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THE IMPERATIVES OF LEADERSHIP QUESTION IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The problems of most organisations in Nigeria irrespective of their business and other parts of the world stem from inefficient and ineffective leadership. The reason being that not all the so called leaders have what it takes to manage the affairs of a people or organisations successfully especially media organisations. As observed, some leaders run their organisations like conducting a symphony orchestra, bossing people around rather than guiding the followership towards achieving the organisational goals and objectives which is the essence of leadership. For this reason, many media organisations, both the print and the broadcast (electronic) media, have been caught in legal web, suffered irreparable human capital flight, low productivity, near closure and other issues bothering on bad management. Importantly, the fact remains that leaders are made and sometimes born but good leadership develops a never-ending process of study, education, training and experience. This paper therefore takes a scholarly attempt to examine the concept of leadership and its make ups; the overwhelming values good leadership tends to offer media organisations and the otherwise of bad leadership with a theoretical framework on leadership. The challenges of managing media organisations in Nigeria is also examined with policy prescriptions upon which media organisations could get it right in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS

Leadership, leadership process, media organisations, media managers, motivation.

THE IMPERATIVES OF LEADERSHIP QUESTION IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the importance of leadership to the success or failure of any organisation cannot be over-stressed. This is so asserted because leadership determines the management style and the rate at which the organisational goals and objectives are achieved. However, many erroneously believe that it is natural to assume leadership positions, be it formal or informal, without possessing the prerequisites. As a matter of fact, leadership has a process, and good leadership develops through an unending process of study, education, training and experience. In other words, it takes general preparations to become a leader. It implies that to inspire the subordinates into higher levels of team work, in order to achieve desired results, there are certain things the leader must be, know and do. This is the reason for the conclusion that leaders are made, not born and sometimes born and equally made.

Axiomatically, the place of leadership in the management of media organisations cannot be overemphasised. It is a great determinant of the success or failure of the organisations to say the least. Findings from Nigerian experience have clearly shown that many media houses went into extinction due to poor management by unprocessed, unrefined and bad leadership. Aina (2002) once posits that good management is the steering wheel of any business, without it, other resources will be ineffectual, and thus throw ill-managed organisations into receivership or outright extinction. The scholar further states that:

Recent experience proves that media establishments, even, those owned by government, cannot thrive by being run as social services, hence the current commercialisation and privatisation gale, which dictates that only those shrewdly managed will survive competition.

Therefore, the question of media management from observation in Nigeria has been mixture of worrisome and fillip. This has actually led to the untimely death of many media houses in Nigeria especially newspapers. Good cases are those of **The Daily Times, New Nigerian, Daily Sketch, National Concord, The Monitor** and so on. On the other hand, good management based on good leadership has equally transformed many media organisations in the country. Good cases in this regard are those of **The Punch Newspapers, The Guardian Newspaper** and many of the radio and television stations in the country. Interestingly, the broadcast industry has witnessed great deal of good management based on good leadership. Some of them have metamorphosed and transformed from the primitive level to the most sophisticated level of operation. This is not to say that they do not have their challenges and tough times but the point is that, good leadership has been identified an inevitable treasure for the success of any media organisation.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Various definitions of leadership have been postulated by many management scholars, but for the sake of this context, the following conceptualisations are considered as cited by Aina (2002) Leadership is a process of influencing others to work willingly to achieve organisational goals, rather than out of fear. It is a dynamic process in a group whereby one individual influences others to contribute to the achievement of the group. Another scholarly definition sees leadership as both a process and a property. It explains leadership as a process, as the use of non-coercive influence direct and coordinate the activities of a group for the accomplishment of its objectives. As a property, it defines leadership as the set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ or exert such influence (Jago, 1982). Yet, Katz and Kahn (1978) note that leadership is the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organisation.

In his view (Chemers 2002), leadership is stated as the "process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" Mills (2005) also posits that it is a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of others. Leaders set a direction for the rest of us; they help us see what lies ahead; they help us visualize what we might achieve; they encourage us and inspire us.

