



A critical analysis of Valmiki's Ramayana and its implications to management & leadership qualities

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Abstract

The modern day management & leadership needs more learnings from the heroic character appeared in the ancient Indian scriptures such as Valmiki Ramayana, one of the most admired texts of India has numerous lessons on management & leadership. There are many characters involved in Ramayana apart of Rama from whom we can learn new aspects of management and can easily correlate with modern principles of management. Many authors have researched on Ramayana by keeping Rama as an integral part of their study, but we sneak up further to explore other characters as well through the perceptive of management, managerial & leadership qualities to get extended lessons from such ignored intellectual characters. Therefore the need of extended analysis on the epic Ramayana is become essential to preserve individual and family values, explore managerial & leadership skills & ethics in work, while they are working hard to achieve success and happiness and we have found in our studies that Ramayana can provide the critical way to solve these modern-day problems through the persuasion of management principles.

Keywords: Ramayana, Lord Rama, Indian mythological epic, Management through Ramayana, Rama as a leader, Leadership qualities in Rama, Vibhishana, Kumbhakarna, Hanumana

Introduction

Applicability of ancient Indian concept in modern business management is of relevance because of the fact that without substantial management principles India could not have seen a united and culturally advanced civilization like Indus Valley. Valmiki Ramayana is one of the greatest Indian epics whose endeavor deserves much better study and recognition in the context of management. As a result, most of the people have been mesmerized by Rama's impressive style of management but what they have ignored to notice is that the Ramayana has lot many characters that are capable to produce management lessons and are well intellectual, which can be applicable even today's competitive corporate world. At 24,000 verses, it may seem smallish, but only in comparison to the Mahabharat. It is still longer than Homer's Greek epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, combined! Here are a few lessons that we can figure out from Ramayana to show the extent to which the leadership & management elements composed in Valimiki Ramayana can be applicable and meaningful to our modern society.

Research Materials & Method

We have studied Valmiki Ramayana and explored many new concept and learnings from it through the Management's point of view. We also studied the Indian corporates working style to understand their learnings from Ramayana's management theories. We came on a conclusion after our deep study that Ramayana is the best management book that can be considered as a Bible or Geeta for managers and management scholars.

Analysis

Management is a process that regards integrating and

coordinating the collective work so that the goals of an organization are achieved easily. There are numerous definitions of 'management'. However, the most quoted definition is 'to get things done through people'. Barnard (1986) has defined management as an organization as a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more people. A quality sample of all leading business houses of India which have been around for more than a decade now – Infosys, IOC, Bharti group, Birla, Reliance, Yes Bank, Mahindra and Tatas, for instance – is adequate confirmation that efficient in business management and ethical guardianship for social responsibility. We did the detail study of Ramayana through Management's point of view and concluded few factors both together that describe how Rama & other characters were scholar graduate of management and how leadership qualities should be applied in practical working with assuring goal achievement through efficient team leading.

Team building & Leadership

Rama had a crystal clear vision to get back her wife from the demon king Ravana, who was the ruler of Sri Lanka; so far from his house Rama won the battle and emerged as the ideal person for Hindu's. Rama knew that this was not an easy task for him to fight alone against the powerful and mighty Ravana, so he started to build his team of humans and animals. It was a team of people and animals that had distinguished powers and ability to perform under pressure including Hanuman, a monkey king and the god of wind, who had powers to fly at supersonic speed; he was blessed to change over in any size or shape, he wants. He could have been a bee or a dinosaur. Nal & Neel, the other monkey

princess who blessed with the powers that whatever they throw in the water, would never sink; with the help of Nal & Neel, Rama constructed a 30 kilometer long bridge of stones from India's end point to the entrance point of Sri Lanka. Rama also took help of his younger brother Lakshmana, who serves Rama and Sita reverently during the exile. In Panchvati, Lakshmana constructed a lavish hut for Rama and Sita to live in. Lakshmana cuts off Ravana's sister Surpanakha's nose in anger, when she tries to seduce Rama and insults Sita. He played an important role in the war with Ravana and slays Ravana's son Indrajit. Rama motivated Jambavan, the leaders of bears to focus on his supernatural powers to find Seeta. Rama not only motivated the individuals but also to the large group of animals like Vanar Sena, the monkey army from southern part of India, who fought for Rama against the army of Ravana. Rama was helped by Jatayu as well, a powerful golden eagle who speaks in the voice of a human being. He pledges his service to Rama. He informed Rama about the person who kidnaped Seeta and her nearest possible location that could be very important tip for Rama in the journey to find Seeta.

