

Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices: Nurturing Inclusive Learning Environment for Tamil Linguistic Minority Students in Kerala

Sruthi S.* and Seema Menon K. P.**

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the implementation of culturally responsive leadership practices in schools in Kerala, with a particular emphasis on Tamil linguistic minority students. The objectives were to analyze the opinions of Tamil linguistic minority students, teachers, and administrators regarding the culturally responsive leadership practices adopted in their respective schools. A qualitative research design was employed to gain in-depth insights into the implementation of these practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and opinionnaires administered to Tamil linguistic minority students, teachers, and school administrators, who were selected through purposive sampling. The study aimed to identify effective leadership approaches that supported multilingualism, cultural diversity, and academic achievement. The insights garnered were intended to inform educational leaders and policymakers, providing guidance for the promotion of inclusive learning environments for Tamil linguistic minority students in Kerala.

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Leadership; Inclusive Learning Environment; Tamil Linguistic Minority Students

*NCERT Research Fellow in Education, NSS Training College, Ottapalam, University of Calicut, Kerala

**Professor, NSS Training College, Ottapalam, University of Calicut, Kerala

INTRODUCTION

In the richly diverse educational context of Kerala, the demand for academic leadership that understands and addresses the unique requirements of Tamil linguistic minority students is evident. The linguistic diversity presents both challenges and opportunities, underscoring the pivotal role of culturally responsive leadership practices. Culturally responsive leadership is not merely a pedagogical approach but a commitment to fostering an educational ethos that respects and integrates diverse cultural perspectives. It involves a profound understanding of various cultures, awareness of institutional biases, and the enactment of policies promoting equity and inclusivity. By prioritizing cultural responsiveness, educational leaders can create environments empowering students to critically engage with diverse cultural narratives, fostering empathy and understanding. Through curriculum adaptation, community engagement, and the promotion of culturally relevant pedagogy, leaders can establish an educational background that honours diversity and empowers students academically and personally.

In the context of Tamil linguistic minority students in Kerala, culturally responsive leadership practices extend beyond the classroom. Leaders play a crucial responsibility in creating a school culture that respects and celebrates diversity, adapting the curriculum to reflect various cultural perspectives and ensuring inclusive policies and practices. This Holistic method aligns with the assertion of Banks (2019) that "cultural diversity is not a barrier to education; it is an asset that, when leveraged effectively, enriches the learning environment." Leaders can facilitate professional development that nurtures educators' cultural awareness, enhancing their ability to connect with students personally.

The cultivation of culturally responsive leadership practices holds immense promise for fostering inclusive learning environments. By embracing culturally responsive leadership, leaders can play a transformative role in nurturing an educational ecosystem where every student's cultural identity is valued and celebrated. This aligns with the perspective of Gay (2018), emphasizing that culturally responsive leadership is a commitment to creating an educational ethos that respects and integrates diverse cultural perspectives.

Research by Lee and Milner (2019) provides a comprehensive definition of culturally responsive leadership, emphasizing its connection to diversity, institutional biases, and the promotion of equity and inclusivity. In the context of Tamil linguistic minority students, culturally responsive leadership emerges as a pivotal force in addressing challenges stemming from linguistic and cultural disparities. Theoharis (2020) underscores the role of culturally responsive leadership in dismantling systemic barriers, highlighting the criticality of leadership in creating an inclusive setting where every learner can thrive academically.

Payne and Welch (2021) highlighted that culturally responsive leadership extends beyond the classroom, encompassing the creation of a school culture that respects diversity, adaptation of the curriculum, and the development of inclusive policies. Villegas and Lucas (2007) affirm that culturally aware educators can adapt instructional strategies, interact with learners on a personal level, and create a positive atmosphere where all learners feel seen and heard. Culturally relevant leadership procedures consist of the promotion of culturally relevant pedagogy, advocated by Ladson-Billings (2014). This pedagogical approach involves integrating students' cultural references into the curriculum, providing opportunities to engage with content reflecting their lived realities. Leaders can support educators in implementing culturally relevant pedagogy, empowering them to infuse diverse perspectives into their teaching.

