hersey and Blanchard (1988). They used the terms Task behaviour and Relationship behaviour to describe concepts similar to consideration and Initiating structure of the Ohio State Studies. The essence of life – cycle theory is the relationship between a leader’s style and the readiness of his followers. The readiness of his followers likely to increase over the life cycle of his relationship with the leader.

The term Task behaviour means the behaviours in which the leader specifies an individual’s or group’s duties and responsibilities
by setting the goal. It gives a clear picture regarding what activities each one is to do and when, where, and how, tasks are to be accomplished. Relationship behaviour is based on communication behaviour of the leaders. It includes listening, facilitating interactions, feedback, and supporting individuals and group; maintain personal relationship between themselves and members of their group by opening up channels of communication (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

Combining these, two dimensions life cycle theory proposes four basic styles of leadership as follows:

i) Telling: High task, and Low relationship. The leader guides, directs, establishes guidelines, Provides specific instructions, and closely supervises performance. A dysfunctional telling-style leader dictates without really considering the employees at all.

ii) Selling: High task and High relationship. The leader explains decisions, clarifies them and persuades employee to follow them as necessary. Too intense selling, however, can result in badgering at employees with too much structure and consideration.

iii) Participating: Low task and High relationship. The leader shifts significant responsibility to the followers, encourages employees to participate in decision-making, and facilitates collaboration and commitment. In extreme cases, the leader can bend too far to accommodate the will of the employees, rather than correctly judging the appropriate amount of participation.
iv) Delegating: Low task and Low relationship. The leader only observes and monitors employees’ performance after giving them responsibility for decisions and implementation. Improper application of this style can result in the leader disengaging too much from the decision making process.

Readiness in situational leadership is defined as the extent to which a follower has the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task. People tend to be at different levels of readiness depending on the task they are being asked to do. Readiness is not a personal characteristic; it is not an evaluation of a person’s traits, values, age, and so on. Readiness is preparing a person to perform a particular task (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

4. Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Recent studies since the early 1980s witnessed new innovative studies in the field of leadership and administration. Transformation and Transactional approaches are the products of new leadership paradigm. These theories began to develop with emphasis on the leader’s charisma, ability to develop and implement vision of the organisation, and ability of each worker to act as self-leader. Manz and Sims (2002) explain that, when most people think of leadership, they think of one person doing something to another person. It is influence and a leader as one who has ability to influence another. A classic leader—one whom everyone recognizes is a leader—is sometimes described as a Charismatic or heroic. A popular concept is the idea of a
transformational leader, one who has the vision and dynamic personal attraction to total organisational change.

Simply, Transformational leadership is a process to transforms individuals. Values, ethic standards, and long-term goals are highly correlated with this concept. It estimates the follower’s motives, satisfying and treating them as full human beings.

Burns (1978) observes that, Transformational leadership refers to the process whereby an individual engaged with others creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. Here the leader makes the follower to attain the maximum goal. Burns presents Gandhiji as a best example of transformational leadership. Gandhiji raised the hopes and needs of millions of his people.

Schermerhorn (1996) classifies the specialities of a transformational leader as follows

(i) Vision: having ideas and a clear sense of direction, communicating them to others and developing excitement about working hard to accomplish shared dreams.

(ii) Charisma: arousing others enthusiasm, faith, loyalty, pride, and trust in themselves through the power of personal reference and appeals to emotions.

(iii) Symbolism: identifying a hero offering special rewards, and holding spontaneous and planned ceremonies to celebrate excellence and high achievement.
(iv) Empowerment: helping others to develop and perform, removing performance obstacles, sharing responsibilities and delegating truly challenging work.

(v) Intellectual stimulation: gaining the involvement of others by creating awareness of problems and stirring their imagination to create high-quality solutions.

(vi) Integrity: being honest and credible, acting consistently out of personal conviction.

