

## LEADING FOR A SINCERE CHANGE

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper crudely yearns for certain humanitarian approaches other than the establishment and recognized leadership qualities required by the principals of polytechnics.*

*The basic man-handling techniques are totally ignored by the principals due to the stable and passive environments in which polytechnics operate. These, if sincerely adopted, will, surely, make the institution climate, a better place to work; as the work environment, in which the employees operate has a tremendous impact upon the job output.*

*Strong need is exhibited for educational leaders in polytechnics, if one sincerely talks of quality and excellence.*

### LEADING FOR CHANGE :

Chamber 20th Century Dictionary quoted the meaning of Principal as "highest in rank, character or importance, chief;" and principality as "Status, dignity or power of a prince."

He is the leader, who plays a key role in the establishment, development and nurturance of any institution. His role is particularly critical in educational and training institute where institution-alization takes longer time. Institutions rise and fall with change in leadership.

The Principal, as the leader, has the complete responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution for:

1. Sustained growth and renewal.
2. Development of mutually supportive relationship with the Management, Government, Staff, Students and the Community from which it draws its support.
3. Creating a climate in which everybody in the institution finds ample opportunity for developing, according to his genius, and is motivated to work as an enthusiastic member of a team, committed to common goals.
4. Creating awareness for ethical, moral and spiritual background for staff and students.

The above sermon sounds very interesting on paper. In spite of excellent infra-structures, majority of "better placed" institutions lack work culture in their organization. Distrust, dirty politics, leg pulling, back-biting, nepotism, and other known vices are rampant where work becomes work load and work place becomes a literal battle field ! The staff becomes a victim of pressure, stress, conflicts and uncertainties and the stressed institution is characterized by break down of the community though outwardly arranging seminars and schools on total quality management and excellence !

What ails the system is a lack of proper leadership and a professional management style.

The future of any institution ultimately depends upon the Principals - their knowledge, skills, attitude, leadership and above all their VISION and WISDOM and not qualifications alone !!

He is like a carpenter and staff his tools. By skillful and methodical use of his tools the carpenter can shape the wood to the requisite design and pattern. With the same set of tools, one carpenter is able to make a crude bench; another a good chair; and yet a third, a shining almirah. So it is not so much in the tools, but in the person using them, that the key to good workmanship lies !!

The principal has to know his "JOB" very well. And this is possible, if he has worked in the lower formations and thus gained experience. It is only when one knows his job reasonably well that one can organize it and improve

upon it. Without this knowledge, the subordinates guide him instead of being guided by him. Knowledge is person; but only when it is used. Though equipped with high qualifications, their poor family culture and declining regard for traditional values, majority of such 'Principals' fail to stimulate "Happiness" in the institutional climate. While working if one gets happiness, there will be an urge for attaining perfection.

Let us see, what does 'happiness' mean ? Is it Money ? No; there are people who have lot of money; but yet they are unhappy. Is it power ? But people in power are always a worried lot. One can give overtime and incentives to make a person work. These economic rewards are not only costly; but they also have a short-term effect, as the employee's expectations will only increase continuously. Should one punish or induce fear in the mind of a man by threats, charge-sheets, reduction in pay, memos, warnings etc. for not doing the work ? It will force the man to work but being negative in character, it is not a long term solution.

Motivation is what makes people do things happily. The essence of motivation, then, is to trust a man and entrust him with work for which he is most suitable; make him believe that you have faith and confidence in him. This approach is seldom practised, which it is assumed to give good long-term solutions.

Man, basically aspires to continuously rise in life. But like a machine,

man needs maintenance to halt depreciation, it is in the interest of the institute that steps should be taken to appreciate his value. The leader has to keep his men developed and contented; here are some steps in this direction.

#### (I) Courtesy :

Principals have to be human courteous, considerable and consistent. Sometimes, he keeps aloof from his staff and behaves rudely, and while this may enable him to get work done for a while, in the long run it does not pay, the team lose its initiatives and tend to function as mere automations.

