

THE CONCEPT OF DECISION MAKING

Decision-making and problem-solving are basic ingredients of managerial leadership. More than anything else, the ability to make sound, timely decisions separates a successful manager from a non-successful. It is the responsibility of managers to make high quality decisions that are accepted and executed in a timely fashion. On the face of it the decisions should be cohesive, conjectured, contingent, flexible, improved, influencing, intuitional, non-judgemental, objective, operational one. One of the most important functions of a manager is to take decisions. Whatever a manager does, he does through decision-making. Each managerial decision is concerned with the process of decision-making. It is because of this pervasiveness of decision-making that Professor Herbert Simon has said the process of managing as a process of decision-making. According to him, a post or position cannot be said to be managerial level until and unless the right of decision-making is attached to it. As a matter of act, it is the core of executive activities in a business organization.

Decision-making is a mental process. It is a process of selecting one best alternative for doing a work. Thus, it is a particular course of action chosen by a decision maker as the most effective alternative for achieving his goals. According to D.E. McFarland, "A decision is an act of choice-wherein an executive forms a conclusion about what must be done in a given situation. A decision represents a course of behaviour chosen from a number of possible alternatives". In the words of Haynes and Massie, "A decision is a course of action which is consciously chosen for achieving a desired result".

Hence decision-making is a typical form of planning. It involves choosing the best alternative among various alternatives, in order to realize certain objectives. A decision represents a judgement, a final word, and resolution

of conflicts or a commitment to act in certain manner in the given set of circumstances. It is really a mental exercise which decides what to do.

Leaders must be able to reason under the most critical conditions and decide quickly what action to take. If they delay or avoid making a decision, this indecisiveness may create hesitancy, loss of confidence, and confusion within the unit, and may cause the task to fail. Since leaders are frequently faced with unexpected circumstances, it is important to be flexible - leaders must be able to react promptly to each situation. Then, when circumstances dictate a change in plans, prompt reaction builds confidence in them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DECISION MAKING

The essential characteristics of decision making are given below:

1. It is a process of choosing a course of action from among the alternative courses of action.
2. It is a human process involving to a great extent the application of intellectual abilities.
3. It is the end process preceded by deliberation and reasoning.
4. It is always related to the environment. A manager may take one decision in a particular set of circumstances and another in a different set of circumstances.
5. It involves a time dimension and a time lag.
6. It always has a purpose. Keeping this in view, there may just be a decision not to decide.

7. It involves all actions like defining the problem and probing and analyzing the various alternatives which take place before a final choice is made.