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PATH-GOAL THEORY OF LEADERSHIP STYLE IN THE STRUCTURAL FORM OF SELF HELP GROUP

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ABSTRACT

Path Goal Theory of leadership style has been applied in the structural form of SHG. The work of House and Mitchell (1974) and Northouse (2007) have been applied to study leadership style of SHG members within the domain of Path Goal Theory. The application of theory fits well to the structural form of SHG. A sample of 240 randomly selected SHG members was found to be closed to be supportive and participative style rather directive and achievement orientation. Education, caste, marital status and occupation influence in imbibing leadership style.

KEYWORDS

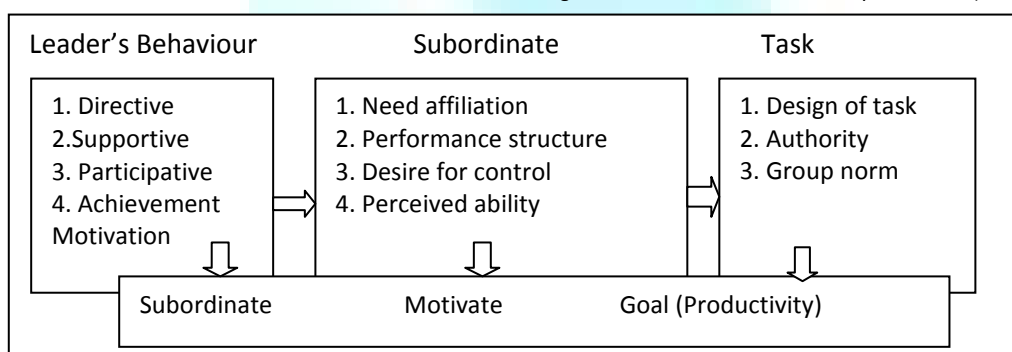
leadership, path goal theory, self help group, directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented style.

INTRODUCTION

There are different theories of leadership style. House and Mitchell (1974) have stressed on three types of theories to describe leadership style. These are (i) Situational (ii) Contingency and (iii) Path Goal Theories (PGT). The concept of PGT in leadership style first appeared in early 1974. Situational theory suggests that a leader must adopt to the level of subordinates, contingency theory emphasize match between leadership style and subordinate with specific situational variables while Path Goal Theory seeks relationship between leader and characteristics of subordinates. The PGT is about how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish pre-determined goal. According to House and Mitchell (1974) leadership generates motivation when it increases number and kind of benefits that subordinates receive from work done. As per concept of PGT, leadership style motivates when it makes the path to goal clear, easy to travel through coaching and direction when it removes obstacles and roadblocks in attaining goal.

The basic concept behind PGT is distance between subordinates and goal (productivity) is connected by path removing obstacles. In short, PGT suggests steps of (i) defining goal, (ii) clarifying path, (iii) removing of obstacles and (iv) providing support.

The relationship between leader's behaviour, subordinate, characteristics of task leading to motivation is well illustrated by Northouse (2007).



The description of the terms are cited to make concept clear in terms of operational definition as stated by Northouse (2007)

- (i) **Directive leadership:** It is the instructions the leaders give about task, expectation, how to be done and time line of completion with fixation of clear standard performance (Halpin & Winer, 1957)
- (ii) **Supportive leadership:** It is the friendly and approachable style where leaders are interested to attain other's well-being
- (iii) **Participative leadership:** It is to invite subordinate to decision making, obtaining their opinion and to integrate opinions into decisions.
- (iv) **Achievement oriented:** It is concerned with performance at highest level possible. It is to establish standard and seek continuous improvement
- (v) **Subordinate characteristics:** These characteristics are (i) need for affiliation (ii) preference for structure (iii) desire for control and (iv) perceived level of ability.
- (vi) **Task characteristics:** It includes (i) design of task (ii) authority system and (iii) group norm.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to investigate Path Goal Theory of leadership style in general and following objectives in particular in Self Help Group structure.

