

Prevailing Leadership styles in Indian Organisations

Indian management is generally believed to be autocratic with subordinates closely supervised by their superiors and only a limited degree of participation is allowed to the subordinates.

However, the real situation in this context can be appreciated only when a detailed account of various practices is taken for consideration. Fortunately, some empirical studies are available in this context which does not necessarily support the traditional view rather they present a mixed note.

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Since, managerial styles are determined by a host of factors such as forces in superiors, subordinates, and situations; it is unlikely to expect a uniform leadership style. Indian work organisations, from this point of view can be classified into three parts which have some distinctive features and consequently the different leadership styles.

The review of various studies fails to give a generalized result. The findings are too diverse, sometimes even contradictory. It indicates the absence of a clear-cut direction in the managerial behaviour thereby reflecting a lack of managerial

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Such classification may be:

- (i) Family-managed traditional organisations,
- (ii) Public sector organisations.
- (iii) Professionally managed Indian organisations and foreign-owned organisations

In many such organisation, a certain amount of the paternalistic attitude prevails. The proprietary character of business and large-scale participation of family members in it have made the attitude of the head of the business, which is also the head of the family, highly paternalistic.

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In family-managed traditional organisations, the most prevalent style is autocratic. Sons and grandsons of the entrepreneurs are automatically promoted without any consideration to efficiency or overall suitability. Thus, there is management by inheritance or management by chromosomes with the result that these organisations are highly centralized in their organisation structure and are authoritarian in their approach.

On the other hand, there are many organisations in the private sector owned by Indians or by multinationals that have appreciable degree of participation or democratic leadership. The reason is that

multinationals that have appreciable degree of participation or democratic leadership. The reason is that multinationals do not bring only their technology but also the work culture which is more permissive and conducive towards the application of modern approach of management. As such, the degree of participation is greater in such organisations. The third categories of organisations are in public sector.

Here, bureaucratic style is more prevalent owing to the work culture inherited by public sector managers. Initially, public sector organisations are manned by civil servants who brought a lot of bureaucratic culture with them.

The same paternalistic attitude

The same paternalistic attitude extends to the employees and has developed a set of values in an employer vis-a-vis his employees. At the initial stage, authoritarian style in more suitable which these organisations have followed. However, such style has also been inherited by successors without any appreciable change of modification.

The net result is that the entire organisational processes are governed by bureaucratic model. Its implication is status differentials, class distinctions, and impersonal relationships which work against participative style.