CHAPTER V

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
The Ministry of Education lays emphasis on such efforts by the principals as help the teachers towards professional growth, for the improvement of school instructions. They include curriculum study, its planning and co-ordination, evaluation, in-service education of teachers and maintenance of records etc.

Academic Leadership has been divided into various areas. Crosby\(^1\) emphasises that the supervisor's chief concern is in the curriculum and in-service education of teachers. Some educationists place all these areas under curriculum development while others like Hammock and Owing consider supervision synonymous with in-service education. For this study, it has been divided into two areas:

1. Curriculum Development.
2. In-service Education of Teachers.

1. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Douglass in a study found that the term curriculum was generally used for 'the systematic arrangement of a number of courses into a unit group for differentiated groups of pupils'. It referred to courses of study only. But now, it is being used in a much broader sense and is all inclusive. It includes all the experiences planned for the pupils under the direction of school.

Krug defines curriculum in the following words:

'The curriculum is now being defined at least by the educational theorists concerned with the problem as all the experiences of the learner that are under the control of the schools'.

In the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 'Curriculum is commonly defined as all the experiences that a learner has under the guidance of the school'.

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Thus, it includes not only the subjects taught in the class-room but various other activities that are undertaken by the school to help children towards the evaluation of a balanced personality.

The present study includes the following areas under curriculum:

1.1 Objectives of Education

It is generally observed that the schools concentrate on helping children cram facts to pass examinations. Such a limited approach does not help students towards all round growth and for being effective citizens of a democracy.

The principal, to be effective, has to see that various objectives are translated into lives of the teachers and students. Harris (1960), in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, defines:

'The effective high school is one which is able to translate its educational philosophies and objectives into students and teachers behaviour'.

1.2 Selection of Material

A teacher with objective oriented vision is likely to feel hampered in the performance of duties efficiently if

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*Ibid., p. 1252.
he does not have proper quality of tools to help him in his job. His tools consist of good quality of textbooks, suitable books for library, proper equipments for laboratory and also for physical and other school activities. The principal should help him (the teacher) in the proper selection of these tools.

1.3 Guidance to Students

The teachers are expected to guide students in various respects. The various areas covered by this study are referred to in the following lines:

1.3.1 Selection of Subjects and Out-of-Class Activities

Each student is different with regard to abilities, tastes and aptitudes and if children are helped within the existing frame-work, to select suitable subjects and various out-of-class activities, one positive step towards their smooth development is taken. The principal is expected to stimulate the teachers in this direction.

1.3.2 Proper Use of Text-Books

The major part of study in our schools is carried on through text-books. The students frequently do not know how to use their text-books effectively. They need to be taught the significance of indexes, footnotes, paragraph headings and use of general reference to other material. The principal is expected to help the teachers in this direction.
1.3.3 Use of Reference Material

Teaching should not be limited to text-books only. Teachers must be led to broaden, vitalise and enrich instructions by suggesting reading of reference-books, journals and magazines to the students for the purpose of getting additional information or exploring new or different points of view.

The principal has to encourage teachers in this direction. He has also to stimulate the librarian to help teachers make selection of proper reference material for students and also make the suggested material readily available.

1.3.4 Suitable Study Habits

Study is not a single unitary action. It is a complex form of behaviour composed of many activities which combine into the total activity called study. When the students do not learn properly, it is the duty of the teacher to discover the causes of poor performance.

In the class, the teacher has to watch the posture of the students while they study, the type of mistakes they make, whether they understand the central idea and also can analyse what they read. This, also includes the speed with which they read. The teachers have to be guided in this respect.
1.3.5 **Individual Differences**

For all the students in a class, the content is the same and so are methods of teaching and assignments. And they cater to the students of average abilities. The result is that the bright lose interest in studies because the contents and the assignments are less challenging for them whereas the below-average stagnate or drop out.

The principal can stimulate teachers towards the formation of homogeneous groups and help children in small groups if not individually.

1.3.6 **Common Areas of Weakness**

It has already been pointed out that because of various limitations, it is not possible for the teachers to attend to each student individually. One way to offset this has been mentioned under 'Individual Differences'; another way is to find out the common areas of weakness of a class.

Tests in each subject for various classes can be prepared at school level with this end in view. But diagnosing of the difficulties is useful only if they are to be remedied. Some special provisions to meeting out these have to be made. The principal has to provide facilities to the teachers for all this because they are likely to prove beneficial as Boardman and others assert:
'There is objective experimental evidence that diagnosis and remedial instruction pays dividends'.

