

Leadership Style of Head Teachers at Secondary Level in West Bengal

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this paper is to study the leadership style of head teachers at secondary level as perceived by teachers. Survey research method was applied for studying the leadership style of head teacher with nine head teachers and 22 assistant teachers selected purposefully from Government secondary schools of Coochbehar district, West Bengal, India. Self-developed questionnaire consisting of 56 items, based on head teacher leadership style was used for data collection. The collected data were analyzed by using percentage, frequency and accordingly interpretations are drawn. The study found that i) 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT have a deep rooted understanding of the school functioning, ii) 81.8% of teachers believe that HT shares visions with the teachers, iii) 81.8 % of teachers agreed that HT acts as a guide for all the staff, iv) 77.3% of teachers supported that HT provide resources needed for all round development of the school, and v) 86.4% of teachers pointed out that HT works according to the rules of the school. The study has suggested implications for head teachers to develop leadership style, school administration, overall development all staff and student as well as organising professional development programmes.

Article History: Received: 14th August 2018, Revised: 17th September 2018, Accepted: 24th September 2018, Published: 30th September 2018.

I. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PROBLEM

The expansion of education, particularly at school level since Independence is one of the unparalleled events in the history of Indian education. Despite the impressive expansion of school education in almost all the states in India, there are still wide among rural, urban and tribal areas. One of the reasons may be the quality and leadership style of Head Teacher (HT) who practically implements all the policies at school level. The effectiveness of school mainly rests on the leadership style of Head of the school. The National Policy on Education 1986 and its Programme of Action laid great emphasis on the role of head teacher as an implementer of educational programmes. They are one of the few who facilitates creation of excellence in the teaching learning process. HT is the pivot of educational system as he/she is directly responsible for implementing new educational programmes from time to time. Much of the initiative and skill required for day-to-day administration as well as the dynamism and foresight needed for school planning and appraisal of activities comes from head teacher. HT has to be able organiser, efficient administrator, tactful in handling men and matters.

The Head of the educational institution is to be a guide and counsellor to the teaching staff under his charge. A great deal of performance and activity status depends upon the leadership of head teacher. He has to perform several innovative and creative functions. He interacts, motivates, inspires his subordinates and guides them for better performance. He has to perform many duties namely academic, administrative, co-curricular activities, co-ordination and understanding between different departments and units of the school. In fact organisations compete by means of their leaders then by their products. Leader gives

life to the organisation, to be more effective for the attainment of goal. Leadership is an important attribute for the development of school that set apart a successful organisation from unsuccessful organisation without leadership. Leadership is the personal quality of an individual who organises the effect of follower and directs their activities towards the attainment of organisation goal. Leadership is regarded as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in effort towards goal achievement in a given situation. In school context, HT need to manage and supervise all the academic and non-academic activities of school. HT required to guide teachers in developing their effectiveness so that they can contribute for the betterment of school as well students.

II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Head teacher has significant role for the development of school and students. He is the main agent for supervising the implementation of curriculum at school level. He is the source of motivation and inspiration for both teachers and students in school. Hence leadership style of head teacher has great bearing on school effectiveness and teacher professional development. Realising the importance of the leadership style of head teachers, many researches are done at National and International level. Some of the relevant studies are discussed in the following paragraph.

Arya (2017) indicated that there are two types of leadership styles of school Principal, namely supportive leadership and participative leadership styles which have significantly affecting teacher effectiveness. Kumar (2017) stated that there is no significant difference in the leadership styles of

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principals and school effectiveness with respect to experience and gender. Eboka (2016) found that the transformational leadership and male principals had a greater influence on teacher morale yielding a moderately high level of teacher morale. On the other hand, transactional leadership and female principals resulted in only a moderate level of teacher morale. Kumar & Nandisha (2015) reported that there is no significant difference between gender and management wise headmasters leadership behaviour. The study also indicates there is a significant relationship between secondary school headmasters' leadership behaviour and their job satisfaction. Rani (2014) stated that impact of autocratic and democratic styles of leadership on work motivation of teachers and professional commitment of teachers. Kelu (2011) reported that more heads of Government schools are democratic than heads of aided schools. There is a considerable difference between Government and aided school heads while considering democratic and laissez-faire style of leadership. Nandamuri (2011) found that the principals of the private unaided managements are a step ahead of their counterparts from other categories in ranking the traits with high preference. The headmasters of the public sector schools have shown a better preference to the traits of motivation which directly supports the finding that more than 90% of them preferred the democratic style of leadership while managing the school. Gordon and Molly (2009) reported that Principals with more diverse leadership styles were more open to community involvement. Guttenberg (2006) revealed that most of the effective principal drew from three leadership styles namely value-oriented, transformational and distributive leadership. The other observed leadership style being transactional. Iqbal (2005) found that the public male and female heads had no difference of leadership style. Female head of public and private schools had no difference of leadership style.

