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Effective Practices of a Leader and Leadership in Management Decisions Ramayana - the Significant Foundation

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Introduction

Indian culture is a set example for spiritual faith and practices. Indian society believes in following the traditional philosophers who direct and guide the society to practice the knowledge of traditional culture. In Indian culture, people name their children after Rama, Sita and Lakshmana for the principle, practice and skill of dealing with others being a leader.

The Ramayana is an excellent example in Indian history of how Indian ethos and values are deeply rooted in our generation. It is not just a story of different characters but a medium that was employed by our ancient mentors to imbibe the significance of performing dharma. 'Sri Valmiki Muni', who is known as Adikavi or the first poet in the Sanskrit language, 'composed the Ramayana', which is known in different versions. Sant Tulsidas rightly said in Ramcharitmanas

that 'Rama katha kai miti jaga nahi', meaning that it is not easy to count the Rama Katha in this world. Sage Valmiki, in the Ramayana, offers personality lessons in leadership, especially those of Sri Rama, King Dasaratha, King Sugriva, Sri Hanuman and even King Ravana. He has enlightened every aspect of human life in the form of behavioural concepts, political inspiration, economic impact, management, psychology, ethics, etc.

Organisational performance means the 'transformation of inputs into outputs for achieving certain outcomes' (Chen, 2002). The performance and success of an organisation are related to the plan and policies of the leaders and the application of the same in effective terms. The role of a leader in influencing and directing the team is a vital position in an organisation. The organisation needs a viable leader who can bring the team together and can

institute suitable systems and structures.

The Terms - Leader and Leadership

Leader and Leadership are two different concepts of management. Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence the members of the team to achieve the goal of the organisation. A leader is an individual who holds the responsibility of assigning or delegating work to a group, team, organisation or similar entity. The existence of a leader comes not from personal qualities but from the nature of the group and the real situation he is part of (Gary Johns, 2008). The leader creates changes in a constructive way, by crafting a vision for the future, by selecting a course together with effective tactics for implementing the necessary plan in the sequence of fulfilling the imagined future. A leader's contribution towards the success of an organisation, society and country comes from his personality, behaviour and character, which are important determinants of the leader. Napoleon Bonaparte once said that he would have an army of rabbits led by a lion rather than an army of lions led by a rabbit (Sheh, 2003).

Leadership is the process of inducing a group, team, or organisation to meet its goal. The achievement of specific tasks of

an organisation by influencing the target group is the ability of leadership, which is a part of management. Leadership motivates groups and their members to achieve the goals of the organisation with management activities such as planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling the groups or teams. Decision-making skills and the ability of leaders in implantation give shape to strategies. It is one of the key energetic forces for refining firm performance. The quality of a leader in decision-making develops, deploying the organisational resources in an optimal way to convert the product and services into valuable terms for delivering quality results. Effective leadership is seen as a potent source of management development and sustained competitive advantage for organisational performance improvement. (Avolio 1999, Lado 1992 and Rowe 2001).

A leader is the one who navigates and provides the vision and mission in sustaining and expanding the organisation with his people. In reality, failure or poor acts, whether economically, politically or socially, are not due to poor management but poor leadership in most organisations, societies and countries. The life force and the spirit of an organisation that holds everything

together is leadership. A wise leader uses this force to inspire and motivate his team. Without a leader, an organisation, a society and a country are merely collections of people (Sheh, 2003).

Practical Significance of the Role of Leaders in the Ramayana

The Ramayana is a lesson in the implementation of effective practices of leadership, in the form of strategies, plan, policies and application of ideas with effective decision. Indian philosophy and values are important for spirituality, harmony and peaceful existence.

It is not limited to a few roles of leaders in the Ramayana but every instant supports and motivates leaders while practicing and functioning with the management. This does not help only in present decisions but also for future prosperity. The roles of different characters in the Ramayana explore the decision-making attitude as well as the support of members, not only in the field of battle but in families also.

In the Ramayana, Lord Rama always took the lead of his members and subordinates from the front and was not anxious to take risks. Taking initiatives and inspiring the team for the best ideas and success was the key quality of Rama. The qualities of patience, courage and bravery give an

insight into his leadership skills, which were evident in the way he conducted himself on the battlefield.

Review of Literature

Pushpa Hongal et al (2023) focused on the modern practices of management and lessons from the Indian ethos. Different principles of management have been taken from the Ramayana such as clear goals, motivation, leadership, strategic planning, etc. The source has not only studied the motivational concepts such as courage, self-control, determination, etc., but also people management principles such as empathy, communication, trust, etc., from the Ramayana. The research has concluded that the characters of Indian culture inspire the manager today. The Ramayana provides the roadmap to make life meaningful. Modern managers can lead the organisation more ethically and morally to greatness.

