



## Review Paper

# Concept of Leadership in Organizations – Prevailing Views

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## Abstract

*This paper has been designed to understand the contemporary concepts which are very common and understandable by every leader or manager in an organization. Therefore intellection of various prominent researchers has been collected in order to comprehend that how a leader should perceive and perform his duties in an organization to achieve the desired results efficiently and effectively. One very innovative responsibility of a leader is to convert himself from Boss to COGAL (Creator of Growth and Learning) by enhancing skills, proficiencies and good behaviors. This paper shall make the manager learn their responsibilities because responsibility of getting high degree of performance not only lies with the overall administration but as well on each of the manager in the organization.*

**Keywords:** Influence, leadership, motivation, ethos, pathos, logos.

## Introduction

Dran defined Leadership as: “The ability to influence a group towards the achievement of aim”. Furthermore, he elaborated that a leader is an earned title who<sup>1</sup>: i. Has expert assurance, ii. Motivates, iii. Sets own aims, iv. Has private promise and keenness, v. Accepts aims, vi. Gives momentum, vii. Measures and controls, viii. Maintains energy.

From the above mentioned definition and the capabilities of leadership, it is clear that if a manager in an organization desires to achieve an excellence in his profession, first he must set the aim or target then use his intelligence and wisdom by applying said competencies.

Another researcher explained that “our inborn meaning of Leadership can be recapitulated by a single word that is general to all civilization’s languages, BOSS”. Concise Oxford Dictionary, explains ‘Boss’ as “to be domineering towards others”. Moreover, it is further elaborated that “leader is an individual who rules or direct others”. His point of view is that “concept of Boss or Leader can be changed to COGAL, as it is a key function of leaders which stands for “Creators of Growth and Learning” in them and in persons for whom they are accountable. Most of the managers and organizations fall down because they are backward in understanding this beautiful innovative concept of growth and learning environment”<sup>2</sup>.

Some very prominent scholars supported the very concept of Napoleon as “Men are nothing; it is the man who is everything. It was not the Roman army that conquered Gaul, but Caesar; It was not the Carthaginian army that made Rome tremble in her gates, but Hannibal; it was not the Macedonian army that reached the Indus, but Alexander.” Here it is well clear that strength of army is nothing but the abilities of the leader matter.

So leadership is supreme for every moment, action and adventure<sup>3</sup>.

Over the time the leadership defined by the George R. Terry has gained worth in the sight of researchers. Terry says: “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives”. So here means to use full potential by mobilizing the men in order to achieve common target<sup>4</sup>.

Another investigation conducted by a team of researchers concluded the conceptualization of the ‘leadership’ in very beautiful and well articulated fashion which says: “Interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, towards the attainment of the specialized aim or aims can be called as leadership”<sup>5</sup>.

One of the beautiful narration about leadership define it as “an individual’s ability to influence, motivate, and make others contribute toward the success of the organizations for which they work, It typically involves a sense of vision. A vision gives correct direction to the influence procedure. A leader (or leaders) can have one or more visions towards future to assist them to acquire the aim successfully”<sup>6</sup>.

Conceptualization about leadership further explains that “the efficient leadership obtains others (supporters) to take action. He or she may push them to action by any of the several devices like i. Precaution, ii. Power, iii. Threat of force and iv. Appeal.

Leadership is such a flexible instrument that can utilize any of accessible wisdom tools”<sup>7</sup>.

In order to achieve the set objectives in an organization above said instruments must be applied. Sometimes, a leader uses all the four tools as per his requirement or he may use any one tool at a time.

Leadership is also termed as a tool and method for development. So it is said that “Leadership is that method in which a person directs others. Then he gets them to progress along, mutually with him or her and with true course with full promise and ability”<sup>8</sup>.

Here it has been indicated through above said definition of leadership that directing the subordinates by providing them right course of action in order to progress mutually, should be the prime role of a leader in an organization.

Truman said: “A leader is a man who can convince individuals to do what they don't desire to do, or do what they're too lethargic to do, and similar to it”<sup>9</sup>.

