The Leadership Style of Jesus and its influence in Select Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala

Fr James John

Research Scholar
Lincoln University College Malaysia
Email: fr.james@mariancollege.org

Abstract

Education has always been the core component for the development of individuals and the world around them. In this research study, the researcher attempts to evaluate the performance of Christian Higher Education Institutions in the present world. The style of leadership evolved and practiced by Jesus has strongly influenced every form of the organization, be it big or small, service, business, or family all through the past twenty centuries. It has universal significance and applicability based on strong foundations that stood the test of time and can be justified empirically.

However, now as rightly observed by Bob de Wit and Ron Meyer, in 'Strategy Synthesis', various Christian institutions established by the followers of Jesus Christ worldwide, face an apprehension due to two diametrically opposite perspectives. They are: whether they follow the shared value of Jesus' movement ie, love of God expressed in the love of neighbor or the present-day CEO style just like a business enterprise. Again, the organizations established by the followers of Jesus are often confronted with the paradox of whether to achieve success through competing (business model) or cooperation with their rivals (Jesus model).

There are different theories on leadership and still, we can expect new ones based on contemporary research. The literature reviews and analysis show a gap for future research on the Leadership Style of Jesus and its influence in Select Christian Higher Education Institutions(CHEI).

Any institution which grows enormously like this tends to divert from its core values. This study examines whether such a change is taken place in the case of these institutions. It is also expecting that the study will reveal miss matches if any, prevailing between the leadership style of Jesus and the present-day functioning of institutions. The researcher believes that the insights gained from the study will help to rekindle the synergy of Christianity for its real mission. The findings of this study may help the CHEIs to suitably align their plans and strategies in tune with National Educational Policy 2020.

The study will follow the mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied. The research study will be based on both primary and secondary data. The selection of CHEIs will be done by stratified random sampling. The selection of the beneficiaries will be based on the convenience sampling method. The researcher hopes as a result of this study, the researcher will be able to develop a new model of leadership style based on the leadership style of Jesus Christ for the sustainable development of humanity and nature.

Key Words: Leadership, Leadership Style, Leadership Style of Jesus, Leadership style in Christian Higher Education Institutions.

1. Introduction

India has the largest education system in the world. People of our country experience various cultures, religions, and value systems. Unity in diversity is one of the core values of our country. UN Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDGs) 2030: Goal four speaks about quality education.

Education is one of the most powerful tools for sustainable development. In this research, the researcher has included Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 as part of the research study.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India. The main objective of NAAC is to ensure the quality of the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in our country. NAAC has fixed seven criteria for the assessment of HEIs. In this, the sixth criterion is 'Governance, Leadership and Management'. The Key Indicators of this sixth criteria are institutional vision and leadership, strategy development and deployment, faculty empowerment strategies, financial management and resource mobilization and internal quality assurance system. In this research, the researcher focuses on the Governance and Leadership of Christian HEIs as part of the research study.

Education has always been the core component for the development of individuals and the world around them. The Church has always recognized the importance of education in its mission worldwide. In our country, Christians contributed greatly to the education sector in India with pioneering initiatives even in the sixteenth century. Any institution which grows further enormously may divert from its core values. In this research study, the researcher attempts to evaluate the performance of Christian Higher Education Institutions in the present world.

The Bible is the sacred scripture of Christians. It is broadly divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament establishes Jesus Christ as the supreme leader of mankind who came as a liberator preaching the Gospel of freedom. Jesus Christ proclaimed: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" The Bible unfolds before us that Jesus had a definite plan and purpose in his interactions with his contemporaries to lead them to a better world. In enlightening them and making them accept the ideals and principles preached by him and successfully establishing a movement with the Apostles at the top-most, Jesus acted as a Leader with a difference; he had a vision, mission, objectives, and strategies with a distinct and definite leadership style. Established about two thousand years ago, the movement initiated by Jesus Christ now has emerged into an illustrious and unrivalled organization named Christianity for the benefit of mankind named which steers the world with the Christian way of living.

