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# VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

BULLETIN OF THE COORDINATING SECRETARIAT  
FOR PLANTATION AREAS

## THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

*(Notes to be used as background for Leadership Training Sessions)*

### Role of Leadership

What is leadership for?

The role of leadership in any group is to guide the group towards the achievement of its objectives.

These objectives can be many, ranging from the most general to the most particular. It is dangerous to neglect the general objective for the particular objective, or to neglect the particular objective for the general objective.

We must explain what is meant by general and particular objectives with some examples:

(i) Take the case of the leader of a whole country.

His objective is the strength and prosperity of the nation. Under this general objective there will be thousands of particular objectives:

- making the trains come on time
- giving electric power to remote communities
- immunization of children, etc.

(ii) Take the case (closer to ourselves, perhaps) of the leader of a small urban, rural or estate community.

The general objective is the upliftment of the living conditions of the people who live in that community. There will be several particular objectives under the general objective:



- working to change the perceptions of the people about themselves
- setting up a pre-school
- looking after the disabled and the handicapped
- tackling the problem of worm-infestation or scabies, etc.

#### Notes

- (i) An important part of the role of leadership will precisely be to guide the group to understand and formulate clearly its general and particular objectives and then to guide the group to the achievement of the objectives.
- (ii) The general objective(s) and the particular objective(s) are important in themselves and important for each other.

### The Necessity of Leadership

Is it possible to have a completely leaderless group ?

It is possible to have more or less autocratic leaders or more or less democratic leaders but it seems that every group must have leadership which may be individual or collective

Can there be a family without a leader

a school without a principal

a country without a government

a community centre without a community leader ?

But, of course, there are different types and styles of leadership.

### Types and Styles of Leadership

We shall take only 2 major types and 2 major styles but we have to remember

- (i) that these are ideal types or styles and that inbetween the 2 types or 2 styles there are several other types and styles
- (ii) that in practice we will have leadership that combines more or less of one type or style with less or more of the other type or style.

You may rarely find a person who eats only rice or only bread. Usually, we find persons who eat more rice and less bread or less rice and more bread.

### Two Major Types

- (i) socio-emotional leadership: which assures the morale of the group by keeping the members united and happy.
- (ii) task leadership: which assures success to the group in the achievement of its objectives.



## Two Major Styles

- (i) democratic: which uses the methods of consultation and persuasion
- (ii) autocratic: which uses the methods of direction and coercion.

### Notes:

- (a) In some groups there are two leaders: one the socio-emotional leader, the other the task leader. In other groups, one leader fulfils both functions.
- (b) The socio emotional leader tends to be more democratic than autocratic; the task leader tends to be more autocratic than democratic.
- (c) In an action-oriented group, task leadership is more important than socio-emotional leadership, but the task leader must not be unaware of the need of socio-economic leadership in the group.

In a reflection-oriented group (say, a study circle, a religious community); socio-emotional leadership is more important.

## Qualities of a Leader

- ability to understand the situation in which the leader has to operate: the leader must be an adept at social analysis
- ability to form a plan of action for effectiveness in this situation
- sensitivity to the common needs of the group
- sensitivity to the particular needs of each individual or each section of the group without however impairing the achievement of common needs
- flexibility and openness to change
- ability to initiate new courses of action or innovativeness
- ability to elicit the maximum cooperation from each member of the group
- ability to inspire and guide the group chiefly by the example of the leader's own excellence and commitment.

## Six Case Studies of Qualities of Leadership

1. There is an epidemic of diarrhoea in a small village or on a division of an estate.

What are the qualities you would expect to find in a community leader working there?

2. In an urban area the community got together and constructed a small community centre. A few weeks after the opening, some drunks living in the community returning home at night after a party smashed all the windows of the centre.



What are the qualities the community centre leader should show in this situation?

3. We have organized a film show and are already 20 minutes late. The people, especially the youth, are becoming restive. Finally, the leader learns that the projector has broken down and cannot be repaired until the next day.

What qualities should the leader show?

4. The Community Centre has just finished a very successful AGM. The MP, the local government official and nearly the whole village were present.

What qualities should the leader show during the week following the meeting?

5. There is a very successful youth leader on an estate or in a village. But the leader has a problem with many other youths who could be excellent community workers but are indisciplined, disobedient and are given to gambling and drink.

What qualities should the young leader show in dealing with these youth?

6. There are three small-scale community income-generating projects in progress in a village: manuring the coconut palms which had never before been manured, making bricks for sale, making sweetmeats for sale in the nearby town.

What qualities should the leader show in order that these projects may be a success?

