The Leadership Role of The Principal

Introduction

> "There is nothing in the realm of human behaviour that does not in some way impinge on the subject of leadership and followership" (Warren Bennis quoted in Kennedy 1994, p. 98).

Nothings seems to be possible without leadership in organisations whether these organisations are public, profit-making, or non-profit like voluntary organisations, including some education organisations such as schools and colleges. The term leadership is written and spoken about extensively. Some even confuse leadership with being a manager; while a manager 'manages', a leader 'leads'. Although these two functions often overlap and are required in one person, especially in voluntary organisations such as health, education and other social organisations and institutions, they are not the same thing. Contrary to popular beliefs, powerful leadership skills are not genetic endowments; they are systematic endowments that anyone can learn and use. (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).

Definitions and Conceptual Clarity:

Let me begin then by clarifying two main concepts we shall be discussing here in the paper – leadership and role. Various scriptures including the Bible are full of examples of leaders and the leadership roles people were given or had taken up. Some New Testament passages call the leaders 'elders'; others call them 'overseers' or 'bishops'; some just call them 'leaders' (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:6-7; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Heb. 13:17). There seemed to be different words for the same role.

They do not include only men, as is usually the case, but women as well (Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Esther, Mary), though they are not given the prominence that male leaders are given. Things have not changed much, have they? Many a times in the Bible leadership is likened to the role of a Shepard and his/her relationship with her/his sheep (Genesis 48:15; Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:9–11; Ezekiel 34:11–24; John 10:1–33; I Peter 5:1–4). Many, including scholars of sociology of organisation and management, have defined the concept of leadership and role; we look at some of the definitions in the following sections.

What is Leadership?

Some would argue that leadership is one of the most studied but least understood of all social phenomena (Bennis and Nanus, 1985), yet, for most people the concept of 'leader' evokes images of a figure that holds a position saddled with

some authority and directs the actions of others by force of personality, if not birthright.

Leadership is defined as influence, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals – "a leader is someone who exercises influence over other people" (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985:281). However Burns makes the distinction between power-holders and leaders and suggests that power-holders have, by virtue of their job, the capacity to influence others (Fincham and Rhodes, 1992) but in virtue of that may not necessarily be able to exert leadership.

Scholars suggest that in transformational leadership a deeper, more powerful process is present; here "one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leader and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Fincham and Rhodes 1992:197). It is suggested that leaders act to help a group attain objectives through the maximum application of its capabilities.

A genuine transformational leader is the one who seeks the greatest good for the greatest number and is concerned about doing what is right and honest and is likely to avoid stretching the truth or going beyond the evidence. Knowledge and wisdom cannot emerge, neither can future citizens be formed based on distortion and manipulation.

Leadership has been defined by various people with emphasis on one aspect or the other. Some say that it is a process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation (Koontz et al. 1996:396), while others say that it is the interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process, towards the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Hersey and Blanchard, 1995). Yet others explain it as the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of group members (Smith and Mark, 1988). Leadership therefore has the function of leading, namely the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of group members or an entire organisation. Obviously this implies that the person/s have the competencies to look critically, analyse, chalk out a plan, motivate, influence and equip people to collectively work towards achieving the set goal/s.

As we see, it is not easy to define the concept of leadership. For our use let us take the definition given by Stogdill (1950), *"Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal achievements."* The above definition highlights three elements --- **influence**, **group** and **goal**.

