

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

1. Autocratic or Authoritarian Leadership
An autocratic leader exercises complete control over the subordinates. He centralises power in himself and takes all decision without consulting the subordinates. He dominates and drives his group through coercion and command. He loves power and never delegates authority. The leader gives orders and expects the subordinates to follow them ungrudgingly and unquestioningly. He uses rewards and holds threat of penalties to direct the subordinates. He does not delegate authority.

Advantages

- (i) Autocratic leadership style permits quick decision-making.
- (ii) It provides strong motivation and satisfaction to the leader who dictates terms.
- (iii) Less competent subordinates are needed at lower levels.
- (iv) This style may yield positive results when great speech is required.

Disadvantages

- (i) Autocratic style leads to frustration, low morale and conflict among subordinates.
- (ii) Subordinates tend to shirk responsibility and initiative.
- (iii) Full potential of subordinates and their creative ideas are not utilised.
- (iv) Organisational continuity is threatened in the absence of the leader because subordinates get no opportunity for development.

Autocratic leadership style may be appropriate when subordinates are uneducated, unskilled and submissive. Lack of knowledge and experience on the part of subordinates makes it necessary that the leader take decisions himself.

This style may also be desirable when the company endorses fear and punishment as accepted disciplinary techniques when a leader prefers to be dominant in decision-making and there is

little room for errors in final accomplishment, autocratic leadership may enhance morale and improve productivity.

These days autocratic style is becoming less desirable as employees are becoming more educated and well-organised.

2. Democratic or Participative Leadership: A consultative or democratic leader takes decisions in consultation and participation with the subordinates. He decentralises authority and allows the subordinates to share his power. The leader does what the group wants and follows the majority opinion. He keeps the followers informed about matters affecting them. A democratic leader provides freedom of thinking and expression. He listens to the suggestions, grievances and opinion of the subordinates.

Advantages

(i) Consultive leadership improves the job satisfaction and morale of subordinates.

(ii) It cultivates the decision-making ability of subordinates.

Leadership

(iii) The leader multiplies his abilities through the contribution of his followers.

(iv) It develops positive attitudes and reduces resistance to change.

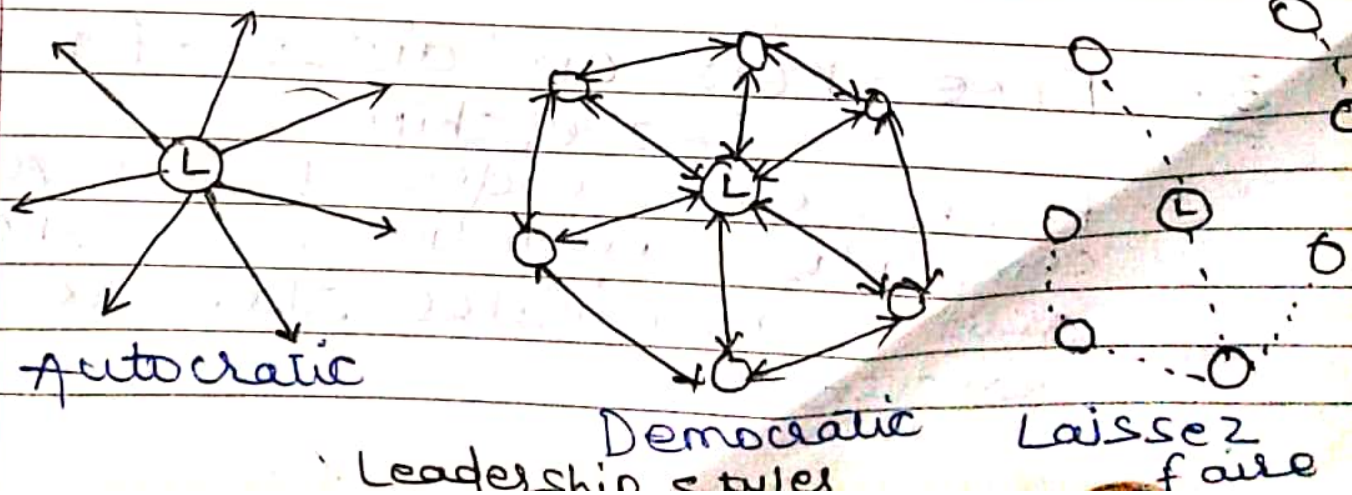
(v) The quality of decisions is improved.

(vi) Labour absenteeism and labour turnover are reduced.

Disadvantages

(i) Democratic style is time-consuming and may result in delays in decision-making.

- (ii) It may not yield positive result when subordinates prefer minimum interaction with the leader.
- (iii) Over a period of time subordinates may develop the habit of expecting to be consulted on every issue and they may feel frustrated when they are not consulted.
- (iv) Consultation may be interpreted as a sign of incompetence on the part of the leader to deal with problems.
- (v) It may be used as a means of passing the buck of others and of abdicating responsibility.
- (vi) It requires considerable communicating and persuasive skill on the part of the leader.



