

A STUDY OF GOLEMAN'S LEADERSHIP STYLES IN KAMBA RAMAYANA

V. Pavithra¹ and Prof. Ravichandran²

¹Research Scholar, Madurai Kamaraj University, Palkalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu, India

²Chairperson (Retd.), Madurai Kamaraj University, Palkalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu, India

¹pavivenkat.research@gmail.com ²ravimba.mku@gmail.com

Abstract

The Indian Epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata have played a vital role in Indian history. Many modern management practices and lessons can be derived from these great epics. Ramayana, written in Sanskrit by Sage Valmiki is the earliest epic in the Indian context. Kamba Ramayana was written in Tamil by the great poet, Kambar during 12th century. Teachings of Ramayana can be applied in many fields, including management and leadership. Though many researches have been conducted in Kamba Ramayana, in various fields including literature, poetry and spirituality, there are very few researchers, who have explored the relation between Ramayana and leadership. In this paper, different leadership styles in Kamba Ramayana are studied. Six leadership styles of Daniel Goleman are considered for the study and compared in relation with Kamba Ramayana through its characters. This paper dwells deep into Kamba Ramayana to extract valuable insights of various leadership styles and their relevance to the modern world. Through the research method of hermeneutics, this paper identifies and discusses the core characteristics of Goleman's leadership styles embedded in Kamba Ramayana. This paper also explores the relevant characters in Kamba Ramayana and their leadership styles based on their characteristics and situations.

Keywords: Management, Ramayana, Kamba Ramayana, Leadership, Leadership styles

1. Introduction

Management is a process of getting the work done in the right way using the right resources. Management has been defined in different ways by various scholars. Peter Drucker, defines management as, "Management is the coordination of individual efforts towards the achievement of organizational goals." Henri Fayol says, "To manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate, and to control." Management involves planning, organising, leading and executing. Management and leadership skills are vital to build a team. Good leadership can result in success and achievement. It involves motivating people at the right time to achieve goals. The word 'leader' is derived from the word lead, which means 'road' or 'path'. A leader is the one who guides the team towards the goal. The success of a manager can be related to the leadership qualities possessed by the manager. Leaders adapt different leadership styles to lead the team at different times. These topics are worked upon in relevance to Ramayana.

Ramayana is deeply rooted in India and it is passed on to generations. It is written in Sanskrit by Sage Valmiki and consists of 24000 verses. It is translated to many regional languages by different poets in different periods. It is written in Tamil by Kambar, which is known as "Kamba Ramayanam". Kamba Ramayanam consists of approximately 10,000 stanzas. This epic narrates the life of Rama which is divided in 6 kandas namely Bala Kadam, Ayodhya Kadam, Aranya Kadam, Kishkindha Kadam, Sundara Kadam and Yuddha Kadam. Each Kadam focusses on the specific aspect of Rama's life and the challenges faced by him. The Ramayana is a treasure of modern and ethical teachings which emphasises on righteousness. Rama can be considered as the

epitome of leadership. This paper talks about the relevance of Goleman's leadership styles shown in Ramayana through its characters.

2. Methodology

Research papers and books were studied to understand the different management aspects and leadership styles in Ramayana. This research used hermeneutics technique, a qualitative methodology that analyse the management concepts in the texts of Kamba Ramayana. This paper focusses on the six leadership styles of Daniel Goleman. Texts of Kamba Ramayana were analysed and the stanzas that are relevant to Goleman's leadership styles are considered for the study.

Leadership styles

Leadership is an important aspect of management and many leadership lessons can be derived from Ramayana. John Adair, in his book, *Effective Leadership Masterclass* says, "People are most willing to obey those who know what they are doing" (pg.17). It is vital for a leader to understand their team and make decisions according to the situation. Leaders follow a diverse style to attain their mission. Every leader follows one or more styles and effective leaders apply different leadership styles depending on the situation. An effective leader is the one who adopts the right leadership style at the right time. Daniel Goleman, the famous psychologist, introduced the concept of six leadership styles which can be applied in various situations. The six leadership styles according to Goleman are Coercive, Affiliative, Pacesetter, Visionary, Democratic and Coaching. In this paper, a comparative study of these leadership styles is made in relevance to Kamba Ramayanam.

