



## PROMINENT LEADERSHIP STYLE OF JESUS FOUND IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF KERALA

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### Abstract

Leadership and Leadership Style are always relevant to the success of any organization. Leaders have a major role in developing the institutions. Higher Education Institutions are the platform to build leadership qualities in the young minds of the world. This is a research work that has been conducted in the Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala to find the influence of the Leadership style of Jesus in their institution. The research also examines the prominent style of leadership followed by the authorities of Christian Higher Education Institutions in Kerala. The findings of the research study give an understanding of the current performance of Christian Higher Education Institutions in Kerala.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leadership Style, Higher Education Leadership Style, Christian Leadership Style, Jesus Leadership Style.

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## **1. Introduction**

Leadership is the most basic and important soft skill required for the proper handling of subordinates in any organization. Leadership includes mutual relationships among the followers and leaders for enhanced performance results. Leadership built one's confidence level and prepares one to lead in a time of impulsion. For a successful leader, the major criteria are self-confidence, coordination, foresight qualities, initiative behaviour, drive and personnel integrity capabilities. Leadership styles can be varied according to the working environment. According to this leadership styles may have merits and demerits also. An individual to become a leader should have a character of personal similar quality to followers. That makes their followers accept that person as their leader. A leadership characteristic can be demonstrated as influencing subordinates by him/his attitude with bringing beliefs.

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. 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. In this research study, the researcher attempts to evaluate the performance of Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) in the present world.

### **Literature review**

In 'The Servant Leader' the author 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).

"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 research 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 the '4i's of Transformational Factors', which are Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individual 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, and inspiring to go to new heights" (Bass, 1994).

"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 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. Like 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).

“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).

“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

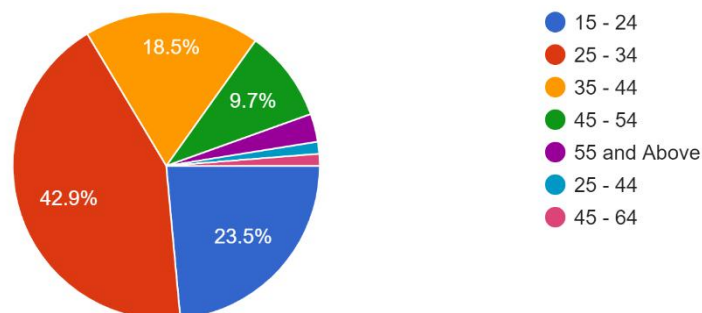
aligning two internal domains – the heart and the head – and two external domains the hands and the habits. The idea of leading others begins in the heart which leads to pleasing the heart of God. Then, the head seeks the will of God by sharing a vision, goals, methods, and values. At that point, hands 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 styles to fit the situations. This review provides an understanding of the leadership styles that Jesus used and gives a base for further discussion and research” (Winston, 2018).

There are different theories on leadership

### A) Based on Age Groups:

#### 1. Classification of respondent on the bases of Age.

238 responses



42.9% of the respondents are in the age group of 25-34; 23.5% are in the age group of 15-24; 18.5% are belongs to 35-44; 9.7%

and still, we can expect new ones based on contemporary research. Further research can be done on this model of leadership for Christian Higher Education Institutions for the effectiveness of its mission in the present world. 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).

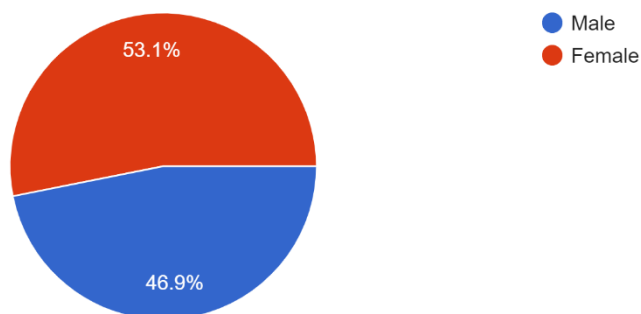
## 2. Methodology

A survey was conducted in the Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) of Kerala. More than 200 persons responded from students, teachers, administrative staff, parents and alumni from various higher education institutions. Respondents are from Arts and Science Colleges, Medical and Nursing Colleges, Engineering Colleges, Teachers Training or B.Ed. Colleges of Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) of Kerala. The questionnaire has been prepared and shared with the respondents. The findings are:

are in the age group of 45-54 and 2.9% belong to 55 and above.

