



WOMEN PRINCIPALS IN BETUL BLOCK: A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the leadership behaviors of female principals working in government schools within the Betul block of Madhya Pradesh. Utilizing a descriptive survey approach, the study selected nineteen schools—including those at the primary, middle, high, and higher secondary levels—through purposive sampling. To evaluate six aspects of leadership—Emotional Stabilizer, Team Builder, Performance Orientor, Potential Extractor, Socially Intelligent, and Value Inculcator—the Leader Behavior Scale (LBS) developed by Dr. Asha Hingar (2005) was employed. Data collection involved direct engagement with participants, and the results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages. The findings reveal that women principals at the secondary and senior secondary stages demonstrate stronger leadership effectiveness, particularly regarding emotional stability and instilling values. Conversely, those at primary and middle school levels showed moderate effectiveness, with noticeable differences across the various leadership dimensions. The study underscores the importance of implementing focused leadership development programs, especially for principals at the foundational stages of schooling.

Keywords: Leadership behavior, Women Principals, Betul Block, LBS tool, Government schools.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is essential for organizational success. Leaders must be adaptable, understanding the past, present, and future. They need to be self-aware and able to inspire their teams. As the world changes rapidly, leaders must be flexible and able to switch between different leadership styles. They need strong technical skills and the ability to build relationships. Ultimately, a good leader is one who can achieve goals while creating a positive work environment. School leaders, such as principals or headmasters, play a crucial role in driving school improvement. They must effectively manage resources, including human capital, to achieve desired outcomes.

Since the very inception of the concept, serious efforts have been made in the direction to explore related dimensions of leadership behaviour. To name a few landmarks, the Ohio-State Studies for instance in 1940s eventually categorized leadership in two dimensions viz., initiating structure and consideration. A situational model by Fiedler (1987) is another important study, which deals with cognitive abilities of a leader. Moreover, Conger and Kanungo (1987) proposed a theory of charismatic leadership based on the assumption that the charisma is an attributional phenomenon.

In the last 50 years, various theories of leadership viz, charismatic, wisdom, transformational, integrative and strategic and many others have flooded in social science researches. All these theories concern with effective leadership which is one lever. But in this rapidly changing world, one lever is not sufficient, one has to search or work upon multiple levers.

Transformational Leadership theories mostly attempt to operationalize effective leader behaviour as their key aspect. However, recent evidences indicate that measures designed to capture transformational leader behaviour lack discriminant validity (Bycio, Hackett and Allen, 1995; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; and Carless, 1998). In essence then, leadership is a very dynamic process which can encourage the people to be more effective in their working by increasing competence and thus in achieving the desired and determined goals.

The spectrum of leadership profile has been large. The most debated and discussed topic of leadership behaviour is in search of empirically valid test of measurement. Management theorists, social scientists, psychologists and others have made efforts to construct scales to measure different dimensions of leader behaviour. The six dimensions which the researcher is more concerned of leadership behaviour are Emotional Stabilizer(ES), Team Builder(TB), Performance Orientor(PO), Potential Extractor(PE), Socially Intelligent(SI) and Value Inculcator(VI).

Emotional Stabilizer (ES), a leader must provide emotional stability, motivation, and energy to employees, enabling them to overcome challenges. Personal ego must be tempered. This requires balanced behavior, empathy, impartiality, patience, and emotional management.

Team Builder (TB) should foster effective communication, motivation, and collaboration. They should encourage diverse perspectives, collaborative decision-making, and problem-solving. Additionally, they must promote team spirit, avoid unhealthy competition and maintain team cohesion.

Performance Orientor (PO) prioritizes tasks, motivates achievement, adheres to high standards,

rejuvenates regularly, and remains resilient. By implementing adaptable strategies, POs ensure timely task completion and organizational success.

Potential Extractor (PE) leadership focuses on identifying, nurturing, and maximizing individual potential. By providing opportunities, delegating authority, and building confidence, leaders can channel latent abilities, benefiting both the individual and the organization.

Socially Intelligent (SE) leader builds strong relationships based on empathy, support, challenge, and respect. They adapt to situations, effectively communicate, and resolve conflicts. They also stay informed about the latest developments.

Value Inculcator (VI) helps organizations grow by encouraging employees to be committed, loyal, punctual, trustworthy, and forgiving.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Educational institutions—especially government-run schools—are fundamental to a nation's advancement. The standard of education these schools provide has a profound effect on the broader development of society (UNESCO, 2015). Among the key determinants of educational quality is the leadership shown by school principals. Effective principals can motivate teachers, engage students, and cultivate a positive learning environment (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). With more women stepping into leadership positions in education, it is increasingly important to examine their leadership behaviors to enhance educational outcomes (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

This study seeks to explore the leadership behaviors of women principals in government schools, recognizing that such understanding is vital for improving educational results. By identifying the

specific competencies these leaders demonstrate, the research aims to inform policy and practice, support the empowerment of women in leadership, and ultimately contribute to better student performance (Bush, 2020). Additionally, this work adds to the existing literature on women's leadership in education, addressing a notable gap—especially in rural and semi-urban parts of India (Nayar, 2020).

