

## CHAPTER VI

### T H E P R I N C I P A L S

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines differences among the three schools in:

- (i) the structural attributes of their principals, that is, the administrative powers that are vested in them;
- (ii) the personal attributes of their principals, such as their educational and teaching qualifications and their experience as teachers and administrators, and,
- (iii) their performance as principals, as gauged from their perceptions and handling of some important aspects of their school environments.

The major portion of the information presented in this chapter is based on data collected from interviews with the principals and from personal observations of the school. I have also drawn on some of the data that was collected in interviews with teachers and students.

A Critical Role - As a facility of the school, the principal has a very crucial role to play in its running. Administratively, the principal may be the person responsible for handling the finances of the school and may even have a role to play in raising finances for the school. The maintenance of the school building, the

recruitment of teachers and students, influencing school policy and handling the day to day problems, are areas that may be an integral part of the principal's other administrative responsibilities. Academically the principal is the person who gives direction to the school, and sets the standards for the school. He may be partially or fully involved in curricula planning, have the task of motivating the staff and students towards performance, and, in fact, the presence or the absence of a learning environment within the school, will in large measure be due to him. Similarly the principal is also responsible for developing the extra-curricular activities of the school and getting students to achieve in these areas.

However, the impact that the principal can make on the school, both academically and administratively, depends on the expertise that he has gained vis-à-vis his educational and teaching qualifications, and the years of experience that he has had, both as a teacher and as an administrator. It will also, to a large extent depend on the administrative powers that are vested in him. When a school is only one among several schools being managed by a large organization, the very size of the organization makes for a centralized power structure, wherein the principal of a school may have a very restricted role to play in many areas of school operation and may have to work under various administrative constraints. When a school is the only one of its kind

being run by the management, there is the possibility that the principal may be given more autonomy and that too in many more areas of school operation.

Alternatively, there are managements that are excessive in their controls, in whose hands the principal may only be a pawn. Moreover, giving greater autonomy, does not ensure that a principal will do a better job, because there is the possibility that he could totally misuse the power that is given to him. However, there is no denying the fact that giving principals more decision-making powers can help in the resolution of many problems that need immediate attention. This is especially true for schools populated by children from the lower SES groups, where it is argued that giving principals greater autonomy, can help in the prompt resolution of problems that need to be handled without delay.

The principal's performance is eventually dependent on two sets of factors. First, the structural, consisting of the powers that are vested in them. Second, the personal attributes, in terms of their education and training and the duration and quality of their experience as teachers and administrators. These two sets of attributes, constantly in interaction with one another, define their performance.

#### THE ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS OF THE PRINCIPALS

Administratively, both, in terms of the extent of powers and in the areas of power, there is a progression

in the powers that are vested in the principals of the three schools. School A (municipal school) principals, have comparatively the least power. The school B (aided school) principal, while exercising more power than the school A principals, has limited autonomy. The principal of school C (unaided school) exercises maximum power and functions with the greatest amount of flexibility. It is interesting to look at the sources of these variations. They are as follows:

School A - Severe Curbs - In school A, the primary and secondary schools are administratively two separate units. These are only two of the hundreds of schools being run by the B.M.C. Each school has an administrator and two principals (called supervisors). The principals of each school report to the administrator. The administrator, who acts as the liason between the Education Department of the B.M.C. and the principals of the school, is also the co-ordinator within the school.

The administrative activities of the school are divided between the administrators and the principals. Activities such as the handling of finances, maintenance of the school building, dealings with the B.M.C. on academic and other requirements of the school and in general, the over-all supervision of the school, are the responsibilities of administrators. The principals handle the day to day activities of the school. They are essentially concerned with motivating students and teachers into better performance, handling disciplinary

problems among teachers and students and evaluating, along with the teachers, the performance of the students in their tests and examinations.

Whereas the administrators are entrusted with the funds sanctioned for payment of teachers and other staff, they have absolutely no purchasing power. In handling minor crises such as the repairs of broken water faucets, the fixing of flush tanks, or even in more crucial matters pertaining to the replacement of equipment or material in the laboratories, they have to go through the laborious task of informing the B.M.C. It is sometimes weeks before any action is taken. This has interfered with their effectiveness in many areas of school operation. In all probability, the poor maintenance of some of the physical facilities provided by the school and the poor functioning of the laboratories, pointed out in the earlier chapter (chapter V) is to a considerable extent due to the limited powers of the administrators in the area of finance. Neither the administrators nor the principals have any say in the policy decisions that affect their school. All major decisions, from the recruitment of teachers to the criteria laid down for admitting students to the school, are taken by the B.M.C.

