UNIT 7 LEADERSHIP STYLES

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Suppose you conducted a survey in which you asked different people the following question: What is common to Mahatama Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela? You would find that most people would reply "good leadership". There is a wide spread belief that leadership is a key ingredient for success in many areas of life-business, educational set-ups, sports and politics, to name a few. But what precisely is leadership? Like love, it is something we can readily recognize but cannot easily define. Leadership is a topic of great importance to people who are leaders, who aspire to be leaders or who are on the receiving end of leadership. This includes nearly everybody at work. As a teacher, you are also a leader since the future of so many students is in your hands. This unit examines what leaders in the work place are like, what they do, and what they should do. It also looks at different kinds of situations facing leaders and the various strategies available for dealing with them. The main aim throughout is to show the reader the essential factors in effective leadership, in so far as they can be identified. No particular approach to leadership is better than all the others, but several approaches offer useful insights. This unit will also deal with the educational implications derived from leadership theories and concepts to enable you to implement some of the aspects in your own professional life.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- define leadership,
- discuss the changing views of leadership,
- describe the types of leaders,
- distinguish between different styles of leadership,
- explain the types of power and their role in organisations,
- discuss the functions fulfilled by an effective leader,
- discuss the traits of effective leaders,
- apply the concepts in your own life situations.
7.3 CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Keith Davis defines leadership as the ability to persuade others to seek objectives enthusiastically. It is a human factor that binds a group together and motivates it towards its goals. It deals with the process of influencing the behavior, action, attitudes and motives of a group of people and satisfying their needs, aspirations and expectations in the process of achievement of institutional objectives. The concept of leadership covers all the interpersonal relationships in which influence/attempt is involved and relates to the structure of power in these relationships. In a school situation, how the school will function, what will be the policies and practices which are followed etc. are all determined by the leadership role of the principal.

It is unusual to find a group where the same person is always the leader. Different people at different times are able to influence the group's activities. Some people may lead more often than others, but depending on the time and circumstances, we are all leaders and followers. However, there is a general agreement that all leadership involves behaviours or practices, many of which can be learned. As a result, many of the studies of leadership have focused on identifying these leadership behaviours. The results of one such attempt are shown in Table 7.1

**Table 7.1: Roles and Functions of Leaders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ten commitments of leadership</th>
<th>Roles of the leader</th>
<th>Specific functions to be performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guiding the process</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Search for opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Experiment and take risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring a shared vision</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Envision the future</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Enlist others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling others to act</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Foster collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Strengthen others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling the way</td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Set the example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Plan small wins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the heart</td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Recognize individual contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Celebrate the accomplishments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The roles and functions of leaders identified in Table 7.1 can serve as meaningful guidelines for you in your role as a teacher.

**Characteristics of leadership in a school system:** Some of the characteristics of leaders in any educational or institutional setting may be described as follows:

- They set the pattern and guide the outcomes of co-operative action.
- They guide the educational programmes, but rely on shared decisions.
- They give common understanding to common purposes and goals.
They produce cohesiveness without which co-operation is impossible.

They communicate with all school personnel with a sense of mutual understanding and mutual loyalty to the ideals of education.

They generate enthusiasm for projects and inspire working towards their completion.

They resolve the differences which frequently arise in growing organizations.

Leadership usually appears in two forms:

- Formal leadership: This refers to the influence exerted by persons appointed to or elected to positions of formal authority like the principal or manager in a school.

- Informal leadership: This deals with the influence exerted by persons who become influential because they have special skills that meet the needs and resources of others. Any teacher or student can become an informal leader.

