

**Primary School Assistant Headship:
An Exploratory Study**

By

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and does not contain any material that has been submitted or is currently being submitted for a higher degree at any university. This thesis contains work that I undertook under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Akhila Nand Sharma and Dr. Govinda Ishwar Lingam. To the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due acknowledgement is made.

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Rajendra Singh

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I wish to share my achievement with my wife, Kamini and my two sons Sachindra and Arindra. I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Mr and Mrs Brij Basi Singh, for their blessings, love and kindness and for the struggles they went through in order to provide me with a decent education that enabled me to become a teacher.

ABSTRACT

This research study examines and documents the nature of work carried out by the assistant head teachers (AHTs) in the Fiji primary schools. It also examines the knowledge, skills, successful past experiences and qualifications that collectively contribute to the success of the AHTs as educational leaders.

It attempts to understand the work of AHTs from the perspectives of the research informants from the two schools, which include the AHTs, the head teachers, teachers, school management committees and Ministry of Education officials.

The research methodology employed in this study was drawn from the phenomenological and qualitative-case study research literature. The data gathering methods included observation, in-depth interviewing and documentary analysis.

The study design and the research process are informed by relevant local and international literature and the data received from fieldwork findings. The conceptual framework of the study evolved as the study unfolded. This research study has also benefited from the work of Southworth (1998) that looks at primary school headship.

The important findings of the study are:

- The AHTs are not well aware of important educational policies.
- The rules, regulations and policies are interpreted and translated into action based on ineffective models.
- The AHTs employ bureaucratic, collegial, democratic and other leadership styles, including laissez-faire to suit the needs and circumstances.
- There is no qualitative data available to gauge the learning outcomes of all the students in the case study schools.
- The HTs do not delegate sufficient responsibility and authority to the AHTs.
- The AHTs are sandwiched between the HTs and the teachers.
- The role of the AHT is considered to be one of ensuring stability and order in the school, a maintenance rather than development or leadership role. They juggle their time between teaching and management roles.
- The AHTs, who are mindful of and sensitive to the various functions, concerns and aspirations of the wide range of factors depicting school environment respond positively, receive approval and achieve success.

The literature review on educational leadership shows that the schools are known not by lines of authority, but by different forms of agreement and governance. This, in the school context includes: respect, collegiality, co-ordination, partnership, negotiation and love.

The study also shows that the success of the school has direct relationship with the quality of leadership. The success of the AHT, among other factors, depends on the appropriate role models and leadership style of the head teacher and the partnership of the HT and AHT. The study recommends to the AHTs to choose successful role models as mentors, acquire high academic qualification and be well versed with educational policies and procedures.

The study concludes with important implications for policy makers and practitioners, as well as suggestions for further research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF EXHIBITS	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv

CHAPTER ONE – OVERVIEW OF STUDY

INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	1
PROBLEM	12
RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	15
AIMS OF STUDY	16
SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS	16
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY	17
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	19
CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	20
Geographical context	20
Social and economic context	21
Political context	23
Educational context	26
ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS	28
SUMMARY	29

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION	30
ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER: LEADERSHIP	30
LEADERSHIP STYLES	33
Autocratic leadership	35
Bureaucratic leadership	36
Collegial leadership	38
Facilitative leadership	41
Laissez-Faire leadership style	41
Ethical leadership	42

VIEWS ON ASSISTANT LEADERSHIP	45
Prescriptive	45
Descriptive	47
HEADSHIP AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS	49
Leadership behaviour and its implications	56
Protective	56
Maintenance	56
Enhancement	57
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY	58
Relevant education policies	59
Style and quality of leadership of the HT	59
Job description of AHTs	60
School environment	60
SUMMARY	61
 CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
INTRODUCTION	63
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	63
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH	65
Strengths of Qualitative Research	66
Limitations of Qualitative Research	68
Case study as a Research Study	70
DATA COLLECTION METHODS	71
In-depth Interview	72
Documentary analysis	73
Observation	74
Report Writing	75
RESEARCH PROCESS	76
Sampling	76
Topics/Literature	78
Developing Aims/Objectives, conceptual framework	78
Selecting case study schools and gaining access	78
Fieldwork	78
Data	79
Report on findings	79
The selected schools	79
Ethical Procedures	80
Approaches used to gather data	81
Analysis and Reporting	82
SUMMARY	83

CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION OF DATA

INTRODUCTION	84
BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOLS	84
SCHOOL 1	86
BACKGROUND S 1	86
Appointment and views of AHT S 1	89
SCHOOL 2	93
BACKGROUND S 2	93
Appointment and views of AHT S 2	96
PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS	101
PERCEPTIONS OF HEAD TEACHERS	101
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	101
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	103
Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with the HTs	110
Views on current policy and practise	111
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER COLLEAGUES	112
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	112
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	112
Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with assistant teachers	114
Views on current policy and practice	116
PERCEPTIONS OF ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHERS	117
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	117
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	117
Leadership style and self reflection by AHTs	122
Views on current policy and practice	123
PERCEPTIONS OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	125
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	125
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	128
Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with MoE	129
Views on current policy and practice	129

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS	131
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	131
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	132
Views on current policy and practice	132
PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	133
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	133
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	133
Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with school managements	134
Views on current policy and practice	134
SUMMARY	134
 CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	
INTRODUCTION	136
THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER	137
PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS	138
Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs	138
Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored	143
Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with research informants	145
Views on current policy and practice	146
Assistant head teacher as a professional leader	147
ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER	150
Leadership	150
The factors that influence Performance of AHTs of case study schools	151
QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP	152
SUMMARY	155

CHAPTER SIX – IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	
INTRODUCTION	158
A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	158
Relevant educational policies	159
The style and quality of leadership of the HTs	160
Job description of AHTs	163
School environment	164
IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	165
Implications for policy and practice	165
Implications for further research	169
Implications for relevant literature	170
Implications for research methodology	171
CONCLUDING REMARKS	171
BIBLIOGRAPHY	174
APPENDIX	
A Index of Policies in Education Gazettes	189
B Position description of HT	191
C Interview questions	200
D Letter of request to S 1	201
E Approval from S 1	202
F Letter of request to S 2	203
G Approval from S 2	204
H Structure of Ministry of Education- Primary section	205

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1.1	Promotion Process 4
Table 1.2	Primary schools by Controlling Agencies 7
Table 1.3	Schools Grades and level of AHTs 9
Table 1.4	Duties performed by HT & AHT 10
Table 1.5	Fijian Students in Fijian and non Fijian schools 25
Table 1.6	Grades of schools &AHTs 27
Table 2.1	Interpretations of virtues 40
Table 3.1	Duration and purpose of visits 81
Table 3.2	Research informants 83
Table 4.1	Background of the two schools 85
Table 4.2	School facilities at S 1 87
Table 4.3	School staff profile S 1 87
Table 4.4	External Exam Result S 1 93
Table 4.5	Staff Profile of S 2 94
Table 4.6	FIE result of S 2 94
Table 4.7	Table of school facilities S 2 95
Table 4.8	Time spent by AHTs on one day 100
Table 4.9	School levels in Lautoka/Nadi 102
Table 4.10	Analysis of brain storming exercise 127
Table 4.11	Analysis/brain storming exercise-AHTs 127
Table 5.1	Six levels of the AHT positions 137
Table 5.2	Minimum Qualification Requirement 137

LIST OF FIGURES

		PAGE
Figure 2.1	Qualities of ethical leadership	44
Figure 2.2	Conceptual framework of the study	59
Figure 3.1	Research design	77
Figure 4.1	Organization structure of S1	88
Figure 4.2	Organization structure of S2	96
Figure 5.1	The role of AHT in the community	157
Figure 6.1	Model of an effective school Structure	168

LIST OF EXHIBITS		PAGE
Exhibit 1.1	Job description and MQR of HT	3
Exhibit 1.2	Duties performed by AHTs	10
Exhibit 4.1	A sample conversation piece	97
Exhibit 4.2	HTs responsibilities towards school effectiveness	104
Exhibit 4.3	Principle accountabilities of AHTs	106
Exhibit 4.4	Guidelines on workbook preparation	113
Exhibit 4.5	Marking of student exercise books	121
Exhibit 4.6	Official records policy in schools	130
Exhibit 5.1	Sample AHT Seminar Programme	140
Exhibit 6.1	The perceptions of Ministry of Education	162
Exhibit 6.2	Roles played by AHTs	163
Exhibit 6.3	Guidance to Education Officers during school visits	166

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
DEOW	Divisional Education Officer Western
FPSAB	Fiji Public Service Appeals Board
FESP	Fiji Education Sector Programme
FIEC 2000	Fiji Islands Education Commission Report 2000
FILNA	Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
HT	Head Teacher
LTCUP	Lautoka Teachers College Upgrading Project
MoE	Ministry of Education
MQR	Minimum Qualification Requirements
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PRIDE	Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education
PSOC	Public Service Official Circular
PSC	Public Service Commission
SEO	Senior Education Officer
USP	University of the South Pacific

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This research study sets out to examine the roles of primary school assistant head teachers (AHTs) in two selected schools in the Western Division of the Fiji Islands. Therefore, the focus of this study is to explore their leadership roles within the context of the school setting.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the study. It begins with the background of the study, dwells on the rationale and then lists the aims of the study and the specific research questions. These are followed by a brief discussion on the theoretical understanding as well as the methodology adopted for the study. Finally, the context of the study is presented which covers four subtopics: geographical context; social and economic context; political context; and educational context. This chapter concludes with an outline of the organization of the remaining sections of the thesis followed by the chapter summary.

BACKGROUND

The term ‘assistant headship’ in this study refers to assistant head teachers in the Fiji primary schools. The deputy in New Zealand and Australian primary and secondary school systems is referred to as ‘vice principal’ (Southworth, 1998). The term ‘assistant head teacher’ is used by schools in the United Kingdom (Rutherford, 2002). As a former British colony, Fiji has also adopted this term. I have, therefore, used the two terms interchangeably in this study.

I decided to embark on this study during the period I was serving as the head teacher (HT) of a very large primary school which had two AHTs. I was concerned about the gap between their actual work performance and that expected from them. My search for research literature confirmed findings by Southworth (1998) that remarkably little is known or published about deputy heads. Southworth (1998) also noted that international literature pertaining to AHTs is substantially smaller than that relating to HTs.

The HT has the accountability of providing quality education to all the students. He has the delegated responsibility of marshalling human, financial and material resources towards achieving the objectives of the school. His performance is guided by regulations, policies and guidelines approved and monitored by Ministry of Education. The AHT plays subordinate role to the HT. Therefore, in order to be successful, the AHT needs to understand the role of the HT.

The official job description of a head teacher as contained in Public Service Official Circular Number 16/2001 of 31 August 2001 is provided in Exhibit 1.1. The AHT has to perform all the functions of the HT in his absence. In my paper, (Singh, 2003), I have noted that the AHT is actually the 'alternate head teacher'. Therefore, the AHT can not function effectively until he/she understands the HT's job. This is enshrined in the job description of the head teacher given in Exhibit 1.1. A detailed position description is given in Appendix B.

The Minimum Qualification Requirement (MQR) of the HT, given in Exhibit 1.1, shows that only adequately qualified and experienced persons should qualify to hold

this challenging position. The AHTs aspiring to be promoted to head teacher positions have to undergo appropriate education, relevant experience and on-the-job training.

Exhibit 1.1

Job Description and Minimum Qualification Requirement (MQR) of the post of a head teacher of a large primary school

To administer a large primary school (ED 2C), offer professional guidance to the staff and to teach, liaise with the school committee, parents and the Ministry of Education staff. To be able to contribute towards the social and cultural life of the school and to supervise the teaching of vernacular language.

The minimum qualification requirement (MQR) for this post as contained in the above referenced document is given as follows:-

Qualification as for teacher ED 8A and at least 2 years service with superior assessment in the ED3 or 3 years in ED4 grade or 4 years ED5E grade or equivalent based upon standard rating scale. Relevant degree from a recognised University is preferred. Completed 3 years rural service or superior assessment in the last 3 years. Superior school administrative ability and professional leadership skills. For a Special Education post, a relevant tertiary qualification from a recognised institution where relevant hostel management experience will be preferred. Potential to advance to a higher post

Source: PSOC 16/2001 of 31. 08. 01

Some attributes required for a leadership position, as contained in Exhibit 1.1, are superior administrative ability, professional leadership skills and superior assessment. Literature on the subject (for example Rutherford, 2002; Southworth, 1998) shows that within most schools, AHTs are given particular areas of responsibility such as discipline, staff-development, data-management or attendance. The degree to which

they are given leadership responsibility is highly dependent on the HT. The promotion process given in Table 1.1 shows the importance of the AHT position and the procedure for appointment and confirmation.

Table1.1. The Promotion Process

Step 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position falls vacant • A qualified person from within the school is appointed to act. • The District Senior Education Officer recommends to the Director Primary Education to advertise the post.
Step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel section advises Public Service Commission (PSC) to advertise the position. • PSC advertises the position through PSOC and the local newspapers. The interested persons are given 21 days to lodge in their application.
Step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are received by the host district and registered. • Applications are vetted, merit analysis worked out, prioritized and the most meritorious candidate is nominated. • The divisional Education Officer reviews and makes his recommendation. • The file is then forwarded to the Director of the Primary Education .
Step 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendation is then presented to the Central Staff Board where the two teacher unions are also represented.
Step 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministerial Staff Board comprising of the Directors, Deputy secretaries and PPU deliberate on the recommendations of the CSB.
Step 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Commission Delegate Paper is then prepared and presented to the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Secretaries and Directors for final approval.
Step 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of provisional promotion is given to the appointee. The unsuccessful candidates are given 21 days to appeal if they wish to do so. The Public Service Appeals Board deliberates on the grounds of appeal before proceeding to steps 8 and 9.
Step 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter of promotion is issued to the successful candidate.
Step 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A confirmation of promotion letter is issued once the promotee assumes duty.

Source: Fiji, MoE :Post Processing Unit 2004.

The post processing process shown above is very time consuming. I have cited evidence that it sometimes takes over one year to advertise the post. Then processing of the post can be delayed due to various reasons. When the appointee gets a provisional promotion letter, the unsuccessful candidates have the right to appeal with the Fiji Public Service Appeal Board within 21 days from the date this promotion is printed in the gazette. The post processing procedure is seen to be based on fair and democratic process.

This study examines the extent to which the AHTs performed their responsibilities as stipulated in their job description given in Exhibit 1.1. This study examines the nature of work the primary school AHTs do. The strengths and limitations of their work in light of relevant theoretical literature are identified. The relationship between the HT and AHT is explored and the suitability of the HT as an effective role model is explored. The study also aims to provide policy makers and practitioners with relevant information and insights that make the AHTs more effective in the management of primary schools in Fiji.

The notion of exploration is appropriate to this study. This is because I wish to understand primary school AHTs from their perspectives and from all those who have a stake in their work. The opinion of stakeholders can be used as a tool to measure outcomes. Moreover, I wish to look more closely into the assistant headship position and make appropriate recommendations for policy and practice.

An aspect that influences the work of the AHT is the nature of the education system. According to several writers such as Sharma (2000), Bacchus (2000), Tavola (2000),

Fiji's education system is academic in nature and bureaucratic in character. This system arrived in Fiji with Christian Missionaries and the British Colonial Government in the early 19th century. The position of deputy head was established in the English system of education in 1869 and this gradually came to the British colonies of which Fiji was no exception (Tubuna, 1989). Research shows that AHTs are a crucial link between the HTs and other staff. Coulson (1974:126) proposes that:

The proper role for the AHT is to carry out the leader's behaviours associated with the role of socio-emotional leader in the institution. His main function would be to concern with group maintenance- ensuring stability, continuity and equilibrium.

In the Fiji context, this is also very relevant as the AHTs ensure that the expectation of the HT is maintained.

Literature on the subject, (for example Southworth, 1998) highlights that the growing workload of HTs, particularly resulting from the local management of schools, has contributed to an increase in the delegation of responsibilities to AHTs. The main consequences of this increase in responsibilities were found to be reduced attention to the quality of their own teaching, difficulty in keeping up with new developments and the feeling that if the HT were away for a longer period, they would find it very hard to take over the headship role.

The education system in Fiji has developed not only by the Government initiative but also as a result of the demand for formal education by the community. In this regard Narsey (2004:2) noted that:

As elsewhere in the developing world, Fiji's various communities recognize all too well the importance of education in enabling their citizens to improve their standards of living and contribute to economic growth and development, especially in the face of globalization and the pressures to become internationally competitive.

The number of schools owned and managed by authorities other than Government is a testimony of this. Various religious organizations took a leading role towards establishing schools in the country, as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Schools by Controlling Agencies

Controlling Authority	Special Education	Primary	Sec.	TVET	Teacher Training	Total
Ahmadiya Muslim		2	2			4
Anglican Church		6	1			7
Arya P. Sabha		16	7	3		26
Assemblies of God		1	1			2
Catholic		39	17	2	1	59
Chinese Education		2	1			3
Church of Latter D.		1	1			2
Committee	3	546	68	40		657
Cripple Children	8					8
D. Andhra Sangam		4	2	1		7
Fiji Blind Society	1					1
Fiji Gospel Ch.	1	3	1			5
Fiji Muslim League		18	5	1		24
Fiji Sugar Corp.		1				1
Fijian Affairs B.			1			1
Gujrat Ed. Society		5	3			8
Macuata Muslim		4	3	1		8
Methodist Church		16	12	4		32
Ministry of Ed.		2	12	6	2	22
Private/International		5	2			7
Provincial Council			3			3
Sanatan Dharam		9	9	2		20
Sathya Sai		1				1
Seventh Day Adv.		11	2		1	14
Sikh Community		2	2	1		5
Society of Disabled	4					4
TISI Sangam		20	5	1		26
Total	17	714	160	62	4	957

Source: Fiji MoE Annual Report 2004:13

Table 1.2 shows the influence of the various communities and organizations towards provision of education in Fiji. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the HTs and AHTs to be prepared to provide effective leadership in the context of this complex community.

Within the requirements of the Education Act (1978) the school managements support schools in the delivery of the approved educational programme. Their primary responsibility is to ensure the effective and efficient management of financial and physical resources, as well as to determine development directions as may be determined by the stakeholders (Tavola, 2000). The school managements try their best to make the schools conducive to teaching and learning. The school managements also believe that education should holistically develop and inculcate in every child the fundamental ethical, moral, social, spiritual and democratic values. The schools are supposed to be concerned about the delivery of quality learning outcomes.

The promotion and subsequent appointment of AHTs is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The concurrence of the school management is not solicited for the appointment of AHT positions.

The Government has greater control on appointment, supervision and promotion of AHTs and ensures that only those who meet the 'minimum qualification requirement' (MQR) are promoted. The performance of AHTs is monitored by the Government through the head teachers, who are the direct representatives of the MoE's Permanent Secretary for Education in schools. The Government has, however, assumed the responsibility of providing pre-service and in-service training to all primary teachers. Different grades of AHTs and the context they work in is given in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 School Grades and Levels of AHTs

LEVEL	HT	AHT	PUPILS	STAFF	ET
ED 1B	ED 1B	ED 4A ED 5D	836+	26+	4
ED 2C	ED 2C	ED 5C ED 5B	661-835	21-25	4
ED 3C	ED 3C	ED 5B ED 5A	486-660	16-20	3
ED 4C	ED 4C	ED 5A	311-485	11-15	2
ED 5E	ED 5E	ED 6A	136-310	6-10	1
ED 6D	ED 6D	None	10-135	5 or less	1 or none

Source: Ministry of Education, Fiji: Job Evaluation Report: 1997.

Table 1.3 shows that there are six levels of AHTs. ED 1B is the largest grade of school whereas ED 6D is the smallest grade. The table also shows that the levels of some AHTs are higher than some head teacher positions. The MQR for different levels of AHTs differ.

There is no definite job description for the AHTs, but according to Fiji Public Service Commission Circular, (Fiji PSOC: 18/2005) they are expected to "assist" head teachers in all aspects of their job. This reaffirms the view that AHTs must also understand the role of the head teachers. Apart from their school-wide leadership role, the AHTs are also full time teachers.

As middle managers, AHTs play multifunctional roles. This finds support in the following advertisement that appeared in the Fiji Public Service Official Circular No. 18/2005 dated 30 September 2005. This document, under "duties of the post" says

To 'assist' the head teacher in the administration of a medium primary school, offer professional guidance to the staff and teach, liaise with the school committee, parents and Ministry of Education staff. To be able to contribute towards the social and cultural life of the school and supervise the teaching of vernacular language

Table 1.4 Duties performed by HT and AHT

Advertised Criteria	Head teacher	AHT
To administer a large primary school	✓	To assist
Offer professional guidance to staff	✓	✓
Teach	✓	✓
Liaise with school committee, parents and MoE staff	✓	✓
To be able to contribute to the social and cultural life of the school	✓	✓
Supervise the teaching of vernacular language	✓	✓

Source: Fiji PSOC No. 18/2005

Table 1.4 shows the comparative analysis of key components of duties of the HT and AHT positions as given in the advertisement. This has been derived from the above advertisement. A list of specific duties for AHTs is given in Exhibit 1.2.

Exhibit 1.2 Duties performed by AHTs

1. To take charge of the school in the absence of the head teacher.
2. To teach a class full-time and cater for the supervision of classes when teachers are absent.
3. To assist the head teacher to keep the school records up to date.
4. To check daily attendance registers of classes assigned.
5. To check the daily general duties carried under the supervision of teachers.
6. To be in charge of the school assembly.
7. To assist the head teacher in the general administration of the school.
8. To organize and check the tooth brushing scheme carried out under the supervision of the class teachers.
9. To take general care of the school buildings and compound.
10. To check exercise books as suggested in the supervisory work.
11. To observe lessons in various classes and give professional guidance and demonstrate lessons and teaching techniques whenever necessary.
12. To prepare teachers' absence return.
13. To take part in community organised activities and functions in order to maintain harmony and healthy relationship.
14. To deputize the head teacher when necessary.
15. To prepare reports on teachers for submission to the Ministry of Education.
16. To be in-charge of school canteen (where applicable).
17. To be in charge of extra-curricular activities.
18. To check lunch supervision.
19. To be in charge of sports gear and gardening tools.
20. To organize and supervise Road Safety.
21. To organise the school gardening Programme.

Source: Senior Education Officer, Lautoka/Yasawa Training Package:2004

The specific duties for AHTs, as given in Exhibit 1.2, are shared if a school has two AHTs. They are typically administration, teaching and supervision duties. The AHTs are expected to carry out whatever duties that have been allocated by the head teacher. This also shows that the AHTs do everything except making important policy decisions. However, they assist in this process also.

The scope of responsibilities, including leadership roles, that are performed by the AHTs, have not been systematically evaluated so far in Fiji. What we know about the work of the AHTs is rather prescriptive and not a descriptive account of what they really do in the classroom, school and community level.

Holton (1988) describes prescriptive work as 'how to do' texts and focuses upon the issues the head teachers and AHTs need to be aware of and the skills they need to discharge their responsibilities effectively. They offer ways of approaching or dealing with problems common to primary head teachers, such as internal communications, staff selection, financial management and delegation.

For a number of years, there has been growing number of attempts to analyse and describe effective schools. One characteristic commonly associated with effective schools is the quality of leadership provided by the head teacher. Research shows that the leadership qualities of head teachers and the manner in which they fulfill their management responsibilities are key factors in determining the effectiveness of their schools.

Lack of leadership is apparent in a number of schools. As an experienced head teacher myself, I hold the view that the head teachers must always lead by example and

display high levels of educational leadership. I agree with Blackmore (2002), that the field of educational leadership has historically failed to address the core work of teaching and learning. Instead, educational administration has sought to become a distinct field of theory and practice.

Every school leader should strive to make their school the best. The 1995 UK National Commission on Education report can be used as a guide to identify the elements of a good school. These include:

1. Strong leadership by the head
2. A good atmosphere arising out of shared values and an attractive environment
3. High expectations of students
4. A clear focus on teaching and learning
5. Good student assessment strategies
6. Students sharing responsibility for their learning
7. Incentives to students to succeed
8. Parental involvement
9. Extra-curricular activities which broaden the students' interests and build good relationship in the school.

Source: www.ncsl.org.uk/liter

School leadership by both the HT and the AHT is the most critical factor of school effectiveness. This is, therefore, the focus of this research study.

PROBLEM

From my work experience, it appears that the performance of AHTs is, to some extent, constrained by the following factors:

1. head teacher and his administration
2. structure and organisation of the school
3. colleagues
4. school community
5. PSC rules and regulations
6. MoE rules and regulations
7. Lack of support, modeling, monitoring and coaching by the Senior Staff and Education Officers.

In the Fiji context, schools both primary and secondary operate in partnership with various stakeholders. Partnership is a working or legal arrangement between two parties who get the best result by working together, cooperating, supporting and scaffolding each other. Head teachers are the senior and most influential members of the school community partnership. Torralba (1996) compares the concept of partnership with collegial governance and says that everyone in the collegial body must foster a genuine spirit of dialogue: to listen carefully to others, to get the many good points they have in their positions and views, and try to incorporate all these good points into one's own position.

Head teachers and AHTs are entrusted with the responsibility to maintain and if possible improve standards. On this issue, the Secretary of United States Department of Education (1993) said that Education standards are definitions of the high expectations we have for what all our children should know and do-and an examination system-a way of knowing whether our children are learning to those standards- are the foundation upon which societies build good schools.

The stakeholders are now more aware of their right to quality education as cited in a newspaper with the following headlines.

1. 'School Keeps Principal Out' (The Fiji Times, Tuesday 11 February, 2003:2)
2. 'Classes returned to normal at..... School' yesterday after dispute over the head teacher. (The Fiji Times, Thursday 4 February, 2003:3)
3. Another school faced a similar problem where the head teacher was not allowed into his office. (The Fiji Times, 31 January, 2003:3)

I view the above cases as a sign of leadership crisis in our school system. According to Northouse (2001), some people are leaders because of their formal position within

an organization, whereas others are leaders because of the way other group members respond to them. Leadership that is based on occupying a position within an organization is assigned leadership or status leadership. When an individual is perceived by others as the most influential member of a group or organization, regardless of the individual's title, the person is exhibiting 'emergent' leadership. While many functions of management activities are consistent with the definition of leadership, they also have some degree of difference. The concept of management emerged around the turn of the 20th century and it was created as a way to reduce chaos in organizations and to make them run more effectively and efficiently (Northouse: 2001). The primary functions of management were planning, organizing, staffing and controlling. Effective school management laid the foundation for school leadership.

Northouse (2001) writes that leadership is a topic with universal appeal, and in the popular press and academic research literature, there is much written about leadership. Despite the abundance of writing on the topic, leadership has presented a major challenge to practitioners and researchers interested in understanding the nature of leadership. It is a highly valued phenomenon that is also very complex. Leadership guru, Robin S. Sharma (2005) says that leadership is easy to recognize, hard to describe, difficult to practice and almost impossible to create in others on demand.

In the light of this background literature, this study explores the case studies of AHTs in the two selected schools. The study hopes to provide relevant insights into the roles of the AHTs, identify effective leadership models and to make appropriate recommendations for policy and practice.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for conducting this research originated from my personal interest in educational leadership. I have personally experienced the dilemma of this position when I was an AHT of a school for four years. I had my own vision and plans for doing things. Unfortunately, I had difficulty in implementing the new ideas because the head teacher did not want to take risks. He was just performing the maintenance function of school management. He wanted to carry on with the routine activities of the school. Later, when I became the head teacher of a larger school, I found that my AHT could hardly perform the duties to my satisfaction. He lacked initiative and other vital leadership qualities. After a period of two years I became an Education Officer. The position of Education Officer is a subordinate position to the Senior Education Officer. I could see a big gap between my perception and the actual performance of my superior. Later, I went back to a school as the head teacher of a large primary school where there were two AHTs. At this level I initiated professional development programmes for my AHTs. I also advised them to read relevant published reports and articles, and take further study by the USP's distance and flexible learning mode.

Over time, I became aware that the literature focusing upon primary school management and leadership does not fully address the concerns of AHTs. I could not cite any research done on AHTs in primary schools in Fiji. This motivated me to conduct the present research study. As I looked at the literature and the work of AHTs, I felt that there was a scope for exploration of the work of the AHTs. This is consistent with the recommendations by Southworth (1998:218), that:

There is a need to examine the work of deputy heads. Little research has been conducted into them and even less into how they work with their head teachers. Moreover, studies of deputy heads' partnership with their heads can reflect head teachers' conceptions of headship. Deputy headship in primary schools is a rich seam which awaits investigation.

I discussed my proposals during various professional meetings. This was also supported by my professional interest as a trainer of educational leaders. My personal experience and the views of my professional colleagues show that the AHTs carry out their duties in an ad hoc manner. We feel they lack proper training, expertise and commitment towards their own professional development. In my view, they lack leadership qualities. As mentioned earlier, this study is expected to provide empirical evidence in order to better understand the actual work carried out by the AHTs.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned earlier, the focus of this study is to provide a more descriptive account of what the AHTs actually do in the school as a whole in the two selected primary schools. Consistent with this, the following aims of the study has been identified:-

1. to document the appointment process and the nature of work that the primary school AHTs do;
2. to identify the strengths and limitations of their work in the light of relevant theoretical literature;
3. to explore the relationship between the head teachers and the AHTs and whether head teachers provide good leadership role model to the AHTs; and
4. to provide policy makers and practitioners with relevant information and insights on the basis of the research findings that are likely to contribute to making the role of the AHTs more effective in the management of primary schools.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Consistent with the rationale and the aims of the study, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is an AHT appointed and prepared for the job?
2. Do AHTs take any initiative to upgrade their qualifications and leadership skills?
3. What do they really do?
4. Who decides what AHTs actually do and how is their performance monitored?
5. What is the relationship between the head teachers and AHTs? Does this in any way affect the performance of AHTs?
6. What do their colleagues and superiors feel about their leadership style?

7. What lesson does the study have for policy and practice?

These research questions formed the basis of inquiry and helped collect focused responses.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

The conceptual understanding of the study stems from the pivotal role played by AHTs in the primary school system. It has also been influenced by the international literature and the works of Southworth (1998). There is a need to explore the context in which AHTs operate and whether role conflicts exist between their professional and personal expectations and whether these (conflicts) affect their leadership role.

This research study has been inspired by my personal interest and the work of Southworth (1998) in which he proposes the 'extended professional' approach, where teacher collaboration and development are actively encouraged and where the school moves forward in a jointly agreed way. This is fast replacing the head-centred paternalistic style.

