

Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals. It is the process of inspiring, guiding, motivating and controlling people towards the achievement of organizational goals. A leader is one who is able to inspire his subordinates to reach their potential and obtain high levels of personal and professional success.

According to Louis A. Allen, “A leader is one who guides and directs other people. He gives the efforts of his followers a direction and purpose by influencing their behaviour.”

According to George Terry, “Leadership is the activity influencing people to strive for mutual objectives.”

In the words of Keith Davis, “Leadership is the process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives.”

Importance of leadership

- 1) **Sound organizational structure-** Formal organizational structure cannot provide for the presence of a sustainable relationship with the employees. That is why informal relationships are made to exist through leadership within the framework of formal organization which is a pre-requisite for the smooth functioning of the organization.
- 2) **Initiation of action-** In an organization, it is the leader who brings the plans and policies of the management to the knowledge of his subordinates and gets these plans policies successfully executed through them.
- 3) **Providing guidance-** Besides supervising the work of the subordinates, an effective leader also provides proper guidance by giving instructions and directions as to the way the work is to be performed by them in reaching their targets.
- 4) **Instills confidence-** Proper guidelines regarding their role and goals are given to the subordinate by the leader in advance. When the subordinates receive proper guidance, support and encouragement from their manager, they feel confident and do their duties to the best of their ability.
- 5) **Motivation-** A leader motivates his subordinates for quality performance by providing them financial and non-financial incentives. He acts as a source of inspiration for them at the workplace.
- 6) **Co-ordination-** A successful leader integrates the personal interest of the subordinates with the organizational goals and achieves co-ordination in the organization.
- 7) **Morale booster-** The humane approach towards his subordinates help in maintaining cordial relations with them and keeps them happy and satisfied. Thus, an effective leader can be a morale booster for his subordinates which would result in increased production and profits.
- 8) **Accommodates change-** By encouraging and inspiring his subordinates, the leader influences them to accept the change in the organization without much protesting. He makes sure that his subordinates do not feel insecure about the changes.
- 9) **Creates successors-** A pro-active leader slowly prepares his subordinates to succeed him in future by providing proper training so that work will not suffer after his retirement. He makes sure that there is a second line of leadership in the organization.
- 10) **Connecting link-** A leader communicates the plans, policies and programmes of the management to the employees. Similarly, he passes on the problems and grievances to the

management for redressal so that there is a healthy work environment in the organization. Thus, he acts as the connecting link between the management and the employees.

- 11) Maintains discipline-** By turning subordinates into followers, the job of securing order and compliance, becomes easy. He motivates the employees with economic and non-economic rewards and thereby gets the work from the subordinates voluntarily. It is this willingness on the part of subordinates which leads to maintenance of discipline

Styles of leadership

1) Autocratic or Authoritarian leadership

This style of leadership implies yielding absolute power. Under this style of leadership, there is a complete centralization of authority in the leader himself. He alone makes decisions. In other words, he does not consult his subordinates while making decisions. No suggestions or initiative from subordinates is entertained. He always expects his subordinates to obey his orders and instructions. He does not want to waste time in a two-way communication. An autocratic leader is, in fact, no leader. He is merely the formal head of the organization and is generally disliked by the subordinates.

Types of autocratic leadership

Edwin. B. Flipppo has divided autocratic style of leadership into following three-

- a) **Strict autocrat-** This type of leader gets the work done through negative motivation, that is, through threats of penalty and punishment. He assumes that his subordinates are not at all intelligent and are irresponsible. He thinks that he is the only capable person and does not require any advice or suggestion from anyone. He is very rigid in his approach. This style of leadership works only when his subordinates are newly appointed and lack any expertise and experience.
- b) **Benevolent autocrat-** A benevolent (kind person) leader takes his subordinates into confidence and tries to motivate them to increase productivity. He wants to have a good relationship with his subordinates. He finds happiness in controlling them and always expects them to be loyal to him. He severely punishes disloyal subordinates. When the subordinates are not ready to assume responsibility and need close supervision, this type of leadership is useful.
- c) **Manipulative autocrat-** A manipulative (unfair in his dealings) leader is one who makes his subordinates believe that they are participating in the decision-making process even though he has already taken the decision. He is manipulative in nature and takes his own decision though he appears to consult every subordinate before taking any decision. In this case also, non-compliance of his orders by the subordinates invites punishments.

Merits

- a) **Successful where subordinates are weak-** This type of leadership can give better results where the subordinates are illiterates, less competent to do their duties properly or new to the organization.
- b) **Expectation of perfection-** This type of leadership is more suitable where perfection in the performance of duties is expected from the subordinates.
- c) **Quick decisions-** Quick decisions can be taken by the leader since he does not consult any subordinate.

