An Analysis of Leadership Styles in Indian Organizations

Dr. Shakti Mehrotra¹ & Dr. Ambalika Sinha²
¹Defence Research and Development Organization, Allahabad.
²Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, MNNIT, Allahabad.

Abstract: The cultural traditions, comprising beliefs, values, attitudes and social practices strongly influence the behavior of leaders in modern business organizations thus, leading to diversity in leadership styles around the world. The culture specific expectations play a significant role in shaping the context of organizations leadership in India. The analyses of researches in leadership styles in India, clearly indicates that in a high power distance, hierarchical and dependency prone culture, the Nurturing-task leadership style and Consultative style of managerial leadership were found to be more effective and congruent with modern Indian cultural values and behavior dispositions. With the changing profile of work force and increase knowledge driven organizations both these styles of leadership are going to be acceptable to Indian employees in comparison to other styles. These styles not only take care of their need to be cared and nurtured but also take care of their ego needs by involving them in the various managerial processes.

Keywords - cultural expectations; leadership styles; organizations; Indian employees

1. Introduction

“No matter what leaders set out to do-whether it’s creating strategy or mobilizing teams to action-their success depends on how they do it.”[7]

Leadership has been defined in so many ways and by different authors and experts. [39] the authors of “Leadership Engine” points out that the scarcest resource in the world today is the leadership talent capable of continuously transforming organizations to win in tomorrow’s world. The individuals and organizations that build leadership Engines and invest in leaders developing other leaders have a sustainable competitive advantage. [22] of Franklin Covey after reviewing a number of studies on modern definitions of leadership states that leadership is…”...An intensely human enterprise, and does not fit neatly into definitions and boxes. Leaders have all the spontaneity, unpredictability frailty, vulnerability and potential that is possible in the human race. If we are to lead with honour, we must start with the premise that flexibility, adaptability, and wisdom are possible, that we have seeds of greatness in us, and if we care deeply about the lives of others, we can work together to accomplish worthwhile things.”

[30] quoting Warren Bennis points out that one thing in common to most leaders is that they all make mistakes but bounce back from them. They use failures as building blocks. [11] of the Drucker foundation say that leaders exist at all levels of the organization. They identified the following traits of leaders:

- They excel seeing things from fresh eyes and they challenge status quo.
- They are energetic and seem to be able to run through obstacles.
- They are deeply interested in a cause or discipline related to their professional arena.
- They can tap convictions of others and connect them to the organizational arena.
- They help everyone see what their everyday work means to larger purpose.
- They have a high quest for learning.
- They are open to people and their ideas.
- They are driven by goals or ideals that are bigger than what an individual can accomplish.

They are willing to push themselves from comfort zones even after they have achieved success.

[31] in his book on “Top Grading” lists 50 critical competencies for top graders. Some of these include: Intelligence; analytical skills; Judgment and decision making; conceptual ability; Creativity; Strategic skills; Pragmatism; Risk taking; Integrity; Initiative; Excellence; Self awareness; Adaptability; Listening; Team Player; Assertiveness; Communications; Political savvy; Running meetings; Vision; Change management; Conflict management; Energy; Ambition; Enthusiasm; Tenacity; and Balance in life.

[7] considers Emotional Intelligence as central to leadership. In his chapter on the competencies of
stars. Goleman identifies personal and social competencies as constituting the emotional competence. Goleman indicates that the traits of outstanding leaders transcend cultural and national boundaries. The most effective CEOs have been found to have three main clusters of competencies. The first two fall under emotional intelligence. They include: personal competencies like achievement, self-confidence, and commitment and the second consists of social competence like influence, political awareness and empathy. The third clusters of competencies are cognitive: they think strategically, seeking out information with a broad scan, and apply strong conceptual thinking. They blend all these into an inspired vision and influence the thinking of others. [7] in his recent book on “The New Leaders” Has presented enough evidence on how moods of people influence their work and productivity and how leaders in turn through their styles influence the moods of their people.

2. Leadership Styles

“Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people”.

2.1 The classic Views of Leadership styles

In 1939, a group of researchers led by psychologist [23] set out to identify different styles of leadership. While further research has identified more specific types of leadership, this early study was very influential and established three major leadership styles.

- Authoritarian or autocratic
- Participative or democratic
- Delegative or Free Reign

Although good leaders use all three styles, with one of them normally dominate, bad leaders tend to stick with one style.