While defining the deed of a leader in an organization, effort has been made to say that a manager or leader should be great psychologist who can motivate them by unleashing their potentials so that every impossible goal be made possible. He should be able to convert their unwilling to willing, lethargy to activeness and nonagreeing to agreeing behavior by convincing them.

As far as effective leadership is concerned it is said that “the greater leader gets things completed with very small movement. He trains through deeds not words. He keeps updated about all but hardly interferes. He is only a channel, when they achieve something he takes no praise”<sup>10</sup>.

Chester gave another definition that “leadership is a superior's ability to influence the activities of a subordinate/group and convince them to track a particular way of action”<sup>11</sup>.

A purposeful leadership is explained as: “the primary job of a leader is to identify a vision for the organization. And Leadership should be the tool to translate vision into reality. So a leader or manager sets the target (vision) and then explores the means and ways (leadership) to reach that target”<sup>12</sup>.

Another excellent differentiation between leadership is as: “managers have subordinates—leaders have followers”<sup>13</sup>.

One very strong team of contemporary researchers has concluded that “leadership is influencing an organized team towards accomplishing its goals”<sup>14</sup>.

Above defined concept of leadership is very deliberate and clear. So he is the leader in true sense that can influence his people for common cause. Influence may be through coercion, inspiration and investigation. In real world these all three tools are used to reach at set target.

One investigation upon the leadership rules and their implementation for the attainment of good results concludes that “leadership is to apply the practices and rules which produce”<sup>15</sup>:  
i. Discipline, ii. Motivation, iii. Increased productivity and iv. Achievement of corporate objectives”

In managing human resources in an organization, leadership has to play an important role of maintaining discipline through implementation of set practices and rules. These practices and rules can ensure enhanced motivation and productivity in order to achieve desired.

## Concept of Leadership

It has also been found out that “Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher of 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. who tutored one of the greatest military leaders of the world, Alexander the Great, says a good leader must have: ETHOS, PATHOS and LOGOS”<sup>16</sup>.

“Ethos, is his moral character, the source of his ability to persuade, to inspire. Pathos, is his ability to touch feelings, to move people emotionally. Logos, is his ability to give solid reasons for his actions to move people intellectually”.

Here very old and historical concept about leadership supports the contemporary ideology of leadership attributes. For example even today every scholar of leadership a human resource management consider it mandatory that a manager or leader must be the custodian of good moral character which is the ability to inspire the subordinate. Similarly he should own his people and must have an expertise to understand human feelings and emotions. This is also agreed notion that a leader should understand the importance of reasoning and logics to drive his people intellectually.

Despite recognition of the importance of leadership, however, there remains a certain mystery as to what leadership actually is or how to define and consume it. In a review of leadership research, it was concluded that there are “almost as many meanings of leaderships as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” – and that was 30 years ago<sup>17</sup>.

There are two basic difficulties being faced in understanding the concept of leadership. First are the feelings of “love”, “freedom” and “happiness”. Everybody contains his own perception about leadership which is based on his respective knowledge and experience. So it is also complex to understand. Secondly, understanding and defining of leadership is highly influenced by people's theoretical concepts. Some people think that leadership is the result of attributes contained by leaders and other's view is that it is a social process which is outcome of relations and mutual interactions. Such types of various views can generate dissimilar or opinions regarding the concept of leadership. So here leadership is also perceived as a power<sup>18, 19</sup>.

So far following four in number difficulties have been identified that make consensus on a common concept and meaning of leadership highly unlikely<sup>19</sup>:  
i. “Firstly, there is the ‘process’ difficulty – a lack of agreement on whether leadership is derived from the personal qualities (i.e. traits) of the leader or whether a leader induces followership through what she does (i.e. a social process)”.  
ii. “Secondly, there is the ‘position’ difficulty – is the leader in charge (i.e. with formally allocated authority) or in front (i.e. with informal influence)”?  
iii. “A third

difficulty is one of 'philosophy' – does the leader exert an international, causal influence on the behavior of followers or are their apparent actions determined by context and situation or even attributed retrospectively"? iv. "A fourth difficulty is one of 'purity' – is leadership embodied in individuals or groups and it a purely human phenomenon"?

Due being diversified nature all the above narrated difficulties cannot be overcome however to some extent element of improvement still exists. Only good efforts, sincerity and willpower are needed by a leader to reach at specified target.