The style of leadership evolved and practised by Jesus has strongly influenced every form of the organization, be it big or small, service, business, or family all through the past

twenty centuries. It has universal significance and applicability based on strong foundations that stood the test of time and can be justified empirically.

However, now as rightly observed by Bob de Wit and Ron Meyer, in 'Strategy Synthesis', (2006) various Christian institutions established by the followers of Jesus Christ worldwide, face an apprehension due to two diametrically opposite perspectives. They are: whether they follow the shared value of Jesus' movement ie, love of God expressed in the love of neighbour or the present-day CEO style just like a business enterprise. Again, the organizations established by the followers of Jesus are often confronted with the paradox of whether to achieve success through competing (business model) or cooperation with their rivals (Jesus model).

2.   Literature Review

"According to John C. Maxwell, A leader knows the way, goes the way and shows the way" (Tiwari, 2017). People often raise this question: Are leaders born or developed? According to Dr Cyril Levicki, "Leaders need to be both born with a set of genetic characteristics and to be nurtured during their childhood and early adulthood to develop what it takes to be a leader" (Levicki, 2004).

"Governance aims to ensure the organization is being run well and being guided in the right direction, in the pursuit of the very purpose or goal of the enterprise" (Kumar, 2010). "Corporate governance is the way organizations are controlled and directed. It involves control, direction, and evaluation of the activities of an organization. It includes principles like honesty, trust, integrity, responsibility, and accountability. Leadership strategies have a very important role to play in corporate governance" (Ghosh, 2013).

"In 'Developing Leadership Genius', Dr Cyril Levicki describes the various theories that constitute leadership. 'The first type is the group of traits' theories which believe that leaders are born, not made. In the next group, the behaviourists believe that leaders can be trained and impart the skills necessary to be good leaders. Finally, the contingency theorists believe that it all depends on the task at hand and the situations the leader has to control" (Levicki, 2004).

"In 'The theory of social and economic organization' the author Max Weber described charisma as a certain quality of an individual personally by which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and based on them the individual is treated as a leader…What alone is important is how the individual is regarded by those subjects to charismatic authority, by his followers or disciples" (Weber, 1918).

"In 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' the author Stephen R. Covey speak about the principles of personal leadership. In that, he explains what it means to 'Begin with the end in mind'. The author says, if you participate seriously in this visualization experience, you touched for a moment some of your deep, fundamental values. You established brief contact with that inner guidance system at the heart of your Circle of Influence…When you begin with the end in mind, you gain a different perspective" (Covey, 1999).

"In 'Effective Leadership: Strategies for Better Results', the authors say: Leadership styles have to do with how people interact with those they seek to lead. Leadership styles go by many different names. However, most styles fall into one of five categories: autocratic, democratic, participative, goal-oriented, or situational" (David L. Goetsch, 2012).

"In 'The 360 Degree Leader', the author John C. Maxwell says,'The principles 360-degree leaders' practice to lead across: follow me, I will walk with you" (Maxwell, 2012).

"In 'Leadership and Management: Test and Cases', the author Dr A. Chandra Mohan says, the concept of leadership has undergone a sea change from the concept of 'born-leader' to 'situation-leader' and effective-leader" (Mohan, 2009).

A servant is a person working in the service of another and one who expresses submission and recognizance. A service is an act of assistance or benefits or favours to 'the other'. In service, the person or group works for the benefit of the other. "According to Kotter, management, and

leadership, both involve deciding what needs to be done, creating networks of relationships to do it, and trying to ensure it happens. Both are necessary for the success of an organization" (Yukl, 2011). In 'The Servant Leader' the author Mr Robert P. Neuschel says, "We learn how to lead from those who have preceded us because basic traits of leadership do not change, even though leadership styles and the application of techniques indeed may and do change" (Neuschel, 2007).

Servant Leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. "The six characteristics of servant leadership are (i) Values people, (ii) Develops people, (iii) Builds community, (iv) Displays authenticity

(v) Provides leadership, (vi) Shares leadership" (Laub, 1999).