School B - Caught in a Chain - In school B, the principal has a large decision-making share in the academic activities of the school. He can take spot decisions in the selection of students, in matters pertaining to their

promotion or failure and in disciplinary action against them. The recruitment of teachers for the school falls under his jurisdiction. The over-all maintenance of the school building and the other facilities are also part of his responsibilities. He has the power to sanction money for minor repairs in the building, such as the replacement of broken window panes, water faucets or for replenishing laboratory stocks, buying new equipment and so on. However, by virtue of the fact that the school is partly aided by the State Government, it has to abide by some of the stipulations that are laid down by them. Thus in matters of curricula, it has to follow the prescribed text-books, has to adhere to the fee restrictions that are laid down for the secondary school and has to take in a small percentage of students who belong to the Economically Backward Classes. The principal also has an additional constraint, in that, his school is one among a chain of schools run by the Diocesan Priests and any policy-decisions that affect the school as a whole, cannot be taken on an ad hoc basis. However, the suggestions that he makes in his capacity as principal, carries considerable weight when policy-decisions are being taken.

School C - Free Rein - School C, is an unaided school and hence governmental directions and prescriptions for the school are at a minimum. It is the only school being run by the management and the principal is given complete control of the actual running of the school. He has a

full say in the recruitment of teachers and in the admission of students to the school. In fact, he himself, devised the the criteria in terms of which students are selected. He has been given a large amount of freedom in curricula planning and in evaluating students, especially so at the primary school level. He has a major say, in how finances are to be utilized and can take spot decisions on any purchases that have to be made for the school, no matter how large the sum of money involved. Policy decisions concerning the school as a whole, are by and large, initiated by him.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPALS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE AS TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

There are no differences between schools B and C, and the secondary school of school A in the educational qualifications of the persons who are selected to head them, in that, all the principals have Masters' degrees (table 6.1). However, the primary school of school A has principals with lesser qualifications. In the teaching qualifications of the principals, the schools B and C principals and all the principals of the school A secondary school are equally qualified - each of them has a Bachelor of Education degree. In the school A primary school, whereas the administrator has a Master of Education degree, the other two have only a Primary Teachers' Training Certificate.

The principal of school C (table 6.1) is most

TABLE 6.1

Percentage Distribution by school of Principals by their Educational and Teaching Qualifications and their Experience as Teachers and Principals.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE	IDENTITY OF SCHOOL			
	SCHOOL A		SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
	Primary School	Secondary School		
Educational Qualifications	1) B.A.	1) M.A.	M.A.	M.A.
	2) B.A.	2) M.A.		
	3) H.Sc.	3) M.A.		
Teaching Qualifications	1) M.Ed.	1) B.Ed.		
	2) P.T.C.	2) B.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.
	3) P.T.C.	3) B.Ed.		
Teaching Experience (in years)	1) 23	1) 16		
	2) 37	2) 18	10	41
	3) 32	3) 25		
Experience as Principals (in years)	1) 3	1) 5		
	2) 15	2) 7	1	23
	3) 6	3) 10		
Age (in years)	1) 47	1) 47		
	2) 56	2) 38	36	60
	3) 51	3) 50		

experienced both as teacher (41 years) and as administrator (23 years). The school A principals rank second in

their experience as teachers (experience ranging from 16 to 37 years) and in their experience as administrators (experience varying from 3 to 15 years). The principal of school B has the least experience, both as a teacher (10 years) and as a principal (1 year).

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PRINCIPALS AS GAUGED FROM THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR HANDLING OF SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THEIR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

The structural (administrative powers) and the personal attributes (the educational and training qualifications and the experience gained as teachers and administrators) of the principal, interact to influence his performance as an educator. However, the individual personality of the principal is also important, in terms of the dynamism or the lack of it that he brings to his office. Very often, the principal, by virtue of his being a forceful and a dynamic person, is capable of transcending the powers that are at his disposal, to effectively discharge his duties as an educator. Alternatively, a principal with an ineffectual personality, may not use even the powers that he has at his discretion and may incompetently discharge his duties as an educator.

When looking at how the principals of the three schools perceive and handle some important aspects of the learning environment, one can see how the attributes of the principals combine to influence their performance.

