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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPORTANT ROLES OF STRATEGIC LEADER IN THE ORGANIZATIONS.

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Abstract

Our paper sheds light on leaders' strategic contribution in organizations through skills or competencies needed for accomplishing tasks and carrying out the development processes. This era is highly competitive, complicated, challenging, and has unique opportunities as well as threats. Strategic leadership strategies improve the firms' performance in unstable and unpredictable businesses. Our objective is describing roles of effective strategic leadership because it helps implementation of strategies, which can turn around an organization through attainment of competitive advantage, and converting it into competitiveness and income.

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Introduction:-

Many firms are fully reliant on leaders during the process of transition but recent findings show that even some highly reputed organizations are either unwilling to change or failing to do so despite efforts. Some of them are unable to implement their strategies for a better and sustainable future. We found that many researchers describe the leadership skills or competencies of leaders rather than describing what they actually did. The available literature has largely ignored the quality of decisions, which organizational leaders made, and that is a major limitation in the accessible literature.

Nevertheless, we believe that the two approaches are necessary for leadership talent to develop, they are interdependent, and good for evaluating leadership roles to assure productive efficiency. However, we should not believe that the leadership roles alter leaders' competencies.

Leaders' competencies include specific skills used in specific circumstances. Thus, while describing the competencies, we must consider that they also include the specific behavior that affects their overall leadership. Mostly, competencies and job roles define effectiveness of leadership. From the perspective of the diagnosis and evaluation, specific strengths and development are required for quality operational decisions.

Noteworthy competencies and roles, and the highest development priority needs can be determined to suit the current or anticipated significant challenges, and for facing them as well. We will look at this paper for important leadership roles through identifying the correct leadership style and identification of leaders in humanitarian/research organizations. This paper will also provide answer to a very important question: How a person can become a strategic leader? It also takes into account the SWOT analysis of the leadership roles for organizations.

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Literature review: -

For understanding leaders, we first define strategic leadership roles.

Leadership:-

There are multiple views in defining of the term "leadership" as different researchers suggested different meanings. Likert defines leadership as an individual's capability to affect/influence another person or a group, and guide them to win their cooperation and motivate them to work with the highest degree of efficiency for achieving desired goals. Qaryouti pointed out that leadership means influencing someone by making them voluntarily accept the leadership without any legal obligation to achieve the desired targets set by the leader (Ibrahim, 2011).

The word strategy or strategic is a multiple-meaning word that is used to describe change in their policy/action/reaction of businesses or organizations.

Researchers suggested many definitions of strategy until 1997. Alfred D. Chandler Junior in his classic study "Strategy and Structure," which was published in 1962 defined strategy as effort to determine long-run objectives by adopting a certain course of action and allocating resources for it.

Robert N. Anthony, the author of a book "Planning and Control Systems," which was published in 1965, did the groundwork for strategic planning but he avoided defining it. He supported the definition by a Harvard professor Kenneth R. Andrews, in which, Andrew termed strategy as a pattern and plan for achieving goals through shifting or designing major policies and plans.

The emergence of some vision of the company in the future can be considered as an element of strategy (Dunphy, 1968). Harvard Prof. Kenneth Andrews first published "The Concept of Corporate Strategy" in 1971 and later updated it in 1980. He believed that a strategy is actually a decision pattern, which finalizes the purposes of businesses in the best interest of their workers, shareholders, customers, and communities. This was probably the best explanatory definition as it takes into account all the stakeholders.

George Steiner, a co-founder of California Management Review, observed that minimum agreement existed between different definitions and explanations but he did not define strategy in straightforward terms (Pasmore, 2004).

Strategic Leadership:-

According to Rowe, strategic leadership means the capability of influencing others through a series of decisions taken for organizational and operational longevities. It also focuses on maintaining the short-run financial stability (Rowe, 2001). Davis (2004) believed that strategic leaders are capable of translating a desired and actionable strategy into reality by aligning people and organizations, and by developing competencies.

