

LEADERSHIP

The process of influencing the behaviour of people towards achievement of organisational goals is known as **Leadership**. It indicates the ability of an individual to maintain good interpersonal relations with followers and motivate them to contribute to achieving organisational objectives. An individual who has the attributes of leadership is known as a leader.

"Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives". - George Terry

"Leadership is the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards achievement of group goals". - Koontz and Weihrich

"Leadership is a set of interpersonal behaviour designed to influence employees to cooperate in the achievement of objectives". - Glueck

Features of Leadership

The features of Leadership are as follows:

- It is the ability of an individual to influence others. It is an influence process, whereby a leader directs the behaviour of members towards the achievement of objectives.
- Leadership does not flourish in a vacuum. Leadership exists when there are two or more people. It is a relationship between two or more people.
- It aims to bring change in the behaviour of others, as it is a process of influence, which is exercised by the leaders.
- Interpersonal relations between leaders and followers are indicated because of leadership.
- It is exercised to achieve the common goals of the organisation.
- It is a continuous process.
- It is highly situational because leaders have to act according to the situation.
- It is an authority-based process, i.e., a leader needs adequate power in order to influence the behaviour of followers.

Importance of Leadership

The importance of leadership are as follows:

- **Inspires Employees:** The behaviour of individuals is influenced and a strong urge to improve their performance is created amongst the employees by effective leadership. Effective leadership inspires the employees to positively contribute their energies for the benefit of the organisation. Good leadership leads to the achievement of goals effectively and efficiently.
- **Psychological Support:** Psychological support is provided by a leader. He maintains personal relations with the followers and satisfies their aspirations and personal needs. He also acts as a friend and provides confidence, support and encouragement to employees.
- **Helps in implementing Changes:** Any change in the organisation is introduced by the leaders. As changes are resisted by the employees, he persuades, clarifies, and inspires them to accept the changes. He takes employees into confidence and cooperates with them to implement the changes smoothly.
- **Handles Conflicts Effectively:** Conflicts arising in an organisation are resolved by a leader. He explains the common goals of the members and integrates their efforts for the achievement of the organisational goals. Effective leadership plays a very important role in sharing the feelings of the employees and sorting out their disagreements by providing clarifications.
- **Development of Individuals:** Overall growth and development of employees is achieved because of effective leadership. Training is provided to employees by leaders and their knowledge and skills are enhanced and updated. A good leader also trains his followers for the smooth succession process.

Types of Leadership Styles

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The behaviour pattern which is reflected by a leader in his role is known as the **Leadership style**. It is the result of the philosophy, personality, experience, and value system of a leader. The type of followers and the atmosphere prevailing in the organisation also affect leadership styles.

Types of Leadership Styles

1. Autocratic Leadership or Authoritative Leadership
2. Participative Leadership or Democratic Leadership
3. Free rein Leadership or Laissez-Faire Leadership

All the above-mentioned styles of leadership are used by a leader over a period of time. However, one style tends to predominate as his normal style of using power.

1. Autocratic Leadership or Authoritative Leadership

The leadership style under which a leader centralises all decision-making powers and exercises full control over his subordinates is known as Autocratic or Authoritative leadership. The leader here gives orders and makes sure that they are obeyed.

For example, if Sam assigns work and gives orders to complete the work as per his discretion without consulting his subordinates, then Sam is an Autocratic Leader.

- Policies and plans are made by the autocratic leader without consulting subordinates. The employees are also not given information about future plans.

- Orders are given and tasks are assigned, and subordinates are not given the freedom to influence the decision of the leader. This situation is similar to "bossing people around".
- In such a leadership style, there is little or no concern for the welfare of the employees. Subordinates are compelled by the leaders to follow orders under the threat of penalties and punishments.
- Because of lack of freedom and threats of penalties and punishments, subordinates suffer from frustration and low morale. Subordinates avoid responsibility, lack initiative and become 'Yes Men'.
- This leadership style should be used on rare occasions.
- Such leadership styles are used in the Military.
- This style is also known as the 'Directive style of leadership'

2. Participative Leadership or Democratic Leadership

The leadership style under which a leader consults subordinates in the decision-making process and encourages them to give suggestions in setting goals and implementing decisions. In this, the subordinates are allowed to participate in the decision-making process and their suggestions are welcomed by the leader.

