



RURAL LEADERSHIP: MEANING, DEFINITION AND TYPES OF LEADERS IN RURAL CONTEXT

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Leader: Meaning

- A leader is one who influences the thought and behavior/actions of other individuals in a desired way.
- A leader is a person who effectively influences a group to cooperate in setting and achieving goals.
- Leader is a person who rules or guides or inspires others.

LEADERSHIP: DEFINITION

- Leadership is the process of influencing, guiding, directing the thoughts and actions of people in the intended directions.
- Leadership is an activity in which effort is made for influencing the people to cooperate in achieving the desirable goal of the group.
- **In 1938, Chester Bernard** gave a new definition of leadership and stated that, “leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behaviour of subordinates and persuade them to follow a particular course of action”.

Theories of leadership

- **Great man theory:** leaders are born and are not made. This is what is popularly called the 'Great man Theory' of Leadership. The great man theory was originally proposed by **Thomas Carlyle**. Ex: Kings and Queens
- **Trait theory:** A person who possesses certain traits of excellence becomes the leader of group. Leadership is decided by the quality one possesses.
- **Functional theory:** Ability to perform functions determines the potentiality of a person to be a leader. Leadership is decided by the ability of person to perform certain functions. Ex: A good player can be a leader on sports A good singer can be a leader on music

Theories of leadership

- **Situational theory:** Certain circumstances or situations that becomes more important in determining leader. Leadership is decided by the ability of person to manage certain situation. The **Situational theory** was originally proposed by **Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard**. Ex : Crowd, quarrel , clashes etc.
- Kurt Lewin and his associates in 1939 and identified different styles of leadership, viz. autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership,

Classification of leaders or types of leaders or Leadership styles

- **Kurt Lewin and his associates in 1939** and identified different styles of leadership, viz. autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership,
- **Autocratic or Authoritative Style:** An autocratic leader centralizes power and decision-making in himself and exercises complete control over the subordinates. The autocratic manager has little concern for the well-being of employees, who suffer from frustration and low morale. He motivates people through fear and punishments.

- **Democratic leader:** The democratic style is also known as participative style. In this style, decisions are taken by the leader in consultation with the subordinates and with their participation in the decision-making process. Frequent interaction between the manager and subordinates helps to build up mutual faith and confidence.
- **3. Laissez-faire leader or Free-rein Style:** Laissez 'faire leadership style is just the opposite of autocratic style. Subordinates are given high degree of power. They have more trust in sub-ordinates. He believes that if you leave workers alone, the work will be done. He will not take decisions at all. The group members enjoy full freedom as regards goal-setting and acting on it.

Roles of leader

- 1. Group initiator:** The most important role of leader is that, he should take initiative to get the group into action . He keeps proper action at right time.
- 2. Group spokesman:** If the group is to have outside relations it must be able to speak as a unit and leader is its voice. Leader has the responsibility of speaking for the group and representing the interests of the group.
- 3. Group harmonizer:** Leader promotes harmony with the group in line with the basic purposes of the group. All social groups usually have both uniformities and differences of opinion (diversity of interest, misunderstanding etc.).

4. Group planner: the leader has to plan the way by which the group can satisfy its needs. The leader has to plan for the group and with the group. Leader has to realize the needs of the group in advance and plan to fulfil them.

5. Group executive: He helps the group in carrying out the plans and policies. He gets things done. He stimulates others and promotes solidarity. Leaders play important role in putting agreed upon plans and policies of the group into action.

6. Group educator or teacher: Leader is a group educator or teacher. He should educate the group members about activities of the group and what are the things going on in and around.

7. Group symbol or symbol of group ideals: All social groups have implicit (internal) or explicit (external) norms or ideals. As a rule, the persons accepted as leaders are those who have adopted these norms or ideals and live by them. He should adopt group norms and ideals and live by them.

8. Group supervisor: A good leader supervises the work of his peers and subordinates. Leader should supervise what are the activities already carried out and what are to be carried out etc. He has to evaluate the activities periodically during execution.

9. Group discussion chairman: Whenever there is group discussion, the leader has to chair the discussion meeting.

Identification of Leadership

There are mainly four methods of measuring opinion leadership

- **Sociometric method** : Socio-metric technique was first developed by **J.L. Moreno and Hellen Jennings**. The Sociometric method consists of **asking respondents whom they sought** (or hypothetically might seek) **for information or advice about a given topic, such as an innovation**. Opinion leaders are those members of a system who receive the greatest number of Sociometric choices (that is, who are involved in the largest number of network links).

- **2. Key Informants' ratings:** In a community **subjectively selected key informants in a social system are asked to designate opinion leaders.**
- 3. Self designating:** In this methods ask each respondent a series of questions to **determine the degree to which he/she perceives himself/herself to be an opinion leader.** Based on the analysis of the answers obtained, the extension workers select a leader. Individuals are asked to indicate the tendency for others to regard them as influential.
- 4. Observation:** in which an **investigator identifies and records the communication behavior in a system.**