## B) Based on Gender:

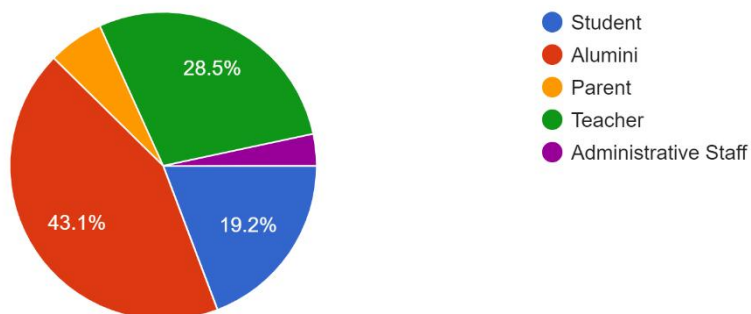
2. Classification of respondent on the bases of Gender.  
239 responses



53.1% of respondents are female and 46.9% are Male.

## C) Category of Respondents:

3. Category of Respondent  
239 responses



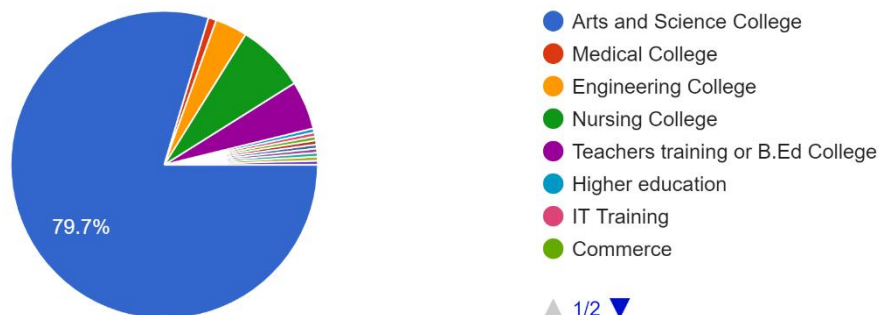
43.1% are alumini, 28.5% are teachers, 19.2% are students, 5.9% are parents and

3.3% are administrative staff.

#### D) Representation of Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala:

4. Christian Higher Education Institution which respondent related with:

236 responses



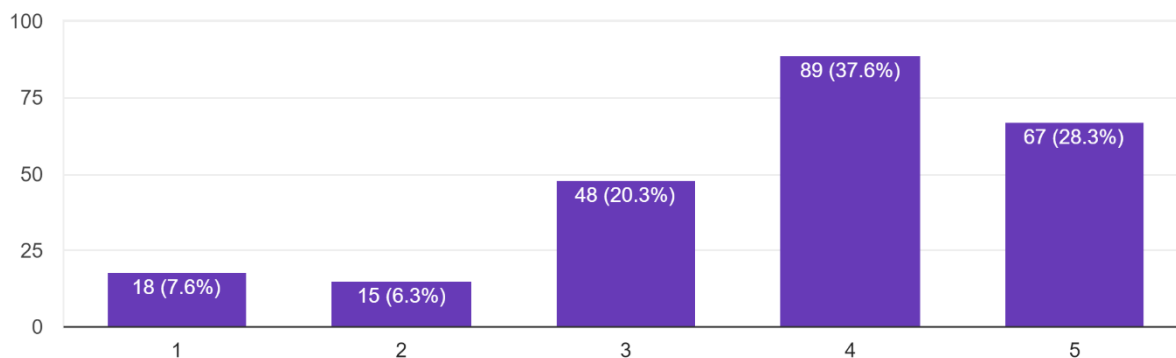
79.7% of respondents are from Arts and Science Colleges, 7.2% are from Nursing Colleges, 5.1% are from Teachers Training

or B.Ed. Colleges, 3.4% are from Engineering Colleges and 0.8% are from Medical Colleges.