We now move on to understand what we mean by '**role'** and later on we shall examine various perspectives on leadership which may help us to draw our conclusions with regards to leadership in educational institutions.
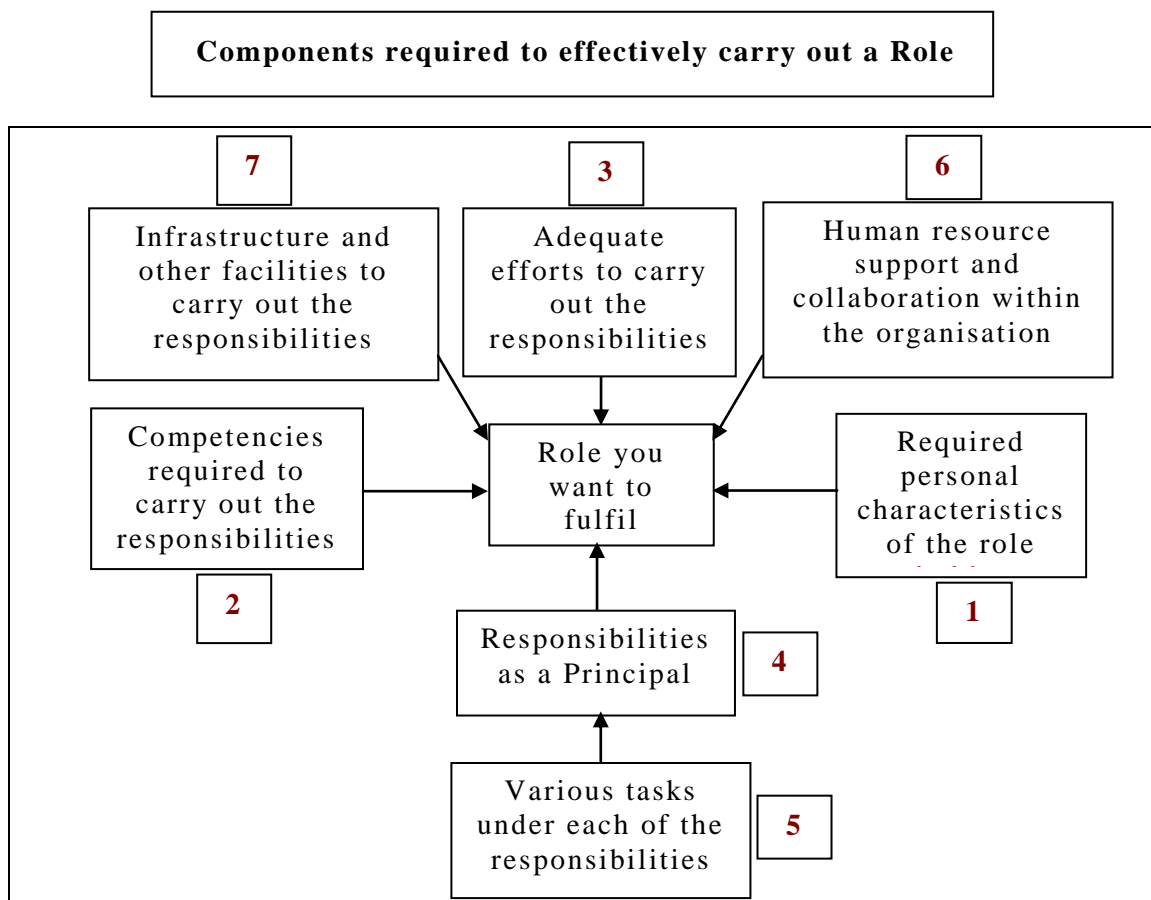
What Is a Role in an Organisation – Education Institution?

Before we comment on **role** let us get familiarised with what an organisation is. Formal and nonformal education is provided through an organisational set-up like schools, colleges, universities, technical institutes, research centres, and so on. Organisation, then, may be defined as two or more people who work together in a structured way to achieve a specific goal or set of goals. Technically we can define an organisation as a stable, formal, social structure that takes resources from the environment and processes them to produce outputs or/and services. Organisation can be understood from behavioural perspective as well; it would then mean a collection of rights, privileges, obligation, and responsibilities that are deliberately balanced over a period of time through conflict and conflict resolution (Laudon and Laudon 1999). There are a few ingredients that exist in and are common to all organisation: two or more people, goals and objectives which are shared by people who work in it besides their own individual goals, roles, responsibilities and tasks to fulfil in a given time-frame and with available resources, some kind of hierarchical structure and leadership, rules and regulations to relate and function and some kind of membership.

All of us play different social roles in our daily life; organisation too has different roles ascribed to people which they fulfil in pursuit of organisational goals. What is a role then? Put simply, "Role is the pattern of behaviour expected by others from a person occupying a certain position in an organisational hierarchy" (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985:325). Therefore these authors would suggest that behaviour expected of any person occupying an office then becomes her/his 'role'. These roles are associated with positions in the organisation and are involved in interaction. A Role holder's behaviour, therefore, is restricted by the role s/he occupies about what behaviour is appropriate in which specific situations. Thus a role influences the behaviour of an individual and the individual learns the role through socialisation within the organisation. Sometimes roles cause conflict because different roles may have different

behaviour expectations and pull the individual in different directions – a woman as a Principal of a college who may also be a mother may experience role conflict. Role conflict then is "the simultaneous existence of two sets of role expectations on a focal person in such a way that compliance with one makes it difficult to comply with the other" (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1985:331).

Along with roles there are role expectations which comprise the rights and privileges, duties and obligations of any occupant of a social position in relation to persons occupying other positions in the social structure (Pareek, 1993:3). For roles to be performed well the person requires competencies (knowledge and skills). How well the person performs a task depends on physical and psychological readiness to perform some task to a given level of competence. Role skills, then, refer to those characteristics possessed by an individual which result in effective and convincing role enactment: attitude, appropriate experience and specific training. But often not much thought is given to what goes into making a role effective and to prepare the occupant for the role. The following chart will help role occupants and those who appoint people to take up a particular role, in our context the Principal, to understand the various components that are required to do justice to a role.

