

## Leadership: An In-depth Study of the Attributes of an Effective Leader

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the various leadership characteristics valued and practiced by employees in various workplace settings. The aim of the study is to determine whether certain common characteristics are shared by successful leaders. In depth analysis of 15 case studies were done and data was gathered from different individuals by conducting unstructured interview. According to the research, certain characteristics like honesty, integrity, transparent communication, amiability, strong decision-making abilities, emotional control and ethics are considered as essential for a leader to succeed in the workplace. The case study method of research was used as it allows for a thorough investigation of common characteristics that makes up a good leader. This method facilitates a deeper comprehension of leadership phenomena while contextualizing it in a larger organizational context. The findings of the present study will be instrumental in hiring of the employees in key leadership positions. It will further aid in developing defined leadership characteristics by people tasked to work in higher hierarchies to foster productive workplace culture.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Decision Making, Communication, Case Study, Productive Workplace

President Ronald Reagan puts it very simply for all of us that the greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does greatest things. He says that a leader is one who gets the people to do greatest things. Koontz and O'Donnell define leadership as a mechanism of positively influencing people so that they will work willingly towards the achievement of group goals. In the words of Chester I. Bernard, Leadership is a specific quality of the behavior of an individual whereby they guide people in their activities in an organized manner. It is not a trait delegated only for professionals working at the higher hierarchy. Leadership is a quality that each one of us need to possess in order to be successful both in our personal and professional life. It includes components like effective decision-making skills, assertiveness, optimism, empathy, interpersonal intelligence and the list continues. Another important quality of a leader is that she motivates individual to take a goal directed action. In the process of motivating her team he needs to know their strength and weaknesses, their preferences, emotional turmoil if any etc. It therefore means that a leader is not a person top in hierarchy rather somebody within the team who knows her team tip to

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toe. There are many definitions of leadership, but they all generally agree on the idea that exceptional leaders have the ability to make wise, visionary decisions and persuade others to follow them. He must handle his subordinates' personal issues with great care and consideration. Therefore, treating people with compassion is crucial for creating a friendly environment. This promotes better employee communication and interpersonal relationships. In nutshell we can say that employees should receive humane treatment from the leader. These aspects in culmination make an individual an effective leader.

Even if there is no direct correlation between leadership and profit, individuals who are perceived as good leaders in corporate settings are the ones who improve their company's bottom line. Therefore, any definition of leadership must take into account the relationship between the key skills of a leader and performance in business. For best results, organizations need strong leadership. He inspires the workers with monetary and non-monetary rewards and procures the work from the subordinates as a result. By securing complete cooperation, a leader can boost morale and enable employees to work as effectively as possible toward achieving their objectives. As we all know, having leadership qualities can be learned as well as inherited. Organizational leadership involves both professional strategies and aspects of human psychology. Organizational leadership places a strong emphasis on the development of leadership competencies that are applicable across all organizations. It refers to a person's capacity to endure challenging times in their field while continuing to advance. The group's members should be capable of being controlled by the leader. A good leader in an organization shouldn't be arrogant. He should act responsibly, provide direction for those who report to him so they can successfully complete organizational goals, and lead by example. He should undoubtedly have confidence. He should be empathetic and should understand the need of the group members. An organizational leader should control the actions of the group in addition to leading people on an individual basis.

Organizational leaders are more likely to succeed if they are highly ambitious, high on energy, driven to lead, intelligent, have thorough job knowledge, are honest and flexible. People who study organizational leadership acquire the abilities and skills necessary for teamwork, effective communication, conflict resolution, and collective problem solving. Building employee morale, ensuring effective business operations, assisting employees in developing professionally and positively advancing the mission of the organization are all tasks performed by organizational leaders. An effective leader will focus on creating coordination between individual goals and organizational objectives. The main goal of a leader should be to properly and effectively coordinate in order to achieve this synchronization. Through their leadership qualities, a leader aids in balancing or integrating employees' individual goals with those of the company. He works to coordinate people's efforts toward common goal in order to accomplish goals. This is only possible if he has the ability to persuade people to cooperate willingly and feel the need to achieve the goals.

