

WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a universal phenomenon. It is the process of influencing team members or a group of people to work hard towards, and be committed to a goal. The success of every institution is dependent upon the quality of leadership at all levels – centre, state and local. Leadership is, thus, *sine qua non* of success in all human activities. But, in a democratic system it assumes greater significance and wider proportions. Leadership has been a topic of great significance in social science and scholars have shown considerable interest in it, thus every aspect of leadership has been the subject of some degree of subject.

Leadership is an important factor for making any type of organization successful. Without effective leadership, an organization is quite inactive. An effective leaders can only pull out the organization from darkness to light, push it to the path of development by residing various genuine difficulties without leadership, an organization is a muddle of men, machines and materials because all these factors of production remain idle unless they are engaged in a co-ordinate manner to product more towards the accomplishment of good of organization.¹

Leadership plays a very important role in all the aspects of human life. There is need of leadership from top to bottom. At lower level, the family members follow the ideas of the person who is leading the family. At world level, it can find those historical victories in which leadership play very impressive and powerful role. Leaders are not only power-holders; but they are also power-spenders and power makers.²

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In every sphere today, leaders and better leadership are needed. All groups and organization within a society require leaders for their survival and grow. Leadership defines, initiates and maintain the social structure. The social organization functions through the leadership phenomenon. In a traditional society, leadership plays a key-role in changing value structure of the society. In such a case leadership develops, elaborates, re-defines and transforms the existing social structure and thus enables it to follow the path of development and modernization.³

In political sphere, leadership is a much important concept. Political leadership ultimately converted in participation of decision-making process.

Meaning of Leadership

It is very difficult to find a sample and satisfying definition of leadership. The concept of leadership has been defined differently by different authors. A few scholars have used this term as charisma and some other used it as power and authority.⁴ The conventional view of leadership says that leaders are those people who are the most physically powerful or because they are elected. Leadership means particular kind of relationship between the leaders and the followers.⁵

Leadership is that role which is played by leaders in a particular situation. The efficiency of any group, depends on the effective of its leaders and leadership refers to that process whereby an individual directs, guides, influences or control the thoughts, feeling or behaviour of other human beings.

Need of Leadership

Leadership is needed to compensate for the weakness inherent in the form of designs of organization. In an organization, technological, legal, cultural and many other kinds of changes are necessary to be brought by a leader.

Leadership is required for the better performance of the subordinates. A leader always guides the

subordinates towards the achievement of organizational goals.⁶ Throughout the history, it has been recognized that the difference between success and failure, whether in a war, a political movement, a business or a team game, can be attributed largely to leadership.⁷

For the smooth running of any group, there is need of proper guidelines. A leader provides the information to his group regarding new policies and programmes. He creates a co-ordination among the different members of his group.

In this way leadership is very important in every aspect of human activities. Political development and democratic growth depends on the leadership.

Political Leadership

Political leadership as those aspects of relationship which are concerned with power organization and re-organization, office acquiring and holding. Chang and Bartol, who view political leadership as a process identify six key elements of this process, namely: “(i) individual personality factors, (ii) leader’s motives and resources, (iii) situational factors, (iv) followers motive bases and capacities, (v) leaders acts and, (vi) the extent of governmental control over public policy decisions on different levels and also over the sources and consequences of such decisions.”⁸

The nature and quality of political leadership depends on many factors like: (a) capacity of the leaders to use this relationship vis-à-vis his followers with a view to bringing about a perspective change in socio-economic, political and human attitudes in the desired direction and in human political order, (b) durability of this relationship, (c) the scale of leadership, (d) whether the leadership is official or oppositional, (e) the position of the leader occupies in the political hierarchy and also, (f) whether he is followed in response to certain objective or just blindly.⁹

Political leadership is the process by which governments try to exercise control over public

policy decisions. Political leadership is best conceived as activities of leaders in interaction with their followers and thus should not be taken as the function of leader's activities only.