Mortimore *et al* (1988:250) identified the following twelve key factors which contributed to school effectiveness. Involvement of the deputy head is one of them.

1. Purposeful leadership of the staff by the head teacher.
2. The involvement of the deputy head.
3. The involvement of teachers.
4. Consistency among teachers.
5. Structured sessions.
6. Intellectually challenging teaching.
7. The work-centred environment.
8. Limited focus within sessions.
9. Maximum communication between teachers and pupils.
10. Record keeping.
11. Parental Involvement.
12. Positive climate.

As an experienced head teacher, I was mindful of each of these factors in providing purposeful leadership to my school. This is a comprehensive list which encompasses leadership platforms, teacher performance, student achievement and an environment conducive for teaching and learning. However, it does not touch on educational policies.

Since AHTs do not perform their roles in isolation, their level of output depends much on the effectiveness of the leadership of the head teacher. Their performance is gauged by tasks accomplished successfully and the manner in which the AHT is able to work with various stakeholders.

This research is based on the understanding that leadership is the key factor which contributes to the professional survival and advancement of educational leaders. Leaders who are authentic, value-based and innovative often lead their schools to success. This study also aims to discover the successful leadership styles in the Fiji context.

It suffices to mention here that a school operates in a complex situation where macro and micro-politics play an important role. The relevant structures, conventions, leadership style and school culture often facilitate or impede the successful management of the school. A thorough understanding of the context of the school, the education system and leadership styles are necessary to appreciate the performance of the school. The conceptual framework of this study stems from the literature reviewed and the fieldwork data. The important components of this conceptual framework however, are:

1. Relevant Educational Policies
2. Style and Quality of Leadership of the HT
3. Job description of AHTs
4. School environment

These areas, as informed by literature review, form the cornerstones of this research study. They are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section briefly discusses the research methodology adopted for the study. More details on the methodology are presented under Chapter 3. Literature on research methodology suggests that the nature and aims of the study determine the types of the information that is required, the choice of the data collecting methods and the research instruments (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). Therefore, in this study, I have attempted to understand the role of AHTs from the perspectives of the stakeholders who include the head teachers, the AHTs themselves, Ministry of Education officials, the school management committee members and teacher colleagues of AHTs. My focus has been on the actual work they do and the leadership qualities they display.

Therefore, this research has adopted a qualitative case study research design. The data collecting approaches that I have employed in this study include in-depth interviewing, documentary analysis and observation. These methods are well suited for collecting qualitative data in a real life context. Moreover, information was gathered from head teachers' workshops. The 'brain storming' session that I

organized with some AHTs also provided me with valuable information. My personal professional experience also provided a firm base to anchor the data collected

I used the ethnographic approach to analyze the data. This was done in three phases. The first phase occurred in the process of collecting data during field work. The next phase was the organization of data into suitable categories. The last phase was report writing. These varieties of approaches enabled me to triangulate data and reach the reality of duties AHTs actually perform in schools.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In order to understand and appreciate this research study, it is important to know the uniqueness of this island nation. The following discussion focuses on the geographical, political, socio-economic and educational contexts.

Geographical Context

Fiji is an independent country that lies in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. It is located along 18 degrees south and 179 degrees east. There are 332 islands but only about one third are inhabited. About 84 percent of the population lives on the two largest islands and the remaining 16 percent live on 97 smaller islands. The total land area is 18,333 square kilometres. Vitilevu, the largest island has a land area of 10,429 square kilometres. Suva is the capital city with a population of 167,421. According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics report (2005), the provisional population of Fiji as at 1 July 2005 was 838 088. This comprises 455,707 Fijians, 318,906 Indo-Fijians and 63,475 others. Sixty percent of the population lives in rural areas. (Fiji Facts & Figures, 1 July 2005).

Social and Economic Context

Eighty six percent of the land is owned by indigenous Fijians while six percent is state land and eight percent is freehold. Only 16 percent of Fiji's land mass is suitable for agriculture (Fiji Facts & Figures: July, 2005.).

Tourism has now bypassed agriculture which remained the single largest sector of the economy for many years. Sugar has been the principle export of Fiji for 100 years and it continues to occupy the dominant position in the economy. There is some doubt about the sustainability of the sugar industry now due to withdrawal of preferential prices by the European Community. The non-renewal of cane leases by indigenous Fijian landowners is causing mass internal migration. This is causing shortage of labour, low cane production and mass unemployment. The displaced farmers are seeking paid employment in the tourism and construction industries while their children are enrolling in urban schools.

Tourism is now Fiji's most important industry and one of the largest foreign exchange earners. More than 430,800 tourists visited Fiji in 2003 (Fiji Facts & Figures, 2005).

Fiji has made substantial progress in its economic growth since independence in 1970. However, it suffered considerable economic setback as a consequence of 1987 and 2000 political disturbances. The number of people living in poverty has increased over the years (Narsey, 2004:3). Two thirds of Fiji's poor population is living in rural areas and many of them do not have a reliable source of income. Landless labourers, who are mainly Indians, are the poorest group in the country. The

eviction of farmers from native land is aggravating the situation. Poverty impedes efforts to achieve quality education and decent living standards (Narsey: 2004:3-5).

Owing to limited resources, the Government can not meet the educational needs of the entire population. However, the Government has taken some bold steps to improve the quality of education in Fiji. Some of these initiatives include:

1. Education Commission Report 2000 and its action plan for the implementation of its recommendations.
2. The Blueprint for Affirmative Action in education for indigenous Fijians and Rotumans. Plans for the implementation of sections of the Social Justice Act.
3. Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) and internal assessment schemes.
4. Curriculum reforms through National Curriculum Framework
5. MoE Strategic, Corporate and Business plans

The Government of Australia, through Fiji Education Sector Programme (FESP), has come to the assistance of the country in trying to help improve the Fiji Education system. The policy document, in support of this assistance, describes the role of FESP to:

enable the Ministry of Education to enhance the quality of education for students in Fiji through the provision of a flexible, responsive support mechanism in the form of a facility to assist in improving the planning, management, provision and monitoring of educational services.
FESP, Project Paper (2004:2)

Historically, the Fijian people lived in close-knit communities along the coastal fringes and river valleys. They were involved in subsistence farming and provided different services for the Government administration. This pattern of settlement and employment was reinforced by the Colonial Government's policy of 'protecting' the indigenous people (Tavola, 2000).

The Indo-Fijian population lives mainly in separate households on individual farms or in urban areas. The expiry of land leases has generated rapid movement of the Indo-Fijian population from rural areas to urban and sub-urban centres. This section of the community has moved mainly to Suva-Nausori corridor and also to Lautoka and Nadi areas. My research has also shown that the school numbers in the Ba/Tavua Education District dropped by almost 11 percent during the period 2000-2004 (Singh, 2004). The student population in the Lautoka-Nadi urban areas rose by about five percent.

The political upheaval of 2000 aggravated the poverty level in the country. According to the 'Fiji Times of 11 August 2003, 13,443 families received family assistance. This increased to 16,603 in 2001. The title of this article reads "Coups multiplied poverty situation" in bold letters. Fiji's education system is struggling through this increasing level of poverty, mass unemployment, urbanization and rising crime rate. As a result of this, many HTs migrated, leaving untrained and immature AHTs to take up leadership positions in schools.

Political Context

Fiji was ceded to Great Britain by the Chiefs of Fiji on 10 October, 1874. As history unfolded, Fiji became politically independent on 10 October, 1970, after ninety six years of colonial rule.

Fiji enjoyed peace and harmony for seventeen years after gaining independence under the rule of the Alliance Party. The Alliance Government was defeated in the general elections of April 1987. However, the National Federation-Labour Coalition

Government was overthrown by a Military Coup on 14 May 1987. The second coup in September of the same year saw Fiji being declared a Republic.

After some instability, a new constitution was promulgated in 1990. This was revised and adopted in 1997. The elections held in 1999 saw the Labour-led People's Coalition attain victory and it formed the Government. Unfortunately, the term of this Government was cut short by another coup on 19 May 2000.

Fiji was governed by a caretaker government led by a caretaker Prime Minister Laisenia Garase. However, he formed his own party. He capitalized on the available resources to strengthen his position and won the general elections held in September 2001.

A lot of promises are also contained in The Blueprint Programme and a 20 Year Plan for Fijians and Rotumans as published in the Fiji Times of Saturday 21 June 2003. The Government is trying to address a lot of problems through the Fijian Education Blueprint. The Government believes that educating the children today would help them grow up into useful and law abiding citizens of the future.

According to Tavola (2000) schools can have powerful influence on children's lives:

Schools are complex social organizations. Set within communities, they are influenced by the ambience of their social, economic, and political surroundings. Schools are subject to government policy, but they are organized at a micro-level by individuals who have the power to create a definite ethos. The children who enter the schools are products of their backgrounds. The interaction of background and school factors and the process of learning and teaching produce results. The enormous variation in results offers a challenge to investigate further the processes and interactions in schools in Fiji. FIEC Report, 2000:v

National awareness and integration were also given priority in Fiji's Development Plans. Equalizing educational opportunities, which has been a key aim of the Ministry of Education, was considered as one way of forging stronger social and cultural bonds among the various ethnic groups in Fiji's multicultural population. It was expected to lead to a more harmonious relationship among these groups in the country.

It is true that a major mechanism for accommodating ethnic and cultural differences is by protecting the civil and political rights of individuals through legal and constitutional measures. However, the stability of a multicultural society depends not only on the justice of its basic institutions but also on the attitudes of its citizens.

This political situation has serious implications on the work of school-based leaders, especially the HTs and AHTs. There is also an increase in Fijian student numbers in traditionally ethnic Indo-Fijian schools. This forced the leaders of schools to cope with the challenges of managing multiracial schools. The following table shows this information as obtained in 2004 during my own research.

Table 1.5 Fijian students in Fijian and non Fijian schools

District	Total Roll	Fijians in Fijian Schools	Fijians in other schools
Lautoka/Nadi	10575	5726	4849
Ba/Tavua	11996	2572	2396
Ra	4614	3878	736

Source: Singh, 2004

The Fijian student numbers in traditionally Indian dominated schools are increasing due to displacement of tenant farmers. These farms are taken over by Fijian farmers who now reside on the farms and send their children to the nearest schools.

Educational Context

The history of Fiji's education system has been given briefly under the background section of this chapter. Education is now compulsory for the first eight years of schooling. There are two external examinations taken in the primary schools. Class six students have the option of appearing for Fiji Intermediate Examination at Class 6 level. Fiji Eighth Year Examination is the terminal examination at Class 8 level. With the assistance from FESP, Ministry of Education is currently trialing Fiji Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FILNA) at Class 4 and Class 6 levels. This is intended to replace Fiji Intermediate Examination in line with recommendation with FIEC report 2000, which states:

Taking the total positive benefits and negative effects into account, continuing with FIE is not warranted (FIEC 2000:362).

Prior to 1916, the Colonial Government in Fiji exercised little control over education. Following a report of a select committee in 1914, the education ordinance of 1916 sought to co-ordinate the education system for the first time. As the Government funding on education increased, it began to take greater control on educational management and this included the appointment of school heads, their deputies and teachers. The Government, however, seeks concurrence of the school management committees while appointing head teachers. The Government appoints head teachers and assistant head teachers in accordance with minimum qualification requirement (MQR) guideline that it has established in consultation with teacher organizations. The teacher organizations are also represented on the teacher appointment committee.

The education budget for the year 2006 is \$301 million compared to \$260.4 million for 2005 (Parliamentary budget paper, 2005). This is the testimony for Government's commitment to education in the country.

Primary school teachers are trained at Government owned Lautoka Teachers College, Church owned Corpus Christi Teacher Training College and Fulton College. Unfortunately there is no formal training institute or programme to train either head teachers or AHTs before they assume their responsibilities.

There are 715 primary schools in Fiji with the same number of head teachers. However, there are 488 AHTs because they are appointed only in larger primary schools. Larger schools have two AHTs while the middle level schools have only one as shown in the Table 1.6 given below.

Table 1.6 showing grades of schools and AHTs.

School level	ED 1B	ED 2C	ED 3C	ED 4C	ED 5E	ED 6D
No. of AHTs	2	2	2	1	1	0

Source: Job Evaluation Document, 1993.

As most of the schools in Fiji are owned and managed by local communities, it is important for educational leaders to understand the community structure and their expectations. A school is not an independent or isolated entity; it operates in a social context, an important element of which is the local community. The school draws its students from the local community and depends on the community for much of its financial and social support. The community exercises its power over the school primarily through the school board, which has authority to establish policies and approve financial expenditures. The community also exerts its influence on the school

informally through parents' groups and individual contacts. Because of these factors every administrator needs to develop a good understanding of and competency in building and maintaining effective school-community relations.

The AHTs have to work in collaboration with the HTs in order to achieve the national and institutional goals as well as establish good school-community relations. It also means that school effectiveness depends largely on the leadership of the school. This leadership, in our primary schools, is shared by the AHTs.

It is stressed that Fiji's unique context sets the scene for the challenges of the school-based leaders, especially the HTs and AHTs. To work effectively, it is important to understand this uniqueness about school context. It is, therefore, necessary for HTs and AHTs to develop their leadership qualities as their work unfolds. Government, as well as individual initiative, is significant in this respect.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This chapter, Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the study. It covered aspects such as the background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale and the research questions as well as a brief methodological orientation to the study. In addition, the chapter provided some essential background information of the study context. The next chapter, Chapter 2, presents the review of literature related to the study, that is, the role of AHTs. On the basis of the literature reviewed, a conceptual framework for the present study is developed and presented. Chapter 3 looks at the research methodology employed for the study. The following chapter, Chapter 4

presents the analysis of the data under suitable headings. The remaining two chapters, Chapters 5 and 6, discuss the findings and implications of the study respectively.

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the study. It covered the background, statement of the problem, rationale, aims and specific research questions posed for the study. In addition, the chapter has presented a brief conceptual framework together with the methodology employed for the study as well as relevant information relating to the research context.

The next chapter, Chapter 2 presents the review of literature associated with the roles of AHTs and also drawn from the literature is the conceptual framework adopted for the present study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTON

This research study looks at the work carried out by the assistant head teachers in primary schools. This chapter critically reviews the international literature as there is lack of local literature on the work carried out by the assistant head teachers. Firstly, it dwells on different leadership styles. The literature on assistant headship is also studied. The relationship between leadership and school effectiveness has been explored under various topics. A conceptual framework is presented towards the end of the chapter.

ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHERS: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The leadership role of the assistant head teachers (AHTs) depends largely on the kind of leadership style adopted by the HT. These, to some extent, depend on the vision and mission of the school and the HT. The AHTs have no choice but to follow the policy decisions or administrative structure of the school head. It is the school head who sets the platform for AHTs to operate. However, genuine leaders emerge and in many cases some AHTs stand out as leaders and attract people around them. (Southworth, 1998).

According to Carmazzi (http://carmazzi.net/afc_motivational_keynote_speaker_trainer_asia.html) leadership does not involve changing the mindset of the group, but the cultivation of an environment that brings out the best in the individuals in that group. Zaleznick, (1977), saw leaders as inspiring visionaries, concerned about substance: while managers he views as planners who have concerns with process.

Leadership development is a process and therefore it develops daily and not in a day. Successful leaders are learners and develop their leadership skills as their work progresses.

Sharma, R. (2005), says that the ultimate task of a visionary leader is to dignify and honor the lives of the people he leads by allowing them to manifest their highest potential through the work they do. He goes on to say that leadership is the ability to get extraordinary achievement from ordinary people.

Bacchus (2000), in the FIEC Report made special reference to the 'power of leadership':

The issue of school leadership is highlighted in the Fiji Education Commission Report. Successful principals and head teachers should be both competent administrators and professional leaders who have well-developed team management strategies. Often, the fortunes of schools depend on their school heads. When a strong head is in place, a school develops a positive ethos and the teaching and learning process is enhanced. The converse situation occurs when a school head lacks strong leadership. There is a clear need for training in school leadership, both pre-appointment and after appointment. It can no longer be assumed that people can learn on the job (Bacchus, et al, 2000: 468).

A review of the scholarly studies on leadership shows that there is a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the leadership process (e.g. Bryman, 1992; Duignan & Bhindi, 1997). Some researchers conceptualize leadership as a trait or behaviour, while others view leadership from a political perspective or from a more humanistic viewpoint, implying that leadership is earned.

The true measure of leadership, according to Maxwell (1998), "is influence- nothing more, nothing less". It is commonly accepted that the role of the leader is pivotal in the success of a school or any organization for that matter. The educational leader's

dual responsibilities as operational manager and instructional leader impose tremendous personal demands on them. As a result of the anxiety, stress and energy drain inherent in leadership positions, it is essential that school leaders purposefully address specific strategies to minimize exhaustion and stimulate personal enthusiasm and self renewal. According to Maxwell (1998), one achieves excellence as a leader when people follow them everywhere if only out of curiosity. Leadership occurs within a group context and involves goal attainment. Thus, Southworth (1998) describes school leadership as a process whereby a school head influences students, teachers and the other members of the school community to achieve a common goal or a set of goals. Similarly, Lloyd (1985) says leadership has the capacity or potential to exert influence.

Leadership has also been defined in terms of the power relationship that exists between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2001). Some studies (such as Crump, 1993, Southworth, 1998) focus on leadership as a trait. The trait perspective suggests that certain people in our society have special inborn qualities that make them leaders. This view restricts leadership to only those who are believed to have special characteristics. In contrast, the current school of thought is that leadership is a process that can be learned and it is available to everyone. These then lead to the two concepts of assigned and emergent leadership.

Assigned leadership is based on having a formal title or position within an organization. This power, which is much like assigned leadership, refers to the power an individual derives from having an office in a formal organization system such as a school (Northouse, 2001). Emergent leadership results from what one does and how

one acquires support from the followers. When others perceive an individual as the most influential member of a group or organization regardless of the individual's title, the person is exhibiting emergent leadership.

In the present Fiji context, it is difficult to manage schools using bureaucratic or collegial leadership approaches alone. There is rise in social evils such as robbery with violence, indecent assault, drug taking and corruption. In addition there is the lack of civic and citizenship virtues among our people.

Leadership is about vision and influence. It is a process by which one sets certain standards and expectations to serve others and influence the actions of others to behave in what is considered a desirable way. For example, Louis and Miles (1990) found in their study that principals in successful schools 'empower' the other members of their staff by sharing power with and delegating authority and resources to them. Such collaborative school cultures not only allow those working and learning to release their potential but also to provide them with opportunity for experimentation, participation and the appreciation of individual differences. The AHT of a school, therefore, has the opportunity to understudy the head teacher by actively sharing the head teacher's responsibilities.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Researchers such as Hughes (1985) and Southworth (1998) have begun to systematically study organizational work teams to better understand what make them effective or ineffective. Deliberations on school leadership have moved from bureaucratic through collegial to ethical leadership that is grounded in caring, conduct

and character (Sharma 2002). Sanga (2000) says that the idea of leadership in the Pacific Island countries sits within a broader framework of 'space' and 'time'. He goes on to say that this broader concept is for the "communal purpose" of which leadership is but a subset. Societies, including schools, exist for communal purpose. Developing this concept further, Sanga (2000) points out that when communal purpose is strong, communities are vibrant and when it is weak, communities experience fragmentation and threat. According to him communal purpose is based on values and when these are unclear or conflicting, communities are in leadership disarray. The same applies to school leadership and as a result the schools are not managed effectively. Furthermore, he says that leadership is contextual. Measures of appropriateness and desirability of leadership are determined by the values of the 'context' and 'culture'. It is, therefore, necessary to reclaim or rediscover Pacific knowledge systems so that leadership in schools is situated in its relevant context and delivered more appropriately.

Southworth (1998) discovered that although primary school heads may adopt a range of styles there is some evidence for saying that one particular style is relatively common if not pre-eminent. This style has been called 'paternalistic', a term which Coulson (1974) shows is a blend of personal control and moral authority and has much in common with the Victorian concept of 'pater familias'. Although most heads now affect a benevolent image and have made some moves towards 'democratizing' their schools, the traditional, centralized pattern persists.

The issue of women leaders is also gaining momentum in Fiji. As cited in Siwatibau, (2005) a well known feminist thinker, Charlotte Bunch says women have influenced how we define reality, conceive of knowledge, and exercise leadership. This has happened both through the collective leadership of women as a social force and through the efforts of many individual women giving shape to this movement in its diverse forms.

In a survey by Siwatibau et al. (2005:12) women leaders in the Pacific island countries lack confidence; they are not willing to take leadership; they are happy to support while men take leadership; they need encouragement; lack enthusiasm; bored with politics; they are not interested in the issues; they are conservative; they are quiet in meetings; reluctant to speak in public; tend to shy away from local government and from politics; tend to be content with their given situation, they are still not coming forward, they tend to be in the background.

Therefore, it is important the leadership at school level benefits from literature on women leadership. There are many ways to lead and every leader has his or her style. The choice of leadership style depends on (1) the manager's choice, (2) the employees being supervised and (3) the traditions, values, philosophy and concerns of the organization. The different leadership styles identified by various writers are explored in greater detail in what follows.

Autocratic Leadership

This is often considered the classical approach. It is one in which the manager retains as much power and decision-making authority as possible. The manager does not

consult employees, nor are they allowed to give any input. Employees are expected to obey orders without receiving any explanations. The motivation environment is produced by creating a structured set of rewards and punishments.

http://essortment.com/leadershipstyle_rrnq.htm

Bureaucratic leadership

Bureaucratic leadership is where the manager manages “by the book”. Everything must be done according to procedure or policy. If it isn’t covered by the book, the manager refers to the next level above him or her. This manager is really more of a Police officer than a leader. http://essortment.com/leadershipstyle_rrnq.htm

The present leadership role of AHTs is clearly focused on power relationships, generally in terms of top-down model, rooted in the notions of classical bureaucracy. Bureaucratic leadership is associated with the work of Weber (1947) who argued that bureaucracy is the most efficient form of management that is largely concerned with planning, organizing, staffing and controlling. According to Sharma (2002) bureaucratic leadership still exists in most of our schools and it is here to stay. This style of leadership is based on a hierarchical authority structure where there is a top down leadership. In a primary school, the line of authority is through the head teacher, AHT, executive teacher and to the individual class teachers. In this context, the head teacher is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office and is accountable to the overall running of the institution. There is also the division of labour into spheres of influence. In other words, those on higher hierarchical structure exert more influence and have more delegated authority.

Bureaucratic leadership that has hierarchical authority or structure is goal oriented and employs the division of labour. It has strict rules and regulations and employs rational process of decision making. This style in the Fiji context is also referred to as 'colonial style' or 'colonial hangover'.

Siwatibau and her colleagues (2005) describe how the Western education system in Melanesia failed to raise the consciousness of local communities. It also failed to develop the necessary leadership skills so that local communities could plan, negotiate and manage the development of their own societies. The report shows that the nineteenth century mission schools destroyed traditional society and in turn traditional leadership in Melanesia by enforcing an ethnocentric and authoritarian form of education. The colonial education was mainly for 'educating' the indigenous people for work that would maintain the colonial administrative structures and processes.

According to Southworth (1998) centralized personal control also stems from the way some heads initiate structure to maintain control. They do not favour decentralization. Moreover, such an approach appears to be acceptable to the followers and may in particular be a preference of teachers who are led by male head teachers. The lack of decision decentralization has caused some researchers to advocate greater delegation by heads, although not at the expense of them 'abrogating their responsibilities' or reducing their power.

Since power resides in the apex of the organization, bureaucracy restricts utilization of the full potential of the subordinates. The division of labour into spheres of influence compartmentalizes attention and response. This diminishes the liberty of

members of the organization as the channel of communication has to be followed at all times. Lack of timely approval or lack of support by the head may lead to frustration. According to Torralba (1996), organizations can no longer thrive with only two or three executives who can provide effective leadership from the top of an organization. Collegial government seems to be a good alternative system of government for schools which can easily function in a schools bureaucratic structure. It is defined as the anti thesis of personal government

Lloyd (1985) proposes six leadership types: nominal, coercive, paternal, familiar, passive and extended professional. According to his survey, the most common and effective type was extended professional, prompting him to suggest that there was a trend away from the 'head-centred' approach to leadership. Lloyd suggests that the 'extended professional' approach, whereby teacher collaboration and development are actively encouraged and where the school moves forward in a jointly agreed way, is replacing the head-centred and paternalistic style.

However, in the primary schools, there is a particular tension between the teaching and management roles of the AHT and a great pressure upon the time available to fulfill both roles (Campbell, 1985; Southworth, 1998).

Collegial Leadership

Collegial leadership is characterized by or having authority or responsibility shared equally by colleagues. Based on this concept, distributed leadership is a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals at school who work at mobilizing and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change. Engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership.

This would imply a much stronger leadership role for the AHT and re-definition of core responsibilities. (Sharma, 2002:1 A discussion paper during HTs workshop).

Reform literature has also focused on the notions of participatory management or power from the bottom rather than the top (Pfeffer, 1984). Collegial leadership is based on authority of expertise, pluralism of ideas, trust and confidence, creativity, unity and loyalty, concern for others and caring attitude. It is attractive because it encourages participation in decision making, leading to a sense of ownership and an enhanced prospect of work. Torralba (1996) views collegial governance as a good alternative system of government for schools. He adds that in collegial leadership of schools the legislative, executive and judicial functions or powers are shared by the stakeholders, that is, the members of the academic community that includes parents, teachers, administrators, auxiliary personnel, the community and students.

Although collegial government is not a guarantee of success, its characteristics features would better translate aims and intentions into the actual results in terms of good students. The AHTs would benefit from this leadership style as they could win the confidence and support of the HTs and teachers.

Torralba (1996) identified the following eleven virtues in collegial leadership which are the cornerstones of a successful organization. As an experienced educational leader, I agree with his findings. My interpretations of these virtues are included in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Interpretations of virtues identified by Torralba (1996)

No	Virtues identified by Torralba	Interpretations of the virtues
1	Philosophical outlook	Look at the big picture, understand the system.
2	Pluralism of ideas	No single idea or method works in all situations. Try other options.
3	Sense of tradition	Every organization has its culture and leaders need to understand the system. Bring changes in small doses.
4	Trust and confidence	Leaders must command respect through exemplary performance.
5	Creativity	Creativity helps a leader remain marketable.
6	Perceptive eye	Leaders need to see things from the view point of the others.
7	Unity and loyalty	Leaders must practice and nurture unity and loyalty.
8	Human elegance	Human beings have big hearts; the leaders must display this.
9	Delicacy	Leadership is a rare commodity and not everyone has the privilege to taste it.
10	Silence of office	Shortcoming of the staff has to stay within the four walls.
11	Genuine concern for others	Human beings have feelings and leaders should be compassionate

Source: Interpretation by Singh, 2005.

The virtues identified above are found in abundance in Fiji due to deep religious belief of its citizens. These virtues help keep the different communities together. They share similar values and sentiments.

Facilitative Leadership

A discussion by Dunlap and Goldman (1991) introduces the concept of facilitative leadership. This concept examines power in terms of a leader's activities designed to create or sustain favourable conditions for the organisation. It allows individuals to enhance their individual and collective performance in an organisation. The concept does not argue either a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' notion of power. Rather, it looks at the exercise of power by administrators in terms of a set of assumptions about superiors, peers and subordinates.

They go on to list four categories of activities leaders engage in when they are employing facilitative management approach and these were helpful while drawing the conceptual framework of the present study.

1. They help arrange material resources that provide support for educational activities.
2. They select and manage people who can work together effectively, paying attention to both the skills and the personalities that compromise the mix.
3. They supervise and monitor activities, not to exercise hierarchical control but to stress feedback and reinforcement and to make suggestions.
4. They provide networks for activities, adding members to groups, linking groups to activities elsewhere, helping groups to "go public" with activities, and diffusing new ideas.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

The laissez-faire leadership style is also known as the "hands off" style. It is one in which the manager provides little or no direction and gives employees as much freedom as possible. All authority or power is given to the employees and they must determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own. This is an effective style to use when:

1. Employees are highly skilled, experienced and educated.
2. Employees have pride in their work and the drive to do it successfully on their own.
3. Outside experts, such as staff specialists or consultants are being used.
4. Employees are trustworthy and experienced.

Source: http://ut.essortment.com/leadershipstyle_rmq.htm

This style is another option and prevalent in some rural schools in Fiji. Tavola (2000:98) writes that:

School heads set a critical level of expectation for their teaching staff. They can motivate and inspire teachers to perform to the best of their abilities. Conversely, if they adopt a laissez-faire attitude and take little interest in the school, especially when they are frequently absent, standards slide.

My professional experience has shown that the degree of success of a school depends largely on the leadership of the school.

Ethical leadership

Writers such as Duignan and Bhindi (1995), suggest that ethical leaders know who they are as persons, as professionals and what values define their character, work and relationships. The power of the leaders resides in their character and trustworthiness and not on their storehouse of data. Ethical leaders are self-differentiated and are able to manage themselves before they begin to manage others. They create a value platform from which they negotiate through dialogue, vision and plan of action.

Ethical leaders adopt a flexible approach to school management and implementation of the curriculum. Sharma (2000:8) states that:

International studies on school management suggest that the school is known not by lines of authority but by different forms of agreement and governance. These include respect, collegiality, coordination, partnership, negotiation, and love and caring. Value-based leaders see themselves as stewardship and reject the ingrained culture of dominance.

Ethical leaders work on genuine partnership, which is based on mutual trust, sharing of information, ease of access, assistance, collaboration, proper communication and a wider range of benefits. It needs partners who work together flexibly. Subramani (2000:16) states that:

Individual initiative, personal creativity and ambition will be highly valued, but equally important will be working together, teamwork, dialogue, consultation and collective decision making.

Authentic leadership is also centrally concerned with ethics, morality and with deciding what is significant to humanity and what is right. Authentic leaders are true to one's own set of values. Bhindi (1996) states that there are many leaders who are camouflaged in the untrue, even deception. He further states that some leaders wear a mask of truth, a façade of responsibility, rarely revealing their true selves.