The linguistic diversity in Kerala necessitates leadership programs that promote cultural inclusivity for learning environments. This study explores dimensions of culturally responsive leadership, its impact on inclusive education, and effective strategies for promoting equity. Through interviews, questionnaires, and a review of related studies, this study provides valuable perceptions for educational leaders and policymakers aiming to enhance the educational experience for Tamil linguistic minority students in Kerala.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ozkan and Cakir (2024) explored culturally responsive leadership in education, highlighting its vital role in fostering inclusive environments that honor the diverse cultural backgrounds of students and families. The study underscores the importance of cultural competence, equity, and social justice in leadership practices. It outlines strategies for effectively managing diversity through professional development and training aimed at building leadership capacity. Through case studies and best practices, the authors illustrate how culturally responsive leadership can enhance academic outcomes, increase student engagement, and promote equity within schools.

Mohd Amin Soleh Abdul Kadir et al., (2023) conducted a study on culturally responsive leadership among school leaders and its impact on the instructional climate in Gombak District, Selangor. The study gathered data from 394 teachers through random sampling using the Google Forms platform to thoroughly assess the current state of culturally responsive leadership and the instructional climate, with a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed a strong level of culturally responsive leadership ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.55$) and a highly favorable school instructional climate ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.53$) among participants. The significant correlation between culturally responsive leadership and the instructional climate ($r = 0.873$, $p < 0.05$) highlights the crucial function of culturally sensitive leadership in fostering a productive and effective learning environment. These findings have significant implications for the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, emphasizing the need to prioritize and enhance culturally responsive leadership practices, especially considering the diverse backgrounds and cultures within the institutional community.

Mugisha (2013) focused on culturally sensitive instructional leadership and conducted a conceptual investigation involving principals from three major schools in New Zealand. The researcher employed investigation to delineate, grasp, and analyze experiences drawn from field-based research in these New Zealand schools. The study used in-depth study to explore individual instances within diverse contexts, observing how principals navigate their distinct school environments. According to the principals, culturally responsive instructional leadership (CRIL) involves fostering a secure educational environment that respects and embraces the cultural heritage of ethnic minority students, while also leveraging their cultural strengths in educational practices. Principal Foster emphasized that CRIL involved recognizing each student's unique cultural identity and tailoring educational approaches to their individual strengths.

Taliaferro (2011) conducted a study on developing leaders attuned to cultural diversity through the use of e-learning and instructional methods. The study examined how culturally sensitive leadership theory can prepare future school administration graduates to become leaders capable of understanding and navigating differences across various academic environments. It explored issues such as the cultural backgrounds and educational experiences of students, faculty, and other stakeholders within educational contexts. The study investigated how educational leadership can leverage 21st-century technologies to improve online instruction and teaching strategies, highlighting the effectiveness of these approaches in providing meaningful and in-depth learning experiences for students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the perspectives of Tamil linguistic minority students on the culturally responsive leadership practices implemented in their schools.
2. To examine teachers' views regarding the culturally inclusive leadership approaches adopted in their educational institutions.
3. To evaluate administrators' perceptions of leadership practices that promote and embrace cultural diversity within their schools.
4. To recommend strategies for improving culturally sensitive leadership practices in schools with Tamil linguistic minority students.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study, a qualitative approach was used to collect relevant data from the target students in the schools (Creswell, 2009).

Design of the study

To assess the extent of prevalence of culturally responsive leadership practices in secondary schools of Kerala, a descriptive survey was employed. The data for this assessment were gathered from various sources, such as personal interviews and opinions.

Sample and sampling

The investigator purposefully selected Palakkad district in Kerala as the study location. A simple random sampling method was utilized to choose 8 schools. A purposive sampling approach was used to select a total of 120 Tamil linguistic minority students from the ninth grade, 8 school administrators from schools with Tamil linguistic minority students, and 20 teachers from the chosen schools.

Tools employed in the study

1. Opinionnaire used for Student responses: An opinionnaire was administered to 120 students to gather their perspectives on culturally responsive leadership practices in schools serving Tamil linguistic minority communities.
2. Interview Schedule for Teachers: An interview schedule for teachers in schools with Tamil linguistic minority students.
3. Interview Schedule for Administrators: The study employed an interview schedule for present school administrators of institutions with Tamil linguistic minority students.

To enhance validity, the tool was evaluated by four experts in the field of research, and their recommendations were incorporated to refine the items, particularly considering the Kerala context.

Statistical techniques

Percentage analysis of the opinionnaire responses from Tamil linguistic minority students

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. To investigate the perspectives of Tamil linguistic minority students on the culturally responsive leadership practices implemented in their schools.