A moral leader won't use his followers as a conduit for pursuing his own objectives. He ought to respect their sentiments, choices, and principles. Respecting the followers entails giving them your full attention, showing compassion for them, and being open to hearing different points of view. Simply put, it means treating followers in ways that respect their values and worldview. He values other people. An ethical leader should prioritize the needs of his followers over his own. He must always act in a way that benefits his followers. He helps communities grow. An ethical leader strives to accomplish the goals that are appropriate for both of their purposes while also taking into account the purposes of his

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followers. He pays attention to the followers' motivations. He is just and fair. Wherever there is differential treatment of some followers, the foundation for that differential treatment must be just, transparent, and morally sound. He is trustworthy and loyal. They consistently gain followers' respect. No matter how important or damaging a fact may be, an honest leader always presents the facts and circumstances honestly and completely.

### ***Types of Leadership***

**Autocratic leadership style-** A leader has total control and authority over their team members or employees when using this leadership style. Even if their opinions are in the best interests of the team or the organization, they cannot be presented. They are not allowed to critique or challenge the leader's methods. The leader completes the tasks by themselves. Under the direction of the leader, this style has the advantage of promoting quick decision-making and increased productivity. This leadership approach has drawbacks in that it increases employee turnover and absenteeism. This leadership style only functions when the leader is at their best, the work is monotonous, unskilled, and routine, or the project is brief and risky.

**The Laissez faire leadership style-** Here, the leader has complete faith in his or her team's ability to complete the task. He does not focus on the management aspect of his work, but rather just the intellectual/rational component. The team and employees are encouraged to express their opinions and make recommendations that are best for the objectives of the organization. This management approach only succeeds when the team members are intelligent, skilled, devoted, and experienced.

**Democratic /Participative leadership style-** Although the leader has the final say in all decisions, the team members are invited and encouraged to play a significant role in the process. The leader instructs the team members on what to do and how to do it, and the team members give the leader feedback on their experiences and suggestions, if any. This leadership approach has the benefit of producing contented, motivated, and more skilled workers. It promotes creativity and results in a positive work environment. The only drawback of this leadership approach is that it takes time.

**Bureaucratic leadership-** The leaders in this situation strictly abide by the organizational guidelines. Additionally, they ensure that the team members strictly adhere to the policies and procedures. Employees are promoted based on their capacity to follow company policies.

**Transactional leadership-** it is a type of leadership in which a leader will either reward or punish the employees with respect to the task completed by them. A transactional leader will build mutual trust among the employees. In a nutshell a team under a transactional leader will feel accountable for their performance.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Singco.K (2021) conducted a study on leadership approaches and found that majority of the respondents possessed traits like extraversion, maintaining good relationship with administration, strong inter-personal relationship etc. In addition to it, the paper concludes that there is a need for leaders to practice more discernment in dealing with personnel.

According to a recent study by Radhika Kapoor on Characteristics of effective Leadership (2020), an effective leader ought to be someone who is honest, integral, confident, committed, resilient, emotionally intelligent and has a strong sense of alignment with the

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vision and mission of the organization. The author emphasizes that in order to work in the leadership position she/he should have deep faith in oneself and have a positive orientation towards the team and the characteristics of the organization.

Transparency is considered to be an important characteristic of an effective leader (Rouss, 2020). It means that the leader should be lucid and comprehensible while giving instructions and delegating various tasks to the team members. The author mentions that ensuring transparency in the workplace will enable the leader to create openness between them and their subordinates. The study further emphasized upon the need to have time management skills and should know how to prioritize the tasks in hand.

The study by Hasan (2019) on leadership concludes that honesty and integrity are the two prime characteristics that make an effective leader. It includes components like keeping one's word, commitment, giving due respect to the various internal and external factors impacting the environment of the organization, upholding the traits of morality, ethics and treating the subordinates with respect.

According to Hogan (2019), an effective leader is one who is modest and will listen to his employees. He/He will be ready to accept their mistake and will be open to change the action plan if need arises.