## The Principals' Spelling Out of the Objectives of Schooling

The principals of school A, see the objectives of schooling as being synonymous with good performance in studies. More specifically, for them, the success of a school is to be gauged by how many students pass in the final examinations each year. The principal of school B, said that the objective of schooling is to develop the different potentialities of the students, through their participation in the different activities offered by the school, and to endeavour to make them responsible citizens. He emphasized that whereas the quality of performance in the academic and other extra-curricular activities offered by the school is important, what is perhaps more important, is that students participate in all the activities, irrespective of whether or not they do well in them. The principal of school C said that the objective of schooling is to give the students the best possible all-round education, with the emphasis both on participation and on excellence in performance; this has been the philosophy of the school, right from its inception.

It is significant that in their enunciation of what they perceive as the objectives of schooling, the principals of school A see education only in the limited context of getting students to pass the final examinations. The principal of school B extended the purpose to include the full participation of students in all the academic

and other extra-curricular activities offered and to the development of responsible citizenship. The principal of school C has, by far the broadest perspective, in that he includes in the scope of schooling, both, extensive participation and all-round excellence in all the activities offered by the school.

### Different Learning Environments

Keeping in view the differences among schools in the principals' spelling out of the objectives of schooling, it is interesting to note that correspondingly there are differences in

- (a) the expectations that principals have for their students;
- (b) the levels of academic performance and competitiveness;
- (c) how principals handle the learning environments.

(a) Principals' Expectations - In school A, possibly as the result of working with children from the lower SES groups, for prolonged periods of time, the principals have low performance expectations of their students. In school B, whereas excellence in performance is not emphasized, the expectations of the principal for his students is that they will academically maintain a certain level of good performance (gauged by the number of first classes in the final examinations). In school C, the principal believes that his students are academically capable of the best.

(b) Levels of Academic Performance and Competitiveness -

Observations of and data from the three schools show differences in (i) academic performance and (ii) the competitive atmosphere that prevails.

(i) Academic Performance - This issue is discussed at length in another chapter (chapter X) and only a brief summary is given here.

In school A, the academic performance of the students is very poor and is characterized by a high percentage of drop-out and failure. In school B, students maintain a certain level of good performance but those who are outstanding academically, are the exception rather than the rule. School C, academically is on par with the best in the city.

(ii) Competitiveness - In school A, competitiveness is missing among the students; in school B, it is lukewarm and in school C, it is very intense.

Interviews with the students show that in school A, students are not vying with each other to better their performance. Even the "best" performers of the class view good performance merely as passing the class and moving on to the next. In school B, students are academically not giving of their best. In school C, in contrast, students are highly competitive.

(c) The Principals' Handling of the Learning Environments -

In school A, the lower SES school, the principals are

confronting a massive problem of drop-out, failure and poor performance. In such a situation, getting students to complete school is a herculean task and it is not surprising that the principals perceive the objectives of schooling as doing just that. In this school, however, every successive year has recorded an increase in the percentage of students who pass. Moreover, among municipal schools, this school is one of the better performing ones. Using the poorly performing schools as a yard stick of comparison, the principals are happy about the performance levels of their students and see their school as one that is progressively improving. It is important to note that in the school, as a whole, apart from examinations at the end of each term and class tests held twice a year, there is an absence of any special programs or measures undertaken by the schools, directed towards getting students to better their performance.

In school B, the principal emphasized participation in the various activities offered by the school as a priority and did not strongly emphasize a striving for excellence in performance. It is interesting to note, in this context, that academically, apart from examinations at the end of each term and class tests held twice a year, the school did not adopt any other measures directed towards putting the pressure on students for better performance. The earlier chapter shows that even the facilities for

other curricular activities are inadequate to bring out the best in students.

In school C, the principal's emphasis on excellence in performance are matched by efforts to ensure it. Academically, the whole environment of the school, is geared, not merely towards learning but towards competitive learning. From the primary school onwards, tests are given once a week and form a part of the mark system for the end of the year evaluation. The school also has unit tests and examinations. Once a month, the principal of the school goes through all the books of all the students in the school. Very often, the principal himself, supervises classroom teaching. Thus, not only are students kept on their toes from the start to the finish of the academic year, but even the teachers are pressured into giving off their best. Academically, the school is on par with the best in the city. The earlier chapter shows that the school also provides superior facilities for other curricular activities to bring out the best in students.

