INDIAN LEADERSHIP STYLE DISCUSSED IN INDIAN SCRIPTURE: RAMAYANA

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Abstract: Ramayana and Bhagavad Geeta are considered as two of the best epics in India. Over the years, different authors from different backgrounds have tried to explore these two epics from various aspects. But among all these aspects management is a topic that has not yet been thoroughly analyzed, keeping these two epics in mind. Therefore, the aim of this research paper is to explore the various management lessons that can be learnt from Ramayana, for enhancing managerial effectiveness.

Key words: Managerial Effectiveness, Leadership, Management.

I. Introduction

Management of any type, whether in business or in some other human activity, is an act through which people are brought together to work for achieving a desired goal. Generally, management is defined by the following five functions as Planning, Organizing, Leading, Controlling and Coordinating. These points are worked upon keeping in context the Ramayana and Bhagavad Geeta. The Ramayana is a Sanskrit epic poem written down by a Hindu sage and Sanskrit poet Valmiki; regarded as one of the two great works of Indian literature (other one being the Mahabharata). The story's original version in Sanskrit is known as Valmiki Ramayana, dating to approximately the 5th to 4th century BC. According to Hindu tradition, the Ramayana belongs to the genre of Itihäsa and takes place during a period of time known as Treta Yuga. Ramayana has a total of seven Kandas (Bala, Ayodhya, Aranya, Kishkinda, Sundara, Yuddha & Uttara) and twenty thousand Slokas. This whole epic is flooded with instances of management issues. All the characters of Ramayana are endowed with powers, skills, self-less dedication and the spirit of tyaga (sacrifice). From this complex of the characters and the story of the Ramayana, we have picked out the principles of management. Management is seen from several fronts of life here in this epic (Shukla, 2015). With the principle of Management, one can encounter the actual situation either for success or otherwise. Even in management, tactics and tactfulness are necessary. If not, the goals and objectives remain defeated. As Valmiki says, one has to think of the Artha (the subject matter) and the situations, as well as the Arthantara (the consequences and the hurdles), before coming to a decision.

II. Literature Review

Leadership is not tantamount to management although they both share some common characteristics. For instance, they are both concerned with influence, working with people and meeting goals (Northouse, 2010). However, the functions of management may be distinguished from those of leadership. In particular, management is concerned with planning and budgeting (e.g. setting timetables and allocating resources), organising and staffing (e.g. establishing rules and procedures) and controlling and problem solving (e.g. developing initiatives and generating solutions) (Kotter, 1990; cited in Northouse, 2010). On the other hand, leadership involves establishing a direction (e.g. creating a vision and establishing strategies), aligning people with organisational goals (e.g. communicating goals and seeking commitment) and motivating and inspiring people to achieve organisational goals (e.g. empowering subordinates) (Kotter, 1990; cited in Northouse, 2010). Despite these differing functions, leaders are also involved in planning and organising tasks in order to get the job done (i.e. management function) and similarly managers are often involved in helping groups achieve their
goals (i.e. leadership function) (Northouse, 2010). Leadership is the art and science of influencing, motivating, inspiring, and transforming people (human resources) towards achieving organizational goals. In 1994, two researchers Bernard M. Bass & Avolio stated that there two types of leadership; Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership defines and articulates a vision and mission for the organization and departments; this type of leadership style can transform the followers towards higher performance. Transactional leadership focuses on exchange of valued things (rewards) and how current needs of followers can be fulfilled. To best describe the two types in the form of an example; if you want to build a ship, don’t rile up the men to go to the forest to gather wood, saw it, and nail the planks together (Transactional Leader). Instead, inculcate in them the desire to explore the sea (Transformational Leader). Lord Rama was such a type of Transformational leader.

III. Methodology
A scientific review of published evidence was undertaken for understanding the different contact that researcher wanted to explain through evidences in Ramayana. This type of examination aims to replicate existing understanding on a particular subject by focusing on the most topical evidence in the area. Three sources of evidence were used: peer-reviewed empirical studies and reviews published in academic journals, non-peer reviewed studies (e.g. religious books). In count, dedicated specific content on religious learning were examined in order to provide an overview of major leadership theories.