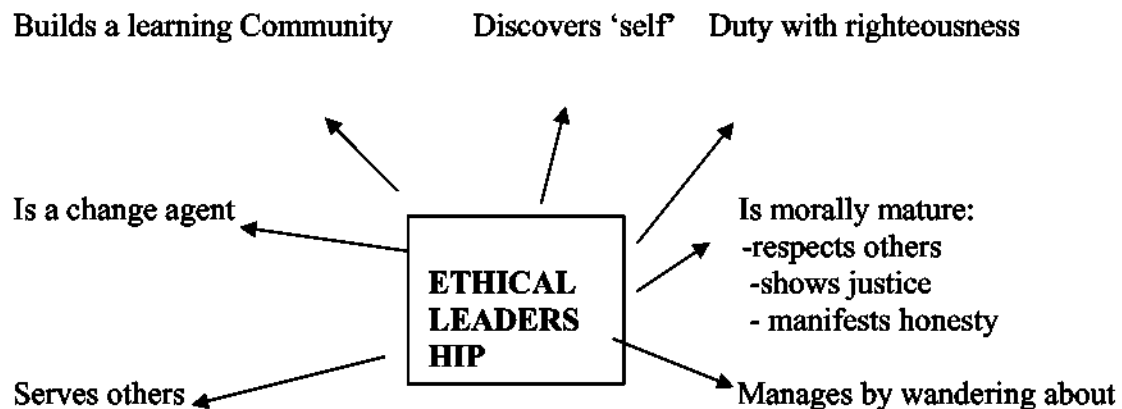
Further to this Duignan, (1996) notes that some leaders are so used to the dramatical performance that they would hardly be able to recognize their 'true self'. Cashman (1997) identifies the five touchstones of authentic leaders as follows:

1. Know yourself authentically
2. Listen authentically
3. Express authentically
4. Appreciate authentically
5. Serve Authentically

I agree with Cashman (1997) that only authentic leaders qualify to be the best role models for AHTs. It is also worth noting that the emerging model of authentic leadership is linking theory, practice and ethics of leadership and responds to many of the concerns about the lack of honesty and integrity in leadership.

Using the following diagram, Sharma (2002) shows how we can use bureaucratic as well as collegial approaches to school management within the perimeters of ethical leadership.

Figure 2.1 Qualities of Ethical Leadership



Source: Adapted from Northouse, 2001:258.

Sanga (2000) says that there is commonly a concern over the style of leadership in the Pacific Island countries. People question the leadership style where there is inappropriate action taken or irrational decision made. He suggests that we should return to our 'roots' and reclaim the leadership that existed then. In my view, we should construct our own moral value leadership platform upon which we can learn to lead and lead to learn. Therefore, the understanding of various forms of leadership is vital.

In summary, I wish to stress that there is no one particular style which can be termed as the best model. The leadership style adopted by a leader depends on a number of factors including the leader's personal leadership style, his educational platform and the context in which he or she exercises leadership.

VIEWS ON ASSISTANT HEADSHIP

This study focuses specifically on AHTs. Literature available on assistant headship both in primary or secondary schools is prescriptive as well as descriptive. Southworth (1998) has done research on “headship” but focuses very little on AHTs. However, he sets a pathway for me to undertake this study. This is studying the AHTs in action and also getting the views of others who are led by them. It is also very important to cite records and to verify evidence of their performance from their supervisors.

Studies show that AHTs mainly dealt with discipline of students. Therefore, their management and leadership experiences were not comprehensive enough to assume the role of principals in future.

Prescriptive

Prescriptive literature is those published in book, paper or online and easily available to HTs and AHTs who wish to read about management and leadership. These documents are basically 'how to do headship' texts (Holton, 1988) and focus upon the issues heads of institutions need to be aware of and the skills they need to effectively discharge their responsibilities. These are usually written by practicing primary heads. Because much of this literature emanates from heads or those who work closely with them, the texts contain an explicit and implicit set of beliefs about how heads should perform the job. They offer ways of approaching or dealing with problems common to primary school head teachers. The suggestions made may or may not work in the real life situation and in different contexts.

According to Southworth (1998:12) the following three issues can be identified in prescriptive literature:

1. there tends to be an uncritical acceptance by the writers of management and organizational theories developed in other settings.
2. they take a reasonably consistent view of a head teacher's work. All devote space to school organization; children; staff; governors; parents; leadership; curriculum; management of change.
3. all the texts locate the head at the centre of the school.

Southworth (1998:13) asserts that the overall impression to be gained from these prescriptive texts is that heads are the single most influential person in the school. He says that it is clear that staff consultation, delegation and participation in decision-making are to be regarded by heads as:

concessions rather than professional necessities the assertion that most primary schools remain 'static, hierarchical and paternalistic' with little real collective involvement in decision-making and with staff at the mercy of heads' 'spontaneous and intuitive' whims probably still holds many schools, if not so extensively as in the early 1970s.

One example of prescriptive literature is Standard Appraisal Manual (SAM) published by UNESCO (1992). It is a field guide for school heads. The authors (Higginson & Laws, 1992:7) write:

SAM is expected to serve several ends. First, it is a complete list of the head teacher's responsibilities, an analysis of what a Pacific Islands primary head teacher should be doing. SAM's writers are, however, expecting him to serve more purposes than just appraisal and have given him these four additional functions:

1. Goal clarification;
2. Motivation of the leader;
3. Specification of the head teacher's expectations;
4. An introduction to the theory of leadership

The name and style of the book clearly show that this prescriptive guide for the head teachers gives support for autocratic style of leadership. This guide was not very popular in Fiji as it did not receive the confidence of the modern educational leaders.

Descriptive

Descriptive literature on AHTs basically contains descriptions of their work. These cover duties and responsibilities or position descriptions. It also consists of investigations of actual AHT behaviour and how they spend their time. There is some literature on observational studies at work (Southworth 1998). According to lessons learnt by Southworth (1998:213), descriptions of primary AHTs work can be divided into five groups. These are:

1. Those that list the duties and responsibilities of AHTs.
2. Other official descriptions of what AHTs do which need to be taken into account.
3. Investigations which have studied actual AHT behaviour, and how they spend their time.
4. Observational studies of AHTs at work.
5. The focus of texts upon the changing nature of leadership.

The framework of analysis of this study took shape as the research process unfolds and as the relevant literature and fieldwork inform one another. The theoretical orientation of the study was initially drawn from management and leadership theories and available research study. Bush (1994) argues that there is not a single all-embracing theory of educational leadership and supports the employment of two or more theories for analysing and understanding events and situations in education. This approach is described as 'conceptual pluralism', and was adopted to study the work of AHTs in two case study schools. It enabled me to study assistant head teachers from several different perspectives. In particular, the perspectives were helpful in analysing

and understanding bureaucratic, collegial and ethical aspects in the AHTs under study.

Southworth (1998) discusses the partnership of the head with the deputy head. He notes that there is a widespread belief that deputy heads in primary schools occupy a position which lacks explicit definition (Coulson, 1974) and so they suffer uncertainty about their role. For example, deputies are seen as filling a difficult position which requires Janus-like qualities because they stand between the head teacher and the staff, being both a class teacher and a senior member of the staff who is close to the head in positional terms. The combination of uncertainty and ambiguity concerning their role caused Bush (1981) to conclude that the 'position of deputy head in primary schools has little substance or meaning'. Moreover it suggested that the deputy is a teacher whose main function is to deputize for the head during any absence. The main duties are as a 'go-between', as a counselor of staff and as an organizer, doing those jobs no-one else thinks are part of their responsibilities.

The HT is normally portrayed in a paternalistic perception (Coulson 1976). Such an outlook locates the head at the centre of the school and places the deputy in not only a subordinate role, but less central and even in a peripheral role. In numerous texts overwhelming attention is devoted to headship while deputy headship is given only a brief mention (Waters 1979; Coulson 1986). In all of these texts the impression gained is of the school revolving around the head teacher, with the deputy performing a relatively minor and supportive function.

The partnership of the head and the AHT are 'characterized by an asymmetrical relationship' or also labeled as 'eyes and ears of the head'. The relevant literature also points out that 'deputy heads are heavily reliant upon their head teachers'. Deputies can not be assistant heads, a new role emerging in the 1990s (Southworth 1998), unless their head teachers facilitate such a partnership.

The AHTs take over the duties of the head teachers in their absence. The HTs also involve the AHTs in policy decision making. Thus, the HTs and AHTs operate as partners.

HEADSHIP AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

The core function of a school head is to provide quality education to students by facilitating discipline in the students, providing adequate teaching-learning resources, by empowering teachers to facilitate student centred classrooms and by closely monitoring the performance of students and teachers. The stakeholders demand quality education and this can only be delivered by successful school heads who employ a range of leadership styles to suit the situation.

In recent years, there have been a growing number of attempts to analyze and describe effective schools. One characteristic commonly associated with effective schools is the quality of leadership provided by the head.

For school effectiveness, the authors, Higginson and Laws (1992) propose that it is important to adopt bureaucratic, collegial and facilitative approaches in school management. It is, however, argued that the key to the successful management of schools rests on ethical leadership that is rooted in respect, service, justice, honesty

and community as well as competency. In this approach, school heads use appropriate strategies and operate within an ethical climate where students, teachers and the school community and their views are treated with respect and dignity.

A report on research on Feniton primary school-leadership for head teachers notes that:

leadership styles are important because of the direct impact they have on how individuals within a particular team feel and the degree to which they are motivated to perform at higher levels and, therefore, have a greater impact on school standards.

Source: Email; admin@feniton.devon.sch.uk.

The above research has looked at the patterns of behaviour leaders adopt, to plan, organize, motivate and control and the extent to which they:

1. Listen; set goals (including standards, targets); direct
2. Develop action plans; give feedback, develop team members;
3. Support and challenges

Within the school environment effective head teachers use a range of leadership styles according to the demands of the situation in order to create a context for school improvement.

HTs of effective schools have a clear vision of a credible and obtainable future for their schools. This is translated into well articulated educational goals. They also buffer teachers against outside distractions which might affect classroom teaching and the students' learning, supply assistance when it is needed, and find ways to work cooperatively with staff on strategies to achieve the objectives of the school. This provides recipe for leading successful schools which provide a quality education to all the students.

During the study on Feniton mentioned earlier:

1. the characteristics of the HT of Feniton School were analyzed;
2. the leadership style of the HT was closely examined against national success criteria and
3. the school context for improvement was evaluated.

From the lessons learnt from this research, a "characteristic" has been defined as a "specific competency" necessary to do the job well. People who have the characteristics necessary for a specific role perform better in that role.

This process highlighted different combinations of characteristics contributing to highly effective performance. The success or otherwise of school leaders or their leadership style is assessed using various tools and different people develop different perceptions of goals achieved. HTs and AHTs are entrusted with the responsibility to maintain and if possible improve standards.

According to Fullan (1992), the quality and nature of leadership, has always been seen as vital to the success of any change initiative. He further says that the school head must not only allow innovation in the school, but must actively lead it. It was also found that initiator principals orchestrated more interventions, developed supportive arrangements, worked actively with other change facilitators, and paid attention to results. Fullan (1991), has also proposed the following guidelines for HTs and AHTs:

1. Understand the culture of the school
2. Value your teachers: promote their professional growth
3. Extend what you value
4. Express what you value
5. Promote collaboration; not co-operation
6. Make menus, not mandates
7. Use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not to constrain
8. Connect with wider environment.

These are powerful indicators for gauging school effectiveness. While contributing to the debate of school leadership in Fiji, Sharma (2000) says:

A unique feature of our school community is its multi-ethnic composition. Therefore, initiatives in establishing good school-community relations will result in drawing the members of all ethnic groups to the school. It is by working together that people of different ethnic groups learn to understand and accept one another. The success of this endeavour depends largely on creating a welcoming environment in schools. Further, the principal and the staff must have the knowledge of the traditions, customs and protocols of our plural society before embarking on this sensitive journey. Effective school-community relations can contribute a lot towards the racial harmony upon which Fiji's future lies.

(Sharma, 2002. Paper titled School-Community Relations: The Principles Role)

Similarly, UNESCO (2000:19) report on educational planning notes:

If innovation and actions to improve efficiency and productivity are to become a regular way of life for educational systems, the main initiative must come from the managers of educational systems.

The school head with the support of the AHT has to ensure that the school operates within the framework of the national goals and policies and the leadership that rests on value-based platform. It is therefore very important for AHTs to understand that they are very important part of the school management system. They need to be both proactive and reactive. The reactive aspect is important because any policy decision initiated by the head teacher has to be implemented by the AHT. The potential of an AHT develops with the performance of the school.

A review of literature carried out by National College for School Leadership, UK (2003), has made some very useful findings on 'Deputy and Assistant Heads: Building Leadership Potential'. The literature pointed unequivocally towards tensions concerning the exact role of the AHTs in relation to the head teacher. It shows that:

1. Role tensions exist for deputy or assistant heads as the responsibilities often overlap with those of the head teacher. In some cases deputies are expected to fulfill all the responsibilities of the head teacher and to deputise fully when the head teacher is away from school.
2. Within most schools, assistant and deputy heads are given particular areas of responsibility such as discipline, staff-development, data-management or attendance. The degree to which they are given leadership responsibility is highly dependent on the head teacher.
3. The main role of the assistant or deputy head is considered to be one of ensuring stability and order in the school, a maintenance rather than development or leadership function.
4. The leadership potential of assistant and deputy heads in many schools is not being fully released or exploited and their leadership capabilities are not being developed in the role.
5. Further study is required into the nature of this relationship between assistant and deputy heads and other senior leaders, and the influence these relationships have upon the work of the leadership team.

Source: www.ncsl.org.uk/literaturereviews-2003

On preparation for headship, one key assumption about AHTs is that they aspire to headship and that their current role is an important stage in their development as a potential head teacher. While headship is not necessarily an aspiration for all AHTs, many of them do seek promotion to the headship. However, a number of studies, for example Southworth, (1998), Harvey, 1994, Ribbins, (1997), demonstrated that many head teachers found their experience as a deputy particularly frustrating or disappointing because of the lack of leadership influence they had within the school. In addition, there are currently limited opportunities for formal leadership training for AHTs. This is potentially a major drawback in preparing for headship and becoming more effective in the role. The literature reviewed by NCSL (Summer 2003:10) highlighted that:

1. The experience of being a deputy or assistant head is not always helpful preparation for headship because of the lack of direct leadership experience some deputy or assistant heads encounter in this role.
2. The absence of targeted professional training and leadership development for assistant heads is considered to be a major drawback in preparing for headship.

3. Assistant and deputy heads often experience a lack of professional support in their role. The support of the HT and other members of the leadership team is a key contributor to feeling valued and motivated in the role.

The limited literature that focuses on the relationship between gender and leadership indicates that gender as a barrier to promotion continues to exist and that women are less likely than men to aspire to leadership positions. The literature suggests that women are more likely to secure a deputy post than to be offered headship. It also shows that women are under more pressure to prove themselves than men in their leadership role. This is even more strongly the case for women from ethnic minority backgrounds who feel a need to continually prove that they are as good as their male and female counterparts (Shakeshaft, 1989; Coleman, 2001). Interestingly, there is no evidence to suggest a gender divide in approaches to leadership. The research evidence dismisses the idea that there are 'male' and 'female' ways of leading. Instead, the evidence suggests that there is good or effective leadership practice and this is not gender specific. In summary, the literature review by NCSL (Summer 2003:13) revealed that:

1. There are more male than female deputy heads, assistant heads and head teachers in the UK. It has been argued that this sends out a negative message to women who aspire to such roles.
2. There is evidence to suggest that women are less likely than men to seek promotion to headship, irrespective of experience or capability.
3. The responsibilities allocated to men and women in deputy of assistant headship positions differ considerably. Women are more likely to deal with pastoral matters and men with discipline and curriculum matters.
4. Women feel under more pressure to prove themselves than men as assistant and deputy heads. This is even more strongly the case for women from ethnic minority backgrounds.

This above research evidence also suggests that ethnicity presents significant barriers to promotion and a high degree of professional challenge. One barrier to promotion was found to be the reliance of many teachers on informal networks, of which ethnic

minority teachers were not part. Research on effective schools with high levels of pupils from minority groups shows that the presence of teachers from the same ethnic group can provide pupils with role models and lead to higher achievement within these groups (Muijs & Harris 2002). The representation of teachers from ethnic minority groupings has been shown to be an important factor in improving pupil achievement. These findings highlight the need for increased representation of ethnic minority teachers within schools, particularly at senior leadership levels. Again, findings through literature review by NCSL (Summer 2003:13), shows that:

1. Being a school leader from an ethnic minority group presents significant personal and professional challenges.
2. Assistant and deputy heads from ethnic minority groups have reported feeling that they have to work harder and are allowed to fail less than their white peers.
3. Black teachers are less likely to be encouraged to apply for promotion to senior roles than their white counterparts and are more likely to be made to teach subjects for which they are not qualified.

The literature review suggests that the traditional role of the AHT is still prevalent in schools despite major changes in the last decade. This traditional role consists largely of administrative and routine maintenance functions. In contrast, a distributed form of leadership suggests an emergent leadership role for AHTs where they are centrally involved in building culture and managing change.

Distributive leadership is a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilizing and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change. Engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributive leadership in action. This would imply a much stronger leadership role for the AHT and some re-definition of core responsibilities.

In this emergent role, AHTs clearly share responsibility for leadership with the head teacher and other teachers (Muijs & Harris, 2002:22) suggest that:

1. An emergent leadership role for HTs and AHTs would necessitate communicating and developing vision, promoting shared understanding amongst staff, working as a change agent.
2. An emergent leadership role will entail more responsibility for planning and coordinating change within the school and it is important that assistant and deputy heads are fully prepared for the demands of this leadership role.

Leadership behaviour and its implications

The review of literature has shown the importance of employing appropriate leadership style. Different leadership styles are employed to achieve specific objectives or desired goals. These goals may be protective, maintenance or enhancement.

Protective

According to Sharma (2004) leaders who use protective behaviour are full of excuses and are prone to complain about people, places and things. They may look for excuses for complaining or even lying to justify their position.

Maintenance

People who use maintenance behaviour are great survivors (Sharma, 2002). They do not complain, lie or put people down. Instead, they hope, cope and survive. They are mainly concerned with themselves and their own survival, safety and welfare. Maintenance people do a lot of wishing but, in reality, do not take risk or do nothing to 'rock the boat'. They do not initiate change but believe in 'going with the flow'.

Enhancement

Enhancement people spend most of their time participating, learning and growing. They are 'we' people, and enjoy participating and going to conferences, training workshops and meetings. This is because they know that they can learn by interacting with, sharing with and listening to other people. People who use enhancement behaviour are leaders and professionals. They are active people at school and in the community. They are achievement-oriented and have vision, and enhance the lives of all the people around them. They are self-motivated and self-disciplined people, and contribute to the quality of their own lives and that of the community.

It is clear from the review of the literature that AHTs have an enormous amount to contribute to school improvement yet within many schools they are currently under-utilised as leaders. It is also clear that without proper investment in the training and development of these key leaders, motivation levels will continue to be variable as AHTs continue to see themselves as only being concerned with low level maintenance activities.

The literature reviewed points towards a need for specialist training for those who see AHTs as a career rather than a step towards headship. To achieve this will require action and support from the head teacher as well as training programmes that skill deputy and assistant head teachers to undertake a more substantial leadership role in schools (Mertz 2000). Training and recognition for established leaders is therefore both necessary and desirable to ensure that leadership at this level is both enhanced

and that the potential for school improvement is maximized. Once again literature reviewed by NCSL (Summer 2003:4) indicated that:

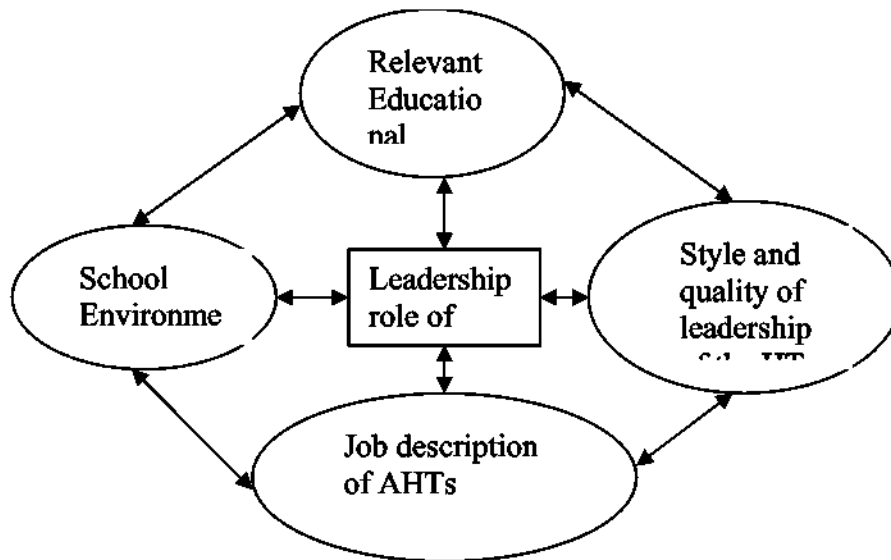
1. There is a need for specialist training for those who see assistant and deputy headship as a career choice rather than a step towards headship.
2. People skills, communication skills, knowledge of leadership theory, techniques for improving curriculum and instruction and working with teams are considered by deputy and assistant heads to be important elements in any future professional development programmes.
3. There is a need for professional development programmes that focus specifically on leadership skills, knowledge and understanding for assistant and deputy heads.
4. To attract deputies and assistant heads of ethnic minority backgrounds, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the difficulties that they face and specific introductory and support programmes for those who are considering such a career move.
5. More research into the particular development needs of these groups is required to ensure that future provision is relevant, appropriate and ultimately effective.

The literature reviewed shows that the position of AHT in a primary school is very challenging. The AHT is seen to be playing a pivotal role and there is a lot of expectation from various stakeholders.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

The conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) for the study is derived from the review of literature and it demonstrates that four key factors affect the leadership role of the AHTs. These are (a) relevant educational policies, (b) the style and quality of leadership of the AHTs, (c) job description of AHTs and (d) school environment. A brief explanation of each one of these factors is given for better understanding of the conceptual framework for the study.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework of the leadership roles of AHTs



Relevant education policies

Literature demonstrates that the AHTs can effectively perform their roles if they are familiar with relevant rules, regulations, policies and guidelines in respect of all aspects of their delegated responsibilities. Some school level policies as contained in the Education Gazette produced by the Ministry of Education are for example, 'preparation of workbook', 'marking of student exercise books', 'official records policy in schools' and 'recruitment and promotion policy'.

The style and quality of leadership of the head teacher

The success of a school depends largely on the quality of leadership of the HT and AHT as well as their relationship. The report by Scottish Education Department noted that leadership qualities of the school head and the manner in which they fulfill

their management responsibilities are key factors in determining the effectiveness of their school. Similarly, Bass views leadership as a combination of special traits or characteristics, that individuals possess and that enable them to induce others to accomplish tasks. In the same manner, Harvey concluded that AHTs needed a much stronger leadership role than they actually possessed and that the role was too reactive with little real scope for leading innovation and change.

Job description of AHTs

A job description is a list of responsibilities and functions expected from a particular position. In the school context, it is what the HT expects from the AHT in terms of on-the-job performance. The AHT is portrayed in literature as playing subordinate role, as being ‘eyes and ears of the head’ and taking over the duties of the HT in his absence. A lack of non-contact time for AHTs has been found to be a major barrier to the successful performance of their roles.

School environment

Mortimore (1985:250) identified the ‘work-centred environment’ and ‘positive climate’ as preconditions for the teaching learning process. Duignan et al (1985) noted that a student’s chance of success in learning is heavily influenced by the climate of the school.

Duignan and his colleagues (1985) also found out that there are a number of factors in the broader community and in the immediate school environment that affect the performance of the schools. They add that the pressures of rapid technological change, the demands for special services for the needs of special children, the

movement to ensure equal opportunity, calls to an end to discrimination on the basis of sex, the increasing incidence of children coming from single parent or broken homes have all been identified as factors, external to the school, that impinge on the role of school leaders such as AHTs.

SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the review of literature relating to the leadership role of assistant head teachers in primary schools. It covered aspects such as leadership styles, views on assistant headship and the impact of leadership on school effectiveness. The literature pointed out that there are various leadership styles such as, autocratic, bureaucratic, collegial, facilitative, laissez-faire and ethical leadership. Literature informed us that the quality and nature of leadership has always been seen as vital to the success of any change initiative. It also shows that initiator HTs and AHTs orchestrated more interventions, developed supportive arrangements, worked actively with other change facilitators and paid attention to results. Review of literature also informed us that a visionary leader dignifies and honors the lives of the people he leads by allowing them to manifest their highest potential through the work they do and gets extraordinary achievement from ordinary people.

The literature looked at the relationship of leadership styles and school effectiveness and informed us that effective leaders influence students, teachers and the community to achieve a common set of goals. Literature also informed us that AHTs are underutilized as leaders. Review of literature further informed us that despite major changes over a period of time the traditional role of AHTs is still prevalent in schools. The traditional role consists largely of administration and maintenance functions. In

the Pacific context, leadership is seen as a subset of communal purpose and that Pacific women leaders lack confidence.

On the basis of the review of literature the chapter presented the conceptual framework adopted for the study.

The next chapter, Chapter 3 deals with the research methodology adopted for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. The chapter begins with the justification of the methodology used. It is followed by the discussion on qualitative research approach. The research methods and the procedures of data collection and analysis are also described. The chapter concludes with the ethical procedures used in this study.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The type of data needed influences the selection of appropriate research methodology. In this research study, I needed qualitative and descriptive data to understand the job expectation, actual performance and the context in which the two assistant head teachers (AHTs) work. Moreover, I wanted to understand the work of AHTs from their perspectives and contexts as well as other members of the stakeholder family. This mode of study finds support in phenomenological perspective and the qualitative data.

This perspective is concerned with understanding educational issues from the research informants' or stake holders' points of view. It also involves observation and examination of different actors, structures and processes in the case study schools. Phenomenologists attempt to describe and elucidate meanings, behaviour and events as they unfold and as interpreted by research informants (Bryman (1988); Bogdan & Biklen, (1992) and Sharma, (2000)).

The following statement by Bogdan and Biklen (cited in Bryman 1988:53) clearly explains the rationale behind the use of phenomenological perspective in this study.

The phenomenologist views human behaviour... as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist, and, for us, the qualitative methodologists, is to capture this process of interpretation... In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view.

The literature in support of phenomenology points out that listening, observing, and forming an empathic alliance with research informants are important skills for qualitative researchers. I took advantage of this advice.

Writers such as Psathas (1973), Bogdan & Biklen (1992), emphasize that inquiry in this perspective begins with silence and patience. These attributes enable the researcher to understand the meanings that the informants construct around events in their daily lives. The phenomenological perspective also acknowledges that research informants have multiple ways of perceiving and interpreting reality. Moreover, phenomenologists argue that any understanding of the behaviour of research informants call for the appreciation of the subjective elements of their social action (King 1979; Burgess 1984; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This 'sociology of inside' (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979), underpins the research adopted in this study and supports a predominantly qualitative research orientation. It also allows the researcher to penetrate the frames of meaning within which the people being studied operate.

This research study approach has both strengths and limitations. In order to understand and appreciate working environment of the research informants through the phenomenological perspectives, rigorous in-depth studies are imperative. The

study involves thorough investigation of the daily activities of the AHTs in the two case study schools. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a trusting relationship (Yin, 1984; Sharma, 2000), greater intimacy and closer interpersonal relationships (Velayutham, 1991) in the school communities.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

A largely qualitative approach has been adopted for the study because it offers the most appropriate methods for in-depth study sensitive to context, and is consistent with the phenomenological perspectives already discussed. In particular, in-depth interviewing (in the form of conversation pieces), documentary analysis of official records and observational studies have been employed as data collecting strategies. As an ongoing process, data analysis is integrated into data collection process. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), this integration is necessary because it provides information about the additional data that needs to be collected in order to understand the topic under study.

Since a “school” is a people-oriented organization, it is necessary to understand its operations and people from the perspectives of those who work and study there. Burns (1978:244) explains:

Writing about people, a study of a group of people for the purpose of describing their socio-cultural activities and patterns, ethnography is a relevant method for evaluating school life since school is essentially a cultural entity.

As mentioned earlier, the procedure of taking the informants’ perspective is often expressed in terms of seeing through the eyes of the people being studied (Bryman

1988; Bogdan & Biklen 1992). Such a discourse also facilitates acquisition of firsthand knowledge about the empirical social world in question.

Strengths of Qualitative Research

Qualitative case study approach provides the opportunities for gaining a variety of insights into the process of school level collaboration between the AHT and the head teacher. This also extends to the other stakeholders. This view finds support in the following words of Southworth (1998:41).

The case study has at least four different applications: the most important is to explain the casual links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. A second application is to describe the real life context in which an intervention has occurred. Third, an evaluation can benefit, again in a descriptive mode, from an illustrative case study even a journalistic account of the intervention itself. Finally, the case study strategy may be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.

According to Williamson (2000), the qualitative case study research has been used extensively to understand the social phenomenon in their natural settings. Moreover, the case study is appropriate for exploratory and discovery-oriented research. Case studies are also used when the topic is controversial or confidential within an institution and only minimal documentation is maintained.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), qualitative research provides rich interpretation of subjects or experiences within naturalistic contexts because qualitative research typically focuses on a small number of people or cases it allows researchers to study selected issues, cases or events in-depth. Not only do the results of such in-depth investigations contribute to a better understanding of the

phenomenon being investigated but the detail of the data contributes to the identification of patterns which can be successfully used for prediction purposes as well as for the development of strategies to avoid the occurrence of undesirable patterns.

Along with other advocates of qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Bell (1988), and Williamson (2000), summarize the characteristics of the qualitative case study as follows:

1. Qualitative research has natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive.
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process rather than with outcomes or products.
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively.
5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

A qualitative case-study is characterized by the researcher spending a substantial amount of time in the research settings. Stake (1980) states that the researcher is personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting on, and revising 'meanings' of what is going on. Bell (1988) goes on to describe a case-study as an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decisions to focus on inquiry around an incident, event, a process or organization. It is much more than a description of a phenomenon. It is concerned with the interaction of factors and events. Burns (1978:365) states:

The case-study is the preferred strategy when 'how', 'who', or 'what' questions are being asked, or when the investigator has little control over events, or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context.

According to Sharma (2000), one of the strengths of the case study approach is that it has the capacity to uncover, analyze, understand and represents viewpoints of people from different ideological and occupational camps. These strengths of the qualitative case-study approach motivated me to adopt it for this study.

Limitations of Qualitative Research

The case study approach relies on human instrument, therefore, the chance of bias and prejudice can not be completely ruled out. Filstead (1970) sees case study as an emergency approach and says, “Obviously, case studies, irrespective of how well they are planned lack the scientific weight and general applicability of conventional research methods”. I agree with this view but the advantages contribute positively towards gathering qualitative data.

According to Williamson (2000), the data collection and analysis are subject to the influence of the researcher in a case study research. Therefore, the data analysis relies on the researcher’s interpretation of events, documents and interview material and may limit the validity of the research findings.

