

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ON LEADERSHIP AND ITS ROLE

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Abstract

In today's world leadership plays an important role in an organisation. It could be one of the reasons for the success or failure of the organisation. The organisation where the leadership is effective, the success of that organisation cannot be denied. In the fast changing technological environment, it is a challenge for the organisation to adapt these changes. These technological changes affect the leadership in the organisation and calls for flexibility and discovering the new ways for effective leadership. Every organisation needs to prepare their present as well as future leaders to tackle the challenges posed by technological changes. The present study is an attempt to understand the impact of technological changes on the leadership and working environment and how leadership can play a role in adaptation of these changes in the working environment for smooth functioning.

Keywords: Leadership, Technological Changes, Organisation

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a research area and practical skill which make an individual to lead other individuals. It is the ability or quality of an individual to influence, motivate and guide an individual or a group of individuals to achieve the specific objectives. Leadership is one of the most important functions of the management. The process of leadership is carried out by leaders by applying leadership qualities and attributes like decisiveness, endurance, knowledge, confidence, unselfishness, integrity, initiative etc. Good leader means good leadership and satisfied followers. A good leader always maintains cordial interpersonal relations among followers. He not only highlights the negative aspects of his/her followers but also highlights the positive aspects to encourage and motivate them. Leadership influences the behaviour of the followers and make them work towards the organisation for the benefit of both the followers as well as the organisation.

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Following are the points which justify the importance of Leadership:

- Helps to achieve the specified goals
- Increase the efficiency of the individuals to whom a leader leads.
- Helps in communicating the policies and plans to subordinates.
- Instils confidence and motivate subordinates by clarifying their roles, by providing guidelines and by solving problems if any.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are the methods in which leaders can lead the subordinates. The following are the various types or styles of leadership:

1. **Autocratic leadership:** In this type of leadership, the subordinates have to obey the orders given by the leaders. Only one way communication occurs with the followers and decisions are solely taken by the leaders.
2. **Democratic leadership:** In democratic leadership, the decisions are taken by leaders in consultation with the followers. There is a two way communication. They are encouraged to participate in decision making.
3. **Laissez-faire leadership:** In this, followers are independent to set their own objectives and work accordingly. The leader interferes and uses his power only when necessary.
4. **Situational leadership:** This type of leadership has been developed by Kenneth Blanchard and Paul Hersey. In this the leader should match his style to fit the development level of the ones to whom the leader is influencing. The leader change style continually according to the situation.
5. **Transactional leadership:** In transactional leadership, leaders promote compliance by rewards and punishments which lead to short term motivation. It is basically used in specific projects or in emergency situations.
6. **Transformational leadership:** In this leaders work with teams to enhance the motivation, job performance, morale and inspire them to take greater ownership for their work and make them able to identify strengths and opportunities.
7. **Strategic leadership:** Leaders influence employees to make decisions on their own to achieve long term success. It includes tactics regarding mission and vision of the organisation. Leader

should motivate and persuade them to follow that same vision and motivate them to apply the strategies.

As the technology changes, the leaders also needs to be flexible enough to incorporate these changes in working environment. The experience of the leader is not enough to be a successful leader but also his ability to adapt and avoid resistance of the employees to adapt these changes. So, leadership could be the best way for incorporating technological changes for achieving goals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alire, 2001 focuses on racial/ethnic diversity and the role leadership plays for emerging library leaders of color. The article covers the need for minority library leadership and the differences between white and minority leadership, and provides five leadership categories followed by ten leadership realities of which readers should be aware.

Gardner et al., 2011 explains the concept of Authentic Leadership with a historical Overview and analyse 91 publications that focus on authentic leadership.

Dartey, 2015 aims to bring resemblance between the current resilient leadership theory and the transformational- transactional leadership theories. It draws a conceptual link among them to buttress the point that resilient leadership is a repetition of the ideas underlying the two already existing theories- transformational and transactional.

Hawi et al., 2015 aims to investigate the relationship of the transformational leadership behaviour in Jordan Universities from teaching staff by conducting a survey through Multifactor Leadership questionnaire and SPSS method is use to analyze it. The results showed that leader's behaviour has main role in the academic field at the level of organizations performance when they show transformative and consider the humanity aspects for achieving goals.

Sidani et al., 2015 takes an institutional approach to identify cognitive, normative and regulatory factors affecting women's leadership in an understudied traditional society. Main purpose is to access how such forces work to create a case of female leadership deficit in Lebanon. The authors analyze interview data to identify themes linking women's leadership with societal institutional forces.

Singh, 2015 examines authentic leadership and its development, new genre leadership theories, complexity leadership and shared leadership.

Bouilloud et al., 2017 aims to analyse the position of the leader in relation to the ethical dimension of truth-telling within the organization under his/her control.