### **Relations between the Leader and the People**

1. The Leader must never, never forget that the leader exists for the People.
2. Hence the Leader must always be in contact with the people. The Leader must act according to the principle, "From the masses to the masses".
3. The Leader must be totally and obviously dedicated to the cause of the people.
4. The Leader in dealings with the People must use what is called the reflection-action-dialectic as follows:



- (i) The Leader gets the ideas of the People, then synthesizes and systematizes them:
  - (ii) The Leader then puts these ideas back to the People
  - (iii) With the People, the Leader then evolves a plan of action which is carried out
  - (iv) With the People the plan of action is reflected upon, that is, it is evaluated
  - (v) The Leader as before synthesizes and systematizes the evaluation
  - (vi) The Leader then puts the reflection back to the People
  - (vii) With the People another plan of action is formulated.
- And so, on and on.

### Training for Leadership

1. Some say that some people are born leaders and hence there is no need to train them. They go on to say that there is no point to try to train those who are not born leaders as they will never become leaders.

This is partially true. We see it in a group of very small children. One or two children in the group naturally adopt leadership roles.

But it is only partially true. Even "born" leaders can lead better if they are well trained, and those who are not natural leaders may in many cases be trained to be very successful leaders.

2. We must admit the influence of nature. But we must not forget the role of the environment for the blossoming forth of natural qualities. A young girl or a young boy on an estate or a village may have many natural qualities of leadership. But they remain undiscovered, sometimes forever, even by the young girl or boy, because of the lack of a suitable environment. As community workers we should be concerned in creating an environment in which leaders can emerge from among the people.

### Types of Training

1. Classes, lectures, discussions on leadership, its nature, its qualities, its types etc., using audio-visuals, role play, exercises of group dynamics.



## 2. Training in specific skills needed by a leader, e. g.:

- how to conduct meetings
- how to formulate a project proposal
- how to maintain accounts
- how to report back on a project
- how to maintain ongoing monitoring of a project
- how to make an evaluation of the project
- instructions on systems of rewards and punishments.

## 3. Training in motivation

### Notes:

- (i) Training for leadership can be done either by someone else for oneself or by oneself (by self-evaluation, self criticism) or by both someone else and oneself.
- (ii) Training can be informal and explicit training sessions or in continuous in-service training
- (iii) No one is ever fully trained for anything. Hence the leader has to continue reading, reflecting, experimenting, self-criticizing. The leader must never grow stale

### Report on

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING SESSIONS

In pursuance of a decision taken by the Action Committee of the Coordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas to stimulate the emergence of leadership among its members, steps were taken to commence a residential leadership training course at the Satyodaya Seminar Hall Kandy. The course of training started in November 1986 and ended in March 1988.

The training was conducted in six weekend sessions in November, 1986, December 1986, February 1987, December 1987, February 1988 and March 1988. It was originally intended to have the sessions once in two months and so complete the whole course in 12 months. But the unsettled conditions of travel etc sometimes counselled postponement.

Resource personnel drawn from the University of Peradeniya, the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Government and Private Schools in Kandy and Social Service Organizations dealt with the following subjects in six sessions of three days each:



1. Evolution of Humankind and of Societies
2. Evolution of Sri Lanka
3. The Role of Ideologies and Religions in Development
4. The Search for Alternatives
5. Qualities of Leadership
6. Formation and Growth of Leadership

On an average twenty-eight representatives from CSPA member organizations followed the course of training and fourteen of them were awarded certificates for good attendance. These certificates were given only to those participants who had followed a minimum of 80 per cent of the classes, that is, at least 5 out of the 6 sessions. Both Tamil and Sinhala participants followed the lectures and simultaneous translations either into Tamil or into Sinhala assisted all the participants to follow the lectures closely.

Group discussions following the lectures evoked much interest among the participants. From the questions posed by them it could be deduced that a fair measure of creative thinking was achieved. This aspect was brought out particularly at the evaluation of the training course which was held after the final session in March 1988 where the participants made a critical analysis of the content of the subjects covered.

In the context of the present unhappy situation in Sri Lanka the participation and cooperation of both Sinhala and Tamil persons was most significant. Further, of those who attended the course of training nearly one third were women who were mainly drawn from the estate sector where the literacy rate among women is low.

It is to be hoped that this Leadership Training Course will result in the emergence of a responsible leadership among participants drawn from the village and the estate sectors who will play a role in the rapidly changing situation of Sri Lanka and contribute towards peace and reconciliation among the different ethnic groups in our native land.

— Y. Ranasinghe Rajapakse



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The CSPA celebrated International Women's Day at Rochdale Hall, Kandy for the second year in succession on 8 March 1988. This year the celebration was based on the theme, "Peace and Women's Contribution towards Peace". Overnight accommodation on 7 March was available for women coming from distant estates and villages. About 200 women participated in the Seminar. The meeting commenced with the traditional lighting of the oil lamp at 9.45 a.m. Vasanthy Charavanamuttu explained the meaning and purpose of International Women's Day. At 11 a.m. Ms Ruparani Joseph spoke on "The Problems Faced by Women in the Promotion of Peace". She said that Sri Lankan women who number more than half of the population should play at least an equal part with men in the process of peace promotion. She made a special point of the value of talking each other's language in order to be able to understand each other better. Women must unite and come forward to find solutions to national problems.