Types of Political Leadership

Mainly there are three types of leadership on the basis of the behaviour and degree or nature of change in political system. The first type is *Conservative leadership* and it tends towards the maintenance of the existing political institutions and policies and seeks the minimum change. *Reformist leadership*, the second type, permits moderate changes in given institutions and policies while the third type, i.e. *Revoluntary leadership* seeks maximal change and tends towards functional transformation of existing institutions and policies.

Burns differentiates between 'transactional' and 'transforming' leadership.¹⁰ In the *transactional leadership*, leaders interact with the followers for the immediate benefit of each and this causes only limited, short-run changes in the operations, of a political system. *Transforming leadership*, on the other hand, enables and elevates the followers level of moral functioning and brings about profound changes in the value pattern and political system characteristics.

The *expressive* leaders are those who show solidarity and believe in seeking suggestions from other members of the group. These leaders act in consolation with others for the accomplishment of objectives of their group.¹¹ *Instrumental* leaders on the other hand are those who do not believe in asking for suggesting or advise from others but in turn give their own suggestions every time without carrying for the views of the groupmen.¹²

Two more styles of leadership are – *Positive* and *Negative leadership*. *Positive leadership* is that in which the leader works for group maintenance and goal attainment. When a leader motivates people by offering them reward, monetary or otherwise, for better performance the approach is said to be positive. It assumes that rewards induce people to work hard. Positive leadership also promotes peace.¹³

When a leader induces people to work hard by threatening them to penalize if work is not upto the mark, it is said to be a negative approach, the main emphasis is mainly on penalties for the shortcomings.¹⁴ The positive style makes a leader to function and operate for the betterment of the followers. These patterns a leadership are– initiating, maintaining and protecting. ‘Initiating’ implies that leaders are supposed to initiate the matter in their field. The followers expect their leaders to do something for them and as such they presume the leaders to initiate the issues for their benefit.

Leadership Styles

Leadership acts and behaviour, what may be termed as leadership styles, tends to determine not only the pattern of leader-follower relationship but also the structure of the group. An understanding of leadership styles, therefore, may facilitate an understanding of group dynamics. On the basis of the role of the leader in the decision-making process of the group, three different patterns of leadership styles may be discerned. These three styles, according to Ralph White and Ronald Lippitt, are *Authoritarian Style*, *Laissez-Faire Style*, and *Democratic Style*.¹⁵

The style of leadership may be characterized as authoritarian style provided the leader centralize and monopolies all decision-making power in his own hand and he himself determines the policy of the group without allowing even a nominal role to his subordinates in the decision-making process. The techniques and steps of the work to be done as well as the personal required for doing the work are also decided by the leader.¹⁶ Only the leader himself knows that goal to be attained. An authorities leader, on the whole and he fends to remain completely aloof from active group participation. The more a society is socially, politically, economically and intellectually backward, the better are the chance for a success of an autocrat leader.

In Laissez-Faire leadership, leaders do not lead, but leaves the group entirely to itself as shown: a leader allows the maximum freedom to subordinate in making decision regarding group goals, politics, techniques and steps to be adopted and personal required to do the work.¹⁷

In this type of leadership, all the decision are taken by group members. In this style, the leader once determined policy, programmes and limitations for action and the entire process is left to followers. Leader of group does not participate in decision-making process. Members are free to take decision for their group.

The democratic style of leadership stands in between the authoritarian style and the laissez-faire style in terms of the dimensions of participation in group decision-making. The leader allows for active participation of the member of the group in the decision-making process and consults with them. Goals, policies, techniques, steps and personnel are decided through discussions and consultations encouraged and assisted by the leader.¹⁸ The democratic leader creates situations by which individual can learn, enables people to check their own performance, allows subordinate to set challenging goals, provides opportunities for improved to set challenging goals, provides opportunities for improved work methods and job growth and recognizes achievements and helps employees learn from errors.¹⁹ So, in this type of leadership, all the members participate in discussion, policy making and all the decisions are taken by majority of the members.