A study was conducted by O.Victor (2019) conducted a study to explore the various prominent qualities of a good leader. The researcher employed a structured questionnaire on 150 respondents from different industry. Some of the key characteristics valued in the study are accessibility, neutrality, dignity, reliability, honesty and a light hearted approach towards work.

Rudolf.P (2016) conducted a study on qualities of good leader and its benefit to the organization. The study reviewed the work of various researchers in the same domain. The study concluded that a leader should be able to persuade and convince the team members to walk an extra mile in order to achieve the treasured goals of the organization.

The study by Lahoti and Sahoo (2016), found that leader's effectiveness and their educational qualification do not exhibit significant positive correlation. The paper concludes that though the literature do not confirms the relationship between education and effectiveness of the leader but higher level of education does create the strength associated with an effective leader.

The study by Hosain (2015) on the characteristics of a leader honesty, creativity, knowledge, competency, kindness and courage is considered to be important in the making of an efficient leader.

According to a study by Boerritger (2015), leadership is independent of the age of the leader. He asserts that there is no clear link between leadership outcome and age of the leader. The paper concludes that there is older leaders are neither better nor worse than the younger leaders in terms of effective leadership.

A study was conducted by Kayode.K et.al. (2014) on the relationship between decision making skills and leadership behavior using a semi-structured interview. The findings of the study reveal that both these constructs share an opaque relationship with each other in theory

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but are highly connected in practice. The paper further asserts that the most favored leadership style is participatory leadership and the preferred decision-making style is consultative decision making.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Sample-** The sample of the present study comprise of 15 male and female professionals working in the various leadership positions in different industries of Faridabad, Haryana. All the participants had more than one years of experience in handling leadership roles. It was made sure that the participants had strong knowledge of leadership behavior and the associated skills. In order to ensure the same snowball sampling method was employed to collect the sample for this research.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

Only private sector employees working as in any leadership position with minimum 2 years of experience were taken. In addition to it all the samples fall between the age brackets of 25-58years.

#### *Exclusion Criteria*

Government sector employees and employees working in any unorganized sector were excluded from the present study.

**Research Design-** The present study is a qualitative research wherein case study method is employed to get a depth understanding of the various characteristics that makeup a good leader. Data was collected using Interview Method. The cases were interviewed using a self-designed unstructured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of demographic details and open-ended questions. In order to gain in-depth knowledge, lead questions were also included in the interview. Before conducting the interview on the target sample population, 5 pilot interviews were also conducted. The research was completed in a time span of 3 months and inferences of the cases were made to decipher the common underlying characteristics.

**Data Analysis-** The collected case studies were compared to generalize the similar personality and behavioral characteristics that are considered to be essential pre-requisites to work in the various leading positions inside an organization. Each case was compared to each other and in-depth analysis of the literature review was done to validate the findings of the study.

### RESULT

#### *Case 1*

In 2016, XYZ, 42, is working as a HR professional in a leading educational institute. She has completed her MPhil from North Hill University in Shillong and has a bachelor's degree from Delhi University. She has been working for seven years. Her view is that team cohesiveness and coherence are fundamental components of leadership. A leader is someone who inspires growth in their team and followers because they believe in unity. She believes that a leader should be self-assured because if he/he lacks self-assurance, they will not be able to inspire others. A leader should also be extremely talented, knowledgeable and someone who goes above and beyond. She further emphasizes that you can always learn from someone who is more knowledgeable than you. Therefore, a leader should be someone who always goes above and beyond and this becomes a reason everyone respects and looks up to him/her. She believed that a leader should have a humble outlook, be a good listener,

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and be able to motivate his team. She holds that becoming a good leader is a process and not something that can be learned overnight. She believes that you always learn from your seniors and that you learn so many things subconsciously.