Bass (1985), one of the proponents of this approach, argues that there are essentially two types of leaders i.e., Transactional and Transformational. Transactional leaders motivate employee by appealing to self-interest. That is, transactional leaders treat leadership as an exchange that is, a transactional relationship between themselves and their employees. In spirit, they are saying, I will look after your interests if you will look after mine. Although nothing may be wrong with this approach, Bass and others argued it fails to lead to the kind of employee commitment and dedication necessary for greatness. To achieve this, the leader must exhibit charismatic, or transformational characteristics.

A transformational leader is one who inspires trust, confidence, admiration and loyalty from his or her followers. As a result, followers are motivated to exert high levels of effort out of a sense of personal loyalty to the leader, if not the organization. Effective leaders always exhibit several characteristics. (Conger and Kanungo, 1987) studied and listed certain unique features that give the leader to influence over their followers. They are as follows:
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(i) High self-confidence, charismatic leaders exhibit strong confidence in their own judgements and actions.

(ii) Ability to articulate a vision, such leaders has a unique ability to put into words an idealized vision of what the future could hold. In fact, the greater the disparity between the status quo and the idealized vision, the greater the likelihood that followers will attribute extraordinary vision to the leader.

(iii) Willingness to assume high personal risks to pursue the vision, charismatic leaders are often seen as being willing to assume great risks to pursue their vision. This commitment to the future and self-sacrifice often entices others to follow.

(iv) Use of unconventional strategies, these leaders often use unconventional behaviour or break accepted norms as a sign of their confidence in their course of action. Such attention-getting behaviour often attracts the admiration of the followers.

(v) Perception of leaders as change agent, finally, charismatic leaders are often seen by followers as change agents, especially when followers are disaffected or unhappy with current events.

G. Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the distinctive way in which a superior manages her/his interfaces with subordinates. This style is likely to be influenced strongly by the leader’s beliefs about how subordinates should be treated. It is likely to manifest itself in aspects such as the nature of a leader’s response to the subordinate’s mistakes, conflicts between subordinates, the role the leader gives to subordinates in decision-making, the kind of support the leader extends to
subordinates, the manner in which the leader assigns tasks, the kind of information she/he shares with subordinates and the way in which it is shared, the opportunities the leader gives to subordinates to take initiative, and the effort the leader makes for the development of subordinates.

A leader can have different ways of relating with subordinates. The relationship here is an exploitative one. Or, the leader can consider subordinates as subjects, as fellow human beings with aspirations, strengths and weaknesses, a potential that can be developed under the right conditions. The relationship here is relatively egalitarian and catalytic of the growth of subordinates in terms of their skills, competencies, maturity, etc. There is also an intermediate way of relating with subordinates – treat subordinates as children to be protected and nurtured in exchange for love, admiration, and loyalty.

The first initiation in the field of leadership styles was in 1939. A group of researchers under the leadership of Kurt Lewin the famous psychologist conducted experiments on different styles of leadership. The experiments were conducted on specific group of school children and the researchers then observed the behavior of children in response to the different styles of leadership. Though recent researches have identified more specific types of leadership, this early study was very influential and established three major leadership styles. They are Authoritarian, Democratic and Laissez-fair. A brief description about these styles is given below.
1. Authoritarian Leadership (Autocratic)

Where the leader exercises rigid control and believes in the ‘carrot and stick’ method to motivate his subordinates. He prefers only one-way communication, i.e., top-down communication. There is one advantage here—the decision making takes less time, but this may antagonize the group members and adversely affect group morale. Authoritarian leaders have the clear concept for what to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. He keeps the strong boundary between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders taking decisions independently without consulting the rest of the group. It is found that decision-making was less creative under authoritarian leadership. According to Lewin it would be more difficult for an authoritarian to make changes in his style. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

2. Democratic Leadership (Participatory)

According to Lewin’s study democratic style of leadership is considered as the most effective leadership style. Here the leaders offer all helps to group members, and they themselves participating in the group. The leader believes in allowing participatory management and group members are free to give their opinion, decision-making is cooperative and members have a sense of belonging. In Lewin’s study, children in this group were less productive than the members of the authoritarian group, but their contributions were of a much higher
quality. Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative. The potential demerit is slower decision-making process.