- d) **Disciplined environment-** There would be a highly disciplined work environment in the organization.

Demerits

- a) **Low morale-** There may be low morale among the subordinates as they are ill-treated by the leader. This may lead to frustration among them.
- b) **No initiative and creativity-** It kills the initiative and creativity of the subordinates since they are not given any importance by the leader.
- c) **Leadership crunch-** The second line of leadership will not be there as proper training is not given by the leader to subordinates.
- d) **Wrong decisions-** Decisions made by the leader may go wrong since he does not consult his subordinates at all while making decisions.

2) Free rein or Laissez-Faire leadership

Under this type of leadership, maximum freedom is allowed to subordinates. They are given free hand in deciding their own policies and methods and take their own decisions. The leader provides help only when required by his subordinates otherwise he does not interfere in their work. This style of leadership creates self-confidence in the subordinates and provides them an opportunity to develop their talents. This type of leadership may not work under all situations and with all types of subordinates. Such leadership can be employed with success where subordinates are competent, sincere and self-disciplined.

Merits

- a) **Highest initiative-** The subordinates will have the highest initiative since they are given full freedom at their workplace to do their duties.
- b) **Joint and several responsibilities-** All the subordinates taken a keen interest in the work assigned to them as they know that the responsibility is joint and several in the accomplishment of group tasks.
- c) **Developing future leaders-** Since all the subordinates take active participation in the decision-making process and in implementing such decisions, they develop leadership traits which will help them to become leaders in due course.

Demerits

- a) **Indecisions-** As all the subordinates take part in the decision-making process, they may not arrive at a decision, in case they differ in their opinions. They may act as a major setback for the team leader and the team.
- b) **Creates confusion-** This type of leadership may lead to confusion among the team members as there is no one to lead them properly. The work given to the team may suffer if no one is there to take up the responsibility to guide them in the right direction.
- c) **Indiscipline-** Subordinates may tend to be irresponsible since no specific responsibility is fixed on them. They may blame their colleagues in the team if anything goes wrong. This may result in discipline among the subordinates creating total confusion.

3) Democratic or Participative leadership

The democratic leadership is decentralization of power and authority as equal opportunity is given to all the subordinates in the completion of targets given to the team. It implies

compromise between the two extremes of autocratic and free-rein style of leadership. Exchange of ideas and opinions among the subordinates is encouraged by the leader. Subordinates are not given authority to make decisions but leader consults them before any decision is taken by him. Subordinates are encouraged to make suggestions and take initiative. It provides necessary motivation to the workers by ensuring their participation and acceptance of work methods. Mutual trust and confidence is also created resulting in job satisfaction and improved morale of workers. A democratic leader acts as a friend, philosopher and guide of the subordinates.

Merits

- a) **Increased productivity-** There would be increased productivity of labor since employees are sufficiently motivated by the leaders to extent their co-operation and support in doing work.
- b) **Morale booster-** It develops a sense of confidence among the subordinates since they feel happy and satisfied working under democratic leaders. Hence, it acts as a morale booster among the subordinates to contribute their best to the organization.
- c) **Balanced decisions-** The participative leader can make the right decisions as due consideration is given to valued opinions of knowledgeable and experienced subordinates.
- d) **Developing future leaders-** It helps in developing future leaders as proper guidance is given by the leader to his subordinates in their field of work.

Demerits

- a) **Delayed decisions-** It takes a longer time to arrive at decisions by a democratic leader as he has to consult his subordinates for their opinions and suggestions. Hence, there could be a delay in making decisions under this type of leadership.
- b) **Lack of co-operation-** The success of this style of leadership depends upon the willing co-operation and team-spirit among the team members. If they are not ready to work as a team, democratic leadership may become big failure
- c) **Greater risk-** If the subordinates are not ready to assume responsibility in implementing decisions taken by the team, the democratic leader runs a great risk and he may land up in trouble.

4) Paternalistic leadership

This style of leadership is based on upon the sentiments and emotions of people. A paternalistic leader is like a father to the subordinates. The leader looks after the needs and aspirations of subordinates and also helps their families. This gives a sense of belongingness among the subordinates which prompts them to work better and harder. The advantage of leadership is that it extracts maximum output from the subordinates as they have maximum job satisfaction because of fatherly treatment given to them by their leader.

5) Bureaucratic or Rules-Centered leadership

The attitude and behaviour of the leader is solely guided by the rules and regulations of the organization under bureaucratic leadership. In other words, the leader is highly rule-minded. He expects all his subordinates to follow the rules and regulations without fail. Breaking the rules would attract severe punishment from the leader. All decisions are taken on the basis of rules and regulations. No deviation of set principles is allowed under all situations. Human relations are not given due significance by the leader under this style of leadership.