Components required to effectively carry out a Role

7	3	6
Infrastructure and other facilities to carry out the responsibilities	Adequate efforts to carry out the responsibilities	Human resource support and collaboration within the organisation

| Competencies required to carry out the responsibilities | Role you want to fulfil | Required personal characteristics of the role |

2   4   1

Responsibilities as a Principal

Various tasks under each of the responsibilities   5

Examine the above chart with reference to yourself as Principal:

| 1 | Required personal characteristics of the role holder: Do your personality traits match the role? Are your personal needs compatible with the organisation's needs? |

| 2 | Competencies required to carry out the responsibilities: Have you developed cognitive (knowledge base), emotive (emotional maturity) capacities and skills necessary for the role? |

| 3 | Adequate efforts to carry out the responsibilities: Do you put in adequate and qualitative efforts in carrying out your responsibilities and related tasks? |

| 4 | Responsibilities as a Principal: Have you identified the various responsibilities you are required to fulfil as the role-holder? |

| 5 | Various tasks under each of the responsibilities: Have you identified the various task/s under each of the responsibilities and its time frame – what, when, how? |

| 6 | Human-resource support and collaboration within the organisation: Do you have competent staff to work with? Have you taken pains to make them competent? Is the culture of the organisation supportive? |

| 7 | Infrastructure and other facilities to carry out the responsibilities: Does the organistion have adequate infrastructure facilities to function well and for you to carry out your tasks? |

The above diagram indicates that doing justice to a role not only implies willingness and goodwill but other aspects as well so that justice is done not only to the role one plays but also to the people one serves.

Different Perspectives on Leadership

Various studies have been done on leadership in social and organisational set-ups, including the educational set-up. These studies have focussed on one or other aspect of leadership. It may help to look at the role of the leader in educational institutions from these perspectives. The following table shows four of these positions in which leadership in education is examined.

Position	Description
Critical	Concerned to reveal and emancipate leaders and followers from social injustice and the oppression of established power structures. Providing practitioners with opportunities to reflect on what they do, are told to do, and would like to do, enabling them to link their work with the bigger picture outside of the immediacy of action.

Humanistic	Gathers and theorizes from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers. The humanistic position is based on a narrative biographical epistemology through which head teachers can tell their own stories of what it feels like to lead and to exercise leadership in particular settings over a period of time.
Instrumental	Provides leaders with effective leadership strategies to deliver organisational outcomes. Post holders are defined as leaders and the behaviours of effective leaders are described.
Scientific	Abstracts and measures the impact of leadership effectiveness on organisational outcomes. The scientific position seeks to measure the causal impact of headmaster (and other post holders) as leaders on follower behaviours, functions, emotions, and on student learning outcomes.

Source: Gunter, 2001:95

Sociologists and students of organisations have examined leader and leadership from various perspectives as well. One of the popular ways of viewing leadership is from 'behavioural style' perspective. I highlight below three different styles which leaders may chose to adopt while carrying out their duties. Each style has its consequence and impact on the leader her/himself, the people in the organisation and the community or clientele at large, in our case the students, parents and neighbourhood.

1) Autocratic style describes a leader who typically tends to centralise authority, dictate work methods, make unilateral decisions, and limit subordinate participation.

2) Democratic style describes a leader who tends to involve subordinates in decision making, delegate authority, encourage participation in deciding work methods and goals, and use feedback as an opportunity for coaching.

3) Laissez-faire style describes a leader who generally gives the group complete freedom to make decisions and complete the work in whatever way it sees fit. The tendency on the part of such a leader is to shirk her/his responsibility of decision making, being accountable and a demanding one.

Some talk of "charismatic" leadership which is found in some organisations. This style of leadership fosters "hero/heroine worship", but does not give due recognition to team-work and people's contribution. Charismatic authority depends for its control on the person of the leader and so is necessarily short-lived and may encourage 'blind' faith.

These styles can be further classified as follows (Robin and Peters, 1992):

1. Exploitative-autocratic: The leader is autocratic in decision making and functioning. S/he does not welcome space for others to be creative and autonomous; on the contrary s/he exploits people – their time, energy and talents.

2. Benevolent-autocratic: The leader is autocratic in decision making and functioning but grants favours to people and meets some needs of the subordinates. The leader appears to be generous (some may view it as false generosity, feudal generosity or mafia-type generosity) in exchange for unquestioningly carrying out her/his commands and wishes.