3. Laissez-Fair Leadership (Delegative)

Where the leader avoids contact with the group and there is a free climate and non-interference from the leader. Though the members have freedom, there is no control and group members may try to realize their personal objectives rather than group goals, with the result that group cohesiveness is lost ultimately. Lewin (1939) observed that Delegative leaders offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation.

In the present study the investigator considered Lewin’s basic style theory to identify the existing leadership styles of primary school heads of Kerala. Most of the heads of primary schools are having the qualification of TTC/B Ed offered by the state. Here this section of heads hasn’t even the basic theoretical background regarding the new theories of leadership. During the in service period they doesn’t have the opportunity to update the knowledge in this area. When compare to other areas of leadership especially industrial, military etc. education field is lagging behind in adapting new trends and methods in administration and management. Hence, in the present study, the investigator mainly intended to assess the existing condition of the
heads of primary schools in Kerala. Considering the above mentioned conditions of the Heads of Primary Schools in Kerala, the investigator strongly believe that it is better to consider Lewin’s basic leadership style theory to evaluate the leadership style of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

H. The Headmaster/Headmistress - Leader of a Primary School

The headmaster plays an important role in an educational institution. He is compared with the captain of a ship. He is also described as the solar wed round whom all the teacher planets revolve. In fact, he is the head of the school both academically and administratively.

The headmaster is the head of the masters or teachers or teachers in a particulars school. He holds the key positions and plans, coordinates and organizes various programmes. He ensures proper maintenance of discipline in the school. He promotes the harmonious development of the institution. He carries the traditions as well as projects the image of the school according to his own ideas and ideals. It is, therefore said that a school is as great as its headmaster.

The headmaster should be a man of great head and heart. He must have good qualification in general education as well as in professional training. He must be a person with character and integrity. He should be a learned person and should have faith in himself, in his profession, in his staff and in his pupils. He should inspire all staff, students and public. He should, therefore, have
adequate proficiency in maintaining proper human relationships with all concerned.

The headmaster is the team leader and the spirit of cooperation should permeate the entire dealings with the staff, pupils and community. He, with collaboration of his staff, would work for accomplishing the objective and ideals of the institution set before them. The success and achievements of the school largely depends on the efficiency, ability, alertness, imagination, experience and resourcefulness. In fine, he is the friend, philosopher and guide in the school

1. Duties of Headmaster/Headmistress

The work of the headmaster can be classified as academic and administrative. He should strive to bring about improvement in the curriculum and the methods of instruction.

The headmaster and the staff should act as a team in bringing about change and introduce innovations, which are essential for the effective functioning of the school. The teaching staff should be willing to cooperate and to work towards the welfare of the institution.

The headmaster’s contact with the students is very important. He should be accessible to the students and maintain his prestige and dignity without giving the impression that he is harsh or indifferent to the students. He should see that he is respected and not feared.

The headmaster’s relationship with the parents is very crucial. He should be cordial with the parents and make arrangements for
parent-teacher association in the school. Meetings should be conducted regularly and parents should be encouraged to participate in certain activities.

The headmasters should keep constant touch with the latest regulations of the Government regarding administration. A private school headmaster should know the details of recognition and grant-in-aid.

The headmaster has to do many things before the commencement of the academic year: preparation of school calendar, distribution of work for the teaching and the administrative staff, framing of the school timetable, purchase of necessary equipment, books etc., completion of admissions as far as possible, formulation of new classes, making plans for the school etc.

The headmaster has large number of academic, organizational and administrative duties and responsibilities, but for convenience sake, these can be classified into the following:

1. Planning
2. Teaching
3. Organising and administering
4. Supervision and guiding
5. Maintaining discipline and relations

2. Duties of Headmaster/ Headmistress as per Kerala Education Act and Rules
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1. To see that the rules and orders issued by the department and Govt. are complied with.

