

Introduction to Public Administration

Unit- II

Chapter 6 – Leadership: Concept, Styles and Qualities of a Good Leader

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Objectives: The Objectives of this chapter are to make the students aware of:

1. The concept of Leadership;
2. Features of Leadership;
3. Functions of a Leader
4. Leadership Styles; and
5. Qualities of a Good Leader.

Introduction

People at different levels within the organisation require guidance and direction to support their efforts in achieving the organisation's common objectives. Their superiors give them direction and also assume the role of their leaders. Each leader has a distinct style of functioning and leading the teams. Researchers have consistently demonstrated a keen interest in studying leaders and their styles. Leadership is the art of motivating or inspiring a group of people to act towards achieving common goals. Leaders adopt different styles to lead their respective groups of followers.

Definitions

Leadership is a process through which a person influences others to accomplish an organisation's objectives and provides direction to make the organisation more cohesive and consistent. Following are some definitions of leadership:

1. **Pigors:** “Leadership is a process of control in which, by the assumption of superiority, a person or group regulates the activities of others for purposes of his choosing”.
2. **Robbins:** “Leadership is the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals”.
3. **Harold Koontz and Heinz Wehrich:** “Leadership is the art of or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and ardently towards the achievement of group goals”.
4. **MacIver and Page:** “Leadership is the capacity to persuade or to direct men that comes from personal qualities apart from office”.
5. **John Maxwell:** “Leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less”.
6. **Keith Davis:** “Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek objectives willingly. It is a human factor that binds a group together and motivates it towards its objectives”.

Leadership is the process of influencing the behaviour, action, approach and purpose of a group of people to achieve common organisational objectives.

Features of Leadership: Features of leadership are as follows:

1. Leadership is the ability of a leader to influence the people in an organisation so that they come forward voluntarily to attain the objectives of the organisation.

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2. Leadership is the interpersonal relationship between a leader and his followers. Good relations lead to willing cooperation, and strained relations lead to disruptions in the attainment of goals.
3. Leadership is a continuous process that is never-ending and never complete.
4. Leadership endeavours to bring positive behavioural changes in people.
5. Leadership styles differ from situation to situation. A leader adopts the participatory style at some times and the autocratic style at other times; and
6. Leadership stimulates employees/followers to strive to achieve excellence in organisational matters.

Functions of a Leader: Functions of a leader are as follows:

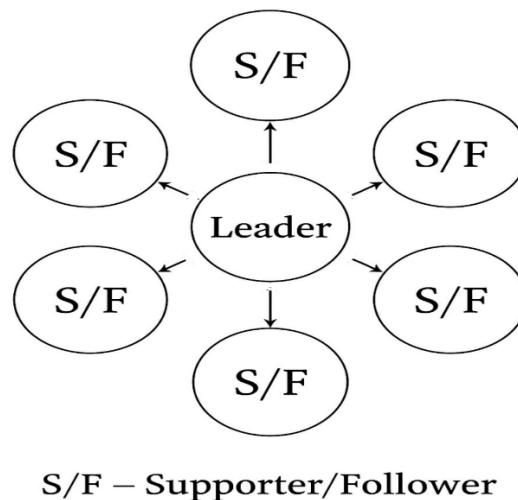
1. Determining Objectives: The leader determines the objectives and sets the goals of the organisation.
2. Organising: Leader creates the structure of the organisation and makes it operational.
3. Planning: Leader makes policies, as well as long and short-term plans, to attain the goals of the organisation.
4. Staffing: Scouting for the right man and placing him on an appropriate position.
5. Acts as a Catalyst: Leader acts as a catalyst to fasten the functioning of the people working in the organisation.
6. Role of an Arbiter: The leader acts as an arbiter in case there is a conflict between two or more members of the organisation.
7. As a Coordinator: The leader is a coordinator who binds the organisation in a single whole to achieve the organisational goals.
8. As a Motivator: One of the main roles of the leader is to motivate or inspire the workers/members of the organisation.
9. As a Trainer: Leader acts as a trainer to the members of the organisation. He not only trains the new employees but also trains the old employees by updating their knowledge.
10. Friend, Philosopher and Guide: Members of the organisation look towards their leader for assistance and suggestions. He is the workers' friend, philosopher and guide. He helps them in the performance of their work as well as dealing with their issues.
11. Providing Security: It is the role of a leader to provide security to his followers/members of the organisation.