#### E) Opinion about the identification of Leadership styles of Jesus Christ in CHEIs of Kerala:

5. Have you identified Leadership Style of Jesus in the Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala?

237 responses



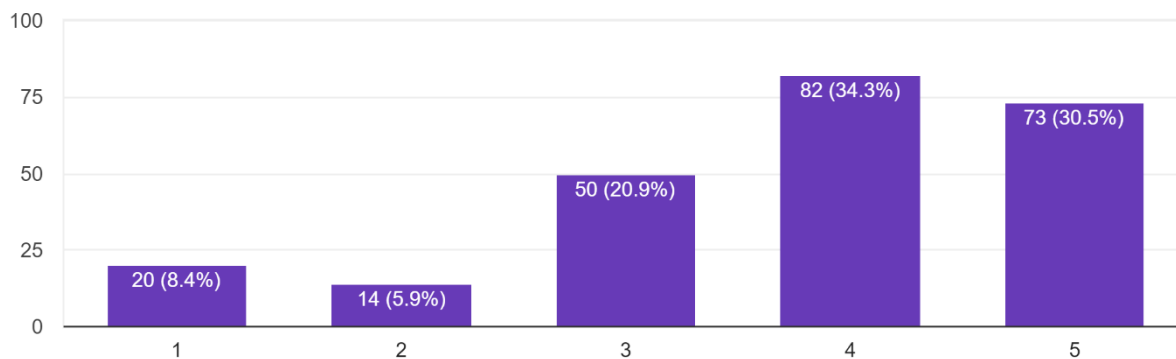
Presence of Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala: 28.3% said excellent,

37.6% said very good, 20.3% said good, 6.3% said average and 7.6% said poor.

## F) Observation of Shepherd Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala:

6. Have you identified Shepherd Leadership Style of Jesus in your Institution?

239 responses



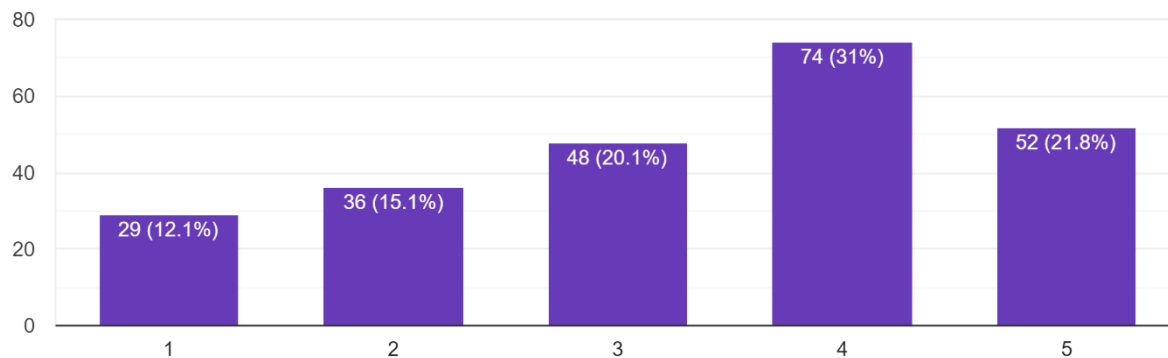
Presence of Shepherd Leadership Style in CHEIs of Kerala: 30.5% of respondents

said excellent, 34.3% said very good, 20.9% said good, 5.9% said average and 8.4% said poor.

