### **Meaning: Mature and characteristics and function of Leadership**

Leadership is an important element of the directing function of management. Wherever, there is an organized group of people working towards a common goal, some type of leadership becomes essential. “The power of leadership is the power of integrating. The leader stimulates what is best in us he unites and concentrates what we feel only gropingly and shatteringly. He is a person who gives form to the uncoarctate energy in every man. The person who influences me most is not he who does great Deeds, but he who makes me feel that I can do great deeds.” Marry Parker Follet.

Leadership is the ability to build up confidence and zeal among people and to create an urge in them to be led. To be a successful leader, a manager must possess the qualities of foresight, drive, initiative, self-confidence and personal integrity. Different situations may demand different types of leadership.

### Definitions:

Leadership has been defined in various ways. Stogdill has rightly remarked that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it

**The definitions given by some famous authors and management experts are given below:**

1. Koontz and O’Donnell, Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce subordinates to work with confidence and zeal.

2. Dubin, R.Leadership is the exercise of authority and making of decisions.

3. Allford and Beaty, Leadership is the ability to secure desirable actions from a group of followers voluntarily, without the use of coercio

4. George R. Terry, Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives.

5. Hemphill, J.K., Leadership is the initiation of acts which result in a consistent pattern of group interaction directed towards the solution of a mutual problem.

In the various definitions of leadership the emphasis is on the capacity of an individual to influence and direct group effort towards the achievement of organizational goals. Thus, ‘ we can say that leadership is the practice of influence that stimulates subordinates or followers to do their best towards the achievement of desired goals.

### Nature and Characteristics of Leadership:

**An analysis of the definitions cited above reveals the following important characteristics of leadership:**

1. Leadership is a personal quality.

2. It exists only with followers. If there are no followers, there is no leadership?

3. It is the willingness of people to follow that makes person a leader.

4. Leadership is a process of influence. A leader must be able to influence the behaviour, attitude and beliefs of his subordinates.

5. It exists only for the realization of common goals.

6. It involves readiness to accept complete responsibility in all situations.

7. Leadership is the function of stimulating the followers to strive willingly to attain organizational objectives.

8. Leadership styles do change under different circumstances.

9. Leadership is neither bossism nor synonymous with; management.

### Formal and informal Leaders:

From the view point of official recognition from top management, leaders may be classified as formal and informal leaders. A formal leader is one who is formally appointed or elected to direct and control the activities of the subordinates. He is a person created by the formal structure, enjoys organizational authority and is accountable to those who have elected him in a formal way. The formal leader has a two-fold responsibility. On the one hand, he has to fulfill the demands of the organization, while on the other he is also supposed to help, guide and direct his subordinates in satisfying their needs and aspirations.

Informal leaders are not formally recognized. They derive authority from the people who are under their influence. In any organization we can always find some persons who command respect and who are approached to help, guide and protect the informal leaders have only one task to perform, i.e., to help their followers in achieving their individual and group goals. Informal leaders are created to satisfy those needs which are not satisfied by the formal leaders. An organization can make effective use of informal leaders to strengthen the formal leadership.

### Leadership Functions:

**Following are the important functions of a leader:**

#### 1. Setting Goals:

A leader is expected to perform creative function of laying out goals and policies to persuade the subordinates to work with zeal and confidence.

#### 2. Organizing:

The second function of a leader is to create and shape the organization on scientific lines by assigning roles appropriate to individual abilities with the view to make its various components to operate sensitively towards the achievement of enterprise goals.

#### 3. Initiating Action:

The next function of a leader is to take the initiative in all matters of interest to the group. He should not depend upon others for decision and judgment. He should float new ideas and his decisions should reflect original thinking.

#### 4. Co-Ordination:

A leader has to reconcile the interests of the individual members of the group with that of the organization. He has to ensure voluntary co-operation from the group in realizing the common objectives.

#### 5. Direction and Motivation:

It is the primary function of a leader to guide and direct his group and motivate people to do their best in the achievement of desired goals, he should build up confidence and zeal in the work group.

#### 6. Link between Management and Workers:

A leader works as a necessary link between the management and the workers. He interprets the policies and programmes of the management to his subordinates and represents the subordinates’ interests before the management. He can prove effective only when he can act as the true guardian of the interests of his subordinates.