

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS FROM THE RAMAYANA: LEARNING FROM ITS CHARACTERS

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Abstract:

The study offers a succinct summary of leadership lessons that may be drawn from the characters of Ramayana. The Ramayana, one of the most renowned epics, is regarded as a magnificent work of literature and the first to be created in an Indian context. The Indian scriptures contain significant insight that can be utilized for modern administrative and leadership techniques. Several chapters in Scripture contain a wealth of wisdom that highlights important ideas and principles important to good management and leadership. The global application of these lessons is contributing to the resolution of current business issues. Further, these concepts cut across historical and cultural barriers, providing insightful guidance for leaders in various organizational circumstances. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research on the topic of Ramayana and the leadership. Because of this, authors have realized that in order to lead successfully they must comprehend how great ideas and lessons can be applied to the development of management practices.

Keywords: Leadership, Ramayana, Transformational leadership

1. Introduction:

The current situation suggests that corporate India could find itself unable to handle managerial problems in the multinational environment unless Indian managerial procedures are sufficiently infused with Indian cultural ethos (Gupta & Singh, 2019). Indian scriptures have been a source of inspiration for people seeking profound understanding into many facets of life, encompassing the ideas and methods of efficient administration and leadership, for millennia. The two great epics of Indian history, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, along with the Vedas and Puranas, provide a strong and enduring foundation for the exquisite and ancient framework of Indian culture and civilization (Gupta & Singh, 2019). The cultural life and way of life of millions of Indians are still greatly influenced by the timeless appeal of these works. The Indian subcontinent is recognized for its extensive patchwork of intellectual and religious customs that have fostered a way of living that is firmly founded in moral and holistic principles. These ageold writings, penned by wise men and seers, provide a thorough insight of human behavior, the complexities of relationships with others, and the skill to arrive at decisions. They offer priceless advice on how to lead and inspire teams, overcome obstacles, encourage moral behavior, and promote harmony in the workplace (Vij, 2021). Although all of these works have made a significant contribution to the growth of management literature and practices, the focus of the current essay is on leadership lessons learned from the Ramayana. In addition to being an engrossing narrative, the story serves as motivation for both individuals and leaders (Pandey, 2023). In actuality, the literature, epics, and scriptures of India must be studied in order to develop administrative philosophy and mentality. Let's seek within for remedies instead of westwards (Pathak et al., 2016).

2. Ramayana:

According to Tulsidas, “Ramakatha kai miti jaga nahi”. It is difficult to keep track of the number of Ramakathas (Ramayana versions) in this universe (Jagannathan & Sundaram, 2002). Ramayana is referred to as “Adikavya”. Its twenty-four thousand verses are arranged into six books, or Kandas. A seventh book, Uttara Kanda, is separate from the core epic (Tapasyananda, 1995). The Ramayana, composed by Maharishi Valmiki, represents one of the greatest Indian legends and a central Hindu religious story (Patel & Singh, 2022). The Ramayana tells the story of Lord Rama, among Indian assemblage of Gods who has been sang about most. He was an earthly manifestation of the Hindu deity Vishnu, who was the crown prince of ancient Ayodhya. In the poem, which centres on the magnificent recounting of Rama's quest, he is also the hero. There are numerous translations of the Ramayana into different languages, but the two most well-known translations were composed by the sages Valmiki and Goswami Tulsi Das, who wrote the Ramayana and Ram Charit Manas, respectively—both of which are commonly referred to as the Ramayana (Pathak et al., 2016).

3. Objectives:

The main objective of the study is to find the leadership lessons from the characters in Ramayana especially from Lord Rama and Ravana.

4. Methods:

Indian ethos, epics, earlier research publications were referred to develop this article. The epic review provides valuable information that influenced the composition of this piece. Reviewers have looked at how the Ramayana can impart important knowledge about leadership style to managers in order to increase their efficacy. Aside from the original text, information is also taken from various websites.

5. Ramayana and Leadership:

"Yatha raja, tatha praja" means that the subjects are the same as the king. This shloka highlights how crucial it is for team managers to lead by example. Being a perfect king, Shree Ram always set a good example for his subjects by upholding moral principles (Ranjan, 2023). The Ramayana provides the fundamentals of the critical art of leadership. Burns (1978) distinguished between two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. In transactional leadership, followers and leaders exchange valuable items based on their respective goals and current values. Tasks, work norms, and results explanation is emphasized by transactional leaders. On the other hand, Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a procedure that inspires subordinates by referencing loftier aspirations and moral principles. The transformational leadership approach exemplified by Sri Rama has changed and is still changing millions of Indians today (Muniapan, 2007). In Indian ideology Lord Rama is revered as *Maryada Purushotam*, a wonderful person and role model. In this context, Rama's personality needs to be evaluated. Values and ethics served as the foundation for his manner of leadership, strategy for leading his team, and method of handling challenges. His guiding principle was dharma, or justice, upon which the decisions were taken. In the Ramayana, we witness Rama's ability to maintain his calm in the most trying circumstances and his scarce tendency to respond despite severe challenge. That is the essence of management: leading with objectivity while

advancing the cause (Pathak et al., 2016). The main responsibility of leadership is making important decisions, some of which demands a great deal of moral fortitude and bravery. It is imperative for leaders to hone their tightrope walking skills. It's about maintaining equilibrium in the face of constant temptations and opportunities to derail you. After one slip, you're down. Rama was meant to serve as an example in this regard.

