Leadership is essentially a continuous process of influencing behaviour. It may be considered in context of mutual relations between a leader and his followers.

The leader tries to influence the behavior of individuals or group of individuals around him to achieve desired goals.

Leadership is a dynamic process, which deserves study. It is a relational process involving interactions among leaders, members and sometimes outside constituencies. Good leaders are made not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader.

Basically, it involves developing those qualities and attitudes in managers which help them to look into the future and to bring necessary improvement pertaining to different leadership styles.

Leadership is the art of influencing people to attain group objectives willingly. Leaders in all walks of life should have some basic qualities. They should be able to establish contact with their equals, deal with their subordinates and guide them, mediate in conflicts, resolve issues by weighing various alternatives, allocate scarce resources properly and take risks and initiatives.

The environment in which a leader is placed is important. The organisational culture, the economic and social set-up, the extent of unionisation and other factors may demand different types of leaders in different situations. A task-oriented leader, for instance, may be more successful in situations which are either very favourable or very unfavourable to him, while a relations- oriented leader may be more effective in intermediate situations.

According to Keith Davis, "Leadership is the process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards their objectives. Leadership must extract cooperation and willingness of the individuals and groups to attain the organisational objectives."

Styles of Leadership:

• **Autocratic Leadership**
Also known as authoritarian leadership, it is a leadership style characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership involves absolute, authoritarian control over a group.

Characteristics of Autocratic Leadership

Some of the primary characteristics of autocratic leadership include:

•Little or no input from group members

•Leaders make the decisions

•Group leaders dictate all the work methods and processes

•Group members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks

Benefits of Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership can be beneficial in some instances, such as when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting with a large group of people. Some projects require strong leadership in order to get things accomplished quickly and efficiently. In situations that are particularly successful, such as during military conflicts, group members may actually prefer an autocratic style. It allows members of the group to focus on performing specific tasks without worrying about making complex decisions.

Downsides of Autocratic Leadership

While autocratic leadership can be beneficial at times, there are also many instances where this leadership style can be problematic. People who abuse an autocratic leadership style are often viewed as bossy, controlling, and dictatorial, which can lead to resentment among group members. Because autocratic leaders make decisions without consulting the group, people in the group may dislike that they are unable to
contribute ideas.

• Democratic Leadership

Also known as participative leadership, it is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. Researchers have found that this learning style is usually one of the most effective and lead to higher productivity, better contributions from group members, and increased group morale.

Characteristics of Democratic Leadership

Some of the primary characteristics of democratic leadership include:

•Group members are encouraged to share ideas and opinions, even though the leader retains the final say over decisions.

•Members of the group feel more engaged in the process.

•Creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

Benefits of Democratic Leadership

Because group members are encouraged to share their thoughts, democratic leadership can leader to

better ideas and more creative solutions to problems. Group members also feel more involved and committed to projects, making them more likely to care about the end results. Research on leadership styles has also shown that democratic leadership leads to higher productivity amonggroup members.

Downsides of Democratic Leadership

While democratic leadership has been described as the most effective leadership style, it does have some potential downsides. In situations where roles are unclear or time is of the essence, democratic leadership can lead to

communication failures and uncompleted projects. In some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision-making process. Democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge. It is also important to have plenty of time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan and then vote on the best course of action.

Delegative (Laissez-Faire) Leadership

Leaders practicing the delegative leadership style are very hands-off. They offer little or no guidance to their group and leave decision making up to the group. A delegative leader will provide the necessary tools and resources to complete a project and will take responsibility for the group's decisions and actions, but power is basically handed over to the group.

Lewin and his team found that the group of children trying to complete the craft project under the delegative leader were the least productive. They also made more demands of their leader, were unable to work independently and showed little cooperation.

The delegative style is particularly appropriate for a group of highly skilled workers, and creative teams often value this kind of freedom. On the other hand, this style does not work well for a group that lacks the needed skills, motivation or adherence to deadlines, and that can lead to poor performance.

