



A Case Study on 'Sensible and Self-reliant leadership

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ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on the leadership traits and other relevant factors that played a vital role for Shruti Sharma in becoming the most successful captain in the history of Gujarat Women's Cricket. In management, leadership is defined as, "The process of directing and influencing people or group of people to achieve a common goal". According to Fred E. Fiedler, leadership style of a person is fixed but there's been a lot of criticism to this. According to me, leadership style of a person is changeable as per the situation but yes; leadership traits of a person are, to some extent, fixed. Therefore, I have focused more upon leadership traits than leadership styles. This case study provides a foretaste to how a young captain, with her strong determination and willpower, despite of various obstacles and criticism, led her team to the much awaited moment – holding the winners' trophy.

Keywords : Motivation, Cohesiveness, Will power, Team work.

The Initial Journey

For me, it was neither a cakewalk nor any trick that happened to work within few months. It was a matter of three long years (2007-2010) which I had invested in building organizational and team bonding, rigorous training sessions and enhancing technical skills. Besides, I was eyeing on the top position-the skipper since 2009 when I thought I was experienced well enough to lead the team so that I could make my day dream of holding the winners' trophy actually come true.

Proactive Personality

Being a proactive personality, I have had always grabbed the challenges in a positive manner, detected loopholes and problems, possibly at its earliest, showed initiative and took action in betterment of my team. Since, I had started playing in 2007; I did not have to reassess the root problem associated with the team. The very first problem was that players had a fear of our coach such that many would even hesitate to talk to him. Besides, he was an

Autocratic leader and wanted captain and other players to strictly follow his established standards. Captain would not have much discretion to have their own way of leading as if they were puppets but still seniors didn't dare to take action, all possibly due to organizational politics. As a result, players could neither enjoy their game nor they could play freely. To control such politics was another reason, why I wanted to become the skipper. I have always liked taking the initiative to any role, responsibility or tasks, never to gain power, position or credit but only because I cannot even think to disappoint the person whom I admire a lot. On the other hand, Kurt Lewin's theory suggests that leadership tends to fail when two autocratic leaders work together. The same was the case here and when I was appointed as the captain of the team, the problem disappeared gradually because I was aware of this theory and therefore, led the team independently. Besides being a proactive, I am highly conscientious as well as self-monitoring which adds up to the tasty dish of leadership as an effective ingredient.

Motivation

a. Mc Clelland's theory of need: It comprises of need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation. I have always strived for two of these: power and affiliation. I seek power to boost my confidence, not to underestimate others.

Besides, I also seek for affiliation to fulfill my emotional needs. Hence, accomplishing both of these needs eased my journey of becoming a successful captain.

b. Personal attention and Recognition: I seek for personal attention and want each of my achievements and hard work being recognized. Both of these needs have strongly motivated me to perform better. Fortunately, I have been successful in achieving both.

c. Organizational bonding and Affective commitment: I tend to develop an emotional attachment with the organization where I work and those with whom I work in the organization. Since I am fully devoted person, the degree of attachment with the colleagues and organization motivates me to give my best.

d. Trust, Cohesiveness and Team work: A strong unity and mutual trust was formed among the team members due to which our confidence boosted and all started enjoying practice sessions. The ambiance of the whole camp got polished.

Factors that attributed to my own success (winning the tournament)

a. Ranking priorities: In 2010, my only priority was to be committed to my cricketer career and to become the champions. The whole year I had passed day dreaming about winning the tournament. Even I wasn't concerned about education and studies to such an extent that I skipped my college exams to play the tournament and gave remedial after coming back. So, in life, I have faced trade-offs, very often, took risks and some brave decisions as well. But yes, I never took major risks without a backup. So, here my success mantra was taking up one and only one goal at a time and be focused and committed to it.

b. Mentor: Every leader has their own views and thoughts, their own way of leading. In cricket, it is said that a professional player should work 5% on his technique, 5% on physical fitness and the rest 85% on mental fitness. Keeping this in mind, I would let our nets and warm up sessions going the same way but my focus was more on the mental

fitness of my players for which I would regularly chat with them in between the training sessions, although that wasn't permissible. I have been scolded many times for it but I claimed it to be a part of my strategic way of leading. I gave my players freedom to chat with each other, have fun during the sessions and that would create a joyful ambiance. As a result, players who used to argue to bat down the order then started showing initiative to bat up the order. I was quite surprised and happy to notice such changes.

c. Know your limits: The physical potential and mental ability of a person differs from others and I strongly believe that one should be aware of their own limits and perform, keeping in mind those limits. I knew our team was not as strong as other teams, on paper and therefore, I would tell my players to stick to basics and instructed them not to focus on extraordinary but simple things.

d. Welcome criticism: As a captain, I have faced a lot of criticism, mostly from our coach. We were told like what great we would do when their best teams in the past could not win a title. Many times, my captaincy was questioned at. Besides, some of my seniors and other players had once criticized my batting. I took these criticisms positively and it encouraged me to perform better and better to prove their claims and challenges groundless.

e. Will power: This proved to be the most important factor by the time; we had won the finals which I could realize later on. After winning the semi-final match against Chattisgarh, we were into the finals of the tournament. Final match was supposed to be held after two days and I was very much excited about it. Unfortunately, one day before the finals, I started feeling low with severe body pain. I could not even move from my bed, didn't eat or drink anything the whole day, could not open my eyes under sunlight. I was taken to hospital and doctors diagnosed that I had chicken pox and yes, I had number of red dots all over my body but I could not make out that time. Doctor advised me, not to play match, the other day as I wasn't in position even to walk properly but I was so much

excited about the final match that I decided to play. My determination and commitment had fueled my will power and even today I wonder how I managed to focus on the game that day! I did not only play the game but even took a catch, a run out and bowl my full quota overs, although I was struggling. Umpire told me to go back to pavilion in between the game but I was determined, I was crazy, I wanted to win the game. In the end, we managed to win by 8 runs and after the last ball was bowled, I just lied down in the ground itself and my struggle continued in Ahmedabad too but I was contended because, we became the champions first time ever.

Besides the above factors, appreciation and emotional support from my family members, friends, teachers and other people motivated me. Thankfulness attitude and belief in god also motivated me.

Conclusion

Leadership is a learning process. A good leader is committed to excellence and believes that second best does not lead to success, though he/she knows how to digest failure. Storms, emotions and crises come and go and a good leader takes these parts as the journey and keeps his/her head cool. A good leader is confident and enthusiastic about their work and their role as a

leader. When leaders are more dedicated and passionate towards their role, they are more likely to succeed. A good leader "walks the talk" and in doing so earns the right to have responsibility for others. True authority is born from respect for the good character and trustworthiness of the person who leads. Not only does a good leader view a situation as a whole, but is able to break it down into sub parts for closer inspection. Not only is the goal in view but a good leader can break it down into manageable steps and make progress towards it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Prof. Anand Nagrecha and Sneha Dave , Faculty, MBA department, LDRP-ITR, Gandhinagar