An opinionnaire was given to 120 Tamil linguistic minority students to analyze their opinions on the culturally responsive leadership practices adopted in their school.

From Table 1, opinions of Tamil linguistic minority students about different dimensions of culturally responsive leadership practices were examined. Based on the dimension of Cultural Awareness and Respect, the opinions of Tamil linguistic minority students were analyzed. From the analysis, it can be observed that 75% of students agree that class leaders understand and respect Tamil culture, while 20.8% disagree. These results demonstrate that the majority of students believe they are valued for their Tamil cultural identity at school, with 81.6% expressing this sentiment, while 18.3% are undecided. This suggests that a majority of students feel a sense of appreciation and recognition for their Tamil cultural identity within the school environment. In terms of teaching practices, 85% of students agree that teachers include Tamil culture in lessons, while 15% disagree. This finding indicates that a significant majority of students feel that Tamil culture is integrated into their lessons, which can contribute to a more inclusive and culturally diverse educational experience.

Based on the dimension of Cultural Celebrations and Awareness, the perspectives of Tamil linguistic minority students were analyzed. According to the analysis, it is evident that 83.3% of students support the school actively celebrating Tamil events and traditions, while 16.6% disagree. Additionally, 80.8% of students agree that the school organizes workshops and activities that promote awareness and appreciation of Tamil culture, while 19.1% disagree. These findings indicate that a majority of students recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the school to celebrate Tamil events and traditions. This suggests that the school is actively creating an inclusive and culturally responsive environment for Tamil linguistic minority students.

Within the dimension of Language and Communication, the viewpoints of Tamil linguistic minority students were analyzed. In addition, 75% of the learners surveyed agree that the school promotes the understanding and studying of the Tamil language. This suggests that the school is actively involved in supporting the linguistic needs of Tamil linguistic minority students. Additionally, 72.5% of the students feel at ease of sharing their Tamil cultural experiences at school, indicating an inclusive environment that fosters cultural expression and understanding. Drawing from the dimension of Cultural Education and Resources, the judgements of Tamil linguistic minority students were analyzed. From the analysis, it can be observed 76.6% of the students support that the school provides opportunities for them to learn about Tamil cultural heritage. This indicates that the schools are actively incorporating Tamil cultural education into their curriculum or extracurricular activities. 84.1% of the students assume that their teachers possess knowledge about Tamil culture and its contributions, indicating that the teachers are well-informed and capable of providing accurate information about Tamil culture.

Additionally, 73.3% of learners recognised for their input on their cultural experiences at school, underscoring the significance of including Tamil-speaking students in decision-making processes regarding cultural education. 98.3% of the students validate that the school provides resources and materials in the Tamil language, suggesting that the schools are determined to support Tamil linguistic minority students by offering educational materials in

their native language. This evidence suggest that schools with Tamil linguistic minority students are making efforts to promote cultural education and provide necessary resources, creating a supportive environment for students to know about and celebrate their Tamil cultural heritage.

The attitude of Tamil linguistic minority students were analyzed within the dimension of Inclusivity and Support. From the analysis, it is clear that the significant number of students at schools with Tamil linguistic minority students affirm that their schools are sensitive to their needs and those of their families, with 81.6% expressing agreement. 89.1% of students think that their schools actively support and recognize Tamil cultural events. This indicates a positive environment that values and celebrates Tamil culture within the school community.

Furthermore, 77.5% of students experience their teachers encouraging them to learn from each other's Tamil cultural experiences, fostering a sense of inclusivity and appreciation for diversity. 85% of students perceive that their school promotes understanding and collaboration between Tamil-speaking students and their peers from different linguistic backgrounds. These findings represent that steps are being taken to establish a harmonious learning atmosphere where every student can interact and learn from one another.

