

NEW & EMERGING THEMES IN THE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP

1. There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. (**Bernard Bass, author of the 1981 revision of Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership**)

- The leadership literature: an overview
 - No one unified and commonly accepted theory of/on:
 - What leadership is?
 - What make a leader effective?
 - How to help people develop leadership skills?
- Common agreement on leadership:
 - Leadership does not happen in isolation.
 - It is a group phenomenon.
 - Dependent on an interaction between two or more people.
 - Showing leadership means influencing a group in some way.

2. A shift in thinking

- Most studies of leadership agree that the non-negotiable tasks of a leader include:
 - Envisioning goals
 - Affirming and regenerating values
 - Motivating behaviour
 - Achieving unity and trust
 - Resolving conflicts
 - Explaining
 - Serving as a symbol
 - Representing the group
 - Leading by precept and example
 - Renewing the organization

3. Changing patterns of leadership:

- **A focus on interaction:**
 - A shift away from leadership studies that list and analyzes the attributes of great leaders, in favour of an approach that gives more emphasis to the interaction between the leader and his or her context, environment and constituents.
- **Changing images of the leadership:**
 - A shift away from the view of leader as hero – a lonely figure at the top of a hierarchy – toward a view of leader as facilitator, servant or steward of the group.
- **An increase in power sharing:**
 - A shift away from the notion that a leader leads by commanding and controlling, toward a new emphasis on power sharing through participative leadership and autonomous decision making.
- **More collaborative structures:**
 - An interest in going beyond studying the interaction of the leader with individual roles and functions within an organization, to looking at the building of teams and more collaborative structures.
- **A desire to value differences:**
 - A shift in emphasis from creating conformity and uniformity, towards a new understanding of the value of the diversity that characterizes most workforces.
- **A new perspective on renewal:**
 - A shift away from a concern with control and predictability, toward a new understanding of the role of disequilibrium and chaos as essential triggers for continual organizational renewal and growth.

4. Traits of successfully leaders?

- There is no traits that guarantee successfully leadership in all situation
- Successful leadership requires
 - Combination of a particular context and an individual with the appropriate qualities to lead in that context.
- Assumptions a leader needs to make about the right way to lead
 - Human nature
 - The way people function in organization
 - The work of leaders
 - The kind of activities that leads to outstanding results
 - An appropriate vision for him or herself and the organization
- Leaders cannot lead in isolation. A key aspect of the context is the people the leader's follower

5. Leadership vs. Followership:

- In reality, followership and leadership are two separate concepts, two separate roles.
- They are complementary, not competitive paths to organizational contribution.
- Neither role concerns the market on brains, motivation, talent or action.
- Either role can result in an award-winning performance or a flop.
- The greatest successes require that he people in both roles turn in top-rate performance.
- We must have great leaders and great followers.

6. Followers' take on fundamental qualities of leaders

- The ability to embrace exemplary followers as partners and co-creators by sharing information, co-creating the vision and mission, and sharing the risks and the rewards.
- The ability to demonstrate the value they add to followers' productivity by creating environment where exemplary followers flourish, and by being less a hero and more hero maker.
- A leader must produce leaders.

7. Changing images of the leader

- The traditional image of a strong leader that is hero – the lone figure at the top who alone carries the burden of responsibility.
- Studies of “great man” and their strategies on the battlefield, in courts or in parliament are, however, giving way to effectiveness studies that look at what value the leader adds to the group
- Participation
 - Leadership is participative to the extent that it allows decision to be shared by a superior and a subordinate.
 - The participative leader shares decision-making power completely or partially – in a consultative, joint or delegative manner. He or she may:
 - Present tentative decision and then ask for modification
 - Present problems, get suggestions, but retain the right to make the final decision.
 - Define limits and ask the group to make the decision within those limits
 - Permit constituents to function automatically within agreed-upon limits.

8. Attributes of women leaders

- An attention to process instead of a focus on the bottom line

- A willingness to look at how an action will affect other people instead of simply asking, “What’s in it for me?”
- A concern for the wider needs of the community
- A disposition to draw on personal, private sphere experience when dealing in the public realm
- An appreciation of diversity
- An outsider’s impatience with rituals and symbols of status that divide people who together and so reinforce hierarchies.