1.3.7 **Attending to Abnormalities**

Adolescence is a period of stress and strain. In addition to the instructional problems, each student may be facing some emotional problems also. It is likely that many students at some time or some students quite often may behave abnormally. The teachers have to be guided to attend to these abnormalities with the objective that children are helped to solve their emotional problems and adjust themselves to the school environment.

1.4 **Planning and Co-ordinations**

Teachers in a school are expected to provide various experiences for children. Some experiences are prescribed by the Department while others are selected by individual schools. Experiences for each class are determined. They include the text-books to be covered and the various physical, social, cultural and moral activities to be undertaken.

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Planning also includes review. Review is important as it gives an idea about the progress of the curriculum during a specified time unit and enables the principal to know whether the various experiences meant for each time-unit, are being provided for or not. In case of non-materialisation, causes for the same should be located and proper action should be taken either in context of the defects in the plan, or defective working.

Planning also involves that the class-room and out-of-class activities should be so integrated and coordinated so that various activities in the class or outside the class supplement and complement each other for common educational purposes. The same is expected of various subjects at the same level that involves inter-subject coordination. Campbell and Gregg assert: 'The contribution of the people, materials and resources towards the achievement of a recognised purpose'.

Coordination makes it an orderly arrangement of the efforts of more than one persons in the pursuit of a common purpose. Coordination holds parts together, integration weaves various experiences into one thread.

The library, the health and guidance services, each has a separate existence but if such services are so organised as to help each other in the achievement of the growth of children, they are likely to make a greater contribution to their welfare than if they function in isolation.

It is for the principal to ensure that curriculum is properly planned and reviewed, class-room and out-of-class activities are integrated and that there is inter-subject integration and also coordination of the working of the various school services. The principal has to be conscious of his role in this respect.

1.5 Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the curriculum improvement. Evaluation appraise our progress towards determined goals. It also gives direction for further improvement.

The ultimate aim of evaluation is to help children grow to the maximum in the desired directions. In the process, the parties involved are the children, the teachers and the principal.

1.5.1 Evaluation of Students

The growth as mentioned previously is an all embracing
ten. It denotes intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral growth. Children have to be evaluated in the various areas to find out where they stand and how they can be helped to grow better in each area.

To evaluate students in all dimensions, teachers cannot exclusively depend upon the examination system of today. New techniques of evaluation have to be introduced. For this, the principal has to ensure that the teachers not only learn to prepare the requisite tools but also learn to use them correctly.

Besides students' evaluation by teachers, self-evaluation by the students is also a good way to self-improvement. So, if children are somehow made conscious of the need for self-improvement and guided to evaluate themselves, they will be immensely benefitted. Teachers can do this. But the principal has to encourage teachers and give them opportunities in this respect.

1.5.2 Evaluation of Teachers

There are various other people who know the work of a teacher in various fields of curriculum. The principal can use these agencies to make his own judgement valid and reliable. Students and parents can help in this direction. Regarding students, Briggs and Justman suggest some questions,
which may well be asked from the pupils in an effort to obtain reaction to the school programme.

The student could be asked which subject interested him most and why? Again he could be asked which subject-class, he would not like to miss and why?

Parents see the exercise-books of their children, check coverage of courses in each subject and have talks with their wards about teachers. They also, some times, see teachers in the school, so, they could also be helpful in this respect. But students and the parents should not be given an impression that they can lord over teachers through their impression about the teachers thought the same be given the due importance.

The principal should never forget that evaluation is not a rod to beat the teachers with. It is rather a tool by which he can locate the deficiencies, if any, of a teacher and then help him improve in those areas. If the aim of evaluation is only rating, it is a dead instrument, for it can make the teacher afraid of it and, therefore, avoid it. The principal should, therefore, properly understand the significance of the objectives of teacher evaluation.

A major ground is covered in this direction if the teachers also participate in this evaluation. That will introduce a sense of participation of teachers in this process.

The best purposes are served if the teachers evaluate themselves. If the principal could encourage the teachers to prepare a criterion for self-evaluation and use the same purposefully, the major work of the principal is done by the teachers themselves. That is the stage where teachers should be led to if they are to make improvements.

1.5.3 Evaluation of the Principal

The principal can play a very limited direct role for helping children grow. But he does all of it through teachers. He evaluates teachers towards this end. Much of the teachers efforts depend upon the fact whether the principal holds his supervisory role properly, whether the principal ensures permissive or democratic climate for teachers, stimulates the latter with effective academic leadership, and provides proper physical facilities. So, he must see that his supervisory role is quality-oriented. How can the quality of supervision be improved?

The teachers can help him evaluate this role. The students and parents can help, however, limited the scope of their observation of the supervisory role of principals.
The best method to improve his supervisory role is through self-evaluation. For that, he can prepare an evaluation criteria and keep on evaluating himself. This will be a process of self-introspection and if properly employed can lead towards his professional growth.