Legislative Leadership

In parliamentary democracy, representatives are elected by the people, thus they assume the position of leaders in the society. Legislative leadership generally includes all those leaders, who happen to be members of the representative assemblies or legislature. Since these legislators play a decisive role in the management of the state affairs; (which includes policy formulation, enactment of law or changing the constitutional processes) and to that extent they can be termed as political leaders.²⁰

The role of legislative leadership has thus been analytically conceptualized by various writers and exponents as for instance, George Catline calls it, “Wilfully or purposefully controlling action and behaviour.”²¹ To David Eastern, “It brings authoritative allocations of values for

society.”²² Robert MacIver regards its role in creating public policies, coordinating interests, articulating popular preferences, conflicting and achieving public needs.²³

The legislative leaders are popular representatives as well as trustees. In a parliamentary democracy, the legislative leadership automatically achieves the position of an elite as it stands united, despite its different politically colouring against a common adversity might be executive or even the judiciary. The privileges enjoyed by the legislative members are so basic and numerous that no other single category can come in comparison to it.

The most important role that the legislative leadership plays in the parliamentary democracy is in the field of decision-making and policy formulation. The legislative leadership provides legitimacy to the legislative process in the formulation of the policy and later to supervise its proper implementation.

In order to facilitate citizen’s participation in governance, new leadership also needs to be facilitated. This includes leadership of those sections, who till now have been marginalized and ignored by the society. This includes the enhancement of leadership of women, dalits, tribals and youth. Women legislative leadership is very essential for removing gender inequality and facilitating women development.

Women and Leadership

In a world, a very few women are in a leadership position. A number of negative stereotypic beliefs have existed about women and their suitability for managerial positions. Whereas women are seen as acceptable in the service or assistant role, such as nurse, secretary, administrative assistant, perceptions of their capabilities in leadership positions have often focused on their lack of experience or training for such roles.

Male think that women lack career orientation, women lack leadership potential, women are undependable and women are emotionally less stable. Ragins and Sundstorm, research program

on the implications of power and its relationship to gender effects in leadership and asked the question of whether women and men differ in their access to power in organization, in their use of power, and in the effects of the use of power. The result of that research program are quite informative and concluded that:

For women, the path to power contains many impediments and barrier and can be characterized as an obstacle course. In contrast, the path to power for men contains few obstacles that derive from their gender and may actually contain source support unavailable to their female counterparts.²⁴ Gender differences in leadership style, emergence, and effectiveness from three explanatory perspectives; cultural, structural and social category but actual difference in capability of male and female are slight.

Camilla Stivers argues in gender images in public administration that leadership exists not in empirical reality but as an important cultural and ideological myth that function “to support and rationalize the continuation of existing political-economic, social and gender arrangements and to impact significance to organizational and political experience.”²⁵

Duerst – Lachi and Kelly note the ideological consequences of unspecified masculinism in leadership.

Masculinism has defined leadership and governance. As a result, women and feminism have been and remain particularly disadvantaged in there crucial domains of public life. One of the obvious disadvantaged is that women have been forced to understand – even master – masculinism and its values if they are to move successfully into positions of public leadership. The converse of men is not true.²⁶

If, talk about the legislative leadership, there is also male dominance because politics has been largely a male experience. Instead of being gender neutral, leadership is inherently masculinist. In 1960, Sirimayo Banuaranike of Sri Lanka became the world’s first women Prime Minister.

Since their, Indira Gandhi, Gold Meir, Margret Thatcher and many older women rare to occupy the highest positions in their countries. Thus started the process of emergence of many more women as leaders in political field but their number is not satisfactory.

At present in world, very few women are representative at world level, least numbers of women leaders in politics shows that the concept of power, reason, justice, history, autonomy and leadership have been produced by a political world of men and are imbued with masculine meaning and values.

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