Another perception about leadership was developed after a thorough investigation concluded in recent previous years. This research says: "Scholars should understand that leadership is not a moral concept. Leaders are like the rest of us; trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous. To assume that all leaders are good people is to be willfully blind to the reality of the human condition, and it severely limits our scope for becoming more effective at leadership"<sup>20</sup>.

In a recent review of leadership theory, it has been highlighted that there are four in number common themes which are to be conceived as<sup>21</sup>: i. "Leadership is a process"; ii. "It involves influence"; iii. "Happens in a group context"; and iv. "It involves aim attainment".

Thus leadership is defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common aim".

One more conceptualization about leadership elaborates the leadership as: "Most meanings of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization"<sup>22</sup>.

In short, leadership is a complex phenomenon that touches on many other significant personal, social and organizational processes. It depends on a process of influence, whereby people are inspired to work towards group aims, not through coercion, but through personal motivation.

Researchers like Bennis and Nanus delivered another very odd and different definition of leadership. They say that "Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but he is nowhere to be seen"<sup>23</sup>.

From above narrated definition it looks as a leader, one should not be fond of securing numbers or earning names but his contribution should be visible and seen everywhere. Contribution always provides rewards in form good name and fame.

An investigation upon role of leadership in human resource management was conducted about 30 years back which says

explained that "a study of the meaning of the word leadership revealed 130 meanings. However, several generally-accepted variations on the meaning appear in the management and leadership, namely<sup>24</sup>: i. Leadership is causative: True Burnsian leadership affects the motives of individuals and groups of peoples and alters the course of the organizational history. ii. Leadership is collective: James Burns regards the notion of one-person leadership as 'a contradiction in terms', because both leaders and followers must exist. iii. Transforming leadership is elevating: Engagement between leaders and followers takes place on a moral – but not a moralistic – plane, as both leaders and followers rise to live more principled lives. iv. Leadership is morally purposeful: Burns sees leadership as aim-oriented with leaders and followers pointing the way to some future condition of the organization with plans about how these aims might be met. v. Leadership is dissent: Burns claims that leadership co-exists with dissent. Indeed, much of the growth of any organization centers on the management/leadership of dissent-except in terms of war."

One more research in the leadership perspective described the dissimilarity among two concepts i.e. a descriptive view and prescriptive view<sup>25</sup>. "A descriptive view describes leadership and how it happens, and a prescriptive view suggests how it should happen". It has further been said that the adaptability of difficult situations is avoided by using following behaviors: i. "Denying that a difficulty exists", ii. "Blaming others", iii. "Finding a distracting issue", iv. "Finding scapegoats (to the extent that this differs from blaming)", v. "Jumping to conclusions", vi. "Externalizing the enemy".

As far as prescriptive view is concerned, the leader tries to avoid the six in number realities and attend the issues to seek their solutions which were previously not there. Here Chinese famous quote holds well that "A non leader would catch fish to feed the poor while a true leader finds a way to help the community engage the difficulty and collectively find a solution". Similarly story of the Lone Ranger's character on television in 1950 is important where he tried to address the symptom but not the difficulty.

After a thorough investigation on leadership Terry has defined leadership as: "the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives"<sup>26</sup>.

Here concept of followership and leadership comes very closer when we say that simply leadership is to influence others to accept some responsibility willingly or unwillingly. So a leader has to lead consciously and a follower has to follow consciously.

## Conclusion

Defining the 'leadership' in its true perspective has become an intricate task for every expert in the field because every individual tries to elaborate it in accordance to his situation and

perception. Conception that every leader should create an environment of growth, learning and development is widely supported.

In order to ensure all the operations in organization get going adequately, sometime a leader has to use strict tools like precaution, power, threat or force and appeal. So he must be well aware of these options for organizational success.

Multitude of definitions, concepts, wisdom and intelligence shared in this paper shall not only refine the thought process of managers and leaders in organizations but also improve their working ability. Because after learning these clearly elaborative concepts about leadership or human resource management, a leader is able to comprehend psychology and feelings of human beings. Such an understanding can subsequently result into an improvement and development of self, people and organization.

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