### *Case 2*

Gautam Khattar, team leader at Reliance Digital, is 21 years old and has held the same position since 2020. He believes that leadership is a skill rather than a position or role. Its ultimate objective is to change a group's mindset so that they can accomplish their own and the organization's goals. It's a skill because it can be taught, learned, and developed over time, and a good leader needs to have good decision-making skills because he always has to make important decisions. He also needs to be a good motivator who constantly encourages his team, as well as creative in his work, strategic, and problem-solving abilities. Since they are responsible for a group of people with varying opinions and viewpoints that we must direct towards a single goal, leaders must be very level-headed and understanding. This is only possible when we communicate with them and put our egos aside.

### *Case 3*

Mr. Manjeet, 43, has been a senior general manager of sales for a real estate firm in Gurugram for the past four years and has more than 20 years of work experience in this industry. He asserts that the most crucial quality of a working professional is leadership, which is not just about being a bossy person around others or giving orders. Since no one pays attention to you anymore unless they stand to gain something, leadership is about persuading others. Leadership is therefore about persuading others to understand that your profit and the profit of the company are directly correlated. Work hard and treat the business as though you are the owner. His company's owner is his role model because he spoke with him once and realised in those 20 minutes that he wanted to be like him at this point in his life. According to him, a good leader must be able to effectively communicate, make quick decisions, inspire others, treat the team like family, and have the common objective of maximising the company's profit. He claimed that since word of mouth is how the entire world operates, effective communication with your team is the only quality you need to manage them. To manage people your age, you must be aware that everyone has a unique way of thinking and seeing the world, but that success is ultimately what we all want. Being the youngest in his family, he was always pampered and obeyed the commands of his older siblings and family members. However, after planning a festival during his college years, he discovered how to manage people and how to get them to do what you want them to. When he started his career, he joined TATA Indicom as the team leader. This was not a very positive experience for him as there were significant communication gaps among all the team members. He was also new to everything, but as he developed and worked with so many leaders, he gradually learned all the qualities of a leader. Since he is currently employed by a renowned company as a senior general manager of sales, he has come to understand that he can be a good leader.

### *Case 4*

Mr. AVK Raju, working as a Personal Assistant to CEO of an IT firm is 45 years old and has held the same position since 2019. He believes that a leader is the one who always takes his team to a consensus. Wherever there is a problem a leader should adjust and say I'm behind you to support you. Its ultimate objective is to change a group's mindset towards positivity so that they can accomplish their own and the organization's goals. Leadership is a skill because it can be taught, learned, and developed over time. One of the key characteristics of a good leader is the ability to take good decisions. He needs to have a

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perspective which can take his team along with him in the pursuit of organizational profit. A leader should always understand his team members in order to solve any problems. Since they are responsible for a group of people with varying opinions and viewpoints that will direct towards a single goal, leaders must be very goal oriented and understanding. This is only possible when we communicate with them and put our egos aside.

### *Case 5*

Anita aged 42 working as a manager in a premier coaching institute and has 17 years' experience in this field. According to her Leadership is about balance. A leader is not derived from designation, command or achievements. Undoubtedly, these are the people who are winners and have gained respected levels in society and we should surely be inspired by them. However, not necessarily they are your leaders. Great leaders know how to balance acumen and analytical skills with interpersonal skills, communication and empathy. They look to the future and help make today's ideas viable. They are open minded and understand the impact their actions have on others and the impact over time. As explained by her Leaders are the people you rely on. Their thoughts are far-sighted, their decisions are firm, and their conclusions are verdicts. Whether we agree with their decisions or not, we still have to follow them. Not because of the pressure, but because we believe in their confidence more than we do in our own. The truth is that everyone is a leader in their own way. Someone who helps others do the right thing, sets direction, Inspires, respects perspective, seeks to develop, and appreciates achievement. Focus more on "we" than on "me." Go beyond your limits and surpass your abilities. As mentioned by her Leaders shape nations, communities and organizations. We need great leaders to guide us and help us make the important decisions that move the world. Indeed, the best leaders consistently possess certain basic qualities and skills, such as integrity, that can become potential blind spots in their organizations. Delegating is one of the key responsibilities of a leader, but effective delegation can be difficult. The best leaders build trust in their workplaces and teams through effective delegation of authority. Effective leadership and effective communication are also linked. Effective communication and good conversations can actually improve organizational culture. They know how to show gratitude in the workplace. "Influence" feels like a dirty word to some people. However, the ability to persuade people through logical, emotional, or concerted appeal influence tactics is a key characteristic of an inspiring and effective leader. From her point of view Leaders don't micromanage. You constantly delegate to others and make them feel empowered. There are ways to personally develop leadership qualities within you, such as identifying your own strengths and weaknesses. It's not always easy. We often have blind spots in our strengths and weaknesses. By understanding these, you can increase your potential. When choosing a mentor, I was looking for someone with leadership experience and respect. Make sure you choose mentors who give honest and constructive feedback. My mentors teach me in many different ways, like a professor who inspires me, a boss who always challenges me to do a better job, or a local business owner you are friends with. The most important thing is to choose a leader who you respect.