Further, Stone (2002) in his research work concluded that true forgiveness supports employee retention, fosters creativity, and innovation; generates flexibility to deal with ever-changing market conditions. When we think about 'Servant Leadership', various dimensions are empowerment, standing back, accountability, authenticity, courage, humility, forgiveness, and stewardship. Research proves that the forgiveness dimension of servant leadership influences the stakeholder's satisfaction level with retention practices.

"About stewardship, existing literature revealed that if employees of an organization perceive organizational human resource policies and practices to be the dedication towards the principles of stewardship, such a perception will help in enhancing the employees' commitment towards the organizations in comparison to the organizations that do not follow such principles" (Caldwell et al., 2008).

"Servant Leadership seeks to involve others in decision making, is strongly based on ethical and caring behaviour, and enhances the growth of workers while improving the caring and quality of organizational life. This article examines a set of ten characteristics of the servant leadership style. They are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Servant Leadership offers great hope for future researches in creating more caring institutions" (Spears, 2010).

Transformational Leadership is a leadership style where leaders and followers engage each other and rise to new levels of motivation, morality, and performance. "Bass speaks about '**4i**'s of Transformational Factors', they are **I**dealized influence, **I**nspirational motivation, **I**ntellectual stimulation, and **I**ndividual consideration. Bass also speaks about the important characteristics of transformational leadership: lead by example and set the expectations, encourage learning and growth, coaching and empowering to success, inspiring to go to new heights" (Bass, 1994).

"Bass has done a Comparison of leadership styles of Transformational leaders and Transactional leaders (1990)" (Maryvonne Lumley, 2014). In the book, 'Leadership and Organizational Climate' the author Dr Joseph Sebastian Thekedam says: "Rather, the Full Range Leadership research reveals that transactional leadership style is equally important and sometimes constitute a necessary counterpart to transformational leadership styles" (Thekedam, 2010).

"Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability to bring about significant change" (Bernard, 1985). "Transformational leaders can head changes in the organization's vision, strategy, and culture as well as promote innovation in products and technologies. Transformational

leaders focus on intangible qualities such as vision, shared values, and ideas to build relationships, give larger meaning to separate activities and provide common ground to enlist followers in the change process. Transformational leadership is the process of engaging the commitment of group members and followers in the context of shared values and shared vision. It is particularly relevant in the context of managing change" (Joseph, 2014).

'Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the secrets of Servant Leadership from the life of Christ, the author Mr C. Gene Wilkes says: "The essential lesson I learned from Jesus on leadership was that *he taught and embodied leadership as service*. Jesus was a Servant Leader in every sense of the concept. I would describe him as one who served his mission [in biblical language, 'the will of (his) Father'] and led by serving those he recruited to carry out that mission" (Wilkes, 2008).

'Leadership of Jesus Revealed in the Gospel of John', the author Daniel W. Keebler

says: "The Servant-leadership philosophy is perhaps the best leadership style to follow as a

Christian Leader and one that Jesus displayed throughout the gospels and the construct revealed

in John 21…. Scripture portrays humankind as being created in the image of God, biased by

sin and alienation, and with the potential to be restored to the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. A moral act enhances the true humanity of those impacted. Ethical leadership enhances human dignity and potential. As Jesus, servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions. As a result, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each individual within the group/organization. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything possible to nurture the growth of followers and recognize them as having their own special and unique spirits" (Keebler, 2018).

'Leadership as Participation in Christ: Paul's Theology of Leadership in the Letter to the Philippians', the author Karl Inge Tangen describes, "an ecclesial vision of a church unified by shared cruciform wisdom that sees Christ as both Lord of the world and as well as an example of humble self-giving leadership. It is argued that Paul's understanding of the koinonia of Christ moves beyond the imitation of Christ to a form of participation in the cruciform leadership of Christ through the Spirit. This kind of leadership takes place as facilitation of, and participation in Christo-practices, which includes cruciform moral reasoning and self-giving love through liturgical-charismatic worship, preaching, teaching, service, economic gifts, and peace-making" (Tangen, 2018).