5.1 Lessons from Lord Rama:

People revere Rama not for his life's victories but rather for the poise that he displayed when he faced the most difficult situations (Thapiyal, 2021). That is what matters and forms the cornerstone of developing the perfect leader.

- **Possess a clear vision:** Rama's ability to see his objective—rescuing Sita—kept him concentrated on the work at hand (Garg, 2023). Additionally, leaders need to successfully convey the company's vision to their workforce (Pandey, 2023).
- **Patience:** A leader's ability to remain patient in the face of challenging circumstances is their most important quality. After departing from the kingdom, Rama patiently lived in the forest with his brother and wife (Thapiyal, 2021).
- **Foster Talent:** Though he did not specify how, Rama dispatched his team to locate his adored wife Sita. Not being a carbon copy is one of a leader's characteristics. He encourages the team to come up with fresh concepts and methods (Thapiyal, 2021). Hanuman travelled to Lanka, broke into the city, crept into Ashok Vatika, delivered his message to Sita, made the decision to test the strength of the adversaries, and introduced Ravana and his group to Rama's formidable introduction.
- **Team Spirit is Essential:** Jamvant inspiring Hanuman is an outstanding instance of an effective leader who acts in a way that allows the employees to reach the heights of their abilities.
- **Respect your subordinates:** Because of his poor management practises, Ravana caused his kingdom to fall. He put his kingdom at war with Ram right from the beginning by disobeying the advice of his managers.
- **Have Faith in your Team:** The army of Rakshasa was formidable. On the other hand, the army of Rama consisted of native tribes who had never before come across a highly organized military force. Nevertheless, Rama remained optimistic that his army could overcome this seemingly insurmountable strange, and inspired by this optimism, his army battled to win. So, leaders should establish trust with their staff by being dependable and honoring their commitments (Pandey, 2023).
- **Personality Traits:** Regardless of his subjects' background or social standing, Lord Rama always engaged in open communication and relationship building with the populace of his kingdom. He was courteous and respectful to everyone.
- **Analyze the Implications of Every Decision:** Because King Dasharatha gave Kaikeyi her boons without considering the consequences, Rama was banished and eventually killed. In a similar vein, companies ought to consider all the ramifications of their choices carefully, especially when they involve possible risks (AtharavRaj, 2021).

5.2 Lessons from Ravana:

Ravana, was a highly learned man. His mother named Kaikesi was a demon, while his father 'Vishwashrava' was a brahmin. Therefore, he was also known as 'Brahmarakshas'. He was an amazing

fighter, veena player, diplomat, and king. He was an expert in astrology and Ayurveda as well as upholder of Vedas and shastras. But he was destroyed by his ego. Raavan was one of the most knowledgeable brahmins in the world, and that is why after defeating him Lord Rama called the younger Lakshman to come learn from him.

- **Egolessness:** Ravana's unquenchable ego proved to be his downfall, undermining all of his other divine attributes. In this way, he is and always will be a lesson to show that, despite having many positive traits, one small flaw in one's character can bring one to ruin (Tiwari, 2022). Because of his conceit, Ravana abducted Sita in order to exact revenge. In the end, Lord Rama kills Ravana. Thus, it's important for leaders to keep their egos outside of the boardroom (Kulshreshtha, 2023).
- **Never undervalue anyone:** Because he believed humans were helpless, Ravana obtained a boon that allowed anyone to kill him but humans. It proved to be an entirely unanticipated occurrence for which he was unprepared. Because of this, Black Swan leadership is required to handle extremely rare events that are difficult to forecast but have a significant impact and cause disruption.
- **All it takes is one careless deed to get things started:** Under Ravana, Lanka flourished and became wealthy. He was a fantastic leader who had the whole support of his people. Under Ravana's rule, gold was present in every home. However, it only took one mistake to destroy excellent leadership. A leadership gaffe might be something you quickly get over, but an act of gaffe might be something you never get another chance at (Kulshreshtha, 2023).

6. Conclusion:

This ageless epic captures the spirit of Indian culture and offers insightful commentary on contemporary management concepts. The importance of moral excellence and purity in positions of leadership is highlighted in the Ramayana. Integrity, fairness, accountability, empathy, respect, and ethics are all important lessons from the Ramayana that are essential to ethical management. We may build organizations that flourish and benefit society by incorporating these principles into our leadership procedures (Vij, 2021). We learn the value of effective leadership from the Ramayana. He commands his army with a well-thought-out plan and vision. Similar to this, an organization's success in the corporate world depends on having strong leadership. An inspiring and motivating leader has the power to propel the group to new heights of achievement.

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