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LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Introduction.

Role of leadership in the twenty-first century is changing rapidly. The leaders must acquire new skills and abilities to survive in the unpredictable business environment. They must bring global perspectives in business strategy formulation and must have the capacity to build alliances and international partnerships. Innovation and creativity will be needed to withstand competition in the new knowledge environment and rapidly changing markets. Future leaders must have a commitment for excellence and excellent skills. They should be flexible and adaptable. In this new millennium, ethics will play a major role in the success or failure of an organization. Leaders therefore, must be honest and sincere and must always try to link profits with principles. As discussed in Greek and Latin classics, the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and the writings of ancient philosophies, leadership and management have been of interest to society for thousands of years, the scientific study of leadership and

management is a recent origin; beginning in the early part of the 20th century. Over the last years, in particular, there has been extensive research on the concepts of leadership. Objective of leadership in empowering the women is to educate civil society for it to better understand the larger factors that enable or hamper the emergence of women's agenda, and the means by which they inspire and influence larger processes of social change.

Approaches to Leadership

Many leadership theories may be classified into three dominant leadership approaches; these are trait approach, behavioral approach and situational / contingency approach. Each of these approaches can provide insights on how we view leadership. Collectively, they also give a multifaceted view of leadership. In both the private and public organization literature, many theories of leadership can be isolated. A review of scholarly studies on leadership shows that there are a wide variety of different theoretical approaches

leadership shows that there are a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process (Bass 1990; Gardiner 1990; Rost 1991). Some of these researchers conceptualize leadership as a trait, or as behavior, while others view leadership from a political perspective, or from a humanistic viewpoint. These researches collectively provide a picture of a process that is sophisticated and complex. This places leadership as a term that can refer to a variety of things: a person, a position, or a process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD LEADERSHIP

The characteristics of good leaders are as under:

- * **Vision:** Good leaders have the vision for the future. They identify the aspirations of the organizations and set the plan to achieve them.
- * **Creativity:** Good leaders bring new ideas and search innovative solutions for any problem. They conceive of the new possibilities which were never thought of before.
- * **Emotional Intelligence:** Recent researches have shown that good leaders are emotionally intelligent. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage emotions of one and of others. Emotionally

intelligence is the ability to manage emotions of one and of others. Emotionally intelligent leaders set manageable goals, know how to handle conflicts, act as a change catalyst and inspire followers

- * **Caring:** Good leaders are sympathetic and affectionate towards their followers. If somebody commits mistakes, good leaders never lose their patience and try to provide their help to followers.
- * **Courage:** Good leaders have the fortitude to stand for what is right. They adopt integrity and honesty as the prime guiding principle and resist temptation.
- * **Lead by Example:** Good leaders are proactive and set standards of excellence for others to follow. They become role models for their followers.

Role of Leadership .

The leader plays the following role in an organization:

- * **Delegation:** Leaders authorize their subordinates to make certain decisions through delegation. Effective delegation helps followers to develop their knowledge, skills and helps in succession management. Followers also learn to take initiative and responsibilities.
- * **Open Communication:** Leaders encourage open communication with their

Followers. They listen patiently to the problems of the followers and encourage them to ask questions. Open communication accelerates the time needed to achieve any work and helps in building trust between the leaders and followers.

* **Bring Optimism:** Leaders bring a lot of optimism. They believe that they can reach the stars. Leaders take the adversity head-on and believe that their out-the-box thinking will lead them to success.

* **Inspire and Motivate:** Leaders inspire and motivate people by affirming their value to the organization. They motivate subordinates to give their best, overcome challenges and reach their dreams.

* **Attracting and Retaining Talent:** Leaders play a crucial role in attracting and retaining talent by giving rewards and recognition to good performers. They celebrate the success of their subordinates. Whether it is monetary incentives or a pat on the back, these go along way in encouraging subordinates.

