

**TITLE: NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Soft skills are very essential to any individual, which are needful for development in various kinds of institutions. Soft skills are communicative skills, fluencing in language, management qualities, ability to work in a team, positive attitude in critical situations, problem solving ability, decision making, stress techniques etc.

Leadership qualities are essential for soft skills. Leadership is basically personal quality, which is the ability to form a group of followers voluntarily. An individual should be aware of his role and responsibilities, he/she should be prompt and punctual in playing his/her roles as an organizer, as a supervisor, as a leader, as an administrator, as a co-ordinator, as a motivator, as a moral builder, as a confidence builder, as a scholar, as a professional person and as a human relationship facilitators.

Soft skills are very essential to any individual which are needful and also helpful for development in different kinds of institutions. Soft skills are communication skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills free from stress and frustrations, ability to work in a team, personality development, leadership etc.

Leadership qualities are very essential for soft skills. This paper deals only with need and importance of qualities of a leader. A leader is person who influences the attitudes and behaviours of others in group activity. The individual should be aware of his role and responsibilities. He/ she should be prompt and punctual in playing his/her roles as an organizer, as a supervisor, as a leader, as an administrator, as a co-ordinator, as a motivator, as a moral builder, as a confidence builder, as a scholar, as a professional person and as a human relationship facilities.

Leaders exist in both formal and informal groups. Formal leadership is institutional while informal leadership is personal. Formal leaders are those appointed or elected to manage an organization. Informal leaders are not appointed or elected but emerge in informal groups. They do not possess formal authority but influence the members of the group because followers believe that the leader can provide them satisfaction.

Bartky considers that “ an educational leader is always trying to get others to accept his decisions or his objectives or encouraging them to join him in some common purpose”. He has identified three types of educational leaders, namely, (i) Educational States man (ii) Teacher (iii) Educational Administrator. Educational Statesman is concerned with presenting the facts objective and persuading other to veer round to his point of view by the clear expression of his opinion. The teacher adopts the method of persuasion. He should know how to plan work intelligently, execute that effectively and evaluate the results critically. His organizing ability is

essential to run the school free from any work of confusion, wastage, duplication, indecision and discrimination. The Educational Administrator has to run the organization. The means of influence which he has to adopt will depend upon the groups factors that operate and other situational factors. The leadership of a teacher depends upon his character, energy, impressiveness and his consideration for good of others and so the capacity for giving guidance, working with a team and stimulating the community to progress towards the objectives to be achieved.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP**

The characteristics of leadership are mentioned as below.

- Leadership is basically a personal quality. Leadership is the ability to form a group of followers voluntarily.
- Leadership is the willingness of people to follow that makes a person a leader. People accept a person as their leader when they feel that he/she can satisfy their needs and goals.
- Leadership is a process of inter – personal influence by which one person(leader) influences others (followers) in a situation strive willingly towards the realization of common goals.
- Leadership is a continuous process of influencing behaviour.
- Leadership is exercised in a particular situation at a given point of time and under a specific set of circumstances. The effectiveness of leadership depends upon the situational variables. Different leadership styles will be appropriate under different circumstances.
- Leadership is a reciprocal relationship. A leader not only influences his group but is at the same time influenced by it.

### **Role of the Leader of an Institution**

The Head of an educational institution should be aware of his role and responsibilities. He should be prompt and punctual in playing his roles as an organizer, as a supervisor, as a teacher, as a leader, as an administrator, as a coordinator, as a motivator, as a moral builder, as confidence builder, as a philosopher, as a scholar, as a professional person and as a human relationship person which are mentioned as below.

(i) As an organizer

The head of the institution must systematically organize the routine work of the institution. He should know how to plan work intelligently, execute that effectively and evaluate the results critically. His organizing ability is essential to run the school free from any sort of confusion, wastage, duplication, indecision and discrimination.

(ii) Administrator

Administrator is a very complex process, which involves planning, programming, organizing, staffing, training, controlling, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, etc.

(iii) As an supervisor

Supervision should be comprehensive. Its scope covers all the activities of the institution. It includes supervision of the work, supervision of the moral development of the staff, supervision of the maintenance of registers and accounts of the office and supervision of co-curricular activities.