Nisha Patel et al (2022) aims to demonstrate the virtues, with lessons of management from the Ramayana and relate them to the modern Indian lifestyle of the 21st century. The study consists of responses of 100 Hindu Indians who participated in the descriptive research wherein standardised five-point ballots were applied. The study has concluded

that the Ramayana is the institute of management which teaches management principles to managers for their regular practices in business. The Ramayana has management ideas, which are accepted by managers as the code of conduct.

Dr. Ashamayee Mishra et al (2022) states that the Ramayana has a wealth of business insight that may easily be incorporated into contemporary management literature. A study was undertaken to improve contemporary management practices by using the lessons from the Ramayana. Different lessons of management have been studied in this research. Some important ideal management paradigms had been undertaken for the study and their application to business was explained. The study has concluded that it is very difficult for every boss to communicate the vision to the employees but Lord Rama's principles did the task. Ethics is the best lesson for all managers, which is strongly believed in the Ramayana.

The Role and Quality of Skilful Leaders of the Ramayana

A leader has a clear goal - Achievement of goals is a challenge for every leader. In the Ramayana, Lord Rama had a clear goal to win the battle of rescuing Sita by

defeating Ravana. The quality of the clear goal of Lord Rama is a guideline and direction to his followers and enables a better understanding to work towards a common goal. Similarly, in an organisation, every leader of the team should have a clear goal.

Create successful leaders - Team members follow the strategy of the leader to implement and apply in a practical situation to achieve the goal. The leader's direction and guidelines motivate and inspire the members to take the lead to handle the project independently; this helps to develop a new leader. In the Ramayana, Hanuman consciously followed and experienced Rama's strategy and gained confidence with the perfect decision. Hanuman rescued Rama and Lakshmana from Ravana by using Rama's strategy used at the time of rescuing Sita. Hanuman performed his duty with a positive intention.

Empower subordinates - Mission and Vision achievement with an objective is an important role of every leader in business. Knowledgeable and experienced leaders make the task easy with coordination with the team members and their empowerment. Rama as a leader supports the opinion of his army. In every movement of success, he implements the ideas of his army for

the best result. The quality of Rama in following a code of ethics and being ready to sacrifice is the sign of every battle's success. Being a leader, he brought ethical decision-making in all areas of his life.

Rely on employees' confidence and trust - Employees are an important factor of every organisation; work is performance with confidence and trust. Employees cannot deal with every stage of work. A leader has to rely on employees for their work with confidence and trust. A good leader trains his employees to attempt undesirable situations by themselves and relies on them in times of need. Hanuman took an autonomous call to save Lord Rama and Lakshmana when they were abducted by the demon Ahiravan. Due to the trust and confidence of Lord Rama, Hanuman performed his responsibility and duty.

Humility - A leader is said to be humble as he doesn't want to be the centre of attraction. He is aware of his mistakes and gaps in his knowledge and imperfection. Lord Rama was the personification of humility and compassion. He not only humbly welcomed Vibhishana, the brother of his enemy Ravana, to his team but also made him the king of Lanka after winning the war, after he realised his folly. Thus, being humble is one of the most

significant characteristics of a good leader. A humble leader has no place for ego or arrogance in a workspace.

Listen to and respect the subordinates - Respecting the opinions openly and listening to the recommendations and suggestions of the subordinates by empowering them is a sign of a great manager. Rama took this initiative before accepting Vibhishana when he came to join their group and welcomed the participation of the other members by listening to their opinions.

Communication skills - A leader wins the confidence of the team members by communicating his strategy to his teammates. Lord Rama communicated tactfully to the *Vaidya* (doctor) to treat Lakshmana when he was injured in the battle with Megnath. He communicated to the *Vaidya* with confidence to treat his brother as a local man of Lanka. But Rama didn't stop here and told Hanuman to bring the *Sanjivani Buti* so that Lakshmana would recover faster than expected.

Professionalism and cool-headedness in adversity - An effective outcome is possible with cool headedness and professional leadership while handling every situation in an organisation. Ravana's brother Kumbhkarana courageously advised and insisted on

respectfully returning Sita to Lord Rama and Ravana got ready cool-headedly for the battlefield with a very professional face despite being aware of what the future held for him.

Optimum utilisation of resources - Strategic resource allocation -

Hanuman's crossing the sea in the Ramayana is a classic example of optimum utilisation of resources. Hanuman allocated the responsibility with authority to his team for traversing the seas. He took help from Jambavant for his flying capability and reached Lanka.

Effective Management Secrets from the Ramayana for Effective Leadership -

A good manager or leader enables the real and full potential of employees.

