

Revitalizing the Present with Past: A Mythological Perspective on Leadership

Ms. Sunita Thakor¹ and Dr. Priti Vyas²

¹Research Scholar, Mody University of Science and Technology, Sikar

²Asst. Prof. Mody University of Science and Technology, Sikar

E-mail: ¹sunitamits22@gmail.com, ²pritiivas.cash@modyuniversity.ac.in

Abstract—In today's business scenario for success, it is necessary to learn all the management skills and especially leadership skills, which can provide the critical means to solve modern day's problems. Though, there are so many data and theories available in the market and accessible on Google related to management skills but still our graduates are incapable to cope up with the market needs. As a result of this there is mismatch between the industrial demand and campus supply of skills in all the sectors. Teaching of soft skills through modern management techniques and in the second language brings only temporary results. In order to overcome the sustainability issue of learning, management principles of leadership can be attained through our own mythological text: Ramayana. It is an ancient scripture written by Valmiki more than 2500 years ago (around 500 B.C). It tries to locate the essential leadership qualities that can be learnt from its protagonist: Lord Rama. The enlightening life of Lord Rama explained answers to the frequent challenges faced by an individual as a leader. He had never misbalanced in life and maintained his character as it is and has his own reflections on management functions for the leadership; they are Tyagavira (Sacrifice), Vidyavira (Wisdom), Dayavira (Compassion), Parakaramvira (Valour) and Dharamvira (Righteousness). This paper throws light on: how one can learn from Bhootkaal (past), connect that learning to Vartamankaal (present) and apply that learning to BhavishyaKaal (future). So that, we, Indians can regain the image of Vishwa Guru which can help us in our growth and make us familiar without our own great past.

Key Words: Ramayana, Leadership, Character, Tyagavira, Vidyavira, Dayavira, Parakaramvira, Dharamvira.

1. INDUCTION

The fundamental role of Indian education system is to spread knowledge and wisdom among students and makes them capable to unfold the management skills of one's life. So that graduates should have all the critical means to solve modern day's problems. But still we have observed from the researches and report done by government agencies and others that our graduates are incapable to cope up with the market needs. As a result of this mismatch between the industrial demands and campus supply there is a huge employability gap in almost all the economic sectors. This mismatch between the demand and supply of life skills clearly indicates the dire

necessity of soughing out this mismatch by imbibing requisite life skills among the learners. Though all the stakeholders of the problem whether its academia, industry, policy makers or any other all are putting their best efforts to inculcate these skills among the learners through modern management techniques but in the second language. Teaching soft skills through modern management techniques and in the second language brings temporary knowledge and productivity which either last till examination date or at the door step of their job and the role and responsibility as a human capital is neglected. According to Shashi Tharoor (2017), "We have an apex institution in the UGC and the Ministry of Human Resources Development, that tell the universities what kind of syllabus they can teach, how many years a course must last, what the size of a classroom should be..but (they are) least concerned about the learning outcome of the educational experience,". So learners are not having sustainability in their learning outcomes which is hampering their sustainability in the market place too. This mismatch between the demand and supply of life skills clearly indicates the necessity of providing soft skills training to students to raise confidence, improve productivity and to enable them to ensure their sustainable employability. In order to overcome this sustainability issue of the learners it is quite apposite that their learning should be designed in such a way which can ensure not only their success but also their sustainability in the market place. Therefore, instead of continuing with the prevailing methodologies and techniques an attempt has been made here to design something new with new orientation to ensure better and more sustainable learning outcomes. These management principles of leadership can be attained through Indian management techniques which will help in developing overall personality of an individual by our own mythological text: Ramayana. So this paper attempts to represent the importance of regaining the Vishwa Guru Image by going back to own philosophical, religious and spiritual text of Ramayana which is written by Valmiki more than 2500 years ago (around 500 B.C.) and also to guard our own heritage. Indian Prime Minister: Narendra Modi has said that "for producing quality teaching staff and developing

an educational system that does not produce robots but helps in developing overall personality of students India should evolve an educational culture which can help the country play the role of “Vishwa Guru” (universal leader) in the 21st century.”(Singh.2014). Ramayana is one of the most popular and great epic texts, and it tries to locate an Eastern approach of leadership through the life sketch of Lord Rama. Its narrative style seeks to recall and remember the relatable things very easily. Character of Lord Rama helps to face the reality of the world because he did not run away from his duties and restrained effective ideas about the principles of management. His life was full of methodologies and techniques to develop knowledge and all productivity skills among a person, so that s/he can be more competent and effective in the real life. He teaches how one’s goal can be achieved through leadership and team work. Sri Rama’s life is full of huddles but he never misbalanced in life and maintained his character intact. So this research represents five good qualities of Lord Rama and relates these qualities to management techniques of leadership. They are Tyagavira (Sacrifice), Vidyavira (Wisdom), Dayavira (Compassion), Parakaramvira (Valour) and Dharamvira (Righteousness).

2. LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a process by which an individual can influence others towards the achievement of an organizational goal and to do innovative things. A leader knows how to find contentment and joy in his/her living soul and how to increase flexibility and sustainability by motivating team members. It is considered as the formal position where a specific person has power over others in the group but leadership is not essentially connected to authority. It is all about encouraging people to tackle the toughest, uncertain and even unpopular problems and speaks in such a way that people feel very energetic and enthusiastic while doing their work. These effective leadership styles were already displayed by Lord Rama thousands of years ago. Valmiki Ramayana has exhibited Lord Rama as the Kalyaana Gunas means the person lived on the earth, who had the embodiment of sixteen different positive and promising qualities. He has been also addressed as an ideal leader and Maryada purushottam (perfect man) because he knew his strengths and weaknesses and never ran away from toughest challenges and critical problems of his life. He had understood the needs of his followers and shown the embodiment of mannerism and characteristics of a leader through his wisdom and all efficient skills, to lead, influence and guide a group of people.

Tyagavira (Sacrifice)

It is necessary and important for a leader to sacrifice for the great wellness. A leader’s life can look fascinating and glorious to the people as an outsider but the reality is that leadership requires many sacrifices because there is no success without sacrifice. A great philosopher and poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson has said, “For everything you have missed, you have

gained something else, and for everything you gain, you lose something”(Goodreads). So, truly inspiring and successful leader must be willing to make several types of sacrifices in order to elevate people and make promising environment in the organization. Sacrifice is the one of the most poignant lessons of leadership which can be drawn from Lord Rama’s life. Lord Rama had made ethical decision in all the critical situations of his life. Lord Rama agreed to abandon his claim to Ayodhya’s throne and accepted an exile (Vanavas) for fourteen years in the forest, for the sake of his father’s honour and to fulfill his stepmother’s wish; to make her son (Shri Bharat) king of Ayodhya. Lord Rama has suffered so much in his life and lived an ascetic life. There are many leaders who make sacrifice once in order to build credibility and then use unethical decisions later but Lord Rama did not do so. He had maintained his mannerism and ethical decision making ability throughout his life. His life’s journey is the perfect example of leadership.

Vidyavira (Wisdom)

Vidyavira means a person who is a scholar or has mastery over all the subjects. Valmiki’s Ramayana has exhibited Lord Rama as the Kalyaana Gunas. Lord Rama had never done anything in his life without knowledge. He had shown complete knowledge in all his deeds. He had used knowledge and wisdom in his words to create happiness and peace around him. The leader should be abundant with knowledge, so that s/he can motivate, guide and inspire his/her followers; like Lord Rama inspired Lord Hanuman and his brother Lakshman so much that they trusted him blindly and followed all his paths. So Lord Rama is the best example of this great virtue. In this regard Shri Shri Ravi Shankar ji said that “Lord Ram that, “the Sanskrit root word ‘ra’. ‘Ra’ means light, ‘Ma’ means within me, in my heart. So, **Rama means the light within me.**” When Lord Rama and his alliance reached the seashore of Indian Ocean, they did not get any path to reach Lanka. So Lord Rama who is capable of doing anything in the world, had given the idea to build the Ram Setu (bridge with stones) over the ocean to his alliance. This idea proved to be successful and helped the alliance to defeat the army of demons and rescued mother Sita. A person with wisdom is self-determined and can unweave his/her attitude towards righteous and truthful path to solve the problems. Lord Rama was very much strong by his attitude and vision, that’s why he used the righteous path to brought back Mother Sita by defeating Ravana. He had given many chances to Ravana to avoid the war and for that he had sent Lord Hanuman as an ambassador to stop the war. Thus, the character of Lord Rama defines a perfect leadership quality by being well determined by attitude, wisdom and showed righteous and truthful path to achieve goals.