(iv) As a Leader

To be a successful head of an institution one should become an effective leader. The qualities of good leadership includes:

- **Sound physique**

sound physical and mental health is essential to bear the burdens of leadership. Physical stamina, nervous energy, mental vigor are important leadership qualities

- **Intelligence**

A successful leader must have above average knowledge and intelligence. Mental ability to think precisely, analyse accurately, interpret clearly

- **Empathy**

The leader must have the ability to see things from others' point of view. He must respect the view points and feelings of others

- **Maturity**

a leader should possess a high level of emotional stability and cool temperament. He needs a high degree tolerance. He must have an open mind and flexible attitude so as to observe new ideas as and when necessary

- **Self confidence**

A successful leader has confidence himself and a strong will power. He is fully aware himself and a strong self motivation to take initiative and accomplish results

- **Foresight and vision**

A leader can look forward and anticipate events. He has a high degree of imagination, moral courage, breadth and determination

- **Objectivity**

A good leader must be fair and objective in dealing with sub-ordinates. He must be free from bias and prejudice while becoming emotionally involved

with the followers. Honest, fair plan, justice and integrity of character are important traits of good leader

- **Decisiveness**

To be effective a leader must have sound judgement and ability to take quick decision. 1

- **Responsibility**

A leader needs to have a sense of responsibility and willingness to assume responsibility for the consequences.

- **Human relation attitude**

A successful leader must have the capacity to understand people, work with them and to gain their confidence, loyalty – and voluntary co-operation. He must have ability to communicate effectively with tact.

The head of the institution has to face a number of problematic situations. Support from the staff. Parents and the public and the availability of essential resources are relevant on problem solving.

(v) As a motivator

Sound leadership creates an urge accomplishment and transforms potential into performance. A good head of the 9institution improves the loyalty and commitment of staff towards the institution. He creates and maintains an environment conducive to high performance. Good leadership is itself a motivating force for individual which inspires people to work hard

(vi) As moral builder

Good leadership is indispensable to high employee morale. The leader lifts a man's vision to higher sites, raises his performances and builds up his personality. He shapes the thinking and attitudes of the group and

maintain discipline. He develops good human relations and facilitates interactions between the members of the group. He maintains voluntary co-operation and discipline among followers.

(vii) As a co-ordinator

The head of the institution should co-ordinate the abilities and work competencies of all the staff for the common good of the institution. He has to provide positive support to staff who are lagging behind with a view to raise their level of performance. There may be a wide range of inborn qualities, aptitudes and acquired skills of staff due to individual difference. The individuality of each staff should be recognized.

(viii) As a confidence builder

An effective leader creates and sustains self-confidence and enthusiasm among his employees. He sets an example for others. He provides advice and guidance by which subordinates can recognize their qualities and capacity. The head of the institution acts as a coach and counselor to his employees.

Thus, the head of the institution to higher performance. It serves as an aid to formal authority and determines the effectiveness of an institution.

(ix) As a Philosopher

The head of the institution must possess and cultivate a sound philosophy of life as well as a sound philosophy of education. He must adopt his own ideas in education to the national goals and objectives of education. He must be clear about his own ideas and the national policy about education.

(x) As a scholar

The head of the institution must be a man of extra ordinary scholastic and academic achievement. His extra-ordinary academic stature is essential to maintain leadership in the academic sphere. To enjoy desired reputation he should be in a position to make valuable suggestions on practically all matters of life.

(xi) As a professional person

In order to be able to provide leadership, the head of the institution must have undergone professional training apart from his academic qualifications. He will have to ensure professional growth in order to be in touch with the latest developments in the concerned field. His professional training and its continuous updating will enable him to hold progressive views in work related matters apply new methods and techniques in experiments with new produces and techniques of education, carry out action research in his situation to solve some of the immediate problem and to inspire the staff to emulate his example.

(xii) As a human relationship person

The head of the institution will have to be expert in human psychology and human relations. He should maintain cordial, pleasant and affectionate relationship with his staff. He must organize staff meetings when the situation so demands for planning the work, organize various activity and distribution of work.

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