2.1.1 Authoritarian (autocratic)

This style is used when the leader tells employees what he wants to be done and how he wants it done, without getting the advice of his followers. Some of the appropriate conditions to use it are when the leader has all the information to solve the problem, he is short on time, and his employees are well motivated. Some people tend to think of this style as a vehicle for yelling, using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abusing their power. This is not the authoritarian style...rather it is an abusive, unprofessional style called bossing people around. It has no place in a leader’s repertoire. The authoritarian style should normally only be used on rare occasions. If the leader has the time and wants to gain more commitment and motivation from his employees, then he should use the participative style.

2.1.2 Participative (democratic)

This type of style involves the leader including one or more employees in on the decision making process (determining what to do and how to do it). However, the leader maintains the final decision making authority. Using this style is not a sigh of weakness; rather it is a sigh of strength that your employees will respect. This is normally used when the leader has part of the information, and his employees have other parts. As leader is not expected to know everything -- this is why he employs knowledgeable and skillful employees. Using this style is of mutual benefit --it allows them to become part of the team and allows him to make better decisions.

2.1.3 Delegative (free reign)

In this style, the leader allows the employees to make the decision. However, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it.

[24] identified four main styles of leadership, in particular around decision-making and the degree to which people are involved in the decision.

2.2 Exploitive authoritative

In this style, the leader has a low concern for of people and uses such methods as threats and other fear-based methods to achieve conformance. Communication is almost entirely downwards and the psychologically distant concerns of people are ignored.

2.2.2 Benevolent authoritative

When the leader adds concern for people to an authoritative position, a ‘benevolent dictatorship’ is formed. The leader now uses rewards to encourage appropriate performance and listens more to concerns lower down the organization, although what they hear is often rose-tinted, being limited to what their subordinates think that the boss wants to hear. Although there may be some delegation of decisions, almost all major decisions are still made centrally.
2.2.3 Consultative

The upward flow of information here is still cautious and rose-tinted to some degree, although the leader is making genuine efforts to listen carefully to ideas. Nevertheless, major decisions are still largely centrally made.

2.2.4 Participative

At this level, the leader makes maximum use of participative methods, engaging people lower down the organization in decision-making. People across the organization are psychologically closer together and work well together at all levels.

3. The Emergent View of Leadership Styles

[28] based on functional and a dysfunctional influencing style has described following leadership styles:

3.1 Supportive (functional style) In this style support is provided when needed. Managers with this style are supportive coaches. They encourage their subordinates, cheer them up and provide the necessary conditions for their continuous improvement. They help them to help themselves.

3.2 Patronizing (dysfunctional style) In this style support is provided by almost imposing oneself on others. Belief is that subordinate is not capable of taking care of himself. This style inculcates dependency proneness.

3.3 Normative (functional style) Managers with this style are interested in developing proper norms of behavior of their subordinates and helping them to understand how some norms are more important than others. The manager is concerned with setting appropriate norms by involving his subordinates in evolving these norms and also in deciding how such norms will be followed.

3.4 Prescriptive (dysfunctional style) Mangers with this style are critical of others’ behavior. They are imposing and want others to do /agree what they think is right or wrong. Managers with this style prescribe solutions rather than helping their subordinates to work out alternative for the problems.

3.5 Task obsessive (dysfunctional style) - The manager in this style is primarily concerned with tasks and in so obsessed with the work to be done that he overlooks various other things. They are not concerned with feelings and in fact fail to recognize them, since they see them not related to the task, overlooking the fact that task is to be performed by people who have also feelings. They function like computers.

[7] has identified the following six leadership styles:

3.1.1 Visionary Leader - who moves people towards shared dreams

3.1.2 Coaching leader - who connects what a person wants with the organization

3.1.3 Affiliative leader - who creates harmony by connecting people to each other.

3.1.4 Democratic leader - who values people’s input and gets their commitment through participation

3.1.5 Pace setting leader - who meets challenging and exciting goals.

3.1.5 Commanding leader - who soothes fear by giving clear direction in an emergency.

[15, 17] has classified Indian Karta leadership in following ways:

3.2.1 Benevolent consultative style

3.2.2 Benevolent Authoritative/authoritarian style

3.2.3 Autocratic/ Authoritative kind style

[33] has worked intensively on Nurturant-Task Leadership Style in Indian context.

