

APJ ABDUL KALAM'S THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION AS REFLECTED IN HIS WRITINGS

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ABSTRACT

Abdul Kalam was one of the great visionaries who contributed with his all round abilities to the nation. The present study deals with his great vision for education and its development in all perspectives. His educational thoughts are many in numbers from which the thoughts on concept of leadership, the qualities and attributes of leadership, leadership approach and requirements of good leadership. The study includes the analysis and interpretation of the thoughts regarding these points. At the end the findings and observations regarding the concept of leadership, the qualities and attributes of leadership, leadership approach and requirements of good leadership are derived.

Keywords: Leadership, Education, Educational Leadership, Skill, Approach.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a prime factor of any organization that leads it ahead in development and growth. *By leadership, I mean influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals... Leadership ... takes ... much ingenuity, energy and skill.* (Cuban, 1988) Abdul Kalam considered the leadership as an important part of school organization. He suggested a leader to be effective and capable of developing his school system. The educational leadership is the big responsibility of the teachers and principal in the school in order to bring positive change in the school climate. Abdul Kalam described many thoughtful ideas in his books regarding the concept of leadership, the key attributes, qualities and approach of leadership and major requirements for being a successful leader.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the thoughts of Abdul Kalam on Leadership in Education as reflected in his writings.
2. To examine the Leadership Approach according to Abdul Kalam.
3. To study the requirements for Good Leadership in Education according to Abdul Kalam.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the thoughts of Abdul Kalam on Leadership in Education?
2. What is the Approach of Leadership according to Abdul Kalam?
3. What are the requirements for Leadership in Education according to Abdul Kalam?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is attempted to examine APJ Abdul Kalam's thoughts on Leadership in Education which definitely need some philosophical description as well as analysis of the content. So the research method for the study is Content Analysis Method in Qualitative Interpretation.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the present study is the writings of APJ Abdul Kalam which involve his books, articles and materials related to him. From these, six books of Abdul Kalam that reflect the thoughts on leadership in education are taken as the sample:

- (1) Manifesto For Change (MFC)
- (2) You Are Born To Blossom (YBTB)
- (3) Advantage India (AI)
- (4) Ignited Minds (IM)
- (5) Indomitable Spirit (IS)
- (6) Forge Your Future (FYF)

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher first of all read the books of APJ Abdul Kalam. After the first reading of the books, the researcher understood some of the ideas and perspectives of Abdul Kalam on leadership in education. During the second reading, the researcher derived major ideas on leadership in education and classified them in different Idea Groups.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher, after collecting the data, studied the ideas on leadership in education in an analytic way. The ideas and thoughts on leadership in education were analyzed according to the following sub-points:

CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Abdul Kalam defined leadership as engaging in continuing education to lead a team. A person who becomes a leader of any organization makes himself educate everyday at different stages. Leadership means to update knowledge, develop abilities and learn how to approach the problems in better way. Abdul Kalam suggested that a leader has to be abreast of knowledge and skills which are necessary for an effective leadership. A teacher in his class and a principal in his school are the leaders. The teacher as a leader of the class should learn how to move his students to better learning. The teacher should update his knowledge and upgrade his skills to make his leadership better in the class.

LEADERSHIP: QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

Kalam suggested the qualities and attributes a leader should possess within himself to forward his team into progressive direction. The first attribute a leader should have, according to Kalam, is the collective understanding of any problem. This makes him an effective leader. Abdul Kalam suggested that the leader's decisions are accepted by his team members. Another quality of a good leadership is the working style of the person how he plans and organizes his tasks laid down before him. It becomes his responsibility in taking every move forward. Any wrong move or decision may influence on the development of his team. Moreover, the leader should unite his people with his future vision. Kalam described the quality of a leader to make the team members together in one organization in order to realize the vision. The leader's way of thinking, the way of working and the way of dealing with the team members make them to follow him. Kalam wrote – *"A leader is someone whom people naturally follow by choice, whereas a manager must be obeyed. (YBTB, p.64)"* The manager deals with the people with authoritative manner; on the contrary the leadership includes uniting of team members in a shared vision.