The above studies were focused on leadership styles of head teacher in relation to their job satisfaction, job performance, leadership behaviour, and work motivation. The related literature also indicated that teaching experience, gender and academic position influence leadership style of head teacher. All these studies are conducted outside of the West Bengal. In this context, an attempt has been made to conduct research on leadership style of head teachers as perceived by teachers at secondary level.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study can be stated as 'Leadership Style of Head Teachers at Secondary Level in Cooch Behar, West Bengal.

IV. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Leadership Style: Leadership Style was studied with respect to traits of autocratic, democratic, laissez faire, transactional and transformational leader as perceived by teachers.

Head Teacher: Head teachers are those who are appointed by the government to manage the school. They belong to both sex and having different educational background and experience.

Secondary School: The school that offers education at class IX and X are considered as secondary school.

V. OBJECTIVE

- To study the leadership style of head teachers at secondary level as perceived by teachers.

VI. METHODOLOGY

For the present study the researcher used survey method for assessing the leadership style of head teacher of secondary school in West Bengal, India. Total nine secondary schools, nine head teachers and 22 assistant teachers were involved as sample in this study. These samples were selected purposefully from the Coochbehar district of West Bengal. The self developed close-ended questionnaire consisting of 56 items based on different traits of leadership style was used as tool for this study. The collected data are analysed as per the objectives of the study. The investigator used frequency, percentage and qualitative descriptions and accordingly interpretations are made.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The investigator analyzed the collected data by using percentage and frequency, which is presented in following paragraph.

Table-1: Perception Relating to Autocratic Leadership Style

Sl No	Items	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	HT takes all decision related to school on his/her own.	17(77.3)	0	5(22.7)
2	HT does not bother about the school improvement.	7(31.8)	4(18.2)	11(50.0)
3	HT makes partiality in dealing training teachers.	6(27.3)	5(22.7)	11(50.0)
4	HT does not encourage employees to act creatively.	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	14(63.6)
5	HT does not believe in improving working conditions to make thing better.	3(13.6)	4(18.2)	15(68.2)
6	HT gives others the information they need to their job.	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	14(63.6)
7	HT criticizes constructively and addresses problems.	4(18.2)	7(31.8)	11(50.0)
8	HT set objectives and follow them through to competition.	8(36.4)	3(13.6)	11(50.0)
9	HT set guidelines for how others are to treat one another.	6(27.3)	6(27.3)	10(45.5)
10	HT takes care to employee who is upset with him or someone else in the school.	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	14(63.6)
11	HT counsel colleagues who have personal problems.	7(31.8)	7(31.8)	8(36.4)
12	Ht have a deep-rooted understanding of the school functioning.	2(9.1)	3(13.6)	17(77.3)
13	HT admits his mistakes and takes responsibility for his actions.	4(18.2)	8(36.4)	10(45.5)

The table-1 indicates 77.3% of teachers disagreed that HT takes all decisions on his/her own. In other word, only 22.7% of teachers have given opinion in favour of the statement.

Further, it reveals 13.6% of teachers agreed that HT does not encourage employee to work creatively but 63.6% of teachers are agreed to this statement. 68.2% of teachers agreed that HT does not believe in improving working condition to make thing better but 13.5% of teachers are disagreed and 18.2% of teachers are undecided about it. It is also found 63.6% of teachers are agreed that HT gives others the information they need in the job whereas 13.6% of teachers are disagreed to it. It can be said that majority of teachers perceive HTs are not autocratic in functioning.