Advocates of qualitative case study research such as Williamson (2000), Bogdan and Biklan (1992) argue that the findings of a single case are generalizable to other settings if there are other findings in other settings that confirm the information of the single case. Consistent with other critics of case study approach, Williamson also says that:

1. Case-studies lack statistical reliability and validity.
2. Case-studies can be used to generate hypotheses but not to test them.
3. Generalizations cannot be made on the basis of case studies.

Other critics of the case-study approach, point out that generalization is not always possible. They say that a single case study does not provide a good basis of generalizing. Yin, (1984) and Bassey, (1981) argue that if case-studies are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are reliable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research.

Another criticism of this mode of inquiry is that it is difficult to cross-check information so there is always the danger of distortion. A strategic way to enhance a study's validity is by triangulating multiple sources of data (Rossman & Wilson, 1994; Bell, 1999). Triangulation is a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verify the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. Triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways a phenomenon is being seen.

Limitations of time can also pose problems in fieldwork particularly with such techniques as participant observation and in-depth unstructured interviewing, which require long periods of continuous presence in the field.

Again as cited in Sharma (2000:162), Morse (1994) outlines the complexity of qualitative research in the following way:

The laboratory of the qualitative researcher is everyday life and can not be contained in a test tube, started, stopped, manipulated, or washed down the sink. Variables are not controlled, and until qualitative researchers get close to the end of a study, they may not even be able to determine what those variables are. Therefore, theory development, description, and operationalisation are often the outcomes. They are the products of the research process, rather than the means, and the tools used while conducting research.

These limitations, according to Rossman and Wilson (1994), are the issues of generalisability and validity, and can be enhanced by triangulating multiple sources of data. According to Rossman (1994), triangulation is the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point. Data derived from multiple sources, informants and methods can greatly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings (Yin, 1984; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Negotiating drafts, audit trails and periodic 'checks and feedback' sessions directly with the key informants are important means of establishing accuracy, completeness and conformability of data.

During my research, I was mindful of the lessons learnt from the possible limitations identified by various researchers as cited above. As I was the main case-study instrument I was always mindful of the limitations as I conducted the research. Moreover, I continuously triangulated the data collected until I was happy with the reliability of my data and the key findings that emerged from it. I visited and revisited the data, the findings and the relevant literature to ascertain that my conclusions were as reliable as possible. The thick data that I collected also allows me to understand the work of the AHTs very well. This finds support in the following discussion.

Case Study as a Research Methodology

As cited in Sharma (2000), the case study involves an investigator who makes a detailed examination of a single subject, group or phenomenon and seeks to address, illuminate and understand a complex array of issues embedded in its context through the eyes of the people being studied (Stenhouse 1978; Bogdan & Biklen 1992). Yin (1984:23) sees a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context". Notably, case study data are strong in their

reflection of reality. I therefore, worked closely with my research informants to understand them, how they went about doing their duties and the results they achieved as a result of their planned activities.

My choice of methodology was inspired by the research undertaken by Southworth, (1998). I used the inspiration and direction from the above research to:

1. attempt to provide a detailed portrait of an assistant head teacher in action by observing what s/he does
2. attempt to present a rich portrait which described what the assistant head did rather than a category list of what s/he should be doing.
3. describe what s/he experienced in terms of feelings about her/his work.
4. record the rhythms and patterns of her/his work over a period of time.
5. discover what other members of the staff, including the school head, thought about the assistant head's work.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

As already discussed, the procedure of taking the informant's perspective is often expressed in terms of seeing through the eyes of the people being studied (Bryman, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Such a discourse also facilitates acquisition of firsthand knowledge about the empirical social world in question (Filstead, 1970). Furthermore, according to Sharma (2000), it allows the researcher to penetrate the frames of meaning within which the people being studied operate.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) are convinced that understanding a phenomenon from the research informants' perspective requires a close relationship with the people being studied. In order to gain the viewpoint necessary for empathy, recommended strategies are a sustained period of participant observation and in-depth unstructured interviewing, which could lead to thick descriptive data. This emphasis on description

requires attending to mundane details of everyday life which are necessary to understand what is going on in a particular context and to provide 'clues and pointers' to other layers of realities.

Such a design also requires the presentation of data in a descriptive and narrative form so that the various research audiences clearly understand the explanations derived from them.

In-depth Interview

The interview is a common data gathering method in qualitative research, which is used to compliment other strategies like documentary analysis and observation. In my research study, the purpose of in-depth interview was to obtain a rich description of the research problem (Appendix C). According to Cohen *et al.* (1994), the interview method serves three purposes. First, it provides access to what is 'inside a person's head'. Secondly, it may be used to test hypotheses or suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. Thirdly, it may be used in conjunction with other research methods undertaken to follow-up on data collected by other means.

While contributing to the debate of using interview as a method of gathering qualitative data, Williamson (2000:226) notes:

Face-to-face interaction assists in the establishment of rapport and a higher level of motivation amongst respondents. The interviewer can be a powerful stimulus- more powerful than words on paper.

The interview sessions I had with the respondents were semi-structured and taken as normal conversation. This alleviated anxiety and I was able to enjoy a good rapport

with the interviewees. This trust and confidence encouraged the respondents to reveal many personal and 'confidential' details which they would not have done otherwise.

The interview takes place between two persons and there is always the possibility of human feelings and biases interfering with reality. Because of my seniority and experience, I was mindful that the research informants would try and paint a good picture of all the situations. I therefore, crosschecked the reliability of the information provided with other evidences available in the form of documentary evidence and views of other research informants.

Documentary Analysis

According to Yin (1984), documents that are useful in research include letters, memoranda, communiqués, agendas, announcements, minutes, reports, proposals, evaluations, news clippings and media articles. The documents relevant to this study were admission register, examination register, supervision records, minutes of meetings, job descriptions, policies, records of courses undertaken and participation in professional workshops and seminars and reports given by the HTs. All these documents are important in understanding the functions of AHTs.

I was always mindful of the context of the documents as they were written for a specific purpose and were not meant for analysis by an outsider. I got direction from Bogden and Biklen (1992) that documents are produced for reasons other than research. Therefore, they may be fragmentary; they may not fit in the conceptual framework of the research, and that their authenticity may be difficult to determine. On the other hand, because they exist independent of a research agenda, they are non-

reactive- that is, unaffected by the research process. They are a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world. Finally, many documents or artifacts cost little or nothing and are often easy to obtain.

Documentary analysis is an on-going process and according to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:146), it forces the researcher to:

1. make decisions that narrow the study
2. make decisions concerning the type of study to be conducted,
3. develop analytical questions,
4. plan the data collection sessions in light of what other data has yielded,
5. write observer's comments as one proceeds,
6. write memos to oneself about what one is learning,
7. try out ideas and themes on subjects,
8. explore literature while in the field and,
9. play with metaphors, analogies and concepts.

The list of official documents that were consulted and analyzed is as follows:

- Admission register
- Time book
- Teachers performance record
- AHT's supervision records
- Students' exercise books
- Staff meeting records

It was not always easy to select relevant information from all the data that I had gathered. I separated the data into themes according to the conceptual framework. This gave me a direction to process the data successfully.

Observation

Observation enables the researcher to share the same experiences as the subjects and to better understand why they acted in the way they did and to see things as those involved see things. This was a very powerful method that I used.

Observation helps me form an independent opinion in light of information received through interview and documentary analysis. This also helped complement the process of triangulation. Williamson (2000), defines observation as studying people by participating in social interactions with them in order to observe and understand them.

I paid a number of visits (Table 3.1) to the schools for short durations in order to observe the AHTs in action during various parts of the day and to gather additional data. Observation could be in different forms. These included observing subjects without their being aware of it; maintaining as unobtrusive a presence as possible in the research setting; engaging in limited interaction with the research subjects; or immersing oneself in the research situation as a fully active participant.

The findings obtained by this method were useful to confirm, contradict and/or complement data gathered by interviews and documents. Vulliamy (1990) supports the significance of this method by emphasizing that what people say in interviews can often be checked out by observation of their practice.

This research was descriptive and not prescriptive. Prescriptive implies 'how to do headship'. Descriptive, as part of this research, consists of investigations which study actual behaviour of assistant head teachers.

Report Writing

The relevant international literature was re-visited throughout the fieldwork. This helped the researcher to understand issues and problems raised in the research process. As suggested by Vulliamy and Web (1992), and cited in Sharma (2000),

returning to the literature provided further insights into the data and proved rewarding in the writing up phase.

The records, reports, evidence and conversation pieces were put together in a draft form. Integrating report writing with data collection and analysis in this way finds support in the works of writers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), and Marshall and Rossman (1995). They argue that these processes can not be separated from one another. As cited in Sharma (2000), Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:208), reinforce this argument by noting that:

Field notes, journals, and diaries are, in one sense, the 'data' that are collected; in another sense, they are written up, in ways that constitute preliminary analyses and presentations.

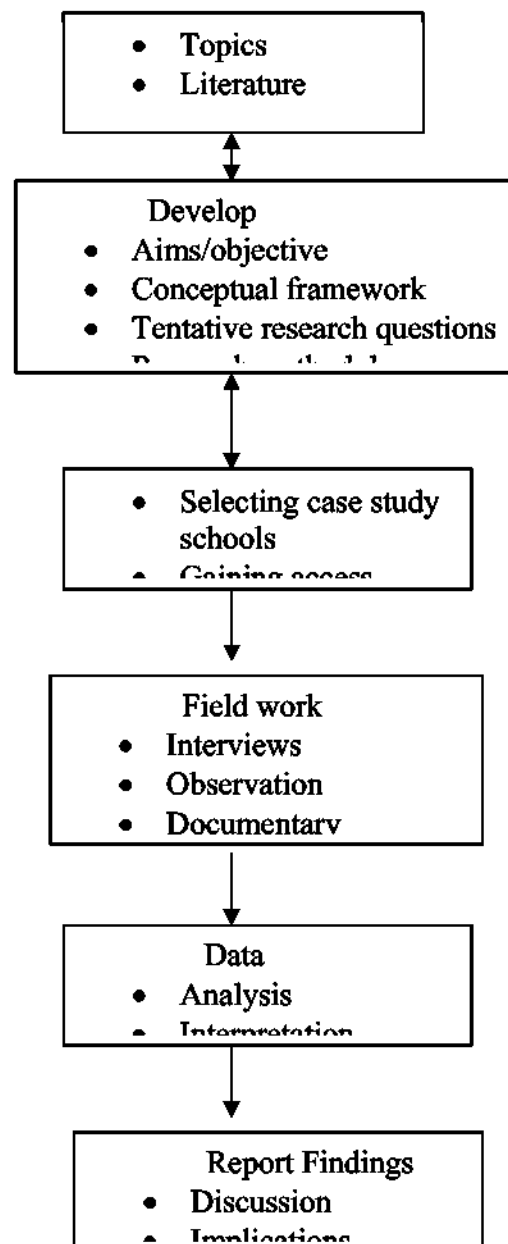
RESEARCH PROCESS

Sampling

I selected two primary schools in the Western Division- one an indigenous Fijian and the other an Indo-Fijian. While the intention was not to make a detailed comparison of leadership in these two schools, the findings had implications for indigenous Fijian education as well as for overall primary school headship and the conditions that are associated with them. The process of selecting these two schools was in itself a form of sampling. Sampling involves a lot of thinking, planning and eliminating unsuitable options. In fact, the sampling here involved (a) where to observe, (b) when to do so, (c) who to talk to, (d) what to ask and (e) what to record and how (Hammersley & Atkinson (1983).

Figure 3.1 shows the research design and explains how I conducted this study. I have highlighted the theoretical aspects of the process in the discussion thus far.

Figure 3.1 Qualitative Research Design



The research design as shown in Figure 3.1 covers the following six steps to show the whole research process that I followed.

Topics/Literature

I selected this topic as a result of personal interest and concern for leadership and also in consultation with my supervisors and professional colleagues. I also got inspiration from the literature that I reviewed.

Developing Aims/Objectives & Conceptual framework

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the aim of the study was to provide a more descriptive account of what the AHTs actually do at the school and classroom levels. I was inspired by the phenomenological perspective which is concerned with understanding issues from the 'insiders' point of view. The above guided me to develop the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework became the basis for the tentative research questions.

Selecting case study schools and gaining access

The two schools were selected in light of accessibility, different ethnic backgrounds of the students, teachers and community and my personal professional relationship with the head teachers. This relationship enabled both parties to discuss issues freely.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken through interviews, observation of the AHTs at work and by reviewing official documents as mentioned earlier.

Data

A substantial amount of data was collected over a period of time. Data which was not considered very important was removed but not discarded. Data analysis and interpretation continued throughout the research process.

Report on findings

The findings were discussed in the light of lessons learnt from research data and validated against knowledge gained through review of relevant literature. The two case study schools were representative of both the major racial groups in Fiji but comparisons have not been made and generalizability was not argued.

The Selected Schools

The Indigenous Fijian School (S1) is located three kilometres from Nadi Town towards the Nausori highlands. This school was established in 1935 and is owned by the community of Dratabu village.

The second school (S2), an Indo-Fijian school, is located six kilometres from Nadi Town along Nadi-Sigatoka Highway. This school was established in 1931. A prominent educationist from India was instrumental in establishing this school. A piece of land was bought and after a long struggle, a small building was set up and thus a new school was established. These case studies are discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

Ethical Procedures

I chose these two schools due to their location and ease of access. After arrangement by phone, I made my first visit on 25 September, 2002. I took a letter outlining my research proposal briefs and requested for their consent to collect the data for the study. I got the approval the same day. I also got access to the AHTs and briefed them of my project. They were very willing to assist me. The channel of communication was opened and this facilitated my subsequent visits.

I was always mindful of ethical procedures and adopted 'informed consent' approach by paying particular attention to the rights and jurisdictions of indigenous and other groups residing in Fiji. The provisions of confidentiality and anonymity sheltered the research informants.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), it is not possible to identify all potential ethical questions or justify what is correct research behaviour in this mode of research study. The research informants were informed about the study and their consent to participate or not, were respected. Consistent with the recommendation by the School of Education of the University of the South Pacific, the following ethical principles were adopted for the study:

1. Respect for research participants and community rights, cultures and knowledge systems.
2. Confidentiality
3. Honesty
4. Cultural sensitivity and avoidance of the conflict of interests.
5. Informed consent

When I visited S1, I took some "yagona" as my "sevusevu". Yagona is herb but has deep cultural value. When I arrived at this school the HT was waiting with the school manager and a few other boys from the community. They welcomed me in the

traditional way. They also accepted my “sevusevu” as a token of appreciation and happily granted approval for my request. In S2, I took some sweets. Offering sweets in Indian culture signifies sweetness in the relationship of the two parties. I was also warmly welcomed in this school. These ethical principles and indigenous approaches enabled me to negotiate and formalize my research agreements with the staff and its community. I was accepted in the case study schools as an ‘insider’ and this contributed to the creation of a friendly research climate. The post graduate committee of the School of Education, USP endorsed the research proposal and granted ethical clearance.

Approaches used to gather data

I made a number of visits (Table 3.1) for consultation and worked with the AHTs. I also held consultation with the head teachers to discuss their school organization. I checked various records for evidence of the schools' achievements. I also received the opinion of the teachers on the leadership styles employed by the assistant heads. Their views on the effectiveness of the AHTs as educational leaders will be covered in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1: Duration and purpose of visits

Interviewee	No of visits	Duration	Purpose
HT, AHT, Manager, staff	1	40 mins	Present token and seek approval
HT	2	50 mins each	Interview HT and review official documents
AHT	4	60 mins each	Interview AHT, analyse documents, observation
Teachers	2	30 mins	Interview, discussion
School Manager	1	40 mins	Interview, discussion
MoE (SEO)	1	75 mins	Interview, discussion

Source: Field notes, 2004.

I began with a set of tentative questions as given in Chapter 2. These were merely starting points. There was, however, a lot of change as the inquiry progressed.

Analysis and Reporting

The methods of data analysis in this study were informed by the approach to qualitative data analysis advocated by writers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Vulliamy and Webb (1992). They argue that as an ongoing process, analysis begins in the pre-field phase and continues in the fieldwork and post-field phases. Therefore, data collection and analysis operated in this study as an integrative and reflective process.

As mentioned earlier, the data analysis and discussion centred on the concepts identified in the conceptual framework. In this regard, I was guided by Southworth (1998) that analysis means the ordering and structuring of data to produce new knowledge. He further states that statistics ‘merely’ provide us with tools when our data lend themselves to quantification. Research work is generally more concerned with thinking about ‘concepts’ rather than just with tangible ‘facts’. It is also concerned with the ‘relationships’ between the concepts that may help to explain the relationships.

The process of integrating report writing with data collection and analysis, which I employed, finds support in the works of writers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983). They argue that these processes cannot be separated from one another. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:208), reinforce this argument by noting that:

Field notes, journals, and diaries are, in one sense, the 'data' that are collected; in another sense, they are written up, in ways that constitute preliminary analyses and presentations.

Research informants are storehouses and valuable sources for information. The list of my research informants is given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Research Informants

Research informants	S 1	S 2	Data collecting methods
HT	1	1	Interview, informal discussion, documentary analysis
AHT	1	1	Interview, informal discussion, documentary analysis, observation
Teachers	2	2	Interview, informal discussion
Manager	1	1	Interview, discussion
SEO	1	1	Interview, discussion

Source: Field notes, 2004

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the details of the research methodology that I employed and the ethical procedures adopted to plan, gain access, carry out field work and record the findings. In brief, the chapter has outlined the seven steps given in the qualitative research design. These steps are:

- Topics and reference to literature
- Developing-aims and objectives, theoretical framework, research questions and research methodology
- Selecting case study schools and gaining access
- Fieldwork
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Reporting findings

The next chapter, Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this study sets out to examine the role of AHTs in the two selected primary schools located in the Western Division of the Fiji Islands. The present chapter begins by presenting data on the two schools. A qualitative case study approach was used to collect data in this study.

The research findings are presented in two parts. The first part of the chapter presents findings on the case studies of the two AHTs. The second part looks at the perceptions of the school heads and other stakeholders on the work of the assistant head teachers (AHTs). The perceptions are presented in four themes identified earlier:

1. Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs.
2. Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored.
3. Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with the research informants.
4. Views on current policy and practice.

BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOLS

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the schools were chosen for ease of access. Each school represents a major ethnic group in terms of student and teacher populations, and school management authorities.

Major features of the two schools are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Background of the two schools

Feature	School 1 (S1)	School 2 (S2)
Location	Rural Primary, situated 3 Km from Nadi Town in the middle of canefields. Caters for children of Dratabu, Vunayasi.	Rural, situated 6 Km from Nadi Town along Nadi-Sigatoka Highway Has classes 1-6 with attached secondary school
Establishment	1935	1931
Type of School	Established and managed by the community under grant aided arrangement	Established by an Educationist from India with the support of local parents of Indian origin.
Number on Roll	150	441
Socio-economic Status of parents	Some are wage earners. Majority are sugar cane of subsistence farmers	Parents come from various backgrounds. Some are farmers, wage earners and displaced farmers settling on new residential land.
School administration and teaching staff	7 teachers in Primary with 1 Kindergarten teacher and 1 part-time clerk/typist	13 teachers with 1 clerk/typist. The caretaker is shared by the high school.
Leadership team and functions	The school has 1 HT, 1 AHT and 1 ET.	The school has 1 HT, 1 AHT and 2 ET.
Communication	Communication with parents through newsletters, announcements through children & meetings.	Newsletters, CAPS meeting, Assembly, parents' day
Curriculum/output in examinations	High pass rate in external exam shows the school is doing well	Above average pass rate in FIEE
Appointment of support staff	Gardener/handyman is employed by the management	Gardener/handyman is shared by the primary and secondary schools

The summary given in Table 4.1 shows many similarities between the two schools, such as:

- Both were established in early thirties
- Both are managed by local school committees
- Both need funds to upgrade facilities

Both the schools are performing well as measured by the external examination results.

In what follows, is a more detailed background of the two schools where the AHTs under study are working.

SCHOOL 1

BACKGROUND

School 1 (S1) is an ethnic Fijian school situated three kilometers from Nadi Town. The school is situated on a piece of native land owned by a landowning unit known as *Yavusa Digilo*. The school was established in 1935 and is owned by the community of *Dratabu village*. The population of the village is about twelve hundred. The school population comprises 145 students and seven teachers.

There is a kindergarten teacher. The head teacher of the school is a male in the ED 5E grade. The AHT is a female in the ED 6A grade. Both are confirmed in their appointments and are experienced in their respective positions. The head teacher has 32 years of teaching experience. Apart from teacher training, he completed a one-year conversion course in Industrial Arts. He taught in a secondary school for a while. As a distant and flexible learning student, he has successfully completed a unit in USP's Educational Administration programme of study. He has attended a number of workshops and training programmes conducted by the Ministry of Education. He has been an active member of his district head teachers' association. He has also attended several national head teachers' conferences.

This school is situated on a small hill. A driveway leads to the school. The compound has a temporary fence of barbed wire which needs urgent repairs. The school has three blocks of wooden classrooms. There are five teachers' quarters.

The school derives major source of income from the fee free grant from the government. This income is supplemented by money raised through fund raising

which helps in financing school activities. For capital projects, other sources of funding are explored. PTA also does fundraising to assist the school.

Table 4.2: School facilities at S1

Facilities	Number	Remarks
Teachers quarters	5	Need repairing/painting
Classrooms	8	Need repainting
Toilet block	1	Needs renovation
Office/reception	1	Needs upgrading
Staffroom	1	Needs extension/
Library	1	Also used for assembly
Kindergarten Block	1	Newly built
Computer & printer	1	Good condition
Photo Copier	1	Satisfactory
Playground	1	Well maintained
Fencing & gate		Urgently needs repairs. Driveway needs upgrading

Source: School organization records, 2004

A look at the school shows that the facilities need major renovation and maintenance. Finance is the main issue that the head teacher and the school manager are concerned with. The money received from government grant and fundraising is only sufficient to meet the operational costs.

Table 4.3: The School Staff Profile of S1

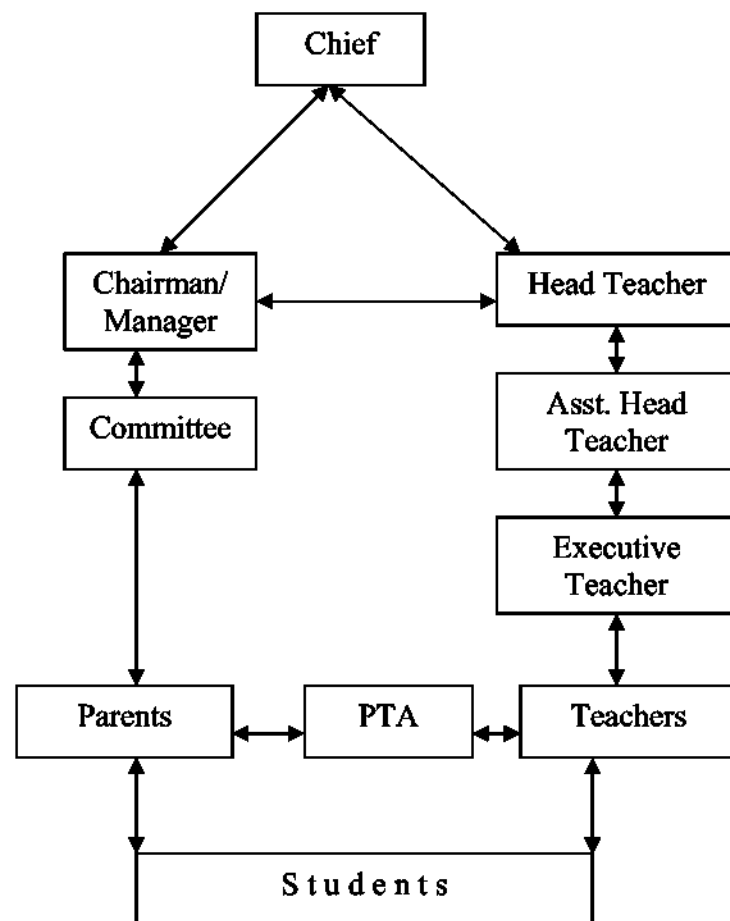
Code Name	Post held	TPF	Qualification	Experience in years
T 1	HT	.....	Teachers Certificate (Pr) Secondary Conversion	30
T 2	AHT	.....	Teachers Certificate (Pr)	31
T 3	ET	.....	Primary Diploma	9
T 4	Teacher	.....	Teachers Certificate (Pr)	10
T 5	Teacher	.....	Teachers Certificate (Pr)	14
T 6	Teacher	.....	Teachers Certificate (Pr) B. Ed. Primary	6
T 7	Teacher	.....	Primary Diploma	8
T 8	Kindy Teacher	.....	Pre-School Teachers' Certificate	2

Source: School organization records, 2004

The school has the support of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). The PTA decides on areas in which it could help the school. According to PTA, the current plan is to assist the school by:

1. raising funds to buy new library books and text book
2. buying of reference materials such as a set of children's encyclopedia
3. helping the governing body of the school in the major development projects, such as fencing, building maintenance and provision of furniture for the lower classes.

Figure 4.1: Organization Structure of school S1.



Source: School Organization of S1, 2004.

The organization structure shows that the village Chief is the supreme authority in the administrative structure of the community. The school is an important component of

the community. Figure 4.1 shows the channel of communication and the line of authority. It also shows the position of the AHT. There is no direct contact between the AHT and the school management committee.

The school is managed by a committee which is elected during the school's annual general meeting held in December after the school prize giving ceremony. The school's audited financial report is also presented and adopted during this meeting.

This structure also shows that there are three channels of communication between the teachers and the community. The first is through the HT and the Chairman/Manager. The second point of contact is through the medium of PTA. The third and the most important channel of communication is through the students. This structure provides the inspiration, support and security for the successful operation of the school. The structure shows the importance of the school in the community. The AHT of this school functions in this context.

Appointment and views of AHT-S 1

In response to the question "How were you appointed?" the AHT-S1 said:

The school was upgraded to level ED 5E. I was the most senior teacher amongst the members of staff. I was later confirmed in my appointment through the normal post processing process of MoE.

Source: Field notes, 2004.

Once a substantive post falls vacant, a qualified person from within the staff is appointed to act. The post is then advertised in the local print media and in the Public Service Official Circular. Any candidate interested in the advertised position has to apply by filling in form GP 142 within twenty one days from the date of appointment.

The AHT-S1 said that although she was doing the job of an executive teacher, she did not receive any training before she was appointed. Explaining what she actually does, she said:

I perform a wide range of activities: These include teaching full time, checking and guiding teachers, attending to and solving minor problems and looking after the school in the absence of the head teacher.

Source: Field notes, 2004

My observation showed that the AHT-S1 was basically a classroom teacher. She exercised her authority only when asked by the head teacher. She hesitated to exercise her authority as AHT even she was acting as head teacher. One day when I visited S1, the HT was away from the school. The AHT was aware that I was in her school. However, she did not come to inquire about my visit. She only came to the office when the school secretary informed her. I was there to collect some information from the head teacher. The AHT said that she could not provide the information I requested since the HT was away. She seemed unaware that the secretary could have provided information I was seeking. A number of issues emerge at this point. One relates to the leadership style of the HT. Second is the working relationship between the HT and the AHT.

Her duties, she said, included

Report writing, deputizing the HT and looking after the welfare of the students and teachers; undertaking specific tasks like looking after the time book, supervising duties, marking teachers' workbook and monitoring discipline

Source: Field notes, 2004

AHT-S1 agreed that there was an affective dimension to their work.

We deal with children and their parents. We talk about our children even after school hours. This shows that we have our job and the children at heart.

Source: Field notes: 2004

The AHT-S1 said that her job "motivates" and "excites" her. According to her:

It is sometimes also frustrating. The job helps me develop my leadership potential. I also feel that I am developing professionally. I also gain respect from my colleagues. Source: Field notes, 2004

The discussion with the AHT-S1 shows that she is a value based leader and is concerned about the welfare of the students in the school. She said that her responsibilities were given by the HT and Ministry of Education. The duty performed by her was guided by the 'position description' given by the Ministry of Education.

In response to the question 'what are the factors that influence your work?' She said:

In my work we are faced with both positive and negative influences. Influences come from parents, students, school committee and the community in the form of actions, compliments, judgments, relationships, school's achievements and personal and professional growth. Source: Field notes, 2004

She says that:

With good organization I am able to perform well both in my teaching responsibilities and my administrative work. The cooperation of the staff makes my work easier. The relationship with the HT is very important. With a cordial and professional relationship, there is good communication and my work is made easier. Source: Field notes, 2004.

"Experience" is the common term used by both the respondents to justify their readiness for their work. The AHT-S1 says that she was prepared for this job through her long experience and guidance from the past head teachers.

Moreover, she said that she had been developing her expertise through staff development programmes conducted by the HT and the Ministry of Education. She added that she improved her performance by reading and attending professional development meetings.

This AHT also confessed:

The HT attends courses but fails to fully inform and train the AHT and other members of the staff. He fails to disclose official documents like the corporate plan to the AHT. I think the HT is not very familiar with the documents himself and feels it is not important. The HT lacks confidence to implement the planned educational change. Source: Field notes, 2004.

She further added that since she was a fulltime classroom teacher, she could not do justice to her role as AHT. She suggested that regular workshops and training be conducted to upgrade her professional competency as well as that of other AHTs. She felt she was sandwiched between the expectations of the HT and those of the other teachers. She said:

Teachers feel that I am throwing my weight around. They are always ready to complain against the decisions made by me. They say they will seek clarification from the HT. Source: Field notes, 2004.

The research findings show that she displays positive attitude towards the overall function of the school and the way the HT manages the school. She told me that there are also some very good moments shared by the whole staff. She also gets encouragement by positive comments made by the HT:

1. during school assembly;
2. in school newsletters;
3. in staff meeting;
4. during school functions;
5. in the reports sent to Ministry of Education.

She felt that she deserved part of the credit as the school continued to produce good external examination results as shown in table 4.4 .

Table 4.4 External Examination results for five years for S1

Year	FIE No. Sat	FIE % Passed	FEYE No Sat	FEYE % Passed
2001	15	100	16	81
2002	24	100	18	89
2003	16	94	20	91
2004	8	100	19	95
2005	14	100	13	85

Source: MoE Examination records, 2005

The good result at both class 6 and class 8 levels over a period of time shows the teamwork and commitment of the whole staff. This is also a positive reflection on the leadership of the school including that of the AHT.

