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Problems of higher secondary school principals in Kerala – Dual role of classroom teaching and school administration

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Abstract

In the field of Indian education system emphasis has been laid especially in the last decade or so on the quality and excellence of educational administration at all levels i.e., Primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education. One of the major components of school administration is the school principal. Principal is the key stone of school administration (Mukherjee, S.N) or hub of educational process (Singh, J). The higher secondary principal has to devote much of his time to discharge numerous duties for the efficient functioning of higher secondary. On him the proper working of the school ultimately depends (secondary education commission). The nature of work that the principal has to discharge is very complex and obviously time and energy consuming (Mahajan). The higher secondary principal needs to perform and organize numerous activities. It is the duty of the principal to plan, organise, direct, coordinate, communicate, budget, report, and control all the activities in the school. The purpose of this paper is to identify the difficulties faced by higher secondary principal for attending office work along with teaching. The study was conducted on a representative sample of higher secondary principals. In the present study structured interview was conducted with higher secondary principals. An interview schedule was prepared. The study revealed that 94.83 % higher secondary principals face practical difficulties to attend office work along with teaching. The result of the present study revealed that there are notable difficulties felt by higher secondary principals while managing the school activities. The investigator hope that the identified difficulties can be rectified and effort can be made to improve the working of higher secondary schools.

Keywords: Higher secondary, Head of School, Classroom teaching, School administration.

1. Introduction

Headmaster is the central pillar of any school, whatever be the designation assigned to the post. "Great headmasters have been great friends of their pupils" (Sachdeva, 1984) [17]. "By virtue of his office, he has to be a nexus between the government and school authorities the management and staff, the mater and pupils, and the parents and teachers – character rather than capacity, tact rather than authority, sympathy rather than severity are his forte" (Joshi 2002). In the field of Indian education system emphasis has been laid especially in the last decade or so on the quality and excellence of educational administration at all level i.e., primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education.

School administration which does not facilitate education is a parasite and a debauchery of public funds. School administration therefore, exists only for the pupil and its efficiency must be measured by the extent to which it contributes to teaching and learning (Wren 1971) [21].

One of the major components of school administration is the principal. Every principal is first of all a teacher and then an administrator. "The headmaster is a keystone of the arch of school administration" (Mukerjee 1972) [13]. On entry into a school campus, the tone and efficiency of the school can be observed. Wren (1971) [21] remarked that 'what the main spring is to the watch, the fly wheel to the machine or the engine to the steamship, the headmaster is to the school'. Secondary education commission states that, "the reputation of the school and the position it hold in the society depends in large measure on the influence that he (headmaster) exercise over his colleges, the pupils and their parents and the general

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public". Jha (1972) ^[7] said that, "A good headmaster or principal is not merely a scholar, he is a man of good character, has deep sympathy and understanding and considerable fact and experience in dealing with pupils. He should be profoundly sensitive to the physical, mental, moral and spiritual needs of the pupils and know how to minister them".

In the course of time the designation headmaster changes to principal in many schools, especially those having senior secondary classes. In Kerala, a higher secondary principal has to take up daily classroom teaching along with administration duties of various kind. A principal has to devote time to see that all circulars, records, documents, papers, cashbook, registers etc. are maintained up to date and kept in good order. The principal is responsible for the efficiency and transparency of the school office. The functioning of the school should be harmonious and proper only if the school office is efficient.

The nature of work that the principal has to discharge is highly complex and obviously true and energy consuming. But then she has to do all that. Gaiind and Sharma (1971) ^[8, 21] said that, "the heart around which and through which the life of the school cooperates".

Government Orders: Related to Higher Secondary Principals

Government of Kerala had decided to reorganize secondary and collegiate education in the state in accordance with the NPE 1986 and necessary orders were issued in this regard. On 23.03.1990 as per GO(MS) No 76/90/H.Edn. Higher Secondary course was started in the state in 1990 abolishing pre-degree course in the college during the academic year 1990-91 as per GO (MS) No. 91/90/G1 Edn. Dt. 23.05.1990. By introducing two year higher secondary education in selected government schools in the state.