## G) Observation of the Servant Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala:

7. Have you identified Servant Leadership Style of Jesus in your Institution?

239 responses



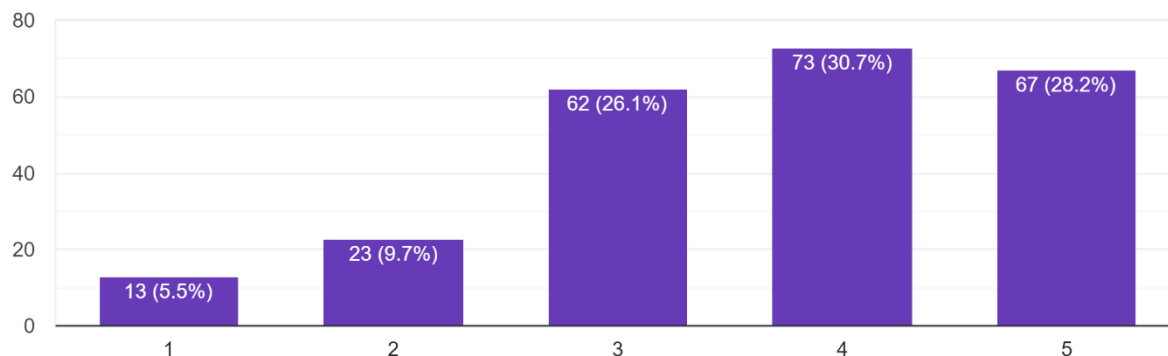
Presence of Servant Leadership Style in CHEIs of Kerala: 21.8% of respondents

said excellent, 31% said very good, 20.1% said good, 15.1% said average and 12.1% said poor.

## H) Observation of the Transformational Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala:

8. Have you identified Transformational Leadership Style of Jesus in your Institution?

238 responses



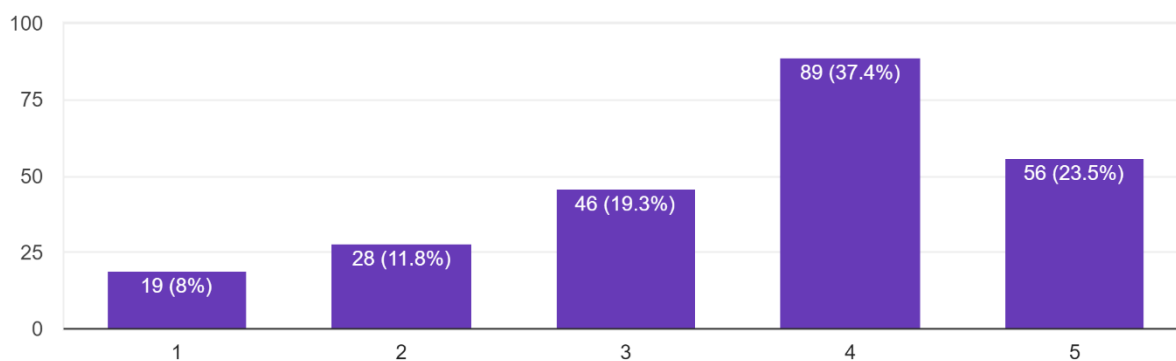
Presence of Transformational Leadership Style in CHEIs of Kerala: 28.2% of

respondents said excellent, 30.7% said very good, 26.1% said good, 9.7% said average and 5.5% said poor.

## I) Observation of the Charismatic Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala:

9. Have you identified Charismatic Leadership Style of Jesus in your Institution?

238 responses



Presence of Charismatic Leadership Style in CHEIs of Kerala: 23.5% of respondents

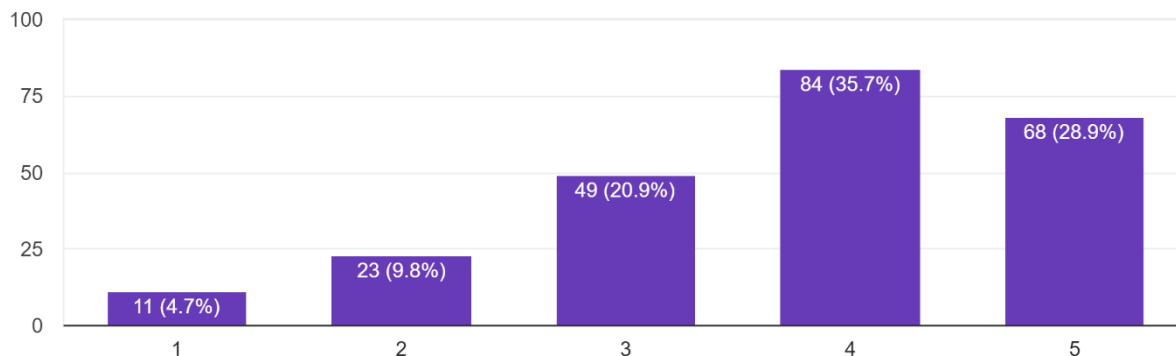
said excellent, 37.4% said very good, 19.3% said good, 11.8% said average and 8% said poor.