A strategic leader is dissatisfied with the current happenings and capacities including absorptive and adaptive capacities. According to Davies, "adaptive capacity" provides capacity to leaders to bring about changes and deal with complexities involved in the process of change and reformations. Almost every strategic leader is predominantly future-oriented.

Strategic leaders decide about the interventions needed in any organization's work processes by developing new vision, creating new strategic moves and leading towards unexpected direction whenever needed.

According to Quinn and Batty, strategic thinking process includes gathering, rectifying, and filtering the ideas. It gives the idea as to how the decisions should be made and when they should be implemented (Beatty and Quinn, 2010).

Leadership largely deals with agents of change and innovations, which helps thinking strategically for achieving the organization's objectives (Kouzes and Posner, 2009).

Quong & Walker (2010) described the definitive terms and segments of strategic leadership. They co-authored an article "Seven Principles of Strategic Leadership," in which, they described seven principles, which are:

1. Strategic Leaders have strategies to implement in the future and they themselves are largely future-focused

2. Strategic leadership gives importance to research and evidence
3. Strategic leadership believes in practically getting things done
4. Strategic leadership looks for new opportunities
5. Strategic leaders appear capable to lead;
6. Strategic leadership believes in making useful and profitable partnerships
7. Strategic leaders believe in doing the "next right thing."

Leaders And Groups:-

Leaders are assumed as perfectly healthy, balanced people, who set the organization's direction/s for others to follow. However, as soon as the role of leaders is clarified, some basic assumption groups can very quickly emerge from work groups, and the possibility arises that leaders can also be the creations of those groups.

Leaders affect what groups do, but groups also affect what leaders do through processes of unconscious projection (Stacey, 2011).

Bales (1970) identified the emergence of two kinds of leaders in small task-oriented groups: the task leader, who gives suggestions, shows disagreement and urges the group to focus on task completion; and the social-emotional leader who asks for suggestions, shows solidarity, soothes tempers, and release tensions.

These leadership roles are mutually supportive and each one of them helps the group solve different problems if the needed members of the group, who assumed a specific role, work in collaboration. Sometimes one person can combine both roles and in that case, he can be termed as the 'great man' leader. When specialist leaders of this kind do not emerge or cannot work together, team-members start dealing with their frustration in unconscious ways that leads to the emergence of scapegoat roles, enemy roles, messiah roles, and so on (Stacey, 2011).

Bion (1961) distinguished between leaders in the basic assumption group: the fight leader, the flight leader, the dependence leader, and the symbolic leader symbolizing some unrealistic utopian, messianic or oceanic hope. Bion points to the precarious position these leaders occupy. Another important fact: Groups put leaders in their positions and later those groups control the leader, not the other way round.

Effective leaders maintain a clear focus on and definition of their most important task. That task determines a leader's roles including analyzing, participating and observing.

The effective leader operates on the boundary of the group, avoiding both emotional immersion and extreme detachment. They regulate transactions between their groups and other groups. Both immersion and distance make this impossible. When a group believes in basic assumption behavior, it gives leadership to a person suitable for emotional needs of the group out of its own interest and not out of practical needs. This leader plays conflicting and fundamentally impossible roles – to provide unlimited nurturing to fight and subdue imaginary enemies, saving the group from death and dissolution, and fulfilling utopian or messianic hopes of the group members. The kinds of roles include the role of aggressor, the seducer who tries to seduce people into exposing their feelings and positions, the scapegoat, the hero, the resisters, the anxious participators, the distressed females, the respected enactors, the sexual idols, the outsiders, and the prophets. These informal roles develop to contain and deal with internal conflict and the tension of fusion (Dunphy, 1968).

Managers' choices and actions are mostly unconscious processes than any rational consideration.

Neurotic Forms Of Leadership:-

The organization theory focuses on what leadership means when it is functioning well. However, leaders normally don't function very well and quite often they are definitely dysfunctional.