#### Selection Procedures - The Principals' Handling of the Socio-Economic Environments of their Schools

The foregoing section shows that schools differ in the principals' perceptions of the objectives of schooling and that correspondingly there are differences in the learning environments of the three schools. Whereas school objectives may influence what is expected of students in the different schools, it is equally possible

that principals' spell out the objectives of schooling keeping in view the realities that they are facing in their individual schools. It is interesting to note here, that there is a concurrence between the two. This whole issue, however, comes to a head in the selection procedures that are adopted by schools. Here one can see a subtle inter-play between ideas and reality.

Administratively, the school A principals have no control over the SES composition of the students who come to their school. According to school policy, they have to admit students coming from the lower SES groups. In handling such students, they constantly seek refuge behind the argument that "given the SES background of the students who come here, there is not much that one can do for them". It is not surprising then, that principals have low performance expectations for their students and academically students perform poorly.

In school B, the expectations of the principal is that students will academically maintain a certain level of good performance. With these expectations in mind, he recognizes that there is a fall in academic standards, especially so in the lower standards. He attributes this to the changing SES composition of the student body, wherein, an increasing number of students from the lower SES groups have begun to populate the school. These observations are borne out by data presented in (table 6.2). With category I representing father's occupations with the highest prestige and category VII representing

TABLE 6.2

Percentage Distribution of the Occupations of  
Students' Fathers, by Class, in School B

CATEGORY OF OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE	CLASS IN SCHOOL		
	STANDARD I	STANDARD V	STANDARD IX
I	0.0	0.7	2.8
II	10.2	5.2	17.8
III	8.5	12.0	26.2
IV	28.8	31.4	28.0
V	20.3	26.8	11.2
VI	17.0	13.4	3.7
VII	4.2	2.2	0.0
Service	5.9	1.5	0.9
Unemployed	0.0	1.5	1.9
Retired	0.9	0.8	1.9
Not specified	3.3	4.5	0.0
Not applicable	0.9	0.0	5.6
<b>T O T A L</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

fathers' occupations with the lowest prestige, one finds that in standard I as compared with standard IX, the percentage of students with fathers in the occupational categories I, II, III and IV have decreased, and those with fathers in the occupational categories V, VI and VII have increased.

To maintain, what was earlier articulated as the objectives of the school, the principal feels the need to correct the SES "imbalance" in his school. The fear

is that any further dilution in the SES composition of the students, can lead to a further deterioration in academic standards. This can result in parents from the higher SES groups withdrawing their children from the school, in the eventuality of which, the school will revert to being a school for children from the lower SES groups.

The principal's statement reveals the gap between school policy and commitment. Whereas in policy, the school is committed to providing an education for anyone who can financially afford to send their children there; in practice, it is likely that in future entrance to the school will be restricted. The principal of school B, plans to introduce selection procedures for both students and parents, for the subsequent academic years. Thus, one can see in this school the missionary dilemma between wanting to maintain good academic standards and a vocation to the poor. More likely than not, this conflict of interest is resolved with one objective being emphasized at the cost of the other.

School C, takes great pains to maintain a consistently high level of academic performance. The selection procedures (a rigorous interview with parents and the administering of tests to children) ensures that most of the students who get into the school are from the higher SES groups. The high costs incurred in sending children to this school, is a deterrent for many parents who may want to send their children there and

many other aspirants are eliminated at the selection stage. Thus, out of the thousand and odd applicants who seek admission to this school, only 120 are selected. According to the principal, the selection procedures that he has devised for his school gives him the assurance that he is bringing together a homogeneous group of students who are academically capable of giving off their best. Having taken the precautions to ensure an exclusive group of students, it is not out of the ordinary, that he has high expectations for them.

The fear of socio-economic dilution and the subsequent fall in academic standards, makes the school C principal show total disinterest, when questioned about admitting into his school, children from the poorer sections. He claims that his school cannot afford to take them in, as it is being run on the income that comes in from school fees, and he cannot visualize any other way of absorbing them. He mentions all this, despite the fact that this school had, to begin with, started off as an orphanage.

Selection of students for the three schools shows how schools B and C try to attain academic success at the cost of students from the lower SES groups and school A tries to explain their inability to attain it because of such students.

#### The Principals' Approaches to Discipline

One of the tasks of schools is to inculcate

discipline in students. Discipline is required. Performance in school itself, is dependent on some amount of discipline. Thus, if students do not attend school regularly, come late to school or if they do not devote adequate time to their studies, they will not be able to grasp what is being taught in the classroom and over a period of time, there will be a marked deterioration in performance. Yet discipline does not come easily. It has to be inculcated, taught, even enforced, and, this is not possible always either. Not unexpectedly, individuals and institutions differ from each other in the rigour and tenacity with which they pursue discipline. Some are persevering, others dilute their demands under pressure of resistance or of apathy.