Analysis of different leadership styles presented in Ramayana

Daniel Goleman, identifies six leadership styles based on his research on leadership and emotional intelligence. These styles are compared and studied with the leadership styles that was present during the Ramayana period. Kamba Ramayanam (Tamil) by V. Ilavazhudhi, Kamba Ramayana (English Translation of Tamil Ramayana of Sage Kamban) translated into English by Shanti Lal Nagar and P.S.Sundaram's translation of Kamba Ramayana in English are used as handbooks for this study.

Coercive style

Coercive leadership style involves forceful commands and control to the team by the leader. Decisions are taken by the top management with little or no consideration for opinions of team members. (Tim Hannagan, pg. 65) People with this leadership style do not motivate and encourage their team and avoid listening to their suggestions. These kinds of leaders expect unquestioning approach from their associates. They have extreme control over the team and ensure compliance with high demands where fear is used as the tool to get the work done. They lack empathy towards their team by focussing only on achieving their own objectives in their own way. They resist and reject feedback by others and if given, challenge them. This type of leadership style creates a negative work environment.

In Ramayana, several qualities of coercive leader, can be found in Ravana, the king of Lanka. Ravana abducted Sita, when she was alone in forest, flew to Lanka on his Pushpaka Vimana and Sita was captivated in Ashoka Vana in Lanka. To kidnap Sita, Ravana approached Maricha, a demon king for help. Maricha, understanding Ravana's plan to kidnap Sita through his words, Maricha explained Ravana that Rama is a powerful and extraordinary person and advised Ravana to abort the plan of kidnapping Sita as it may result in a disaster. Ravana, being a coercive leader, ignored Maricha's suggestion and commanded him to transform into a golden deer which will help to drive Rama away and in turn, will help Ravana to captivate Sita. In this conversation, coercive leadership characteristics are evident in Ravana's behaviour. He, as a coercive leader, failed to listen to Maricha's suggestions and forcefully commanded him to take the form of golden Deer to achieve his own objective of abducting Sita.

Ravana's refusal to notice warnings and his determination towards his own objective are the strong characteristics of coercive leader. In addition to this, Ravana also threatens Maricha, that Maricha will be killed, if he refuses to obey Ravana's orders. Again, it is apparent that Ravana used fear as his tool to attain his goal, which serves as a perfect example of coercive leader. Ravana, in Maricha's Death padala, in Aranya Kanda of Kamba Ramayana says,

"Should you refuse, I will cut you down

With my sword, and do what I please.

I won't desist. If you wish to live

Cease this hateful advice and fulfil my aim." (3266)

Visionary style

Visionary leaders are authoritative leaders who have clear vision and mobilise the team members towards the goal. The team working for this leader have great commitment and have a deep understanding of organisation goal. These leaders inspire their followers with their action and confidence, which will cultivate trust within the team. These types of leaders set high standards to their team and take responsibility in setting these standards to achieve the goal. They are extremely good in making decisions at tough times and have the flexibility to adapt to changing situations. Visionary leaders possess exceptional communication skills and comprehend the situation before taking decisions.