Both types of leadership are important in an institution, although most of our emphasis in this unit is on formal leadership.
7.4 CHANGING CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP

Who becomes a leader and on what basis? Traits, situations or both? Are some people born to lead? Common sense suggests that this is so. Eminent leaders of the past, such as Alexander the Great and Abraham Lincoln seem to differ from ordinary human beings in several respects. Such observations lead researchers to formulate a view of leadership known as the great person theory. According to this theory, great leaders possess certain traits that set them apart from others. However, this theory failed due to unsupported test findings, as researchers could not formulate a short, agreed-upon list of key traits shared by all leaders. What then are the key traits of leaders? What are the characteristics that suit them for this important role? The findings of research on this topic are summarized in Table 7.2

Table 7.2: Characteristics of Successful Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits/Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Desire for achievement, ambition, high energy, initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty and integrity</td>
<td>Trustworthiness, reliability, openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership motivation</td>
<td>Desire to exercise influence over others to reach shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Trust in own abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive ability</td>
<td>Intelligence, ability to integrate and interpret large amounts of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Ability to adapt to the needs of followers and to changing situational requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Knowledge of the group’s activities, knowledge of relevant technical matters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see from Table 7.2, leaders appear to be higher than other persons in terms of such characteristics as drive- the desire for achievement coupled with higher energy and resolution, self-confidence, leadership motivation and in the desire to be in charge and exercise authority over others. Perhaps the most important single characteristic of leaders is the ability to recognize what action and approaches are required in a given situation and then to act accordingly.

To measure traits, one researcher Ghiselli used a test called self-description inventory, a portion of which is presented in the Exhibit given below. In this test persons are asked to describe themselves by checking which of a series of adjectives applies to them. For example, a person might describe himself/herself as discrete, thorough, co-operative and cheerful. Based on this test Ghiselli identified a number of traits which he called:
Supervisory ability | Maturity
Intelligence | Affinity for working-class values
Initiative | Need for self-actualization
Self-assurance | Need for power over others
Decisiveness | Need for high financial rewards
Masculinity/Femininity | Need for job security

Exhibit: Portion of “Self-description Inventory”

The purpose of this inventory is to obtain a picture of the traits you believe you possess, and to see how you describe yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, so try to describe yourself as accurately and honestly as you can.

In each of the pairs of words given below, check the one you think most describes you.

| 1. | -capable | 11. | -unaffected |
|    | -discreet |        | -alert |
| 2. | -understanding | 12. | -sharp-witted |
|    | -thorough |        | -deliberate |
| 3. | -cooperative | 13. | -kind |
|    | -inventive |        | -jolly |
| 4. | -friendly | 14. | -efficient |
|    | -cheerful |        | -clear-thinking |
| 5. | -energetic | 15. | -realistic |
|    | -ambitious |        | -tactful |
| 6. | -persevering | 16. | -enterprising |
|    | -independent |        | -intelligent |
| 7. | -loyal | 17. | -affectionate |
|    | -dependable |        | -frank |
| 8. | -determined | 18. | -progressive |
|    | -courageous |        | -thrifty |
| 9. | -industrious | 19. | -sincere |
|    | -practical |        | -calm |
| 10. | -playful | 20. | -thoughtful |
|    | -resourceful |        | -fair-minded |

Ghiselli found that several of these traits characterized effective leaders. Supervisory ability or the capacity to direct the work of others and organise and integrate their activities so that the goal of the group can be attained, was the most significant leadership trait. Next in importance was a cluster of five traits. As might be expected, effective leaders were more intelligent and decisive than less effective leaders as well as more self-assured. Effective leaders are more achievement oriented in that they seem driven to achieve high level positions. Finally, they had a high need for self-actualization in that they seemed to need and seek the opportunity to utilize their talent as well as that of others to the fullest extent. Similarly researchers have isolated several other traits that seem to characterize effective leadership. These include: aggressiveness, self-reliance, education and dominance. While these findings may not be conclusive they do suggest that trait theory can be useful in
predicting leader effectiveness. Trait theory proposes what leaders are. Behaviour approach states that the best way to study and define leadership is in terms of what leaders do. According to the behaviour theory: 'Initiating Structure' and 'Consideration' are two dimensions of leadership. Initiating Structure refers to the extent to which a person is likely to have job relationships that are characterized by mutual trust, respect of subordinates' ideas and regard for their feelings. He/she shows concern for his/her followers' comfort, well being, status and job satisfaction.