For example, if Satyam is discussing the work and taking suggestions to complete the work, then he is a Participative or Democratic Leader.

- Under the Participative leadership style, orders are given only after consulting the subordinates, and any plan or policies is carried forwards only after the acceptance of the subordinates.
- This style wins greater confidence, cooperation, loyalty and initiative of the group. The morale of the employees is also boosted.
- Here, the subordinates are never asked to do things without working out long-term plans.
- The subordinates become part of the team and help the leader in making better decisions. Thus, it is a style of mutual benefit.

3. Free rein Leadership or Laissez-Faire Leadership

The leadership style under which a leader gives complete freedom to the subordinates is known as Free rein or Laissez-Faire.

For example, Sitaraman gives the responsibility of setting goals and devising plans to the subordinates, then here Sitaraman is practising free rein leadership.

- The leader depends on the group for setting goals and devising plans to achieve such goals.
- It can be said that this style is more of a non-leadership style than a leadership style, as the leader acts as an umpire and delegates the entire authority of decision-making to subordinates.
- Group members work as per their choice and competence. The leader acts as a contact man with the outsiders and collects information and resources required by the group to achieve the goals.
- This style is also known as "laissez-faire", which means no interference from others. "Laissez-faire" is a french phrase, which means "let them do".

QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE LEADER

A Good leader should possess certain qualities and skills in order to lead, guide, and influence the actions of the people in a group or organisation. Some of the qualities that are needed to make a good leader are as follows:

Physical Features

The personality of an individual is an important factor in determining the success of [leadership](#). The personality of an individual is **determined by physical features like height, weight, energy, health, appearance, etc.** A person who is physically fit is likely to appeal as a leader and attract people.

Knowledge

A leader must be knowledgeable and competent. He should **possess a thorough knowledge of all the subjects, principles, procedures and operations of his field.** Intelligent and knowledgeable leaders are taken seriously by the group and they are able to instruct and influence people in the workplace.

Integrity

Every leader **should have a high degree of integrity and honesty.** His way of working will influence his image amongst his followers. High moral standards should be maintained to act as a role model.

Vision

A good leader should have vision. **He should be able to see the big picture of where the organisation or team** they are working within is headed, what it's capable of, and what it will take to get there.

Initiative

A leader **should take initiative to grab the opportunities**. He should be creative and capable of evolving new ideas and methods of doing things. He should be able to lead the group and show them the correct path to achieve team and organisational goals.

Communication Skills

Communication skills play a very important part in influencing people. So, a **leader should be good at communicating his ideas, feelings and decisions**. He should be able to persuade and direct subordinates. In order to be an effective leader, an individual should not only be a good speaker, but also a good listener.

Motivation Skills

A leader should be an effective motivator, as he has to **influence the actions and intentions of people through motivation**. A good leader should understand the needs of people and motivate them by satisfying their needs.

Self-Confidence

A good leader should be confident. Self-confidence is **essential to motivate and boost the morale of the followers**. A confident leader is able to create confidence among others.

Decisiveness

A good leader **should be able to take decisions according to the need of the circumstances**. Decisions should be taken at the right time after the analysis of the alternatives available. Once decisions are taken, they should not be changed frequently in order to maintain stability.

Social Skills

A good leader **must be friendly and sociable with his followers**. He should recognize the problems of followers and should help them in every possible way. He must possess the ability to win the confidence and loyalty of his subordinates.

A leader may not necessarily possess all the qualities of a good leader. But, an understanding of these qualities will help him to acquire the missing qualities through training, effort and practice. The above mentioned qualities will help them to bond better with their team and help them to keep their team motivated and work as a team.