"The ecclesiastical leadership demands a full understanding of the biblical model of shepherd-leadership, with the three major functions of caring, courage, and guiding the church most effectively. Leaders are the shepherds called to the responsibility for the mature church that is called to test every manifestation of the Spirit. Many claim to be called to servant leadership but are disqualified to be shepherds according to God's criteria" (Resane, 2014). Further researches can be done in this model of leadership for the Christian Institutions for the effectiveness of its mission in the present world.

In an article, Clarke says that "biblical models of leadership often differ from secular models and that principles of biblical leadership are timeless" (Clarke, 2000). "In the article, 'Jesus Authority and Influence in the Gospel of John: Towards a Johannine Model of Leadership', Cornelis Bennema examines Jesus' authority and influence in the Gospel of John and shows that Jesus style of leadership is exemplary or prototypical rather than autocratic. Jesus uses influence (education and

personal example) rather than authority (commands) to urge his disciples to continue His Mission. This leadership style will be useful for contemporary models of leadership" (Bennema, 2016).

The New Testament records the life, teachings, and service of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. "His teaching on leadership served as guiding principles to His disciples and even the present-day leaders in the church. Christ's leadership style was characterized by compassion, love, and servanthood. Jesus was not only a servant-leader but also a good shepherd who was ready to die for his people" (Nyabwari, 2013).

"Servant Leadership is to be a living statement of who are in Christ, how we treat one another, and how we demonstrate the love of Christ to the whole world. Leadership expert Ken Blanchard explains the process of discovering how to lead like Jesus. He describes it as the process of aligning two internal domains – the heart and the head – and two external domains

– the hands and the habits. The idea of leading others begins in the heart which leads to pleasing the heart of God. Then, the head seeks the will of God by sharing a vision, goals, methods, and values. At that point, hands start working on the planned vision with the team. Later, working with a team is a habit in their life. The exciting part of leading like Jesus is that He never sends us into any situation alone or with a flawed plan or a plan to fail" (Blanchard, 2008).

In 'Biblical Principles of Leading and managing Employees' Bruce E Winston found that "Jesus has four leadership styles (i) Charismatic Leadership (ii) Paternalistic/Clan Leadership (iii) Autocratic Leadership (iv) Servant Leadership. From the review, Bruce believes that Jesus is a situational leader who used specific types of leadership style to fit the situations. This review provides an understanding of the leadership styles that Jesus used and give a base for further discussion and research" (Winston, 2018). There are different theories on leadership and still, we can expect new ones based on contemporary research. The above literature reviews and analysis show a gap for future research on the impact of the Leadership style of Jesus Christ and its effectiveness in the governance and leadership of Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEI).

3.   Need and Significance of the Study

The Christians were originated on the day of Pentecost. Now we are in the 21st century and during these years, the Church has been flourished into an illustrious and influential organization extended all over the world. The Christian institutions in the modern world are going through a predicament of confusion or a crisis in following Jesus' way of leading.

Jesus Christ's leadership style has been rooted in the "Good Shepherd concept". The prime focus of this concept is the well-being of the flock and Nature. The Christians must perform retrospection and introspection to find a place in the hearts of common men. They must introspect whether the Christians have side-tracked from the ideals and essence of Christianity as Jesus Christ visualized for the sustainable development of humankind. Do we need to go back to the root "Love of God and Love of Neighbour" which Jesus Christ had highlighted in his mission? The researcher believes that the work will help to rekindle the synergy of Christianity for its real mission and existence for the sustainable development and welfare of humanity and Nature which are the pressing needs for the modern-day world.

Educational Institutions under the Catholic Church has flourished as an influential organization all over the world inspired by the life of Jesus. Any institution which grows enormously like this tends to divert from its core values. This study examines whether such a change is taken place in the case of these institutions. It is also expecting that the study will reveal miss matches if any, prevailing between the leadership style of Jesus and the present-day functioning of institutions. The researcher believes that the insights gained from the study will help to rekindle the synergy of Christianity for its real mission. The findings of this study may help the CHEIs to suitably align their plans and strategies in tune with National Educational Policy 2020.

4. Scope of the Study

The study covers the theoretical aspects such as Jesus leadership style and Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 which are reflected in the administration of CHEIs including its influence on the performance of CHEIs. Four gospels of the New Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition for India) are used for studying the Leadership style of Jesus. Several Christian denominations in Kerala are running Educational Institutions and among them, the select CHEIs will be chosen for the study.

