



LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM MSD

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ABSTRACT:

An organization, a team, a formal or an informal group should get proper guidelines every time to achieve the desired goals. There are the leaders who can run such organisations in a right direction. Leader is a person who influences the people and makes them to follow him with his behaviour. He does the right things in a right manner. The concept 'Leadership' is not so simple to understand. There are many attributes which should be possessed by a leader to ensure his team achieves the target. Every member of an organization or a team seeks proper co-operation and direction from the leader. Therefore it is very important that the leader should have the traits such as- good communication, encourage people, utilize resources effectively, manage success and failure, make decisions have personal influence, self-regulated etc. leadership is the combination of all these attributes. Leader should use it as and when required. Indian cricket team has got many captains so far as leaders. Mahendra Singh Dhoni is such a leader who sets an example to the young managers and leaders organisations. He has the ability to prove his leadership skills. Dhoni, the captain of India in one day and T20 formats, keeps motivated all his team members every time. He is very much reliable, cool, calm and able to predict the situation earlier. Under his leadership Indian cricket team has witnessed many joyful moments. He definitely sets the best example of leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Dhoni,

INTRODUCTION

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way”- a famous quotation by John Maxwell. India has got a large amount of talent in people in terms of leadership from among different areas. Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain of Indian cricket team had such a personality who have led Indian cricket over past 10 years with his immense talent. India has achieved lots of success under his leadership. Many former Indian players including Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar have praised Dhoni on various occasions.

No doubt, India has got Dhoni, One of the greatest leaders in sports India have ever seen, who always keeps inspiring the young generation with his on-field and off-field behaviour. There are many traits of Dhoni which teach many lessons to the young managers and leaders in the country

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a complex term to explain. There are many definitions given by many philosophers and great thinkers.

- Wendell French- Leadership is the process of influencing the behaviour of others in the direction of a goal or a set of goals or more broadly towards a vision of the future.

- Grey and Starke –Leadership is both a process and property. The process of leadership is the use of non-coercion influence to direct and co-ordinate the activities of the members of an organized group towards the accomplishment of the group objectives. As a priority leadership is the act of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ such influence.

Styles of leadership

There are different styles of leadership viz. Autocratic, Democratic and Free-rein style. Research studies tend to indicate that democratic leadership style is more likely to produce effective group performance. There are many variables underlie in the concept of leadership

in work organizations. The most effective form of leadership behaviour is a product of the total leadership situation.

Leader MSD

Dhoni has got selected as a captain of India at times when he was a new entrant in the team. It was a recommendation from Sachin to the board to make him captain as he already identified Dhoni's potentialities to lead the team. Dhoni has always been interactive with the team members. Being a wicket-keeper he was at the center and used to communicate, give suggestions read the game. This gave an exposure to the big player's attention in team. The conversations that led them into believe that Dhoni could be a good leader. It teaches lesson to the young people to have a good communication with teammates, to have better results.

The best trait that needs to be mentioned that he is always ready to accept the responsibility for a mistake than putting up a claim for his leadership when there is a success. This is very true about a great leader as the leader has to assume all responsibilities at the time of failure and give credit to entire team for success instead claiming for it himself.

Sixteen strengths of MSD that make him very special Leader

It is said that leaders are born and not made. But this probably is proved wrong by M. S. Dhoni. His qualities as manager and leader have been dissected, debated and discussed by sports journalists and management groups. Finally everyone agreed with the leadership qualities in MSD. In this study the qualities of a great leader have been explored with taking the traits of MSD in to the account. All these qualities have been classified under three different categories for better understanding as below-

- A. A leader
- B. A player
- C. A Human being

This classification will give us very clear idea in understanding traits of a leader as MSD does possess.

A. A Leader-

A leader is said to be good when he/she knows exactly how to manage their people and take all responsibilities to deliver when the team is down. There are different qualities of a leader who always try to look ahead and keep motivating his team. Team always needs his support at the time of fall and it is the leader who takes away the team from the getting caught in a problem. He/ she needs to possess the combination of many such traits which will prove his/her ability to handle the situation. All these attributes furthermore classified as below.