3. Consultative: The leader decides but consults people and subordinates to gauge their opinion, feeling, and perspective. Subordinates have space to influence the decisions and the functioning.

4. Democratic: The leader takes the responsibility for the decision but takes people along with her/him. S/he looks for consensus, ensures that the interests of various groups within the large group are taken into account and dialogued with. Democratic leadership does not imply leadership *for* or *of* the majority but it means participative leadership. Decisions are taken after wider participation of the various smaller groups and rightfully dialoguing with their interests, contribution, suggestions, ideas and limitations. Democratic leadership hopes for people's ownership of the decision made, as well as willing to bear the consequences of the decisions made.

Robin and Peters also speak about *participative* vs. *directive* leadership. This dimension characterises one key aspect of leader behaviour, namely, decision-making, which may have important effects on group or organisational climate and effectiveness. One of the major criticisms of the participative approach to leadership is that it can be much slower and more expensive than directive leadership. However, it can lead to increased satisfaction with the job and supervision as well as improving the quality of decision-making and decisions and subordinates' acceptance of decisions.

Another way of looking at leadership is from the perspective of traits of a leader as related to leadership ability. These are: physical traits (such as appearance, height) intelligence and ability traits, personality traits (enthusiasm, self-confidence), task-related characteristics (initiative, persistence), social characteristics (cooperativeness, inter-personal skills) etc. Leaders do not possess

all the qualities but the more qualities s/he possesses the better the leader or leadership. Trait theorists speak of certain traits, which, if present in the leader, will help her/him become a better leader. Keith Davis (1981) summarises four major traits.

i) Intelligence: Usually leaders are expected to have comparatively higher intelligence than their followers.

ii) Social maturity and breadth: Leaders need to be emotionally stable (not emotionally manipulative), mature and should have broad interests and activities.

iii) Inner motivation and achievement-drives: Leaders usually a have high motivational drive of the achievement type.

iv) Human-relations attitudes: Successful leaders recognise the worth and dignity of their followers and are able to get along with them.

v) Specialist knowledge and skills can be added as one more quality of the leader (Leigh, 1996:31).

Scholars like Koontz et al. refer to four basic ingredients of Leadership which Principals may like to take into consideration:

i) Power: Whether one likes it or not, acknowledges it or not, leadership is associated with power. Therefore an ability to use power effectively and in a responsible manner.

ii) An understanding of people: The ability to understand that human beings have differing motivating forces at different times and in different situations. Therefore an ability to apply the knowledge of motivation to people and situations.

iii) The ability to inspire. The skill and ability to inspire followers in such a way that their full capabilities are elicited.

iv) Style and climate: Organisational climate influences motivation. Therefore leaders know how to create and promote organisational climate such that people within the organisation feel like giving their best.

Organisation and management scholars like McGregor (1960) state that there are at least four major variables known to be involved in leadership:

1. the characteristics of the leader,

2. the attitudes, needs, and other personal characteristics of the followers,

3. characteristics of the organisation,

4. social, economic and political milieu in which leadership is exerted.

The above research findings suggest that leadership is not a property of an individual, but a complex relationship among different variables. McGregor comments that it does not follow that any individual can become a successful leader in a given situation. It does follow, however, that successful leadership is not dependent on the possession of a single universal pattern of inborn traits and abilities. In the context of our educational institutions the above variables are important and may throw some light on the issue. This brings us to an oft-asked question – Are leaders born or made?

Leadership - Is it Acquired or Innate?

There are people who think that leaders are born while others refute this claim and assert that leaders are made. Drucker (1990) believes that management cannot create leaders but only the conditions under which potential leadership qualities become effective. Leadership, he says, needs aptitude and attitudes. According to him some people genuinely cannot learn the skills. He also suggests that to some, learning leadership skills may not be important, as they would prefer to be followers. Drucker is of the opinion, however, that most of us can learn these skills. Others like Adair (1990) are of the opinion that leadership skills can be acquired through training. In any case, leadership development is increasingly seen as an investment for the future.

Often we may blame individuals from certain sections of society for their lack of initiative, but their limitations may be the result of the dominating and oppressive milieu in which they live. In the caste, class, sex, race and religion--ridden societies, the anti-human and unjust ideologies and practices hamper the emergence of leadership.

To say that leaders are born, then, is to endorse these socially discriminative ideologies. To say that leaders are born is to say women, black, coloured, the *avarnas* (out of castes) and adivasis cannot be leaders, because people adhering to certain ideologies believe that these people are less human or not human at all, no leadership can be expected from them, and they are incapable of leading (see Dabhi, 1999).

