The manager occupies a pivotal role in any organization. It is the vision, dedication and integrity of the manager that determines its progress and prosperity. Every manager has her/his own way of performing the various functions such as setting objectives, evolving a strategy for achieving them, controlling and co-ordinating the operations, managing the environment and developing its human resources. This peculiar way of doing tasks is called management style. There are different styles of management known under different names. The head occupies the position of a manager in every school. The style of management of a school head does have an influence on the performance of her/his subordinates. The study aims at identifying the management styles of the heads of secondary schools of Kerala and its influence on the performance of teachers. This investigation is based on the five styles, namely, (1) Autocratic, (2) Democratic, (3) Leiszez-faire, (4)Transactional and (5) Contingency styles mentioned in the Common Wealth Secretariat resource material for school heads. The objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the management styles of the heads of secondary schools in Kerala.
2. To find out whether there was any association between styles of management of school heads and the performance of teachers.
3. To examine whether there was any difference in management styles based on locale, type of ownership of schools, age, gender, qualification and experience of school heads; and
4. To suggest suitable measures for the effective management of secondary schools of Kerala.

Based on the above objectives, the following two hypotheses were formed.

1. There is significant difference in the performance of teachers based on different styles of management.
2. There is an association between style of management and other variables with special reference to locale, type of ownership of schools, age, gender, educational qualification and experience of school heads.

Survey method was applied to elicit the opinion of school heads and teachers. It was supplemented by an interview with the heads of schools and teachers. The sample of the study constituted 120 school heads and 480 teachers selected at random from a population of 2874 secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique from the three districts of Kerala-Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam and Malappuram.

The researcher developed the following tools for collecting the necessary data.
1. Management Style Preference Scale (TPAS)
2. Interview Schedule for Heads of schools.
3. Teacher Performance Assessment Scale (TPAS)
4. Interview Schedule for Teachers.

The statistical techniques employed for the analysis of data include:

a) Percentage Analysis
b) Analysis of Variance and
c) Chi-square test of association.

The study found that the largest number of school heads (45%) followed a contingency style of management. The second largest group (36.5%) followed a Leisses-faire style of management. Transactional style (8.3%) and Democratic styles (1.7%) occupied the third and fourth positions respectively. It was also found that a few school heads (6.7%) did not show preference to any particular style as they rated all styles equally.

The teachers’ opinion regarding the influence of styles on their performance however, gave a different picture. The largest group of teacher (41.7%) claimed that they were influenced by a Democratic style. The second largest group (21%) claimed that their performance was influenced by a Transactional style followed in their schools. Influence of Contingency style (15.8%) and Autocratic style (12.5%) were in the third and fourth positions respectively. A small group of teachers (8.3%) did not claim that they were influenced by any particular style in their performance.

The test of association between style of management and other variables such as type of ownership of schools, age, gender, qualification and experience of school heads could not find any association between them. But it showed an association between style of management and locale.

The study also recommended a number of steps for improving the management practices of the secondary schools of Kerala in the form of short term and long term measures to be undertaken at the state level and several reforms at the institution level. A series of inservice courses for the capacity building of school heads in planning, management and administration with the help of various management institutions and universities is recommended under short term measures. Whereas, a number of courses - PG. Diploma, Diploma and certificate courses having different durations - are recommended for school heads, teachers and aided and un-aided school managers as a long term measure. Both these activities are co-ordinated, implemented and evaluated by a departmental committee under the leadership of the Director of Public Instruction, Kerala. Preparation of total school development plan, its implementation, monitoring etc. are suggested as institution level measures.