In school A, discipline is not being emphasized strongly enough, whereas in both schools B and C it is regarded as the key to academic success.

Indiscipline, especially in the form of coming late to school, absenteeism, the noise that prevails in the school while lessons are in progress and so on, is a problem, according to the school A principals. However, they feel that, given the home background of the students, the problem has to be dealt with sympathetically. They are firmly persuaded that putting undue pressure on the students for punctuality will only result in their dropping out, and feel that many of the students who are late or have absented themselves, have genuine reasons for doing so.

The principals of school A are handling the students with leniency. According to them, many of the students are responding to the absence of severity, by coming back to school even after long spells of absence, many of whom, may have dropped out had the principals taken a firm stand. However, one wonders what the long term implications of late attendance and absenteeism are? It is likely that the students concerned, will find it difficult to cope with their studies. Moreover, for the teachers concerned, the task of dealing with students at different performance levels will make their jobs even more difficult.

The school B principal is able to maintain good discipline. He deals firmly with students who are late and demands explanations from students who are absent. Having the facility of an inter-com, he is able to check indiscipline, especially in the form of talking and rowdiness during school hours.

When compared with school B, the school C principal maintains the best discipline. During school hours, very little noise permeates into the corridors. The gates of the school are closed to late comers. The principal does not hesitate to use the cane on students, for what he considers to be serious offences. Even the teachers of the school are subject to discipline. Unlike the school A teachers, they are not seen talking to one another in the corridors, and like the school B teachers, work quietly in the staffrooms, taking time off

to chat only during their lunch breaks and recesses.

### The Principals' Perceptions and Handling of the Physical Environment of their Schools

In creating conditions conducive to learning, the principals of both the schools of school A did not appear to emphasize the importance of a congenial physical environment for learning. The earlier chapter shows that the physical environments of the schools are badly neglected. This neglect is perceived by the principals as being solely an administrative problem due to the inadequate provision of maintenance staff, with those who are there, not doing their jobs well. It is likely that school A is not as well provided for as schools B and C, with maintenance personnel. Hence, one cannot expect the same standard of cleanliness in school A, that one sees in schools B and C.

However, in the schools of school A there are glaring aspects of uncleanliness, such as littering in the corridors and classrooms, which is absent in schools B and C. Since "cleanliness" is a subject in the curriculum of the school A students, the practical aspect of getting students to refrain from dirtying their environment can be taught to the students as is being done in schools B and C.

That the primary school of school A was once the recipient of an award (among municipal schools) for school cleanliness, is a fact that is mentioned over and over again but is not visible when one visits the school.

What the principals did not seem to appreciate, is that, the importance of a clean environment has to be instilled in the students as a way of life and not as a "once in a life-time, award-winning affair".

In both schools B and C, the principals see the cleanliness of the physical environment as being a basic prerequisite, in an effort to create a congenial learning environment for their students. They take great pains to maintain the school buildings and the classrooms - the school C principal, more so than the school B principal. From the start of their school careers, the students are taught the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of their school.

The Principals' Statements on the Importance of Physical and Academic Facilities for meeting the Educational Requirements of their Students

The principals in schools B and C are able to see the importance of physical and academic facilities for the educational requirements of their students. Whereas the principals in school A, in looking at physical and academic facilities appear to be dissociated from the requirements of their students.

The school A principals perceive the needs of their schools as being an inadequacy of physical facilities. Thus the administrator of the primary school wants to make the school a "model school" in terms of special furniture and physical facilities. Where the student fits in with this conception of a model school, is

completely missed out, when discussing the need for more facilities. Whereas the primary school principals want the best by way of facilities, they did not appear to have thought about how they could use their facilities to bring out the best in their students. By way of illustration, the principals are very proud of the fact that their primary school has a television set, but that students have very few opportunities to utilize the set, seem of little consequence to them.

Similarly, in the secondary school, of school A, academic facilities that do exist in the school are either not being utilized or else are being inadequately utilized, and the principals have not thought about, how these facilities can be meaningfully geared to the needs of their students. The earlier chapter (chapter V) shows how the projector in the science laboratories is not in commission. Though there is a library with a full-time librarian, students are not availing themselves of the facility, and the principals appear to be making no effort to promote reading among their students. As far as the teaching staff of their schools (both primary and secondary) are concerned, the principals opine that they are the best. On probing further, I found that they define the "best" as teachers having the requisite formal qualifications. None of them talk of calibre, in terms of what the teachers have accomplished or are accomplishing within the school.