In Ramayana, Rama displays the characteristics of visionary leader in numerous situations. Rama inspired the people of Ayodhya and inculcated the vision of following righteousness through his actions. When Rama was informed by Kaikeyi, that the kingdom will be ruled by Bharatha and Rama to go on exile for 14 years, Rama accepted Kaikeyi's decision straight away. Rama was an apotheosis of righteousness and embodiment of ethical values. By accepting the exile, he sets high standards to this people by abiding to the orders of his father and following righteousness. As an authoritative leader, he showed his flexibility to adapt to the unforeseen and challenging situations. In Kaikeyi's Misdeed Padala of Ayodhya Kanada, Rama replied to Kaikeyi,

"In case it is not the command of the king, but even if it is of your own even then can I refuse it? Is the glory of my younger brother not mine? What could be the more fortunate thing than this? I have accepted the command gracefully. I shall move just now to the forest where the sun always shines like the lightning. I now take leave of you." (295, Shanthi lal nagar, pg.181)

Visionary or authoritative leaders set high standards and gives the freedom to people to choose their way of achieving it. Rama, along with setting high standard, accepted Bharata's request to rule the kingdom with Rama's paduka (sandals). Rama's visionary leadership style is displayed here as Rama not only followed his duty but also recognized Bharata's intention of righteousness by ruling the kingdom with Rama's padula (sandals).

Affiliative style

Affiliative leaders try to keep their team cheerful by encouraging the team members and creating harmony within the team. It's a people first leadership style and focusses on solving team problems and stimulates collaborations. Affiliative leader needs a great empathy, good communication skills. They recognise and uplift their members which allows the team members to think and make decisions. These leaders emphasize trust and mutual respect through collaborations. A positive environment is created leadership style as it prioritizes team well-being and concerned about the happiness and satisfaction in the team.

In Ramayana, Hanuman can be considered as an affiliative leader. Hanuman always tried to create harmony and was concerned about the wellbeing of the monkeys in Kishkintha. In the quest of searching Sita, Rama met

Hanuman in Kishkintha. After the introduction and knowing them, Hanuman arranged a meeting with Sugriva, King of Vanaras. Rama and Sugriva collaborated and agreed to help mutually. Here, the affiliative leadership style of Hanuman is evident. He focussed on collaborations and prioritised the happiness of the team. He helped Sugriva to get back his kingdom through this collaboration. Affiliative leaders always uplift their team members. By establishing a collaboration between Rama and Sugriva, Hanuman created a win-win situation for both Rama and Sugriva. Rama, killed Vali, brother of Sugriva and handed the kingdom to Sugriva, who in turn sent the monkey army in search of Sita. Hanuman was also an excellent communicator. During collaboration, he advised and convinced Sugriva to team up with Rama. Hanuman created a trust between Sugriva and Rama through his communication skills and stimulate collaboration between the two teams. In the Friendship padala of Kishkindha Kanda, Kambar says,

“Hanuman was well-versed in the scriptures and was also well-versed in giving the advice. He then spoke to Sugriva,”O best of the intelligent people, he is quite graceful to you. The time of the end of Bali your enemy and the son of Indra has arrived. Therefore, you go to him” (92, Kamba Ramayana ,Shanthi lal nagar, pg. 389)

In the above, Kambar mentions that Hanuman was well versed in scriptures and giving advice. Affiliative leaders guide the team to take the right the decision during chaotic situations. Sugriva, who was hesitant to join hands with Rama initially, team up with Rama as per Hanuman's guidance. Hanuman, being an Affiliative leader, was able to help and promote the collaboration between Rama and Sugriva.

Democratic style

Democratic leaders involve their team in decision making, instil them a sense of responsibility by valuing and accepting their feedback, thereby motivating them towards the organisation goal. These leaders give importance to the feedback received by adapting and changing the strategies based on the feedback received. They involve their team mates in every step which will ensure the trust in team. They also empower the team by helping the team members to identify their strengths and guide them to develop their strengths, thus supporting to the overall development both personally and professionally. Although decisions are taken jointly, democratic leaders take the responsibility of the decisions made by the team. They make sure the decisions are communicated on time and serves as an effective communicator. As the whole team is involved in decision making, this type of leadership helps to generate fresh ideas and new perspectives. The team typically consist of high-performance team where minimum management and direction is needed. This type of leadership style builds a positive environment.