Theories of Leadership

TRAIT THEORY:
Some of the significant characteristics of leaders are categorized as follows:
- *Physical Characteristics* – age, appearance, height, weight
- *Social Background* – Education, social status, mobility
- *Intelligence* – Intelligence, ability, judgment, knowledge, decisiveness, fluency of speech
- *Personality* – Aggressiveness, alertness, dominance, enthusiasm, extroversion, independence, creativity, personal integrity, self-confidence
- *Task-related Characteristics* – Achievement drive, drive for responsibility, initiative, persistence, enterprise, task orientation
- *Social Characteristics* – Administrative ability, attractiveness, cooperativeness, popularity, prestige, sociability, interpersonal skill, tack and diplomacy

The trait theory is founded on the characteristics of different leaders – both the successful and unsuccessful ones. The theory is used to predict effective leadership. Usually, the identified characteristics are compared to those of potential leaders to determine their likelihood of leading effectively.

Scholars researching the trait theory try to identify leadership characteristics from different perspectives. They focus on the physiological attributes such as appearance, weight, and height; demographics such as age, education, and familial background; and intelligence, which encompasses

decisiveness, judgment, and knowledge.

CONTINGENCY THEORY

The Contingency Theory emphasizes different variables in a specific setting that determine the style of leadership best suited for the said situation. It is founded on the principle that no one leadership style is applicable to all situations.

Renowned researchers Hodgson and White believe that the best form of leadership is one that finds the perfect balance between behaviors, needs, and context. Good leaders not only possess the right qualities but they're also able to evaluate the needs of their followers and the situation at hand. In summary, the contingency theory suggests that great leadership is a combination of many key variables.

BEHAVIOURAL THEORY

In Behavioural Theory, the focus is on the specific behaviours and actions of leaders rather than their traits or characteristics. The theory suggests that effective leadership is the result of many learned skills.

Individuals need three primary skills to lead their followers – technical, human, and conceptual skills. Technical skills refer to a leader's knowledge of the process or technique; human skills means that one is able to interact with other individuals; while conceptual skills enable the leader to come up with ideas for running the organization or society smoothly.

HOW TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

As well as providing direction, inspiration, and guidance, great leaders exhibit courage, passion, confidence, commitment, and ambition. They nurture the strengths and talents of their people and build teams committed to achieving common goals. The most effective leaders have the following traits in common:

1. Leaders Provide Task Support:

Leaders support the followers by assembling the organizational resources; and helping them accomplish their tasks in accordance with standards of performance.

2. Psychological Support:

Leaders not only help the followers in accomplishing the organizational tasks; they also help them overcome various problems they confront while performing these tasks. They create willingness in people to work with zeal and enthusiasm. They make the followers realise that their work is important so that they work with confidence towards task accomplishment.

3. Development of Individuals:

Leaders build willingness, enthusiasm and confidence in followers for accomplishment of their individual and organizational goals. This results in their overall growth and development.

4. Building the Team Spirit:

No individual can work alone. Leaders develop team spirit amongst followers to work collectively and coordinate their activities with organizational activities and goals. A leader works as captain of the team.

5. Motivation:

Leaders motivate the employees to take up jobs that they otherwise may not be willing to exercise.

6. Provides Feedback:

When people work towards well-defined targets, they want constant feedback of their performance, which helps in achieving their goals effectively. Leaders provide them this feedback.

7. Helps in Introducing Change:

Effective leaders can convince members about the need and benefits of organizational change. The change process can, thus, be smoothly carried out.

8. Maintain Discipline:

Leadership is a powerful influence that enforces discipline in the organization more than formal rules and regulations can. Members will be committed and loyal to rules and regulations if their leaders have confidence in them.

9. Affirming Ethical Values:

Leadership derives from trust. Ethics affirms trust of people (employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, regulators and community) in a leader. Thus, a leader needs to conform to ethical practices.

10. Empowering Others:

A good leader leads by empowering others. It means delegation of power. Today's leader is not expected to retain all power with himself, he gives autonomy and power to others. He has to diffuse his power. He has to command power and respect for empowering others.

11. Reviewing the Norms:

From time to time, a leader needs to review his mission and vision statements along with clear norms and guidelines, taking into account views and experiences of his subordinates, by interactive ways like organizing workshops and discussions.

12. Setting the Ethical Example:

The ultimate leadership responsibility is modelling the behaviour of others. Employees constantly watch and learn from leaders. They rightfully assume that it is okay to do whatever the leader does. Regardless of what is written or said in the organization, leader's behaviour is the performance standard which employees generally follow.