4. Leadership Styles of Indian Organizations

India is country of great diversity. There are substantial regional, linguistic, cultural, and religious variations across the country. Given the wide range of variation, it should be impossible to generalize about the society, organizations, and leaders in India, as also about organizational and leadership practices in Indian organizations. There is however hope because in spite of the fact that the languages of India are many, and there are well marked differences between one regional culture and another, yet there is an over- all unity of design which makes them all members of one family. This stems primarily from the economic and social organization of the country and extends to
commonness of intellectual and emotional attachments and obligations. The details might vary from place to place, and from one caste to another, yet the sameness of the traditions on which all of them have been reared cannot be overlooked [3].

Since, India is emerging as a global market and particularly in post liberalization era many international players have entered the Indian market either as a joint venture with some Indian company or independently. In the field of Information Technology (IT) India has emerged as a major force in the world. Given this kind of development, management researchers in the recent past have realized that many of the management practices and managerial styles as applied in the west cannot be transplanted exactly in the same manner in the Indian context. Some of the recent researches are a pointer in this direction. [2] have tried to study the impact of culture on Human Resource Management practices in ten cultures, including India. Similarly [1] have tried to study the cross-national differences in the cognitive style and its implications for management. In the light of this from quite some time now, the corporate and researchers are trying to search a managerial leadership style, which could be effective in the Indian context. Initially Indian corporate started applying many of the western ways of managing business and managing people in business organizations. Later based on some empirical data, some researchers started questioning this. For instance, [33] and [16] questioned the relevance of the participative management style in the Indian context. Karla in this regard observed:

Culture plays a very important role in management development. Basically management development is manager’s development and any manager is first an individual belonging to a particular culture and then a manager. When he comes as manager, he already has certain set of attitudes, values, norms, expectations etc. All these to a great extent are products of the society or culture to which he belongs. But unfortunately most of us in India are so much obsessed by western – particularly American – concepts and ideas of management development that we overlook this important factor and then we wonder why our management development programs do not yield expected results.[16].

In his study [34] observed that in Indian setting the participative management was successful till the change element was heading the organization. After the departure of the change element there was a reversal and one of the possible reasons for the same could be the surrounding culture, which is basically authoritarian.

The biggest impetuous to the importance and relevance of cultural diversity in management was provided by the massive authentic work of [12]. Based on his research he reacted to “the resumed universality of management theory by raising the question of whether American theories apply abroad.[12] Besides the above observations, in Indian context, some of the cross-cultural studies also supported this. For instance, a study done by[5] on managers drawn from seven cultures showed that 75% of the Indian managers were most satisfied in such decision making sessions where the subordinates were uninvolved and passive. On the other hand such Anglo American mangers were only 29.8% Northern Europeans 28.0%, Latin 28.2%, Dutch Flemish 21.4% and Japanese only 18.1%. Similarly, the study also showed that only 29.4% of the Indian subordinates preferred participative meetings with their superiors, whereas 64% of Dutch Flemish 56.4% of Northern Europeans, 53.1% Anglo American, %2.6% Japanese subordinates preferred participative meetings with their superiors. Similarly, studies by [6], [26], [3] and [27] also show that in Indian context the authoritarian leaders were preferred. A study by [27] also showed that the majority of executives reported themselves to be authoritarian. A survey by [38] lends further support to these findings. The survey showed that ‘obedience to the superiors’ and ‘Respect for Powerful People’ came out to be two top most cultural characteristics of Indians. On The other hand some studies showed the preference for democratic styles of leadership [13] and [9]. A study by [21] indicated that in Indian context “authoritarian leadership is no less preferred than the participative styles” A study by[18], using projective methodology showed that 73.3% of the respondents “tend to be obedient to their bosses or tend to be submissive to their authoritarian bosses.” This included 34.4% of such respondents who accepted an authoritarian boss without questioning, whereas there were 38.9% such respondents who showed qualifying tentative acceptance that is where the subordinates would first like to clarify certain things before accepting him.

This in a way indicated that though respondents tended to accept an authoritarian boss, but at the same time they wanted to be heard or they wanted that they should also be consulted. The above findings are not surprising in the context of Indian culture, which is hierarchically structured. Therefore before going further in trying to understand the leadership and follower ship dynamics in Indian context, it may be worthwhile...
to understand the Indian joint family structure, which provides the base for the above kind of socio-psychological development of individuals, before they enter the outer world as managers and subordinates.