In Ramayana, King Dasaratha exhibited the qualities of democratic leader. King Dasaratha was the father of Rama and the King of Ayodhya. He was a leader by example. Dasaratha was a well learned king and had scholars in his team. Dasaratha was dedicated to uphold Dharama, the righteous path. He had high-performance team which needed minimal supervision. As a democratic leader, Dasaratha gave importance to the feedback and he involved the team in the decision making. He worked towards continuous improvement based on the suggestions received. These characteristics of Dasaratha can be compared to Goleman's democratic leadership style.

In Ayodhya Kanda of Kamba Ramayana, it is mentioned that King Dasaratha arrived in the assembly hall, where the well-versed scholars were present who acted intelligently considering the situation and they worked for the success of the leader. Dasaratha, who wanted to coronate Rama and make him next king, started his speech by saying “ *I thought of performing great function. You happened to be my wisdom. You listen to me attentively*”. (Kamba Ramayana, Shanthi Lal Nagar, pg. 154, verse 13). As a democratic leader, Dasaratha, expressed his desire to coronate Rama and asked everyone for their opinion. In the consultation Padala of Ayodhya Kanda, after expressing his view about coronating Rama, he said,

"Therefore, entrusting the kingship to Rama, I intend to perform tapas to achieve enlightenment. You kindly let me have your opinion." Thus speaking Dasaratha put a question to them. (31) (Kamba Ramayana , Shanthi Lal Nagar, pg 156)

Pace setting style

Pace setting leaders set high standard of performance and lead by example. They expect the team members to meet the same level of commitment. This style of leadership demands good performance and cannot tolerate poor performance. Including the leader, high level of performance is expected in this style of leadership. These leaders are task oriented and the team members know what the leader wants and they simply follow the leader. This team mostly have self -motivated members and high performing individuals. These types of leaders can make swift decisions and are ambitious. They take up responsibility and challenges and not anxious about difficult and demanding jobs. They emphasize on continuous improvement and help to constantly improve work towards efficiency. As they consider continuous improvement is vital to run the organisation, they are open to feedback from others. This leadership also requires effective communication between the team members to be successful. It is essential for the leader to communicate clearly, the requirements of the objective and the expectations from the leader to the team members to successfully run the team.

Rama can be considered as a pace-setting leader. Goleman's characteristics of pace setting leader can be seen in Rama. Being an embodiment of virtues and dharma, Ram had set high-standards for himself and for the people of Ayodhya. His commitment to ethical values sets as a pace for his followers. He cannot tolerate unethical behaviours. Rama was result oriented and encouraged others to strive for excellence. As a result, Rama had a self-motivated team who were experts in various fields. Rama accepted new challenges and was ready to commit to the new work. He was a quick decision maker in critical situations. He always led the team from the front and shared the hardships of the kingdom which were the great characteristics of pace setting leader.

In the Yuddha Kanda, Rama undertook a colossal task of building the bridge across the ocean to reach Lanka, with the help of monkey army. After analysing the situation, Rama decided to build the bridge across the ocean to rescue Sita. This was an arduous job. Rama's team has experts which included Sugriva, Nala and Hanuman. They were able to build the bridge under the guidance of Rama. This is described in Setu Bandha Padala in Yudha Kanda. Kambar speaks about the building of the bridge by monkeys in this chapter. As a pace setting leader, Rama was result oriented, a quick decision maker and led his team towards the goal in critical situations. Rama, then led the army of monkeys to Lanka to war against Ravana.

Coaching style

Coaching leader empowers and develops the team members to achieve the objective. They provide guidance, support and motivation to help the individuals to attain their full potential. Communication plays a vital role in this type of leadership. They motivate, encourage, mentor and guide the team by sharing experiences and insights. It is important for a coaching leader to be a good communicator as the leader has to encourage and build trust within the team during crisis. They work with the team to attain the objective. These leaders understand the unique strength of every team member, then help them to develop their strength to reach the goal. This style of leadership also focuses on continuous improvement and lead the team towards that by focussing on the individual capability. They provide decision making opportunity to the individuals and motivate them to take up the responsibilities. They are open to the feedback given by the members and also provide positive feedback in a constructive manner. It is important for a coaching leader to instil confidence about themselves in the team. They do this by giving challenging assignments and encourage initiative by them. They possess good questioning skills which will stimulate critical thinking and help the individuals to find the solution on their own. This type of leadership creates a positive environment, as the individuals wish to advance and improve their performance.