1. To find out leaders in SHG possessing leadership quality of Directive, Supportive, Participative and Achievement oriented nature.
2. To find out relation of leadership with variables like level of performance of SHGs, educational level of sample, their caste structure, occupational composition and marital status

METHODOLOGY

PGT was applied in case of Self Help Group (SHG) as it is emerging as main vehicle of development. In Odisha the performance of SHG is well recognized at planning level, as a result, many of the social welfare programmes are transferred to the hands of SHG groups. The status of SHG in Odisha is as follows (2011-12).

1. No. of Women SHGs formed	4,56,713
2. No. of members	54,80,558
3. Credit advanced	Rs.2,69,448.62 lakhs
4. Amount savings	Rs 8,893.29 lakhs
5. No. of WSHG credit linked	548,450
6. Federations formed	7,950
7. No. of HG with repeat finance	1,14,432
8. Amount of repeat finance	Rs 7,37,442.36 lakhs
9. Mid Day Meals in school	43,463 of 60,675 schools
10. 7,890 WSHGs are engaged as PDS agents	
11. Out of 15,000 GP tanks in the state, about 6,497 leased to WSHGs	
12. 2,137 WSHGs involved in LGP gas distribution	
13. 7.950 federations have been formed	

Source

Leadership style is very well observed with President and Secretary of SHGs and the members of it need their leadership. If leadership style is appropriate and democratic in nature the sustainability of it becomes visible and effective. Besides other environmental variables, leadership style plays crucial role in achieving the goal. PGT being one of its kind can very well explain the traits of leaders leading SHGs. Keeping these considerations in view an attempt was made in Odisha taking 240 SHGs in six blocks spread over three districts.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE SIZE OF THE STUDY

Sl.No.	District	Block	No. of SHG selected
1.	Khurda	(i) Bhubaneswar	40
		(ii) Ballipatna	40
2.	Puri	(i) Pipli	40
		(ii) Delana	40
3.	Cuttack	(i) Nuabazar	40
		(ii) Baranga	40
Total	3	6	240

Again selection of SHGs based on criteria of (i) minimum existence more than five years (ii) having continuous bank transaction without default (iii) following the principle of changing President/Secretary every two years. Thus representative samples of 240 President/Secretary who lead the SHGs were finally interviewed with a scale developed by Northouse (2007) with little modification in scale points. The scale was applied with three point assessment reactive points to record the response of the sample under study.

Result

(A) Prevailing of Leadership Style: The important component of SHG is management leading to profit and sustainability. It depends to a large extent on leadership. The study used the scale developed by Northouse with little modification to survey sample. As has been explained out of three styles of leadership, the present study has been confined to Path-Goal Theory (PGT). The PGT are of four types, i.e. directive, supportive, and participative and achievement oriented. The results have been presented in following tables.

(i) Directive Style of Leadership: The Directive style of leadership has been studied from different angles. The scores assigned in terms of 3, 2 and 1 for very much, much and little of the magnitudes respectively. Item No. 5 has been scored reversely. Analysis of data in score is presented in table 2.

TABLE 2: DIRECTIVE STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

Sl.No.	Statements	Average Score
1.	Members are informed what they expected to know	2.08
2	Members are informed about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done	2.21
3	Members are asked to follow standard rules and regulations	1.22
4	The members are explained level of performance that is expected of them	2.33
5	Sometimes vague explanation is given of what is expected of them on job	1.62
	Mean Average	1.89

Result indicates the sample (N=240) have secured an average score of 1.89 out of 3.0.

The directive style of membership believes members to be explained their level of performance that expected of them (2.33) followed by the members are to be informed about need to be done and how to do it (2.21). The other successive indicators of directives style of leadership is members to be informed (2.08) and sometimes vague explanations are to be given what is expected from them on job (1.62). However, the members are directed to follow standard rules and regulations (1.33).

(ii) Supportive Style: Supportive style of leadership has been studied in terms of friendly relation, to make membership pleasant, help to overcome problem and satisfying of personal needs. The same scoring procedure was followed with reverse scoring of item No.3. The analysis of data is reflected in table 3.

TABLE 3: SUPPORTIVE STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

Sl.No.	Statements	Average Score	+/- than average
1.	Keep friendly working relationship with members	2.12	-
2.	There is little to make it pleasant to be member of group	1.95	-
3	Sometimes things hurt personal feeling of the members	1.53	-
4	The members are helped to overcome problems that stops them to carry out task	2.21	+
5	Personal needs of the members are taken care	2.85	+
	Mean Average	2.13	

In case of supportive leadership the sample with respect of making leadership pleasant (1.95) and hurting the feeling of the members (1.53) are observed to be minimum while taking personal needs of members into consideration is at very high level followed by helping members to overcome the problems and friendly relation.