Without leadership a group of human beings quickly degenerates into argument and conflict, because we see things in different ways and lean toward different solutions. Leadership helps to point us in the same direction and harness our efforts jointly. Leadership is the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not otherwise do. It's energizing people toward a goal. (Ibid)

From these few definitions, it is very clear that, leadership is but a dynamic process that impacts, imparts and principally meant to achieve lofty goals which are all facilitated by the qualities of the leadership.

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THE LEADERSHIP PROCESS

The leadership process denotes that good leaders are made, not born and that good leadership status is achievable for anyone who desires and has the will power. Although, as earlier stated, it does not come naturally, good leadership develops through continual work and study to improve their skills; they do not rest on their laurels. However Bass (1990) theory of leadership states that there are three basic ways by which people become leaders. These may be through the trait theory which holds that some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. Another is the great events theory whereby a crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extra-ordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person while the third is the transformational leadership theory, which states that people can chose to become leaders by learning and training -people can learn leadership skills. This is the most widely accepted theory today.

Meanwhile, Kouzes and Posner (1987) postulate the following tips as methods of achieving great leadership which are common to successful leaders:
- Challenge the Process - First, find a process that you believe needs to be improved the most.
- Inspired a shared vision - Next, share your vision in words that can be understood by the subordinates/followers.
- Enable others to act - Give your followers the tools and methods to solve the challenges
- Model the Way - When the process gets tough, get your hands dirty. A boss tells others what to do, while a leaders show it can be done.
- Encourage the Heart - Share the glory with your subordinates/followers hearts, while keeping the pains within your own heart.

LEADERSHIP IN PERSPECTIVES

Aina (2002) espouses five different perspectives of leadership. The Charismatic Leader: The influence wielded by a charismatic leader emanates from his personal qualities. The fact remains that not everybody has exceptional attributes that can transform the subordinates into willing followers because these attributes/qualities cannot be acquired by formal training. In media organisations, a charismatic editor is bound to have great influence on reporters, line-editors and other subordinates.

Jesus Christ, Napoleon Hill, Winston Churchill, Prophet Muhammed and the incumbent President of the United States of America, Barack Obama are good examples of charismatic leaders. The Situation Leader: Is a temporary type of leadership whose effectiveness depends on his being in the right place at the right time. However, the transient nature of the situation leadership makes it undesirable, especially for an industrial concern, since what is required is a leader who can play leadership role in different situations for an extended period.

The traditional leader according to Aina (2000) is an ascribed status, since leadership is sometimes a function of birth. For instance, it is impossible for many people to aspire to kingship or queenship other than those who are blue blooded or born into a royal family. Still, another leadership perspective is Functional Leader. In this case, leadership is conferred on an individual based on what he does, rather than what he is; effective leadership depends on what the leader does to meet task, group and individual needs. He may choose to meet task needs by allocating responsibilities and setting performance standards or meet group needs by acting as a representative and to meet individual needs; he may choose to counsel or motivate individuals. The appointed leader as conceptualised by the scholar as the fifth perspective is a leadership position occupied by formal authority conferred on an individual within the hierarchy of an organisation. This form of leadership is said to be effective because he enjoys a formal and collective authority within an organisation.

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

U.S. Army (1973) identifies eleven basic leadership which can build and mould a successful leader. In media organisations, the success is a function of the leadership. Therefore, our media managers in the country need to imbibe certain principles for the survival of their various organisations. As noted by U.S. Army, the first principle is for a leader to know himself and seek self-improvement. This demands understanding the concept of be, know and do as well as continually strengthening one's attributes through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others. Also, a leader especially in a media organisation must be technically proficient as instructed by the second principle. A leader must know his job and have a solid familiarity with the employees' tasks. A media manager must be grounded on the job and seasoned and must be able to define job responsibilities of his reporters to ensure delivery of desired results.

Seek responsibility and take responsibility for actions: A leader should always search for ways to move his organisation to new heights and must not seek to blame others when things go wrong. Instead, analyse the situation, take corrective actions and be ready for the next challenge. Make sound and timely decisions which imply the use of good problem solving, techniques and proper decision making system. Set examples is another principle. A leader must be a good role model for his subordinates- the employees must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see. The late great Indian leader and sage, Mahatma Gandhi once advises that leaders 'must become the change we want to see'.