Table-2: Perception Relating to Democratic Leadership Style

Sl. No	Items	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	HT takes all decision in consultation with other teachers.	6(27.3)	3(13.6)	13(59.1)
2	HT asks employees ideas and plans for progress of school.	3(13.6)	3(13.6)	16(72.7)
3	HT assigns work equally to all teachers.	5(22.7)	3(13.6)	14(63.6)
4	HT allows his employees to determine what needs to be done for teaching learning process.	3(13.6)	5(22.7)	14(63.6)
5	HT prefer group interaction in which decision are taken unanimously.	5(22.7)	1(4.5)	16(72.7)
6	HT shares his vision with the teachers for the school.	1(4.5)	3(13.6)	18(81.8)
7	HT use the intelligence gathered by other staff members to make a decision.	3(13.6)	2(9.1)	17(77.3)
8	HT makes deliberate efforts to solicit new ideas from team members.	1(4.5)	9(40.9)	12(54.5)
9	HT develops a budget for the school with consultation with teachers and higher bosses.	2(9.1)	3(13.6)	17(77.3)
10	HT conduct meeting with all the teachers for improving teaching learning process.	4(18.2)	1(4.5)	17(77.3)
11	HT takes support of local community whenever needed.	1(4.5)	6(27.3)	15(68.2)

The table-2 reveals 59.1% of teachers agreed that HT takes all decision in consultation with other teachers. It is also found 72.7% of teachers agreed that HT asks employees ideas and plans for progress of school. 72.7% of teachers agreed that HT prefer group interaction in which decisions are taken unanimously but 22.7% of teachers are disagreed with the same statement. 81.8% of teachers are agreed with the statement that HT share vision with teachers for school improvement. 77.3% of teachers are agreed that HT conduct meeting with all the teachers for improving teaching learning process but 18.2% of teachers are disagreed with the same statement. 68.2% teachers are agreed that HT takes support of local community for school development.

Table-3: Perception Relating to Transactional Leadership Style

Sl. No	Items	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	HT creates an orderly atmosphere in the school.	4(18.2)	3(13.6)	15(68.2)
2	HT acts as a guide for all staff.	1(4.5)	3(13.6)	18(81.8)
3	HT resources needed for school development.	0	5(22.7)	17(77.3)
4	HT takes interest in academic matters of school.	1(4.5)	4(18.2)	17(77.3)
5	HT gets irritated by small mistakes of other teachers/staff.	9(40.9)	4(18.2)	9(40.9)

6	HT operates from within the boundaries to achieve the goal of the organisations.	5(22.7)	3(13.6)	14(63.6)
7	HT takes all realistic constraints and opportunities into account for taking decision.	6(27.3)	9(40.9)	7(31.8)
8	HT works act to the rules of the schools.	1(4.5)	2(9.1)	19(86.4)
9	HT uses the motivation to direct the organisation to the right path.	2(9.1)	2(9.1)	18(81.8)
10	HT focuses toward planning and execution school development plan.	1(4.5)	5(22.7)	16(72.7)
11	HT actions are consistent with school aims/deal.	3(13.6)	4(18.2)	15(68.2)
12	HT walking around the school every day.	4(18.2)	0	18(81.8)
13	HT reacts to situations in which the quality of a teachers work goes down.	2(9.1)	7(31.8)	13(59.1)

It is pointed out from the table-3, 81.8% of teachers agreed that HT acts as a guide to the staff. 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT provides resources needed for school development but (22.7%) of teachers remained undecided on this matter. 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT takes interest in academic matters of school. HT works according to the rules of the schools is agreed by 86.4% teachers. The majority of (81.8%) teachers agreed that HT uses the motivation to direct the organisation to the right path. For monitoring and supervising the school activities, HT walks around the school every day is agreed by 81.8% of teachers.

Table-4: Perception Relating to Laissez-faire Leadership Style

Sl. No	Items	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	HT gives much freedom to teacher in their work.	10(45.5)	2(9.1)	10(45.5)
2	HT friendly behaves with other teachers/staff.	2(9.1)	2(9.1)	18(81.8)
3	HT openly communicates with other teachers/staff.	2(9.1)	2(9.1)	18(81.8)

It is evident from the table-4, 45.5% of teachers agreed that HT gives more freedom to teacher in their work where as 45.5% of teachers disagreed to it. 81.8% of teachers have given opinion in favour of HT friendly behaves with other teachers/staff whereas only 9.1% of teachers disagreed to it. The similar pattern of opinion is expressed by teachers about the open communication of HT with staff.