1. Strong Interaction with team:

A great leader always wants his teammates to be well aware of all objectives, goals and available resources. Therefore he/she tries to communicate more and more with all team members in order to overcome the obstacles. In communication the message will be passed clearly. According to Dhoni most times an individual starts to doubt his talent before the other doubts him. That individual doesn't trust his own ability and the self belief goes missing. Dhoni is very particular in such time and chooses words very carefully while interacting with teammates. So the communication or interaction becomes very crucial. Dhoni believes in more interaction with players and he experienced it when there was question of leading the team even there were



many senior players in the team like Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly, VVS Laxman, Rahul Dravid.

2. Leading from the front:

A leader is always supposed to take responsibilities for directing people and showing them the right path to achieve the goals. The result will not be a big matter in such time. Dhoni is such a player who always likes to carry all responsibilities on his shoulder when his team finds it difficult to move ahead. The final of World cup 2011 is the best example of it when Dhoni himself promoted to bat at number 4 well ahead of in-form Yuvraj Singh and won the world cup with an unbeaten knock of 91 runs for his country.

3. Encouraging and Motivating the People:

When the team members feel stressful and lose confidence in them it is the leader who should encourage the team members and come up with a better plan next time. A self-motivated leader works consistently towards his goals has extremely high standards for work. Here motivation comes from within and is more positive when one compares it to extrinsic factors that affect one's motivation. Dhoni's locus of control is very intrinsic. He has always been seen motivating his team members. Especially if there is a new player who comes into the team and doesn't perform well, Dhoni motivates him well enough to get back in his form and perform well.

4. Utilizing available Resources:

A leader or a manager has to look at the available resources with him/her. The focus should be on how to utilize and optimize the resources in order to get maximum output. A manager should be able to get the best out of the resources allotted to him rather than complaining about the resource. Dhoni is expert in utilizing available resources properly. The way he rotates his bowlers, brings part-timers into the game so that he has a lot of options for the death over, is simply amazing.

5. Instinct and Self Belief:

On certain occasions leaders have to believe their gut feelings based on their experience and take decisions accordingly. It does not mean that the decision taken will always be proved right. To have this gut factor the leader should possess sufficient in-hand experience. Dhoni does have good experience and he always believes himself. He has good instinctive ability which helps him to take fair decisions at very crucial times on the field. There were many occasions in cricket when he had led the team with certain decisions; based on his gut feelings and that had proven right at the end. In the final match of the Champions Trophy, he chose Ishant Sharma to bowl the crucial over even though the data showed to choose Umesh Yadav to have a better result and that over had turned the match for India.

6. Backing the Teammates:

A leader should always keep motivating team members by extending his support to make their performance more effective. Team members reciprocate and feel a sense of responsibility based on the trust shown by their leaders. Dhoni places immense trust on his people and backs them to deliver the best. This allows them to express themselves freely without the fear of failure. He always believes in his teammates even after they fail to deliver their performance in the game.

7. Risk taking ability:

There is saying in the business world that if there is more risk the probability to profits also is more. Based on the knowledge and analytical skills leader or managers take risks to gain more profits. Dhoni too has the ability to take risks especially in the pressured situation. T20 world cup final against Pakistan has been a great example of it, when Dhoni took risk by asking newly entered Joginder Sharma to bowl experienced informed Misbah-ul-Haq. Finally everyone knew the result as India lift that T20 world cup.

8. Sharing Credit:

It is the tendency of human being that they always try to take credit for success and blame others on failure. A great leader always understands as to give credit to team and take responsibility on failure. MSD has that understanding and in the post match presentation, interview, press conferences he never boasts about himself rather he says it's the team effort that has won the game. This brings out the confidence in players, makes them feel secured and inspires them to perform better under the leader.

9. Managing Success and Failure:

In corporate world early success need not be brash behaviour towards colleagues and customers. It is a common observation that managers see success at very younger age, lose their balance and face early career burnouts. Dhoni is blessed early success along with the team as T20 world cup champions when he led team India first time. But he never had gone losing his control and keeps his feet on the flour. The failure also is a part of life. Therefore manager should not choose to fly away instead of fighting with the situation. Dhoni's downfall began just after his team tested the success of world cup 2011. After a string of embarrassing losses, it required a great character and attitude to bounce back which Dhoni has balanced successfully.