A third approach-situational approach to leadership argues that situational variables such as the needs and structure of the group, and outsider-threat determine who emerges as the leader. Hence, being in the right place at the right time is the critical variable. For example, research has shown that the person seated at the head of the table often becomes the group leader because he or she can maintain eye contact with the other group members. More recent approaches to leadership take an interaction approach. This approach argues that the emergence of a successful leader is determined by a combination of leader traits, the needs of the group and the situation. This approach also states that people with different traits will be successful at different times. For example, Fred Fiedler (1978) found that the leaders whose main aim is to complete a task are more effective in groups that have either a high degree of structure or very little structure. Structure here means that group members have well defined role or work assigned by the leader in an organisation. On the other hand, leaders whose main concern is the satisfaction and happiness of group members are most effective in groups with a moderate degree of structure and in situations where the requirements of the task are not completely clear. Taking all this into account, the bottom line is that in order to have effective leaders we must match the leader's characteristics to those of the group and the situation.

**Transformational leadership: Leadership through Vision and Charisma**

Transformational leaders are those who exert profound influence over followers by proposing an inspiring vision and through charismatic appeal. Leaders who change their society are called charismatic or transformational leaders. These two terms are used interchangeably. Such persons do indeed transform social, political or economic realities of people. They seem to possess special skills that equip them for this task. (the word Charisma means gift in Greek). Examples of charismatic leaders are persons like Mother Teresa, Medha Patkar etc.

### 7.5 TYPES OF POWER

Power refers to a capacity that 'A' has to influence the behaviour of 'B', so that 'B' does something he or she would not otherwise do. Probably, the most important power is that it is a function of "dependence". The greater B's dependence on 'A', the greater is A's power in a relationship. Dependence in turn is based on alternatives that 'B' perceives and the importance that 'B' places on the alternatives that 'A' controls. A person can have power over you only if he/she controls something you desire. For example, a teacher in school totally depends on the principal's direction and resource support to facilitate his/her functioning. He/she recognises the power that the principal has over him/her. Suppose, after a few years, he/she is made incharge, now he/she can
take some decisions on his/her own and less power is exerted over him/her by the head of the institution.

Take a moment to consider the people who have power over you. Where does this power come from? Social psychologists have identified at least six roots of power. These are given below:

(i) **Coercive power:** This type of power relies on threats and punishment in order to influence because this type of power is easy to use and achieves quick results. It is used frequently. It has two critical drawbacks, however.

- The low-power person dislikes the high power person and is motivated to end the relationship as soon as that becomes possible.
- The use of coercive power requires that low power person be watched so that he does not try to deceive or avoid the grip of the high-power person.

(ii) **Reward power:** This relies upon positive reinforcement as a means of influence. In this case, the low-power person is motivated to stay in the relationship. Keeping a watch is not necessary. Reward power is costly to high-power individuals because low-power persons are influenced as long as the high-power person continues to possess rewards.

(iii) **Legitimate power:** This exists when a person has a specific role, for example, as the principal, head boy or head girl in a school. One cannot "use up" legitimate power, but this power is limited to specific domains.

(iv) **Expert power:** Expert power is taken by an expert in a certain area. The use of expert power does not require that low-power persons be watched.

(v) **Referent power:** This comes to those who are liked and admired. When we want to be similar to those we admire, we change our behaviour to be like theirs. Referent power does not weaken, when it is used nor does it require surveillance.

(vi) **Information power:** Information power is held by those who possess information that some one needs or wants. For example, a teacher can influence students because of the fund of information he/she has.

Simply, having power does not mean that a person will use it successfully. An important ingredient in successful leadership is knowing how and when to use power. Sometimes power does seem to "go to the head" of the power holder. A number of forces may tempt people to take advantage of their power.

### 7.6 LEADERSHIP STYLES AND POWER CONCEPTS

Leaders differ greatly in personal style and these differences really matter. Consider the behaviour of two different types of teachers. In one class a teacher truly "ran the show". He/she took firm control of all class activities and left no doubt about who was in charge. He/she made all the decisions and never asked for students' inputs. He/she even posted a long list of rules in front of the room, telling learners what to do or not to do in a wide range of situations. Another teacher offered a sharp contrast to this approach. He/she
seemed to enjoy sharing his/her authority with students and let the class vote on many decisions. And while he/she too had rules, they were much more flexible and were never posted in a formal list. Can you guess which style of leadership was superior to the other in terms of encouraging better performance? Obviously the second one, since students were more relaxed, felt encouraged and were happy to work in collaboration with their teacher.

