Advance Course in Social Psychology

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Lecture 50: Group Leadership- Part IX

Hello friends. Welcome back to another discussion related to group leadership. Today I am going to discuss about another dimension of group leadership that is leadership development. It is not that leaderships are born. Sometimes it is also that leaderships or any employee can be transformed as a leader or leadership qualities can also be developed while understanding one's own characteristics, situation and having some or undergoing some systematic process to get that training and build that capacity to perform any role in leadership position that is leadership development. It is beneficial also that we should understand that what kind of opportunity exist in any situation or organization where we can take up that role as a challenge in any leadership position.

So, in today's discussion I am going to talk about that how leadership can be developed, how the capacity to lead any task or role can be developed while undergoing or taking some kind of training or education in a way that can transform a person into a leader. So, we can say that the systematic process of training people to expand their capacity to function effectively in leadership roles is known as leadership development. No doubt that every employee, every personnel has some qualifications to perform a particular task, but developing special abilities, capacity to function more effectively the similar function in a leadership role that also adds something to an individual's enhanced performances. This connotes leadership development undergoing a systematic process where people are being trained to expand their leadership capacities to perform effectively.

This is leadership development. So, the idea about this discussion is it is not only to understand the situation and then think about that which leadership style will be more effective in any situation. Definitely this amalgamation or alignment of leadership situation and role is very important, but at the same time developing leadership qualities or traits that can help us or an individual to perform any particular role effectively in leadership role is very important aspect of leadership development. So, in recent years organizations have invested heavily in these efforts that recognizing the effective leadership is a source of competitive advantage for an organization. This connotes that it is not only that one particular leader will only lead the organization.

Just to meet the competition based on an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities, the organizations also identify different employees or people in the organization that which employee will be more suitable to lead a particular role or task to meet the competitive advantages. The idea is that organization considered every employee as a potential leader in that organization. So, that source that that means employees are a source to meet the competitive advantages in any organization. Such efforts have focused on some certain areas that where leadership development can occur is possible and the organizations can be more effective and perform effectively. Those areas are developing networks of social interaction between people and close ties within and between organizations.

The other is developing trusting relationships between oneself and others and developing common values and shared visions with others. It is not only that one particular leader will only have this emphasis, every employee has this understanding that how any leadership role can be taken up while developing these traits or characteristics and focus on how to lead the group. So, basic idea is that whenever an organization is providing any training to any employee, they also keep it in their mind, they have this perspective that whenever a training is imparted to any employee, then the three perspectives that is to develop networks of social interaction and having close ties within and within and between organizations, developing trusting relationships and developing common values and shared visions is the most common feature and most important aspect to be focused when we are talking about leadership development. It is not only one leader, it is about transforming every employee as a leader based on these three emphasis. Therefore, leadership programs are based on two key assumptions.

As I mentioned just now that every organization is trying, is making its efforts to transform every employee as a leader based on two assumptions. The first that the leadership makes a difference in an organization's performance. Based on the situation, based on an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities, experience and expertise they gain, every employee has a potential to lead any specific role, which will enhance organization's performance and that it is possible for leaders to be developed. In the starting of the discussion, I mentioned that it is not every time that leaders are born, they can also be made or transformed and every employee has the potential to become a leader and the various leadership development tools go about the mission of promoting leadership skills in different ways. Any employee who has specific expertise and can help the organization in meeting the competitive advantage, then definitely according to organization's perception that employee is far more capable than any other leader within the organization to lead a specific role to meet that competitive advantage and enhance organization's performance.

So, this is the basic assumption that what is leadership development and how it makes important contribution in the development of any organization. Based on this systematic process that how

leadership is developed, social scientists have identified certain techniques that how leadership can be developed, how this process when initiates, then what kind of techniques are being used to understand and develop leadership among employees. So, they have identified six kind of strategies or techniques. The first is 360 degree feedback, the other is executive coaching, action learning, job assignments and mentoring. These are the techniques where people come forward through organization that when organizations are implementing these techniques, then how people are engaging themselves more into organizational activities to prepare themselves to lead some specific roles for enhancing organization's development and performance.

So, let us talk about one to one the different strategies that are being used for leadership development. The first is 360 degree feedback. It is one of the most important leadership development tool which has become very pervasive in every organization. No organization is there who is not following or using this technique for leadership development. The first is the 360 degree feedback.