Consultative leadership is considered to be more effective than autocratic style though there is no empirical proof for this. Consultative style is more compatible with the prevailing value system which favours freedom of expression and independent thinking. The choice of leadership style depends upon the immediate goals and on the subordinates. If the immediate goal is increase in productivity or subordinates have low need for independence, autocratic style may be preferable. But when the goal is job satisfaction and employees have a high need for independence, consultative style may be more effective. Consultative style is also appropriate where subordinates have accepted the goal of the organisation and the leader really wants to share decision-making with the subordinates.

3. Free-rein or Laissez-faire Leadership.

Free-rein leadership involves complete delegation of authority so that subordinates themselves take decisions.

The free-rein leader avoids power and relinquishes the leadership position. He serves only as a 'contact' to bring the information and resources needed by the subordinates.

Advantages

- (i) positive effect on job satisfaction and morale of subordinates.
- (ii) maximum possible scope for development of subordinates.
- (iii) Full utilisation of the potential of subordinates.

Disadvantages: -

- (i) Subordinates do not get the guidance and support of the leader.
- (ii) It ignores the leader's contribution. Just as autocratic style ignores the contribution of the subordinates.
- (iii) Subordinates may move in different directions and may work at cross

purposes which may degenerate into chaos.

THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP (Approaches to leadership)

Researches on leadership have identified three main approaches to leadership - trait theory, behavioural theory and situational theory.

TRAIT THEORY

According to this theory, leadership is a conglomeration or a set of personality traits. It is a function of personal traits of the leader. It is the oldest theory popularised from the time of ancient Greeks. This theory has also been called the 'Great man theory' because it is based on the set of traits which are common to great men. It seeks to rationalise the greatness of leaders. It follows that a leader is

thought to possess certain traits which separate him from the common mass of followers. Traits are innate and inherent personal qualities.

Researchers have identified the following traits of leaders:

1. **Physical Qualities:** - Sound health, vitality, endurance, physical and nervous energy, enthusiasm, forcefulness.
2. **Intellectual Qualities:** High intelligence, sound judgment, ability to teach, scientific approach, decisiveness, self-understanding, ambition, desire for achievement.
3. **Moral Qualities:** Integrity, honesty, fair play, moral courage, will power, sense of purpose, achievement drive, objectivity.
4. **Social Qualities:** Ability to inspire, leadership, confidence, empathy, initiative, knowledge of human nature, human relations, attitude.

Behavioural Theory (Follower's theory)

Deficiencies in the trait approach have led researchers to focus attention on leadership behaviour.

Behavioural theory attempts to describe leadership in terms of what leaders do rather than what they are. According to the behavioural approach, leadership is the function of effective role behaviour.

In other words, an effective leader is one who performs those acts which help the group to achieve its objectives. Three main models of leaderships based on the behavioural theory are given below:

1. The Michigan Studies. After studying a large no. of Supervisors in several factories, the Michigan researchers identified two leadership styles - employee centred and production centred. A Supervisor is considered as employee centred if he allows the employees to handle most of the problem themselves and provides necessary assistance for this purpose. He is more concerned with the human

element. On the other hand, a production oriented supervisor is concerned more with the task than with the people who perform the task. He regards the employees as instruments for getting the work done rather than as human being with needs and emotion. Employee - centred manager is a theory Y manager while production centred manager is a theory X person.

EMPLOYEE-CENTRED LEADER	PRODUCTION CENTRED LEADER
1. Treats employee as human beings.	• Treats employees as tools in the production process.
2. Shows concern for the welfare of workers.	• Emphasises production targets and technical aspects of the job
3. Encourages and involves employees in decision-making	• Exercises close supervision and control.

Michigan school researchers found that employee-centered supervision was more effective in increasing productivity. Production-centered supervision and control lead to lack of interest and responsibility on the part of workers. Supervisory style influence group motivation and emphasis on productivity at the expense of workers dignity is self-defeating.

Michigan studies became popular in America because they were compatible with the prevailing value system. These findings led to the widespread belief in the 1950s that employee-oriented leadership style was superior.

2. The Ohio State University studies after analysing actual leadership behaviours in a wide variety of situations, researchers at the Ohio State University identified two leadership behaviours - consideration and initiating structure. Consideration (C) refers to the mutual trust, friendship and warmth between the leader and his staff. Initiating Structure (IS)

implies the degree to which the activities of subordinates are defined and work procedures are established. The researcher used a Leader Opinion Questionnaire (LOQ) to systematise leader's self-perception of the leadership style. The questionnaire was to be answered by the leader himself to enable him to perceive his own leadership style. A Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was developed to be answered by the leader's seniors, peers and initiating structure. It was used to develop a model of observed leader behaviour.