Know people and look out for their well being: a media manager (leader) must be aware of human nature and the importance of sincerely caring for his subordinates (reporters). Media managers must be fully aware of the fact that reporters are humans with interests and who equally need attention and concern in order to perform to their optimum level. Keep employees informed: Media managers must always know how to communicate information or decisions from the top management and other key people to their subordinates. This includes information that can enhance the workers performances as well as the outputs for the organisation.

Develop a sense of responsibility to workers: a good leader (media manager) must help the workers develop good character traits that will assist them discharge their professional responsibilities with less supervision. Ensure the tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished, this is another principle. Media managers must ensure that job roles are clearly outlined to avoid confusion and to ensure that things are done in line with the organisational goals and objectives. Train as a team: media managers must encourage team training in the real sense of it. There must be systematic integration of the entire various departments in a media organisation so as to achieve the organisational goal. Use the full capabilities of the organisation: this can be achieved by the media manager when he develops a team spirit and this will assist him to employ all the organisational resources to their fullest capabilities.

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Leadership style can simply be defined as the behaviour exhibited by a leader during supervision of subordinates. The style is a function of the leader's assumption about his subordinates and his behaviour when interacting with them. While a leader can exercise his authority in many ways, it must be noted that styles determine the degree of motivation, efficiency and effectiveness of subordinates. In a media house, the best of a journalist can be tapped when he is well motivated. Although, there are as many leadership styles as there are leaders, the four major styles as variously discussed by management literature and as adapted by Aina (2002):

Dictatorial Style: here, the manager uses force and threats to make subordinates carry out official assignments. The use of coercion in task execution is immense under the dictatorial style of leadership. This as a matter of fact is not desirable for a goal oriented media organisation. Journalists are not such professionals that can be threatened or treated as non-humans. The Autocratic Style: This style concentrates decision making in the leaders hand, while subordinates participation is discouraged. It is more of a 'tell style' by one-way communication; the leader tells subordinates what to do but not why they must do it. However, this style is prevalent in private media organisations except few other ones.. Moreover, a leader may adopt the style when he feels that the subordinates are incompetent and lazy. An advantage of the style is that assignments are executed to deadlines, since consultations with subordinates will not constitute impediment.

The Democratic Style: This is a sharp contrast to the autocratic style because decision making is decentralised. It is also called participative or 'Joint Style'. Here, responsibilities are delegated to subordinates based on their competence and interest. Editors and other media managers adopting this style usually suggest sketched ideas and ask for contributions or present a problem and seek ideas to enable them adjust their position to it. The benefits include boosting the feeling of self worth and satisfaction in employees; it makes employees feel self-actualised through participation in decision-making and their contribution may improve

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the quality of decision-making; and change implementation will be easier because of subordinates' input. This leadership style has occasioned the breakthrough of many media organisations in Nigeria.

The Laissez-Faire Style: this style is also known as 'abdicratic style', 'free rein style' or 'that of anything goes' as described by Aina op cit.. In this context, the leader, rather than assumes leadership role, abdicates the position by giving it to someone else. The criticism against this leadership style, technically, is that it is an absence of leadership style, because it portrays a scenario whereby subordinates are allowed to establish their own objectives and make all decisions since they are given little or no direction. A leader my adopt this style due to lack of self-confidence, fear of non-performance and personal evaluation of the costs of leading, which may outweigh the advantages.

Editors and media managers often adopt this style if they are convinced that allowing their subordinates greater use of initiatives will enhance job performance. In addition, it may be a better option where subordinates are highly motivated, experienced and competent. As it is, the editor will present a problem and ask the subordinate to solve it as they wish within specified limits. (Ibid)

LEADERSHIP AND DESIRABLE QUALITIES

Napoleon (1966), in his work' Think and Grow Rich' notes that a good leader must have the following characteristics which constitute the eleven secrets of leadership:

- Unwavering Courage: this is essential because no intelligent follower wants to be dominated by a leader who lacks self- confidence and courage.
- Self–Control: A leader must be able to control himself and set good examples for his subordinates (reporters).
- Keep sense of Justice: To command the respect of the subordinates, media managers must consistently exhibit high sense of fairness and justice.
- Decisiveness: when a leader is not resolute and decisive when making decisions, he will have problems leading others.
- Pleasant Personality: A leader with pleasant personalities is more respected. Media managers must be amiable and possess excellent human skill.
- Sympathy and Understanding: Leaders must understand the problems of the subordinates and sympathises with them.
- Mastery of detail: To succeed as a leader, one must be able to master details of one's position and roles as well as the tasks ahead.
- Co-operation: A leader must be able to adopt the principle of co-operative effort and induce or encourage same in the subordinates.
- Willingness to assume full responsibilities: A good leader must always be ready to assume full responsibility for the mistakes and shortcomings of his workers. Aside declining to disclose information sources to security agents when being interrogated, media managers are expected to assume responsibility for their reporters' mistakes in a case of libel suit.
- Ability to do more than paid for: Perhaps the willingness to go extra mile, put extra measures and efforts than the subordinates that distinguishes the leadership: The editor, the manager (programmes) and others must show must greater commitment and work harder than the subordinates.

In another dimension, a quality of good leadership is also x-rayed by Stogdhill (1984) in his review of 124 empirical studies of leadership attributes and recommends that successful leaders generally exhibit the following qualities:

- Intelligence: Successful leaders tend to be rated higher on intelligent quotient (IQ) tests which cover verbal fluency, overall knowledge, originality and insight.
- Initiative: Leaders tend to show higher level of energy, ambition, persistence and resourcefulness than the subordinates.
- Height: This seems to be a contestable fact in that not all leaders, in most cases are taller than the average height of the followers.

LEADERSHIP MODELS

Leadership model will enhance the reader's knowledge in understanding what makes leaders act the way they do, as the ideal is not to lock oneself into a type of behaviour explained in the course of the models, but to realize that every situation demands for a different approach, behaviour or decision to be taken. Therefore, for the purpose of this study and more importantly to widen the horizon of our media managers in the country, the four Framework Approach by Bolman and Dean (1991)

THE FOUR FRAMEWORK APPROACH

Bolman and Deal (1991) note that leaders display leadership behaviours in one of the four types of framework, structural, human resources, political or symbolic. It is essential however to note that the style can either be effective or ineffective, depending on the chosen behaviour in certain situations. Therefore, for a goal oriented media manager, this framework is very essential.

STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

In an effective leadership situation, the leader is a social architect whose leadership style is analysis and design. Structural leaders focus on the practicability of means of achieving the desired results of organisational efforts-structure, strategy, environment, implementation, experimentation and adaptation. While in an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a petty tyrant whose leadership style is details. A good media manager must assume the personality of a "structural engineer" and live above the traditional ways of managing his subordinates and the overall co-ordination of the organisation

Human Resources Framework

In an effective leadership situation, the leadership is a catalyst and servant whose leadership style is support, advocacy and empowerment. Human Resource leadership believes in people and communicate that belief, they are visible and accessible; they empower, increase participation, support, share information, and move decision making down into the organisation.

The death, recently, of the Group Managing Director (GMD) of Daar Communications Plc, owners of RayPower (Radio) and the African Independent Television (Television) and Daarsat, the late Alhaji Ladi Lawal and the attendant condolence messages attested to the fact that he was an human resources leader, loved by the subordinates. But in an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a pushover, whose leadership style is abdication and fraud.

POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

In an effective leadership situation, the leader is an advocate, whose leadership style is a coalition and building. Political leaders clarify what they want and what they can get. They assess the distribution of power and interests; they build linkages to other stakeholders; use persuasion first, then negotiation and coercion only if necessary. While, in an ineffective situation, the leader is a hustler, whose leadership style is manipulation.

SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK

In an effective leadership situation, the leader is a prophet whose leadership style is inspiration. Symbolic leaders view organisations as a stage or theatre to play certain roles and give impressions. They use symbols to capture attention, then try to frame experience by providing plausible interpretations of experiences; they discover and communicate a vision. However, in an ineffective leadership situation, the leader is a fanatic or fools, whose leadership style is smoke and mirror-not real or tend to confuse the subordinates, reflective and delicate.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT: SALIENT ISSUES

Media management the worldover is quite challenging most importantly as it practically involves human figures who are sociologically described as enigmatic whole. Not limited to human beings alone, the question of media management is equally dimensional as it involves varied and wide range of pertinent issues.