### *Case 6*

Mr. Gogoi aged 55 is a mechanical engineer in research and development. He has 35 years of professional experience. He asserts that leadership definitely has nothing to really do with one's level in the organization's hierarchy or one's seniority; rather, a leader should mostly listen to and mentor his subordinates in a subtle way. In his opinion his immediate boss at work serves as his leader, while his father particularly is his real leader. He for all intents and purposes believed that a leader should always literally be able to solve problems and

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should guide his team towards a successful goal so they can all achieve it, which particularly is quite significant. According to him, a leader must really be polite, maintain order, literally be punctual, literally maintain a basically positive working relationship with the team, and basically have effective communication skills, or so they mostly thought. Delegation skills, confidence, and it took a lot of practice because he gained knowledge from dealing with numerous people and co-workers while guiding them to form the really ideal team, literally develop their self-confidence, and cultivate a leadership mindset in a subtle way.

### ***Case 7***

Bhavna, 36, is an MBA Graduate and is presently employed as a head in a cement industry. He claims that the ability to motivate and direct a group of people towards a common objective or vision constitutes leadership. Being a leader involves more than just being in a position of authority; it also involves being able to win others' respect and trust. He claims that he is her own leader! He will say her father if you ask her who he looks up to. He asserts that a leader needs to possess the following qualities: Vision, Intelligence, Decision-Making, Accountability, and Emotional Control. According to her effective leaders are able to inspire and influence their followers to succeed by having certain traits and abilities, such as communication, empathy, integrity, vision, and strategic thinking. He asserts that a good leader one who is an empathetic listener, maintains discipline and is experientially intelligent. He/he should be able to motivate others and strengthen their team.

### ***Case 8***

Mr. XYZ aged 28 years old team leader in JBL, Delhi. He has completed his Graduation and has been working for 9 years in various positions. He is married for 4 years and has a child. According to him a leader is someone who is involved in shaping as well as moulding the behavior of the group towards accomplishment of organizational goals. He emphasizes on STAR technique as the best option for any aspirant who is preparing for leadership roles. The STAR technique is defined as S stands for Situation, T for Task, A for action and R for Result. He is of the opinion that in order to be a leader one needs to train him or her in that work rigorously. This will enable oneself to work independently and with self-confidence. Therefore, whoever is expert in whatever work in one's team should be allotted the work accordingly. He himself is often seen in indulging in encouraging people and appreciating them for their minutest of achievements. In his personal life, he is always seen in indulging in positive self –talks. His colleagues report him of giving them constructive feedback and are the person of immense positivism. He believes in teaching work rather than expecting them to know it all. He is reported to take initiatives both in the personal and professional life without any hesitation. He comes out to be an active learner with immense hunger for knowledge and growth.