Leadership Styles

Leaders/civil servants adopt different leadership styles in diverse situations. A leader/civil servant may combine one or two leadership styles. Choosing the right leadership style is the key to the success of a leader/civil servant. Leadership studies conducted by Kurt Lewin and his associates at Iowa University have identified three leadership styles, namely, Autocratic Style, Democratic Style, and Laissez-faire Style of leadership. Brief details of these leadership styles are as follows:

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I. **Autocratic Style:** This style of leadership is also known as the authoritative style or directive style of leadership, wherein the leader/civil servant retains most of the authority and control over the group.



Features: The features of this style of leadership include:

- a The entire authority and responsibility lie with the leader. It is a highly centralised system.
- b The leader gives orders and expects the subordinates/followers to follow his orders without question. There is close supervision.
- c The leader takes all the decisions without consulting his subordinates/followers;
- d There is only one-way communication, i.e. top to bottom or downward communication in the organisation.
- e There is strict control over the subordinates. They are not allowed to interact freely with each other.

Advantages: Advantages of the Autocratic style of leadership are as follows:

- a It enables fast and uniform decision-making in emergencies.
- b Due to strict control over the subordinates, quality can be maintained.
- c Lesser problems of coordination.

Disadvantages: Disadvantages of the Autocratic Style of leadership are as follows:

- a Lack of motivation amongst the employees as they follow the directions of the leader without questions.
- b Alienation of the people towards the organisation.
- c The functioning of the organisation is rigid.
- d It lacks two-way communication in the organisation.

II. **Democratic Style:** Democratic style of leadership is also known as the participative style of leadership. In this style of leadership, the leader/civil servants consults with his subordinates/followers while taking decisions.

Features: Following are the features of the democratic style of leadership:

- a The subordinates are involved in the decision-making process;

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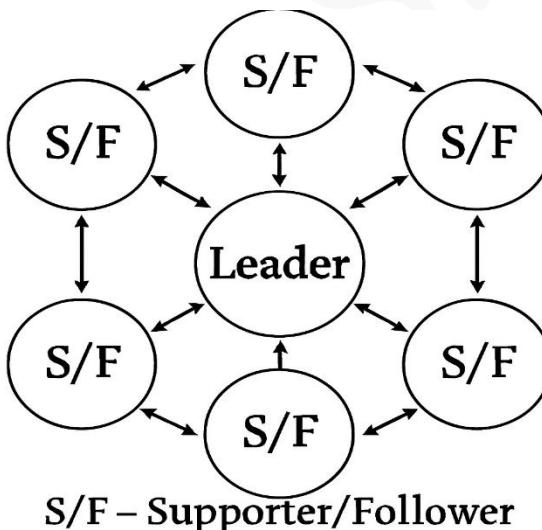
- b There is vertical as well as horizontal communication; and
- c The subordinates are equal partners in the decision-making process and have a sense of belongingness towards the leader and the organisation.

Advantages: Following are the advantages of the democratic style of leadership:

- a Employees/subordinates willingly cooperate with others and their superiors due to the leader's democratic style of functioning;
- b Participative decision-making leads to a sense of belongingness towards the leader and the organisation;
- c Upward, Downward and Diagonal communication flows through the channels of communication; and
- d Subordinates/employees/followers take the initiative to perform work creatively and innovatively.

Disadvantages: Following are the disadvantages of the democratic style of leadership:

- a There are delays in decision-making due to participative management;
- b There is no uniformity in the decision-making process;
- c Chances of distortion in communication increase as it travels through several channels; and
- d The quality of decision-making is not very good.



S/F – Supporter/Follower

III. **Laissez-Faire Style:** The Laissez-Faire style of leadership is also called the Free-Rein Style of leadership, wherein subordinates have complete autonomy to make decisions. The interference of the leader/civil servants is minimal, and the subordinates consult the leader/civil servants whenever required.