I am of the opinion that leadership can be developed in oneself and in people provided they show interest and are willing to learn. A suitable environment, healthy *humane* Socialisation and Providing Opportunities make the Process Easy.

Education Organisations and Institutions – Reality and Possibilities

Warren Bennis (1989) cites three reasons why leaders are important: firstly, they are important because the responsibility of the organisation (such as schools, colleges) and its effectiveness (success or failure) lies with them. Secondly, leaders provide an anchor to the group connecting the past, the present and the future. Thirdly, leaders provide credibility and integrity to the organisation.

We must also note that we are talking of leadership within an organisational context. A Principal heads an organisation, an institution imparting education. It is difficult to comprehend society without organisations; they not only fulfil individual and collective needs but they also function as agents through which nation-states and societies translate their aspirations (Chaturvedi and Chaturvedi, 1995; Dabhi, 2003). Education providers (public, profit making, and Not for Profit organisations) have their own needs and agenda in providing education including how and what they provide. The proclaimed and stated objectives of service and public interest may be well articulate but need not be real.

If organisations are capable of building human society, they are equally equipped to dominate, exploit and destroy society – "This process of domination and exploitation is made possible through financial, political, bureaucratic and sometimes even judicial organisations, structures and processes" (Dabhi, 1999:25). Clark (2002:96) in his article 'Competing Visions' quotes Donal Dorr, "We live in a stratified society where certain economic, political, cultural and religious structures maintain and promote the dominance of the rich and the powerful over the mass of ordinary people and peoples." To make education an instrument of change, a Principal cannot overlook the praxis, the milieu. So Principals have a major part to play in determining the role their organisation/s will play in society so as to make education an instrument of social transformation.

In the social context academic organisations have dual functions. The first is **academic**, that is, these organisations are instruments generating and imparting knowledge and learning without of course creating the dichotomy of teacher and taught against which Paulo Freire (1972) the Brazilian educationist warns us. The academic function of our education organisation/institution needs rethinking, transformation because in the absence of a minimum desirable and effective leadership in hundreds and thousands of our educational institutions, especially the undergraduate colleges in both rural and urban areas, education now is hopelessly substandard, where utter indiscipline and chaos reign supreme. (The Statesman, 15th March 2003)

The second is, **political**, that is, academic organisations strengthen or weaken power structures. The distorting of history textbooks by the previous government and altering *what* and *how* of an education system points to how education and leaders within educational institutions can be manipulated. In El Salvador the Jesuits involved in education in the University were eliminated by the right-wing military because their education was questioning the anti-people regime, and thus disturbing the status quo. In Gujarat, in the anti-Christian agitations in Dangs, it was not the elite educational institutions that were targeted by the Sangh Parivar but the schools that catered to the marginalised. Therefore educational institutions are not value-free, neither are they politically neutral. Silence (of educational institutions) in the face of violence on the marginalised is tantamount to consent. Either these institutions and organisations take the side of the poor or they stand against them. Leaders cannot get away with a non-committal or neutral attitude.

Having discussed the dual dimensions of educational institutions/organisations, let us examine the other aspect of organisational reality. In our set-up, it is the leader's, i.e. Principal's responsibility, to protect the institution from the environment and also acquire resources from society for the institution. Referring to the governance of colleges and the duty of the college Rector, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus has this to say: "The leader must keep a wary eye on all his men, safeguarding them from harm at home and abroad, preventing them if possible or finding a remedy if necessary, so that both private and common good are served (Part IV: 424-5). Therefore taking care of the organisation and the people within it becomes an important duty of the leader.

Our lives are interwoven with organisations of all kinds. These organisations belong to different sectors – public, profit-making, and non-profit sector (like some of our schools and other educational institutions). These organisations, while fulfilling various needs of society, fulfil their own needs and those of the individuals who work within these organisations.

 Some organisations such as educational organisations (schools, colleges, technical institutions and others) may belong to more than one sector, influencing other similar kinds of organisations in the same sector as well as outside it (also see Dabhi, 2003).

Often some of these organisations work towards transformation of the larger society through their interventions, products and services and in fact they do make a difference in society. In some way they believe that the need, the good the individual is seeking for her/himself, must match that of the organisation and

society at large – that will be the common good. This common good will promote 'integral human development' (for details see Alfrord and Naughton, 2001:70). However there are umpteen examples where society has changed these organisations positively or negatively. As an example of a negative society has had on some of these organisations is the entry of social evils/discriminations based on caste, sex, class, and so on --- these are the very evils these organisations wanted to resist and fight against. A concrete example is to be found in our Church institutions.