Table 1: Perspectives of Tamil linguistic minority Students regarding culturally responsive leadership practices implemented in their schools

Dimension	Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Cultural Awareness and Respect	Class leaders understand and respect Tamil culture.	90	75	5	4.1	25	20.8
	I feel valued for my Tamil cultural identity at school.	98	81.6	-	-	22	18.3
	Teachers include Tamil culture in lessons.	102	85	-	-	18	15
Cultural Celebrations and Awareness	The school actively celebrates Tamil events and traditions.	100	83.3	-	-	20	16.6
	The school organizes workshops and activities that promote awareness and understanding of Tamil culture.	97	80.8	-	-	23	19.1
Language and Communication	The school promotes the understanding and learning of the Tamil language.	90	75	-	-	30	25
	Students feel at ease sharing their Tamil cultural experiences within the school environment.	87	72.5	-	-	33	27.5
Cultural Education and Resources	The school provides opportunities for students to learn about Tamil cultural heritage.	92	76.6	-	-	28	23.3
	Teachers possess knowledge about Tamil culture and its contributions.	101	84.1	-	-	19	15.8
	The school seeks input from Tamil-speaking students on their cultural experiences	88	73.3	-	-	32	26.6
	The school provides resources and materials in the Tamil language.	118	98.3	-	-	2	1.6
	The school shows sensitivity towards the needs of Tamil-speaking students and their families.	98	81.6	-	-	22	18.3
	The school actively supports and recognizes Tamil	107	89.	-	-	13	10.8

Inclusivity and Support	cultural events.		1				
	Teachers encourage students to learn from each other's Tamil cultural experiences.	93	77.5	-	-	27	22.5
	The school promotes understanding and collaboration between Tamil-speaking students and others.	102	85	-	-	18	15

2. To examine teachers' views regarding the culturally inclusive leadership approaches adopted in their educational institutions.

An interview was conducted with 20 teachers to analyze their perspectives on the culturally responsive leadership practices adopted in their school. Based on the interview, the investigator uncovered several key findings. Teachers reported various strategies to incorporate Tamil culture, including integrating cultural themes into lesson plans, using culturally relevant materials, and organizing activities that reflect Tamil traditions. This approach aims to create an inclusive learning setting harmonious with the cultural background of Tamil linguistic minority students. Teachers use interactive teaching strategies, group discussions, and collaborative projects to engage Tamil linguistic minority students actively. In this approach, students are valued and motivated to contribute actively. Teachers reported receiving training focused on cultural competence, language teaching methodologies, and understanding the unique needs of Tamil-speaking students. This training equips educators with the skills needed to teach effectively in a culturally inclusive context.

Creating an immersive cultural experience through storytelling, interactive sessions, and exposure to Tamil literature and arts is seen as essential to fostering cultural pride and awareness among students. The aim is to cultivate a genuine appreciation for Tamil heritage within the school community. Access to culturally relevant textbooks, multimedia resources, and collaborations with community organizations further enhances the educational experience for Tamil-speaking students. These tools support a more holistic and culturally responsive approach to teaching. Diverse assessment strategies such as student feedback, classroom observation, and evaluations of cultural competency are employed to monitor progress. Ongoing reflection and adaptation of teaching practices ensure sustained efforts toward cultural inclusivity and responsiveness in the classroom.

Teachers stressed the significance of maintaining open communication and taking initiative in resolving cultural conflicts. Creating a supportive and understanding classroom environment allows for addressing cultural issues promptly, fostering a harmonious learning space. Teachers reported actively involving families through parent-teacher collaborations, cultural events, and community outreach programs. Teachers express the importance of involving Tamil linguistic minority families and communities in the educational process. Their responses highlight collaborative efforts, such as organizing PTA Meetings, inviting community members to exchange their experiences with learners, and establishing regular communication channels like newsletters in Tamil. These examples showcase practical ways to build partnerships with families, promoting a sense of community engagement and shared responsibility in fostering the educational well-being of Tamil linguistic minority students. This community-oriented nature aligns with the wider goals of culturally responsive leadership, recognizing the relevance of collaboration between educators, students, and their communities.

Teacher responses underscored the use of technology to support Tamil-speaking students' learning experiences. This includes utilizing educational apps, online resources, and virtual platforms to supplement traditional teaching methods. Their responses highlight the strategic use of educational apps like "Learn Tamil Now," tailored to language learning, online platforms offering supplementary resources in Tamil, such as "Tamil Learning Hub," and virtual language exchange programs. Additionally, initiatives like the school's ICT (Information and Communication Technology) club and other technology programs play a crucial role. These examples showcase how teachers leverage technology, including club activities and specialized programs, to enhance language acquisition, provide additional learning resources, and facilitate a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Culturally sensitive leadership practices designed to meet the diverse needs of Tamil linguistic minority students using innovative and accessible educational tools.