Table-5: Perception Relating to Transformational Leadership Style

Sl. No	Items	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
1	HT motivates the other teachers for doing best.	0	4(18.2)	18(81.8)
2	HT provides innovative directions to all teachers.	2(9.1)	4(18.2)	16(72.7)
3	HT helps teachers in enhancing competency.	1(4.5)	6(27.3)	15(68.2)
4	HT gives constructive feedback to teachers in improving in teaching.	3(13.6)	7(31.8)	12(54.5)
5	HT keeps good rapport with BEOs, DEOs.	0	10(45.5)	12(54.5)
6	HT makes good rapport with parents.	1(4.5)	5(22.7)	16(72.7)
7	HT attend professional development programme.	3(13.6)	2(9.1)	17(77.3)
8	HT expected from the teachers to solve problem on their own	6(27.3)	5(22.7)	11(50.0)
9	HT shows concern for teacher's professional development.	5(22.2)	7(31.8)	10(45.5)

10	HT appreciates when employees achieve success	2(9.1)	2(9.1)	18(81.8)
11	HT elicits desired performance from the team by motivating them externally.	5(22.7)	4(18.2)	13(59.1)
12	HT keeps their ego with control on the institutions.	2(9.1)	4(18.2)	16(72.7)
13	HT makes decisions with a clear focus on the values vision objective and goals of the school.	0	3(13.6)	19(86.4)
14	HT treats each employee as a valued individual.	3(13.6)	4(18.2)	15(68.2)
15	HT takes risk in developing the school.	10(45.5)	5(22.7)	7(31.8)
16	HT treats other with respect and dignity	4(18.2)	4(18.2)	18(81.8)

The table-5 indicates, 81.8% of teachers have given opinion in favour of HT motivates the other teachers for doing best. 72.7% of teachers agreed and 9.1% of teachers disagreed to the statement that HT provides innovative directions to all teachers. 54.5% of teachers supported that HT keeps good rapport with BEOs and DEOs. 81.8% of teachers agreed that HT appreciates when employees achieve success. Majority of (86.4%) teachers agreed that HT makes decisions with a clear focus on the values, vision, objective and goal of the school. 81.8% of teachers have given in favour of HT treats other with respect and dignity.

VIII. MAJOR FINDINGS

- HT does not take all decisions on his own which is agreed by 77.3% of teachers while 59% of them said that HT takes all decisions after consulting with other teachers.
- 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT have a deep rooted understanding of the school functioning. The majority of teachers believe that HT shares visions with the teachers.
- 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT prepare budget for the school in consultation with teachers and higher bosses. The same percent of teachers have given responses in favour of the statement that HT conduct meeting with all the teachers for improving teaching learning process.
- 81.8 % teachers said that HT acts as a guide for all the staff. 77.3% of teachers supported that HT provide resources needed for all round development of the school.
- 77.3% of teachers agreed that HT takes interest in academic matter in school. 86.4% of teachers pointed out that HT works according to the rules of the school.
- Majority of teachers believe that HT motivates subordinates to direct the organisation to the right path and 72.7% of teachers opined in favour of the statement that HT focuses towards planning and executions.

IX. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- The findings of the study can be used by the HTs to improve their managerial and administrative skills particularly in the context of leadership styles. Leadership plays a key role in school improvement. HTs may use the findings of the study to increase teacher involvement in decision-making process. As it has been found in the study that leadership of Principals and teachers involvement are crucial to the success of any programme in the school.
- The present study gives the overview of the profile of the HTs leadership style in West Bengal. It can also give a

sense about the leadership style of HT used in the secondary schools of West Bengal as well as the effect on of these styles on the teacher. It can develop strategies of leadership styles used by the head teacher in the secondary school. It is helpful for school administration for the improvement of capabilities of HT in the line of new developments in education

- Leadership style of head teacher has direct bearing on the school functioning and over all development of all staff and student. All HT must have ideal leadership style by getting orientation and training on leadership. Hence Government must organise training programme for HTs through teacher education institutes and management colleges. The focus of training must be on creating enabling environment for the fullest development of staff and student.
- The present age is the age of digital technology. All the HTs must be motivated and encouraged to use digital devices for management of school and staff. Hence professional development programmes must be organised for HTs, which can develop skills of using digital devices among HTs.
- Teacher education programme have to teach about school leadership to trainee teachers. Hence the teacher education curriculum must reflect aspects of school leadership especially human management, democratic management, school planning, budgeting and financing etc.

X. CONCLUSION

School improvement has direct bearing on the leadership style of head teachers, who can help both teachers and students in achieving excellence in teaching learning. This study indicated that most of the head teachers are democratic in function and managing the school, which is of good sign for the quality improvement of education. It can motivate other head teachers of all levels of school to follow democratic leadership style. The Government must organise training and orientation programmes and workshops for HTs on management and leadership of school. At the same time, HTs can be encouraged to develop practical understanding on leadership style by online modes.

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