

## **IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS AS A PART OF PROJECT SUCCESS IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Leadership is one of the most subjective matter of all the time. It changes from head to head, company to company, people to people. The Ahmedabad construction industry is growing faster day by day; you will see development in every sector - Private as well as government. The general tendency of measuring the project success is mainly depending on 3 criteria: 1. Does project completed on time? 2. Does project completed within budget? 3. Does project achieved its predefined quality? Because of rivalry among the companies and high competition in market the field of Project management has expanded and attained unavoidable importance. With the technical advancement and increased level of complexity; the project success is largely depending on how it is managed or you can say how it has been led by the project manager. To observe and define importance of leadership skill, leadership style and few project success factors in the accordance with the leadership - A questionnaire survey was conducted to answer specifics like what is leadership according to the people who are in working in industry, which are the important skills which leader must possess, what are the project success factors in accordance with leadership skills etc. which were actually derived from background study and literature review. Total 43 responses were received covering all the positions like senior project manager, Project manager, Assistant project manager and Assistant project manager. 3 case studies were also included as a part of research work with the aim of to go in the detail that how leader acts or applies their leadership skills in certain phase or situation of the project. The analysis shown that the leadership skills and project success are intermediately correlated to each other with the use of SPSS software. The research also showed that there is a much need of leadership training module for the employees working at different levels.

**Key words: Leadership skills, Project Management, Construction Industry, Project Success.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is one of the most subjective matter of all the time. It changes from head to head, company to company. The Ahmedabad construction industry is growing faster day by day; you will see development in every sector - Private as well as government. The general tendency of measuring the project success is mainly depending on 3 criteria: 1. Does project completed on time? 2. Does project completed within budget? 3. Does project achieved its predefined quality?

Rivalry among the companies and high competition in market the field of Project management has expanded and attained unavoidable importance. With the technical advancement and increased level of complexity; the project success is largely depending on how it is managed or you can say how it has been led by the project manager. The traditional view of leadership is getting changed & will be changing dramatically in the next five to ten years.

The type of leadership or the leadership skill has become one of the important factor of project success on which there is little research is done. If we look at Ahmedabad construction industry, a person has greater chances of becoming a project manager who has great technical skills/abilities and/or has vast

experience (in years) of construction field. It is a project manager who is responsible for entire project, he is the one who needs to get things done. With only technical skills it is bit difficult to lead the project towards success as the medium scale or big scale project involves various contractors, specialized contractors, Vendors, Engineers, clients, users, consultants, designers etc. Project manager has to work combine and in accordance with all of them. The importance of Leadership skills is as equal as technical skills here.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a research gap between Best practice books and on field in the matter of who should be considered as leader? & what skills he must possess to make a project success. There are many questions and factors which affects a person's leadership skills. Here are few of the literature & what they have to say about Leaders.

Berry Benator & Albert Thumann (Author of Project Management & Leadership skills for Engineering & construction projects) initiate about leadership skills with asking a question "Are Leaders born or made?" According to them almost anyone can become a respectable front-runner with hard-work, coaching and practice. Like any other job function, leadership proficiency can be learned. And just as almost anyone can improve a skill with practice, so can leadership skills can be learned and improved upon with practice.

Professional engineers need to be exposed to different leadership skills and styles to be better prepared for future projects. By implementing leadership qualities, professionals in the industry can become more versatile and more prepared to move up to project management positions. To make these changes, numerous methods to achieve these leadership skills will have to be reviewed. To start the discussion about the development of leadership classes, the following terms are defined:

- Definition of Leaders: People who recognize the need for and implement change, establish direction, align people, motivate and inspire, give away as opposed to hoard power, communicate a vision of where the organization is headed, build teams and share decision making, mentor and coach subordinates, and demonstrate a high degree of integrity in their professional interactions (Skipper and Bell 2006).
- Definition of Leadership: Process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish stated objectives (Yukl 2002).

The 3rd Addition of the PMBOK includes leadership skill into the head of interpersonal skill.

- Leadership – Developing a vision & strategy, and motivating people to achieve that vision and strategy.

The 4th Addition of the PMBOK also includes leadership skills in the head of interpersonal skill.

- Leadership is something which has more involvement in focusing on the efforts of the team towards a single goal. The key elements of it are: Admiration and faith not anxiety and obedience. Leadership is bit of critical in the early phases of the project when you have to shape the vision & have to inspire all the project stakeholders especially project team.

The 5th Addition of the PMBOK also includes leadership skills in the head of interpersonal skills.

- Successful project requires strong leadership skills. Leadership is important through all phases of the project life cycle. There are multiple leadership theories defining leadership styles that should be used as needed for each situations or team. It is especially important to communicate the vision and inspire the project team to achieve high performance.