IV. Analysis of Ramayana for Lord Rama as a Transformational Leader
Although leadership is not confined to individuals in formal leadership positions, it is argued that these individuals may have a particularly wide remit of influence within an organisation (Kelloway & Barling, 2010). Seven studies focused on transformational leadership (Barling, Loughlin & Kelloway, 2002; Kelloway, Mullen & Francis, 2006; Clarke & Flitcroft, 2008; Conchie & Donald, 2009; McFadden, Henagan & Gowen, 2009; Mullen & Kelloway, 2009; Innes, Turner, Barling & Stride, 2010). Three studies focused on transactional leadership (Zohar, 2002a; Zohar & Luria, 2003; Luria, Zohar & Erev, 2008). And three studies examined both transactional and transformational leadership (Zohar, 2002b; Clarke & Ward, 2006; Lu & Yang, 2010). The traits of transformational leadership had been already demonstrated by Lord Rama thousands of years ago. He showcased the many qualities that a good leader is expected to have: patience, ambition, optimism, compassion, confidence, vision, and good organizational skills. These qualities and characteristics of Lord Rama resulted in respect, motivation, admiration and in gaining the trust of the people of Ayodhya. The seven main characteristics of Transformational Leaders, which were showcased by Lord Rama were as follows:
1. Transformation Leaders are visionaries: They have broad visions, which are then further translated into missions and goals to complete the task. Lord Rama created a future vision for Ayodhya and its people, which were clearly communicated to them before he left for the forest.
2. Transformation Leaders are change agents: They strive to bring changes in the attitudes, behaviours, expectations and goals of all their followers. Lord Rama changed the kingship of Kishkinda from the hands of Bali to Sugreeva. He also crowned Vibheeshana as the king of Lanka, before the war with Ravana.
3. Transformational Leaders are courageous: Once they have taken a stand, they do not back down, no matter what the circumstances. They are brave to take the risks necessary, to ensure their goals are achieved. Lord Rama was firm, and stuck true to his father’s word given to Kaiyeki to go on exile. No one was able to persuade him to return back to Ayodhya and rule as the king.
4. Transformation Leaders believe in people: They believe in the abilities of people and empower them to reach their true potential by exploring themselves. He showed full faith in Hanuman and gave him the authority to successfully locate his wife Sita in Lanka, and hand over the ring to her. He also had immense confidence in his Vanara army to defeat Ravana’s army and rescue Sita.
5. Transformational Leaders are value driven: They believe in a set of core values, from which they will never deviate.
6. Transformation Leaders are lifelong learners: They take every mistake and failure as a learning experience and show a continuous desire for learning and development. Lord Rama took lessons from all the sages during his childhood, and also when he became the king of Ayodhya.
7. Transformational Leaders can deal with complexity and uncertainty: They have an ability to deal with and solve complex problems. Lord Rama took the difficult decision to banish Sita from Ayodhya so as to uphold the honour of his dynasty.

V. Analysis of Ramayana for Management Lessons from the characters in Ramayana
Ravana, an erudite Brahm was nearing his death when Lord Rama asked his brother Lakshmana to learn Rajaneeti from him, which is applicable for everyone to do any form of work. Firstly, if we have any task at hand, we should complete it immediately before our mind changes. Secondly, never underestimate your opponent like Ravana underestimated Rama’s army, which was full of Vanaras, who were not even humans and
were considered incompetent as compared to Ravana’s demons. But in the end he lost the battle eventually. Thirdly, the work which you do should be for the welfare of the organization and organisation’s secrets should never be revealed. For instance, Ravana revealed his life secret to Vibhishana, as he was his brother & also well-wisher for his kingdom, but Vibhishana revealed his secret to Rama, which in turn led to Ravana’s death at the hands of Rama. Soorpanakha, the sister of Ravana, enticed her brother to abduct Sita. But this was all a strategic plan on her part. She was married to Dushabuddhi, who wanted to upsurge the throne from Ravana, but he was killed by him. In order to take revenge, she provoked Ravana as she estimated that Lord Rama could be the only able person who could kill Ravana. Her nose got chopped by Laxmana, which created a strong reason for her to provoke her brother, and set her plan in action.

VI. Conclusion

There are many lessons to be learnt from the Ramayana but some of the most crucial ones from a management point of view are:

1. **Team Work:** This can be seen in the team work demonstrated in the mission of searching for Sita and her eventual rescue from Lanka, from the clutches of Ravana.
2. **Innovation:** The best example for innovation can be seen in the building of the highly non conventional Ram Setu bridge that spanned the immense gap from India to Lanka, which helped the Vanaras army to reach Lanka and defeat Ravana’s army in war.
3. **Clarity in vision:** Rama’s army of Vanaras had a clear vision of defeating Ravana’s demon army in war and rescue Sita.
4. **Interpersonal skills:** Lord Rama always interacted freely with the people in his kingdom and developed relations with his subjects no matter what their social status or background was. He treated everyone equally with respect and courtesy.
5. **Consulting subordinates:** Lord Rama took Ravana’s brother Vibhishan under his protection, and took his consultation many times during the battle, as he was able to provide crucial information about Ravana’s army and on how he could be defeated.
6. **Ethical Behaviour:** When Ravana entered the battlefield on the first day without any preparations beforehand, he was immediately disarmed by Rama, but was still allowed to return back to his city unarmed, as the code of chivalry followed by Rama stipulated that an unarmed enemy should not be attacked.

**References**


