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## **The Nature of Administrative Leadership in Institutions**

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### **Abstract:**

*Many prominent scientists, scholars, practitioners and writers are agreed that the most polymorphic concept of leadership is an indispensable and universal element for the useful and successful functioning of a group or institution and attainment of its goals and objectives. They further maintain that without leadership a group or institution is but a mule of men and women and machines. Leadership transforms potential into reality. It is the ultimate act that brings to success all the potential which is in an institution and its people. This particular article focuses on the meanings and the nature of administrative leadership.*

### **1. Introduction**

Many prominent scientists, scholars and writers agree that leadership is an indispensable universal element for the useful functioning of a group or institution and attainment of its goals and objectives, without leadership a group or institution is but a mule of men and machines. Leadership transforms potential into reality. It is the ultimate act which brings to success all the potential that is in an institution and its people. This article focuses on the meaning and nature of the concept of administrative leadership.

### **2. The Purpose of This Article**

The purpose of this article is threefold:

- describe the meanings of leadership in institutions;
- define the concepts leader and leadership; and
- explain the nature of leadership;

### **3. The Meanings and Nature of Administrative Leadership**

#### *3.1. Meanings of Leadership*

Some of the quoted thinkers, writers and scholars who are relevant to this aspect include:

- J. J. N. Cloete;
- Hicks and Gullett;
- M. P. Follett;
- Keith Davis;
- H. A. Simon;
- D. W. Smithburg
- V. A. Thompson
- S. B. M. Marume.

According to Mary Parker Follett [1868 – 1933], a leader is not head of the department or president of the organisation, but one who can see all round a situation, who sees it as related to certain purposes and policies, who sees it evolving into the next situation, who understands how to pass from one situation to another, He is the person who can show that the order is integral to the situation.

M. P. Follett states that such people are found not only at the top but also throughout the organisation [institution].

Follett opined that the leader not only influences his group but is also influenced by it. She calls this reciprocal relationship as circular response. Further, the leader must also be influenced by the experts within the organisations. Finally, the function of the leader is to create a group power (power – with rather than to exercise personal power [power – over]).

### 3.1.1. Explanations

Leadership is indispensable for the useful functioning of a group or an institution and attainment of its goals and objectives. Keith Davis observed, without leadership, an organisation is but a mule of men and machines. Leadership transforms potential into reality. It is the ultimate act which brings to success all the potential that is an organisation and its people.

Herbert A. Simon, Donald W. Smithburg and Victor A. Thompson [Public Administration:1971:102 – 103] state that: The work situation, extra – organizational affiliations, like – mindedness, and symbols and insignia provide some of the materials out of which identifications develop or can be created. Very often individuals who take a role of leadership play an important part in crystallizing these potential identifications into strong, cohesive working groups, A leader even one with strong natural capacities cannot force a social group into being where there is no basis for it in common tasks, beliefs, affiliations, or symbols; but he an often act as a catalyst, and he can sometimes decide the issue between two alternative closely – balanced group structures. A string leader can sometimes forge his unit into a working group where diverse professional loyalties of its members might otherwise disrupt it.

As rightly put by Hicks and Gullett, the terms leader and manager are not necessarily interchangeable because leadership is a sub – class of management a leader needs to influence the behaviour of others. He is necessarily required to perform all the functions of a manager. Thus the hall mark of leadership is the capacity to influence others to follow. Professor J. J. N. Cloete, one of the finest South African social scientists states that for the achievement of an agreed upon goal by a group of people they have to cooperate. Through the ages man has learn how to cooperate. Cooperation has mostly been effected by groups of workers under the leadership of a single leader generally referred to as supervisor. Originally each leader developed his own personal style to ensure that each member contributed to the fullest of his mental and physical capacities to the attainment of the agreed upon goal. Eventually it was realized that it should be possible to obtain guidelines in accordance with the leaders should act to direct subordinates to achieve the goals to the fullest extent (effectively) and with the least cost efficiently. Although each leader could still develop his own personal style, he should in order to achieve specified results, exercise leadership in accordance with guidelines which have been agreed upon.

It has been explained that personnel administration consists of four groups of functions:

- provision functions;
- utilization functions;
- support functions, and
- training and development functions.

Leadership activities can be re-classified as constituting the personnel utilization function.

Specifically, leadership is one of the groups of functions of *personnel utilization*, consisting of those functions which must be performed to make employee work to the utmost of their physical and mental capacities, namely,

- inspiring employees;
- communicating with the employees;
- directing or commanding;
- constructing work programmes; and
- conducting suggesting schemes.