Leadership Style

Leadership style is the approach of the leader for the accomplishment of his task. Henry Ford, Aziz Premji, Dhirubhai Ambani and as on other hand Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Dr. (Mrs)Kiran Bedi, Mrs. Soniya Gandhi,

Dr. (Mrs)Kiran Bedi, Mrs. Soniya Gandhi, Meera Borwankar, Hon'ble President of our country Mrs.Pratibha Tai Patil and the list goes on, all have exhibited different leadership styles. Each of these leadership styles has their own positive or negative characteristics. Some of the important leadership styles exhibited by different leaders are as under.

* **Autocratic Leadership Style:** In this type of leadership style, leaders take unilateral decisions and believe that subordinates can be persuaded to perform their tasks only when they are threatened or punished. Efficiency is the sole objective of such a leader and he has no sentimentality.

* **Democratic or Participative Leadership Style:** In the democratic style, the leader seeks the opinion of their subordinates while making decisions. However, final decision making authority remains with the leader. This leadership style creates an environment of trust between the leaders and subordinates. Hence subordinates are motivated to give their best.

* **Laissez Faire Leadership Style:** It is called the hands-off approach to leadership. A leader does not keep much control and gives full freedom to the

followers for achieving organizational objectives. It works well in situations where subordinates are highly motivated.

* **Transformational Leadership:**

Transformational leaders have a vision and commitment of where they want to reach. They lead the change and allow subordinates to develop by encouraging creative and innovative ideas. Transformational leaders are warm and caring and motivate their subordinates to give optimum performance. Bill Gates of Microsoft and Jach Welch of General Electric are considered transformational leaders.

* **Transactional Leadership:**

Transactional leadership is based on the assumption that people are motivated by rewards or punishment. Leaders make clear the objectives which the subordinates have to achieve and give rewards only when they feel that subordinates have given their best. Management by exception is used by transactional leaders to suggest corrective action if employees fail to achieve performance standards set by the leaders.

* **Situational Leadership:** In situational leadership, the leader adjusts his styles according to different situations. Situational leadership Model was

developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. They believed that leaders provide the following four styles according to the level of competence and commitment of their subordinates:

a. **Directing Style:** It is needed for subordinates who have low competence and low commitment. Directing leaders decide the objectives to be achieved by the followers and monitor them closely. Communication is one-way.

b. **Coaching Style:** It is used for subordinates who have some competence and low commitment. Leaders give explanation to subordinates and communicative is two-way.

c. **Supporting Style:** It is used for subordinates who have high competence and variable commitment. Leaders provide their support to subordinates in decision making.

d. **Delegating Style:** It is used by subordinates who exhibit high competence and high commitment. Leaders leave the entire responsibility of the task to subordinates. No supervision by the leader is required.

Leadership Development

Leadership development refers to the process of developing leaders. Every person is not a born leader. But through

leadership development, one can achieve the necessary competencies needed to be a leader. Leadership development can be achieved through perseverance and regular practice. It also helps in preparing next generation to responsibilities.

* **Leadership Development Strategy:** There has to be an effective strategy for identifying and developing future leaders in the context of rapidly changing business environment. An organization's future depends on its leadership development strategy. Leadership strategy refers to a strategy meant for encouraging leadership within the organization. An organization needs good leaders if it wants to excel. Organizations which do not develop a leadership development strategy will experience attrition.

* **Leadership Talent Identification:**

An organization will be successful if its leadership is passed in the hands of able successors. The highpotential employees who have flair of leadership needs to be identified. These subordinates generally demonstrate an appetite for taking responsibilities, ability of solving problems creatively and bring a lot of enthusiasm. Developing a talent pool resolves succession crisis and ensures the availability of employees for current and future needs.

* **Creating a Culture of Leadership:** Creating a culture of leadership helps in creating future leaders for the organization. Leaders are the role models for creating the culture of their organization and hence they must set standards of excellence for subordinates to emulate. The ethics and values that a leader brings, how a leader behaves in situations of crisis and the policies adopted by organization for succession management all will help in creating a culture of leadership.