### ***Case 9***

Mrs. Sudheera Ranjan aged 50 is working as a Senior Manager HR in a steel manufacturing industry in Faridabad, Haryana. She has been working in various hierarchies as an HR Professional for more than 25 years. She is in her current position for 5 years and is awaiting a promotion soon. She appears to be a strong and sinister personality. According to her being a wife, mother and a working professional is though is a difficult juggle to play but is worth playing. In her opinion, a person's childhood experiences shape his or her adult personality. She being the daughter of army personnel and being the eldest of the three children had to face a lot of difficult situations. Frequent changes in the posting were a major challenge for their mother because he had to leave her job as a school teacher. All the three siblings also had to adjust to a new locality, new school, cultural differences, loss of



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friends etc. which took a huge toll on their emotional wellbeing. Mrs. Sudheera was a very ambitious person right from her childhood hence was determined to not to get affected and continued her studies well. Her resilient behaviour landed her up in a very prestigious University in Madras where again he had to face cultural shock. In this entire tussle he developed a lot of skills that has made her an efficient leader. Right from guiding and raising her siblings, finding a place for her in different schools, being sensitive and active towards the various social evils in the society, becoming the college president to now working as a Senior Manager she has developed a lot of important skills that proves he is a leader not just by birth but also by sincere hard work. According to her, to live and work as a leader one should be assertive, open to new ideas and opinions, self-confident and should have the ability to bind together the team members to work towards the organizational goal. An important mantra to be a leader is to understand the need of the team member and give it an equal priority as organizational goal.

### ***Case 10***

Mr. Karan Sharma aged 46 is working as Training and Development Manager in an IT firm in Gurgaon. His wife is a homemaker and has a 14 years old son. He has been working in this field for more than 20 years. He comes out to be a highly assertive person with an optimistic outlook towards life. In the time of crisis, he has the potential to remain calm and chalk out a way for all. According to him, a leader will exhibit the traits of being a leader not just in an organizational setup but in every facets of life. In his interview he said that a common perception prevails among people that a leader is one who has to deal with challenges. Rather according to him a person who paves way for oneself and for others out of a challenging situation is an actual leader. He emphasizes that one needs to be democratic in order to be accepted as a leader in an organizational setup.

### ***Case 11***

Mr. XYZ aged 28 years old team leader in JBL, Delhi. He has completed his Graduation and has been working for around 9 years in various positions. He is married for 4 years and has a child. According to Mr. XYZ a leader is someone who is involved in shaping as well as moulding the behavior of the group towards accomplishment of organizational goals. He emphasizes on STAR technique as the best option for any aspirant who is preparing for leadership roles. The STAR technique is defined as S stands for Situation, T for Task, A for action and R for Result. He is of the opinion that in order to be a leader one needs to train him or her in that work rigorously. This will enable oneself to work independently and with self-confidence. Therefore, the tasks should be divided after analyzing the strengths and weakness of the team members. His friends and family reports that he is often seen in indulging in encouraging people and appreciating them for their minutest of achievements. In his personal life, he practices certain self-help techniques like positive self –talks and self-affirmations. He believes in teaching work rather than expecting them to know it all and will always give constructive feedback. He is reported to take initiatives both in the personal and professional life without any hesitation. He comes out to be an active learner with immense hunger for knowledge and growth. From his case study we can conclude that he is a true leader with prominent leadership traits like Optimism, self-confidence and compassion for others. He is lives in the spirit that development of an individual is dependent upon the collective development of the entire team.

### ***Case 12***

Mr. ABC is a 52 years old DGM, working in a manufacturing industry in Faridabad. He is married and is a father of two children. He has been working in managerial and leadership

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post of more than 16 years. He is reported to be a very honest, straight-forward and compassionate individual with wide area of experience. According to him, a true leader is one who has a deep understanding of the nature and requirement of the work. In addition to it he/he should be careful of few things like employee's readiness to do the job, their emotional wellbeing within the organization, sensitivity towards their personal juggles (without hampering the professional commitments) and should be people centric. He has high degree of concern regarding maintaining work motivation of the employees and giving them adequate reasons to ensure job satisfaction in their workplace. He asserts that a leader needs to be a good and active listener. If one cannot understand the thought process of their fellow mates they will not be able to bring them into consensus.