2. To maintain discipline in the school.

3. To organize work in the school by framing time tables, distributing work among the assistants, conducting tests and examinations, and encouraging extra curricular activities.

4. To effect promotion of pupils.

5. To supervise the work of teacher.

6. To see that records, books and registers of the school are maintained in proper conditions and to attend to school correspondence promptly.

7. To collect fees from the pupils through the teachers and remit the amount in to the treasury.

8. To maintain the school premises in a healthy neat and tidy condition.

9. To organize and conduct staff council.

3. Tomorrow’s Headmaster/ Headmistress

Schools are changing dramatically. Headmaster/ Headmistress in the coming decades will lead schools that are far different than those of today. Students will be more numerous and more diverse than ever, and they will continue to bring many of society’s problems to the schoolhouse door. Qualified teachers will be harder to find. Technology will play an ever-increasing role in education. Safety likely will remain a top concern. Increasingly, schools will be expected to be
centers of community. Many heads will lead schools in public education systems exploring innovations such as charter schools and tuition vouchers. And perhaps most importantly, academic achievement will be the priority for professional accountability. In other words, heads will be expected to lead in an atmosphere of constant, volatile change.

The Heads of today, on the other hand, typically is a white male about 50 years old. He works at least 10 hours a day. He/She has been a head since before 1990. In the intervening decade, he has received little training or support to help him deal with the emerging challenges of school wide leadership for student learning. Despite the yawning chasm between where heads of the school are and where they need to be, the nation can prepare heads for tomorrow’s challenges. Communities have little choice. The schools of the 21st century will require a new kind of Heads, one whose role will be defined in terms of:

1. Instructional leadership: that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision-making and accountability;

2. Community leadership: manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school’s role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources;
3. Visionary leadership: that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside the school building.

All three are important. But in a crucial sense, leadership for student learning is the priority that connects and encompasses all three major roles. The bottom line of schooling, after all, is student learning. Everything principals do - establishing a vision, setting goals, managing staff, rallying the community, creating effective learning environments, building support systems for students, guiding instruction and so on — must be in service of student learning.

I. Primary Education in India

Education has ever been accorded an honoured place in the Indian society. The great leaders of the nation when engaged in the Freedom struggle realised the fundamental role of education in accelerating the pace of Independence movement and stressed its unique significance for the national unity and development. Gandhiji formulated the scheme of Basic Education not only to harmonize intellectual and manual work, but also to unify various parts of the country into a national whole. Basic Education had most of the characteristics of a national system of education and it was intended to lay the foundation of a unified India.

Just after the Independence it was decided to reorient the educational system of the country in order to adjust it to the changing needs and aspirations of the people. Education was also regarded as a
potential instrument of social change and national upliftment. It was taken as a vital factor of the national progress and security. It has been the major concern of Government both at the national as well as state levels and increasing attention was given to educational reconstruction. Several Commissions were required to review the educational problems and make recommendations for bringing about desired changes in the structure and strategy of education.


Attempts were made to implement the recommendations of these Commissions and the Resolution on Scientific Policy was passed under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the erstwhile Prime Minister. As a result of this the development of science, technology and scientific research received special emphasis and encouragement. Towards the end of the third Five Year Plan, a need was felt to get the entire educational system reviewed with a view to initiating a fresh and more determined effort at educational reconstruction. The Education Commission 1964-66 was appointed to advise Government on “national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects”.

According to the Convention, State Parties recognised the rights of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively on the basis of equal opportunity, they should make
primary education compulsory and free to all (Article 28). In the Constitution of India, Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy declares “the State shall endeavor to provide with in a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14.” But in spite of various efforts on the part of government, this objective could not be realised so far and the National Policy on Education, 1986, the goals set for Education For All (EFA) 1990 and the revised NPE, 1992 reaffirm the country’s commitment to universalisation of primary education by the year 2000. But it is felt that without strong commitment on the part of government and massive involvement of public, it may not be possible to reach the goal even by the end of the 20th century.