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The proper management of the human figure involved as well as other issues in any typical media organisation determines the overall success of such an organisation.

Among others, issues such as organisational conflict, motivation and reward, stress management, proper communication channels practical integration of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the challenges of poor managing them so as to save his organisation from unnecessary extinction.

For instance, no media organisation can carve a world class status for itself without proper application and integration of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in all aspects of tis activities and operations. The relevant communication technologies in the media practice are now christened "The New Media Technology" (Osazee-Odia 2008). The new media technology from observation has tremendously improved the lots of media organisations be it print or electronic in all continents of the world. Emphasising this, Osazee-Odia (2008) notes that, worldwide community is facing endless bombardment of messages and programmes from global broadcasting. The driving force of this scenario is linked to the development and diffusion of new media technology.

Defining new media, Illa (2001: 41-42) states that these are means or channels by which information is gathered, processed, delivered, used, reused and reacted to in the new globalised environment, adding that it has to do with application of technology. Osazee-Odia (op cit) however posits that new media technology refer to as digital technology applied to mass communication or international communication which essentially has to do with computer mediated systems to which the internet and satellite communication technology as a transmission hardware are also significant.

These communication technologies have brought a new dimension and high degree of dynamism into media practice to such an extent that a media manager who fails to move with the trends of things would never be able to compete favourably with other media organisations. The face and operations of the media practice in Nigeria in the last fifteen years are quite dimensional with appreciable degree of sophistication. In other words, both print and electronic media organisations have benefited so immensely from hthe communication technologies and have improved the quality of their services aspects of media practice.

Another question that must be answered at all times by various media managers is stress and its management. Media managers in the country and all over, should always recall that journalists are human beings and not robots. They feel tired after exerting energy and overdose of this could lead to disorder in their system. Stress as it were must be understood. This will enable media managers to understand the dynamics of stress and its proper management among their subordinates. Givnig a picture of stress as a concept, Sharma (2008) notes that stress is a force which acts on human body to produce strain.

Stress is also captured as a natural bodily response to perceived threats resulting from the integrated activities of the nervous system and hormones on the body (Aina 2002). Heller and Hindle (1998) see stress in individuals as any interference that disturbs a person's healthy mental and physical well being. It occurs when the body is required to perform beyond its normal range of capabilities. Undoubtedly, journalism or media practice in general is stressed-based especially in the developing countries. Therefore, this must be put into consideration by media managers because observation shows that media managers go through less stress compared to the reporters or journalists who are practically on the field. The latter are exposed to stress, risk and somewhat dangers. In managing these individuals (journalists or reporters) and to get the best out of them, the of media managers must always be conscious of stress and how it usually takes its toll on the reporters. Media managers can practically manage stress by creating a relaxation / resource centres within the organisation to relax the muscles and the brain after a hectic outing. Other ways of managing stress are spelling out work schedule or staff roster with strict adherence, due and encouraging reward apart from salary, granting leave as at when due mandatory medical check-up and so on.

Motivation and proper remuneration are other salient issues that the leadership of media organisations need to properly manage. It is a shallow and myopic view to hold that salary is the only means of motivation in media organisations, Aina (2002) asserts

Media organisations will survive only if adequate attention is paid to staff motivation. This is essential to boost their morale for improved performance and to check against human capital flight to other media organisations, public relations and advertising firms offering better incentives. Editors and others in supervisory positions in media houses must not only be versed in motivation theories and strategies; but must also realise that in modern business, " command and control " style is counterproductive and " advise and consent" is motivational.

Still on motivation, Raka (2010) notes that, every human being needs motivation to work**.** It adds an extra zing in the spirit of an individual towards his work. So, incentives form an essential element of motivation for every organisation. It can be in the form of cash as well as non-cash**.** Either form of motivation helps employees to perform better. In any organization, every individual has different intensity towards their work.