It is a process of using multiple raters or sources from inside and outside the organization to evaluate the work of an individual. It is a timely process or may be after every six months the performance of an individual is being assessed and that particular individual, every particular individual is being evaluated by the seniors or the juniors or the higher authorities or the lower authorities about the performance of every particular employee. Based on the ratings of and evaluation of that particular employee, people will evaluate and give their perception about any particular individual in any specific role, especially any leadership role and people come to know about their shortcomings, their lackings and in what areas they need to be in they need some improvement and what kind of training they have to undergo. This is 360 degree feedback. So, this practice has proven to be an effective way for leaders to learn what key others such as peers, direct reports and supervisors think about them.

Like A has to be employee, A has to be evaluated, may be that A will be evaluated by each and every employee irrespective of his or her designation or position in the hierarchy and people tend to evaluate his performance. This is a useful means of identifying aspects of one's leadership style that are in need of change. That how an individual can be put in any leading position based on the shortcomings or achievements or advantages of putting him in a leading leadership role. Therefore, the basic assumption is that different people will have varying perspectives on someone's leadership. So, identifying the expertise, identifying the shortcomings and advantages will compile together a very different perception about an individual to be fit in any leadership role or not.

Nearly all fortune 500 companies rely on this technique in one way or the other. Now, this technique is not only restricted to 360 degree feedback, but is also restricted and expanded to 720

degree feedback. This is a two process way. If we are talking about 360 degree feedback that one employee is being evaluated by other members of the organization irrespective of their position in the hierarchy, when it is expanded or extended to 720 degree feedback, then again it is being reevaluated, the same person is being reevaluated and then it makes a 720 degree feedback. But yes, whenever we are talking about feedback, then feedback, any feedback mechanism, then it is only 360 degree feedback that is widely used in any organization.

So, in addition 360 degree feedback is given within exercises conducted in assessment centers. Now, again when assessment or evaluation of the performance has been made for an employee and all the changes are being made, then again assessment is being made and again some perception is being modified or developed about the same person who is being evaluated. So, 360 degree feedback mechanism is something that not only the evaluation process is there, but how that evaluation has to be done that it is connected to certain assessment centers in any organization. They have their own nodal offices or authority who have the complete responsibility of conducting these feedback mechanisms within the organization based on assessment centers. So, every organization has their own department where they are involving or engaging themselves in only in the process of 360 degree feedback.

So, based on this feedback mechanism, assessment centers are being established in any organization which comprises sessions in a variety of techniques which are used to determine how to behave under various standardized conditions. Now these standardized conditions are the simulated conditions which involves role playing exercises. The individual who is being assessed is being assigned a hypothetical role to perform and at the same time the other members are also there in the similar situation and how the person who is being assessed or evaluated in a particular role, hypothetical role in through role playing exercises, his responses, his behavior is being evaluated and assessed in a way that makes it clear for the organization members to identify him as an employee's performance and to put him in a particular leadership position or not. So typically the individual being assessed assumes the role of a person in a particular job who is asked to respond to various things being said by a trainer who is playing another role. The way the individual responds can provide insight into what he or she is like.

Therefore, the way the person responds to that role in that role playing exercise, he or she will reflect his own persona based on his interactions, based on his behavior, based on his relationship with every other member in that situation. Discussing this might is part of the assessment but the information can be extremely useful to leaders for leaders to gain insight into new ways of behaving. As soon as assessment is done and that assessment is shared with that particular individual that individual will come to know that where he stands. This will give an indication of an individual to develop leadership in which direction. So this is 360 degree feedback or mechanism.

The other is but the most important thing again is it is again satisfying the one basic assumption of leadership development that is developing networks of social interaction, trusting relationships and common values. So any individual can be assessed based on these three focus of leadership development. So in 360 degree feedback if we are talking about feedback mechanism through assessment centers then specially in role playing exercises it is possible to assume the leadership qualities or behavior of individual based on his interaction and responses in that hypothetical situation. Next is networking. This is a leadership development tool designed to help people make connections to others to whom they can turn for information and problem solving.