Features: Following are the features of the Laissez-Faire Style of Leadership:

- a It has decentralisation of authority, enabling the subordinates to take decisions in the area of their authority.
- b The leader has full faith in the abilities of the subordinates.
- c Followers/subordinates are self-reliant, and close supervision is not required.
- d Followers/subordinates communicate with the leader as and when required.

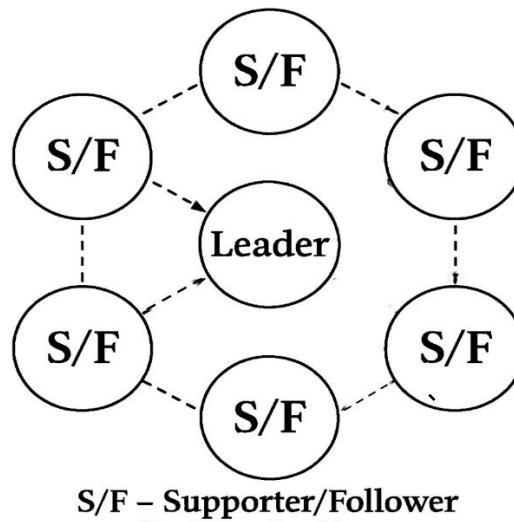
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Advantages: Following are the advantages of the Laissez-Faire Style of Leadership:

- a Subordinates/followers are not dependent on the leader for decision-making.
- b Interpersonal relationship between the followers/subordinates is good.
- c Motivation level in the followers/subordinates is high.
- d Subordinates/followers take initiative and are creative in the performance of their work.

Disadvantages: Following are the disadvantages of the Laissez-Faire Style of Leadership:

- a Bringing cooperation and coordination among the followers/subordinates in the organisation is difficult.
- b Every subordinate/follower should be well qualified and trained.
- c The leader becomes inconsequential as his role in the decision-making process reduces.



IV. Transformational Leadership Style: Transformational Leadership Style focuses on inspiring and motivating followers/subordinates/civil servants to achieve extraordinary outcomes. The leader's style also transforms and develops his capacity.

Features: Following are the features of this style of leadership:

- a This style of leadership works on the vision of the leader.
- b This style of leadership works on the vision of the leader.
- c It inspires the members of the team to be creative and innovative.
- d Leaders/civil servants/officials encourage their followers to take up challenges and think out of the box.
- e Followers/subordinates have great respect for the leader.

Advantages: Following are the advantages of the Transformational Style of Leadership:

- a Leaders/civil servants/officials and followers/subordinates/officials are committed to the objectives of the organisation.
- b Transformational style helps in the personal development of both the leaders and followers.

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- c. The leader and the organisation can achieve a higher rate of growth and development.
- d. This style encourages creativity and innovation in problem-solving/decision-making.
- e. There is a higher level of accountability in an organisation headed by a transformational leader.

Disadvantages: Following are the disadvantages of the Laissez-Faire Style of Leadership:

- a. The team starts depending on the Leader's/civil servant's vision and charisma and may stop trying to think out of the box.
- b. Not all the followers/subordinates may be receptive to the transformational style, leading to resistance to change and friction within the organisation.
- c. All may not be able to work at the pace of the leader, which may lead to stress and burnout of the individual.
- d. Focus is often on long-term goals, and in the process, the short-term goals are affected.
- e. This style is difficult to adopt in an old-established organisation as it is difficult to take everyone along.

V. Transactional Leadership Style: Transactional Leadership uses rewards and punishments to motivate team members and focuses on routine and structured tasks. Following are the features of this style:

Features: Following are the features of the Transactional Style of Leadership:

- a. This style is considered more of a short-term mechanism.
- b. The leadership delineates the role of different members of the organisation.
- c. Leaders encourage their followers to meet the deadlines as per the given schedule.
- d. The performance of the followers is monitored with a system of giving rewards and punishment.