Therefore, investigating the leadership behaviors of women principals in government schools in the Betul block of Madhya Pradesh is particularly significant. This research will focus on examining the leadership practices of women principals across all levels of school education, including primary, middle, high, and higher secondary schools.

OBJECTIVES

This study has the following research objectives:

- 1) To study the leadership behaviour of women principals in government Primary schools of Betul block.
- 2) To study the leadership behaviour of women principals in government Middle schools of Betul block.
- 3) To study the leadership behaviour of women principals in government High Schools of Betul block.
- 4) To study the leadership behaviour of women principals in government Higher Secondary Schools of Betul block.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method was utilized in this research to explore the leadership behaviors of

women principals in government schools situated in the Betul block of Madhya Pradesh. To ensure comprehensive representation from each educational tier, a multi-stage sampling strategy was implemented, resulting in a final sample of nineteen schools spanning the primary, middle, high, and higher secondary levels. Leadership behaviors were measured using the Leader Behavior Scale (LBS) created by Dr. Asha Hingar (2005), which evaluates six core dimensions: Emotional Stabilizer, Team Builder, Performance Orientor, Potential Extractor, Social Intelligence, and Value Inculcation. The LBS is a validated instrument with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) exceeding 0.75 and employs a Likert-type response format; scores are classified as indicating high, medium, or low leadership effectiveness.

Data collection was carried out through in-person visits, during which the researcher clarified the study's objectives and obtained informed consent from each participant. Participants independently completed the questionnaire, and responses were scored according to the guidelines provided in the LBS manual. Throughout the study, ethical standards were rigorously followed, including ensuring that participation was voluntary, maintaining participant anonymity, and safeguarding the confidentiality of all responses, in line with established research ethics protocols.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis and interpretations are presented objective wise under different captions. The present investigation was to study the leadership behaviour of Women Principals in government schools of Betul block. The data were analysed with the help of the Percentages. The results are presented in Table 1(Level wise and dimension wise response on LBS of principals).

Table – 1: Level wise and dimension wise response on LBS of principals

Level Of School	Emotional Stabilizer [ES]	Team Builder [TB]	Performance Orientor [PO]	Potential Entractor [PE]	Socially Intelligent [SI]	Value Inculcator [VI]	Total
Primary	16	13	15	20	15	16	95
Primary	17	9	16	15	17	16	90
Primary	17	14	15	16	17	20	99
Middle	16	14	16	17	19	16	98
Middle	18	15	15	17	18	19	102
Middle	20	13	16	18	17	16	100
Middle	17	16	15	16	18	21	103
Middle	18	14	17	18	16	18	101
Middle	16	15	17	18	22	19	107
Middle	19	13	15	16	17	18	98
Secondary	21	18	20	23	22	24	128
Secondary	22	23	21	17	22	24	129
Secondary	22	20	21	23	24	24	134
Secondary	24	24	20	23	19	22	132
Secondary	22	20	20	21	24	23	130
Senior Secondary	24	21	18	25	24	24	136
Senior Secondary	21	22	25	24	25	24	141
Senior Secondary	24	20	22	23	22	24	135
Senior Secondary	24	19	20	23	22	25	133

The Categorization of dimension wise raw scores and total scores of Leader Behavior (Effectiveness) is given in Table 2 for all the levels of the schools.

Table – 2: Categorization of dimension wise raw scores and total scores of Leader Behaviour (Effectiveness)

Leadership Behavior (Effectiveness)	Total scores	Dimension wise raw scores
High	110-150	20-30
Medium	70-109	10-19
Low	69 & Below	9 & below

1. Leadership Behaviour of Women Principals in Government Primary Schools

From the Table-1, Level wise and dimension wise interpretation can be drawn about leader behaviour of Women Principals as follows:

1. The Emotional Stabilizer dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was

found to be effective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.

2. The Team Builder dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the team builder dimension was found to be ineffective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 80% and low scored for the 20% of the sample.
3. The Performance Orientor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.
4. The potential extractor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the potential extractor dimension was found to be highly effective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 80% and high scored for the 20% of the sample.
5. The Socially Intelligent dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.
6. The Value Inculcator dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the Value Inculcator dimension was found to be highly effective at the Primary level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 80% and high scored for the 20% of the sample.