### 3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is conducted with the following objectives:

- To study different factors and skills in leadership in the context of construction project management.
- To improve the current style of leadership trends so as it contributes to the project success.

### 4 HYPOTHESIS FORMATION:

H<sub>1</sub>: Project Success and Leadership skills are highly correlated to each other.

H<sub>2</sub>: Leaders can be created.

H<sub>3</sub>: Leaders requires training at every phase of their job. (Assistant Project Manager to Senior Project Manager)

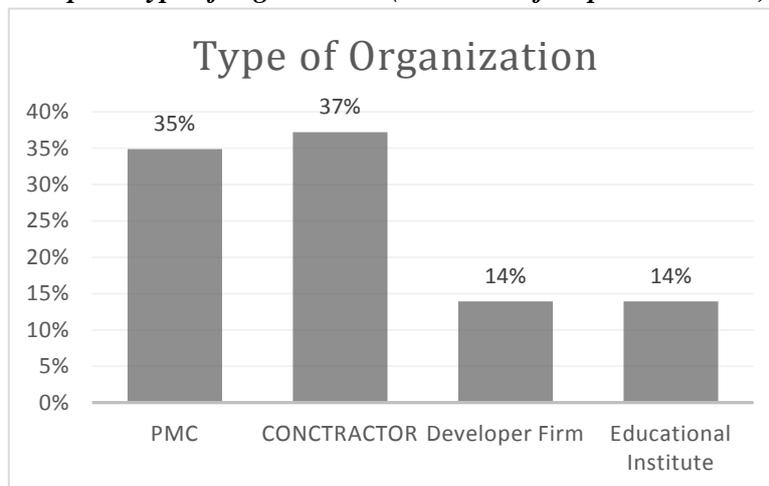
### 5 METHODOLOGY & DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected in the form of Questionnaire survey which was sent to almost every professional who is connected to civil engineering – Contractors, Developers, Project Management Consultants, and Academicians. Total 43 Respondents and 3 case studies were conducted from different 22 Companies.

#### 5.1 Data Analysis

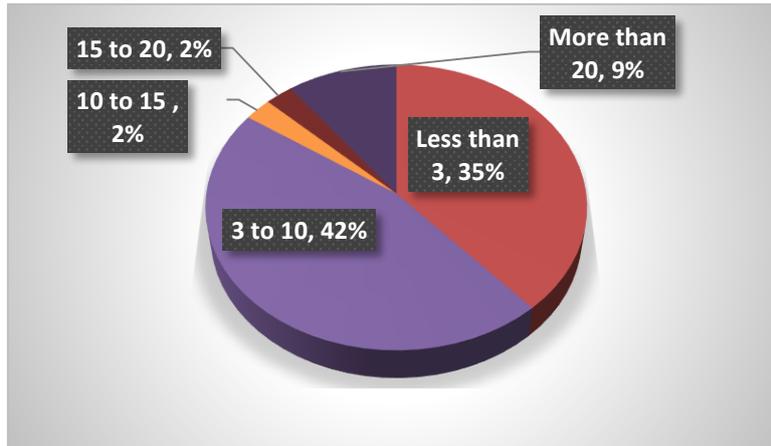
Out of 43 respondents 35% were working in the project management consultancy, while 37% were associated with contracting firm. Remaining respondent were majorly Developer firm and Educational Institute.

*Graph 1 Type of organization (Total No. of respondents – 43)*



Surprisingly almost 46% respondents were having experience between 3 to 10 years. While 12% respondents were having more than 15 years of experience. Other 38% were the respondents who had just started their careers having experience 2 years or less.

**Graph 2 Experience (Total No. of respondents – 43)**



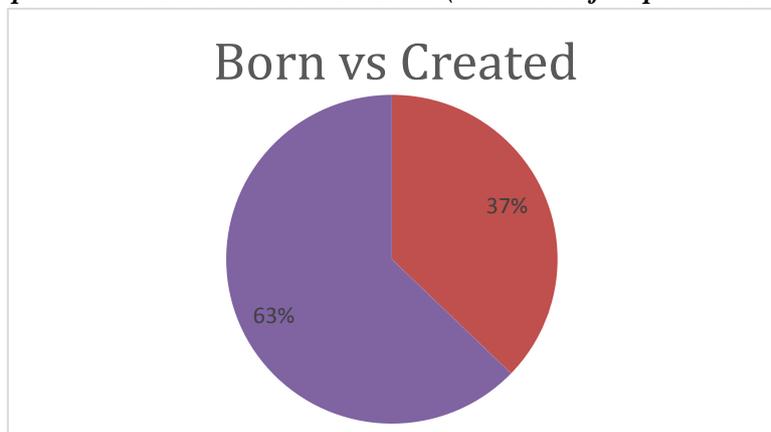
When respondent asked about that “Do they feel like a leader while managing a project?” In response to that almost 53% people partially agreed the statement while about 40% strongly felt that they act as a leader in project. Only 10% disagreed and said NO. That simply concludes that market has always demand of being leader from a project manager.