### ***Case 13***

Mr. ABC is working as a finance manager in a leading manufacturing firm in Faridabad. He has been working in various industries at different levels for around 15 years. He is married and has two daughters. He is also very socially active and works enthusiastically in the community engagement activities. He is very outgoing and cheerful person. He is known for his optimism and positive approach towards all life events. He is hardly seen lamenting on any aspects of his life. Along with these qualities he is very assertive and knows how to motivate people around him to get a task accomplished. While talking to him, we come to know that he considers leadership as a skill that each one of us possess but do not know how to channelize the same. According to him most people confuse leadership with autocracy and dominance. He says that you cannot become a leader by commanding your will on other. In order to become an accepted leader, you should know the art to understand and value the different perception of people you are working with as a team. In line with the same you should also know the ways to accommodate the personal goals of the individual employees that work as a fuel to motivate them to work towards the greater organizational goal. A good leader will also possess the ability to say no as and when needed to conducts that are far beyond the level of acceptance in a professional domain. Therefore, from his case study we can understand that empathy, extraversion, optimism and assertiveness are key traits that make you a good and effective leader.

### ***Case 14***

Mrs. Ranjana is working as Assistant Manager in a textile firm for the past 15 years. She is married and is a mother of two children. She is a business graduate and has a strong hold on her profile. While interviewing her, we got to know that he is managing a team of 15 people. She says that leadership is a skill that develops with time. As learning progresses and a human attains some sense of wisdom, the leader in her/him starts growing and maturing. According to her, leadership was an ability that he possessed right from her childhood. She has been very active in school, college, workplace and has never been a passive recipient rather an active participant. She says that a leader is someone who has an in-depth knowledge about the area of work and has the ability to transfer the same to other stakeholders involved. She/he should have an opinion and possess the courage to put forth the same as and when required. According to her, one who is open to new ideas and can spearhead change comes out to be an efficient leader. She says so because as time changes, a lot of people cling to old methods. Since everybody aspire for growth therefore change is inevitable. Any person who equips him or her with the changing environment can actually motivate and help other with the same and assure a collective growth. When one is not open for such a change they even demotivate the other and friction arises. In addition to it one must be high on professional values and commitments. Honesty should always be given priority as this the basic ethical standard that is expected from any leader. She further said

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that in her entire career, ethics have been her priority and gives credit to this philosophy for whatever success she has achieved.

### Case 15

Ms. Malik is working as a senior manager in a publishing house in Delhi and has been working for more than a decade. She is married and is a mother of a 6 year old daughter. Her husband is working as a general manager with a leading IT firm. She is an extroverted personality. Her family reports her to someone full of life right from her childhood. Along with it he is also praised for her thoughtful nature. She is extremely considerate and a god fearing person. As a leader he is managing a team of more than 15 people. According to her though accommodating them is a difficult task since they are from very different culture and backgrounds but this is what describes a leader. She says that knowledge of the discipline of psychology is very beneficial for people aspiring to be in good leadership positions. According to her, emotional intelligence is the most pivotal attribute a good leader. If one is not able to regulate one's emotions, it becomes very to bind the entire team together. In order to achieve an organizational goal, it is very important to motivate your team to work towards it in a union. In order to ensure the same, one need to give equal importance to the emotional and professional needs of your team member.

## DISCUSSION

Leadership is one of the most researched topics both in industries and academics. Literature provides us with various theories like The Great Man Theory, Contingency Theory, Behavioral Theory, Situational Theory etc. which explains the different dimensions of a leader. It is a well stated fact that leadership is a behavior so far which can be mastered with time. Extraversions, Openness to new experiences, amicability, clear vision etc. are the traits most commonly found in the literatures so far. From the cases discussed in the present study, it would not be wrong to conclude that leaders are both born and made. In the interviews concluded, it was very much evident that there are various life circumstances as well as a person's perception towards it that makes a person an efficient leader. In this paper we attempted to identify few key traits that work in combination to create a leader who has a strong ability to guide and motivate their team.