4.1 The Indian Joint Family

The typical Indian Joint family system is characterized by hierarchical structure, where oldest male member of the family is head of the family and his is referred to as the ‘Karta’ of the family. ‘Karta’ commands respect by virtue of his age, seniority and experience. Generally everybody in the family respects him, takes his advice and all-important decisions of the family like buying of property, deciding about the career and marriage of the younger member of the family etc., are taken by him. He is loved as well as feared. According to [36] “The ‘Karta’ is father figure who is nurturing, caring, dependable, sacrificing and yet demanding, authoritative and strict disciplinarian. He evokes feelings of security, trust and dependability in creating a familial culture. He empowers, grooms, guides and protects.” He also mediates if there are any family disputes and generally his decisions are accepted and respected. Studies indicate that some ‘Kartas’ involve the family members by consulting them, but generally large number of ‘Kartas’ take unilateral decisions [8] and[15].

Overall there is ambivalence towards ‘Karta’. Different individuals as per their experience and perception of the ‘Karta’ Perceive him differently. In general a ‘Karta’ is likely to be perceived as ‘Shardha Vardhak’ (Respectful) of ‘Bhyer Vardhak’ (Fearful). Some could be in between these two, In the case of ‘Shardha vardhak’ ‘Karta’ juniors do things to get his acceptance and admiration. They don’t want him to be let down. On the other hand ‘Bhye Vardhak’ is obeyed out of fear. Therefore generally, it has been observed that there are three kinds of ‘Kartas’ in the Indian families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benevolent / Consultative</th>
<th>Benevolent /Authoritative</th>
<th>Authoritative/Authoritative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring &amp; Loving</td>
<td>Conditional caring</td>
<td>Autocratic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commands Respect</td>
<td>Expects Respect</td>
<td>Demands Respect</td>
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<td>Involves, Consults</td>
<td>Expects Obediency</td>
<td>Orders/Direct</td>
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<td>Awe-inspiring encouraging</td>
<td>Fear Inspiring</td>
<td>Fear Inspiring &amp; Terrorizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains moderate distance</td>
<td>Maintain Distance</td>
<td>Keeps Distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patronizing/Paternalistic &amp; Supportive</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Feudalistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normative &amp;/or moderately Prescriptive</td>
<td>Prescripti ve, Task oriented</td>
<td>Highly Prescriptive, Task Oriented &amp; Aggressive</td>
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As evident from the above discussion, the ‘Karta’ concept is culture specific and is very relevant in the Indian context as it influences the psyche of Indian managers/leaders through the process of ‘Kartaisation’.

4.1 Kartaisation Process and its Impact on Managerial Behaviors

‘Kartaisation’ as a process is characterized by the internalisation and transference of many of the ritualistic and symbolic behaviours and associated beliefs, values and attitudes of the ‘Karta’ of the Indian joint family to the various organizational and non organizational roles outside the family, such as managers, colleagues, subordinates, etc.

Based on his study on 75 high and 75 low achievers [15] observed the influence of this kind of socialisation/ ‘Kartaisation’ process on the attitude and behavior of high and low achievers. Commenting on ‘Karta’ concept, [33] observed that “… the leader has to be like the family head. There is on demarcation between home and work domains and between work relations and ‘personalised’ relations with the subordinates.” [41] and [9] also observed the ‘Karta’ role of top leaders in their study. Commenting on this they report “… that although the leader does try to lay down certain ‘professional norms and procedures’ in the organization, he does finally return to the expected forms of paternalism and ‘personal’ style
of functioning.” [32] in their study of Transformational Leadership provide number of illustrations of Benevolent kind of ‘Karta’ like top managers who were able to achieve corporate success of their respective organizations. They treated their organizations like ‘Kutumba’ (a big family). One of the top managers in their study said. ‘I have been the ‘Karta’. Anyone can approach me and I am available to them for information, guidance and problem solving. …It is a big ‘Kutumba’. I consider myself as the guardian of the….‘Kutumba’. We all belong to one ‘Kutumb’. [32].