Until and unless we do not interact with other people we will not be able to understand and recognize the other person's talents, their abilities and expertise and when we are interacting then we create a sort of relationship with that other person and it leads to networking. So whenever any problem occurs in any organization or problem solving is required it becomes very easy for any leader or employee in any leadership position to revert to those people again because of networking and get things done in a very smooth fashion. So networking is designed to break down these barriers. Once that interaction is been created then that barrier can be breached or broken down so as to reach people, right people to solve their problems. It is beneficial to leadership development because it promotes peer relationship in work settings and it involves mutual obligations thereby promoting cooperation.

When there is networking there is obligation, people tend to reciprocate to each other in different situations while giving more information and problem solving solutions to each other. This is networking. But the most important thing is that when we are talking about networking it has very different perspectives from country to country or culture to culture. For example the most important perspective to be discussed here is the concept of guanxi in Chinese management. In China networking plays a very important role in their management technique as a leadership tool.

Why? According to Chinese management guanxi is a technique which refers to interpersonal relationships specifically one's personal and business connections network. They focus on networking so heavily that they even prefer to exchange gifts with their business partners which is acceptable legally and which is not considered as bribe in their culture and people tend to create networking in a way that whenever they are in need they tend to revert or contact those people in one go and people tend to establish a network and solve their problems. For instance in Chinese culture or management anybody who wants to have license for a particular product to launch in the market then they would not mind in offering some gifts to the authority who would give them license and in return they will also give some favor to the same authority. This is guanxi. This networking is known as guanxi in Chinese management.

This guanxi term as interpersonal relationship has become very famous in management discourse. For several centuries guanxi has been a pervasive part of Chinese business world where people bind which binds people together into vast social and business web. It is not only network more than network that is a web. Business cannot be conducted in China without guanxi and one must have the proper network of connections to get things done. The most important feature of this kind of networking is that one party supports another and they exchange favors and it is not considered as bribery and is perfectly legal in Chinese business world.

In fact, it is the glue that holds together the Chinese business enterprise. It is developed by cultivating a network of reciprocal obligations over time and person one person does a favor for another and that original favor subsequently is returned by another and so on. So, this creates a chain of interpersonal relationship in the whole business world and people tend to create contacts in such a manner that whenever they approach definitely they are being favored. The leaders cultivate strong interpersonal relationships and become powerful because they are given opportunities that are denied to others and those are open up for them. For example, to obtain a license to market your product in a new region then this process can only be accelerated when people tend to approach the person with the right guanxi and they would just exchange gifts and ultimately the process is accelerated and becomes less expensive because when we know the right person to whom to contact to get the license based on guanxi because we have already established that interpersonal relationship with that person or authority then the process gets accelerated and it becomes less expensive.

No doubt that this process of networking that is guanxi is a long lasting process and personal networks tend to be very effective because they transcend organizational boundaries. Now here transcend organizational boundaries means an employee of one organization can also move beyond the organization to create that interpersonal relationship to get the things done in a more fastidious manner and in less expensive manner. So, they transcend that is the most important feature of guanxi as interpersonal relationship or networking that they cross the boundaries to approach people and create that networking. Thus bringing people together from different parts of organization who otherwise would not normally come into contact with one another. At the same time networking is also beneficial in businesses in all countries especially in China and is essential aspect of doing business else it is being said that if any person who fails to create any network in Chinese management discord then the person is stuck with a number of problems or he is tied to a number of mountains of problem.

This is how guanxi is being discussed in management discourse when we are talking about leadership development in form of guanxi. Now how this practice of guanxi has its positive effects when came into practice. So guanxi is more about goodwill and personal support and people from China would not think of any business without this process of guanxi. They would bring a small gift such as wine or cigarettes which they offer to the other person with whom they want to do

networking and giving small gifts is absolutely necessary to cultivate, develop and nurture the vast network of relationship needed to succeed. This is a way to showcase or exhibit your regard and affection to a business associate and how it has been cultivated in long run.

For example, former president Bill Clinton was considered a master of developing a vast network of business relationship and whenever he needed a favor from someone he would just find the Rolodex card that is a card file of business contacts Rolodex where the person maintains all the important contacts in one file and whenever he needed any contact he would just use that card and meet the person and get things done and attain all the strategic advantages one can have. This is a process known as guanxi. It is not only in Chinese but yes it has also become widely spread in the other parts of the world. So this is networking where networking is being expressed in different cultures in different organizations in varied form and the most popular is guanxi.