It was specified in G O (MS) No. 138/90/G.Edn. Dated 27.06.1990 introducing higher secondary course in 31 government high schools during 1990-91, that the headmasters of the school will function as principal and they will be given a special pay of Rs. 250 per mensem for the additional work. No scale of pay will be prescribed for the post of principals till rules are framed for regular recruitment. Later government had decided to place the senior higher secondary teacher in charge of the post of principal as per GO (MS) No. 122/2002/G.Edn dated 21.05.2002. The actual creation of principal post was taken place only in January 2006. On the basis of GO (MS) No: 11/2006/G.Edn. Dated 06. 01. 2006. It was only on 01/08.2009 that Government issued the promotion and posting order in the cadre of principal in government schools for the first time GO. No. 3240/09/Edn. Dated 1/8/2009, i.e after 19 years of inception of the course.

Need and Significance of the investigation

Principals in the higher secondary schools have to perform different roles for the smooth functioning of higher secondary schools. For this she is supposed to discharge numerous duties. Most of the principals fail to play an effective role in the academic field in the school because of limitation of time and energy (Mahajan). The role and functions of the principals acquired new dimension when the school became the centers of collective information. The higher secondary principal in the role of head of the institution face different types of problems. Problems of

higher secondary schools of Agra district revealed the administrative load of work of principal was heavy because of lack of helping hands and interference of manager (Gupta). Higher secondary principals need to perform and organise all activities in the school. It is the duty of the principal to plan, organise, direct, control, coordinate, communicate and budget all activities in the school. i.e., an effective principal is an effective manager. The clerical work and routine work consumes most of his time and he is left with little time for teaching and related duties. Identification of difficulties among higher secondary principals will enable the concerned authorities to develop an insight into the factors and device appropriate strategies to prevent such difficulties. Hence the investigator strongly felt to conduct this study. So it was decided to undertake "A survey on difficulties in doing office work along with teaching among higher secondary principals".

Objective of the Investigation

- The objective of this investigation was to identify the difficulties faced by higher secondary principals in taking up the dual role of classroom teaching and administration.

Variables

The criterion variable of this study was the problem faced by higher secondary principals in order to attend office work along with teaching.

The classificatory variables in the study were:

- Type of Management
- Gender

Methodology

The study was conducted through survey method. The population of the study was higher secondary principals.

Sample

The study was conducted on a representative sample of higher secondary principals in Kerala. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The sample consists of 58 higher secondary principals from 37 Government higher secondary schools and 21 aided higher secondary schools.

Break-up of the final sample with respect to Gender

Type of Management	No. of Male Samples	No. of Female Samples	Total
Govt.	20	17	37
Aided	13	8	21
Total	33	25	58

Tools

In the present investigation structured interview was conducted with principals of selected higher secondary schools in Kerala. An interview schedule was prepared. The interview schedule sought information regarding difficulties to attend office work along with teaching.

The investigator interviewed 58 higher secondary principals. Among them representation was given to gender and type of management.

Data Collection Procedure

The interview was conducted as per time schedule fixed in advance. The responses were collected with care and subjected to analysis.

Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

In this study the investigator made use of percentage analysis for the analysis of data collected through interview schedule. The results obtained through the percentage analysis were interpreted qualitatively.

Analysis and Findings

The objective of the study was concerned with the identification of practical difficulties to attend office work along with teaching. Data in this regard was collected from higher secondary principals.

Practical difficulties to do office work along with teaching.

The higher secondary principals were asked whether they have difficulties to attend the office work along with

teaching. Their response in this regard is presented in Table No. 1.

Table 1: Practical difficulties to do office work along with teaching.

Sl. No.	Existence of Difficulties	No. of Opinion	% of Opinion
1.	Difficulties exist	55	94.83
2.	Difficulties do not exist	3	5.17
Total		58	100

Table 1 shows that about 55(94.83 %) higher secondary principals face difficulties to attend office work along with teaching. Only 3(5.17 %) higher secondary principals have no difficulties to do office work along with daily teaching.

Difficulties based on Gender and Type of management of Institution

Gender wise and management wise data was collected from principals, to ascertain whether there exist any specific pattern for the distribution of difficulties among the sub samples. The details were given in table 2.