SCHOOL 2

BACKGROUND

The second school (S2) was established in 1931 by a Hindu community that has continued to manage it ever since. This is reflected in the Hindu school prayer that is recited by the students and teachers every morning. A prominent educationist from India was instrumental in establishing this school. The first school building started from a small and simple structure. However, it set the foundation for the two current learning institutions. As demand for education grew, the school experienced shortage of space. In 1975 a secondary section was established. The current secondary school roll is 550. The community now has provision for education from class 1 to form 7. The secondary school also offers vocational and training courses.

S2 has a student population of 440. Out of 13 teachers, the head teacher is in the ED 4C salary grade level, one AHT in the ED 5A grade, two executive teachers and 9 assistant teachers. The school also employs a clerk/typist and a gardener/caretaker.

Table 4.5 Staff Profile for S2

Code No	Post held	TPF	Qualification	Service in yrs
T O1	HT	....	TC	33
T 02	AHT	....	TC	29
T 03	ET	....	TC	27
T 04	ET	....	TC	26
T 05	T	.....	TC	23
T 06	T	.....	TC	18
T 07	T	.....	TC	5
T 08	T	.....	TC	5
T 09	T	.....	TC	4
T 10	T	.....	TC	4
T11	T	.....	TC	4
T12	T	.....	TC	4
T13	T	.....	TC	2

Source: School organization record 2004

The school is adequately staffed. However, no one has attained any higher qualification after graduating as a teacher from their respective teachers' colleges. They did not take advantage of several certificate, diploma and degree programs offered by the University of the South Pacific or other institutions in Fiji or abroad.

External examination result is used as a benchmark to determine the success of the school in Fiji. The Fiji Intermediate Examination Result for the last five years is given in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 showing FIEE results for five years for S2

Year	Number sat	% Passed
2001	63	81
2002	68	93
2003	90	88
2004	68	97
2005	86	99

Source: MoE Examination Records, 2005

The result shows that the pass rates of students in the school in the FIE has always been over 80 percent and the community is happy with this performance. The role of the community is highlighted in the following extract from FIEC, 2000.

The community-state partnership in the provision of education shows its limitations in rural areas. Rural communities are often unable to raise sufficient funds to supplement government grants in order to maintain an acceptable standard of school quality. In addition to providing and maintaining school buildings, rural communities must also provide housing for teachers. This places an added burden and compounds the disadvantages faced by rural schools. Source: FIEC 2000:168.

Table 4.7 shows the school facilities of S2.

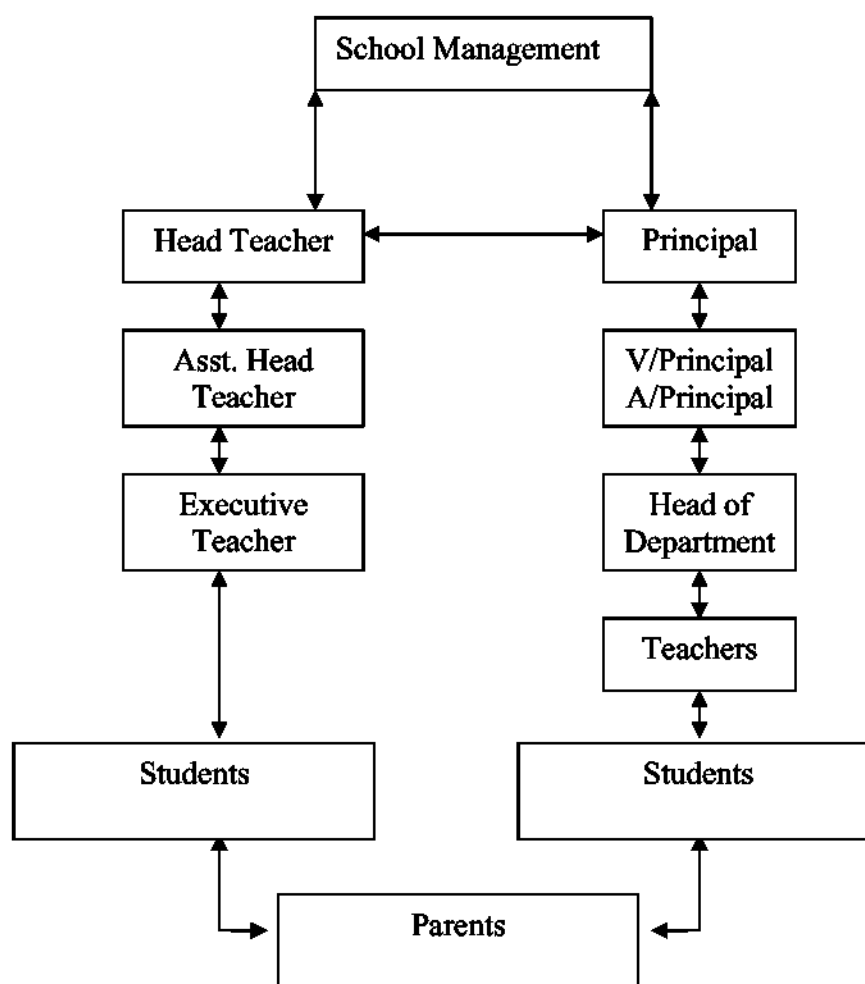
Table 4.7 School facilities of S2

Facility	Number	Remarks
Teachers Quarters	1	2 bedroom concrete house
Classrooms	12	2 rooms overcrowded
Toilet block	1	Satisfactory condition
Office/reception	1	Satisfactory
Staffroom	Nil	School badly needs one
Library	1	Very small
Kindergarten	1	Well resourced
Computer/printer	1	Second hand
Photocopier	1	New
Playground	2	Well maintained
Fencing & gate	Yes	Partly fenced

Source: School organization record 2004

The school facilities are old and need regular maintenance. The school also needs additional classrooms to meet the growing demand for places. There is a big influx of people around this school as displaced farmers are settling on leased residential lots offered by native landowners. The children from these families are enrolled in this school.

Figure 4.2 Organization structure of School S2



Source: School organization record: 2004

Figure 4.2 shows that both the primary and secondary schools are managed by the same school management committee.

Appointment and views of AHT S2

According to the AHT-S2:

The committee always compares the performance of the primary school with the secondary section. I have to share the responsibility of maintaining the standard with the HT and other teachers. Together, we, the HT and AHT have to ensure teachers and students perform to the expected level. We also have to ensure that we have the support of the parents. It is not always easy to get support from everyone. Source: Field notes, 2004.

A sample conversation with the AHT of this school is given in Exhibit 4.1.

Exhibit 4.1: A sample conversation piece with AHT CS2.

Q:	Were you prepared when you were offered the responsibility of being the AHT?
A:	Yes
Q:	How?
A:	I was experienced, had knowledge about administration and had confidence?
Q:	How did you prepare yourself for this job?
A:	I did Diploma in Educational Administration from USP.
Q:	How do you handle this job effectively?
A:	I discuss with the HT, share administration work and share decision Making?
Q:	Do you do any professional reading?
A:	Yes. Some reading.
Q:	What is your future plan?
A:	Do well as AHT. Learn all aspects of school administration and be ready to lead a school on my own.

Source: Field notes: 2004

The AHT-S2 raised concern that there is no training for them and the expectation from her is very high. She was also concerned about being a fulltime teacher apart from performing duties as an AHT. She also told me very confidently that she knew about all official records and assisted the HT in keeping them up-to-date. According to her, she was responsible for the admission register. At this point I asked her to bring the school's admission register. I found out that student information was entered correctly but the register was not updated for about seven years. This was just one case where the HT failed to provide the right role model and proper training to the AHT. The AHT believed that Admission Register was complete as long as all the new students enrolled in the school were entered in this register. She was however,

unaware of the updating process. This finding inspired me to look at relevant educational policies in detail. The references are given in Appendix 1.1.

The enrolment of students is done along very clear guidelines and its application is being closely monitored by Ministry of Education. It is common practice in primary schools that AHTs handle enrolment of students.

My study shows that the Admission Register at school S1 was not complete. It was not updated for over ten years. The HT of school S1 told me that:

I have been following what my predecessor did. I make sure all the students are enrolled when they join school. No body from the Education Office ever told me that this document was incomplete. Source: Field notes, 2004

When I asked him if he knew the importance of updating the register to show the progress of the children, he told me that no one ever told him about it. This responsibility is shared by the AHT. AHT-S1 was not given any specific guidance but she had some experience of filling in the register when she assisted the previous head teacher.

The study shows that it is very important for Education Officers to check and advise head teachers and AHTs on how to complete and update admission registers. The study shows that this duty was assigned to the AHTs but they were neither monitored nor trained to do so.

I discovered that the admission register in school S1 was not completed and updated for about eighteen years. This register was last cited and signed by an Education

Officer in 1998. In the second school, this was not done for the last ten years. The implications for this ignorance and neglect are very serious.

The discrepancies that I discovered were:

1. Pages were not numbered
2. Whole page was not used
3. Pencil was used to make entries
4. Date of admission was missing
5. Progress of children column was left blank
6. There was no evidence to test the accuracy of the record or numbers.

I also discovered that Education Officers actually signed these incomplete documents.

A signature is supposed to mean that the record is complete in respect of all required details. The HTs and AHTs were also not advised of the correct procedure of completing all aspects of this important document.

I was informed by the HTs of both the schools that they were never guided or trained to fill this document correctly. They just followed what their predecessors were doing. This was the case of 'the blind leading the blind'. The AHTs in these schools also followed the guidance given by these misguided HTs.

The AHT-S2 told me that she tries her best to be honest, trustworthy, display initiative and hold positive attitude. I agree with her that a lot more training and close monitoring is needed in order to get the maximum output from the AHTs.

The Table 4.8 shows a comparative analysis of time spent by the two AHTs under study. The time under study is between 8.00 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. The figures were obtained from official records, interview and observations.

Table 4.8: Time spent by the two AHTs during one day

Action	Time AHT- S1	% S1	Time AHT- S2	% S2
Meeting and greeting	10 mins	2	20 mins	3.8
Tea and Lunch	30	5.5	30	5.6
Supervision of class duties	15	3	15	2.8
Attend staff meeting/briefing	60	11	55	10.5
Assembly (am/pm)	30	5.5	25	4.7
Teaching and supervising own class	315	59	365	70
Counseling teachers about duties	5	1	3	0.6
Professional guidance to staff	5	1	10	2
Discussions/ briefing by HT	0	0	0	0
Conference with individual teachers	30	5.5	0	0
Leadership role	15	3	0	0
Performing other duties- opening rooms	20	3.5	0	0
Totals	535	100	523	100

Source: Field notes, 2005

It is clear from the findings that the AHTs are concentrating on teaching their own classes most of the time. It also shows that very little time (less than 15 percent) is spent on playing leadership role.

The AHTs of the two schools believe that they have an enormous amount to contribute to school improvement yet within their schools they are currently under-utilized as leaders. It is also clear that without proper investment in the training and development of these key leaders, motivation levels will continue to be variable as AHTs continue to see themselves as only being concerned with low level maintenance activities.

PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE ROLE OF AHTs

Clark and Peterson (1986), state that teachers have theories and belief systems that influence their perceptions, plans and actions. The perceptions of the role of AHTs from the following groups have been studied as part of this research study:

1. Head teachers
2. Assistant teachers
3. The AHTs of the case study schools
4. Ministry of education
5. Parents of case study schools
6. School managements of case study schools

The perceptions of the above research informants are summarized under the following four themes derived from the research questions.

1. Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs.
2. Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored.
3. Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with the research informants.
4. Views on current policy and practice.

PERCEPTIONS OF HEAD TEACHERS

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

The head teachers of both the schools agree that the existing practice is that the most meritorious teacher from within the existing staff is appointed to act as the AHT as soon as a vacancy arises. The position is advertised once it becomes vacant. The seniority of service, performance, qualification and relevant experience form the foundation of the merit of a teacher. The qualification and performance of junior teachers are normally not taken into account. All qualified applicants who apply for the position are considered by the post processing machinery of the Ministry of Education. The teacher considered to be the most meritorious after this vetting is then given provisional promotion. The unsuccessful candidates are then given 21 days to appeal against the decision of the Ministry. The appeal is then heard by the Fiji Public

Service Appeals Board (FPSAB). The FPSAB, after considering all the facts presented from both parties, gives its judgment.

Once appointed, AHTs are expected to be provided on the job training at the school by the head teacher. In the Fiji Education system, there is neither provision to send the appointee to be trained in an institution nor a training programme available for the induction of these new appointees. Whatever training or induction is given by the school head teacher is done on an 'ad hoc' basis. The head teachers admit that they are themselves products of this unstructured system. The grades of schools and the various levels of AHTs in these schools are given in Table 4.9 in more detail for easier understanding of the system. This came into effect as a result of a Job Evaluation exercise in 1997.

Table 4.9 School Levels and AHTs in Lautoka/Nadi/Yasawa District

School level	ED 1B	ED 2C	ED 3C	ED 4C	ED 5E	ED 6D	Pri	Total	
Level of AHT	4A/5D	5C/5B	5B/5A	5A	6A	–	–		
No of AHT	2	2	2	1	1	0			
No. of Sch	4	3	10	19	29	16	5	86	
No of AHT	8	6	20	19	29	0	0	82	
Av. Service	33 yrs	31	29	27	22				

Source: Ministry of Education- Staffing Register, Lautoka/Yasawa District, 2004

In the above classifications, the highest level of the AHT is 4A and the lowest level is 6A. The table also shows that the average year of experience of the lowest level of AHT is twenty two years. The average service to reach the highest level of AHT is 33 years. The above information shows that 'length of service' is a strong factor in

determining the merit of a candidate for possible promotion. This supports my findings that the AHTs were appointed on the strength of the length of their service.

The head teachers also agree that the promotion of AHTs depends quite a lot on their past performance, their marketability and the confidence the decision makers have on their ability to perform the duties of the advertised post effectively. The HT of S1 feels the management should also be consulted during the appointment of AHTs.

Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored.

The information provided in Exhibit 4.2 shows the principle accountabilities for assistant head teachers. The goals, strategies and performance indicators are also tabulated. The performance of AHTs is monitored using this given framework. This has been reproduced from the official document from school S2. This was derived from MoE guidelines.

According to the HT of S2, there are several factors that contribute positively and/or negatively to the overall performance of the AHT. Relevant qualification, successful experiences and training received under the guidance of a successful head teacher lays the foundation for successful performance. The leadership style of the head teacher determines whether the AHT has the liberty and freedom to initiate new ideas, draw on resources and make decisions without fear of interference by the head teacher. The AHT must have the confidence that the decision or commitment made by the AHT would be endorsed by the head teacher.

The HT of S1 said:

The duty statement or the job description gives the framework of the job. Specific duties are decided by the school policies and organization structure, location of the school. Gender of the AHT is another strong factor that has a lot of bearing on the type and degree of duties delegated to the AHT. The confidence of the head in the AHT or suitability for certain duties that needs to be performed also affects the overall performance of the school. The willingness, initiative, knowledge and past experience of the AHT contributes positively towards successful accomplishment of assigned duties.

Source: Field notes, 2004

During my discussions with the HTs of these schools, it was revealed that:

The performance of the AHTs is monitored by results produced. This can be verified using a checklist, monitoring performance through relevant records and reports. These determine the quality of work. Opinion of the subordinates is another powerful indicator of the marketability of the AHT. Success is also determined through time management, timely accomplishment of tasks and appreciation by others of the performance of the AHT.

Source: Field notes, 2004

Exhibit 4.2 Head Teachers responsibilities in monitoring school effectiveness

1. Has each teacher a scheme of work to follow and is the teacher following that scheme? The head teacher should see that entries in work books correspond with entries in Scheme of Work.
2. Is the teaching sound or are subjects being skimmed over?
3. Are the faults of children being corrected and is individual attention given to weaker pupils?
4. Has the teacher prepared all the necessary apparatus?
5. Is the teacher merely talking instead of doing practical work with the pupils?
6. Am I paying special attention to general weaknesses in the school and giving special attention to any one class which requires such attention?
7. What do I myself know of the pupils themselves, their weaknesses and difficulties, and how these are being approached by the class teacher?
8. Have I discussed Education Officers' reports with my assistant teachers?
9. Do I check regularly to see that all my staff is carrying out all instructions given by Education Officers?
10. Is the class teacher correcting all written work thoroughly?

Source: Education Gazette Term 1 1958

As far back as the 1950s, the Education Gazette 1/58 (Exhibit 4.2) gives a very useful account of the head teachers' responsibilities. However, it must be noted that many of

these responsibilities are now being delegated to or shared by the AHTs and executive teachers. Therefore, smart head teachers monitor the performance of all their teachers through their deputies. They need to seek answers to the questions posed in Exhibit 4.2.

The views of the research informants find support in the findings of Louis and Miles (1990) that principals in successful schools 'empower' the other members of their staff by sharing power with and delegating authority and resources to them. On reflecting on the performance and lack of professionalism of one AHT, the HT of S1 said:

One morning the AHT blasted a teacher for coming late in front of the staff. This was reported to the HT by the other staff members and confirmed by the teacher concerned. The AHT was counseled. Source: Field notes, 2004.

The HT of S1 was sympathetic towards his AHT and said:

We must not forget that the AHTs are full time classroom teachers and they are delegated many other duties with very short notice. There is a lot of demand on their time. No one asks the AHT whether they are free to undertake the additional responsibility. Source: Field notes, 2004.

The HT of S 2 said:

AHT is generally a professional school leader and disciplinary officer. There is no fixed guideline given on the evaluation of the performance of AHTs. There is very little guidance given in this area by the education officers. Source: Field notes, 2004.

The above views find support in the findings by Weller and Weller (2002), that the main role of the AHT is considered to be one of ensuring stability and order in the school, a maintenance rather than development or leadership function.

Exhibit 4.3 Principle Accountabilities for the Assistant Head Teacher

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 1 Planning and Policy Develops action plans for administrative functions under his/her charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Strengthen system for checking scheme of work , workbook details and coverage of curriculum ♦ Improve present system for checking exercise books ♦ Develop strategies for monitoring Canteen, Tools, Utensils, Science Apparatus/ Equipment/Sanitary Supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ System developed by Wk.2.Term I ♦ System improved by Wk.4.Term I ♦ Strategies developed by week 6.Term I

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 2 Whole School Responsibility Supervises the internal operation of the school program under delegated authority of the Head Teacher in order to benefit the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Check the following for classes delegated: 1. Schemes of Work 2. Work Book/Coverage Lesson notes 3. Exercise Books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover Neatness Writing Marking Correction Coverage ♦ Assignments/Research Paper ♦ Attendance Register ♦ Broadcast Notes ♦ Awards Book ♦ Club Attendance Records ♦ Blue Prints/Exam questions ♦ Analysis of Examinations ♦ Assessment Records ♦ Inventory Ensure the following: ♦ Cleanliness and maintenance of classrooms ,footpath verandah, flower gardens and Notice Boards Co-ordinate external DOQS program ♦ Supervise the conduct of all assemblies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Scheme of Work checked Wk.3 Term I ♦ Workbook & lesson notes checked every Thursday ♦ At least five Exercise Books per stream checked daily ♦ Teachers advised in writing once a week ♦ Checked once every term Checked every Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Attendance Register ♦ Broadcast notes ♦ Award Records ♦ Club Attendance ♦ Checked as required ♦ Assessment Records checked once a term ♦ Reconcile once a term Neatness maintained at all times ♦ External DOQS Program co-ordinated as scheduled ♦ Assemblies supervised

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 3 Teaching Responsibilities Prepares appropriate work program and carries out teaching as delegated by the Head Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Teach class stream allocated in all subject areas ♦ All teaching to be group oriented ♦ Develop children's confidence in public speaking ♦ Develop children's writing skills (classes 3 to 8) ♦ Develop research skills Class 5 to 8) ♦ Identify and assist weaker students ♦ Improve overall class/exam results ♦ Expand the Present Award System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A total of seven hours of teaching per day done ♦ Teaching in groups done ♦ Three morning talks and three written speeches per term given by each student and assessed. ♦ Three journal entries written by each student every term and assessed ♦ At least one Searching for Information class taken every fortnight ♦ At least one Research Paper written by each child every term and assessed. ♦ Weak students identified by Week 7 of term I ♦ Strategies to assist them developed by Week 9 ♦ Overall formal/informal performance and exam results improved ♦ Annual Awards given for achievements.

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 4 Staff Management and Development Assists the Head Teacher in developing and implementing staff development programs in order to improve staff and student performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Cluster meetings conducted once a month ♦ Professional needs identified by Wk.7. Term I ♦ Development Programs finalized ♦ Conduct in-house workshops for teachers ♦ Coordinate the assessment component for pupils ♦ Monitor student performance for classes allocated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Cluster meetings conducted ♦ Professional needs identified by Week 7 Term I ♦ Development program finalized by Week 9 ♦ Workshop for teachers conducted ♦ Assessment components revised and developed by Week 3 ♦ Student performance monitored

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 5 Controlling and Reporting Assists the Head Teacher in the control of physical and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Supervise the following: Operation of the Canteen Management of tools Availability of sanitary supplies Management of utensils Text Book Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Records checked and stocktaking carried out last week of every term

human resources of the school	Library	
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Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 6 Student Needs * Directs action to eliminate discrimination and harassment to ensure equal participation of students in learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Monitor the application of rules of conduct for your cluster ♦ Ensure your cluster develops and implements programs for slow learners ♦ Encourage parent counseling for slow learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Class log book/diary checked for reports and records. ♦ Development of remedial program by Week 8 Term I and implementation by week 10 Term I checked and monitored ♦ Records of parent counseling checked

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 7 Behavior Management Maintains a high level of professionalism in the school and ensures that advice is given within the official boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Develop and maintain a strict professional code of ethics ♦ Maintain consistency in decision making ♦ Follow guidelines for AHTs issued by the Head Teacher ♦ Log all advise /discussions ♦ Keep within the ambit of delegated authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Code of ethics developed ♦ Consistency in decision making evident ♦ HT's guidelines followed ♦ Discussions recorded ♦ Limitations maintained

Goals	Strategies	Performance Indicators
Principle Accountability 8 Relationships Fosters a positive team culture that facilitates the fulfillment of school goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Follow administrative procedures, requirements and guidelines ♦ Disseminate positive information to staff ♦ Consult H.T. on interpretation of rules and guidelines ♦ Develop a team approach in resolving issues ♦ Provide support and guidance to all staff to enable them carry out their delegated duties ♦ Carry out regular counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Administrative procedures followed. ♦ Staff well informed ♦ H.T. consulted ♦ Staff members involved in solving problems. ♦ Staff supported and guided. ♦ Counseling carried out and recorded

Source: CS2 Principle Accountabilities of AHT, 2004.

The AHTs of S1 and S2 were delegated responsibility for the welfare and maintenance of discipline of all the students in the school. As such, the AHTs have to be well versed with the children's rights and responsibilities. They are expected to

deal with disciplinary cases within the guidelines of this provision. The following extract helps the AHT to better understand the students and gives guidance in dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Swami Satyamayananda (2000) says

No child understands violent methods, be he Indian, American or Chinese. A child undergoing traumatic experiences inevitably will carry those traumas into adulthood, where they will crystallize and cause endless troubles. All this has been studied and presented in hundreds of books on child psychology.

The relationship between the teacher and a student should be based on love, not the fear of violence. The teacher needs to have a clear identity as a teacher. His subject area must be clear to him and to his students. Imparting of knowledge of any kind through the medium of love, understanding, patience and sacrifice will yield quick results.

Source: Hinduism Today, 2000:52

In March 2002, the High Court of Fiji at Lautoka declared that the infliction of corporal punishment in schools in pursuance of the Ministry of Education's guidelines is unconstitutional and unlawful and that it conflicts with section 25(1) of the Constitution Amendment Act 1997. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, through its 42 articles protects the rights of the child. Some relevant examples are:-

- ARTICLE 19. No one should hurt you in any way. Adults should make sure that you are protected from abuse, violence and neglect. Even your parents have no right to hurt you.
- ARTICLE 28. You have the right to education. Primary education must be free and you must go to primary school. You should also be able to go to secondary school.
- ARTICLE 37. Even if you do something wrong, no one is allowed to punish you.

The debate on whether to re-introduce corporal punishment in schools is continuing.

The two teacher unions in Fiji have opposing views. While one union supports

corporal punishment to maintain discipline in schools, the other opposes it. According to Seona Smiles:

A student who can not read is not going to magically make sense of it all by being belted on the back of the head to make his brains work better.

Source: Fiji Times, 2005:11

The AHTs of the two schools said they should be given more training as counselors as primary schools in Fiji do not have the provision for school counselors. As mentioned earlier, the AHTs can play their counseling role more effectively if they are aware of the rights and responsibilities of the students.

Leadership style and relationships of AHTs with the head teachers

These HTs are of the view that senior teachers appointed as AHTs are not necessarily very effective leaders. Therefore, the other staff members sometimes do not have the confidence in the decisions made by the AHTs and the style of leadership provided. They feel their AHTs lack relevant training. This view was also expressed by the assistant teachers I interviewed in the two schools. For example, school S2 has a policy that “all defaulters and cases of indiscipline have to be dealt with in the office”.

However, one day the AHT-S2 started dealing with the above cases in full view of all the children. She started scolding and punishing the children. She was reminded by the HT to stop that and to follow the approved procedure.

Source: Field notes, 2004.

Another frank view expressed by the HT of S2 was:

When the AHT fails to perform at the expected level, personality clash creeps in. Reminders to perform better by the head teacher may be interpreted as victimization by the AHT.

Source: Field notes, 2004.

The head teachers expressed the view that the leadership styles employed by the AHTs are not consistent. They also felt that “good professional outlook and maturity” are key ingredients needed in AHTs. The HT of S1 feels that successful AHTs “are eager to learn, have interest in education and are dynamic in view and action”. This view finds support in the research by Southworth (1998) that leadership styles are important because of the direct impact they have on how individuals within a particular team feel and the degree to which they are motivated to perform at higher levels and, therefore, have a greater impact on school standards.

Views on current policy and practice

HT of S2 feels that seniority in service is not the correct yardstick for measuring the merit of a person aspiring to be appointed as AHT. Younger teachers who are well educated, eager to learn new concepts and ideas and take interest in whole school responsibilities are better candidates for the AHT positions.

HT of S1 believes that the current provision whereby the unsuccessful AHTs can seek redress through the Fiji Public Service Appeals Board ensures that the most meritorious candidate gets promoted. He also feels the view of the school management needs to be taken into account as well.

There is also a need for senior and promising teachers to be groomed to assume future leadership roles. This view finds support in Mertz’s work (2000), that there is a need for specialist training for those who see assistant headship as a career. Mertz goes on to say that people skills, communication skills, knowledge of leadership theory,

techniques for improving the curriculum and instruction and working with teams are considered as important elements in the work of AHTs.

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER COLLEAGUES

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

The four teachers I interviewed displayed frustration about the quality of leadership provided by the AHTs. One teacher from S2 said:

These people are post crazy. Once they get the post they do not work hard to justify the extra money they get. Ministry of Education should only allow people with the right capability to be appointed AHT.
Source: Field notes: 2004.

The teachers felt that the appointees should be trained before taking up their posts. Most of the views were based on the human relations aspect of the AHTs. Another teacher from S2 felt that only “capable” persons should be appointed as AHTs. This can be judged by their ability and confidence to supervise other teachers and must display fairness, honesty and be approachable.

It was also evident from the views expressed that teachers preferred better qualified AHTs over teachers who are appointed on the basis of seniority only. On this issue, Southworth (1998), says that AHTs occupy a position which lacks explicit definition and they suffer uncertainty about their role. Kent (1989) believes the AHTs occupy a difficult position and therefore teachers find it difficult to understand or appreciate the role of AHTs.

Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored.

Discussions with the other teachers in these schools showed that they feel the success of the AHT in the school depends on the extent of their support. If the staff does not have confidence in the AHT they may cease to cooperate. Most teachers accept the fact that the AHT takes over control of the school when the HT is away. It is the duty of the AHT to monitor the discipline of students and attendance of teachers. A teacher from S1 said that in her effort to maintain the support from the staff, the AHT does not hesitate to give concession to the rest of the teachers.

I asked two teachers from S1 what they felt about their AHT. They said the AHT was a very nice person. According to them, the job of the AHT is to mark teachers' work book once a week, conduct the assembly and supervise duties. They do not see the AHT as a professional leader. This view is consistent with Bogue (1985) when he says leadership is about vision and influence. He goes on to say that leadership is a process by which one sets certain standards and expectations to serve others and influence the actions of others to behave in what is considered a desirable way.

The following guidelines about the preparation of Teacher's Work Book is given in the Education Gazette 3/58 No. 2.

Exhibit 4.4 Guidelines on preparation of Workbook

1. Every teacher must have a work book and it is to contain a record of all lessons or other work proposed for each day. While preparing the work book, every teacher must bear in mind the aims of each lesson.
2. All entries should be completed before the commencement of the week's work and are to be clearly dated. The head teacher or AHT, shall sign the work book and his signature will be held to mean, unless he has written adverse comments in the book, that he approves the plan of work, that he believes the

- book has been prepared in accordance with regulations, and it corresponds with the scheme of Work and Time Table.
3. All entries in the work book should be so set out that they show at a glance exactly what the teacher intends to do during each period each day. From each entry it should be possible to question the pupils on the subject matter of the lesson. Any book which does not give this information is not a work book. Some of the most notable omissions are the exact detail of games, singing, gardening, drawing, handwork and drill.
 4. When entries involve written work on the part of the pupils, dates of such work in pupils' exercise books must correspond with the date of the lesson entered in the work book.

Source: Education Gazette Term 3 1958

Every primary school teacher in Fiji, including HTs and AHTs are to prepare a workbook, which is a plan of a week's work prepared and submitted to the supervisor for approval. The HTs and AHTs monitor curriculum implementation through this document.

My study shows that many of the guidelines given above were not followed. However, these were approved by the AHTs of both the schools. This proves that the AHTs are not familiar with the importance of this document and how to monitor its correct use.

A teacher from S2 believes the assessment of the performance by the head teacher is not very transparent. This teacher also said that the head teacher should get the opinion of other teachers on the performance of the AHT through questionnaire. This may be the best appraisal of the performance for the AHT.

Leadership style and relationships of AHTs with the assistant teachers

Teachers from both the schools feel the challenge of the AHT is to meet the expectation of the head teacher, teachers, students, parents and the community at large. The performance of the AHT is always compared with that of the head teacher.