### J) Observation of the Participatory Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala:

10. Have you identified Participatory Leadership Style of Jesus in your Institution?

235 responses



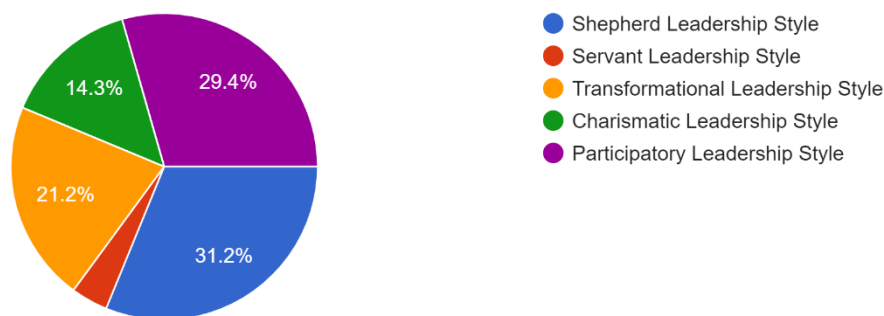
Presence of Participatory Leadership Style in CHEIs of Kerala: 28.9% of respondents

said excellent, 35.7% said very good, 20.9% said good, 9.8% said average and 4.7% said poor.

### K) Prominent Leadership Style of Jesus observed in the Authorities of CHEIs of Kerala:

11. Which Leadership Style of Jesus is prominent in the Authorities of Christian Institution of Kerala?

231 responses



Prominent Leadership Style of Jesus observed among authorities of Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala: 31.2% of respondents' opinion is Shepherd Leadership Style of Jesus, 29.4% of respondents' opinion is Participatory Leadership Style of Jesus, 21.2% respondents' opinion is Transformational Leadership Style of Jesus, 14.3%

respondents' opinion is Charismatic Leadership style of Jesus and 3.9% respondents' opinion is Servant Leadership Style of Jesus.

#### Findings:

The study was conducted among the Students, Teachers, Administrative staff, Alumni and Parents belonging to Arts and

Science Colleges, Medical and Nursing Colleges, Engineering Colleges, Teachers Training or B.Ed. Colleges of Christian Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) of Kerala. All the participants (altogether above 200) responded in different aspects of the Leadership styles of Jesus Christ.

- 1) 31.2 per cent of the respondents have the opinion that Shepherd's leadership style is dominating in all the CHEIs in Kerala
- 2) 29.4 per cent of the participants have the opinion that the Participatory leadership style prevails in Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala.
- 3) 21.2 per cent of the respondents have the view that the Transformational leadership styles of Jesus prevail in CHEIs Kerala.
- 4) 14.3 per cent of participants informed that charismatic leadership styles of Jesus Christ are prevalent in Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala.
- 5) 3.9 per cent of respondents identified the Servant Leadership Style of Jesus in CHEIs of Kerala.

### **3. Conclusion**

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. 31.2 per cent of the respondents have the opinion that Shepherd's leadership style is dominating in all the CHEIs in Kerala. 29.4 per cent of the participants have the opinion that the Participatory leadership style prevails in Christian Higher Education Institutions of Kerala. 21.2 per cent of the respondents have the view that the Transformational leadership styles of Jesus prevail in CHEIs Kerala. 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 believes that the insights gained from the study will help to rekindle the synergy of Christian Higher Education Institutions in Kerala.

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