The integration of Tamil cultural elements into classroom instruction and the broader curriculum reflects a deliberate effort to create inclusive and meaningful learning experiences. Traditional Tamil stories, the use of the Tamil language in lessons, and the facilitation of cultural exchange activities serve to enrich students' educational journeys while promoting cultural awareness. These efforts align closely with the principles of culturally

responsive leadership, which emphasize the importance of honoring and supporting diverse cultural backgrounds. Enhancing access to culturally relevant resources such as a library collection rich in Tamil literature, classroom displays featuring cultural artifacts, and language-specific tools like interactive software and educational games further reinforces this commitment. However, the absence of specialized training for mainstream subject-area teachers and the limited availability of targeted supports, such as Tamil language tutors or enrichment workshops, underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, culturally informed professional development programs.

Teachers describe a range of activities and programs dedicated to celebrating Tamil culture across the school community. For instance, cultural festivals showcasing traditional dance and music, language proficiency competitions, and art exhibitions featuring Tamil themes are common activities. However, the observation that certain schools outside the border of Tamil Nadu do not celebrate Tamil cultural festivals, like Pongal or Tamil New Year, raises questions about the inclusivity and cultural responsiveness of these educational institutions. This evaluation aims to note the areas for modification, celebrate successful initiatives, and further advance the commitment to inclusivity and cultural responsiveness in education. Through this comprehensive approach, it is possible to assess and address challenges, celebrate successful initiatives, such as intercultural exchange programs and language workshops, and further advance the commitment to inclusivity and cultural responsiveness in education.

Engagement strategies within the classroom are highlighted by teachers as a means to foster a positive and inclusive atmosphere for Tamil linguistic minority students. For example, incorporating group discussions, organizing cultural exchange projects, and assigning collaborative projects that explore Tamil history are effective approaches. Teachers express the importance of interactive and participatory approaches that encourage students to allocate their perspectives, offering a dynamic and culturally rich classroom environment. Regarding training, teachers acknowledge the necessity for specialized training in teaching Tamil-speaking students. They emphasize the requirement for professional development initiatives that enhance their cultural sensitivity, linguistic proficiency, and capacity to tackle the unique educational needs of Tamil linguistic minority students effectively. Practical examples include workshops on integrating Tamil culture into lesson plans, language-specific teaching techniques, and cross-cultural communication skills.

In examining teachers' perspectives on leadership practices that adopt cultural sensitivity in their school, several key themes emerged. Teachers emphasized the meaningfulness of leadership that prioritizes cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and a deep understanding of the diverse backgrounds of students. The implementation of policies and initiatives that promote cultural awareness, along with continuous professional growth for educators, was viewed as instrumental in constructing an environment that embraces diversity. Teachers highlighted the value of leadership fostering a collaborative approach, involving teachers, students, and parents in decision-making processes to ensure a culturally responsive educational experience.

Teachers reported receiving targeted training in cultural competence and language-specific pedagogies, enhancing their ability to meet the needs of Tamil-speaking students. This aligns with Ladson-Billings' (1995) assertion that effective culturally responsive teaching requires ongoing professional development and reflective practice. The use of interactive and inclusive pedagogical strategies such as storytelling, group projects, and collaborative learning was commonly noted, reflecting the principles of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which underscores learning through social interaction within meaningful cultural contexts.

Teachers pointed out the importance of using technology alongside digital resources like Tamil language apps and culturally responsive educational platforms. These efforts support findings from research by Nieto (2004), who emphasized the role of technological inclusion in multicultural education. The importance of inclusive leadership was further reinforced by the emphasis on proactive communication, conflict resolution, and engagement with families through PTA meetings, newsletters in Tamil, and community-led programs demonstrating alignment with Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis' (2016) concept of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), which prioritizes equity-driven collaboration among stakeholders.

In examining teachers' perspectives on leadership practices that adopt cultural sensitivity in their school, several key themes emerged. Teachers emphasized the meaningfulness of leadership that prioritizes cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and a deep understanding of the diverse backgrounds of students. The implementation of policies and initiatives that promote cultural awareness, along with continuous professional growth for educators, was viewed as instrumental in constructing an environment that embraces diversity. Teachers highlighted the value of

leadership fostering a collaborative approach, involving teachers, students, and parents in decision-making processes to ensure a culturally responsive educational experience.

3. To evaluate administrators' perceptions of leadership practices that promote and embrace cultural diversity within their schools.