2. Leadership Behaviour of women principals in government Middle schools

- I. The Emotional Stabilizer dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the Emotional Stabilizer dimension was found to be highly effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 90% and high scored for the 10% of the sample.
- II. The Team Builder dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.
- III. The Performance Orientor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.
- IV. The potential extractor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 100% of the sample.
- V. The Socially Intelligent dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the Socially Intelligent dimension was
- VI. found to be highly effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 90% and high scored for the 10% of the sample.
- VII. The Value Inculcator dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be effective with an exception where the Value Inculcator dimension was found to be highly effective at the middle level of the school. This dimension was observed medium scored for the 90% and high scored for the 10% of the sample.

3. Leadership Behaviour of women principals in government High Schools

- I. The Emotional Stabilizer dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.
- II. The Team Builder dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.
- III. The Performance Orientor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.
- IV. The potential extractor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective with an exception where the potential extractor dimension was found to be effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 80% and medium scored for the 20% of the sample.
- V. The Socially Intelligent dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective with an exception where the Socially Intelligent dimension was found to be effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 80% and medium scored for the 20% of the sample.
- VI. The Value Inculcator dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the High school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.

4. Leadership Behaviour of women principals in government Higher Secondary Schools

- I. The Emotional Stabilizer dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.
- II. The Team Builder dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective with an exception where the Team Builder dimension was found to be effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 80% and medium scored for the 20% of the sample.
- III. The Performance Orientor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective with an exception where the Performance Orientor dimension was found to be effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 80% and medium scored for the 20% of the sample.
- IV. The potential extractor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.
- V. The Socially Intelligent dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective with an exception where the Socially Intelligent dimension was found to be effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 80% and medium scored for the 20% of the sample.
1. The Value Inculcator dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be highly effective at the Higher Secondary level of the school. This dimension was observed high scored for the 100% of the sample.

Findings

- The Findings of the present study is presented, below, under different captions. Dimensions-wise findings of the present study are as follows:
- The Emotional Stabilizer dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be high scored at the all level of the school.
- The Team Builder dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be medium scored at all level of the school except primary level, it was found to be low.
- The Performance Orientor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be medium scored at all level of the school.
- The Potential Extractor dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be high scored at the all level of the school except secondary level, it was found to be medium.
- The Socially Intelligent dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be high scored at the all level of the school except secondary level, it was found to be medium.
- The Value Inculcator dimension of leadership behaviour of Women Principal was found to be high scored at the all level of the school.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that women principals in government schools within Betul block display different levels of leadership effectiveness depending on the school level. Principals at the secondary and higher secondary stages generally showed higher effectiveness across most leadership domains, whereas those at the primary and middle school levels demonstrated moderate effectiveness. These patterns point to both the opportunities and obstacles that women leaders encounter in rural educational contexts.

These findings are consistent with transformational leadership theory, which highlights the ability of leaders to inspire, motivate, and intellectually engage their teams (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Women principals in higher-level schools particularly excelled in areas such as Value Inculcation, Performance



Orientation, and Emotional Stability, reflecting a strong alignment with transformational leadership qualities. This could be attributed to their expanded administrative roles and increased access to leadership development at these levels.

On the other hand, the moderate leadership scores among primary and middle school principals may stem from limited decision-making authority, fewer training opportunities, and systemic barriers that are more pronounced in foundational rural schools (Nayar, 2020). This observation also aligns with situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982), which suggests that the effectiveness of leadership is influenced by the specific context and readiness of the team. In settings with restricted resources, such as many government primary schools, principals may focus more on maintaining daily operations rather than adopting a transformational approach.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of social intelligence and emotional regulation, both of which were rated highly among senior secondary principals. These competencies are crucial for managing staff, implementing policies, and sustaining a positive school culture—skills that are particularly vital in the hierarchical and resource-limited environments typical of rural Madhya Pradesh (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020).

From a gender perspective, the results reinforce previous research showing that women leaders often demonstrate collaborative, empathetic, and ethically driven leadership styles (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). However, the findings also point to the need for specialized professional development for women principals, especially at the primary and middle school levels. Such targeted support could strengthen their leadership capacity and contribute to improved educational outcomes in underserved regions.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that women principals in Betul block display stronger leadership qualities at the secondary and senior secondary school levels, while those at the primary and middle levels tend to show moderate effectiveness. These results point to the importance of designing leadership development programs that are sensitive to the specific contexts and needs of school leaders at different educational stages. Policy measures should emphasize building the capacities of women principals at foundational levels by providing equitable access to mentoring, professional peer networks, and ongoing training opportunities.

Training programs should focus on developing skills such as emotional intelligence, effective team management, and ethical decision-making, drawing on principles from transformational and situational leadership theories. Future investigations could examine how leadership behaviors influence student achievement, incorporate perspectives from teachers and other stakeholders, and track changes in leadership effectiveness over time across various regions and socio-economic backgrounds. Gaining deeper insight into the systemic challenges faced by women leaders in rural settings will further support the creation of gender-responsive educational leadership policies.

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