In Ramayana, coaching leadership can be related to Jambavan, who motivated and persuaded Hanuman to cross the sea. The army of monkeys, those who went south in search of Sita, discovered that Sita is in Lanka through Sampathi. In the Kishkintha Kanda of Kamba Ramayana, Jambavan said to Angadga, “*Hanuman is indeed the person who should accomplish the task of uniting Rama with Sita*”. (pg. 470) Then Jambavan describes about the powers of Hanuman. When in self-doubt, coaching leaders instil confidence and mentor them. Here, Jambavan acts as a coaching leader by identifying the strengths of Hanuman and encouraging him to reach the goal. In Mahendra Patala of Kishkinda Kanda, Jambavan says,

*“Analysing good and bad things, he is competent enough to talk things without blemish. What is to be done should be decided by him and he should return after accomplishing the task.
(pg.470, verse 988)*

Jambavan mentions all the powers of Hanuman in this patala. Being a coaching leader, Jambavan also guides him on how can he cross the ocean to find Sita. Hanuman, after listening to Jambavan said in Mahendra Patala of Kamba Ramayana,

*“Uproot Lanka, and bring it here’, should you say,
Or ‘Powder all the Rakshasas and bring Sita here,’
I can do exactly what you ask me to do.
You will see it soon with your own eyes.
Do not have any doubt whatever. (21)*

3. Conclusion

The Indian epic, Ramayana provides valuable insights of present leadership styles proposed by Daniel Goleman's and his six leadership styles can be found in Ramayana.

References

- Tim Hannagan, “Management Concepts and Practices”, Fifth Edition, 2008 pg 65- 67
<https://www.ijmh.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/v9i9/I1603059923.pdf>
- John Adair, “Effective Leadership Masterclass”, 2010, Pan Books
- G.R.K. Murthy, “Epic Leadership, Timeless lessons from the Ramayana”, 2017, Viva books
- Michael Heath, “Leadership Secrets”, 2010, HarperCollins Publishers
- So.Ma. Valliappan, “Management thoughts of Kamban” (Tamil) , 2018, Sixthsense Publications
- Peter F.Drucker, “The Practice of Management- the classic Drucker Collection”, 2007, Elsevier Ltd
- V. Irai Anbu, “Effective Communication- The Kambar Way”, 2018, Viva books
https://content.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/aspce3/files/Leadership_that_gets_results_goleman.pdf
- Kamba Ramyanam, translated by P.S. Sundaram, Department of Tamil Develoment -Culture

Kamaba Ramayana (English translation of Tamil Ramayana of Sage Kamban), Volume 1 and 2, translated by Shanthi Lal Nagar, Second edition, 2023, Parimal publications

John Adair, "John Adair's 100 greatest ideas for being a brilliant manager," 2011, Capstone Publishing Ltd.

P.S. Sundaram, "Kamba Ramayanam", 2002, Penguin books

Bishupada Chakravarty, Translated from the Bengali by Debjani Banerjee, "The Penguin companion to the Ramayana", 2006, Penguin books India.

V. Irai Anbu, "Ancient yet Modern – Management Concepts in Thirukkural", 2011, Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd

<https://www.mtdtraining.com/blog/golemans-leadership-styles.htm>

<https://www.business-powerhouse.com/6-leadership-styles-from-daniel-goleman-author-of-leadership-that-gets-results>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304196751_Transformational_leadership_style_demonstrated_by_Sri_Rama_in_Valmiki_Ramayana

Daniel Goleman, "Leadership: The power of Emotional Intelligence – Selected writings", 2011, More than sound LLC