Every employee is different with their own set of experiences, values, cultural backgrounds, influences and beliefs. No matter how much potential an employee has, it can remain dormant if not managed rightly and properly nourished with the right ingredients.

A great manager never allows an employee's potential to go unnoticed or to lose its momentum. A good manager will observe employees, talk to them about their strengths and put them in the right place at the right time, therefore enabling the full potential of employees.

This we get to see in the Ramayana when the entire convoy of Rama's side was standing and gazing at the ocean. Everybody was worried as to how they would get through the water and reach the other side to rescue Mother Sita and get her back to Lord Rama. It was then that the great leader Jambavant who knew the potential of Hanuman, persuaded and motivated him, made him remember his strengths and urged him that only he could cross the entire ocean because of his divine strength. Also in future, just because of this remembrance of his divine strength and qualities, Hanuman could help Lord Rama against Ravana.

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis means to know our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

- i) We need to have certain goals for jobs to be done.
- ii) We have to get mentally prepared for it and have a right plan for our actions.
- iii) We have to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors and threats and opportunities in the business.

Therefore, every organisation, before taking an important decision in any

uncertain environment, does a SWOT analysis, which minimises the risk and helps the organisation to focus on the opportunities aligned with its strengths.

We find that this kind of analysis was done by Hanuman once he reached Lanka. He saw that Ravana had a huge fort, which was guarded by his soldiers from all the sides. Therefore, he had to minimise himself to the size of a bee and wander in and around the palace and the Ashok Vatika, where he got to see Mother Sita and gave her the message which Lord Rama had given him. He made a plan of seeing and understanding the strength of Ravana, so he started troubling the soldiers who were near Ashok Vatika, where he got himself arrested and got a chance to see Ravana. When, as punishment, Hanuman's tail was put on fire, he purposely put the palace on fire at all important places and flew back to the other side of the ocean and informed all that he saw and stated his analysis to Lord Rama. Then, they made a plan to attack Ravana and rescue Mother Sita.

Showing commitment

In the story of the Ramayana, the political administration is appreciated even today in a number of places and the lesson of management of governance is used to apply and taught to many managers. The

lesson is the commitment of Shabaree towards Lord Rama in the form of waiting for Lord Rama for his blessings, commitment of Lakshmana towards Lord Rama and commitment of Sita towards her husband. Commitment, courage and strength are shown by the characters of the traditional epic, under all possible circumstances.

It is a lesson to all the top level and middle level management to understand the effort of honour towards commitment and apply it into practices for better results and success in business.

Leadership, delegation, authority and responsibility

The Ramayana also teaches how to lead; like a true leader, Rama created leaders during his journey to save Sita. In the corporate world also, all leaders should work towards that common organisational goal with all their strength and commitment. Mainly, we see leaders in the Ramayana, like Rama, Sita, Sugriva, Ravana and Hanuman, who give us techniques to lead and follow. Hanuman was given the responsibility to find out where Sita was. Nal and Neel were given the responsibility of designing and building the Lanka Bridge from India to Sri Lanka, which was an important role to play.

Authority and responsibility work hand in hand. Rama, being a prince, had authority but at the same time, he was responsible enough towards the people, towards his team, his family and to the service of mankind.

Teamwork

The best example of teamwork is building the Ram Setu from India to Sri Lanka, which is a marvel even today. It is being researched and held even today as one of the greatest marvels of that time, where all the monkey soldiers, including leaders like Hanuman, Jambavant, Sugriva, and human beings worked together day and night as a team to build and complete a particular task.

Time management

Time management is also related to selecting the appropriate time to start an event. Lord Rama waited for the whole *chaturmas* that is four months of the rainy season before he started to execute the plan of rescuing Sita from the clutches of

Ravana. Lakshmana and Rama planned each and every step in all these four months and made the team understand how and when they were going to attack. By doing this, they saved time and they managed their people and soldiers appropriately. It is important for each and every executive in an organisation to keep a track of the time that he or she spends in the organisation so that production happens in the given time and the delivery of the products and services to the customer are prompt and precise.

Business alliance with strategic relation

In the Ramayana, Sugriva showed the best managerial characteristics and worked with Rama and defeated Bali, who was far mightier, and got back his kingdom. Sugriva, with his managerial skills, even managed to get Angad, the son of Bali, to work for him. A leader who can nurture good relations with his employees, customers, etc., can do wonders.

Conclusion

The Ramayana is the key to understanding and following management lessons. The leader and manager of an organisation holds the key to the success of the organisation. This can be possible with effective practices. The characters of the Ramayana support the managers and leaders for their every movement, making it successful.

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