Commenting on the successful top managers they report, “In our cases, the leaders exhibited a remarkable grasp of the culture specific psycho-social demands like ‘Karta-orientation, relationship and survival. They made the requisite efforts to link up appropriately the modes of transformation with these cultural imperatives.” [32] The development of ‘Karta’ psyche in Indian managers takes place through this process of ‘Kartaisation’ and it strongly influences their managerial behavior. Though, as indicated earlier, large number of studies on Indian managers seems to suggest the acceptance of authoritarian leadership in Indian context, and thus indicating that in majority of the cases, Indian family system could be reinforcing the development of Authoritative or Authoritarian ‘karta’ psyche. However, there have also been few studies like [33] study on NTL style, which have indicated some kind of transition from truly authoritative style to nurturant directive style, which could be stemming from a combination of Benevolent ‘Karta’ psyche and Authoritative ‘Karta’ Psycho. In this sense it is closer to Benevolent Authoritative style.

In some cases predominantly Benevolent ‘Karta’ psyche could also be developed, as some studies have also shown the effectiveness of the consultative style, which seem to stem from this kind of ‘Karta’ psyche. For example a study by [17] showed that high achievers during their adolescence were more often consulted by their parents with regard to important family decisions like buying of family property, deciding about their own and their younger brothers/sisters’ marriage etc. Similarly [8] also found that though 56% of his respondents felt that elders without consulting the boy or girl should arrange marriages, but 42% of the respondents felt that parents must arrange marriages after consulting the boy or girl. Gore observed that high education and urban residence of the respondents was directly related to their attitudes with regard to the freedom of choice. Perhaps these kinds of consultations help individuals develop independent thinking and related consultative skills.

It is perhaps due to this kind of early training that high achievers of [15] developed these kinds of skills and as a result of this their bosses also consulted them even when they were occupying lover clerical/supervisory positions. They were also given responsible assignments. Perhaps it was so, because their bosses felt that they had the skills to give constructive suggestions and handle responsible assignments. In the case of low achievers, in majority of cases, their parents never consulted them and at later stage their bosses also did not involve them, perhaps because they found them lacking in these skills [15] and [17]. Similarly, a study by [19] indicated that managers who were high on supportive, paternalistic and normative dimensions with moderate prescription and low task obsession were seen to be more effective by their subordinates. Here it may be worthwhile to mention that Indians and individuals in many eastern societies are high on familial self [29]. In familial societies people like to be patronized by their elders and superiors. In view of the strong joint family orientation, where ‘Karta’ also takes care and protects, patronizing is associated with being taken care of and it gives a feeling of security to the individuals. Therefore patronizing boss with low task obsession and low to moderate prescription is likely to be perceived as effective.

Generally managers who are low on task obsession are also likely to be low on task orientation. This does not mean that they will not be interested in getting the task accomplished, but with their other functional behaviours, subordinates would feel motivated to accomplish the work and would not like to let down their bosses. For instance, such managers with their supportive, normative and consultative approach would be able to generate other options/ways of getting the work accomplished. Some of the following descriptions given for effective managers provide some insight in this respect.[20]:

* “He was mixing with his staff members freely and regularly; was knowing their personal problems and trying to solve them, impressed the staff members and was able to extract more official work through these qualities;”

* “He was hard working and had meetings with his managers at regular intervals….he was good at counseling. Took decisions after consulting his subordinates, was affectionate and helpful”.

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* “He was one who on a regular basis met his officers, discussed the business plans with them and invited their suggestions for achieving the targets of Regional Office”.

A careful look at these descriptions indicates that managers with benevolent consultative managerial style are seen/perceived as effective managers in the Indian context.

The managers who do not possess these qualities are perceived as ineffective or not as effective as can be observed from some of the descriptions of ineffective/less effective managers. Some of these were:-

*”He did not have any knowledge of local problems, but still due to his high headedness was taking decisions by himself without consulting and considering the problems of his subordinates… he never had any consideration for subordinates’ suggestions.”

* “He was highly authoritarian (Dictator), did not treat people with respect. Created lot of confusion in the office, did not trust people…. delayed decisions on important matters. Morale of the Regional office was the lowest during his tenure”.

* “He lacked appreciation of the work of each department… never interacted with all the officers had handpicked a few, had poor time management and priorities were always wrong”.

Analysis of these responses indicate that ineffective or less effective bosses were those who were authoritarian, had favorites, lacked humane approach, did not involve subordinates by taking their suggestions etc.