5. Objectives of the Study

5.1 Statement of Proble

Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) have contributed immensely to the socio-cultural development of the country in general and the state of Kerala in particular. Taking inspiration from Jesus' teachings and leadership, the pioneers spent their blood and toil to develop these institutions to their present glory. Millions of successful students who came out from these institutions stand out as testimonies of their selfless service to the nation. Of late, CHEIs is confronted with many challenges and the researcher doubts whether these issues are forcing them to drift away from ideals upon which they are established. Whether the contemporary Christian Leadership of these educational institutions demonstrates or is inspired by Jesus' model of leadership as portrayed in the four gospels of the Bible? It is in this wider context that this research work is undertaken to find out answers to the following questions:

i. What are the prominent leadership styles of Jesus as outlined in the four Gospels of the Bible?

ii.	How far the leadership style of Jesus is practiced by authorities of CHEIs of Kerala in the present scenario?

iii.	Are the authorities of CHEIs encounter any problem in the implementation of the leadership style of Jesus? Does it influence the performance of the CHEIs of Kerala?

iv.	How far the leadership style of Jesus influences the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030, and the CHEIs performance?

v.	Whether there is a model that can suitably explain the performance of CHEIs in tune with Jesus leadership style, adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 and CHEIs problems?

vi.   Whether the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 have any mediating role in the relationship between leadership styles and performance CHEIs as well as in the relationship between problems and performance of CHEIs?

5.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

i. To identify the prominent leadership style of Jesus portrayed in the four Gospels of the Bible.

ii.   To evaluate the extent to which the leadership style of Jesus is practised by authorities of CHEIs of Kerala in the present scenario.

iii.   To verify whether the authorities of CHEIs have encountered any problem in the implementation of the leadership style of Jesus and its influence on the performance of CHEIs of Kerala.

iv.   To examine how far the leadership style of Jesus influence the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030, and the CHEIs performance.

v. To develop and test a model that can explain the performance of CHEIs in tune with the leadership style of Jesus, adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 and CHEIs problems.

vi.   To analysis whether the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 have any mediating role in the relationship between leadership style and performance of CHEIs as well as in the relationship between problems and performance of CHEIs.

5.3 Hypotheses of the Study

i.   There is no significant relationship between the leadership style of Jesus and the performance of the CHEI of Kerala.

ii.   There is no significant relationship between the leadership style of Jesus and the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 practices relevant to the CHEIs of Kerala.

iii.   There is no significant relationship between the adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 practices relevant for CHEI and their performance.

iv.   Adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 have no mediatory role in the relationship between leadership style and performance as well as in the relationship between problems and performance of CHEIs.

5.4 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Model: Impact of Jesus Leadership Styles on CHEIs Performance

6   Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design and Procedure

The study will follow the mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied. The qualitative part includes analyzing the leadership style of Jesus Christ in the context of the four Gospels of the Bible.

The quantitative part includes the empirical assessment of leadership styles and Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 practice in CHEIs. It also evaluates the relationship between the leadership style, adoption of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 Practices and CHEIs Performance.

The research study will be based on both primary and secondary data. The selection of CHEIs will be done by stratified random sampling. The selection of the beneficiaries will be based on the convenience sampling method.

6.2 Operational Framework

The qualitative part of the study is meant to identify the prominent leadership styles of Jesus based on the Four Gospels. And it will be validated and incorporated through focused group discussions. The researcher proposes three focused group discussions. One including academicians of Bible Scriptures, the second one includes experts in management professionals, and the third group includes people belonging to different religious groups other than Christians.

6.3 Subjects or Data Sources

The quantitative data pertaining to the performance of CHEIs, adoptions of Goal four

– target seven of UN SDGs 2030 practices and leadership styles of Jesus will be collected by using structured interview schedule/ questionnaires.