**Graph 3 Are you a Leader, while managing a project? (Total No. of respondents – 43)**



In the next question when they were asked that “Leaders are born or created; what is their view on that!” almost 60 – 40 situation was there. Nearly 60% respondents felt that leaders can be created while remaining were in the opinion of leaders can be born.

**Graph 4 Leaders are Born or Created? (Total No. of respondents – 43)**



A biggest paradox was found in the analysis, which was when respondent asked that “Has he/she attended any leadership Programme?” and “Does leadership skills are require to complete the project successfully?”

On one hand 70% respondents felt that Leadership skills are require to complete the project successfully while 60% of the same respondents haven’t attended any leadership Programme. Which also conflict and questions that if 63% people feels that leaders must be created but same 60% haven’t attended any leadership module.

**Graph 5 Have you attended any leadership Programme? (Total No. of respondents – 43)**



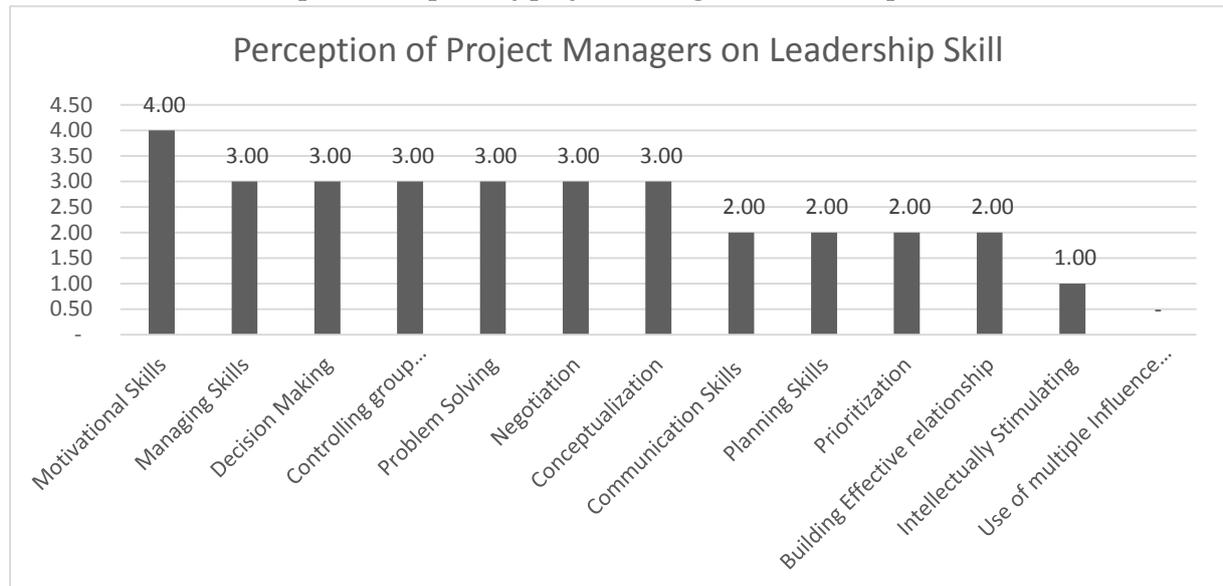
**5.2 Rank Analysis of Leadership Skills for Senior Project Managers**

When in an interaction with top management – Following findings were concluded as their perception to the importance of leadership skills in construction.

**Graph 6 Perception of senior project manager on leadership skills**



**Graph 7 Perception of project manager on leadership skills**



## 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Hereby, with all the collected data, analysis and findings we can conclude that leadership what PMBOK or other project management books write are nearly same to the what current construction industry or may be construction industry is turning more towards project leaders rather project managers. On the other hand, construction industry demands of leadership training modules.

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Following training module must be applied in order to turn the project manager into a leader.

1. First there should be assessment of project manager’s current skill so that area of improvement can be identified.
2. There should be Event sharing programme for senior project managers and project manager where they can share different project stories regarding leadership skills.
3. There should be training of strategy building, strategy implementation, control of group performance and other such tool which gets the project towards success.

Other Topics Include: Building greater leadership confidence and presence; understanding leadership and corporate accountability; and improving communication skills and cultural awareness. There should be training module of Authentic Leadership: They are the people whose inner breath guides their work and earn the trust of their team.

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