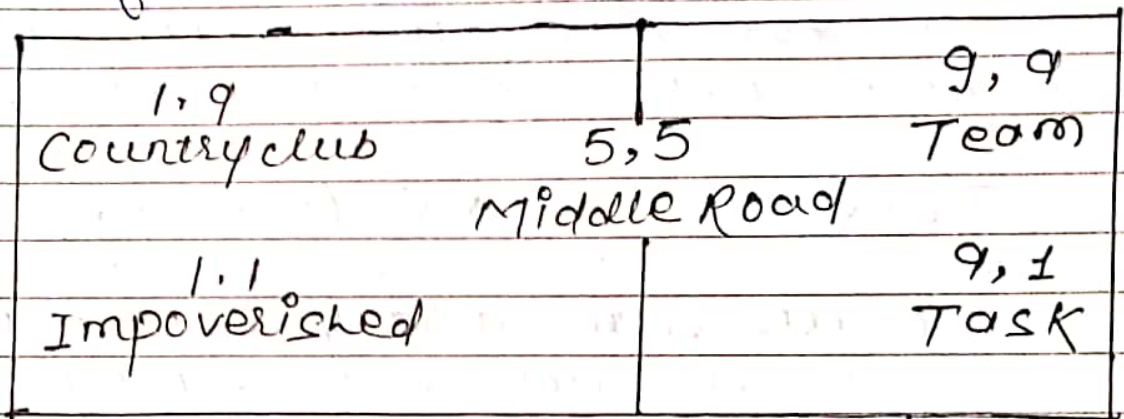
The researchers found that consideration and initiating structure were not mutually exclusive or distinct dimensions. A high score on one dimension does not necessarily mean a low score on the other. Leader behaviour was plotted on two separate axes and four quadrants were developed as

MANAGERIAL GRID

Blake and Mouton have developed a grid to explain leader behaviour. They point out that leadership style is a blend or matrix wherein task-oriented and relations-oriented behaviour mix in different degree to involve the composite style. In the managerial grid, the x-axis represents the 'concern for production' while y-axis represents the 'concern for people'. Concern for production implies the managerial attitudes about volume of output, work procedures, work efficiency, etc. Concern for people means degree of personal commitment, self-esteem of workers, responsibility based on trust and satisfying inter-personal relations. A manager has to get things done through people and, therefore, he is concerned with both the task and the people. The managerial grid identifies five discrete combinations of these two factors. These five styles of the grid are as follows:

Impoverished: - The manager has low concern for both production and people, under it exertion of minimum effort is required to get work done and sustain organisation membership. The leader avoids controversy and confrontation.

(Low) ← concern for people → (High)



(Low) ← concern for production → (High)

Country Club (1, 9). Thoughtful attention to needs of people for satisfying the relationship leads to a comfortable friendly organisation atmosphere and work tempo. The leader keeps his team in good humour and secure good relations. He has maximum concern for the people and minimum concern for the production.

Middle of the Road (5,5). Adequate performance is possible through Organisation balancing the necessity to get out work while maintaining morale of people at a satisfactory level. The leader balances tasks with concern for people through compromise. He has moderate concern for the both production and people.

Task Management (9,1). Efficiency in operations results from arranging conditions of work in such a way that human elements interfere to a minimum degree. The task is well-planned and authority is well-defined. This is the task-oriented or authoritarian style involving suppression of conflicts. The leader is mainly concerned with production with production and has ~~to~~ little concern ~~of~~ for people.

Team Management (9,9): work accomplishment is from committed people and interdependence through a common stake in organisation purpose that leads to relationship of trust and respect. This is team leader style in which the leader consults his team and harmonise goals. The leader has maximum concern for both production and people and people-centred leaders are more successful than job-centred leaders.

Managerial grid approach has a common sense appeal and it helps managers to identify their own leadership styles. It serves as a useful framework for assessing leadership style. Managerial grid is more than just a theory of human behaviour. It is also a technique of organisation development. It has been used successfully in improving the attitudes and behaviour of people throughout an organisation. The grid-training programme consists of six phases

- (a) Laboratory Seminar Training
- (b) Team Development
- (c) Inter-group Development
- (d) Organisation Goal-setting
- (e) Goal attainment
- (f) Stabilisation

The grid approach is popular among managers. But it is highly controversial among theorists due to lack of empirical evidence. It is an attitudinal and conceptual description of leaders because it measures the values of managers. It does not tell why a manager falls in one part or the other of the grid. In reality, the extreme positions shown in the grid are seldom found in their pure form.

Situational Models

According to the situational theory, no leadership style is the best for all times and in all situations. Leader effectiveness is the result of the situation in which the leader operates. Therefore, the situational variables should be analysed

before an optimum style is selected. The leader should adjust his style according to the nature of the task, the type of followers and the environment to improve his leadership effectiveness.

The five main models of situational leadership theory are given below:-

1. Fiedler's contingency model.
2. House's path goal model.
3. Life cycle model.
4. Reddin's Tri-dimensional model.
5. Hersey-Blanchard model.