Ms Monica Ruwanpathirana, one of the listed discussion leaders, was unavoidably not able to attend. The time set apart for her was therefore used by the participants to express their ideas and give an idea of the women's work programmes implemented in their own organizations. Mrs Seneviratne, an Agricultural Instructress, pointed out that production is currently being affected by the lack of peace in the country and as a consequence women face several hardships in their homes. She agreed with Ms Joseph that the women should come forward to solve these problems.

Ms Saroja from Satyodaya expressed the view that only by improving educational facilities could the knowledge of the nature and value of peace be imparted to estate and rural women. She spoke of the urgent need of Adult Education in order to achieve this end.

There was a lively discussion throughout the proceedings. Sinhala and Tamil were used with immediate translation from one language to the other. However, the number of those who actively participated was smaller than expected and desired.

Vasanthy Charavanamuttu, Malini Mahagedera and Shiela Ranasinghe were the chief organizers of the Seminar. The CSPA expressed its gratitude to them.

Vasanthy Charavanamuttu



## Documentation

### NAME AND ADDRESS OF PLANTATION UNIONS

*(This alphabetical list is probably incomplete; omissions are entirely indeliberate and we shall be grateful for information which will enable us to complete the list)*

1. Agricultural & Plantation Workers Congress (APWC)  
45, Mahiyangana Road  
Badulla
2. Ceylon Plantation Workers' Union - Red Flag (CPWU)  
Gunawardane Building  
Hatton
3. Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC)  
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha  
Colombo 7
4. Democratic Workers Congress (DWC)  
98 A, Mohideen Masjid Road  
Colombo 10
5. Lanka Estate Workers Union (LEWU)  
457, Union Place  
Colombo 2
6. Lanka General Services Union (LGSU)  
10/1 - 1/1, Kotugodella Vidiya  
Kandy
7. Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU)  
546/4, Galle Road  
Colombo 3
8. The National Union of Workers (NUW)  
618/- 1/2, Galle Road  
Colombo 3
9. National Workers Congress (NWC)  
94 1/6, York Street  
Colombo 1
10. Peasants Estate Workers Congress (PEWC)  
No 2, Ward Street  
Badulla



11. **People's Labour Congress (PLC)**  
30, Kalutara Road  
Matugama
12. **Sri Lanka Independent Estate Workers Congress (SLIEWC)**  
71/6, Barnes Place  
Colombo 7
13. **Sri Lanka Independent Estate Workers Union (SLIEWU)**  
43/6, Church Road  
Ratnapura
14. **Sri Lanka Mahajana Trade Union Federation (SLMTUF)**  
82, Sri Vajiragana Mawatha  
Colombo 10
15. **Sri Lanka Nidhas Sevaka Sangamaya - Plantation Sector (SLNSS)**  
301 A, T B Jaya Mawatha  
Colombo 10
16. **Sri Lanka Sinhala Estate Workers Union (SLSEWU)**  
Welimada Road  
Bandarawela
17. **Socialist Workers Congress (SWC)**  
309, Kahatapitiya  
Gampola
18. **United Lanka Estate Workers' Union (ULEWU)**  
143, 3rd Floor Kew Road  
Colombo 2
19. **United Plantation Workers' Union (UPWU)**  
71, Malay Street  
Colombo 2
20. **Workers & Peasants Liberation Front (WPLF)**  
65 A, Wasala Road  
Colombo 13



## Book Review

Siruvār Padalhal (*Children's Songs*)

Kulandhailhal Poonga (*Children's Park*)

From its office in Bandarawela the Project Cell of the Education Component of the Badulla Integrated Rural Development Programme published in Tamil in 1986 the two roneoed booklets listed above. The format of the roneo is entirely unattractive and could certainly have been of a better standard. But the contents of the booklets are excellent and the motive behind their publication - with the assistance of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) which generously funds the Education Component - most worthy of praise.

The poems and songs are graded from Year One to Year Five of primary school. They have been selected to suit the interests of the child as the child moves forward from Year to Year. The poems can be sung which is a distinct advantage, as song is at the heart of the culture of the plantation people.

The second booklet contains simple instructions on how 24 items that a Children's Park may wish to have may be constructed with skills available in the local community of estate or village and at low cost. It also discusses simply and briefly the uses to which each item can be put and how each item could help the integral development of the child.

We may be permitted to suggest that the booklets and others like it be reprinted on better paper and in colour and with an illustrated hard cover. This would be an investment in education which would amply repay its costs.

- P Suthanthiraraj and Vasanthi Charavanamuttu

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