Such dysfunctional leaders do not get significance in the management literature, but since they exist, they should be understood. Functional leaders help containing anxiety and thus help creating the possibility of learning, but dysfunctional or neurotic leaders may well become caught up, and drive others to become caught up in neurotic behaviors, which block the learning process.

Kets de Vries (1989) explained neurotic leaders. They believe that under the supervision of neurotic leaders, everyone behaves as if affected by the inner theatre. That theatre shows psychological behavior, which is the outcome of their interaction with people, conflicting relationships and other situations in their early childhood.

This kind of behavior shows as if people spend much of their lives re-enacting conflicts they did not understand in their childhood, partly because they are familiar with them, and partly, perhaps, because they are longing to conceive the truths behind them. What they do, then, is project this inner play with conflicting real world situations.

Leaders do this just as others do, the difference being that they project their inner conflicts on to the gigantic real-world stage that includes their followers. A leader projects internal private dialogues into external public and these dialogues are about core conflicting themes of their childhood. The particular neurotic style a leader practices is the outcome of these core inner conflicts.

Followers also project their inner plays in the form of their leaders; therefore, these leader-follower projections keep leaders and followers engaged in a particular manner. Followers project their dependence needs on to leaders and displace their own ideals, wishes and desires on to them (Rowe, 2001).

The inner theatre, in which, leaders and followers join each other contains scenarios that are based on imagined, desired and feared relationships between them. There are typical scenarios that occur repeatedly and they constitute typical dispositions, typical ways of defending against, repressing, denying and idealizing particular leader-follower relationships. Everyone uses such devices and everyone has prominent dispositions that constitute a person's neurotic style.

This is quite normal and it becomes a problem only when people massively, compulsively and habitually use fewer defenses. This blocks the people's capabilities to relate to reality and it is then, when they can be labeled as 'neurotic'.

Kets de Vries (1989) distinguished amongst many such dispositions or neurotic styles as follows:

Every leader will display a combination of these styles and it becomes a problem only when just a few of the dominant leaders' and followers' behavior.

- 1.** The aggressive disposition tends to characterize many, who become leaders and rather fewer who are followers. Aggression is often acceptable in leaders but creates problems for followers. Tough, socially forceful, intimidating, energetic, competitive and power oriented chief executives fall into this category. For them, people are not so important because they want to dominate. This type of leaders is impulsive and thinks that the world is a jungle. They expect people to be hostile to them and they become aggressive in advance to counteract such expected hostility. Of course, this can provoke the hostility they expect. Such leaders probably experience parental rejection or hostility.
- 2.** The paranoid disposition frequently occurs amongst leaders and less often amongst followers. Such people have hidden motives and they are suspicious of others. They are hyper-vigilant; they keep on scanning the environment and taking unnecessary precautions. They deny personal weaknesses and do not readily accept blame. They live under self-imposed restrictions and behave coldly in relationships with little humor. They are fond of mechanistic devices to measure performance and keep track of people. Such kind of people might have intrusive parents and may feel uncertain about their own selves.
- 3.** The leaders having histrionic disposition try getting others' maximum attention at all costs. Such people are alert to the desires of others, they are sociable and seductive but they believe that their self-worth depends on others' opinions. They love activity and excitement and tend to overreact to minor incidents, often throwing tantrums. Such kind of people, when they are children, find it hard to attract their parents' attention
- 4.** Some leaders show detached disposition when they find it difficult to form close relationships. They behave coldly and remain aloof, which may be a response to parental devaluation.
- 5.** The controlling disposition is high in leaders and low in their followers, who want maximum control. They have an excessive desire for order and control. This is their way of managing hostile feelings, which may be the outcome of having controlling parents. The resultant hostility may emerge as tyrannical behavior.
- 6.** The passive-aggressive disposition is common in followers than in leaders. Such people are highly dependent but tend to attack the leaders they depend on. They resist the demands for performance, they are defiant, provocative, negative, complain on regular basis, and demand too much from their leaders. They tend to blame others all the

time; they are ambivalent and pessimistic. This difficulty might arise because such people find it difficult to assess what others expect out of them. This may be due to having parents with conflicting behaviors. Other dispositions are the narcissistic and it happens when someone considers himself/herself exceptional and special; the dependent disposition, in which, people are excessively dependent upon others; and show the masochistic disposition. It is how the styles engage with each other and all this creates the environment, within which, they have to work. Therefore, an aggressive, controlling leader interacting with dependent, masochistic followers will produce a rather different context and pattern of behavior as compared to the leaders interacting with, for example, passive-aggressive followers.

