

Transformational leadership

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Transformational Leadership is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. The concept was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Transformational leadership has been described by various individuals- One of the best descriptions of transformational leadership has been penned by Prof.

Bernard Bass, a renowned exponent of the idea. He says succinctly, " Leaders are truly transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, important and beautiful, when they help to elevate followers' needs for achievement and self-actualization, when they foster in followers high moral maturity, and when they move followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of their group, organization or society. " In a similar vein avers Mr.

Kumar Mangalam Birla, " Transformational leadership to me means leadership in its highest form, such that it transcends the trappings of hierarchies, authority, power, as well as, formal and informal systems of reward and recognition — and in the political sphere, votes. " James MacGregor Burns introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his descriptive research on political leaders, but this term is now used in organizational psychology as well. According to Burns, transforming leadership is a process in which " leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation".

Burns related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in characteristics and

behaviors. He established two concepts: "transforming leadership" and "transactional leadership". Example of Transactional leadership: "If you help me THEN I will help you" According to Burns, the transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of employees.

Unlike in the transactional approach, it is not based on a "give and take" relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are a moral exemplar of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community. Burns theorized that transforming and transactional leadership are mutually exclusive styles.

Most things that we value, transformational leadership is in short supply in our country. We need much more of it, in every sphere, be it government, business, education, the law, or even non-profit organizations. Our slow and halting progress seems even more conspicuous when we look at the rapid growth many less-endowed countries have achieved over the past two-three decades. If we take a look at just one indicator — the Human Development Index ranks India at 124, out of 173 countries, behind countries such as Gabon, Nicaragua and Mongolia.

Given the talent and resources we possess, obviously, things need not be this way. Examples of Transformational Leadership 1. Lee Kuan Yew 2. Dalai Lama Lee Kuan Yew A unique attribute of Lee Kuan Yew was his aversion to

strong ideologies. He consistently discarded theory in favor of what worked. If a policy worked, he would continue with it; if it didn't work he would drop it and try something else. For example, what mattered most to him was not whether Singapore Airlines was nationalized or privatized, but rather, how the airline performs.

While his inclination was towards letting free markets operate, he resorted extensively to government intervention if the circumstances called for it. He was a strategist, he made periodic and sweeping transformations. During his tenure, the Singapore government successively pushed through at least four radical directional changes — from labour-intensive import substitution, to labor-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing, to moving the entire economy up the value chain, and lastly, turning the focus sharply to infrastructure, human capital, and high technology.

Implemented deftly, this strategy kept Singapore's economy on a relatively even keel. At each stage, the leadership sought the citizens' inputs, thus helping to strengthen the people's sense of identity with the vision set out by the leaders. Another distinguishing feature of Lee Kuan Yew's leadership was his accent on meritocracy in government. His focus on getting the best people was almost absolute. Speaking in Parliament in 1994, he said, "Singapore must get some of its best in each year's crop of graduates into government.

When I say best, I don't mean just academic results which indicate only the power of analysis. You've then got to assess him for his sense of reality, his imagination, his quality of leadership, his dynamism. But most of all, his

character and his motivation, because the smarter a man is, the more harm he might do to society. " Lee Kuan Yew worked hard to drive this thinking into the mindset of every government official and every citizen in Singapore. Another area where his unconventional and practical approach stood out sharply was in policies related to human resources.

For instance, he believed that primary and secondary education would, to the extent possible, be universalized. Lee Kuan Yew's view was that trying to promote universal access to university education would create too many graduates for the Singapore economy to absorb which was a real concern in the 1960s and 1970s. The flip side was that those who did not get into a university were given excellent access to technical and vocational education, often through programs organized jointly with foreign governments and multinational companies.

Impact of his leadership on Singapore government- In his 25 years at the helm, Singapore was transformed from a tiny colonial outpost into a thriving, global economic center. Per capita GNP has risen from US\$ 920 in 1965 to US\$ 23, 300 in 2000. The literacy rate has risen from 72 per cent in 1970 to over 92 per cent currently. The number of people living in owner-occupied housing raised from 9 per cent of the population in 1970 to 90 per cent by 1990. Singapore's government and public sector are regarded as one of the most efficient and cleanest in the world.

Its infrastructure facilities are world-class. And all these factors combined, contribute to Singapore being ranked amongst the top in the world competitiveness league Dalai Lama Dalai Lama is a great spiritual leader. He

is a leader of a different mould. He has no overt base of power; he holds no political position; neither does he command an army; and he has no control over mighty economic resources. Yet, he strikes a powerful chord. In a world driven by material progress, and the incessant thunder of conflict and strife, he offers the message of peace and humanity.

People around the world care about a simple Buddhist monk who 50 years ago was forced to leave his country, and who for years has headed an unrecognized government-in-exile, a 'virtual' nation of 6 million Tibetans. The Dalai Lama's efforts have been instrumental in providing a haven and a life of dignity to the thousands who escaped the trauma of communist rule in Tibet. After their flight to India, the refugees have been resettled in various countries, among them, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Switzerland and Canada. It was his personal initiative and moral force that persuaded many countries to open the door to Tibetan refugees.

This was no minor accomplishment, at a time when there were powerful pressures from the Chinese government not to accord official status to the Dalai Lama, or recognize the Tibetan people's desire for independence. In fact, for almost a decade, he was persona non grata in the U. S. , and was barred from entering the country. The Dalai Lama has succeeded in establishing a strong Tibetan base in India, and in several other countries. For instance, the Tibetan community in Dharamsala, near Mussourie, where the government-in-exile is based, is a thriving center of Tibetan culture, and a home away from home.

References

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