(iii) **Participative leadership:** As operationally defined the leaders are the partners or share equally in bad or good days in work performance. This quality of the sample was examined as contained in table below. Item No.3 was reversely scored.

TABLE 4: PARTICIPATIVE STYLE

Sl. No.	Statements	Average Score	+/- than average
1	Members are consulted when faced with problems	2.52	+
2	The suggestions and ideas of the members are heard with concern	2.47	+
3	Action without consultation of the members is taken sometimes	1.57	-
4	Suggestions of the members as how to carry out the task	2.25	+
5	Suggestions are invited from the members as what assignments are to be made	1.97	-
	Mean Average	2.15	

Results reveal that sample in participative style of leadership value consultation with members at the time of facing problems (2.52) followed by taking suggestions from the members to solve problems (2.47) and carry out task on suggestions of members (2.25) in this type of leadership action without securing suggestions is not appreciated nor suggestions are sought as how to carry out the task.

(IV) **Achievement oriented leadership:** This approach has both advantages and disadvantages to perform as per standard of the prescribe task. However, item No.4 was reversely scored.

TABLE 5: ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTED STYLE

Sl.No.	Statements	Average score	+/- than average
1	Members are given understanding about performance at highest level	2.04	-
2	Goals are set for members and these are challenging	2.00	-
3	Suggestions are given for continued improvement in performance	1.73	-
4	Members are shown about doubt in their ability to meet goal	2.20	+
5	Constantly challenging goals are set for members to attain	2.45	+
	Mean Average	2.08	

The results indicate that in achievement style of leadership, constantly challenging goals are set before he members (2.45), and members are shown the deficiencies in their ability to meet the goals. The other parameters are, members are given understanding about highest level of performance (2.04), setting up of challenging goals (2.0) and suggestions are given to continued improvement (1.73)

Gap in Leadership Style: Analysis was made to find out gap in leadership styles of the four kinds as shown in table below.

TABLE 6: GAP IN LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership Style	Max. Obtainable score	Score Obtained	Gap (%)
1. Directive	5.00	1.89	62.20
2. Supportive	5.00	2.13	57.40
3. Participative	5.00	2.15	57.00
4. Achievement oriented	5.00	2.08	58.40

Results indicate gap in different style of leadership as found with sample of 240 respondents. Minimum gap is observed in case of supportive and participative style of leadership indicating the sample believes more in these two types of leadership than that of achievement orientation directive type.

Performance of SHG and leadership style: The hypothesis is that better the leadership style greater is the output of the SHGs. The performance of SHGs was measured over 10 important parameters as decided by the SHG members.

Performance level Parameters

1. Engagement per year
2. More production
3. More sales
4. More credit absorption
5. Timely repayment of credit
- 6 Increase benefits
7. Increased participation in decision making
8. Diversification in product
9. More outside contact
10. Recognition in locality

On score analysis, the sample SHGs were grouped on performance level as high, medium and low securing more than 66% of the total scores as high, 34- to 59% of score as medium and less than 33% as low. The distribution of sample on level of performance and leadership style is presented below.

TABLE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ON LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

Style of Leadership	Level of performance			Total	
	High	Medium	Low	f	%
1. Directive	5	17	20	42	17.50
2. Supportive	25	21	13	59	24.58
3. Participative	20	36	8	64	26.67
4. Achievement oriented	10	10	55	75	31.25
Total	60	84	96	240	100.00
%	25.00	35.00	40.00	100.00	

Analysis reveals that 25% of SHGs were at high level, 35% medium and 40% low level of performance. Again in the continuum of leadership style, 22.50% were of Directive, 16.25% Supportive, 19.17% participative while 42.08% were of achievement oriented style. The observation reveals that supportive and participative styles close together constitute 35.42%. The supportive and participative leaders are found more in high level of performance, directive and achievement style leaders are concentrated in medium and low level of performance. The Chi-square value between performance of SHG and leadership style ($X^2=72.38$) is highly significant indicating powerful influence of leadership style on performance of SHG.