2. In-service education of teachers

In-service education refers to improving of the skills and knowledge of the teachers. It also includes the improvement in the attitude of the teachers. Wiles is of this view: 'It involves not only the growth in subject-content, and teaching methodology but also other elements as improvement of attitude and social skill for they also help him to improve on the job'.

For this study, the following aspects were included under in-service education of teachers:

2.1 Improving Teachers

2.1.1 (a) Each teacher has to teach one or more subjects.
   (b) Teaching of each subject involves methods of teaching.
   (c) Effective teaching also involves classroom management.

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2.1.2 Every teacher needs to direct one or more out of class activity, besides subject teaching.

2.1.3 The subject teaching and the direction of out of class activities will be more effective if the teacher can establish individual contacts with the children and know each child's background properly.

2.1.4 Since parents are considered partners in the education of the children, the teachers should make their plans for children in consultation with the parents and also seek their help for reinforcement of the school programme at home.

No doubt, each teacher has some potential, but the same may not find full exhibition in action. If the teacher could be helped, guided and stimulated to improve his competence in the various aforesaid areas, the objectives of education could be better achieved.

Some teachers are deficient in one or more areas of operation. Such teachers will not be in a position to do justice to the students in those areas if they are not properly helped. The principal has to locate such teachers and help them to overcome their deficiencies, as far as possible.

Various means as mentioned in the questionnaire could be used to achieve this purpose. But the capacity of the school to impart in-service education is limited. The
principal should, therefore, be on the look out for identifying out-of-school agencies for this purpose, find out their programmes and encourage teachers' participation in their programmes, organised for this purpose.

2.2 Induction and Orientation

Trained teachers coming to the school for the first time face some practical problems. The theory that they have learnt may not be fully practicable in various school-situations. Such teachers may fail to reconcile themselves with the school environment and tend towards frustration and disappointment. Some might like to play the part of inspired teachers but become targets of jealousy of their colleagues. Teaching may be difficult in the first few days for some new entrants. In such cases, they will not be able to give their best to the students.

The principal has to take the various points into consideration and make provision for proper emotional climate and effective academic leadership for such new entrants.

2.3 Habits of Teachers

In every school there are some teachers, who cut classes, go to classes unprepared, waste time in the classes or do not correct written work of the students. These are some attitudinal problems with some teachers. So, the principal will have to identify them and take proper steps.
to improve their attitudes. This is a very important function, for, if the principal does not or cannot do so, the morale of other teachers doing good work is likely to be dampened.

But identification should be followed by constructive approaches. The word 'check and reform' in the questionnaire has been used intentionally. When such an attitude is identified, it has got to be checked up with the teacher to find out the reasons for this. After knowing the reasons, the principal has to act like a nurse who smiles to heal. In other words, he shall take pleasant, dignified and constructive steps to reform such teachers. Awe of authority can repress such work-habits for the time being but does not remove them to be replaced by something more constructive.

2.4 The Gifted Teacher, the Enthusiastic Worker

There is generally a tendency on the part of the principal to leave teachers who are gifted or who are enthusiastic workers, to themselves. Such teachers could be exploited to the maximum for school welfare if the principal could stimulate them to further their interest in and enthusiasm for the school.

Techniques:

To bring about improvement in the teachers, various
supervisory techniques are used. They are tools for in-service education of the teachers. They can be classified as follows:

1. Specially organised, in and outside the schools. They include providing opportunities for the growth of teachers through organizing study-circles, subject advisory-councils, action research, arranging demonstration lessons and talks, organizing workshops, seminars, and exhibitions, encouraging inter-class and inter-school visits, field-trips/educational travels, encouraging teachers participation in workshops, seminars, and summer institutes etc. organised by agencies other than the school.

2. Routine features of school supervision: This covers checking of students' corrected written work, observation of class-room teaching, observation of out of class activities, individual conferences and staff-meetings.

The difference between supervisory techniques mentioned in 1 and 2 above, is that the former are purely in-service education activities while under 2, in most of the cases, there is an element of checking by the principals to meet out some expectations of the Department as well. Each of the latter is being given in details.

Checking of Written Work:

Written work is considered to be an important part of
teaching of each subject. It may be used to give students practice in what is done in the class, afford them an opportunity to develop ideas discussed, do some piece of original writing or give practice in comprehension, paraphrase or explanation etc. Of course, the degree of importance attached to written work indifferent subjects is likely to vary.

The principal has to stimulate teachers for the written work in such a way that the teachers begin to consider that written work is an important part of the teaching process and it is not extra-burden. Secondly, he has to stimulate them to improve the written work. He should also help teachers to do the correction work thoroughly and in a proper way.