A Principal - Is S/he a Leader or a Manager?

Many of us are aware of the distinction between the role of a manager and that of a leader, each one requiring different competencies and skills. The line between manager and leader is forever being redefined, but Warren Bennis says "the manager does things right; the leader does the right thing" (Kennedy, 1994:101). It is quite possible that good leaders may be bad managers (administrative) and good managers may fail to make good leaders. But many of our educational institutions require people who fulfil both roles and do adequate justice to them. Our educational institutions need people who are good managers, and who, at the same time, exhibit good leadership skills. As the management guru Peter Drucker (1990) suggests, there are simply no such things as 'leadership traits' or 'leadership characteristics'. We are talking of leadership skills that perhaps cannot be taught but they can be learned by most of us. Thus we need people who are willing and able to learn these skills.

Discussing the role of a leader and a manger, one has to be careful about attaching gradation to these roles. Both are important roles in an organisation and one may find it easier to perform one or the other role. But to say that one role is superior to the other defeats the purpose of the differences. Differences of roles are not to be seen in terms of superior and inferior. One or the other role may be given importance and priority at some time or the other. The following table may help us appreciate the differences.

Management	Leadership
1. Planning and Budgeting - establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, and then allocating the resources necessary to make that happen.	1. Establishing direction - developing a vision for the future, often the distant future, and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision.
2. Organizing and Staffing — establishing some structure for accomplishing plan	2. Aligning People — communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those

requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation.	whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity.
3. Controlling and Problem Solving --- monitoring results vs. plan in some detail, identifying deviations, and then planning and organizing to solve these problems	3. Motivating and Inspiring --- energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs.
4. Produces a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential of consistently producing key results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always being on time; for stockholders, being on budget).	4. Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential of producing extremely useful change (e.g., new services, inputs, insights that may help society, new approaches to staff relations that help make the organisation more competitive).

(Source: Kotter, John P. 1990, Force for change, NY: The Free Press)

In the changing political, economic, socio-cultural scenario, it is not an easy task to provide leadership in an organisation and manage it at the same time. Organisational complexity is not only due to external factors but internal constituencies (students, staff, management, trustees) as well. Today communication and information technology organisations are increasingly becoming learning organisations. People who take up leadership and managerial roles in organisations, including educational institutions, are equipping themselves with new knowledge, skills and expertise, without undermining past experience and traditional knowledge available in leading and managing.

As our organisations and institutions expand and grow, people within these organisations take up multiple roles and therefore multiple responsibilities and tasks. Therefore it is not uncommon that many people are asked to take up dual roles of a manager (administrator) as well as Principal. Striking a balance may not always be easy but it does not mean that one cannot become good at performing both roles if one wishes and is willing to learn and acquire the necessary competencies. The role diagram will help in examining the areas where inputs may be needed.

Leadership and the Role of a Principal

Having looked at various aspects of leadership in organisations with special emphasis on educational institutions, let us now focus on the leadership role of a Principal. GC 32 (419), commending the Jesuits in education ministry states, "They educate their students as 'men and women for others' who can assume leadership roles in their own communities and organisations." Thus Jesuits forming leaders need to be familiar with leadership and being leaders themselves in some way.

There are some Principals in leadership position who are averse to theory and concepts while others find it difficult to get down to brass tacks. My effort here will be to draw the readers' attention to both and impress upon them that action and reflection, theory and practice are equally important. We need to acknowledge that Principals of our educational institutions are administrative leaders. They take on and fulfil many roles such as teacher, manager, supervisor, administrator, and disciplinarian. Hence the position of a Principal demands that these leaders cum administrators be flexible and persistent, with a love for teaching and a vision for the organisation/institute's future. It is often heard in informal circles that outstanding Principals must be good leaders, have excellent people skills, and have UNIMPEACHABLE integrity. One of the most difficult tasks of an integrated leader and manager is to integrate effective goals with good means (Alfrord, et al, 2001:82) because ends do not justify the means.

The role of Principals has shifted from the traditional headmaster to a leader in the community, improving the educational process through staff, parent, and student education. Therefore training for Principals (this aspect will be dealt with in some detail later) includes formal education and degree, as well as training in leadership and administration. In addition to teaching experience, a good number of institutions ask for people taking up Principal's role to have managerial and leadership training and education.

We must note that Principals of educational organisations/institutions face several challenges and there is no simple magic formula that will make you a leader. It takes hard work, dedication to learning, compassion, and courage, along with a distrust of the status quo and a sincere belief and commitment that you can make your own little part of the world a better place for everyone to live

in, to work and to learn and influence society. Let me highlight some areas where leadership is exercised by Principals of educational institutions.