While the HT enjoys the confidence of having the authority, the AHT is always mindful of being a subordinate and lacks confidence. The AHT makes sure the HT is not bypassed in making new commitments and makes sure the comments are always in line with the rules laid down by the HT. This observation is consistent with the work of Weber (1947) who argued that bureaucratic leadership is the most efficient form of management that is largely concerned with planning, organizing, staffing and controlling.

The teachers came out frankly that they always have a lot of respect for age and seniority of post holders. A teacher of S2 said:

The professional relationship of my AHT is somewhat collegial in nature. She talks to the teachers whenever she finds an opportunity. Source: Field notes, 2004.

Another view expressed was that

The AHT is too close to the head teacher. The AHT spends a lot of time with the head teacher in the office at the expense of the class teaching time. In such cases, the teacher next door has to supervise two classes. Source: Field notes, 2004.

Yet another important issue highlighted during the interview was that the teachers show reluctance in taking the class taught by the AHT in the previous year. This is because the AHT does not cover the scheme of work adequately. Performance of teachers teaching responsibilities can easily be assessed using student exercise books.

The two AHTs under study agree that we can have the best curriculum in the world but if there are no effective systems within each school for translating that curriculum into effective teaching and learning, not a great deal will be achieved. The two AHTs

also agree that it is their delegated responsibility to manage curriculum and instruction. However, my findings showed that they lacked understanding of the new initiatives towards curriculum development and assessment.

Fiji education system is very much examination oriented with two external examinations at primary level. There is a widely held view that the present examination system does not facilitate innovative teaching.

Contributing to this topic, Sadler (2000:344), observed that external, or public, examinations are a significant feature in Fiji's education system. Except for the first five years of primary schooling, they dominate what goes on in the class rooms; how teachers teach and assess their students; how parents, officials in the Ministry of Education and others evaluate schools; and what students do and how they fare in life after they leave school. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the AHTs to ensure that the teachers are delivering the curriculum effectively rather than teaching the students to pass examinations only.

Views on current policy and practice

The teachers interviewed know very well that incompetent AHTs lack confidence and give concession to teachers to gain their support and sympathy. The teachers feel that younger teachers with good leadership qualities should be appointed as AHT and do not agree with the current practice of appointing long serving teachers. For example, a teacher from S2 came out very strongly that

The current practice is not very favourable because it does not consider an applicant's qualification; rather the years-of-service seems to be the strongest factor. Normally such people are stagnant and impose colonial style of

leadership on the new generation of teachers. This is a major cause of conflict in many schools.

Source: Field notes, 2004.

This view is consistent with the findings of Southworth (1998) that AHTs mainly deal with discipline of students and therefore, their management and leadership experiences are not comprehensive enough.

PERCEPTIONS OF ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHERS

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the AHTs of both the schools were appointed because of their seniority in service. Therefore, they feel experience prepares them adequately for the leadership roles. They also showed confidence in their head teachers and accepted them as good role models.

The AHTs felt that the appointment authorities should give a fair opportunity to women on leadership positions. However, they are also aware that women are taken as “second choice” for leadership positions in Fiji. Some women, however, take advantage of the “seniority” criterion and got appointed as AHTs.

The AHTs agree with the findings by Siwatibau et al. (2005) that women lack confidence; are reluctant to take leadership roles; they are happy to support while men take leadership; they need encouragement; tend to be content with their given situation and prefer to stay in the background.

Duties performed by the AHTs and how their performance is monitored

Both the AHTs under study are of the view that:

Head teachers make the AHTs do the dirty job. The HT usually asks the AHT to deal with students who owe school fees. He gives directive to the AHT to be firm and demand students to pay. By this action the AHT is not popular with the students and parents. Source: Field notes, 2004

Another example is using the school assembly to communicate with the community where the AHT is made the escape goat. AHT-S2 said

My school committee has a rule that soccer players have to clear the ground by sunset. They have asked the HT to monitor this. However, the HT always asks the AHT to make this announcement to the children. The children have to take this message home. The community interprets it as the AHT showing his authority. They feel if the HT is not concerned, why is the AHT doing this? Is he trying to be in the good books of the management? Field notes: 2004

The same applies to notices which the AHT implemented as part of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) requirements. For example, when the AHT was asked to put up a “No Trespassing” board in the compound it was interpreted as challenging the parents who perceived the school as a part of the school community. The AHT-S2 also said

When the village soccer club wishes to hold bazaar, the rule is that they have to produce consent letter from the Management. When we demand for this sometimes they insist and ask “Don’t you trust me”? The AHT is asked to take ground fees and give furniture. This also leads to ill feeling between the parties. The HT makes the rules with the Management but is not always on hand to implement this. Source: Field notes, 2004

Rules regarding the use of the school facilities by the community are made by the HT but implemented by the AHT. Often the latter becomes unpopular if the demands of the community, such as use of furniture and water, are not met. To avoid embarrassment, the AHT-S1 often ignores the rules made by the HT. She said that it is difficult to follow all the rules. She felt that the HT ought to be more flexible in the

rules regarding the use of school facilities and provide her the authority to make decisions.

The AHT-S2 is in charge of ground maintenance and has to monitor the workers employed to clean the compound. When the AHT demands better performance, and checks fuel use the workers come up with complaints such as the AHT is “too ‘bossy’ and demands too much”.

The AHT of CS2 said

I am supposed to implement the policies of the school. One such duty is to check the Scheme of Work. When I demand for certain standard of work, the teachers say that the HT and the previous AHT was satisfied with whatever they were doing. They also show the signature of the HT to confirm that the HT had approved the incomplete Scheme of Work in the past.

Source: Field notes, 2004

While citing another case, the AHT-S2 said

The school policy says that the teachers should not sit while teaching. When I point this out, I am seen as someone trying to throw my authority. They feel I am too colonial. The same happens when I remind teachers to make new charts. Teachers also overlook subjects like Art & Craft, PE and Music. When I remind them about this, they give excuses that they have to produce good result in external examinations. They also hesitate to do extra duties like afternoon classes. They also hardly come to school early to supervise duties.

Source: Field notes, 2004

The findings show that there is confusion and role conflict in the duties performed by the HTs and AHTs. In the cases of S2, the AHT has been practicing bureaucratic leadership. This view finds support in Sharma (2002) that bureaucratic governance still exists in most of our schools in Fiji and it is here to stay. This style of leadership is based on a hierarchical authority structure. When the HT of S2 sees any problems such as student discipline and teacher punctuality, he asks the AHT to attend to them.

In another instance, AHT-S2 explained

Younger teachers feel they know more. They make faces when advice is given to them. However, this attitude changes as they get more experienced with the system. Source: Field notes, 2004

The role played by the AHT is often very unpredictable. AHT-S2 said

I viewed a case of bullying by a student as serious and referred him to the head teacher. The head teacher listened to the story and took the case as insignificant. It was very embarrassing for me.
Source: Field notes, 2004

Use of school phone is another thorny issue according to AHT-S2.

Our school rule says that no teacher is to use the school phone during lesson hours. As a matter of procedure, they come to me with request. When I decline the request, they go straight to the head teacher. He allows the use of the phone. I get branded as 'non cooperative'.
Source: Field notes, 2004

Teachers take advantage of the vulnerable position of the AHT. For example, AHT-S2 said

Often the head teacher has to go out on school matters. Some teachers come to the AHT to seek permission to leave early soon after the head teacher leaves. The head teacher then questions me saying why leave was not taken when he was in the school. During other times, the head teacher approves early departure of teachers but does not advise the AHT.
Source: Field notes, 2004

The AHT-S1 said

My HT is also a full time classroom teacher. His class work is sometimes not up to date. The teachers know this. When I demand certain standard like all the books to be marked, they ask me to first ensure the head teacher's work is up to date. They demand that the rule be applied uniformly to everyone.
Source: Field notes, 2004

One important area of responsibility that HTs and AHTs have to perform is the checking of pupils' exercise books. To assist them become well acquainted with the attainments of each class, it is recommended that HTs should examine one or more sets of exercise books of pupils from one class each week, and check whether the pupils are doing satisfactory work or not. He should also check whether the assistant teachers are attending to what is required.

Education Gazette 3/62 gives the guidelines as given in Exhibit 4.5.

Exhibit 4.5 Marking of student exercise books

1. Marking written work carefully, neatly and correctly.
2. Keeping all marking up to date.
3. Checking whether pupils do the 'corrections' or not.
4. Checking to see that the work is neat and well set out.
5. Checking to avoid wastage of paper.
6. Checking to see that there is improvement in the standard of neatness and penmanship.

Source: Education Gazette Term 3 1962

My enquiry at school S1 shows that no such records are kept. There was no other record available with the AHT to show that there was continuous monitoring of the performance of the teachers. AHT-S2 told me that individual written record of performance of the teachers was not kept. Any shortcomings were communicated to the teachers either during meetings or informally to individual teachers. The only evidence of supervisory record available at S2 was a blank form which contained a checklist for checking children's exercise books.

Thus, the AHT has to cope with a lot of dilemma. Louis and Miles (1990) propose collaborative school cultures which allow working and learning to release their potential with opportunity for experimentation, participation and the appreciation of individual differences.

The leadership style and self reflection by AHTs

The issue of value-based leadership emerges once again. Leadership occurs within a group context and involves goal attainment. Thus, according to Southworth (1998), school leadership can be described as a process whereby a school head influences students, teachers and the other members of the school community to achieve a common goal or set of goals.

This response from AHT-S1 sums up the view when she says

With good organization, I am able to do my work well; that is my teaching work and my administrative work. The cooperation of the staff makes my work easier. The relationship with the head is very important. With a cordial but professional relationship, there is good communication and work is made easier. Source: Field notes, 2004

AHT-S1 further adds

The community does not understand the role of an AHT and therefore lacks appreciation. On the other hand, Ministry of Education appreciates my performance because they are well aware of the duties of an AHT. I feel that my work is appreciated as I get 'encouragement' and 'respect' from the officials. Source: Field notes, 2004

AHT-S1 also says

I enjoy a 'pleasant' relationship with the head teacher, who is 'very considerate and approachable'. We communicate well. He also provides guidance. We talk about issues regarding staff, school and children. Source: Field notes, 2004

AHT-S1 believes that

Leading by example is the way to influence the staff to perform well. While being approachable, I try to ensure that I am firm with my decisions.

Source: Field notes, 2004

In the words of Northhouse (2001), leadership has been defined in terms of the power relationship that exists between the leaders and followers. It is also worth noting that in the present context of turbulent educational environment, it is difficult to manage schools using bureaucratic and collegial leadership approaches alone. Sanga (2005) advises that leadership is contextual and adds that the desirability of leadership is determined by the values of the 'context' and 'culture'. In these contexts, leading by influencing seems appropriate and both the AHTs and their HTs felt the same.

Views on current policy and practice

While all schools have to comply with the same government policies, school level policies and practices differ. The latter is determined by precedents set in the past. For example, one school starts the day with an assembly. The students in the other school commence their private studies. A prayer bell is rung at eight o'clock in both the case study schools and everyone recites their respective school prayers in their classrooms.

Homework given to students is very much part of the schooling process and different schools devise their own policies. However, it is also a subject of controversy as parents and students often complain either for insufficient or at times excessive homework given to students. Both the AHTs said that monitoring homework in their respective schools was part of their responsibility.

The schools are expected to adopt or adapt the provisions of Ministry of Education circular in order to make “homework” more meaningful in their schools. In other words, the schools are expected to develop their own homework policy aligned to the overall guide provided by the MoE.

The Fiji Education Commission Report 2000 gives a very relevant summary on this topic that supports the findings of this study.

The quality of learning can be enhanced by well-designed homework. It is apparent, however, that few schools have an explicit homework policy. Teachers tend to give homework on an ad hoc basis, which means that sometimes students get a lot, and sometimes none. Homework tends to be finishing off class work, rather than being well structured or planned.

Source: FIEC 2000:96

The MoE circular asked HTs to set clear guidelines on homework and, where necessary, conduct staff development programs. The AHT of CS2 told me that she does not have sufficient time to monitor homework given by the teachers in her school. She says that she has a class of her own and hardly finds time to monitor the work of other teachers.

AHT-S2 feels they are sandwiched between the expectation from the HT and the perceptions of other teachers. AHT-S2 agrees with AHT-S1 that

Teachers feel the AHT is throwing her weight around. They are always ready to complain against the decisions made by the AHT. They threaten to seek clarification from the head teacher. Source: Field notes, 2004

AHT-S1 says that:

It is encouraging to see that Fiji Public Service Commission and Ministry of Education recognize the contributions made by women and are trying to create gender balance by appointing more deserving women to leadership positions. However, more women should be encouraged and challenged to take up roles as AHTs. Source: Field notes, 2004

In this regard Southworth (1998) advises us that organizations can no longer thrive with only two or three executives who provide effective leadership from the top of an organization. According to Torralba (1996), collegial government seems to be a good alternative system of government for schools which can easily function in a school's bureaucratic structure.

PERCEPTIONS OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

Ministry of Education views AHTs as qualified for the job and expects them to have the confidence to carry out their duties effectively. The Ministry believes that the head teachers are there to provide all necessary information and guidance.

This view finds support in the promotion process that ensures the most meritorious applicant gets promoted. Appointment and promotion of teachers in the civil service is guided by Public Service Act 1999 Part 2(4) under Regulation 5 and within the provisions of section 140 of the Constitution.

The promotion process of the AHT is guided by the "Recruitment and Promotion Policy" of the Fiji Public Service Act 1999, Part 2 (4), which reads:

- The recruitment of persons to a state service, the promotion of persons within the state service and the management of a state must be based on the following principles:
- Government policies should be carried out effectively and efficiently with due economy.
- Appointments and promotions should be on the basis of merit.
- Men and women equally, and members of all ethnic groups should have adequate and equal opportunities for training and advancement.

- The composition of the state service at all levels should reflect as closely as possible the ethnic composition of the population, taking account, when appropriate, of occupational preference.

According to Section 140 of the Constitution of Fiji, and Subsection 3 of Regulation 5

of Public Service Regulations 1999, the following work-related qualities are taken

into account in making an assessment for promotion:

- Skills and abilities.
- Qualifications, training and competencies.
- Standard of work performance.
- Capacity to perform at the level required.
- Demonstrated potential for further development.
- Ability to contribute to team performance.

The job description of the AHT, as cited in the Ministry of Education Performance

Management System (PMS) document shows the following:

NATURE and SCOPE

- *Reports and Relationships.*
The assistant head teacher reports to the head teacher. Reporting to the assistant head teacher are the executive teacher(s) and the teachers.
- *Role of the school.*
The school is responsible for the education and training of pupils in accordance with the policies of the Ministry of Education as well as in response to the needs and aspirations of the people.
- *Role of the Position*
The position is responsible for the allocation of teaching duties as well as administrative responsibilities delegated by the head teacher.
- *Role of Subordinates.*
Executive teachers and teachers report to the position. AHT is responsible for implementing courses in order to improve students' performance.
- *Interpersonal Relationships*
The assistant head teacher supports the head teacher in maintaining good and healthy working relationships among staff members, colleagues and other personnel to benefit students.
- *Challenges and Developments.*
Assist the head teacher in ensuring the effective day to day operation of the school in the light of the challenges and resource constraints.

Source: Fiji: Competency Based Performance Management Programme;
1999:7

Under the current process, among other things, the applicants are scrutinized for ‘suitability for duties’, ‘work related qualities’ and ‘the relative capacity to perform the duties’ of the advertised post.

I tried to test this perception on 28 July, 2004 with thirty nine head teachers when they gathered to attend a workshop. This I did by a short brain-storming session. Table 4.10 shows a sample of the questions and quality of responses received from these professional leaders.

Table 4.10 Result of brain-storming exercise

No	Area of question	% of correct answer
1	Name of Chief Executive Officer, Education	87%
2	Name of Director Primary	72%
3	Chairman of FIEC panel 2000	26%
4	Period covered by ACR -GP 36	62%
5	Role of Fiji Education Sector Programme	62%
6	President of Fiji Head Teachers Association	82%

Source: MoE Workshop data, 2004

The HTs are supposed to be number one teachers, professional leaders and well versed with the programmes, persons and projects directly affecting the primary education system. The result shows only 26 percent could get the name of the chairman of FIEC panel correct and eighty seven percent got the name of the Chief Executive Officer, Education correct. Seventy two percent knew the name of Director of Primary Education and eighty two percent correctly answered the name of the then President of Fiji Head Teachers Association.

Table 4.11: Analysis of Brainstorming Exercise for AHTs

No	Area of Question	% Correct District A (38)	% Correct District B (31)
1	Name of CEO Education	84	71
2	Director Primary	24	42
3	Period of reporting for ACR GP36	45	74

4	President of Fiji HTA	34	58
5	Countersigning officer for teachers in large schools	63	81
6	Ministry of Education Motto (Education the way Forward)	34	48
7	Salary level of the AHT in ED 5E school	53	61

With the assistance of my Education Officer Colleagues, I conducted a similar type of brainstorming exercise with thirty eight AHTs in two districts in the West. The exercise was in the form of multiple choice items. The result from selected items is given in Table 4.11.

The result at a glance shows that AHTs from District 'B' did better than those from District 'A'. The Head Teachers Association (HTA) both at District and National level has been conducting a number of professional development programmes. Unfortunately just 58 percent of AHTs know that the president of Fiji Head Teachers Association who comes from District B. Only about 50 percent know the salary level of the AHT in an ED 5E school

The findings presented above do not match with the perceptions of Ministry of Education that AHTs are qualified and have confidence to carry out duties effectively. However, the finding gets support from Fullan (1991) that the education system failed to develop the necessary leadership skills at all levels. In this context, Lloyd suggests the 'extended professional' approach, whereby teacher collaboration and development are actively encouraged.

Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored

The HTs have their own school vision and mission. Then, there is the Curriculum that guides the teaching programme. Guided by the above documents, the HTs develop their school organization structures. The AHTs fit into this structure and scaffold the school administration. The performance of the AHTs is therefore monitored by the head teachers. It is assessed on the basis of how well the AHTs are able to support the aspirations of the head teachers.

Leadership style and relationships of AHTs with MoE officials

As mentioned earlier, the AHTs have been appointed for new roles without any training or briefing. They are expected to find their way out and carve their identity in their schools. Their success depends largely on their leadership capability.

An official of MoE believes that

A lot depends on how the head teacher delegates duties to the AHT. I believe that many AHTs are self starters. It is usually his personal initiative and interest that enables him to excel.

Source: Field notes, 2004

On this issue, Louis and Miles (1990) believe that collaborative school cultures not only allow those working and learning to release their potential but also to provide them with opportunity for experimentation, participation and the appreciation of individual differences.

Views on current policy and practice

The lack of effective leadership in schools is a common concern. However, steps are under way to establish a national leadership centre. It is hoped it will help facilitate training for educational leaders like AHTs.

The AHTs under study admit that they must be well conversant with various official records which are part of the school administrative system. The following extract from Education Gazette 3/63 gives very useful guidelines;

Exhibit 4.6 Official records policy in schools

1. Records to be kept permanently- Admission Register, Examination Register, instruction Book, Teaching Guides, Non-expandable Register, Register of Revenue Receipt Books, Library Accession Register and records of school funds.
2. Records to be kept until a revision is issued- Schemes, Syllabuses and Assignments issued by the Department.
3. Records to be kept until an audit has been carried out- All receipts and receipt books for any funds held by the head teacher.
4. To be kept for three years and then destroyed- Examination papers, Attendance Registers, Staff meeting minute book, Time Book.

Source: Education Gazette Term 3 1963

My finding showed that the AHTs under study were not specifically sure of the guidelines governing official records at school. They were just following precedents set by their predecessors or HTs.

This official of MoE believes that “seniority” is a justified criterion for appointment of AHTs. However, higher academic attainment should not be overlooked. The cultural background of the school should also be taken into account when appointing AHTs.

A characteristic commonly associated with effective schools is the quality of leadership provided by the HTs. This also involves school level policies which the HTs and AHTs jointly own and implement. For school effectiveness, Higginson and

Laws (1992) stress that it is important to adopt all the different styles of leadership: bureaucratic, collegial and facilitative approaches.

It is also important that HTs and AHTs are familiar with all the regulations guiding their employment and performance. Some of these regulations are:

1. Public Service Act 1999- Public Service Values
2. General Orders and Conditions of Service
3. The Education Act
4. Terms and Conditions of Service
5. Emergency Policy (Fire, Flood, Cyclone, Commotion, Unrest)
6. Amended Transfer Guidelines (1999)
7. Fiji Islands Education Commission Report: 2000.
8. The Suva Declaration
9. The handbook for school managements (2006)

My findings showed that the AHTs of the two case study were not at all familiar with the above documents, let alone knowing their content and importance.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PARENTS

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

The parents I interviewed see the AHT as the ‘number two’ in the school. This was confirmed during one of my visits to S2. Two parents came to the school with some complaints. The school secretary advised them to see the AHT because the HT was away. However, they insisted that they wanted to meet the head teacher. They were even prepared to return the next day to see the head teacher.

The parents believe that

The AHTs are next to the head teacher. The HTs delegate the AHTs the responsibilities to perform thus allowing them to get training to lead a school in future. They do not have the authority to provide all the information.
Source: Field notes, 2004

This view is consistent with the findings by Southworth (1998) that most AHTs had chosen the position because they looked upon it as preparation for the headship.

Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored

Discussions with various groups show that the parents hold separate independent opinions about the performance of every teacher including the AHT. This is usually communicated to the head teacher through verbal communication, telephone and letters. There are also evidences available in the school about views being expressed by interested parties through anonymous letters. The parents always compare the performance of AHTs with the HT and with others in different schools.

The parents show a lot of respect to all the teachers and they believe the AHTs have a special place in the school. They describe them as ‘alternative head teachers’ and their position and authority are accepted by the parents. The parents I interviewed accept the AHTs as leaders whose duties are confined to students, teachers and the curriculum. This finds support in the findings by Rutherford (2002) that most primary schools remain ‘static, hierarchical and paternalistic’ with little involvement in decision-making.

Views on current policy and practice

During the course of my research, I interviewed a number of parents. They showed more confidence in the leadership of the school head than AHTs. They felt the AHT still had to gain more confidence, maturity and better understanding of the issues

affecting the students. The parents favour a teacher from within the staff to be appointed AHT rather than a person from outside being appointed by the Ministry. The parents also wanted to participate in the appointment of AHTs because they see them as alternative head teachers. This finding is consistent with the views expressed by Reay and Dennison (1990) that main function of AHTs is to deputise the HTs during their absence or in the responsibilities delegated to them.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

The study shows that the school management committees of the two case study schools feel that the AHTs in their schools do not have the confidence to lead their respective schools successfully. They also feel AHTs in their schools are not sufficiently prepared to manage their schools. As Bacchus (2000) points out, a school needs effective leadership to develop a positive ethos and effective pedagogy. I would add that this leadership also comes from AHTs and teachers, students and parents.

Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored.

In the words of one of the committee members:

The work of the AHT is monitored by the Ministry and the head teacher. We are only concerned when parents come up with complaints against the AHT.
Source: Field notes, 2004

The school managements now realize that their responsibility is to provide the facilities while the HT with the support of the teachers, and in particular the AHT, has to provide quality education to the students. The community monitors the performance of the school as a unit. Some guide posts for this purpose are external

examination results, student discipline and performance of the school in the out of school activities.

Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with school managements

The study also revealed that the school management committees were not aware that every leader has different styles of leadership and school management. They normally compare school leaders with previous counterparts and those in neighbouring schools.

Views on current policy and practice

While the school management committee knows that the appointment and promotion of teachers, including AHTs is the prerogative of the Ministry of education, it still wants to be consulted. Generally, the promotion is based on merit, however, the management committees of both the case studies wanted to know about the AHTs before they were appointed. The promotion process is transparent and it is guided by the Public Service Regulations. Relevant work-experience is also taken into account.

Summary

As mentioned earlier, the findings of this chapter, Chapter 4 are presented in two parts. The first part looked at the background of the two schools in which the two AHTs under study are working. We are informed that both the schools were established during early thirties, are managed by local school committees and are performing to the satisfaction of the local communities. The management structures of both the schools are similar and the committees deal with the HTs on policy issues.

The second part looked at the performance of the AHTs, including their leadership roles, in the context of their schools. The principal accountabilities of the AHT (Exhibit 4.1) are included for better understanding. The performance of the AHTs is measured using the performance indicators included therein. The AHTs assist the HTs to implement the policies of the Ministry of Education, including supervision of teachers to ensure delivery of quality education to all the children enrolled in their schools. The perceptions of the research informants showed that the work of AHTs needs to be closely monitored. The current research showed that the HTs are satisfied with the current system of appointment of AHTs. The HTs believe that relevant qualification, successful past experiences and training under successful HTs are sufficient preparation for an AHT to perform well. However, the need for proper induction and regular on- the-job training in all the aspects of the AHTs was identified. Enhancing leadership potential was identified as a priority.

The findings are discussed in detail in the next chapter, Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

It is reiterated that this study examines primary school assistant headship in two selected schools in the Western Division of the Fiji Islands. This chapter discusses the research findings presented in Chapter 4. The beneficiaries of the services provided by the AHTs are well placed to make judgments on the AHTs. Therefore, the perceptions of the following research informants have been obtained:

1. HTs of the AHTs under study
2. Other teacher colleagues
3. The AHTs being studied
4. Ministry of education
5. Parents of case study schools, and
6. School management of the case study schools.

The perceptions of various stakeholders are discussed under the following themes which are derived from the analysis of the data collected.

1. Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs
2. Duties performed by AHTs and how their performance is monitored
3. Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with the research informants
4. Views on current policy and practice.

The discussion begins with the four themes presented above, looks at leadership styles and concludes with the identification of factors that lead to successful performance of AHTs. The lessons learnt from the literature review that is presented in Chapter 2, are used to evaluate the performance of AHTs under study and to see whether it confirms what was found in the literature about AHTs.

The discussion is also guided by the conceptual framework given in Chapter 2. The key concepts include:

- Relevant educational policies
- Style and quality of leadership of the HT
- The job description of the AHT
- School environment.

In particular, the discussion focuses on the actual performance of the AHTs in the case-study schools (CS1 and CS2). This is done by examining the perception of other stakeholders and the review of special qualities needed in a successful AHT. Moreover, the leadership role of the head teacher (HT) is also examined. This is because the HT influences the AHT's work and leadership considerably.

THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER

The position of AHT is a substantive post in the primary school system. There are six levels in the AHT position, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Six levels in the AHT position

HT	ED 1B	ED 2C	ED 3C	ED 4C	ED 5E	ED 6A
AHT (1)	4A	5C	5B	5A (CS-2)	6A (CS-1)	---
AHT (2)	5D	5B	5A	---	---	---

Source: MoE 1993 Job evaluation document.

Table 5.2: Minimum Qualification Requirement

Position	Grade	MQR
Assistant head teacher	ED 4A	2 years in ED 5E or 3 years in ED 5A,B,C,D or 6 years in ED 6 (D-A)
Assistant head teacher	ED 5D	3 years in ED 5 (ED 5 A, B,C) or 4 years in ED 6 (ED 6 D-A)
Assistant head teacher	ED 5C	2 years in ED 5 (ED 5B,A) or 3 years in ED 6 (ED 6D-A) or 14 years in ED 8 (ED 8 A/G)
Assistant head teacher	ED 5B	1 year in ED 5A or 2 years in ED 6 (ED 6D-A) or 12 years in ED 8 (ED 8A/G)
Assistant head teacher	ED 5A	2 years in ED 6 (ED 6D-A) or 10 years in ED 8 A/G)
Assistant head teacher	ED 6A	1 year as Executive teacher or 6 years in ED 8A/ED 8G.

Source: 1993 MoE Job evaluation document.

Table 5.2 contains details of the grades shown in Table 2.1. The ‘minimum qualification requirement’ (MQR) for appointment to the position of AHT is at least six years experience as a teacher, at least three years rural service and superior assessment in the last three years. It also requires superior administrative ability and professional leadership skills. (Fiji Public Service Official Circular No. 12/2002:10). Oxford Word Power Dictionary defines the term “superior” as: “Better than usual: He is clearly superior to all the other candidates”.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Appointment, preparation and training of AHTs

The position of AHT is a substantive post in the primary school system. There are six levels of AHT positions, as shown in Table 5.2. It contains details of the grades shown in Table 5.1. The ‘minimum qualification requirement’, (MQR) for appointment to the position of AHT, is also shown in table 5.2. Among other things, the requirements are three years rural service, superior assessment, superior administrative ability and professional leadership skills (FPOC No. 12/2002).

Superior administrative ability and professional leadership skills are subjective decisions and this is subject to manipulation. This study shows that both the AHTs studied did not meet the above criteria and yet they were confirmed in their appointments.

The study established that appointments are made in two categories. Firstly, as soon as a position is vacant, the most qualified or senior person from within the school is appointed as the acting AHT. The research findings show that both the AHTs were appointed in this manner. The District Senior Education Officer is also advised of this

vacancy. The acting appointment is regularized and the incumbent is paid the acting allowance. The post is then advertised.

The study shows that the above-mentioned criterion was taken into account in the appointment of the two AHTs under study. Merit analysis for all the applicants for the vacant post of AHT of S1 was prepared. The incumbent was the most senior in the service. The other meritorious candidates had slightly higher qualifications. The annual confidential report (ACR) on performance of all the candidates was similar. Therefore, the candidate with the longest service and relevant experience was considered ahead of the others and was confirmed in her appointment.

However, in the case of the AHT of S2, the above-mentioned process was followed but she was not promoted. Another candidate was given provisional promotion. The AHT of S2 took her case to the Fiji Public Service Appeals Board that upheld her appeal and then she was confirmed in her promotion.

The findings show that in the absence of very highly qualified and competent applicants, the best candidate from the applicants is promoted. According to the HT of S1, these appointees need a lot of training, assistance and guidance by the head teachers and Ministry of Education. The present study shows that this role is not performed adequately by the relevant authorities. This limitation is reflected in the overall performance of the AHTs that were studied.

The process described above does not show any provision for job training. I have not cited any evidence during my research whereby the school head or the District

Education Officers are required to provide training to the incumbent before he/she assumes his/her duty. It is assumed that the AHTs know about the duties of the post as a result of their experience in the school system. This view is supported by the two AHTs that the length of service is taken as the most important factor in determining the suitability of a person for appointment to this position but not enough is done towards developing relevant professional and leadership skills.