These patterns of interaction will have strong effect on how effectively an organization learns. Such neurotic interactions, therefore, are central to processes of management (Stacey, 2011).

Style And Strategic Leadership:-

- Strategic leadership is complex because it involves vision, flexibility, process of change and continuous struggle for empowering others.
- A manager shows his leadership skills through leading his enterprise through affecting co-workers' behaviors and perceptions.
- Strategic leaders manage human resources and firm's operations through sustainable performance and appropriate decisions.
- The leadership style affects the co-workers' productivity and firm's output. Transformational style is the best because it exceeds expectations, and places the organization's interest above self-interests.

Elements Of Learning Process:-

These resources assure firm's future benefit. Organizational strategies are part of the learning processes, which include the following five elements:

- Assessment of current situation: This relates to collecting information and analyzing the organization's competitive environment.
- Creating a direction for the organization: It includes values of an organization, its unique mission and its futuristic vision.
- Understanding how to achieve the objectives: It involves formulation of strategy including determination of priorities.
- Making the journey: This includes changing an idea into a real action through finalizing the steps involved in the execution process.
- Analyzing the improvement: It helps the organization attain new performance levels and it starts the learning process over again (Hughe and Beaty, 2005)

Strategic Focus:-

Example of strategic focus: Campbell Soup Company serves as a brilliant example of the strategic focus. Effective leading process created a diverse environment in the company. Celebrating their successes and empowering them are keys to the success of the company.

Much of the success that Campbell has experienced during the six-year time under Doug Conant's leadership as president and CEO, who generated productivity with a diverse workforce. This credo has been paramount for the successful turn-around orchestrated by Conant of a beleaguered soup company into food industry's best performers. Many of the actions Conant has been taking, and how he took them, are consistent with the attributes of transformational leadership. He readily gives credit to others for the firm's achievements and continuously deflects praise about his role in Campbell's turnaround. He was anxious to celebrate what is right about employees' work and attitudes rather than what is wrong.

Framing inspiring value propositions were among the first actions he took as CEO. He believes strongly in workforce diversity, as he said: "Our goal as an organization is cultivating a diverse workforce that will bring new and richer perspectives to their jobs and enable us to better understand, anticipate and react to changed marketplace." Mr. Conant proved himself as the epitome of transformational leadership.

Success of his organization lies within its diverse employee base. Several principles guide Conant's work as a strategic leader. Using a personal touch to interact with people, working with individuals for jointly determining

performance expectations and utilizing chances for every person to succeed are major direction-providing principles Conant followed as a strategic leader (Sydney & Albert, 2009).

The Role Of Top-Level Managers:-

Top management is a vital organizational resource because of formulating and implementing strategies; therefore, it is important for organizations to hire highly skilled top management.

Three factors determine a leader's strategic decision:

- External environmental sources
- Organizational characteristics
- Managerial characteristics

Strategic Leadership Styles:-

Many strategic leadership styles exist now. Rowe, in his writings, created distinction between leaders based on their styles. He believed that some leaders are strategic, some visionary and others are managerial (Rowe, 2001).

Strategic leadership provides a vision to the organization as to how it should be in the future. Managerial leadership manages and influences day-to-day assignments pertaining to operational responsibilities.

On the other hand, visionary leadership work in high-risk capacities and make efforts for greater ventures with greater rewards (Rowe, 2001).

Strategic Leadership Roles In Education Systems:-

As far as education management is concerned, institutional leaders must pay attention to the need for change, and they should have three major skills: decision-making, problem-solving, and creative thinking.