Table 2: Difficulties in doing Administrative Duties along with Classroom Teaching Based on Type of Management and Gender

Sl. No.	Existence of Difficulties	Government		Aided		Male		Female	
		No. of Opinion	% of Opinion						
1.	Difficulties exist	35	94.59	20	95.23	30	90.9	25	100
2.	Difficulties do not exist	2	5.41	1	4.77	3	9.1	0	0

Table 2 clearly shows difficulties in taking up administrative duties along with teaching based on type of management and gender. From the table it is clear that 94.59 % of government higher secondary principals face difficulties to attend office work along with teaching 90.9 % of male principals are also agree with the existence of difficulties to attend office work along with teaching and 100 % female teachers also face difficulties to do office work along with daily classroom teaching.

Major areas of Difficulty Faced by the Principals

55(94.83%) higher secondary principals who face difficulties to do office work along with daily teaching have identified the nature of difficulties they confronted with. The same is consolidated in Table No. 3.

In table 3, it is evident that 50(90.9 %) principals are unable to complete portion in time due to attend the office work along with teaching. No time to evaluate students is faced by 42(76.36 %) principals. 16.67 % principals find difficulties in disbursing scholarship. For 68.57 % principals one of the hurdles is with regard to routine interaction with top level authority. Never ending process of admission and related work is the problem confronted by 32(58.18 %) principals physical and mental physical strain due to overwork burden is the problem faced by 39.53 % principals. Salary disbursement problem is faced by 6(10.9 %) principals. Office management problem is the problem confronted by 18(32.72 %) principals. 37.14 % principals find difficulties to make arrangements to open and close classrooms. 54.29 % principals find difficulties in keeping files properly.

Table 3: Areas of difficulty to do the Office work along with Daily Teaching

Sl. No.	Type of Difficulties	% of Agree responses
1.	Unable to complete portion in time	90.9
2.	No time to evaluate students	76.36
3.	Routine interaction with top level authorities	68.57
4.	Prolonged process of +1 admission	23.64
5.	Disbursement of scholarships	16.67
6.	Physical and mental strain (over work burden)	39.53
7.	Draw and disburse salary in time	10.9
8.	Proper office management	32.72
9.	Make arrangements to open and close classroom	37.14
10.	File keeping problem	54.29

Implications

The present study explored major areas of difficulty faced by higher secondary principals in doing classroom teaching and administration together. The major findings of the study and conclusion drawn from the findings helped the investigator to propose some measures to solve the problems of principals. Based on the study the following suggestions are putting forward which will be helpful for the authorities concerned to alleviate the difficulties of higher secondary principals.

1. The post of secondary school headmaster is a non-teaching post supported by office staff. Hence, the post of higher secondary principal also should be made non-teaching from the existing teaching principal post.
2. It is very difficult to work as institution head, office head, administrator etc, when the post of office clerk became vacant. The clerical work and routine work consume most of the time of a principal and time left for

teaching and teaching related duties should be very less. So the principal should have sufficient supporting staff for office work.

3. A principal in science subject must have 24 periods per week theory classes along with practical in science subjects along with office administration may affect the performance of the school. So atleast a peon is to be provided.
4. Equip the principal and one or two senior teachers with administration and official work.
5. Single window is a good process but difficulties arise when the three are so many allotments, transfers etc. The allotment should be minimized. The allotment process should be completed before June and classes should be started in June 15th itself. Limit the admission process. Too many options do not give to students. Complete the allotment as early as possible.
6. Give administrative training to principals for handling the crisis situation

Conclusion

The study revealed that 94.83 % higher secondary principals are facing practical difficulties to do office work along with classroom teaching, i.e., majority of higher secondary principals find it very difficult to do the administrative duties along with 21 hours of teaching in a week. Most of the principals have to do all kinds of office work along with teaching. They do not get the assistance of any non-teaching staff as in secondary schools. The only non – teaching staff allowed to higher secondary is a Lab Assistant. But they are of no assistance in office administration. Majority of higher secondary principals argued that they are always under the pressure of higher authorities or management for the admission, promotion, examination, valuation and organizing various programmes. Permanent teachers are always shifted in very short interval in government schools. This unexpected frequent transfer causes a lot of dislocation and class management problems. The investigators hope that the identified difficulties can be rectified and effort may be made to improve the working of higher secondary schools.

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