

Effective Leadership for Better Management of Hospital

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Introduction

The hospital is a complex organisation humming with activities aimed to achieve the patient care satisfaction. This organisation is, though, entirely different from other organisations like cotton industry, industry associated with production of toys or cars, yet all the principles of management are applicable in the hospital environment. Since hospitals are labour intensive organisations and involve a large number of professionals who are working in a "life and death activity", leadership is one of the areas which attaches lot of significance in the hospital management.

Definition

Leadership has been defined in various ways by different authors but the most appropriate one in the hospital scenario is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group so that they strive willingly towards the achievement of organisation goals.

Types of leadership

There are three types of leadership (Fig. 1).

1. Autocratic Leadership

The characteristics of Autocratic leadership are :-

- (a) The leader mainly seeks the obedience from his group. They have just to carry out the work as desired by the leader.
- (b) The entire authority is centralised with the leader and he only determines everything.
- (c) The leader structures complete work for his employees.
- (d) Communication is usually unidirectional from above downwards.
- (e) Workers compliance is obtained through threats and punishments. Those who obey orders are rewarded and those who do not are punished. It is a carrot and stick type of leadership.
- (f) Employees have very little responsibility.
- (g) Employees feel a certain amount of security.
- (h) Decision making is quick and less competent subordinates can be easily employed.
- (i) Highly qualified professionals do not like this type of leadership as there is lack of scope for growth, development, initiative and sense of responsibility.

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- (j) Fear, conflict, dissatisfaction and frustration can develop easily.

2. Participative or Democratic Leadership

The characteristics of Democratic Leadership are :-

- Here the leader and workers share the decision making.
- The leader draws the ideas and suggestions from the workers by discussions and consultations.
- The workers are encouraged to take part in setting organisation goals and the job of leader is mainly that of moderation.
- It is not a carrot and stick type of leadership. There are no punishments but corrective actions and rewards are based on objective achievements.
- Communication is in all directions.
- The workers have a sense of belonging and satisfaction.
- Knowledgeable and skilled workers feel more happy and satisfied.
- Decision making takes more time.
- Unskilled and lower level workers who have strong need of security do not like this style.

3. Laissez-Faire or Free Rein Leadership

In this type of leadership, each worker has his own authority and the leader is more or less like an information booth. He exercises a minimum control and assumes the role of just another member of the group.

This is more suitable for research laboratories and similar organisations.

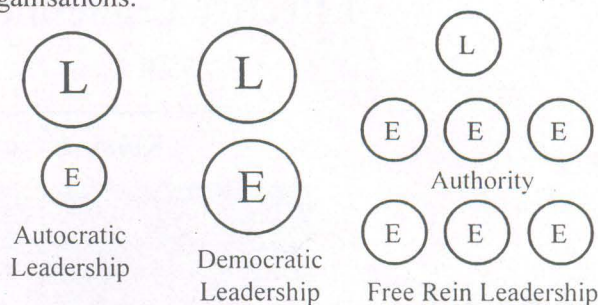


Fig. 1 : Types of leadership. L – Leader, E – Employee.

Epidemiology of Leadership in different situations

In order to determine the best leadership style following three factors must be considered.

- The situation in which the leading takes place.
- The people being led.
- The personal characteristics of the leader himself. Because differences occur in all three of these factors, there can be significant variation in leadership styles, all of which are effective as shown in (Fig. 2).

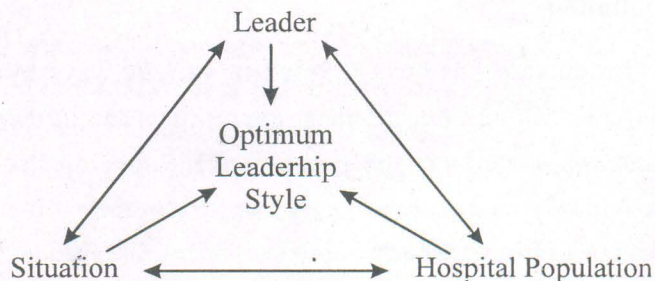


Fig. No. 2

1. Hospital population

In the hospital there are various types of people, who come across, like hospital employees, patients and the visitors. But in this paper the scope is more or so limited to the hospital employees. As already discussed hospital is a complex organisation humming with various types



of activities performed by various groups of employees ranging from unskilled to highly skilled and highly qualified employees. Mainly the hospital employees can be divided into three groups.

- (a) Medical (Professionals).
- (b) Nursing and paramedical.
- (c) Non-medical.

(a) **Professional employees** : This group consists of doctors, specialists and super specialists who are highly qualified and highly skilled workers. Although money and materials may motivate some of them but basically they are motivated only after their psychological needs are met with. Their psychological needs can only be met once they are participating actively in the decision making. As a result of which they feel sense of belonging and achieve recognition as well.

(b) **Nursing and paramedical employees** : This group consists of semiskilled, technical workers with social status lower than the professional group. Initially they need job structuring by autocratic way of leadership but as the time passes, they acquire so much proficiency that guidance and self control takes higher precedence in motivating them and they become an important constituent of the democratic leadership.

(c) **Non-Medical employees** : This group consists of ground level workers with very little education and very low socio-economic status. Their motivation comes through by meeting

their basic and security needs. Merely money and material benefits can satisfy this group. Since their needs are very limited and require job security, the autocratic style of leadership is better way of controlling them.

2. Situation

There are two types of situations in hospital industry.

- (a) Normal situation.
- (b) Crisis situation.

(a) **Normal situation** : During normal situations professional, nursing and paramedical groups of workers are controlled better with the democratic type of leadership. Even the hospital disaster plan can be discussed and modified accordingly as per the past experiences with the group with democratic type of leadership. The non-medical group of employees are better governed by the autocratic style of leadership even during the normal situations.

(b) **Crisis situation** : The relatively sudden and wide spread disturbance of the social system and the life of a community by some agent or event can amount to large scale admissions of patients and lead to the crisis situation in the hospital. Hospital disaster plan is activated in such situations and the situation demands autocratic style of leadership at that time.

3. Leader

For achieving optimum leadership style the leader

has to tailor his working according to the needs which can be better understood in the following chart.

Situation	Professional employees.	Nursing & para-medical employees	Non-medical employees.
Normal	Democratic style.	Predominant Autocratic coupled with Democratic style.	Autocratic style.
Crisis	Predominant Autocratic style.	Autocratic style.	Autocratic style.

Summary

In olden days leadership was considered to be the in-born trait and used to run in the particular families. Due to advancement of the scientific knowledge and with availability of better management tools, now it is considered that leadership basically involves motivating the staff and application of communication skills. Effective leadership is an essential requirement for higher utilization of scarce hospital resources and higher quality

of medical care. It has been discussed that democratic style is more suitable for the normal situations among the professional, nursing and paramedical group, whereas crisis situations are better managed through autocratic style of leadership. The non-medical group is better controlled by the autocratic style of leadership. The hospital administrator should have proficiency in all the styles of leadership and should select the one according to the situation.

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