The Principal must lead the teaching and non-teaching staff members, into vision and mission building. The Jesuit Principals have an overarching mission: "commitment to the promotion of justice" (GC 34:52), a commitment which is based on faith in people, especially the poor and marginalized, and on inspiration drawn from the Scriptures and from the life of a man called Jesus. This presupposes that Principals of our educational institutions have the ability to scan and analyse the social and political forces operating in society, without letting the institution/organisation become a political tool of any party or its ideology. Not an easy task but not impossible either! Principals will require political will to make their institutions instruments of social transformation.

There are educational institutions which have their vision-mission statements written in their calendars and brochures. These could be revisited at the beginning of the year by asking one of the staff to lead others in a reflection on the implications of the same in the routine life of the organisation. Vision and mission help keep the organisation's 'ship' on course, in the right direction. Principals as leaders are expected to promote this vision – no one will follow you simply because you decide you want to lead. The leader has to have a clear idea of where to take the group and convince them that the goal is worthwhile.

It helps staff and management in the organisation to discern which educational content, processes and extra-curricular activities can be taken on board so as to translate vision and mission into reality. Moses led the Israelites in spite of difficulties; and motivated his colleagues because he had a vision and a mission and could enthuse others with that mission. No wonder more and more people today emphasise that *leaders are the ones who provide vision, direction, take people along with them and translate that vision into reality* (Bennis 1989, Kotter 1990). With a visionary leader the organisation remains relevant and alive but otherwise as Drucker (1990) warns, the organisation collapses with the exit of a leader, the so-called leader has "sucked the place dry."

Although leadership positions in formal organisations are assigned to individuals on the basis of experience, seniority, or expertise, there are many situations at work where leadership emerges without formal sanction. Principals need to realise that in their organisational set-up there are many who have leadership skills, and although they may lack formal status they are nonetheless perceived as

leaders. Therefore, it is important that *Principals recognise these other leaders and provide room and space for many more to emerge*. Leaders who are like a banyan tree may not be right for our kinds of organisations since a banyan tree never allows anything to flourish under it.

Studies of various leaders showed that the most common factors among various leaders are their interpersonal, intellectual and technical skills. The second set of common factors cited were concerned with how the leaders related to their groups, particularly the methods used to motivate and coordinate group activities. The least frequently occurring factors were related to personal characteristics of the leaders. In our context therefore it implies that successful Principals are those who possess and utilise a set of social skills mentioned above, rather than merely having personality characteristics.

Group members seem to look for *two types of competence in a leader, socio-emotional and task competence* (Fincham and Rhodes, 1992), i.e., those who are aware of and can influence group relations and cohesion and those who are able to contribute to task achievement, have problem solving capacities and foster the effectiveness of the group. Principals who exhibit and exercise these competencies, rather than personal characteristics, have greater possibilities of influencing the staff and making the organisation more effective. Moses (Ex 3/7-13) was guided by a vision and mission given by Yahweh but it was not easy for him to keep the people together and at the same time keep his eyes on the task, i.e., to get to the promise land.

The Principal, to emerge as a leader in the organisation, must remember that leadership is also associated with her/his ability for spontaneity. Research suggests that people who initiate a wider range of activities within the groups or attempt to develop wider opportunities for individuals to participate are more likely to emerge as group leaders (Fincham and Rhodes, 1992). It is equally important that leaders allow themselves to be influenced by others. A skilful Principal emerging as leader is able to balance the need to influence and being influenced.

How an organisation functions, how people within the organisation think and behave, also points to the work culture that exists in the organisation. Leaders play an important role in promoting and sustaining a healthy work culture (Dabhi, 2002). In simple terms, culture would mean the shared meaning and way

of doing things in an organisation, which in concrete terms means people's understanding of goals and objectives, the leadership behaviour, the way decisions are made, the interactions taking place, the way resources are used and values that are proclaimed and practised in the organisation. Some say that a **code of conduct** is part of organisation culture (Robbins and Coulter, 1998:167). It is important that the organisation is committed to a code of conduct that guarantees each individual's right to work in an environment that is respectful, supportive, and free from harassment – "In most countries it is now recognised that all forms of harassment are unacceptable and measures need to be taken to ensure that people are protected" (Work in the World, 2003:53, also see the Directive Principles of State Policy, Constitution of India, Part IV: 42).