Observation of Class-room Teaching:

Observation of classes taught by teachers is a very important supervisory technique that the principals in schools adopt. This technique can be useful if it brings about improvement in teaching by the teachers. If the principal only visits classes to police over the teachers or only find out faults without giving constructive suggestions, the very purpose of observation is defeated.

The principal has to ensure constant improvement of teaching through observation of class-room teaching. This improvement is possible if:
1. The principal stimulates willingness in teachers to improve.

2. He/she affords them help, guidance, opportunities, or material for improvement.

Progress in both these aspects will be possible if proper rapport is established between the teachers and the principal. All teachers do not need the same amount of supervisory help in terms of class-room visits. There may be gifted and superior teachers, the new or some other categories of teachers who need differential treatment.

Visits should not be a nightmare for the teachers. The real success of the principal lies in the fact that his visits are liked by the teachers. If the principal is trusted for leadership in respect of class-room teaching i.e. if the teachers feel that the principal is really of great help in context of class-room teaching, they would like such visits.

Observation of Out-of Class Activities

Out of class activities have an important place in the school curriculum. One major purpose of principal's observation of these activities will be to see that they are given due place in the school programme. The teachers are likely to lay more stress on class-room teaching and
ignore out-of-class activities because their subject results are considered as an index of their efficiency.

The principal has to help teachers understand the objectives of such activities and also critically examine and see if the activities are achieving objectives aimed at. There is need to locate factors which hamper the progress of such activities towards the realisation of the desired goals and think of ways of not only removing the irritants but also adopting positive measures towards the requisite end.

**Individual Conference**

In an individual conference, a principal confers with an individual teacher with a particular objective in mind. As a technique of supervision, pre-observation and post-observation individual conferences are important.

In pre-observation individual conference, the principal calls a teacher for conference before visiting his class to know what the particular teacher has done in the particular subject at the particular level, what difficulties he faced and in what respects he was doing well.

Another purpose of holding pre-observation individual conference with the teacher means that the teacher knows when the principal means to visit his class. The teacher concerned in that case, will be in a position to exhibit his
best. This is in contrast with the surprise visits meant to catch teachers unprepared.

In post-observation conference, the teacher knows the opinion of the principal about his work after the latter has observed his work. It is expected that there will be exchange of ideas and principal can help the particular teacher to improve upon his previous performance.

For the success of these meetings, it will have to be presumed that the principal has helped the teacher to put faith in him, for if that is lacking, whatever technical excellence the principal has, the conference is likely to have little impact on the teacher and there is every possibility that the conference may become ineffective.

Individual conferences for the above mentioned purposes are a common feature in the school life. All these will be successful only if the teachers have faith in the leadership of the principal.

Staff Meetings

As a technique of supervision, the purpose of the staff meetings is to discuss various academic problems faced by the teachers. This is a powerful means of joining heads together and think of solutions which are in the best interest of the school.
Even in case of policy-making, the teacher could be given opportunities to share in the process through staff-meetings. That will mean a more balanced and a better decision and will be willingly and readily executed by the teachers since they also participate in the decision making process.

To give teachers an opportunity to think about various problems or consult some references, to enable them to make meaningful suggestions, it is necessary that the agenda is prepared well in advance and circulated to the teachers for information. But who is going to prepare the agenda? Should the principal do it? No, for that may mean only one sided approval. That may ignore the process of democratic supervision. In order that the agenda may cover various problems, the suggestions of the teachers should be given due importance.

While discussing the agenda, some principals monopolise most of the speaking and suggestions, leaving the teachers with little or no scope to express themselves. This approach is hardly useful unless of course, the meeting is specially called to announce some decisions.

For decisions to be willingly executed, teachers in general should be allowed to make suggestions. To meet the objection of shortage of time of staff meetings, ways could be found out to allow many teachers to participate.
Care has to be taken that the various points should be discussed in an atmosphere of goodwill. Teachers should not resort to mutual bickerings during staff meetings because that kills the very spirit of cooperative process. The principal should be very particular about it. He should neither make an undignified remark about any person himself nor let others do so.

Sometimes, some matters need the help of some experts, consultants or resource persons. The staff committee under the guidance of principal can decide which outside person or agency could do this job, best. The principal needs to know the sources from which such help could be asked for.

**Follow-up**

The various supervisory activities mentioned above need follow-up action.

Follow-up action ensures proper implementation of the various policies. It also serves to identify and locate the factors which are responsible for making a particular supervisory practice less effective or ineffective and think of ways and means of improving the state of affairs.

Follow-up action also reinforces the concepts. After some policy has been decided upon and is put to action, follow-up is necessary to revitalise the same.