Thus, allowing a wide margin for the administrative constraints within which the principals of school A operate, the fact is that they do not mobilize the resources available to them. Instead they look for better and newer facilities without really giving a thought as to how that is going to help them.

The school B principal despite his relative inexperience in the teaching profession and as a principal, is very clear when it comes to identifying many of the problems that he faces as an educator. One reason that he attributes for this clarity in thinking is that he completed his Master's degree only prior to his taking charge as principal and the exposure that he received to newer ideas and concepts are helping him to look at his school more perceptively and critically.

The school B principal sees limited finances as imposing special disadvantages in undertaking many of the activities of the school. The school has a need for more sports facilities, library facilities and physical facilities such as fans for some of the classrooms. However, the principal felt that since he has tried to provide many of the basic facilities, his top priority is to utilize these facilities to the best advantage of the students. In doing this, he is facing many problems. Due to the changing SES composition of the student body there is a fall in academic standards. This is coupled with the problem of a lack of commitment on the part of the teaching staff.

The school B principal admits that he does not have the answers to these problems, but he is resolute in his determination to want to solve them. He sees this as posing a big challenge for the future.

The school C principal spends money liberally in those areas of schooling from which he believes that students can derive the maximum benefit. He developed a library that is one of the finest as far as school libraries go. He firmly believes that reading is crucial for the educational development of students, and makes the use of the library, a compulsory part of the curriculum for both students and teachers. There are excellent laboratory facilities that both students and teachers are encouraged to use, and very good facilities for sports. He tries to get the best by way of teaching staff and is himself responsible for selecting them. Whereas all this is possible because administratively the principal has the freedom to develop these facilities and financially there is no dearth of money, that he felt the necessity to do all this is because he believes that in order to get the best out of students, he also has to give them the best.

The school C principal is a man very much in control of his school, and has succeeded in making it one among the finest in the city. He is able to initiate changes in his school, in areas that are beneficial to the students. Although one can argue that his effectiveness as a principal is due to the autonomy given to him by the

management, one needs to recognize that this autonomy is the outcome of a personal relationship between him and the Board of Trustees, a relationship that has spanned over decades and whereby (according to them) they have developed an implicit trust in his judgement, both, because of his experience and because of the way he has managed the affairs of the school, over the years.

### SUMMARY

This chapter shows that there are important differences among the schools in some of the attributes of the principals.

As far as differences among schools in the structural attributes of the principals (administrative powers) are concerned, both in terms of the extent of powers and in the areas of power, the school C principal (unaided school) has the most power and in all areas of school operation. The school B (aided school) principal has lesser power and his power is curtailed in some areas in the freedom with which he operates. The school A (municipal school) principals have the least power and have their hands tied in many areas of school operation.

As far as differences among schools in the personal attributes of the principals, such as, their educational and teaching qualifications and their experience as teachers and administrators is concerned, the school C principal is consistently the best qualified in all these respects. However, the differences between schools A

and B are not so cogent. As far as the educational and teaching qualifications of the principals are concerned, the school B principal and the school A secondary school principals are on par with the school C principal whereas the school A primary school principals have lesser qualifications. However, in their experience as teachers and administrators, the school B principal has the least experience.

As compared with the personal attributes of the principals, more decisive differences among the three schools appear in the principals' perceptions and handling of some aspects of the learning environments of their schools. Once more the school C principal emerges as the most effective, in that, he has succeeded in establishing, by far, the best learning environment, for his students. His capability stems not only from his personal attributes, such as his qualifications and his experience, but also from the kind of person that he is. The complete autonomy that is given to him in all school matters is in no small measure the outcome of his being a propulsive and dynamic person, who has over the years displayed his capacity as an able administrator and educator. Whereas the school B principal is effective in maintaining an environment that is adequate for learning, he is not really giving his students the best. Despite his relative inexperience in the teaching profession and as an administrator, he was very perceptive in identifying

many of the problems that he faces as an educator. However, in many areas of school operation, he is rendered ineffective by the constraints on his administrative powers. School A emerges as the school where the principals are less effective than the principals of the other two schools. Their lack of effectiveness is in a large measure due to the administrative constraints under which they are operating and to the magnitude of the problems that they face in educating the urban poor. However, even if one gives a wide margin to the fact that they are at a disadvantage in many respects, they are still operating less effectively, in that they are not fully mobilizing the resources that are available to them, to tackle the myriad problems that they face.