Exhibit 5.1 AHT SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Memorandum	
From: The Senior Education Officer Lautoka/Yasawa 6664033	Phone:
To: The Head Teacher.....School	File: SEOL/Y
Subject: <u>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP</u> <u>FOR ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHERS.</u>	Date: 24. 05.
03	
<p>A one day professional development workshop has been organized for assistant head teachers on 4 June, 2003 at Andrews Primary School as per programme given below:</p>	
<u>Programme</u>	
8.30	Registration
9.00	Prayer
9.05	Welcome and Introduction of Chief Guest
9.10	Address by Chief Guest- SEO Lautoka/Yasawa.
9.15	Vote of Thanks
9.20	Self introduction

Source: MoE training programme- Lautoka, 2003

The Ministry of Education mounts training sessions for AHTs. The present study shows that some districts, such as Lautoka/Nadi/Yasawa are getting support through professional bodies such as head teachers and assistant head teachers associations. These training sessions mainly deal with management functions but enough is not

done towards developing relevant professional and leadership skills. A typical programme mounted for AHTs is given in Exhibit 5.1.

A look at the programme shows that this training in itself is not sufficient to adequately prepare AHT for the challenging positions they hold. The best results can be obtained if participants are taken through practical sessions.

The two AHTs told me that they were trying to upgrade their skills by reading educational literature and attending workshops and seminars. However, a one day workshop in a year is not sufficient. The AHT of S2 has completed four units towards Diploma in Educational Leadership and Change from The University of the South Pacific while her counterpart has not made any attempt to improve her professional qualification.

The principle accountabilities of the AHTs are very similar to that of the HTs. Their responsibilities support, scaffold and compliment each other. The AHTs are expected to perform well in all the areas mentioned above without much training. However, a review of school documents and discussion with the AHTs show very little evidence of proactive role being played by them.

Relevant literature (Mertz, 2000; Southworth, 1998) clearly indicates that upgraded qualification and training contribute positively to the overall performance of the AHTs. Better qualified AHTs are more confident. Mertz (2000), found that

1. There is a need for specialist training for those who see assistant headship as a career choice.
2. There is a need for professional development programmes that focus specifically on leadership skills, knowledge and understanding of AHTs.

These views are generally consistent with current research and school of thought. The AHT of S2 who has completed four units towards her Diploma in Educational Administration displays more confidence in discussing school management issues. The study shows that she is more competent in record keeping and displays good leadership skills such as confidence, communication skills and maturity of thought. The AHT of S1, on the other hand, only relies on her experience and whatever she has learnt from her HT.

Both the AHTs are not computer literate and have not made any attempt to take advantage of the many training courses available locally. This gap greatly affects their confidence. They feel they have to depend on others to set out and type reports and other correspondence.

The upgrading of qualifications in Fiji is largely a personal initiative. It also means paying for this from one's own pocket. There is provision for the AHTs to take up courses from USP through the distance and flexible learning (DFL) mode. The in-service section of Ministry of Education grants some scholarships to teachers who have completed most of the required units through their own initiative. However, in line with the Government policy, Fijian Affairs Board and Public Service Commission also award scholarships to selected teachers to complete their degree programme as full-time students.

The AHT of S1 has 32 years of teaching experience but has not taken any initiative to upgrade her qualification. The study shows that official records such as admission register and log book that I cited were incomplete. There was virtually no written record to show the performance of the teachers and pupils. This is the reflection of lack of appropriate knowledge and skills to completely handle this aspect of the AHT's work.

Duties performed by the AHTs and how their performance is monitored

As mentioned previously, I found out that the AHTs of the case study schools only perform duties that are delegated to them. Most of their time is spent on just doing their teaching duties. Other duties they normally perform are report writing, looking after the welfare of students and teachers, monitoring arrival and departure times and preparing monthly absence return.

As given in Table 4.1, my study shows that the AHTs spend very little time for administrative and professional duties. The AHTs under study spend 60-70 percent of time teaching and supervising their own classes.

According to literature reviewed, there is conflict between the teaching and management roles of the AHT and there is great pressure upon the time available to fulfill both roles (Southworth, 1998).

The evidence from the present study supports the assertion by Coulson (1974) and Bush (1981) that AHTs in primary schools occupy a position which lacks explicit definition and so they suffer uncertainty about their role. This combination of uncertainty and ambiguity concerning their role prompted Bush (1981) to conclude that the 'position of deputy head in primary schools has little substance or meaning'. This study agrees with the view points of Coulson (1974) and Bush (1981).

The study has also found that the AHTs of the case study schools are not proactive and innovative. Their actions are reactive. They only attend to duties that are delegated to them by their HTs. When the head teacher is in the school, the AHTs just play maintenance function, that is, they ensure the status is maintained. The AHT of

S1 said that she ensures that all the teachers are in their classes and are busy with their work. She sees that time of arrival and departure is entered and that every class is supervised in the case of absence of any colleague.

The AHT of S1 hardly initiates any changes on her own. She just gives suggestions to the HT for consideration. Its acceptance and any further action depend on the head teacher. The AHT of S1 said

I am the AHT of the school. The HT makes policies and I help to implement them. If I have some ideas I discuss with the head teacher. It is up to him whether to accept them or not. Source: Field notes, 2004

The study agrees with the common belief of the stakeholders that the AHTs are 'leaders-in-training' and do not possess the required level of leadership skills. Any action by the AHTs is compared with that of the head teachers. The AHTs under study also accepted this view.

In this regard, literature highlights that:

1. The experience of being an AHT is not always helpful preparation for headship because of the lack of direct leadership experience some AHTs encounter in this role.
2. The absence of targeted professional training and leadership development for AHTs is considered to be a major drawback in preparing for headship.
3. AHTs often experience a lack of professional support in their role. The support of the HT and other members of the leadership team is a key contributor to feeling valued and motivated in the role.

As a result of the Job Review Exercise of 1993 in Fiji, executive teacher positions were created in the primary school system. The executive teachers now share part of the professional duties of the AHTs.

Leadership style and relationship of AHTs with research informants

The research study shows that good leadership at all levels makes the difference between highly effective and well led schools and those that are poorly led and have little direction. My findings showed that the other staff members do not have confidence in the decisions made by the AHT and the style of leadership provided. The findings support Southworth (1998), that a genuine leader emerges and in many cases some AHTs stand out as leaders and they begin to attract people around them. Bacchus (2000), also noted that school leaders need to be competent administrators and professional leaders and have well-developed team management strategies.

My study also finds support in the research by Louis and Miles (1990), that principals in successful schools ‘empower’ the other members of their staff by sharing power with and delegating authority and resources with them. Such collaborative school cultures not only allow those working and learning to release their potential but also to provide them with opportunity for experimentation, participation and the appreciation of individual differences. The AHTs of S1 and S2 had ample opportunity to understudy the head teachers by actively sharing the HTs’ responsibilities. My study in the two schools showed that the AHTs did not take advantage of this opportunity.

The teachers I interviewed felt that the appointees should be trained before taking up their posts. Other views expressed showed that assistant teachers expect the AHTs to display fairness and honesty and be approachable. It was also revealed that although assistant teachers do not have much faith in the leadership of the AHTs, they show respect for age and seniority of the post.

Views on current policy and practice

Fiji Education System is guided by policies and regulations at every stage. The school administrators, which include both the HTs and AHTs, are expected to be well versed with all of the important policies that are applicable to the schools and discussed in this study. The findings are discussed as the topics unfold.

There are a number of school level policies which the AHT has to be well versed with. Some of these are on enrolment, children's rights and responsibilities, curriculum and assessment and other policy statements that the Ministry periodically sends out through circulars and Education Gazette. The documentary analysis shows that there are 49 policies that relate to AHT's work. These are listed in Appendix 5.1

The findings show that both the AHT of S1 and the AHT of S2 lacked the knowledge, understanding and implications of the important policy issues relevant to their work as AHTs. Some of the important policies which have a lot of bearing on the work of AHTs are given in chapter 4. These regulations provide a good base to understand the work of the AHT.

The study shows that school heads and AHTs need to be more professionally enlightened to meet the future challenges of educational leadership. My findings in the case study schools show that the school leaders are currently ill equipped to meet such educational demands.

Assistant Head Teacher as a Professional Leader

The AHTs of my case study schools agree with Southworth (1998) and Mortimore *et al.* (1988) that a head teacher is the principal teacher and educational leader. He is, therefore, expected to demonstrate excellence in both his teaching and leadership duties. The core business of primary schools is to educate the children. Head teachers are expected to ensure this is done to the expectation of the stakeholders. The AHTs play a pivotal role in this respect.

Review of literature, such as Southworth (1998), shows that successful HTs and AHTs are well organized and the results are very evident in the tone of their schools, the general attitude to work of their staff and pupils, the out of school behaviour of their pupils, and in the manner in which they and their schools are held by the community. However, both my case study schools lacked explicit definition of the above due to lack of necessary written records.

Both the HT and AHT of S1 said that they are fulltime classroom teachers and their priority is to prepare their own lessons, teach and mark students' written work. The head teacher also has to attend to other administrative duties and attend to visitors at the school.

The data collected from the case study schools show that there is lack of proper monitoring of what was going on in the classrooms. There is no systematic analysis of assessment and follow up. There is no documentary evidence to show that curriculum implementation in the classes is closely monitored. It also goes on to show that

educational leaders are not giving adequate professional guidance to new and inexperienced teachers who are on the staff.

The AHTs under study know that they have to operate within the framework and guidelines of regulations governing the duties of AHTs. Their performance is judged by the success of the whole school.

The study shows that the case study schools did not have a system in place to ensure that teachers were actually undertaking their teaching responsibilities faithfully. There was no means to gauge whether children were actually making progress in the development of knowledge and skills. Any monitoring and assessment undertaken was for the purpose of compiling official reports. It was not intended to gauge student- learning.

This finding supports concern by Bacchus (2000) that

When a strong head is in place, a school develops a positive ethos and the teaching learning process is enhanced. The converse situation occurs when a school head lacks strong leadership.

The research shows that the HTs of the two schools are neither very effective leaders nor appropriate role models for AHTs. The records kept in the schools are minimal, official records are incomplete, information displayed is outdated and there is no evidence of any research on important aspects affecting students, teachers and the community. The “success” of the schools is gauged by the results the students achieve in external examinations. The external examination results of the two schools are consistently above average. Therefore, the parents and the Ministry of Education are happy. The issue of quality learning is not given much emphasis.

There is hardly any qualitative data to gauge the learning outcomes of all the students in the case study schools. The assessment records available are only for academic subjects and not in subjects that provide education in human values such as art and craft, music, culture, vernacular and physical education. Moreover, examination results do not show any understanding or discovery potential of students.

This study supports the views of Southworth (1998) on the lack of partnership relations of the HTs and AHTs. He notes that there is widespread belief that AHTs in primary schools occupy a position which lacks explicit definition (Coulson 1974; Bush 1981:), and so they suffer uncertainty about their roles. This combination of uncertainty and ambiguity concerning their role led Bush (1981) to conclude that the 'position of deputy head in primary schools has little substance or meaning'. In my view AHTs are 'alternative head teachers' (AHT) and should undergo vigorous training in professional leadership, curriculum management, assessment, and homework and remedial work supervision. This is consistent with the Ministry of Education specific outcome as contained in its Corporate Plan (2005) and it reads: "assist students to reach their full potential by providing programmes that engage students as active participants in the learning process and develop skills to become self-directed learners".

As found in this study the AHTs prefer to play the second fiddle role instead of taking initiatives on their own. The situation can change if the AHTs are more confident and have appropriate additional qualification and are given appropriate motivation and reward.

ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER

Leadership

I have mentioned earlier that the HT and the AHT work as a team and share their responsibilities. Some of the responsibilities of the HT are delegated to the AHT. It is, therefore, very important that the AHT understands the perimeters of performance of the HT.

Both the AHTs portray their head teachers as successful educational leaders. They told me that the head teachers give them necessary assistance and guidance. Upon further inquiry, AHT S1 said that all decisions are made by the HT and she helps implement the decisions made. Therefore, there was very little room for the AHT to implement her own ideas and the school may be missing out on potential development. This finds support in this extract:

The leadership qualities of school heads and the manner in which they fulfill their management responsibilities are key factors in determining the effectiveness of their school.

Source: Scottish Education Dept, 1990:16

Bass, (1990), views leadership as a combination of special traits or characteristics, that individuals possess and that enables them to induce others to accomplish tasks. Despite numerous shortcomings as mentioned earlier on, the case study schools have been functioning since their establishment. However, they lack quality in performance as the leaders lack relevant management skills.

My finding supports research by Harris and Chapman for the National College of School Leadership (2002) which provides a list of positive outcomes found in a

successful educational leader. This is given in detail in the literature review. I found out that the AHTs under study were aware of professional issues but did not follow the correct management processes.

The factors that influence the performance of AHTs

The factors that influence performance can be classed as internal and external. Internal factors are those attributes that are found in the person. These are successful past experiences, length of experience, training and academic qualifications. Another internal factor that influences performance is the perception of the leader.

One important external factor in this case is the leadership style and quality of leadership of the school head. My findings find support in FIEC (2000) report where Tavola (2000:99) notes that effective school leadership and management is a prerequisite to a successful school. She says

The school heads set a critical level of expectation for their teaching staff. They can motivate and inspire teachers to perform to the best of their abilities. Conversely, if they adopt a laissez-faire attitude and take little active interest in the school, especially if they are frequently absent, standards slide.

Both the schools have displayed average performance in both academic and non academic disciplines. My finding shows a direct relationship between leadership style and the performance of the school.

I have found that there is abundance of literature on leadership and school effectiveness. However, it is unfortunate that the AHTs under study are not making any effort to access these or read them to increase their knowledge and skills. They

feel they get adequate training by attending a few workshops organized by Ministry of Education and by the school-based professional development initiatives.

The study also shows that the AHTs lack the thirst for knowledge and there was no evidence to show that they have included research as an integral part of the teaching learning process. It also shows that the school leaders lack initiatives as well as leadership qualities.

QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

The central theme of my research study is 'leadership'. Literature on leadership (Lloyd 1985) points to power which has the capacity or potential to exert influence. "A true measure of leadership", according to Maxwell (1998), "is influence-nothing more, nothing less".

The role of AHTs has recently undergone contemporary changes. The growing workload of HTs in the last decade, particularly resulting from the local management of schools, has contributed to an increase in the delegation of responsibilities to the AHTs. The main consequences of this increase in responsibilities were found to be reduced attention to the quality of their own teaching, difficulty in keeping up with new developments and the feeling that if the HT was away for a longer period (more than one week), they would find it very hard to take over the headship role. The literature highlights that

1. There is increased pressure on AHTs within schools to meet the many demands and requirements imposed externally upon schools and generated internally within schools.
2. This expanded set of responsibilities inevitably places an additional demand on the time of AHTs. In most cases, extra time has not been allocated and more 'personal' time is being taken to complete the tasks required.

3. In primary schools, there is particular tension between the teaching and management roles of the AHT and a great pressure upon the time available to fulfill both roles.
4. The influence and involvement of the AHT in leadership and development activities varies considerably across schools.
5. In some schools AHTs remain a central part of the discussion and decision making process, whilst in other schools the decisions are still made by the head teacher with little real consultation.
6. Where AHTs build up strong relationships with head teachers the possibility for broadening leadership responsibilities and extending responsibility for developing the school is increased.

Despite a general shift towards increased responsibilities, the AHTs in the case study schools are still mainly concerned with maintenance rather than developmental functions.

The AHT is still seen as someone who ensures the school operates properly and generally keeps things running on a day-to-day basis despite a willingness to engage in leadership activities. In the two selected schools the AHTs did not display the qualities of leadership. Neither were they close to being a second HT. Evidence also support findings that where AHTs build up strong relationships with the HTs, the possibility for broadening leadership responsibilities and extending responsibility for developing the school is increased. The HTs play a pivotal role in the success of their schools. They also play dual responsibilities as operational managers and instructional leaders.

I found out that the HTs and AHTs employ different leadership styles. The leadership style common to both case study schools was bureaucratic leadership. This is a top down model, rooted in the notions of classical bureaucracy. This style is used during staff meetings and while communicating about official policies. This style adopts one

way communication. The study showed that the AHTs only play reactive role of implementing the decisions made by the HTs.

However, I cited evidence that other leadership styles were also employed in certain circumstances. Collegial leadership is employed very liberally when planning various school activities. A good example of collegial leadership was displayed while planning for school fundraising in school S1. I was present in that meeting and witnessed the view of Torralba (1996) in practice:

Collegial government seems to be a good alternative system of government for schools which can easily function in a school's bureaucratic structure. It is defined as the anti thesis of personal government.

The teachers were placed in groups and they appointed their group leaders. This confirmed the view of Pfeffer (1981) that focuses on the notion of participatory management or power from the bottom. The success of this meeting confirmed the view of Wallace (1988) that defines collegiality as 'the model of good practice'. I came to know later that the fundraising activity was a great success.

The research literature shows that the foundation for the success of the schools rests largely on the "school organization". This is a planning document that spells out vision and mission, objectives to be achieved, delegation of responsibilities, allocation of classes, rules, guidelines and procedures and appropriate guiding principles in achieving success.

It was however unfortunate that both schools did not have any written 'school organization' document that could be cited. This was another example of insufficient records prepared and kept at the two schools.

School environment is also referred to as school culture. The two schools are located in rural set up. Rural areas tend to be bonded in traditional culture, with relatively fewer outside influences compared to urban centres. There is thus a cultural hegemony, a singular worldview, which may have different priorities from those espoused by the school system. Generally, traditional norms and values are accepted and schools have to work within this framework. Traditional Fijian communities place much importance on communal activities and commitment to the *Vanua*. This includes a time-honoured belief system of mutual respect and obligation, whereby each person knows their place in the hierarchy. Teachers, especially HTs and AHTs are expected to participate in the affairs of the host community.

Fullan (1991) says that the quality and nature of leadership, has always been seen as vital to the success of any change initiative. His view is that school leaders must not only allow innovation in the school, but must actively lead it. He also found that initiator principals orchestrated more interventions, developed supportive arrangements, worked actively with other change facilitators, and paid attention to results.

SUMMARY

The data presented in Chapter 4 was discussed in this chapter. The discussions also took into account the lessons learnt from the literature review to test the validity of the findings of the current study.

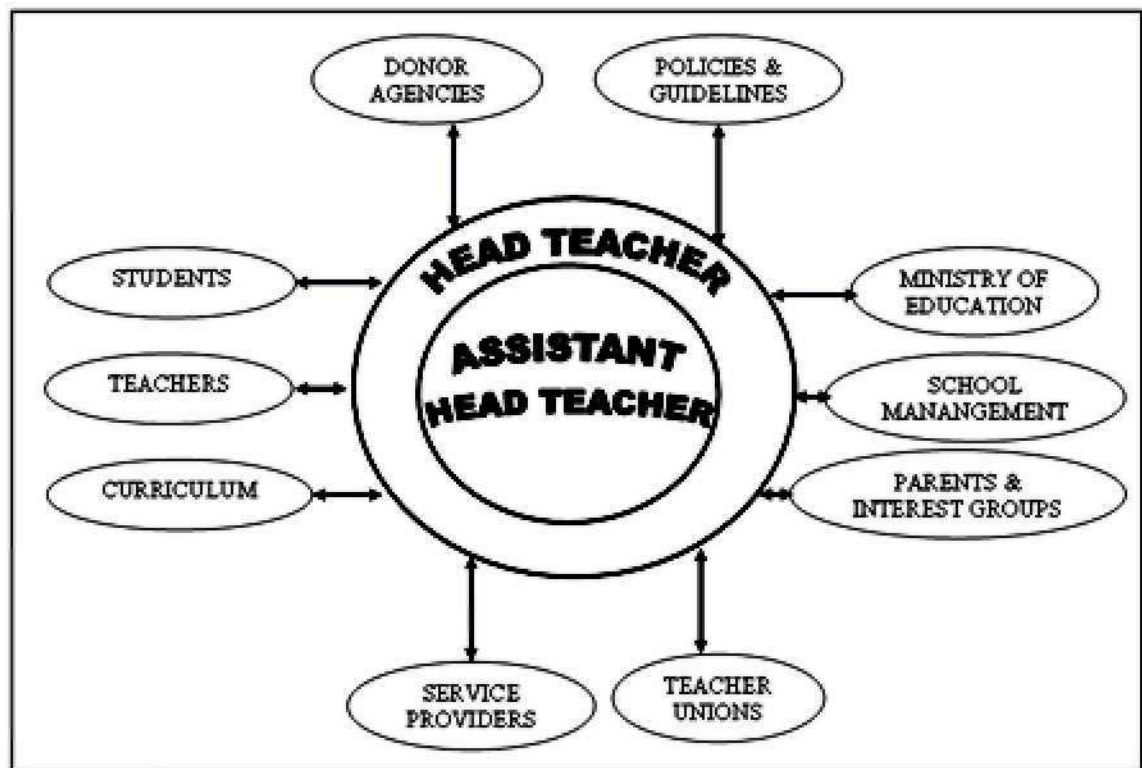
Through this research study, we are informed that the performance of the AHT depends on:

1. His own level of professional and personal competence.
2. The expectation he has of others and others have of him.
3. His own levels of understanding of his professional and managerial roles; and
4. The effect of his behaviour on others- as an individual, within a team and as a member of his organization.

This research studied the role played by the two AHTs under study. The relevant education policies and their implications to the work of AHTs were also discussed. The extent to which the school leaders are familiar with the relevant educational policies was also explored. The fieldwork findings, relating to the work of the AHTs, show that there exists a considerable gap between the relevant policy and practice. The study confirms my belief that AHTs' work is closely linked to the leadership of their respective HTs. The quality of leadership, the competency and integrity of the HTs and the AHTs have direct bearing on the performance of their respective primary schools. The study showed that the AHTs are also ignorant about the official records kept at the school level. While the AHTs know the records by name, they were ignorant of its content and importance to their school management. Therefore, there is a need for better preparation of the AHTs before they assume their duties.

The relationship that exists between the HT and AHT can be described as complementary, subordinate, participatory, collegial, partnership or professional. The head teacher and AHT are required to share the responsibility of dealing with all stakeholders in their endeavour to fulfill the educational goals of their school. The context in which the AHT operates is summarized and presented in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 The Role of the AHT in the School Community.



The next chapter summaries the important research findings and presents the implications of the study under suitable headings.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

It is recalled that this study examines the roles of AHTs in the two selected primary schools in Fiji. This chapter attempts to pull together the important findings and based on them make appropriate implications for policy and practice, and for further research. It begins by summarizing the important findings.

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

It is reiterated that this research study adopted a qualitative case-study approach for gathering and analyzing data, and presenting findings to the interested audiences. As mentioned earlier, the study addressed the following key questions:-

1. How is an AHT appointed and prepared for the job?
2. Do AHTs take any initiative to upgrade qualification and leadership skills?
3. What do they really do?
4. Who decides what an AHT does and how is the performance monitored?
5. What is the relationship between the head teacher and the AHT? Does this in any way affect the performance of the AHT?
6. What do their colleagues and superiors feel about their leadership style?
7. What lesson does the study have for policy and practice?

The key findings of the study are summarized under the important themes identified in the conceptual framework of the study. These include (a) relevant educational policies (b) style and quality of leadership of the HT (c) job descriptions of AHTs and (d) school environment. The perceptions of stakeholders on this subject are reflected in all the above-mentioned aspects of the conceptual framework.

Relevant educational policies

The findings in the two case study schools show that

1. The AHTs are not well versed with important education policies as printed in Education Gazettes.
2. The rules, regulations and policies are interpreted and translated into action based on ineffective models.
3. The AHTs of the case study schools have not studied the Fiji Islands Education Commission Report-2000 which sets guidelines for effective delivery of education in the 21st century.
4. The AHTs are not familiar with a number of policy guidelines given by the Ministry of Education through circulars and memorandums.

It is clear from the review of the literature that AHTs have enormous professional and leadership responsibilities in the school and its community. Unfortunately, this research study establishes that AHTs under study are not well-versed with their work and are currently under-utilized as leaders. It is also established that without proper training and development, AHTs largely perform the 'maintenance' rather than the leadership or enhancement functions at the school. There was no evidence to show that the AHTs contributed positively towards the delivery of quality education.

The study suggests that potential AHTs as well as HTs and other school-level leaders/teachers ought to be thoroughly prepared for leadership roles before their appointment. The quality of leadership can be improved by providing school-based induction and on-going professional development programs as well as at Ministry of Education or centre-based in-service programs. Further, the school and the Ministry of Education should support teachers who study leadership courses through DFL mode from the University of the South Pacific. In brief, this study suggests that

1. There is a need for specialist training for those who see assistant headship as a career choice rather than a step towards headship.
2. People skills, communication skills, knowledge of leadership theory, techniques for improving curriculum and instruction and working with teams are considered important facets of school-based leadership and programs to

enhance these are vital. In fact, there is a need for professional development programmes that focus specifically on leadership skills, knowledge and understanding of the work of AHTs.

3. There is a need to provide gender-balance in the appointment of school-based leaders, especially AHTs. They need to be encouraged and provided training to enhance their leadership skills and confidence. Literature suggests that women can provide more democratic and 'sharing and caring' style of governance.
4. More research into the particular development needs of the AHTs is required to ensure that future provision is relevant, appropriate and ultimately effective.
5. There is a need for HTs and Education Officers to provide effective and on-going supervision of AHTs, facilitating training and learning opportunities where necessary.

The Fiji Islands Education Commission Report (2000) supports the need for training. In this regard, the Fiji Education Sector Programme has taken some initiatives. It is expected that similar programs will be mounted regularly. In these programs, due regard ought to be placed on factors such as context, culture, time and space. It is also emphasized that school-based or district-based initiatives will yield greater benefits to leadership at the school-level. It is therefore proposed that relevant educational policies be made available to all AHTs and HTs and these be discussed in meetings and training sessions.

The style and quality of leadership of the HTs

My observation, the review of school records and the views of other teachers including that of the AHTs show that

1. The head teachers are doing well in their own context as there are no adverse records or reports against them. The stakeholders are happy with their performance. However, there is a need for research to find more about their role in promoting quality learning outcomes in their schools.
2. They (HTs) are satisfied with the occasional training they receive from the Ministry of Education and the head teachers' association. However, research is needed to determine the relevance and the quality of these training programs.
3. They are adequately qualified for the job. They feel their experience complements their lower academic qualifications. Moreover, research is needed to verify this.

4. Their ability to perform better is constrained by limited financial resources as well as leadership at the school community level. Research is needed to provide more information on community participation in schooling.
5. They see progress in terms of upgraded buildings and other physical development and not so much on the enhancement of the quality of learning.
6. They have sound working relationship with the school management committees and the officials of Ministry of Education.
7. The HTs depend largely on bureaucratic style of governance but within it facilitate collegiality where possible.

Based on the research findings and my personal knowledge and experience, I argue that progress of the schools is hindered by ineffective leadership. The schools are currently only administered and not led. The findings of the case study schools show that the school leaders, both HTs and AHTs, are more concerned about maintaining the status quo and avoid any risk-taking situation. Such approaches restrict “learning” as their work unfolds. The school system is rigid and the teaching learning process occurs within the four walls of the classroom. During my numerous visits to both the schools at different times of the day, I did not see students moving freely to gather information, to do research or get engaged in other supervised inquiry-based activities. In the same manner, the teachers keep themselves busy with their classes. This consolidates my assertion that the leaders and teachers at the school-level perform ‘maintenance’ and ‘protective’ functions and do not facilitate enhancement activities that are cooperative, constructive, research and growth-driven. Enhancement approach is consistent with Fullan’s themes of initiative-taking, vision-building, emergent-planning and human resource development.

The lessons learnt from international literature are echoed by Sharma (1999), who sees democracy as the platform for authentic leadership. Authentic leadership in educational management is based on personal integrity, credibility, mutuality and commitment to ethics and morality. Such leaders always attempt to build, nurture,

inspire and empower students and all those who work with them to become more effective.

The following are the perceptions of the Ministry of Education. However, the study argues that these are expectations or prescriptive in nature and not based on a descriptive account of what really happens in reality at the school-level.

Exhibit 6.1 The perceptions of Ministry of Education

- All head teachers are duly qualified and trained teachers. They are therefore expected to be effective classroom teachers.
- The head teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced as they were promoted after their applications were vetted and they were found to be more meritorious than the other applicants.
- School leaders who are confirmed in their substantive posts have no reason to make excuses for their sub-standard performance.
- Head teachers are vested with the responsibility of giving assistance, guidance, training and support to the teachers including the AHTs. They are to take corrective measures on non performing staff. There are appropriate procedures laid down to address this issue.
- School leaders are accountable for maintaining standards in terms of academic achievement of students, student discipline, school compound and buildings.
- Professional upgrading is a personal initiative and upgraded qualification increases the productivity and marketability of individuals. The students, teachers and the school as a whole benefit from upgraded skills of school leaders.

It is important to note that researchers, such as, Fullan (1991), show that in order to manage schools effectively, the school leaders need to:

1. Understand the culture of the school.
2. Value the teachers: promote their professional growth
3. Extend what they value
4. Express what they value
5. Promote collaboration; not co-operation
6. Make menus, not mandates
7. Use bureaucratic means to facilitate, not to constrain
8. Connect with wider environment

The research findings showed that the AHTs have not been able to stand out as effective leaders. If Fullan's criteria as given above is taken as a checklist, the findings show very little evidence in favour of the AHTs.

Job description of AHTs

The AHTs under study feel that they carry the heaviest load because they play leadership role as well as teach a full-time class. The roles played by the AHTs are summarized in Exhibit 6.2.

Exhibit 6.2 Roles played by AHTs

- The AHTs always protect their schools and the HTs.
- The HTs do not delegate sufficient responsibility and authority. The AHTs are capable of doing much more.
- They are only delegated duties when the HT is busy or he has other priorities. Many a times, messy issues are referred to the AHT.
- The AHTs are seen as the persons who can be called upon at the eleventh hour and expected to perform miracles.
- The AHTs feel the head teachers are closer to the management than the teachers.
- The AHTs do not question the decisions made by the HTs.
- They are sandwiched between HTs and the Teachers.
- The HTs attend meetings and training sessions and receive information through letters and circulars but only selected and limited information reaches the AHTs.
- The core function of the school leaders is to ensure the curriculum is implemented successfully throughout the school.

Consistent with the relevant literature, the study finds that there are always some tensions between the AHTs and HTs. Some of these include:

1. Their responsibilities often overlap leaving some duties unattended. In some cases, AHTs are expected to fulfill all the responsibilities of the HT and to deputise fully when the HT is away from school.
2. Within most schools, AHTs are given particular areas of responsibility such as discipline, staff-development, data-management or attendance. The degree to which they are given leadership responsibility is dependent on the HTs. Sometimes this leads to confusion.
3. The main role of the AHT is considered to be one of ensuring stability rather than development or leadership function. Therefore, they are not

trained to take leadership role and colleagues see them as not so well-informed.