Bradford and Lippitt refer to four types of leadership styles. For each of these styles they postulate the characteristics, group reactions and group personalities. Let us study them briefly:

- **Autocratic style**: An autocratic leader is a rigid disciplinarian and believes that praise will spoil the students. He/she constantly checks subordinates’ performance, gives orders and expects immediate acceptance. He/she is status-minded and does not trust the employee’s initiative. The group tends to be insecure, tense and aggressive.

- **Benevolent authoritative style**: A benevolent authoritative leader dominates all employees and is the source of all standards. Failure to meet these standards on the part of employees makes him/her feel hurt, angry or surprised and he/she interprets this as personal disloyalty. The group is submissive and shows no initiative without checking with the leader.

- **Laissez faire style**: Laissez faire leaders often busy themselves in paper work so as to stay away from group members. Such a leader sets no goals, makes no decisions and provides no direction. Frustration, failure and insecurity are typical in the directionless group.

- **Democratic style**: A democratic leader shares group decisions, gives reasons for decisions and devotes time to planning. The enthusiasm is high among group members and their basic needs tend to be satisfied. Democratic leaders work in a democratic frame-work. They recognize that meetings are necessary for group thinking and action and that the group should have definite goals.

It is clear from the above that autocratic leaders make decisions unilaterally, while democratic leaders invite inputs and participation in decision making from their followers. Another important dimension is the one involving the extent to which leaders dictate how followers should carry out the assigned task versus giving them freedom to work in any way they wish. This is referred to as the directive-permissive dimension. Any leader will tend to show one of the four different patterns of leadership style described above and as teachers these are the possibilities with their consequences available to you. It is clear that the democratic style will get you the best results. Your students will feel happy, relaxed, involved and committed and you will be able to generate an optimum classroom climate.

**Basic dimensions of leadership style**: Leaders differ greatly along the two dimensions shown here: *democratic-autocratic* and *directive-permissive*. This is shown in Figure 7.1.
We should know that a leader's style also differs along two other important dimensions. These are: task orientation and person/employee orientation. Task orientation refers to the extent to which a given leader focuses on getting the task done-whatever it happens to be. Person orientation, in contrast, refers to a leader's interest in maintaining good, friendly relations with the followers.

A leadership continuum: The two leadership orientations described above can be broken down further into several different leadership styles. The leadership continuum represented in Figure 7.2 uses the task and person orientations and styles identified to demonstrate the range of possible leadership.

Task orientation is the strongest at the extreme left side of the continuum and becomes less dominant as we move to the right. By the same token, the strongest person orientation is the far right and decreases in strength as we move to the left on the continuum. Nearly all leaders have some blend of person and task orientation in their leadership styles. Interestingly, no single style seems to be best; rather, which one is most effective depends on the specific circumstances. For example, leaders such as a school principal who is high on person orientation and who has friendly relations with his/her subordinates, may then not receive from them any negative feedback such as
poor progress of class XII students. The result is that the principal may get into serious trouble because he/she is not receiving vital feedback from staff members. They tend to take him/her for granted because he/she is friendly with them. In contrast, leaders high in task orientation often do bring out a high level of performance from their followers. These people may feel that the leader has no interest in them and this may weaken their commitment to the group.

To most experts, power is not equivalent to leadership. Instead, it is an essential ingredient of leadership. From our early discussion we can easily interpret that power stems either from dependence or legality. Adding power would involve action that enhances the legal power of a person's position. For example, a supervisory head is appointed as the principal of a school because he/she can extract work from others and has shown tremendous improvement in the working of the school system at various levels. India being a high power distance country, subordinates accept the power of superiors. Bypassing of superiors is considered inviting trouble to oneself. In low power distance countries such as Israel and Denmark, employees expect to bypass the boss frequently in order to get work done. It has been found that people perform many actions to create situations favourable to the use of power. Hence, norms are laid down to reduce the misuse of power by leaders.