LEADERSHIP APPROACH

How to approach to the team members and how to face the problems coming in the way is considered very significant in any leadership. Abdul kalam considered a leader's approach and suggested to make a balance in the approaches of the leader towards his team. Kalam advocated a delicate balance between the hands-on and hands-off approach of the leader as it helps in managing the performance of the members. Kalam defined the hands-off approach as trusting the team members and recognizing their needs. In Abdul Kalam's words, *"It hinges on their self-motivation. (W.F., p.68)"* Abdul Kalam also defined the effect of both the approaches on the team management and wrote, *"When the leader goes too far with the hands-on approach, he is seen as an anxious and interfering type. If he goes too far hands-off, he is seen as abdicating his responsibility or not being interested. (W.F., p.68)"* It is therefore the leader has to develop an appropriate balance between both these approaches and avoid being interfering and irresponsible to the team. Hence, the leader should not give more than enough freedom to the members and should also not control over them if there isn't any need.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GOOD LEADERSHIP

The leader is required to have the right to take decisions independently. He should be given the freedom to work on his own condition and criteria but in rules and regulations of the organization. If the organization is failing to succeed, the leader should have a right to make big decisions for the betterment of the team and success of the organization. Abdul Kalam suggested freedom with responsibility in every leader. Further Kalam asked that the leader should build up his eligibility with necessary education and learning. He should upgrade himself with important skills and knowledge which are invariable to be grown in every leader of any organization. *"Knowledge is a tangible asset, quite often the most important tool in your work. The more up-to-date the knowledge you possess, the freer you are. (W.F., p.77)"* It builds up his own personality which is different as well as better from others. Abdul Kalam suggested that the leader should

be known of the situations around him and be in touch with everyone. "A leader can only be free to lead his team if he keeps abreast of all that is happening around him-in real time. (W.F., p.77)"

MAJOR OBSERVATIONS

- (1) A leader has a collective understanding of any problem. This makes him an effective leader. The leader has to understand the problem first and take decision thinking about everything around his team as his decisions are going to affect the team climate positively or negatively.
- (2) The quality of a good leadership is the working style of the person how he plans and organizes his tasks laid down before him. It becomes his responsibility in taking every move forward.
- (3) A good leader has full control over the activities of his team members and is strict for any wrong move in the team. At the same time, there is freedom and flexibility in his working style.
- (4) A good leader unites his people together with his future vision. His way of thinking, the way of working and the way of dealing with the team members make them to follow him. If he is devoid of skills of leadership, he must have a vision that unites people together.
- (5) A good leader deals with the members in a way that they are motivated and their performance is enhanced. He is a great motivator, an encourager and a master of facing the challenges.
- (6) It is an important responsibility of a leader to support honest and devoted people of his team. He needs to be people-centred first and then task-centred.
- (7) Good planning, division of works among the members, preparing a blue-print of daily works and determination to the duty make it possible to defeat the problems and get success.
- (8) A good leader is independent, powerful and influential in work. He has a right to take decisions independently. If the organization is failing to succeed, the leader has the rights to make big decisions for the betterment of the team and success of the organization.
- (9) A good leader updates his current knowledge and skills through organizational trainings and workshops. Such training programs need to be arranged once in every two or three months so that newer trends can be known by him as well as new requirements can be fulfilled.
- (10) A leader sometimes succeeds in his work and often fails in his role. At that time, a good leader shares both success and failure. After failure, he becomes capable to encourage and to enthuse his members for success.
- (11) Public applause for hardworking members may increase the productivity level in the organization. A good leader is required to create appropriate climate and attractive job design for such people in the team.
- (12) A good leader knows the abilities of his people, creates an enthusiastic environment for them and stimulates them to work. He also identifies their dissatisfactions if any and solves them gradually. He has an ability of observation and recognition of such members in the team.
- (13) A person with high education can be a leader of any organization but this is not enough to have knowledge. It is invariable to have knowledge of ethics and integrity in a person to become a true leader with creative leadership.
- (14) A true leader acts as a true citizen of his nation and fulfils the requirements coming on his part with great courage and conviction. A leader for change can become a part of the nation's development and growth.
- (15) Trust is the foundation of leadership. A true leader develops integrity in his works and creates a climate full of trust and integrity.
- (16) Moral leadership has an ability to dream and to realize it with conviction and determination. A moral leader analyzes the things on the basis of right and wrong aspects with the concern of the society.

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