### 3.2. Definitions of Leadership

Various notable scientists and scholars have defined the concept of leadership variously. Here are some of the authors and their definitions:

Dimock and Dimock:	Leadership is not power, dominance, social superiority, or anything suggestive of snobbery. Leadership is influence on people, not power them.
Robert Tannenbaum:	Leadership is the interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, towards the attainment of a specialized goal or goals.
F. A. Nigro and L. G. Nigro:	The essence of leadership is influencing the actions of others; the essential quality of leaders is that they are convinced something must be done, and the persuade others to help them to get it done
Warren Bennis:	The single defining quality of leaders is their ability to create and realize a vision.
M. P. Follett:	A leader is not the President of the organisation or head of the department but one who can see all around a situation and understands how to pass from one situation to another.
James Rost:	Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.
Wendell Davis:	Leadership is the process of influencing the behaviour of others in the direction of a goal or set of goals or, more broadly, towards a vision of the future.
Keith Davis:	Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically.
Koontz and O'Donnell:	Leadership is the activity of persuading people to cooperate in the achievement of a common objective
Terry:	Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for mutual objectives.
Barnard:	Leadership refers to the quality of the behaviour of individuals, whereby they guide people in their activities in an organized effort.
Mooney:	Leadership is the form that authority assumes when it enters into process.

Table 1

- In addition to the above definitions by the lofty overseas scientists, it is significant to note what Professors William Fox and Ivan H. Meyer [1995:72-73] at the prestigious University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, have to say about the concepts of leader and leadership. Their contributions are as follows:
- Leader: one who performs more leadership functions than others in the group.

### 3.2.1. Leadership

- a. a personality characteristic, organizational function, or relationship among leading traits, follower expectations and situational demands.
- b. any behaviour that aids a group in accomplishing its goals.
- c. the ability to influence people to work towards attaining group or organisational objectives. The following are some of the most important tasks which have been identified as essential in relation to leadership:
  - defining the mission of the organisation;
  - reaching the institutional personification of purposiveness;
  - choosing methods for attaining the mission in accordance with the talents of employees; and
  - retaining a perspective of individual needs and defining a social base.

In leadership relations between persons within a social environment, the leaders in one situation are not necessarily the leaders in other situations.

- Shared leadership: groups in which several people perform significant leadership functions [Fox and Meyer, 1995:115].

### 3.2.2. Operational Definitions of Administrative Leadership

According to Catherine Seckler – Hudson (1957:238), leadership in large institutions is defined as: the influencing and energizing of people to work together in a common effort to achieve the purposes of the enterprises.

And Pfiffner and Presthus [1967:89] perceive leadership as the art to *coordinating and motivating individuals and groups* to achieve desired ends.

### 3.3. Nature of Leadership

The nature of leadership is explained by the following prominent writers and scholars:

- L. A. Allen: he differentiated between personal leadership and management leadership. Thus, he stated A person is born with the talent for personal leadership; he must learn management leadership
- Chester Barnard: according to him, leadership depends upon three things, that is, the individual, the following, and the conditions.
- M. P. Follett: she says that the leader not only influences his group but is also influenced by it. She called this reciprocal relationship circular response. She observed, we should think not only of what the leader does to the group, but also of what the group not the leader does.
  - a. leadership of position, that is, the leader holds a position of formal authority
  - b. leadership of personality, that is, the leader holds forceful personal qualities.
  - c. leadership of function, that is, the leader holds both position and personality.
  - Follett commented that only those people, who possess functional knowledge, lead in the modern organisations and not those who possess formal authority on personality. She wrote, The man possessing the knowledge demanded by a certain situation tends, in the best managed business and other things being equal, to become the leader at that moment. Thus, leadership goes to a person who possesses the knowledge of the situation irrespective of rank in the organizational hierarchy. For instance, Follet says a store clerk can give orders to a superintendent. She believes that the leadership of function of more important than the leadership of position and leadership of position and leadership or personality.
    - J. D. Millet; He states leadership is often made or broken by circumstances. According to him, the essential circumstances of leadership are twofold, that is, political and institutional. The political conditions of administrative leadership means the need to be responsive to external; political direction and control. The institutional condition of leadership, on the other hand, means the need to be responsive to the requirements of internal operation of keeping an administrative agency in actual running order.
    - Katz and Kahn: they say that the essence of leadership has to do with influential increment which goes beyond routine and taps bases of power beyond those that are organizationally decreed.

### **4. Summary of the Nature of Administrative Leadership**

According to S. B. M. Marume, (1988 and 2015), a social scientist as a public administration scientist, who bases on his extensive studies and administrative experiences, correctly states that: the most that can be said of this polymorphic concept of leadership in a universal and generic sense is that:

- a. it occurs in groups;
- b. it is practiced by individuals in groups or in institutions; and
- c. it helps to determine the general direction and manner of action of the group or institution.

Source; S. B. M. Marume; Life – Work Skills: Experiential Learning; Academic Work No. 1: unpublished PhD programme: California University for Advanced Studies, State if California, USA: March 31, 1988: chapter 2: Administrative Leadership.

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