* **Leadership Training:** Leadership training helps in building extraordinary leaders for the organization. The employees who have been chosen in the talent pool must be sent for formal workshops and seminars to enhance their leadership skills. Challenging job assignments and observing others also helps in learning new skills. Potential leaders must be encouraged to acquire core competencies that will benefit the organization. Leadership training helps employees in making crucial decisions and developing interpersonal skills.

* **Mentoring:** Mentoring is the process in which leaders as mentors, take a deep interest in subordinates or mentees and help them to develop their careers.

Through mentoring, subordinates learn wisdom, values, skills and perspectives from the leader. Employees receive advice from leaders on how to balance new responsibilities and develop professional standards. Leaders through mentoring try to groom their future successors in the organization.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

Objective of Leadership is to educate civil society for it to better understand the larger factors that enable or hamper the emergence of women's agenda, and the means by which they inspire and influence larger processes of social change. It is widely recognized that a gender sensitive and rights based women's movement as we see today, is an outcome of a long struggle by several women leaders during the pre and post independence era. However, women's concerns and ideas were not explicitly incorporated under any form of struggle, neither under British regime nor during Independence. This was not because women were not part of the movement but because at the policy / decision level the 'gender' factor was not dominant. The women leaders who participated in social reforms and political movements during the early 1940s were satisfied with legal reforms and constitutional changes. Few of

satisfied with legal reforms and constitutional changes. Few of the eminent women were invited by the government to contribute to the planning process. A sub-committee on women called Women's Role in Planned Economy (WPRE), was established in 1939 to examine and make recommendations on women's role in the planned economy. A welfarist approach was adopted to address women's concerns and it was felt that needs and voices of large sections of women were not addressed.

It is at this point women realized that neither they need the control of women's organizations nor do they want to speak in a singular voice. They thought that the prevailing political system reduced the role of women. It was at this juncture that two different political ideologies came closer to one another to give rise to a more 'feministic agenda' that was earlier unheard of. Women leaders following Gandhian and the Leftist philosophy realized that however progressive their mutual ideologies were, it had not equipped them to fight 'patriarchy'. The leftist women formed exclusive women's organization that would fight for their rights while Gandhian women explored ways within the existing system to reach the masses. It is then that these women from

different political back grounds started participating in major political issues with a pro - women perspective. In 1974, concerns pertaining to women's status and rights came into forefront when the first ever State sponsored report 'Towards Equality' was published. The report became the foundation for women's movement, which today is vigorous and healthy.

In 1992, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, mandating one-third reservation of seats for women in local government, and the proposal to extend this provision to the Parliamentary level, became a turning point in the struggle for women's empowerment. This is one of the most visible elements of a strategy that aims to promote gender equality. The experience of women's global struggles shows that the presence of a 'critical mass' of women within mainstream structures and institutions can trigger the process of challenging and changing gender hierarchies within these structures and institutions, as well as energize and inspire larger processes of social change.

Some of the common observations across country studies noted that an interface among elected women officials, government officers and poor people is an effective means of improving the delivery of public sector resources to the poorest and

most disadvantaged, particularly women. Further, when elected women representatives link the needs of their constituents with the resources of government and other public sector organizations, local government is more transparent & effective. Evidence also points that building the capacity of female elected officials enhances the effectiveness of local government and develops the social capital of the women themselves.

In India, while there are several studies in this field, particularly on women's presence within panchayati raj institutions, these have tended to focus on the role of individual women leaders. Moreover, the focus is on the women leader in formal positions. However there are very few studies that have analyzed the dynamics of the emergence of women leaders in informal positions. Findings suggest that women associated with the informal structures are more capable in voicing women concerns than that of pradhans or ward members.

Conclusion

Leadership is the process of getting things done through people. It is about commitment, consensus and achieving excellence. Effective leaders express dissatisfaction with status quo and establish high standards of productivity and quality. They are able to meet deadlines and deliver good results under pressure. Leaders must keep in touch with the international standards and must develop new competencies. They must be

able to utilize the whole potential of the organization and must try to build a learning organization especially for women empowerment. able to utilize the whole potential of the organization and must try to build a learning organization especially for women empowerment.

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