4. The leadership potential of the AHTs in many schools is not being fully released or exploited and their leadership capabilities are not being developed in the role.

Based on these findings, I suggest that regular professional development programmes and work attachments in successful schools would be helpful in changing their perceptions of their respective roles. The teacher colleagues also have their own perceptions about the role performance of AHTs. These include:

1. Teachers accept AHT as the 'number two' in the school.
2. They give support to the AHT out of respect.
3. They see the AHT as a close associate of the head teacher.
4. Some teachers are not concerned as long as the AHTs do not interfere with their work.
5. They look upon the AHT to solve their problems rather than referring them to the head teacher.

Perceptions of school management committee members are that the AHT is:

1. a 'leader in training' and not ready to lead the school yet.
2. under-qualified and inexperienced.
3. lacking in self confidence and poor in decision-making.

School environment

The study also found that AHTs operate in complex school environment that comprises:

1. The location of the school
2. The school community
3. Ethnic background of teachers
4. Ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of students
5. Gender balance of students and teachers
6. Socio-economic status of the school community
7. School culture
8. School history
9. Traditions, customs and protocols
10. Parental community support.

The relevant literature points out that the AHTs ought to be sensitive to the community functions, concerns and aspirations and respond positively to create a good mutual relationship in the school and its community. This mutual relation is necessary because the school alone can no longer provide quality learning environment for students.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned earlier, this is a descriptive study and not a prescriptive account to provide information on what the AHTs ought to do. It attempts to find out what the AHTs actually do in selected primary schools. Based on the findings, it goes on to make implications for policy and practice, further research, research literature and research methodology.

Implications for policy and practice

The study clearly shows that the AHTs have the potential that needs to be developed through appropriate pre-service and in-service training programs. The study also shows that AHTs who aspire for headship of the school, see their current position as an important stage in their development. In the two case studies, it was found that the AHTs do not perform their functions adequately. Supported by a number of studies, such as Southworth (1998) and Mortimore (1991), the present study found that their experience as AHTs was not very effective because of the lack of leadership influence displayed. Moreover, the school and the Ministry of Education provided very little opportunities for formal leadership training for school-based leaders. This is potentially a major drawback in preparing for headship as well as providing on-going development of their work. The latter is necessary in the light of turbulent school

climate and changing information, communication and technology. In fact, ‘e-learning’ opportunities have extended the horizon of learning and the management environment. The school-based leaders must keep pace with such development especially ICT in pedagogy and school management.

The study therefore suggests that the Education Officers play a more active role in preparing AHTs. It is suggested that school leaders who are unable to perform their duties satisfactorily owing to ignorance be given further training and/or be placed on short attachment with more successful HTs. The Ministry of Education should prepare guidelines for education officers and head teachers in this regard. The extract titled ‘school visits’ that I prepared for the education officers in the Western division of Fiji is reproduced below.

Exhibit 6.3 Guidance for Education Officers during school visits

1. District staff to visit every school and every classroom at least once during the year. The EO professional has to ensure this is done.
2. A systematic record has to be kept of findings. Follow up visits must be undertaken if shortcomings are identified.
3. It is advisable to meet staff as a group and create a forum for professional discussion even for a short period.
4. Tasks set during training sessions can be monitored during these visits.
5. Official records of the HTs like school log book, admission register and teachers work books must be scrutinized and signed as an indication that the records are in order. Incorrect or incomplete records should have relevant comments to this effect. These need to be followed up in the next visit.
6. Verify admission records with Birth Certificates and other relevant documents.
7. District staff is also requested to monitor the system used by the schools to receive money, banking and payment procedures, and how appropriate financial records are kept.

Source: Singh, 2005.

The study revealed that the HTs of the selected schools did not provide their AHTs their job description. This was one of the reasons for the AHTs not knowing what actually constituted their work. When I was the head teacher of a large primary

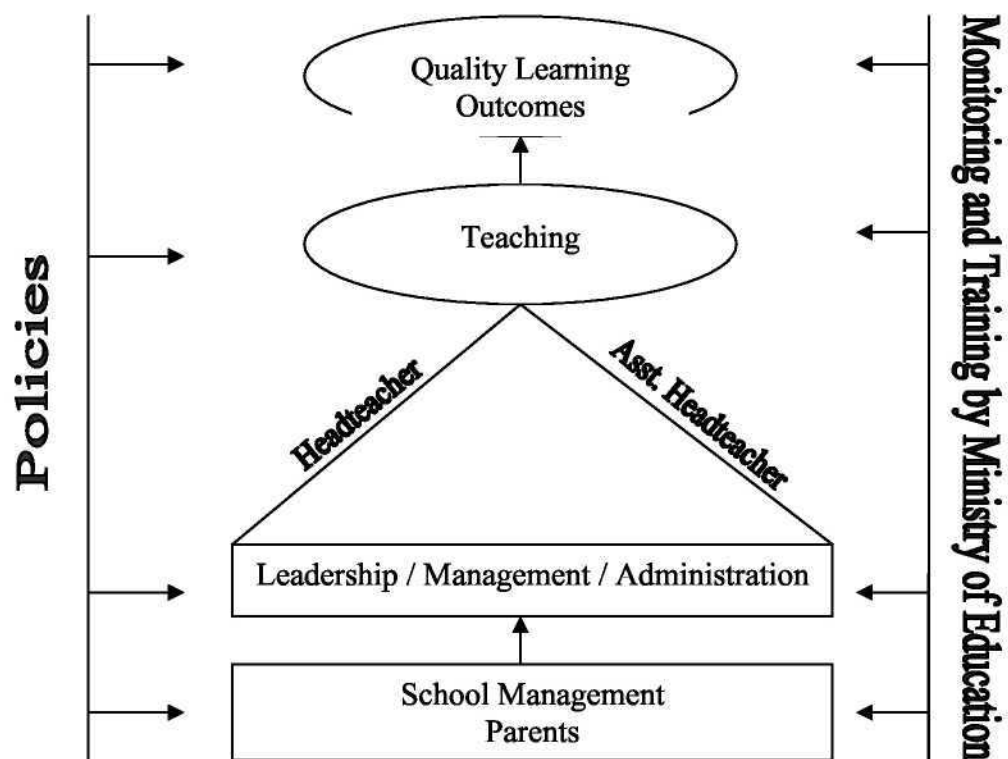
school, I prepared a position description and job analysis. This is appended. This document shows that the responsibility can be delegated. However, it is stressed that leadership can be devolved but the overall accountability and empowerment remain with the school head. Obviously, the quality learning outcome in the students depends on the quality of the teaching learning process, the quality of school management and genuine delegation. These, in turn, depend on the support, guidance, trust, teamwork, training and mentoring

According to 2005 Corporate Plan, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration and management of education policies and delivery of educational services. It provides the curriculum framework, policy guidelines and directions, and qualified teaching personnel that support all schools in the delivery of quality education for students. The Ministry is also responsible for ensuring that standards in education are met and maintained and that human, physical and financial resources allocated to education by the government are appropriately directed and utilized. Ministry of Education has the responsibility of facilitating cohesive working partnerships with local management authorities of schools and institutions in the provision of school service. (Fiji: Ministry of Education Corporate plan, 2005:3)

It is hoped this research study will help and guide relevant authorities and other stakeholders to better understand the professional issues in primary education. It will provide guidance to policy makers and planners on the need for providing training on leadership to AHTs before the new appointees commence their work. There is also a need for on-going training program on educational leadership for all HTs, AHTs and potential leaders.

The following model (Figure 6.1) has been developed as a result of this research study and it helps with the understanding of policy and practice both at the Ministry and school levels. The model shows that delivery of quality education to the students is guided by relevant policies and monitored by Ministry of Education. However, translating the curriculum into meaningful learning experiences is the responsibility of the teachers under close supervision of the HT and AHT. The school management and the community form the foundation of the school structure.

Figure: 6.1 Model of an effective school structure



This study recommends preparation of a training package for school-based leaders. It is suggested that only candidates who successfully complete the program and those who display proficiency in leadership be considered for appointment as AHTs. The study also recommends that the Ministry, the teacher unions, the school management committees and the head teachers to address the limitations that currently exist in the appointment, training, monitoring, induction and policy and practice of the school-based leaders.

It is recommended that training for AHTs, among other things, should address interpersonal skills, values and attitudes and emotional intelligence. The AHTs should also be given reasonable non-contact time to enable them to offer professional support to colleagues through observation of classroom practices and coaching activities

Implications for further research

This research study has posed a number of questions. These areas, therefore, need more in-depth research using a much bigger sample size. As the core function of schools is to deliver quality education, it would be interesting to find out whether all the students in the school actually receive quality education. This study focused on leadership in the context of AHTs, therefore, the issue of delivery of quality education was not explored in any depth.

It is expected that this research study will contribute to improving the quality of learning in primary schools. Moreover, they will complement the present study by shedding new light in the work of school-based leaders including the AHTs. The

study also suggests more qualitative-oriented research methodology that has the capacity to yield qualitative and descriptive data.

Implications for relevant literature

The literature on AHTs is largely prescriptive in nature. This literature is mainly from more developed countries and, therefore, lacks relevance to the Fiji context. There is very little research-based literature on this topic in Fiji. Therefore, the central theme that arises from this thesis is that the present international literature is useful in understanding and improving the work of AHTs and other educational leaders at the school-level. However, its application in the Pacific Island country of Fiji is limited by the fact that much of it stems from developed countries.

The study shows that there are a number of factors that are particularly relevant to the Fiji context. These include the politics of international aid that forces the aid recipients to import leadership models from the donor countries. For example, 'individualism' supersedes 'communalism'. The latter is the way of living of the Fiji Islanders. The school and its people are driven by individualistic principles including the leadership styles. This is a topic for another research. However it suffices to mention here that the literature on school leadership can be complemented by indigenous approaches and Pacific knowledge systems.

Second is 'politics of ethnicity'. The 'race card' still divides schools into indigenous Fijian schools and Indo-Fijian schools. Therefore, it is difficult to establish a conceptual framework to understand the work of all school-based leaders and provide

effective policy and practice guidelines. The bureaucratically-driven guidelines for school-based leaders are not equally applicable or relevant to the two types of schools. More research is needed in this area. However, it is important to stress that our schools in Fiji should be known as 'schools' and not as 'Fijian' or 'Indian schools'. In my view, the school-based leaders from the two communities can mutually benefit from one another.

The above-mentioned issues are not captured in the international literature on AHTs as well as on the school-based leaders. It is expected that these will enrich this body of literature from the perspectives of the Pacific Island country of Fiji.

Implications for research methodology

I adopted qualitative case study methodology for this research. Yin (1984:23) sees a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context". However, I found that my personal presence prompted the AHTs to "showcase" the best practices. They tried to "make up" for the shortcomings in or ignorance of policies and procedures. Since no research is conclusive, I suggest more in-depth inquiry into specific areas of the work of AHTs be undertaken employing indigenous approaches such as "talanoa" and short "conversation" sessions. I go on to suggest that indigenous approach to leadership may also be useful in constructing the conceptual framework of the study.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The area of this research study has been of personal interest to me and the research process was a very enlightening experience. The findings of this study may prove

beneficial to respective stakeholders as well as to those who decide to read this research report. I expect this research study to inspire educational leaders to better understand the relevant education policies, be informed about best practices adopted by successful leaders and see the relationship between leadership styles school effectiveness. This study supports Lloyd (1985) “That the school leaders employ ‘extended professional’ approach, whereby teacher collaboration and development are actively encouraged and where the school moves forward in a jointly agreed way, is replacing the head-centred, paternalistic style”.

The present study documents the nature of work the AHTs actually do. These include teaching their own class, monitoring teaching being done in other classes, helping with school administration and acting as the HT in his absence. The study also identifies strengths and weaknesses of their work in light of relevant theoretical literature. The finding shows that better qualified and enlightened AHTs achieve better results. The success of the school has direct relationship with the quality of leadership. It was also clear that their effectiveness as leaders was based upon the esteem in which their colleagues held them.

The study also identifies the limitations of the relevant theoretical and research methodology literature that have their roots in developed countries and Western cultures. It stresses the need to compliment these bodies of literature from the perspectives of the Pacific island country of Fiji. In particular, it refers to Pacific knowledge systems and indigenous pedagogy.

The findings agree with Slowey (cited in Sharma 2000) that there are no simple blueprints for success. However, by offering reflections on strategies which worked, and some which did not, it is hoped to contribute to broader understanding of the nature of the management of change in the complex environment.

This research study was supposed to be a journey through a familiar territory. However, as the study progressed, I met new challenges at every step. I must admit that I have not been able to explore much as there is no end to learning and new knowledge is in abundance. It is expected that similar studies would complement the findings of this study and together provide relevant insights to improve the quality of leadership not only in Fiji but also beyond.

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Appendix: A

Educational Policies as contained in Education Gazettes

No	POLICY	GAZETTE	PAGES
1.	Notes on the design of primary school classrooms	3/57	4
2.	Head Teachers Responsibilities	1/58	9
3.	Term and Annual Examinations in School	1/58	13
4.	Preparation of Work Books	3/58	4
5.	Overage pupils	1/60	10
6.	Pupils Medical Cards	3/62	4
7.	Schemes of Work	3/62	2
8.	Checking of exercise books by head teachers	3/62	3
9	School fees	2/63	9
10	School Records	3/63	7
11.	Religious holidays	3/63	6
12.	Dismissal of Pupils/Teachers	2/64	12
13.	Coaching of Pupils outside school hours	3/64	9
14	Disaster Plan	1/95	41
15	Convention on the Rights of the Child	3/95	23
16	Management of School Funds	2/96	24
17	Teachers Serving on School Committees	3/97	18
18	Fundraising in schools	3/97	20
19	School Repeaters	2/97	28
20	Corporal punishment	3/97	29
21	Overtime Work	2/98	13
22	Disciplinary Action on Students	2/98	14
23	Consumption of Yagona in Schools	2/98	15
24	Freeze on Fundraising	1/98	16
25	Consent for Out of School Activity	1/03	18
26	Absence from School	1/03	19
27	Conducting Research in Schools	2/98	16
28	Restriction on Smoking in Schools	2/98	24
29	Values Education in Primary Schools	2/98	26
30	Competitive Sports in Schools	1/97	13
31	Flag Ceremony & National Anthem	2/97	22
32	Code of Ethics	2/97	24
33	Closure of School	2/97	27
34	Child Road Safety Education	1/99	10
35	Enrolment of Teachers for Part Time Studies	1/99	21
36	Compulsory Education and Attendance Act	3/99	24
37	Health & Safety at Work at Work Act 1996	3/99	24
38	Homework Policy for Schools	2/01	18
39	Retirement Policy	3/01	17
40	Amended Transfer Guidelines (1999)	1/00	18
41	Public Service Act 1999/ Public Service Values	1/00	22
42	Public Service Regulations- Disciplinary Action	1/00	25

43	Ill-Treatment of Students	2/00	18
44	Corporal Punishment in Schools	2/00	16-18
45	Public Service Conduct	1/00	24
46	Fundraising in Schools	2/03	9
47	Extra Curricular Programmes	2/03	12
48	Internal Assessment	3/03	16
49	Preparation of Work Books	3/58	14-14

APPENDIX B

POSITION DESCRIPTION AND JOB ANALYSIS

- A.
1. Position Title: Head Teacher ED2C Andrews Primary School
 2. Department: Education
 3. District: Lautoka/Nadi/Yasawa School: 1050 Andrews Primary
 4. Incumbent's Name: Rajendra Singh TPF: 6554
 5. Position Title of Supervisor: Divisional Education Officer (Western)
- B.
1. **Describe the objectives of your organization:**

This school was established to provide primary education from classes 1-8. I am duty bound to provide quality education and wholesome development of the children. The children and teachers need constant advice, guidance, counselling and monitoring. I need to provide direction, empowerment and ethical leadership.
 2. **Describe the primary purpose of your position:**

The objective of the school is to deliver curriculum to 675 students from classes 1-8. To ensure children do well in external exams. To control 23 teachers and 3 support staff. To be responsible for the welfare of staff and students through guidance and counselling. To monitor attendance and performance of staff and students. To liaise with relevant support agencies and stakeholders
- C. **Position Dimension:**
1. Staff No. Directly supervised: 26
 No. Indirectly supervised: 3
 2. School School Roll: 675
 Day Students: 675
 Boarders: Nil
 Class Type: Straight
 Class Size: Average – 34
 3. Resources: Finance:
 Physical:

Position Reporting on	Primary Objectives
AHT ED5C (i)	Responsible for classes 5-8. To monitor curriculum, assessment, discipline, professional development. Report on teacher's performance, deputise HT, extra-curricular activities. Assist the HT with school administration.
AHT ED5b (i)	Responsible for classes 1-4. Share duties with the first AHT as given above.
Executive Teachers (4)	Team leaders for classes 1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 respectively. Provide professional guidance, monitor curriculum, guide and coach teachers in their clusters.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CONTACT/ORGANISATION	PURPOSE AND FREQUENCY
Ministry of Education	Posting salary, admin matters – as per need. Leave, transfers, promotion opportunities.
Parents	As per need Minimum of two consultations in person each year. Communication through newsletter – once per term.
N.G.O	Solicit support for finance. Expert resources persons expose students to variety of learning experiences, and help compliment the curriculum.
Other organizations eg. Sports, bodies, business houses, service organizations	Contact on need basis. Consult for extra curricular activities, fundraising, technical support.

E. DECISION MAKING:

1. List all decisions that this position makes independently:

Admission, promotion and discipline of students. School Programme, leave for teachers, school rules. (Also refer to list attached).

2. List all recommendations you would make to your supervisor for approval:

Need for relieving teachers, in-service of deserving teachers, underage approval, leave for sports, picnic, any other deviation from the normal school programme, leave with/without pay for teachers.

F. What knowledge, skills and experiences are essential for effective and competent performance in your position?

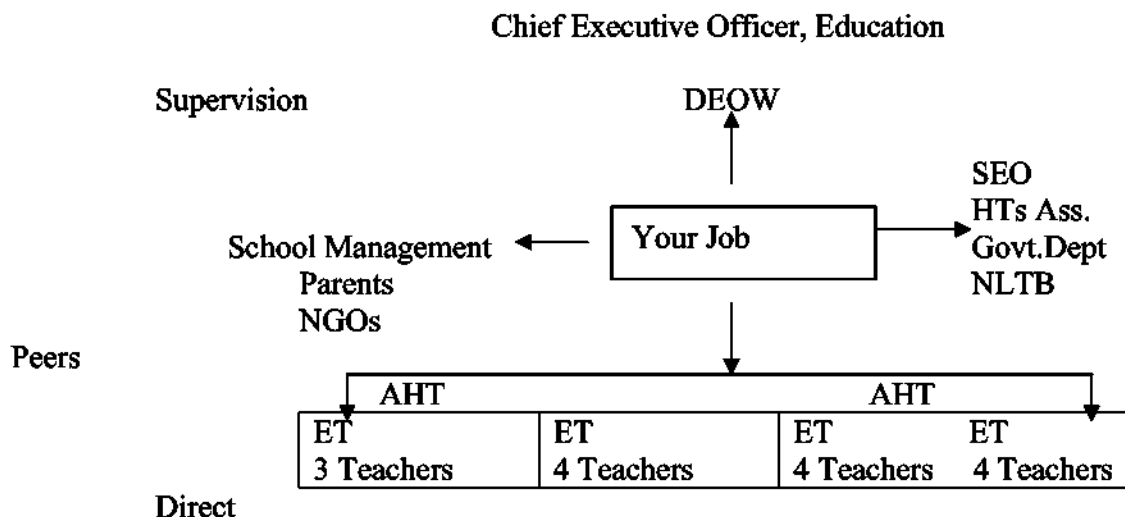
Relevant knowledge in school administration, appropriate training, with leadership skills and sufficient exposure are essential. Well developed leadership qualities, appreciation of different cultures and knowledge and appreciation of the school vision and mission have distinct advantage.

G. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Principal Accountabilities	Activities
Policy & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold vision and mission of the school. • Formulate and implement professional development programme for teachers. • Meet aspirations of the school community.
School Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement school development plan. • Supervise 23 teachers and 3 support staff. • Negotiate and allocate classes, monitor, give guidance and support.
Controlling, Regulations & Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor curriculum implementation • Undertake assessment/evaluation. • Report performance to parents/MOE.
Staff Management and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate with teachers for extra curricular activities. • Conduct school based professional development programmes. • Identify needs and advise MOE.
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain good PR with staff, students, parents and other stake holders. • Have regular communication through newsletters.
Professional and Whole School Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold Welcome, Respect and Help- the three pillars of our school rules. • Empower children to perform well. • Motivate children to be regular.
Student Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help develop and maintain racial tolerance and co-operation. • Be mindful of the socio-economic background of the students.
Behaviour Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high level of discipline • Monitor staff morale and conduct. • Train children through character building programme such as values education.

H. ORGANISATION ENVIRONMENT:

Show how your position fits into the organization:



I. MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT OF THE POSITION:

Qualification as for the head teacher ED6D (Primary) and at least 3 years service with a superior assessment in the ED3 or 4 years in ED4 grade or equivalent, based on standard rating scale. A relevant degree from a recognised University is strongly recommended.

Completed 3 years service or a superior assessment in the past 3 years
Superior school administrative ability and professional leadership skills.

Contribute to Fiji Education beyond the immediate school environment and be able to communicate effectively on education issues with the wider community and recognized leaders in Education.

For Special Education post, a relevant tertiary qualification from a recognised institution. Where relevant, hostel management experience will be preferred.
Potential to advance to a high post.

I. DESCRIPTION OF YOUR MQR:

DOB : 11.09.1953

Secondary Education: Xavier College, B auto Form Five (NZSC)

Tertiary Education: PGDE, B.Ed, Dip.Ed.Amin, TESL

Teacher Training: NTC, 1971

Other Qualification: Wood Badge (Scouts), UNDP/UNESCO National Trainer.

Schools Served: 1. Moto Sanatan, 2. Nalotawa District 3. Namau Public, 5. Naruku Primary (Education Office-1988-1995), 6. Votualevu Public, 7. Andrews Primary School.

J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Refer to additional information given below.

Supplementary Information on JOB ANALYSIS for Rajendra Singh TPF 6554 Head Teacher ED2C , 1050 Andrews Primary School

Tasks Undertaken Daily:

1. As the custodian of school keys, ensure the school gates, office, classrooms and toilet blocks are open at the appropriate time.
2. Monitor the arrival of students and ensure all safety measures are followed by all drivers and pedestrians in the school compound.
3. Review the days programme. Remind teachers if any additional activity has been planned for the day. For example, attending of sports meeting, arranging tea for special visitors to the school etc.
4. Check the mail and take appropriate action. Note important items in the diary and staff notice board. Advise teachers of any upcoming events like meetings, activities like oratory contest, or visits by important personnel like CDU, School Health Sisters, Road Safety personnel etc. Negotiate with a group of teachers and delegate responsibilities to prepare for the requirements as mentioned above. Negotiate with the accounts clerk for appropriate budget to cater for the visit. Advise the school manager in case important stakeholders are visiting.
5. Ensure morning routines are followed and classes begin at the right time.
6. Monitor teacher attendance. In case of teacher absence, negotiate with other teachers for the supervision of the affected class. Monitor that this class is not neglected throughout the day. Personally teach/supervise this class when not tied down to other urgent business.
7. Supervise the teachers and students throughout the day by employing various strategies like walking about, visiting classes at random and through the assistant head teachers and executive teachers.
8. Receive complaints from teachers about students who are irregular, who do not complete their homework or those who are found to be misbehaving. This needs investigating, monitoring, counselling and if need be referring to their parents.
9. Parents also come up with allegations of bullying by other students, lost items, and at times allegation of mistreatment by the teaches. Such cases are time consuming as the complaint has to be entertained, investigation carried out and satisfactory response given to the aggrieved party.
10. Business organisations send their sales people to the school with various types of items and proposals. They only wish to see the head teacher. We have to spare time for these people even if we are not interested in their products. We have to keep a cordial relationship since these are the people who support us during school fund raising.

11. The school clerk and typist must be allocated job and monitored throughout the day.
12. Take telephone calls as numerous persons and organisations wish to communicate with the Head Teacher.
13. Ensure school canteen operates on time during recess and lunch and that all approved financial procedures are followed.
14. Ensure children are adequately supervised by teachers and prefects during recess, lunch and duty times.
15. In case of emergencies, like children falling sick, ensure that first aid teachers check and if need be advise the parents. In emergencies, refer the children to the hospital.
16. Make alternative arrangements for those children who were found not having anything to eat during lunchtime.
17. Ensure appropriate dismissal procedures, including road crossing is followed after school.
18. Attend to parents who come up to enrol new students or to withdraw their children. This is very common as there is a lot of migration, both local and overseas.
19. Writing references letters for parents who wish to seek assistance from Social Welfare Department.
20. Writing reference letters for parents who wish to claim money from FNPF to pay for fees etc.
21. Give reference for children in the school if they wish to visit overseas during the holidays. Such reference is also needed when they wish to make their passports.
22. Attend to requests by the Management on any matter.
23. Certify documents for parents whose children are in secondary schools and wish to claim "Remission of Fees".
24. Help supervise any construction/repair/maintenance work being undertaken in the school.
25. Delegate duties and, supervise and monitor performance of the school gardener/handyman.
26. Inspect any damages done/identified and arrange for its repair. In case of major works, consult the Manager, obtain relevant quotation, get the damage repaired and organise payment.
27. Make provision for rooms etc required by other organisations like Road Safety Council, Teachers Union, who meet after school hours or during weekends.
28. Ensure that all fans/power points are switched off, rooms locked, water taps and control valves turned off, toilet locked and school gate closed after school.
29. Make entries in the log book for any important incident, event or in case of any changes to routine like some classes going out for excursion.
30. Monitor the teachers, students and the functioning of the kindergarten section. Attend to any request that may come from that section.

Tasks Undertaken Weekly:

1. Check and approve Teacher's Work Book and other plans with the assistance of two AHT's.
2. Check the attendance register. Identify cases of excessive absence and take appropriate action. Establish the cause of absence and identify cases of truancy. Take appropriate corrective measures.
3. Check reports prepared by teachers on duty and take appropriate remedial action.
4. Liaise with the Ministry of Education on issues of importance.
5. Monitor remedial programme and assessment of class activities.

Tasks Undertaken Monthly:

1. Supervise preparation of Monthly return of absence of teachers.
2. Supervise preparation of Accounts for presentation to monthly committee meeting.
3. Monitor assessment of student performance undertaken by class teachers.
4. Hold staff meeting to deal with administration and professional issues.
5. Attend Head Teachers Association Meetings.

Tasks Undertaken Termly:

1. Facilitate Term end tests.
2. Ensure adequate resources are available for use by teachers and students. Monitor issuance and records of such expendable and non-expendable items.
3. Prepare and submit school list to the Ministry for Fee Free Grant.
4. Organise procurement of items in short supply.
5. Publish school newsletters.
6. Attend workshops/seminars organised by SEO, HTA, CDU, LTZ, other organisations.

Tasks Undertaken Annually:

1. Preparation of Annual Work Plan
2. Approval of Scheme of Work prepared by every teacher.
3. Negotiate class allocation, rooms and other duties.
4. Negotiate and delegate duties for extra-curricular activities.
5. Help prepare job descriptions for all positions.
6. Consult teachers and involve deputy heads to prepare duty roster, delegation of specific duties, allocation of garden space and duty areas.
7. Prepare year planner.
8. Set targets for external examinations and other competitions organised by various Government and Non-Government Organisations.
9. Assist the Management in the preparation of annual budget for the school.
10. Organise school fund raising with the management.
11. Enroll new students in class one and other classes after vetting applications and conducting interviews. Update admission register and tally for accurate information.

12. Help facilitate Annual General Meeting of the school. Help management prepare annual report of activities and finance.
13. Organise Children's day, Teachers day, Sports Day and various other programmes to mark religious festivals and important events like Ratu Sukuna day.
14. Organize Annual Prize giving programme.
15. Endorse candidate registration forms for Fiji Intermediate and Fiji Eighth Year Examinations.
16. Prepare schools annual report and send copy to the Ministry of Education.
17. Cite and sign student report of internal examinations after Mid Year and Annual Examinations.
18. Attend Conference organised by Fiji Head Teachers Association.
19. Maintaining inventory of school assets like books, furniture, production equipment, furniture, keys etc.

Tasks Undertaken as and when required:

1. Prepare and present professional papers to teachers and head teachers as part of professional development exercise.
2. Entertain and negotiate with donor agencies for assistance and aid.
3. Entertain visitors from overseas who come on goodwill visits.
4. Entertain visitors from teacher training institutions who come for familiarisation and for placement of student teachers.
5. Take on student teachers, guide them throughout their practicum period and write progressive and terminal reports.
6. Write project proposals for possible funding and project reports upon completion of the projects and programmes.
7. Attend functions in the school community as guest speakers.
8. Attend funerals/functions in the community on behalf of the school.
9. Be part of the management team while dealing with the landowners.
10. Help organise special events like World Food Day, National Library Week, World Health Day etc at school and district level.
11. Guide children to participate in various national and international competitions.
12. Be responsible for the training and participation of students to various Districts and Nations sporting activities.

CONCLUSION:

The head teacher is accountable for the school 24 hours a day and seven days a week. We have to ensure that the property is safe at all times. The head teacher has to answer all the questions like what damage has been done and what items have been stolen in cases of burglary.

Head Teacher has to be accountable if the results in the external examinations is not good. Fingers are pointed at the school head if students are found to be in-disciplined.

Thus the major responsibility of the school head is accountability. The demand increases with the increase in student and teacher population.

The HT, with the support of the AHT, has to ensure the following purpose of education in Fiji is fulfilled:

- Support the development of students with positive attitudes;
- Empower students with a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and values;
and
- Maximise students' potential to meet challenges of living in a dynamic Fiji which is part of the global society.

APPENDIX C

Interview questions that guided the research

1. How were you appointed?
2. What does the work of an AHT look like over a period of time?
3. What are your responsibilities?
4. Is there an affective dimension to the job? If so, what are the characteristics of this dimension?
5. What do you think of your work?
6. Where do you get your responsibilities from?
7. What are the factors that influence your work?
8. What do the stakeholders think about your work?
9. What is your relationship with your HT?
10. How were you prepared for this job?
11. How have you been upgrading you qualification and expertise?
12. Do you, as an AHT possess a great deal of power? How do you exercise your authority?
13. Any other remarks that you wish to make.