6.4 Instrumentation and Data Analysis

In this research, a mixed-method approach will be used for data collection and data analysis. This research study will be theoretical and analytical. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. An appropriate sampling method and statistical tools will be used for data collection and data analysis.
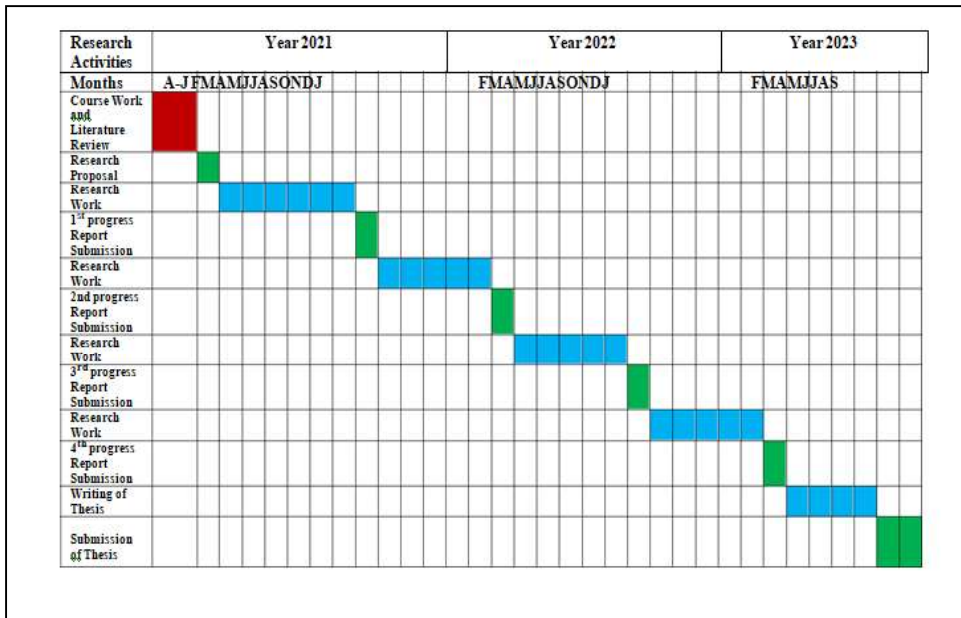
6.5 Limitations

Even though there are different states in India, in this research study the researcher selected the State of Kerala only. The CHEIs in Kerala will be subjected to this study. However, the detailed study is limited to select CHEIs of Kerala.

6.6 Ethics in Research

"Ethics are moral principles and values that influence the way a researcher or a group of researchers conduct their research activities. Ethics apply to all situations and activities in which there can be actual or potential harm of any kind to anybody" (Churchill, 1999). Ethics in research is to be a code of conduct or anticipated social norm of behaviour while conducting research. The aim of ethics in research is to assure that no one is harmed or suffers unfriendly instants from research activities. Ethics in research are necessary to maintain integrity and generating accurate findings. The researcher must think of ethics before he prepares the research design.

7   Gantt chart of an overall research plan

The Gantt chart reflects the three years of the work plan of research activities and plan of action. The researcher will be able to complete the research work within the time limit.

Research Activities	Year 2021		Year 2022		Year 2023	
Months	A-J FMAMJJASONDJ		FMAMJJASONDJ		FMAMJJAS	
Course Work and Literature Review	■					
Research Proposal						
Research Work						
1st progress Report Submission						
Research Work						
2nd progress Report Submission						
Research Work						
3rd progress Report Submission						
Research Work						
4th progress Report Submission						
Writing of Thesis						
Submission of Thesis						

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) says, "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Jesus Christ as well" (Flannery, 2001). The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World correctly points out the stewardship nature of the Church in the Modern World. Therefore, the researcher thinks this study has great relevance in the present context of the church in the modern world for the sustainable growth and development of human beings and Nature. The researcher hopes as a result of this study, the researcher will be able to develop a new model of leadership style based on the leadership style of Jesus Christ for the sustainable development of humanity and nature.

As part of this research study, the researcher will also try to identify the areas in which the CHEIs have to improve and focus on the development of human welfare and Nature to ensure the implementation of Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030. In future, this research study will help the CHEIs to adopt Goal four – target seven of UN SDGs 2030 in all their day-to-day activities

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