Overall analysis suggests that effective managers’ behavior seemed to be stemming from ‘Benevolent ‘Karta’ psyche’. They were perceived to be caring and encouraging. They commanded respect and they consulted & involved their subordinates on organizational issues. Overall their style of functioning appeared to be a consultative style of management. On the other hand the ineffective managers’ behaviour seemed to be stemming from Authoritative/Authoritarian ‘Karta’ psyche.

The above studies indicate that in Indian context managers style of functioning is greatly influenced by the ‘Karta’ psyche through the transference of father-son relationship to the boss-subordinate relationship in the job situation. Given this kind of situation, Indian managers’ Karta psyche could be influenced by any one of the three kinds of ‘Karta’ psyche, depending on his/her early ‘Kartaisation’.

In the Indian context there could also be some Benevolent-Authoritative ‘Kartas’ and as pointed out earlier, Sinha’s (1980) Nurturant Task Leadership (NTL) style could be stemming from this kind of ‘Karta’ psyche.

### 4.3 Nurturant-Task Leadership Style (NTL)

One of the earlier attempts to search for an appropriate effective style of leadership in the Indian context was made by [35]. Based on his extensive research he found that in Indian context the Nurturant Task Leadership Style (NTL) was found to be most effective. The style is characterized by leaders concern for task and nurturing orientation. According to [35] -

*“The NTL Style is flexible and is therefore transitional in the sense that it gradually leads to fuller participation of his subordinates. Its emphasis on task orientation grows out of the leader’s conviction that no meaningful interpersonal relationship on job can develop unless it develops out of the effective handling of the task system. The task system provides the focus for superior-subordinate relationship while the socio-cultural system provides the appropriate ways of handling the relationship…”*

He further says: “In this sense, Nurturant-Task leadership is fore-runner to the participative style of leadership which stands for full participation of subordinates, group decision making and the role of a leader as ‘one of us’. According to [33] “The NTL model has been found to be more effective in work Indian cultural values and behaviour dispositions. It has been found more effective in work organisations. The style is essentially paternalistic, drawing heavily on the patterns of interaction typifying family dynamics in India.” In this respect a study done by [19] and [20] supported the nurturance aspect and showed that effective managers were rated low on task obsession and they were seen as moderately prescriptive. Therefore in this sense they were nurturing and moderately prescriptive but not task oriented. The possible reason for this difference could be that most of the executives in Sinha’s sample were promotees [35] whereas the most of the executives in [20] were professionals and had started their careers as executives. In fact earlier quoted study by [18] also showed that respondents with higher/professional education are less likely to see a directive style as effective, even if it is coated with nurturance. These conflicting findings once again raise number of questions. Is NTL style the only effective style in the Indian context? Is NTL the only manifestation of Indian paternalistic style...
or are there some other ways also in which paternalism gets reflected without being directive? Could there also be another effective style in the Indian context, which could be in between directive NTL style and participative style? In fact Sinha does not see any middle ground between directive NTL and Participative style and sees NTL as a forerunner to the participative style [35].

To answer some of these questions it is essential to examine the consultative style in the Indian context and how it is different from participative and NTL style.

4.4 Consultative Style of Managerial Leadership (CSML)

Consultative style of managerial leadership is characterized by the managers ability to make decisions by involving the subordinates in getting their suggestion/ideas with or without any discussion on them and with the manager having the sole discretion of either accepting or rejecting any idea with or without giving the sole discretion of either accepting or rejecting any idea with or without giving any reason or logic thereof and thus making the final decision by himself and by giving the subordinates a feeling of being heard.

As per this definition, CSML fits in with the average Indian’s psyche, which is dependency prone, feels comfortable in hierarchical structures, looks for support/approval from superiors and even being heard by the boss gives him a feeling of acceptance. CSML is able to take care of his all these needs. However the flavor of CSML may differ depending on the maturity level of the workforce. Though in terms of same characteristics, the Indian managers’ consultative style may be similar to the consultative style of [24] but it is different in terms of its spirit. At the same time, in terms of employee satisfaction it seems to provide the same degree of satisfaction to the subordinates as provided by the participative style in the western context.