Quality leadership improves the environment, in which, education can be better imparted; therefore, in Barron's, strategic educational leadership has been defined as "The leadership in all the areas of educational environment for creating and communicating strategic vision."

Strategic Leadership In Not- For -Profit/ Humanitarian Organizations:-

Most of the research in strategic leadership has been conducted in the commercial/for-profit sector, so, very little research work and studies are available on the humanitarian/not-for-profit segment.

In a study published by Phipps & Burbach (2010), it was established that the public executive roles are different as compared to roles of business executives mainly because they have different information-dissemination, person-to-person, and decision-making roles. In this context, Taliento & Silverman (2005) established differences between the CEO roles in corporate and not-for-profit sectors.

They based their conclusions on the interview responses of organizational leaders in both the sectors. Their research showed that in five areas, leaders of not-for-profit organizations adapted strategies of leaders of the commercial sector:

- Smaller scope of authority
- Large numbers of stakeholders, who believe in consensus
- Performance-monitoring needs
- Need to focus on communications
- Focus on effectiveness in their organizations within minimum resource utilization and training

Studies show that that the practices of strategic leaders are, in some ways, consistent with broad-spectrum theory of strategic leadership but the practical implementation of strategic leadership practices is certainly different in the not-for-profit sector. It is the evidence of the fact that leadership and its roles differ from situation to situation (Phipps & Burbach, 2010).

Strategic leaders focus on gathering resources and collecting people, and then they give them a sense of direction/purpose.

It is very important to answer the question: How should strategic leaders utilize their firm's resource portfolio for exploiting its competencies for gaining a definitive competitive advantage?

Mostly, the strategic leadership tries to make decisions to strengthen their business areas including finance, marketing, and customer services etcetera. Before taking decisions, strategic leaders should verify what competency needs better exploitation because some competencies they already effectively exploit in their day-to-day business.

Companies have to create and exploit their competencies to stay ahead of competing firms but at the same time, they should not let their competence become a liability. Investment in training and development, commonly called as human development, is the single most important source of developing competencies.

Human capital's increasing importance suggests that if a leader/manager decides to invest in training and development programs, it will increase his/her chances to become a successful strategic leader.

Additionally, training and development programs increase workers' knowledge, improve their skills, and make them accept common values, which create team spirit and cohesion within the organization. When a workforce learns continuously, it improves the skills and reduces errors.

Strategic leadership has a common trait and that is learning from mistakes/failures and poor decisions. Learning and building on existing knowledge are important for creating innovation in firms, and innovation leads to competitive advantage. Relationship between workers is a social capital, which helps value-creation for the stakeholders. Experts believe that social capital is crucial for the development of any organization, its workforce and coordination between its different departments. Activities such as R&D produce results, when workers cooperate with each other.

Organizational Culture:-

The culture of any organization comprises of complicated ideologies, symbols, and values, which the management communicates to stakeholders for conducting business.

In other words, because it influences how firms do business, control its processes, and manage employees' behavior, it can create competitive edge. Thus, maintaining culture is pivotal for strategic leaders because it leads to opportunities.

When an organization gets business opportunities, it gets chances to grow and innovate. Any firm's entrepreneurial mindset consists of the following: autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, pro-activity, and competitive aggressiveness.

Incremental changes in any organizational culture makes implementing strategies possible but radical changes make more difference as compared to incremental or historic changes as they change the whole organization's philosophy and sometimes changes its way of doing things. Changing a culture needs good communication and problem solving skills but that must be done after selecting the right people. No cultural change initiative can become successful without active engagement, participation and support by the organization's CEO, administrators, and managers. One catalyst for change in organizational culture, particularly for critical changes, is choosing top managers from outside the corporation (Hughes and Beaty, 2005).