Dayavira (Compassion)

A compassionate person is said to be a humble person, who possesses feeling of empathy and sympathy for others. The

humility was Lord Rama's most outstanding virtue, which made him so popular. Lord Rama had never shown in his life that he was from elite level or class but he had shown himself at lowest level and accepted everyone unconditionally. He had shown compassion to all, whom he met in his life. When he was going to the forest, he accepted Guhan (the leader of the hunters) as his younger brother and accepted Sabari also who belongs to a tribal class. Lord Rama went to her abode because of her sincere devotion. He didn't care for her caste and colour but acknowledged only the true bhakti (devotion). He had not only accepted tribal class people but also accepted semi civilized people; like monkey tribes, eagle tribes and etc. He accepted Vaanaras as his brother, Lord Hanuman as his best devotee. He accepted his enemy also, like Vibishana (who was born in the demon clan and was the brother of Ravana). When on the first day of the battle between Lord Rama and Ravana, Ravana lost all his weapons in the battlefield, Lord Rama allowed him to return to his citadel because according to the ethic of chivalry an unarmed enemy can't be attacked. So from this aspect of Ramayana, we can say that Lord Rama was a person, who had adopted the feeling of Karunaa (compassion) in his life and treated everyone equally without any differences. A good leader should imbibe these qualities, so that s/he should not discriminate his/ her subordinates, treat every team members equally and should give equal value to the team members.

Parakaramvira (Valour)

Valour is a quality, which shows a person is having great courage to face the danger, especially in a harsh time of a life or in another words a person with extraordinary power and strength to face all toughest problems. It is well known that Lord Rama was a great and a fierce warrior. His alliance was less armed and inferior in comparison to the opponent's army, yet they built up and defeated the powerful and complicated army of the Demon king: Ravana. Demon king: Ravana was one who singlehandedly defeated powerful kings and formidable Devas (god). But Lord Rama was strong physically, mentally and morally and had courage to fight against all odds and to remove the all fears. He constantly motivated and inspired his alliance and guided them to success.

Similarly a good leader should be physically, mentally and morally strong to take risks while making decisions because today's markets are so dynamic that an individual has no option but to adapt himself or herself to this ever changing scenario. A leader should support and guide his/her team members in tough time and should be strong enough to fight against all odds and drives the clear path for his/ her team members. He should be mentally prepared to face the difficulty during a crisis and be strong to develop effective strategies to conquer the problem and find solutions.

Dharamvira (Righteousness)

In pursuing righteousness, one should sacrifice materialistic pleasures and sense pleasures. Ramayana has given several lessons and among those lessons one is that ultimate aim of life is to get Moksha (salvation). Moksha can be attained only by rightly following a life of Dharma and by abandoning Materialistic pleasures and sense pleasures. Lord Rama was the man known as Maryada Purushottam (perfect man), who was completely guided by consciousness of god and the path which leads to righteousness. His virtues were incomparable and he never spoke lies in his life. He had spent fourteen years in the forest to fulfill his step mother's wish and for his father's honour. In Hindu king's history, all Indian kings had married more than one woman but he was the only Hindu king who refused to marry more than one woman. At the time of war also he has showed the ethics of chivalry and allowed Ravana to go back. These all incidents prove that he had always stood with the righteous path and Dharma in his life. For a leader, it is very important and necessary to choose ethical path and accordingly make decisions. In an organization, righteous path and ethical duties enable leader to have strong will- power to achieve the best solution for any kind or toughest problem and to teach how one should respect and treats his/her team members.

3. CONCLUSION

The above discussion proves that we (Indian) need to be efficient in almost all management skills because there is a mismatch or gap between the campus supply and industrial demands. The result of this gap is unemployment and unsustainable job among graduates. So by understanding the gravity of situation and to overcome it, we have to learn the management techniques of leadership through our own past. It is having universal significance to study and practice all management techniques of a leader and by its knowledge and wisdom we can regain the honour of Vishwa Guru, which we have lost during the colonial rule. When graduates are going to learn the management techniques of leadership in their first language and through their own scriptures and in their own language in a narrative style, it would be easier for them to relate, recall and remember the things easily. Graduates can learn leadership skills and techniques from their own country's past and can connect them to present era, so that they can apply all their learning to ensure their bright future. Lord Rama is the perfect example because his enlightening life explained answers to the common and frequent challenges faced by an individual as a leader and His Kalyana Gunas (good qualities) is an inspiration for all the upcoming leaders in future. Lord Rama's leadership styles showed how to encourage people, bring positive attitude and empower employees of an organization to create an atmosphere of encouragement, harmony and sense of belongingness among the group members so that they can think innovatively and can take risks at right time.

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