10. Decision Making:

A leader should be very prompt in decision making; because a wrong decision may lead to wind up the business. Dhoni takes very quick decisions as the situation demands and make changes accordingly.

B. A Team Player:

Generally speaking, democratic style of leadership is mostly appreciated. But there are very rare leaders we find in organization who pertain under this style. MSD is exception to it. He is a kind of Participative leader who would like to behave as a team player rather a captain. He always tries to make his players feel stress free. He has got this unique characteristic from different attributes.

1. Staying Calm:

Many a times leaders feel stressed, get under pressure and may take wrong decisions. To overcome such obstacles, a leader always needs to stay cool and calm in stressful condition. Dhoni has however got this very special trait within him. In fact we have watched him in many situations where he used to stay calm under highly pressured situation. Many occasions leaders tend to lose their tempo and take a wrong step which will be criticized later. Staying cool and calm enables us to think quickly, correctly and keep things well in control. Dilip Vengsarkar paid a tribute to Dhoni saying his composure under pressure is simply amazing and unique.

**2. Keep things Simple:**

Need often need to sell their concepts and convince the people. Doing so, they need to use such tools or medium which will accessible be and understandable to the target audience. One of the ways to do so is to keep things very simple so that everyone can understand what leader wants to say or do. It helps to remove the communication barrier. Therefore even a new player playing under Dhoni feels satisfied as his captain always tries to keep thing simple.

3. Focused:

We find many distractions in our environment which will divert our attention from one point to another. A leader always needs to know how important the topic is for him to deal with. He needs to be more focused to achieve his objectives and should be very particular in choosing words framing sentences while speaking. Dhoni never gets diverted and keeps focused his attention while he is on field. There have been many examples which exhibit his 'Focused' approach towards the game.

C. A Human being:

It is agreed that a manager should possess more Intelligent Quotient (IQ) than Emotional Quotient (EQ). But it should be remembered that a manager should have humanity. He should try to be a better person first and then take any business decision ethically. Hence ethics, feelings, ego, self-respect and self- regulation play important role in managing people.

1. Staying grounded:

It is said that leaders who connect each team member, drive more out of them in long run their loyalty, high confidence and zeal to surpass themselves in their performance. MSD has never been seen jumping with exhilaration after a win or getting depressed after the recent consecutive eight test matches lost abroad. He knows that winning and losing are the part of the game. A leader should learn to acknowledge the success, accept failure and bounce back.

2. Self-Regulated:

A general observation is that leaders, who regulate themselves effectively, rarely harm the others. Staying in control is what the self-regulation is. According to Goleman, the element of emotional intelligence covers a leader's flexibility and commitment to personal accountability. It is often said that Dhoni does not believe in dwelling in the past or living for the future. Rather he gives the best he can in the present. He is accountable, accepts and own up the mistakes publicly as a player and as a team. The self-regulation has led Dhoni to be a respected captain ever by senior players like Dravid and Tendulkar.

3. Empathy:

Leaders should have empathy to someone who really needs their co-operation. They help, develop the people in their team, challenge others who are acting unfairly, give constructive feedback and listen to those who need it. Many of us are aware that Dhoni letting Ganguly captain the side for a little during his last match, or when he took to the sides as team India took Tendulkar on their shoulders during the World Cup 2011 victory cap, or asked Kohli to finish match with a winning run even though there was an opportunity for Dhoni to finish it up against Australia in semis.

He shows his sympathy towards the bad performance and supports players through their ups and downs. He says we should always believe in the ones who failed in the team. At crucial times a team member who was not able to deliver might do miracles.

**Conclusion:**

Leadership is not a simple but a complex concept. It is defined as the ability to influence people, motivate them and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organization. Leaders exist throughout the organisation. There are many perspectives of leadership like competency perspective, behavioural perspective, contingency perspective, transformational perspective and implicit perspective. A great leader should possess emotional quotient along with the Intelligent Quotient. MS Dhoni has always been seen backing up his teammates irrespective to the performance of the teammate. He has got enough experience to tackle the situation. He controls very well his emotions and exhibits the skill perfectly as per the requirement. There are many of his traits which keep on inspiring the young people not only in India but throughout the world.

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