INTRODUCTION

The subject of administrative leadership styles has been an important consideration in the study of the role of the principal. In recent years, great emphasis has been placed on the leadership aspects of the principal's role. However, amid this growing body of knowledge, very little has been written on principals in aided schools. In view of the strong thrust for local control of education and the centrality of the principal in aided schools and communities, a study of the leadership style of principals in the aided schools system could be an important undertaking.

The principal is the key administrator at the local level in the aided schools system. His/her leadership styles and managerial skills are important aspects in improving the quality of education of children. It is with this in mind that this study was designed to investigate the leadership styles of principals from their own perceptions, the perceptions of their subordinates and the perceptions of their superordinates.

The principal as a key local administrator, is the connecting link between the school and community in interpreting the needs of its students. The success or failure of the school program is dependent on the quality of leadership of the principal. This idea was substantiated by Lipham and Hoeh (1974) when they suggested that: The leadership of the principal is a critical factor in the success of any program in the school. Knowledge about leadership, therefore, is a prime pre-requisite if an individual is to fulfill effectively the principalship role. (p. 176)

Background to the Problem

The principalship continues to be one of the most durable and critical positions in the administration of Indian schools. Although there are variations in the size and location of schools and school systems, differences in the personalities and experiential backgrounds of principals, and variation in the socio-economic circumstances of children, youth and parents served, the building principal remains the administrator most closely associated with the daily operations of the school, with the implementation of curriculum, and with its association with the community. (Erickson and Reller, 1979, p. 22)

In view of what has been said by Erickson and Reller about the role of the principal in educational administration, it would seem that a better understanding of the principal's role as a leader is crucial to educational control at the local level. As stated earlier, a significant trend in India and particularly in Mumbai is a movement towards local control of education.

This may also have an impact on the leadership styles of the principal since he/she is the chief administrator at the local level. Unfortunately, the management framework, and Indian education seems to lack the leadership it must have in order to achieve its goals. This concern was voiced in a 1982 paper on Indian education. The basic problem with local control of Indian education is that the concept has been implemented without the federal/Indian relationship involved having been defined and without the necessary structures having been developed. Consequently, there is an uncertain management framework, and Indian education lacks the
leadership it must have if it is to achieve its objectives. Much of the program definition work remains incomplete particularly in respect of management processes, evaluation criteria, standards and the Indian federal government roles and responsibilities.

The principals as school leaders must be able to utilize all resources at their command to keep the public informed as to school progress. They must also be able to integrate community needs with school needs. In essence they should utilize community groups, staff groups, and other interested parties in developing an improved educational program. Principals must be able to adapt their leadership styles to meet future demands.

India has made impressive economic gains in the last few decades and currently has the 4th largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity. Despite this improvement, more than 260 million people in India live in poverty. The reciprocity of poverty producing disability, and disability resulting in poverty (Rao, 1990) creates unique challenges for the integrated education movement in India. This paper begins with a brief history of special education in India, including changes to government legislation and policy in the move towards more integrated educational provision. A number of strategies are presented to address the current challenges that Indian administrators and educators face in the move towards more integrated education.

Inclusive and integrated education

With the release of the Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO), a large number of developing countries started reformulating their policies to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream schools. While a large number of developed countries (e.g. USA, Canada, Australia) now have policies or laws promoting "inclusive education," a number of developing countries continue to provide educational services to students with disabilities in "segregated" schools. Typically, inclusive education means "that students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education settings, under the responsibility of [a] regular classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students with disabilities may also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as [a] resource room" (Mastropero & Scruggs, 2004, p.7).

Historically, many educational systems have adopted an integrated education model as an interim approach in the move towards inclusive education. In the "integrated education" model "whenever possible, students with disabilities attend a regular school". The emphasis, however, is upon the student to fit the system rather than the system to adapt to meet the educational needs of a student. In India, "integrated education" has been provided mainly to students with mild disabilities who are considered "easy" to include into regular school programs. Students with severe disabilities, in a majority of cases, do not attend a school, or in rare cases, attend a special school.

A principal has many general responsibilities which they must carry out on a daily basis. First and foremost, the principal is the head of the educational setting. This individual provides guidance not only for the teachers but for the students as well. The principal must monitor all activities within their school and be the leader of it all, so to speak.
In addition, the principal must act as a liaison between what goes on in the school and those in the general community. The principal will meet requests from parents, school board members and government officials. This individual is the one these people go to with praise as well as complaints.

Principals are leaders. They divide their time between working with students and teachers and taking care of the administrative aspects of the job, but throughout it all they are leading the school towards a common goal.

A large part of their job involves making the school work positively for both students and teachers. The principals work on developing and coordinating educational programs with staff, parent groups, and the school board. They are in charge of the teachers, including hiring them, training them, mentoring them, and letting them go if necessary. They communicate with the school's surrounding community and other schools, they spearhead fundraising campaigns, and they assist in acquiring supplies for all extra-curricular activities. They meet with concerned parents, troubled or abused children, social workers, and school psychologists in an effort to address problems within the school community. The students often get to know their principals as they walk around the school, attend concerts, plays, purchase student anthologies, and watch soccer games and volleyball tournaments. As they lead by example, principals try to encourage student pride and school respect in an effort to maintain a safe and prosperous educational environment.

The day-to-day life of a principal isn't easy. It is hard, tiring, and frustrating at times, but it can also be extremely fulfilling, for the school community as well as for the principal who heads it up. A good principal has children's artwork in their office, knows the first names of the school's maintenance staff, and always has an open door, even if the paperwork is piling up, their head pounds, and there are feet sore from walking the halls.

Successful operation of an educational institution requires competent administrators. Education administrators provide instructional leadership and manage the day-to-day activities in schools, preschools, day care centers, and colleges and universities. They also direct the educational programs of businesses, correctional institutions, museums, and job training and community service organizations. (College presidents and school superintendents are covered in the Handbook statement on general managers and top executives.)