In the 8th Five Year Plan (1992-97) universalisation of primary education and eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15 to 35 have been taken as the basic objectives of education. It is a major step in the direction of making primary education compulsory. Special attempts have been made for improving enrolment particularly among girl children of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and to reduce wastage and to improve efficiency of school management. It has also been emphasized to improve the quality of school education and to make the teaching learning environment more enjoyable, accountable and meaningful.

1. Role of primary education

The programmes and practices of primary schools contribute in one way or another to the child’s achievement of the developmental task. Thus, the curriculum helps or hinders the accomplishment of
every task. Every school is thus a laboratory for working out of these tasks. Consequently it seems useful to regard the developmental tasks as objectives or goals of primary education. Successful achievement of these tasks can be described in terms of observable behaviour and these descriptions may be used in evaluating the progress of a child. The objectives of primary education are synonymous with the achievement of developmental tasks. Living stone (1949) as there fore said, “Elementary education is not complete in itself. It is preparatory. It prepares the people to go on to something else and put his foot on the first step of the ladder of knowledge”.

Unless the school properly discharge their responsibilities and the help the pupils to achieve their development all tasks very well, they fail in their fundamental duties and also the entire generation of the future citizens would suffer with irreparable loss to the society. In this context, Howard (1950) has remarked, “If the school do not do everything in their power in on generation to make their people feel that they “belong” to knit them in to the social fabric, to help them to become aware of their social responsibility then the whole of our social life will be that much the poorer in the next generation.”

Primary schools provide for universal education, which is fundamentally a democratic conception. That is why Fascism could never tolerate this idea. Kilpatrick (1963) has cited flitter is reported to have said, “Universal education is most corroding and disintegrating poison that liberalism ever invented for its own destruction. We must, therefore, be consistent and allow the great mass of the lowest order the blessings of illiteracy”. Free, compulsory and universal education
is considered a strong pillar of democracy, not only because all citizens will have equal opportunities for all-round development of their personalities, but also because they will become creative and productive members of a democratic society. With a view to enabling the children to efficiently discharge their responsibilities as citizens, universal primary education is a pre-requisite. That is why John Stuart Mill has aptly said that universal education should precede universal enfranchisement. Primary Education is thus called “People’s education” as well as education for the ‘masters’ i.e. voters. Education, especially primary education is mainly shaped by the social milieu in which it is provided. Considering the future of our society, the Philosophy and sociology of Primary Education must clearly reflect the rural and urban differences, national and regional integration, industrial and agricultural values of life, population explosion and so on. The Kothari commission (1966) has, therefore, observed.

“But in view of the immense difficulties involved such as lack of adequate resources, tremendous increase in population, resistance to the education of girls, large numbers of children of the backward classes, general poverty of the people and the illiteracy are apathy, it was not possible to make adequate progress in primary education and the constitutional directive has remained unfulfilled.”

2. Universalisation of Elementary Education

In accordance with the Constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to age 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature
of notational policy since independence. This resolve has been spelt out emphatically in the National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programmer of Action (POA) 1992. A number of schemes and programmes were launched in pursuance of the emphasis embodied in the NPE and the POA. These include the scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB); Non Formal Education (NFE); Teacher Education (TE); Mahila Samakhya (MS) State Specific Basic Education Projects like the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), Lok Jumbish (LJP) in Rajasthan, Education For All project in Uttar Pradesh; Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) Rajasthan, National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education; District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the ongoing scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). But the constitutional commitment made 40 years ago has not been realized up to date. The target has not yet been reached and the goal of universalisation of elementary education has not been realized so far.