So the ones who put an extra effort towards their work, or whose contributions make the organisation achieve splendid results, need that special treatment from their employer**,** as they wish and expect their efforts to be recognised so that they stand out from the rest of the general masses. Everyone loves attention, this is human nature. In such cases, employee motivation plays a vital role. And the best way for any employer to recognise his employees' efforts is through incentives either cash or non cash form.

Also, as ways of motivating journalists or me media workers generally in media organizations, the management should give room for career development from time to time. The management should make it a policy to even sponsor career development courses or seminar within and outside the country. This would boost the morale of journalists and be able to perform to the optimum level. The question of prompt promotion to individual employees in media organisations is another important way of motivating them. This should be based on a standardized scale and rule of thumb should be avoided in this regard. Also, promotion in media organization should not be politicised or delayed unduly. Nepotism as well should be avoided rather; due process should always be adopted in the process. However, promotion can equally be effected as a reward to extra ordinary effort as this is obtainable anywhere in the world.

Remuneration on the other hand is yet another salient issue in media organizations. Henry Fayol emphasizes this in his fourteen principles of management. His position is that, employees should be given fair and commensurate pay for the job done. According to Cascio (2001) cited by Iqbal (2009),"Compensation which comprehensively addresses the question of remuneration includes direct cash payment, indirect payments in the form of employee benefits and incentives to motivate employees to strive for higher levels of productivity is a critical component of the employment relationship.

Compensation affected by forces as diverse as labor market factors. Collective bargaining, government legislation and top management philosophy regarding pay and benefits" Compensation may be defined as money received for the performance of work plus many kind of benefits and services that organizations provide for their employees. Compensation is recompense, reward, wage or salary given by an organization to persons or a group of persons in return to a work done, services rendered, or a contribution made towards the accomplishment of organizational goals.

In this regard, the remuneration must not only be fair as advocated by Henry Fayol, it must equally be consistent especially in the media practice where the remuneration is relatively discouraging. Unfortunately, findings show that in Nigeria, media organisations owe up to six or seven months' salaries to journalists. This is a terrible situation; the consequential effect of this is an encouragement of the brown envelops syndrome, practice of PR-journalism and other unethical practices among journalists. Therefore, the leadership of media organizations in Nigeria and Africa at large need to take urgent steps to improve the situation most particularly to restore the glory of journalism and protect the dignity integrity of journalists.

CONCLUSION

The question of leadership in media organisations is synonymous to the place of the heart in human body. Leadership as a concept and a management phenomenon unequivocally makes or mars the whole process of an organisation. A leader in any media organisation leads and not to mislead, guides and to misguide, this he achieves by being made as a result of deeper internalisation and proper application of management theories and principles as well timely training and retraining. For a media organisation which desires to stay permanently in business with appreciable market share, proper management of journalists and other class of the employees in the organisation is a sine qua non. Importantly, the salient issues discussed above and many others should be taken care of by the top management for as long as the leadership is much after the result, the human figures and the entire process that produce the result should be given the utmost attention.

It must be emphasised that the performance of journalists and other media practitioners in the country and other African countries is a reflection of the various leadership styles obtainable in their various organisations. At this juncture, it is better to remind our various media managers of the classical submission of Dr Adalat Khan in his write up titled **the need and importance of Leadership** published in American Chronicle in July, 25 2007, "Managers are the most important people for any business organisation. Whether it is a very small business or a multi billion Ringgit corporations, the success or failure of both of them depend on

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good management...we need to appreciate, that today, good management in addition to basic management skills also requires leadership skills. In fact, leadership is the key quality which every manager must acquire to become an effective manager. A manager may develop a perfect strategy to make an organisation successful, but to carry forward that strategy towards realisation; he or she needs leadership qualities. Leadership then takes a bigger, broader and more important role". Therefore, what makes good leadership as advocated by this paper needs be internalised by our various media managers so as to get the best of journalists' performance and to ultimately take their organisations to greater heights.

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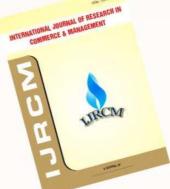www.ijrcm.org.in

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