■ Some of following signs of a culture support the learning process:-

- The feasibility and desirability of new opportunities reflect in the vision, mission and strategy.
- People talk about the initiative shown by the coach who saw opportunity, resources found to test it, and assure survival in the market.
- New ideas sometimes come from the functional areas.
- People know the vision, mission, values, and strategy.
- The management in the office recognizes cross-functional achievements of the team.
- Usage of mantras like "attempt", "faster," "cooperation," "vision," "sophisticated" and "initiative."
- The official authority among the members suits the situation in all the teams and shifts
- Discussions on strategy occur in both top-down and bottom-to-top directions
- Managers have a wide network of regulatory relations beyond routine work groups.
- People seek and provide assistance to others
- Common feeling that everyone has some role in leadership of the organization
- Focus on learning, and to accept it because mistakes are a part of the learning process (Pasmore, 2004).

How to become strategic leader ?

- Learning Process: Its elements contribute towards individual development and apply to the process of becoming a strategic leader
- Identifying and Collecting Useful Data: For doing SWOT analysis, necessary data should be available. It might include feedback, performance reports, assessments, and details of current leadership challenges and opportunities. " SWOT analysis " mentions strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats including internal as well as external ones.
 - A leader should pay attention to his objectives along with objectives of his organization. Following factors are important for strategic leaders
 - Values: They are critical and fundamental towards existence and success of a leader in any organization and success of that organization under his/her leadership.
 - Leadership legacy: What kind of legacy a leader wants to leave behind and what footsteps he or she wants others to follow is very important because every generation of leaders of a specific organization follows the footsteps of its predecessors to a certain extent.
 - Career aspirations: Career aspirations of a strategic leader are very important because they first decide their own roles and later, they can decide about the future of the organization. They need to decide how they see themselves in five to 10 years, what roles they want to play and how they would like their organization to be. Leadership development is a process that depends on the leader's own ability and his/her learning potential.
 - About Making the Journey: Initiating the journey is about the tactics, which need effective implementation and it is about specific actions, which help leaders achieve their aspirations.
 - Checking Progress: The plans, which are presented by the strategic leaders, identify targeted milestones for progress. Strategic business drivers should review their progress from time to time. Finally, Strategic leaders should not let their plans or objectives become ends in themselves. Regularly reassessment is needed to identify the ones, which are crucial for a leader's long-term self-development (Hughes and Beatty, 2005).

Relationship Between Leadership Roles & Leadership Competencies:-

Most of the existing literature discusses the leaders' behavior and skills and very less of it focuses on their roles and capacities but we will give leadership role its due significance because it is an important area and it is interrelated with behavior and skills of strategic leaders.

Strategic roles do not replace competencies. While the roles mean "what's" in the strategic leadership literature, competencies describe the "how's."

The core competence analysis helps knowing about specific strengths and development needs related to executive advancement or placement decisions. From the above by looking both at competencies and the roles, the highest priority development needs can be determined to fit current or planned job challenges vis-à-vis their roles. In this context, training plays a significant role because leaders have to be capable of leading, coordinating, assessing, learning, communicating, and delegating.

Similarly, some executives reported that soon after resumption of their roles, they discovered many new aspects, for which, they were not prepared. Many of them further reported that they did not fully understand what "events" and situations they would need to encounter. Clearly, the competency-based assessment and development-based grouping are both necessary for the strategic leadership roles, which unveils the most robust opportunity for building leadership strength (Stacey, 2011).

Conclusion:-

Strategic leadership helps an organization to implement its strategies effectively. Without appropriate strategic leadership, organizational strategies will become ineffective. Therefore, leadership issue is a major challenge for most of the businesses today. The effective identification, development and deployment of senior strategic leaders are central to addressing this issue. Rather than just relying on competencies, it is important to understand roles, which strategic leaders have to play, and the situations, which strategic leaders have to face. Strategic leadership provides system/s or framework/s for dealing with different situations. This review provides the much-needed insights pertaining to link between the strategic leaders' competencies and their roles. These insights are helpful for analyzing the leadership needs, and for dealing with leadership crisis, which many organizations are facing. Defining the roles and analyzing them is an appropriate approach towards senior leadership activities because these roles help making the leaders successful, which consequently makes businesses successful.

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