According to the present study, some of the common characteristics that make up a good leader include an innate desire as well as the ability to *motivate* his/her team. Our former president, APJ Abdul Kalam is a true example of ways a leader should motivate his followers. He was an epitome of straightforwardness, modesty and commitment to public service. He relentlessly inspired the younger generations to follow their goals in life. According to the findings of the study by Rudolf.P (2016) a leader should be able to persuade and convince the team members to walk an extra mile in order to achieve the treasured goals of the organization.

A leader should be able to *communicate* clearly the tasks and the expectation from the employees. It helps people to save themselves from experiencing role conflict. A study was conducted by Rouss(2020) wherein he asserts that transparency is an important characteristic of an effective leader. It suggests that the leader should be lucid and comprehensible while giving instructions and delegating various tasks to the team members. Communication is not only limited to clear instructions but also feedbacks. Feedbacks are the prime most force that enables a person to constantly keep him/ her motivated. The next most important characteristics in the making of a good leader is the ability to make the team feel like a family. As per McClelland's theory of work motivation, all of us have an innate

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desire to feel a sense of belongingness. All of us have the need for belongingness. When we create a comfortable environment for our employees and give them an equal say in the important matters of the organization, it strengthens their organizational commitment. This was shown by our leaders like Ashoka who is known for his tolerant and sympathetic attitude towards his people. Raja Raja Chola of the great Chola dynasty is revered for his superb administrative ability and the care he exhibited for his countrymen. This is a very important factor which decides whether the employee will walk an extra mile to get his/her job done. This further ensures a healthy achievement of the organizational goal.

A good number of our participants believe that quick and efficient *decision making* is a key characteristic of a good leader. This is evident from the research conducted by Kayode.K. et.al which concluded that there is a strong relationship between decision making styles and leadership. A good leader believes in a democratic decision making process where all the stakeholders have equal footing. A leader will be cautious enough but will not be doubtful about his/her decision. The responsibility of the leader is not only confined to making a decision rather extends even to own the consequences of the decision. In order to be a good leader one should possess both *interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence*. Radhika Kapoor (2020) in her study on characteristics of an efficient leader found out that a leader should be honest, integral, confident, committed, resilient and *emotionally intelligent*. This will enable them to understand the emotional challenges of the team members and accordingly regulate their emotions. This will further strengthen the bond between the team members and between the employees in different hierarchies.

When we say that a leader should be emotionally intelligent, it encompasses other traits like *extraversion, openness to new ideas, amicability and a strong sense of integrity*. The participants of the present study have highly emphasized on these characteristics. This makes them approachable as well generates a sense of trust among the subordinates. The literature on the same field pays testimony to fact that extraversion is considered to be the most dominant trait in the making of a leader. Singco.K (2021) concludes in his study on leadership approaches that majority of the leaders possessed traits like extraversion, maintaining good relationship with administration, strong inter-personal relationship etc. Another similar study was conducted by Hogan (2019) wherein he found out that a leader should be ready to accept their mistake and is open to change the action plan if need arises.

As discussed, Leader is a person who has the authority (either by rule or consensus) to shape the behavior and performance of the employees. Therefore, *ethics* is considered to be a value which should never be compromised. It defines the personality and subsequently the credibility of the leader. If a leader fails on this parameter it will be difficult for the team mates to respect and follow him/her. We have numerous examples of leaders from Indian history like Mahatma Gandhi who was revered for his unwavering moral standards and inner fortitude. Therefore, a leader should be guided by ethical and moral principle in addition to the principles of the management.

### ***Future Implication***

This research will enable employees in general and young graduates in specific to understand the various leadership characteristics they possess and the areas they should work upon to have a successful work life. Professional in various leadership positions can gain inspiration and can consequently enhance their efficiency.

## CONCLUSION

The present study focused on understanding the various characteristics of an effective leader. Case study method was employed to complete this study. In the process of gaining an in-depth understanding about leadership and its different facets, we used interview to collect our data. From the analysis, we can conclude that there are few characteristics that were found to be common across most of the case study. Self Confidence, Empathy, Empathetic listening, Personal touch, effective decision making and ethics are considered to be the most valuable characteristics in the making of a good leader.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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