It is this organisational culture and the values that the culture fosters, which will help the Principal, staff and students to take responsibility for their actions and for those of their group. Leaders who admit their mistakes courageously and are accountable and responsible for everything the members of the group and organisation do or fail to do affect the organisation culture positively. When things go wrong and the Principal, as the head and leader of the institution takes responsibility for it, without foisting it on to others s/he sets a responsible and responsive culture and provides a role model of leadership for students and staff.

Principals are primarily teachers but 'Leaders as teachers' is not merely about 'teaching' people how to achieve their vision, it is about fostering learning, for everyone (Senge, 1990). Leaders need to help people in the organisation to develop a systematic understanding of not only the rules and procedures but also of the milieu in which it operates and the purpose of its existence. It is then that the staff begins to see their role and function in a wider context. It is likely to increase their motivation because they begin to see and appreciate how their contribution would make a difference.

Let me take you back to the chart where a difference between a leader and a manger is cited. Going over those functions conceptually and in practice will enhance your competencies in fulfilling the dual roles of a Principal. The conceptual framework and practice of these functions will have to be adapted to local situation, needs and organisation specificities.

Principals as Leaders and Their ongoing Formation:

The role of a leader is a dynamic one and so a Principal occupying this role cannot be complacent. If one is committed to leading a group, an organisation or a community, one needs to keep oneself abreast of theory and practice of the role one occupies. Principals as leaders must be sensitive to key contingency variables (e.g., governing board, staff, students, parents, education board, neighbourhood, sister-concern organisation, government bureaucracy, etc.) and so can alter their leadership style accordingly. Effective Principals must continuously negotiate their role with their subordinates and in this context the staff exchanges their compliance in return to the leader meeting their needs and that of the organisation. Not that all the needs of the staff are in keeping with the goal of the organisation, but to know the genuine needs of people one must be able to perceive them. Therefore, the development of a leader's sensitivity to subordinates' needs has been a key area of leadership training. T-group (T for training) has been one of them, not without its share of criticism. The trainers of these processes believe that this training, interaction and process within it promote (Fincham and Rhodes, 1992:199):

1. An increased self-awareness,

2. An increased awareness of the needs of the subordinates,

3. An increased desire to share information,

4. An increased desire to reach decisions participatively,

5. A shift towards less formal styles of interaction with subordinates

6. A reduction in assertive and directive leadership behaviour.

The author being a professional facilitator (professional member of Indian Society of Applied Behavioural Science, India) of such training programmes would like to suggest that these kinds of training are not meant for everyone. They are quite unstructured, place the responsibility of learning on the participants, and have the potential of triggering stress and anxiety. Experience and studies suggest that training of this nature produces the desired outcomes.

There is yet another kind of training for Principals playing a leader's role which emphasises the cognitive faculty – rational training. One model available is that of Yukl's typology of management skills (Fincham and Rhodes, 1992). The key issues covered under this kind of training are: **Building relationships,**

Influencing people, Making decisions which **Giving and seeing information**. Finally there is also the possibility of training which is *skill theory* based. It will focus on leadership skills such as information gathering, interviewing, counselling, and negotiating, motivating and using feedback. It will begin with the cognitive component but the stress is on the behavioural part.

The above-mentioned trainings are to help Principals equip themselves constantly, provide space in which they can share experiences and learning with other likeminded leaders in education organisation/institutions and opportunity to expose themselves to new knowledge and learning in the field.

Conclusion:

We began our discussion of leadership in the context of organisation and society. We clarified to the readers the concepts and definition of leader and role. We then discussed the different perspectives on leadership drawing from different scholars, experiences and traditions. We then argued that leadership is not innate but acquired. Leaders are not born but made. The article then placed the discussion of leadership role of a Principal in the context of organisation reality and possibilities for Principals to bear in mind as leaders.

We then briefly examined the difference between a leader and a manager and argued that in our context the Principals will have to play both roles effectively as by virtue of their role and definition of leadership our Principals are leaders. Then we focused on leadership and the role of a Principal suggesting what needs to be done by those who are saddled with this role.

Finally we concluded with the ongoing formation of Principals suggesting that it is an opportunity for the Principals to be exposed to new knowledge and learning, space to share and learn, and update their knowledge and skills to enhance their performance and thus the effectiveness of their organisation/institution.

Let us conclude that Principals of education organisation/institutions have an important leadership role to play in forming young minds and bodies, future citizens and society – "our educational institutions … should become agents of change and find ways and means to educate the students towards social awareness and concern for the less privileged" (Desrochers, 1992:426).

These formed young citizens will not only believe in a just, equitable society but will consciously and constantly act to make it happen as these young women and men journey through life because they were inspired, motivated and helped to act

to make another world possible by their teacher, who was their Principal and their leader.

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