Miniano et al., 2018 highlights meaningful insights drawn from the leadership journey and experiences of twelve former presidents of a national association of human resource management professionals in the Philippines. The qualitative research resulting into the identification of three major leadership journey stages namely: Leadership Awakening, Leadership Metamorphosis, and Leadership Transcendence.

Aithal et al., 2019 argued that the behaviour of a leader depends on his/her attitude which may be positive or negative depends on the four factors identified as feelings, emotions, belief and environment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand the impact of technological changes on leadership
- To understand the impact of technological changes on working environment.
- To understand how leadership can help adapting these changes.

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AND LEADERSHIP ROLE

Technological changes have both positive as well as negative impact on the employees and leadership. It is in the hands of leader that how he uses the positive impact for the benefit and take it as a challenge to turn the negative impact into positive one by adopting his skills and competence. Therefore leadership has lot to do with the technological changes. Following are the various impacts of technological changes on leadership and how leadership plays an important role in absorbing these impacts.

Social Concern: Fast changing technological environment challenges the leaders to anticipate the changes in business environment accurately and to make their organisation flexible. Also there lies the social concern about the future of jobs as people are being replaced by the technology and are losing their jobs. It poses a challenge for the leadership to adapt to new technology without compromising on

the human capabilities and creativity. Leadership can solve the problem by augmenting the technology with human resources by following human centric, followership or full circle approach.

Distant leading: Changing technology has given rise to virtual organisations. Employees are working remotely over the internet without being physically connected. Thereby increasing the difficulty level of the leaders to lead and guide the employees who are more efficient in face to face leading. It is difficult but not impossible. Leaders can manage and lead the employees using the technology, maintaining continuous contact by online chat tools and exchanging information through online software, discussing the progress through video conferencing. Leaders should empower the employees and held them accountable for their work and must create environment of trustworthiness and cooperation.

More flexibility to employees: Nowadays employees prefer working from their homes without physically present in the organisation. The home has now turned into the workplace. This change is only because of the changing technology as it keeps them connected to the organisation. And this challenges the leadership for managing people at home. Due to this leadership has to provide more flexibility to the employees to work from their home creating loyal and satisfied employees leading. Hence leads to greater efficiency and productivity maintaining work life balance.

Managing diversity: Employees working in an organisation may belong to different religion, culture, languages, may have varied preferences and expectations. The major barrier may be the language. Introduction of technological changes has solved this problem as there are number of software or translation tools that a leader can use for effective communication and maintaining the interpersonal relations. Hence, it makes easier for leaders to manage the workforce diversity.

Facilitates expansion of market: Organisations are becoming virtual due to technological changes thereby making it easier for leaders to expand their operations globally; eliminating the barriers of language and providing access to the potential markets and talents that was not possible earlier. Maintaining documents in various languages has also become easier. A good leader always find opportunities and uses disadvantage to its advantage.

Leading and motivating through social media: Technological changes do not mean only new techniques and IT solutions but also mean new way of leading through social media. Effective

leadership involves interacting and motivating individuals through wide channels of communication through social media.

Taking training to the higher level: Technology has developed number of ways for providing the training to employees even without physically present at the training place. Leaders usually face problems like irregularity, employee resistance, high cost, hindrance in regular work etc. But technology has removed these problems as online training programmes can be easily designed which can be accessed anytime, anywhere by the employees. Also it has made it easier for the leaders to manage the HR information, progress reports and monitor the training programmes for the employees. Leaders can easily allocate human resources and monitor the teams to various projects.

Employee Resistance: Leaders have the responsibility to implement these changes in the organisation. Implementation of changes is not an easy task as the employees have the tendency to resist change. Therefore leadership comes in the picture to avoid this resistance by highlighting the benefits of the new method and motivating and assuring employees that change is for their benefit. Leaders with help of the technology may design personalize training programmes to implement the changes.

Effect on Critical Thinking: With the increasing use of technology at work place, employees highly rely on the automated systems and are less involved in critically examining any problem. Employees are becoming more reactive than proactive. They are becoming slaves of the technology. Leadership plays an important role in challenging employee's capabilities and making them realise that human abilities are more powerful and important than machines.

Emotional Intelligence: There is no better way than to lead and motivate face to face but technological changes and work from home has hampered the effectiveness of the leadership. The interpersonal relations are suffering and communication between leaders and employees is reducing. For motivating employees physical and emotional presence is important to make them the masters not slaves. It will induce confidence among the employees and realize their importance.

Women Employees: Today women's can manage their work from home. In case of emergency situations they have the option to work from home than sitting idle. The leader has a challenge to manage the work and problems of women employees simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

Technological changes affect the employees which in turn affects the leadership. Leadership must aim at adapting these changes but not at the cost of human resources. Technology may leads to change in the leadership styles but the basics of the leadership remains intact. Not even a single area is untouched by the technological changes therefore leadership should always take a step forward to tackle these changes for good of the employees and organisation.

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