7.7 EFFECTIVE LEADERS

Like the conception of leadership, ideas of leadership effectiveness differ from writer to writer. One major distinction between definitions of leadership effectiveness is the type of consequences or outcomes selected to meet the effectiveness criteria. These outcomes include group performance, attainment of group goals, group growth, group capacity to deal with crises, subordinate satisfaction with leader, subordinate commitment to group goals, and their psychological well being. The most commonly used measure of leader effectiveness is the extent to which the leader or organization performs its task successfully and attains its goals. Subjective assessments of performance are used including ratings of leader’s effectiveness in carrying out his/her duties and responsibilities. The attitude of followers towards the leader is another indicator of leader effectiveness i.e. how well does the leader satisfy their needs and expectations? Follower attitudes are measured with questionnaires or interviews. Leader effectiveness is also measured in terms of the leader’s contribution to the quality of group processes, as perceived by followers or by outsiders. It deals with the issues of whether the leader improves the quality of work life, builds the self-confidence of followers, increases the skill and contributes to the psychological growth and development of the group?

Effective leadership is a complex matter involving:

- traits and behaviour of the leader,
- characteristics of individual subordinates and the group as a whole,
- traits and behaviour of the leader’s supervisor,
- objectives of the organisation,
- systems and policies related to matters such as role design and requirements,
- training and compensation.
An effective leader should be technically competent and possess a high problem solving ability. The effective leader is one who is interested in his/her leadership role and has a strong drive to get things done.

7.8 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational implications of different leadership styles are given below:

The ability to provide leadership in the classroom may lie with teachers, students or both. Students as well as teachers exert leadership in the classroom. Most teachers identify the student leaders in their class and develop ways to focus their leadership abilities on the attainment of goals that benefit the entire class. Teachers should encourage their students to develop leadership skills and aim towards educating them for good citizenship values. By providing leadership practice, teachers guide students towards the important life goals of becoming autonomous, accepting responsibility and influencing others to respect their opinion. It has been noted that teachers with a democratic style of leadership are preferred to those with authoritarian styles. Democratic teachers create a more positive atmosphere characterized by greater student enjoyment and co-operation and less competitiveness and frustration.

According to one study, “hostility, competitiveness and high dependency” marked the autocratic group, while “openness, friendly communication, and independence” were shown by the democratically led group. Teachers’ leadership style and power unquestionably affect the climate and the quality of human interactions in the classroom. Student councils, class leaders/monitors, class meetings and school assemblies planned by students are forms of student government that offer leadership opportunity and the means of practising democracy. To create a democratic classroom is not easy. It takes time, patience, skill and a willingness to share power. However, the rewards for teachers who implement democratic principles can be significant. Group spirit and school pride are often enhanced, students’ attitude towards learning improves and achievement can rise.

According to the task or situation, a principal in a school has to adopt a flexible role and leadership style to meet successfully the requirements of his/her job.

7.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have studied that:

- Leadership is a process in which one member of the group (its leader) exerts influence over other members towards the attainment of common goals.
- Leaders differ from each other in certain respects—traits, behaviour etc.
- Transformational or charismatic leaders exert profound effects on their followers and often on entire societies.
- Leaders adopt different styles and use various types of power to exercise influence over others.
Leadership effectiveness has been conceptualized by using varying criteria.
Effective leadership is characterized by various qualities/traits.

7.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Check point: State whether true or false, and rewrite the false as true.
   a. Leadership often involves two functions or types of behaviour: one designed to ensure a positive emotional atmosphere in the group, and the other aimed at task functions.
   b. There is really a difference between leading people and directing them.
   c. Task orientation is productive in the long run.

2. What constitutes leadership?

3. Discuss the traits possessed by successful leaders.

4. Compare and contrast the two basic styles of leadership in a school scenario? How are each related to student and employee (staff members) performance and satisfaction?

5. Give ten concrete examples of how a person can accumulate power in an organisation?

6. Some leaders such as those of religious cults, exert powerful effects on their followers. What are your views on how these leaders attain such power?

7. Analyze the leadership style of two different people you have worked for in the school i.e. a coach and principal etc. What characteristics did they display that were most indicative of their leadership style?

8. Reflect on a classroom based on democratic leadership style. Make a list of the features which typify it.

7.11 SUGGESTED READINGS