Eight administrators were interviewed to assess their views on the culturally responsive leadership practices implemented in their school. Based on the interview, the investigator discovered numerous significant findings. Administrators collaborate with local cultural organizations such as the Tamil Cultural Association. These partnerships facilitate the organization of cultural events, workshops, and awareness campaigns within schools with Tamil linguistic minorities. Administrators engage with local community leaders, language experts, and historians to ensure a comprehensive and authentic representation of Tamil culture in school activities. This collaborative effort enhances the cultural responsiveness of leadership practices, creating a vibrant and inclusive educational environment for Tamil linguistic minority students.

The school's commitment to promoting cultural diversity extends beyond a singular focus on Tamil culture through the implementation of inclusive initiatives. Programs such as traditional arts and crafts exhibitions, regional language proficiency competitions, and cultural heritage awareness campaigns specifically support the Tamil linguistic minority community while fostering a broader appreciation for diversity. These efforts reflect the principles of culturally responsive leadership, emphasizing the importance of creating an environment that values and uplifts all cultural identities. Practical strategies include partnerships with local cultural organizations, hosting community events, and integrating the rich cultural history of Tamil linguistic minorities into the school curriculum.

Specialized programs and activities developed to celebrate Tamil culture play a vital role in enriching the school community. Events such as Tamizh Vizha, a cultural festival that highlights traditional Tamil arts, dance, and music, offer students immersive opportunities to engage with their heritage. Initiatives like language exchange programs further support Tamil linguistic minority students by providing collaborative environments to practice their language skills. These targeted efforts extend beyond standard cultural observances, fostering a dynamic platform for students to express and celebrate their identity in meaningful and innovative ways.

Administrators prioritize addressing language barriers for Tamil-speaking students through initiatives such as "Language Learning Labs," featuring interactive software to elevate language proficiency. Collaborative efforts with language specialists involve workshops and tutorial sessions designed to support Tamil-speaking students in overcoming language challenges. This comprehensive strategy adheres to the principles of culturally responsive leadership, ensuring that language barriers do not impede the educational experience for Tamil linguistic minority students.

Administrators enhance teacher training by collaborating with the local BRC (Block Resource Centre) cluster, tapping into its expertise in Tamil medium education. Joint training sessions organized with the BRC cluster, such as language proficiency workshops and cultural sensitivity seminars, provide teachers, including core subject Tamil medium teachers, with specialized insights, resources, and hands-on experiences to deepen their understanding of Tamil linguistic minority students' needs. While general training is provided, the collaborative effort ensures a multifaceted and context-specific approach to professional development, aligning with the overarching goals of culturally responsive leadership practices within the school. However, it is currently observed that there are no special training programs specifically customized for core subject Tamil medium teachers, indicating a potential area for improvement.

Ensuring fairness and inclusivity for Tamil-speaking students is a priority for administrators. They describe measures such as equitable resource allocation, personalized support, and transparent communication to create a climate where all students feel valued and included, aligning with the ideas of culturally responsive leadership. The methods used to assess the effectiveness of cultural inclusion within the educational institutions are outlined by administrators. These assessments encompass measures, providing a thorough understanding of the impact of cultural inclusion initiatives on the learning experience of Tamil linguistic minority students. This commitment to assessment aligns with the dynamic and responsive nature of culturally responsive leadership practices.

4. To recommend strategies for improving culturally sensitive leadership practices in schools with Tamil linguistic minority students.

- Teachers can join training sessions regularly to understand how to include different cultures, like Tamil traditions, in their teaching. This helps make the classroom more welcoming for Tamil linguistic minority students.
- Administrators should make rules that encourage schools to include practices that respect different cultures. These rules should include things that help Tamil students feel included.
- Teachers can talk and work together with parents, community groups, and others. This helps make sure that schools know what Tamil students need and can make changes that fit their culture.
- Schools should give teachers extra tools and help so they can include Tamil culture in their teaching. This could be books, videos, or advice from people who know about Tamil culture.
- Administrators should also make sure there are extra help services in schools that can support Tamil students who might find it hard to speak English. This makes sure they understand everything and can do well in school.
- Teachers should try to teach about Tamil culture in the lessons. This means including things like Tamil stories, history, and traditions in what they teach.
- Teachers can also organize events that show and celebrate Tamil culture. This helps Tamil students feel proud of who they are and integrated into the school structure.
- Administrators should solicit responses from students, parents, and teachers to know if the changes they are making are helping. This way, they can keep making things better.
- Schools should have support services for students who might feel stressed or worried. This includes making sure students feel comfortable talking about their feelings and getting help if they need it.