This is quite evident from the descriptions of the effective managers in [19]. In the Indian and Eastern contexts juniors/subordinates feel good even if they are just heard by their superiors. In this regard observations by [4] in the context of Turkish culture are quite similar. She observes“... for collectivist individuals, the underlying purpose of an ‘involving and consulting’ behavior is one of securing the involvement of others and making people feel part of the group so that they do not feel left out. For individualistic individuals, however, the behavior of ‘involving and consulting’ is likely to include asking the opinion of the group members and creating a consensus among members on the issues.”

It is evident from this that given high power distance and hierarchical structure in the eastern cultures. Even an audience by the superiors can make subordinates feel good. Therefore consultative style in eastern context is likely to have a different flavor. In the Indian context consultative style could also be seen at the grass root level in the form of the village ‘Panchayat.’ Panchayat is a body of five wise men of the village. It is hierarchically structured with ‘Sarpanch’ as its head. ‘Panchayat’ members take decisions about various village matters in consultation with each other.

Here also ‘Sarpanch’s opinion does carry more weight in decision-making. Therefore, these kind of consultative approaches, which are different from western consultative approaches, seem to be very much a part of the many eastern societies.

However, Consultative style of Managerial leadership (CSML) in the Indian/eastern context must be differentiated from the Participative style of Managerial Leadership (PSML). In contrast to CSML, the participative Style of Managerial Leadership (PSML) is characterized by the managers ability to involve the subordinates in decision making process as equals and getting their suggestions/ideas/views and then arriving at a joint decision based on discussions, whereby the subordinates feel equally responsible for the decision as well as they getting the feeling of being involved.

As per this definition in PSML, both the manager and the subordinate have a proactive role in making a decision. PSML is generally successful in societies, which are not hierarchical, have low power distance and are egalitarian. In distance hierarchical societies like India, a manager with this kind of a style may be seen as a weak manager. In fact supporting this, [36] reports that in hierarchical society like India, “the participative leaders were liked in some cases; by in most other cases they were perceived to be weak”. They were accused of failing to direct their subordinates making decisions and taking responsibility for the consequences. In some cases, they were perceived as being manipulative. “He even reports a case where such a style even created confusion, anxiety and tension in the minds of the team members [36]. Therefore to a great extent PSML may still not be the most effective style in the Indian context.
5. Conclusion

The above analysis clearly indicates that in a high power distance, hierarchical and dependency prone culture Participative style of Managerial Leadership (PSML) in its pure form is less likely to be effective and successful. Hierarchical orientation is so deep in the Indian psyche that managers feel if in some way they are not influencing or controlling the subordinates or the situation, they are not influencing or controlling the subordinates or the situation, they are not performing their role as a manager. However, Sinhas’s (1980) Nurturant Task Leadership style (NTL) style has been found to be effective in Indian context, but in the changing Indian environment its scope seems to be limited. The above discussion indicates that in changed circumstances Consultative style of managerial leadership (CSML) could be a better and more effective alternative particularly in the situations, where the group has a higher maturity level in terms of their being highly/professionally educated. Besides this, one of the major differences in NTL style and CSML is in terms of managerial belief system, which in turn could be influenced by influenced by the kind of ‘Karta psyche’ of the respective manager.

In NTL style the belief is that to start with, subordinates need to be initiated, guided and directed to work hard and maintain high level of productivity, both in terms of quality and quantity [33]. In this sense he has to gradually graduate from directive to participative. First he has to prove he has the potential, and once he does that, the reward follows in terms of greater autonomy and participation. “Subordinates who meet his expectations are reinforced by nurturance” [33]. In this sense nurturance is conditional and it follows the principal of operant conditioning, where reward is conditional to desired performance/behaviour. Therefore in this respect, NTL style is closer to benevolent- Authoritative style. On the other hand in CSML style the underlying belief is that individual has the potential to think, give useful ideas/suggestions and he only has to be motivated and encouraged doing so. Thus consultation as one of the factors responsible for the success of the top manager and it is one of the contributory ‘Karta’ orientation factors.

Therefore, in conclusion it can be said that in Indian context Nurturant Task Leadership Style and Consultative style of managerial leadership both seem to be effective managerial styles. Both seem to be having their roots in the Indian culture. However, with the changing profile of workforce and increase in the knowledge driven organizations, Consultative style of managerial leadership seems to be more acceptable to Indian employees in comparison to other styles. Besides taking care of their need to be cared and nurtured, this kind of leadership style also takes care of their ego needs by involving them in the various managerial processes.

References