Socio-Economic Variables and Leadership Styles: It is believed that leadership style of an individual is influenced by socio-economic variables. Out of many, the study has examined education, caste, occupation and marital status

(i) **Education and Leadership Style:** The relation between educational attainment and leadership style was examined taking here levels of education of the sample. E 1 represents education up to primary level, E 2 up to middle school standard and beyond high school as E3 The distribution of sample according to style of leadership and educational attainment is presented in table.

TABLE 8: LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Leadership	E 1	E2	E3	Total
1. Directive	7	10	25	42
2. Supportive	14	32	8	59
3. Participative	12	40	12	64
4. Achievement oriented	8	27	40	75
Total	46	109	85	240
%	19.16	45.42	35.42	100.00

The sample consists of 19.16% sample who earned low level education, 45.42 % medium level education and rest 35.42% high level education within the sample and range of educational attainment. Supportive and participative leadership quality was found with medium level of education more than low and high level educational attainders. It is evident that sample with educational level below matriculation and above primary level exhibit supportive and participative leadership quality. The Chi-Square value($X^2 = 45.01$) between educational back ground of leaders and their leadership style indicates that both are significantly associated in showing output of the SHG.

(ii) **Caste and Leadership style:** Influence of caste on leadership style has been established by many authors owing to differential family back ground and environment. The distribution of leaders on caste composition is presented below.

TABLE 9: CASTE AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership	SC	OBC	General	Total
1. Directive	17	10	15	42
2. Supportive	12	31	16	59
3. Participative	10	37	17	64
4. Achievement oriented	5	20	50	75
Total	44	98	98	240
%	18.34	40.83	40.83	100.00

Results show that of the sample, 18.34% belonged to SC, 40.83% OBC and 40.83% to general caste structure. The sample with supportive and participative leadership quality is found more in OBC category over SC and general caste. The caste and leadership style is found to be closely associated ($X^2 = 32.53$).

(iii) **Family Occupation and Leadership Style:** It is the common observation that individuals taking up different occupation differ in mind set and behavior. The relation between occupational composition and leadership style was examined as contained in table below.

TABLE 10: MAJOR OCCUPATION AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership	Farming	Business	Service	Total
1. Directive	10	22	10	42
2. Supportive	32	5	22	59
3. Participative	38	10	16	64
4. Achievement oriented	22	30	23	75
Total	102	67	71	240
%	42.50	27.92	29.58	100.00

The analysis reveals farming as major occupation imbibe supportive and participative leadership style than business and service. It is evident that occupation as means of living influence leadership style. Caste as an independent variable is found to have close association with leadership style ($X^2=39.16$)

(vi) **Marital status and leadership style:** It is believed that married and unmarried leaders have different kind of approach in dealing subordinates or people working with them. The study examined the marital status of the leaders in relation to leadership style which yielded the following information.

TABLE 11 MARITAL STATUS AND LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership style	Married	Unmarried	Total
1. Directive	30	12	42
2. Supportive	40	19	59
3. Participative	48	16	64
4. Achievement oriented	55	20	75
Total	173	67	240
%	72.08	27.92	100.00

The findings reveal that of the total sample, 72.08% were married against 27.92% who were bachelors. Supportive and participative type of leadership style was more prominent with married leaders than that of bachelors. The relationship between marital status and leadership style is found to be significant ($X^2=16.49$).

CONCLUSIONS

The study, 'Path-Goal Theory of Leadership Style in the structural form of Self Help Group' conducted taking 240 SHG leaders spread over three districts and six blocks lead to arrive at the following conclusions.

1. Directive, supportive, participative and achievement leadership style do exist with presidents/secretary of SHGs with higher percentage of supportive and participative style.
2. Level of performance of supportive and participative style of leaders is much higher than that of directive and achievement styles.
3. Leaders with education beyond primary and below matriculation are found with supportive and participative style of leadership.
4. The leaders belonging to OBC believe more in supportive and participative style of leadership over directive and achievement style.
5. Leaders coming from families of farming occupation exhibit more on supportive and achievement style of leadership.
6. Married leaders are more inclined towards leadership style of supportive and participative type rather directive and achievement.

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