#### (II) Give Due Credit :

One is seldom satisfied with another's performance. A man securing 75% in an examination is adjudged as brilliant, and one getting 60% first class but when we ask a man to do a job for us we expect 100% performance. We are not satisfied with 75% or even 90%. So what is the reaction of a man who does 90% and still gets rebuffed. Changes are that, after one or two such unhappy experiences, he may give up the job.

Due credit gives one encouragement and encouragement spurs one to do better, and still better work. It enables one to love the work assigned; and when one loves his work, he can do it for long hours without getting tired. Moreover, he develops originality, initiative and drive and attain the goal for a while .....

#### A Friendly Attitude :

"Nothing helps more that a friendly attitude and nothing harms more than

ridicule". If someone is called into a room and is sure that no one is listening; he will be docile to harsh criticism. But if the door is open even a slightly harsh tone may lead him to despise. It is better to have a plain talk than to use the instrument of ridicule. It is not necessary to use harsh words or ridicule to get more work done. More and better work can be ensure by being friendly.

#### Counselling :

It does not mean giving spiritual advice. It means sharing another's pain and emotions to enable him to release his tension and feel him part of the organization.

- The principal should be aware that he has to converse freely with the person about problems and what he can do to improve his performance.
- Talk to him in a friendly tone and tell him that he has been called not for apportioning blame but to work out a solution jointly.
- Listen to him patiently and ask for small clarifications.
- Collect data needed from his statements and identify problem.
- Tell him that organization needs him.
- Explain what was wrong. Suggest ways of overcoming the problem without criticizing him.
- Formulate "action plan" in consultation with him.
- Get regular feedback about his performance.

- If performance improve pat him on his back.

#### Double Standards :

Nothing damages reputation and work more than, when the principal maintain double standards, not discipline. No organization can run without discipline. Some standards have to be laid down.

Discipline only means that the principal should be firm in demanding standards; while being human and sympathetic. It is this lack of firmness coupled with empathy hat breeds concept, dissatisfaction and discontent.

The subordinate are a sensitive lot and they know whether the head is capable of taking responsibilities ! If they are satisfied with it, they will have profound respect for him but on the day they are let down, all respect will be lost.

#### Broad Thinking A Prerequisite :

The principal has to be broad minded and he should avoid taking undue interest in the petty activities of his staff unless these are detrimental to the institute.

The staff should be allowed to feel at ease. They must be given freedom to act and allow them to have satisfaction and pleasure of doing something as their own. Else, the tendency to wait for orders grows and action is not taken in time. After all credit goes to the need of the institution.

Taking all credit for a job well done and passing only discredit to staff, does not pay. A group of happy and content workers is always an asset to a success-

ful principal.

Many time principal fails to motivate others and cannot mobilize the resources of an organization when they -

- Remain busy doing paper work.
- Rely on people who flatter.
- Busy themselves in finding ways and means to enhance their "Personal" lives.
- In the name of 'education' go on foreign jaunts to attain international and national seminars, conferences and remain absent for days together.
- Find innovative ways of punishing an offender instead of counselling him or setting an example themselves.
- They are glued to their "Management" bosses for personal gain.
- They do not have clear objectives and vision.
- They place the Rule before the Man.

A Principal busy in activities like the ones described above finds it difficult to lead his team; as he fails to create a feeling among the members of the team that each one is working a higher goal which can be achieved only through collaborations with others.

The Polytechnics, having traditionally operated in stable environments; have not been required to develop this type of qualification. Today, being faced by a world in motion, they do not always succeed in identifying what is at fault. The ship is a float but it is stranded .... Principals must resolve to lead, not merely manage .... and come out of their

ivory towers; seize opportunities for institutions building .... birth, establishment of identity, growth, maturity and development and transform their colleges into agents and vehicles of change in society.

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