The National Education Policy (NPE) 1986 expressed strong political will and deep commitment to the universalisation of elementary education. The Programme of action (POA) 1986 for implementing the NPE rightly observed, ‘NPE gives an unqualified priority to universalisation of elementary education (UEE). The thrust in elementary education emphasizes: (i) universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education.

The POA has aptly mentioned, determined efforts have been made since independence towards the achievement of this goal.
Between 1950 – 51 and 1984 – 85 the number of primary schools increased from approximately 2,10,000 to approximately 5,20,000 and the number of upper primary schools from 30,600 to 1,30,000. Even so an acceptably large number of habitations are still without primary schools and nearly one-third of the schools in rural areas have only one teacher. The emphasis so far has been on enrolment of children – approximately 50 percent children in 11-14 age group are enrolled in schools, the corresponding figure for girls being 77 percent children dropout between classes I-V and 75 percent between classes I-VIII. Thus, in spite of enormous expansion of education at all stages, there has been quite inadequacy in provision of schools, retention of students and enrolment of children in the age group of 6-14.

4. Latest Innovations in the Primary Education of India

a) District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is a centrally sponsored scheme providing special thrust for achieving Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE). The programme takes a holistic view of Primary Education development and seeks to achieve the maximum result through implementing various new strategies for UPE. The DPEP was mainly operationalised by the district agencies specific to the local needs with emphasis on decentralized management, participatory process, empowerment and capacity building at all levels.

The DPEP has been structured to provide additional inputs over and above the provisions made by the State Government for
Elementary Education. It has visualized to fill up the existing gaps in the development of Primary Education and to revitalize the existing system of administration and supervision. This programme is called contextual programme with stress on gender equality and improvement of the infrastructure by construction of class rooms and new school buildings, opening of non-formal/alternative schooling centre, appointment of new teachers, establishing Block resource Centers, Cluster resource Centers, Teacher Training and Orientation, research-based other special interventions for education of girls and SC/ST Sections of the society. This programme has also planned to include components of integrated education for disabled children and distance Education component for teachers to improve their professional competency.

The DPEP mainly seeks to provide access the Primary Education for all children, reducing primary student’s dropouts to less than 10 percent. Increasing learning achievement of primary school students by at least 25 percent and reducing the gap among gender and social groups to less than 5 percent.

The programme which was initially launched in 1994 in 42 districts of seven States have now extended to cover 219 districts of 15 states, namely, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. The programme is likely to expand further to eight districts of Orissa, six districts of Gujarat, 9 districts of Rajasthan.
b) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) through a time-bound integrated approach in partnership with State. SSA, which promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age groups by 2010.

The SSA is an effort to recognize the need improving the performance of the school system and to provide community owned quality elementary education in the mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and asocial gaps.

Objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

2. All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
3. All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.
4. Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
5. Bridge all gender and asocial category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
J. Primary Education in Kerala

Being the largest literacy state in India, Kerala has achieved tremendous improvement in the field of elementary education. The dream of universal enrollment and retention has almost fulfilled. But the quality is still lagging behind. DPEP tried to revive and SSA is doing the same, still there are some problems both financially and academically.

The strength of primary school in Kerala is satisfactory. We have adequate schools within the limit of walkable distance. But the problem of wastage and stagnation still exist. In the field of primary education, the head of the institution has a key position to perform. The headmaster/headmistress is the head of the masters or teachers in a particulars school. He holds the key positions and plans, coordinates and organizes various programmes. He ensures proper maintenance of discipline in the school. He promotes the harmonious development of the institution. He carries the traditions as well as projects the image of the school according to his own ideas and ideals. It is, therefore said that a school is as great as its headmaster/headmistress.

Conclusion

Effective administration and management has wider scope especially in the field of education. Here the role of head of the institution is crucial. Proper training and orientation is very necessary for the improvement in this field. New techniques and strategies should be developed according to the changing world and it should be implemented in a systematized way. Thus the investigator hopes that, proposed study may throw light in this field and open new doors for healthy discussion.