By implementing these suggestions, educational leaders and policymakers can promote environments that foster inclusivity in schools that have Tamil linguistic minority students in Kerala. This initiative will help the students directly and contribute to a more diverse educational system overall.

CONCLUSION

This study deals with the implementation of culturally responsive leadership techniques in schools in Kerala, with a specific emphasis on creating a comprehensive learning atmosphere for Tamil linguistic minority students. Through qualitative methods such as interviews and opinionnaires, data were gathered from school administrators, teachers, and students to understand their perspectives on culturally sensitive leadership practices and their impact on fostering inclusivity. The study's conclusion revealed several culturally responsive leadership practices being implemented in schools. These practices included promoting multilingualism, embracing cultural diversity, and supporting academic achievement. It was found that educational institutions adopting these practices were successful in creating an inclusive learning environment for Tamil linguistic minority students.

The insights gathered from both teachers and administrators shed light on the multifaceted efforts within schools with Tamil linguistic minorities to embrace culturally responsive leadership practices. The intentional integration of Tamil culture into teaching methods, curriculum, and celebratory events reflects a commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment that honors and celebrates the cultural diversity of students. So many areas for improvement have been identified, including the requirement for specialized training projects designed for core subject Tamil medium teachers. The lack of such targeted initiatives underscores the need to enhance cultural sensitivity and language proficiency among educators. Additionally, ensuring the equitable availability of resources and materials, both in the classroom and through external partnerships, remains crucial for fostering a truly inclusive educational experience.

Suggestions for further advancement include introducing specialized workshops for core subject Tamil medium teachers, collaborative efforts with local cultural organizations to enrich cultural celebrations, and expanding language support initiatives to address language barriers effectively. Transparent assessment methods, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative measures, will provide a continuous feedback loop to refine and optimize cultural inclusion efforts. The findings highlight the positive strides made in embracing culturally responsive leadership practices while also presenting avenues for continuous improvement. By addressing the identified areas and building upon innovative initiatives, schools with Tamil linguistic minorities can further strengthen their commitment to providing an inclusive and culturally diverse educational environment for all students.

The study also underscored the impact of effective leadership approaches in promoting inclusivity. Educational leaders and policymakers can play a vital role in advocating for culturally responsive leadership practices by offering support, resources, and training to school administrators and teachers. Drawing from the outcomes of this study, recommendations can be made to further enhance the implementation of culturally inclusive leadership approaches in schools with Tamil linguistic minority students. By cultivating a culture of inclusivity, schools can ensure that Tamil linguistic minority students feel valued, supported, and included in the studying process.

REFERENCES

- Banks, J. A. (2016). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (6th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315622255>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of literature. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(4), 1272–1311. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668249>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465–491. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 74–84.
- Lee, J., & Milner, H. R. (2019). Culture-centered leadership: A book talk with Dr. James A. Banks. *Urban Education, 54*(5), 725–731.
- Mohd Amin Soleh Abdul Kadir, Mansor, A. N., Jamaludin, K. A., & Mohamad Idrus, R. (2023). Culturally responsive leadership among school leaders and instructional climate. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6*(4), 3331–3344.
- Moll, L. C., & Greenberg, J. B. (2017). *Creating culturally responsive classrooms*. TESOL Press.
- Mugisha, V. M. (2013). Culturally responsive instructional leadership: A conceptual exploration with principals of three New Zealand mainstream schools. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 15*(2), 1–21.
- Nieto, S. (2004). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ozkan, M., & Cakir, C. (2024). Culturally responsive leadership. In *Advances in educational marketing, administration, and leadership* (pp. 193–220). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-0402-1.ch005>
- Payne, C. M., & Welch, B. J. (2021). Examining the role of culturally adaptive leadership in promoting inclusive school cultures. *Journal of School Leadership, 31*(2), 131–158.
- Taliaferro, A. (2011). Developing culturally responsive leaders through e-learning and teaching approach. *i-manager's Journal of Educational Technology, 8*(3), 1–7.
- Theoharis, G. (2020). Reclaiming accountability in teacher education for justice: Democratic community, assessment, and the preparation of teachers for multicultural communities. *Teachers College Record, 122*(10), 1–38.

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2007). The culturally responsive teacher. *Educational Leadership*, 64(6), 28–33.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.