Next is executive coaching. It is a highly effective method of developing leaders which involves custom tailored one on one learning aimed at improving an individual leader's performance. It is about like career counseling. Person as an employee has complete idea about what kind of job he has to perform, the sequence of work experiences or expertise he has, the predetermined task or set of activities that an individual has to perform and a coherent set of jobs that how his job is structured in a way to perform in a specific manner. The point is that still some issues are needed to be addressed even an individual employee is performing his or her job which becomes a continuous process. A person is performing a job but still there are some loopholes in his performance related to the set of duties he has to perform or the sequence of experience he has then how that experience can be more garnished based on identifying the lackings or missing things and how it can be improved.

Therefore, executive coaching plays a very important role in filling up those gaps. So, this approach is an extension of the practice of career counseling and coaching can be either a one time process aimed at addressing some specific issues or it can be an ongoing continuous process that the person has performed the job, the performance has been evaluated and how certain loopholes or missing pattern of the job is being identified by the organization and immediately the employee has been assigned a coach so that that missing or loopholes can be improved for further enhancement in the performance. This is executive coaching which is very much related to career counseling. For instance, what more skills are needed for an employee so as to enhance his performance. For example, I would say that may be any assembly line worker is performing a job in a very typical fashion.

At the same time some loopholes are also being observed in that performance which can only be rectified when some more training skills are being developed so as to enhance that manufacturing process. Immediately that manufacturing worker is being subjected to some kind of training skills

so that that manufacturing process can be enhanced. This is executive coaching. This includes integrative assessment of a leader's strength and weaknesses and comprehensive improvement plan. Now this kind of coaching is something not only restricted to any assembly line worker but at the same time any employee is performing a set of duties then how those set of duties can also be improved.

Sometimes that set of duties become so mundane that it does not at one point stop leading to any effective performance or outcome of those duties. To enhance those skills, executive coaching plays a major role. Although at the same time it is being said that person or individual employee can benefit a lot from such kind of coaching but at the same time it also becomes very embarrassing for one particular employee that he has been picked up for executive coaching. This becomes very embarrassing and sometimes the individual employee resists to undergo such kind of coaching and to overcome such kind of problems. All the employees are being put on equal footing and they are being given coaching in different areas of their job.

Just that the employee should not feel embarrassed for they have been only identified in the whole organization. So this is executive coaching. At the same time if we are talking about executive coaching then how that integrative assessment is taking place then it involves four steps. Step one where it is being defined the nature of the coaching relationship that is what will be done and how. Identifying the loopholes and how it has to be filled up or rectified.

Once this is defined between the coach and the employee then it leads to step two. Assessing individual performance that is by using 360 degree feedback. If it has been decided that employees needs more coaching to enhance their set of duties that they have to perform then immediately they are being subjected their performance is been subjected to 360 degree feedback and there the loophole or the missing patterns are being identified. Their performance is been assessed, evaluated by the organization. As soon as the assessment has been done coaching plans are being customized for the development in construction with the leaders immediate supervisor.

Now assessment center is there who is evaluating the performance of an employee as soon as the assessment process is over. An individual's immediate supervisor is been contacted in order to understand that why the assessment is low or high and how it can be improved based on the supervisor's interaction with that particular employee. Because immediate supervisor is in better position to make it very clear that on which part an individual needs to improve. As soon as this is been decided the steps or the customized plans are been implemented and as soon as it is been implemented the it is been again assessed or undergoes the 360 degree feedback mechanism where the improvement can easily be perceived or evaluated accordingly. In the whole process the idea is that assessment is been evaluated and it is and the an individual employs relationship with the immediate supervisor.

When these two aspects are been fulfilled a plan is been coaching plan is been customized which is again adding more to the expertise of an individual performance. This is how executive coaching is been performed. It is not an immediate process that any loophole or any missing thing is been identified and the person is been put in on coaching. It involves a process where 360 degree feedback will actually decide that which kind of plan is more appropriate or coaching is more appropriate to make enhance an individual's performance. As soon as individual performances are been enhanced through coaching plans then definitely the employee an individual employee is in a better position to take up any leadership role.

So this is how leadership is been developed. So these are three leadership development techniques we have discussed right now that is 360 degree feedback, executive coaching and action learning. Next we will discuss in the next class. Thank you so much. Thank you.