Advantages: Following are the advantages of the Transactional Style of Leadership:

- a. Every employee is clear about their goals and objectives;
- b. There is a provision of incentives under this style.
- c. A system of monitoring the performance of the followers/subordinates is there.

Disadvantages: Following are the disadvantages of the Transactional Style of Leadership:

- a. Followers/officials may be punished/penalised if they are unable to achieve their goals and objectives;
- b. The followers/officials may have lower job satisfaction due to curbing their creativity and innovation.

VI. Situational Style: Situational Leadership style developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard emphasises the need for the leaders to adjust their style as per the situation and/or needs of their teams/team members.

Features: The features of the Situational Leadership style are as follows:

- a. This style of leadership is flexible and adaptable.
- b. Decision-making is by the followers.
- c. The leader uses different styles as per the requirement.
- d. Focus in this style is on the development of the followers to a higher level of competence.

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- e. The leader provides specific instructions and closely supervises the tasks of the followers.

Advantages: Following are the advantages of the Situational Style of Leadership:

- a. Situational leadership supports the endeavours of the members of the team.
- b. It helps in nurturing and developing the skills and confidence of the followers.
- c. It helps in inspiring and motivating the followers.
- d. It provides a flexible approach to leadership that can be applied in diverse contexts.
- e. As the leader adapts to the style of the followers, productivity can increase leading to job satisfaction.

Disadvantages:

- a. Situational style requires a highly skilled leader to understand and respond to the situation;
- b. This style can also lead to confusion among followers.
- c. It is challenging for the leader to accurately assess the competence of the followers; and
- d. It may be based on short-term goals rather than long-term goals.

VII. Servant Leadership Style: Robert K Greenleaf stressed the role of a leader as a servant. This style emphasises the well-being and development of team members.

Features: The features of the Servant Leadership Style are as follows:

- a. Serves the followers rather than exercising power.
- b. Encourage team members to be enterprising and grow professionally.
- c. Understands and prioritises employees' wants.
- d. Promotes teamwork, collaboration and sense of belongingness.
- e. Focuses on long-term objectives and opts for sustainable progress and employee welfare.
- f. Has integrity and is morally responsible.

Advantages: Advantages of the Servant Leadership Style are as follows:

- a. Followers feel valued and satisfied.
- b. Organisation has loyal workers and a positive work culture.
- c. Better teamwork leading to reduced conflicts.
- d. Higher productivity due to loyal workers, fewer conflicts and positive work culture.
- e. Lesser employee turnover due to the leader nurturing and encouraging employees.
- f. Due to the leader's nurturing nature, communication is in all directions, and employees share their ideas freely.
- g. Organisation has an ethical work culture.

Disadvantages: Disadvantages of the Servant Leadership Style are as follows:

- a. The leader may be taken for a ride by some unscrupulous employees.
- b. The leader may be confronted with conflicting choices while decision-making, leading to delayed and slow decision-making.

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- c. Such a style of leadership is not suitable for dealing with emergencies, wherein early and uniform decision-making is required.
- d. The leader may lose authority over time and seem weak during tough decision-making.
- e. Most of the time, the leader spends on the employees and their concerns, leaving less time to make important decisions.

Self-Assess your Leadership Style: <https://www.verywellmind.com/whats-your-leadership-style-3866929#toc-the-leadership-style-quiz>

Qualities of a Good Leader

Leaders have some core skills to be successful. Scholars like Millet, Terry, and Chester I Barnard provide a list of specific qualities which a leader must have to be successful. Qualities of a leader suggested by Millet include - Good health, Intelligence, Integrity, Persuasiveness, loyalty and sense of mission. Terry's list includes - Energy, Emotional Stability, Empathy, Communication Skills, Teaching Ability, Technical Competence and Personal Motivation. Chester I Barnard mentions the qualities of Vitality and Endurance, Decisiveness, Intellectual Ability, Knowledge, Persuasiveness and Stability as qualities of a leader. Following are the qualities of a good leader:

1. **Clear Vision and foresight:** A leader should have a clear vision of the goals and objectives of the organisation. He should possess the foresight to visualise the effects of his actions in future;
2. **Intelligence:** A leader should possess the requisite intelligence to identify, analyse and resolve the problems faced by the organisation.
3. **Physical and Mental Wellbeing:** A leader must be physically and mentally well to bear the physical rigours and mental stress while leading the organisation.
4. **Effective Communication skills:** A leader must possess effective communication skills so that he is able to communicate the policies and programmes to the workers and also take them along by persuading them.
5. **Knowledge of work:** A leader must have complete knowledge of the work being performed by his unit or organization so that he can assist and guide the work of his subordinates.
6. **Human Resource Manager:** A leader must know about human resource management as he deals with human resources, their aspirations and problems. If he deals with his subordinates in a humanistic manner and takes care of them, they will also be loyal to the organisation and be willing workers.
7. **Ability to take Risks and shoulder Responsibility:** A leader needs to have the courage to take risks and shoulder responsibility for the same. His risk-taking capacity as well as shouldering the subsequent responsibility, will motivate and maximise his and other members' potential.
8. **Honesty and Integrity:** Honesty and integrity are two qualities of a leader which also motivate other members to follow suit.
9. **Persuasiveness:** A leader must be able to persuade a member of the organisation to carry on difficult work in the most consummate manner.
10. **Fairness:** A leader must be fair and treat all his subordinates equally. His bias can harm the unity of the organisation.
11. **Maturity:** A leader must be able to handle his and his organisation's problems maturely. A confused and immature leader will harm the organisation more than achieve its objective.

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Conclusions

Leadership is the essence of success in an organisation. The leader not only has diverse and distinct styles, but the same leader also has different styles in different situations.

Important Terms/Terms/Information

1. **Definition:** Harold Koontz and Heinz Weihrich, Leadership is the art of or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and ardently towards the achievement of group goals.
2. **Charismatic Leader:** A Charismatic leader has certain qualities like a strong presence, an aura, extraordinary knowledge, self-confidence and a strong ability to charm and persuade people by his thoughts and actions. The followers follow a charismatic leader due to his 'charisma'.
3. **Ideologist:** An ideologist supports a particular ideology. For these leaders, following the ideals/objectives of that ideology is very important. Example: Mahatma Gandhi was an ideologist.
4. **Symbolic Leader:** Symbolic leaders represent an organisation or a country in other places. An ambassador is the symbolic leader of a country in another country. Example: Indian Ambassadors represent India in other countries.
5. **Autocratic Style:** This style of leadership is also known as the authoritative style or directive style of leadership, wherein the leader/civil servant retains most of the authority and control over the group.
6. **Democratic Style:** Democratic style of leadership is also called the participative style of leadership. In this style, the leader/civil servants consults with his subordinates/ followers while taking decisions.
7. **Political Leader:** A political leader is a politician who fights elections periodically to be a part of the government or make up the government. He is elected for a fixed period and has to get re-elected at the expiry of his term.
8. **Laissez-Faire Style:** The Laissez-Faire style of leadership is also called the Free-Rein Style of leadership, wherein subordinates have complete autonomy to make decisions. The interference of the leader/civil servants is minimal, and the subordinates consult the leader/civil servants whenever required.
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Short and Long Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Define Leadership.
2. Write a note on any one style of Leadership.
3. Give any three qualities of a Leader.
4. Give three types of leaders.
5. Write a note on the features of Leadership.
6. Give three advantages of any one type of leadership style.
7. Give three disadvantages of any one type of leadership style.
8. Give three functions of a Leader.

Long Question

1. Define Leadership. Discuss different Styles of Leadership.
2. Define Leadership. Give its Features and qualities of a Good Leader.

MCQs for Competitive Examinations: <https://forms.gle/eP7nPsDBX2sy5TJJ6>

Suggested Readings

1. Sharma, Vibha. Fundamentals of Public Administration for Semester – I, Jalandhar: New Academic Publishing Co, 2024
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10. Relevant reading material from egankosh - <http://egyankosh.ac.in/>
11. Relevant reading material from e PG Pathshala - <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>