Perception

Rama had some supernatural qualities that made him like a living god, he was ambitious and visionary, humble & smart, self-motivated and an excellent planner, a brave warrior, master of archery, who broke Lord Shiva's bow *Pinaak* with his bare hand and most significantly people had a perception that he was the Avatar of Lord Vishnu, so everyone in the army jubilantly associated with him and never felt fear or lost. No one ever felt guilt for killing enemy army because they were motivated and inspired that they are helping divine god itself, so nothing wrong would go in their name as part of Karma. It is the same management policy, where a perception is projected to communicate with employees and customers in order to build a brand and keep adding value's to the product. The same divine perception of Rama worked smoothly on Lakshmana, who attacked a woman, Hanuman, who stole a mountain, Vibheeshana & Sugriva, were involved in killing their brothers without feeling any sort of guilt or thought of rendering a sin.

Resources management

The strategic planning used by Rama during the war against Ravana was bang on the target because Rama was fully aware of his available resources. He led an inferior & less armed army against the might of the Ravana's elite army. Rama researched on every single aspect of Ravana's war tactic, his commander's abilities, the army strength and his powerful weapons. After the baffling calculation, he managed to ascertain his resources in an effective way to lead the team and win over the Ravana. During the war, he used *Gandharvastra* to kill almost 14000 demons, as this weapon compelled demons to think that the next person fighting to them is Rama thus they killed each other and killed themselves. Through his research and informers report, Rama guided his brother Lakshmana to use *Indrastra* weapon against Ravana's mighty son Meghnad, the powerful warrior of Lanka, who could only be killed by someone who has not slept for fourteen years and that person was Lakshmana who

gifted his fourteen years of sleep to his wife. Once in the war, Meghnad, used *Naagpaash* weapon that imprisoned Rama & Lakshmana but Rama already had an idea of this, so he thought Hanuman to use *Garuda* weapon over *Naagpaas* to relieved them from this tactic. When Rama understood that it was not an easy task to kill Ravana so easily, he took help from Ravana's brother Vibheeshana, who believed in Rama. Vibheeshana told the secret to kill Ravana as he was immortal in many sense. This was the turning point in the war, when Rama convinced Vibheeshana to come to his side. Lord Rama killed Ravana by using the weapon presided over by Lord Brahma called *Brahmastra*, which blazed Ravana & his chariot with fires. This also could be the reason of *Dushhera* being celebrated in certain way. Rama used all his resources effectively including Vasavi Shakti Astra; Brahma Astra; Bramhashira Astra; Varuna Astra; Agneyastra; Brahmanda Astra; Surya Astra; Jyothiksha Astra; Maheshwara Astra; Linga Astra; Shiva Astra; Sudharshana Astra; Venkatesa Astra; Narayanan Astra; Karma Astra; Bhumi Astra; Vayva Astra; Trimurti Astra; Garuda Astra; Bhakti Astra; Siddhi Astra; Kali Astra; Durga Astra; Yama Astra; Indra Astra; Chandra Astra; Asvini Astra; Rishi Astra; Gandharva Astra; Maya Astra; Deva Astra; Yaksha Astra; Parvata Astra weapons in the war.

Cooperation & Reward Management

Rama used this management concept as give and take policy in some ways and reward management in other ways. Rama was known that cooperation is the key to get things done, so he helped few of them and asked for favor in return. The same concept can be seen in the modern day management system in the name of incentive pay on extraordinary performance. Sugriva the younger brother of Vali who was the ruler of *Kishkindha*, because of some misunderstanding during a fight with demon, brothers became bitter enemies and henceforth Vali abducted Sugriva's wife and asked Sugriva to leave his kingdom. Upset and lost Sugriva met with Rama, where Rama promised Sugriva that he would kill Vali and would reinstate Sugriva as the king of the monkeys. In return, Rama took a promise from Sugriva that he would serve him with his army. The same give and take cooperation policy applied on Vibheeshana, that if he would help Rama; Rama would help him in return to make him the King of Lanka after the defeat of Ravana. For his dedicated and excellence service to Rama, Legend Hanuman, Jambavan, Mainda, Dvidida, and five other Vanaras including Nila and Nala, are rewarded that they would be available to the devotees of Rama for as long as Rama's names and stories were on people's lips and said to be still alive today. It is therefore strongly believed that Hanuman is immortal & still present in places where Rama's glory is sung. Angad, the son of Vali was rewarded as a king of Vanar sena after the end of war because he was the one who distracted Ravana from doing a against Rama. While creating the bridge to get to Lanka, a squirrel was helping the monkeys; seeing a squirrel carry beach sand for the bridge, some monkeys laughed at squirrel, Upset squirrel went and sat near Rama. Acknowledging the tiny creature's dedication, Rama cuddled its back and hence ever since, squirrels carry white stripes as the finger signs of Rama's reward management.

Through offering the best reward system to its employees to channelize work motivation amongst them is global IT Company, RMSI, ranked first in India in terms of best place to work with, like fast track growth option, numerous workshops, tours & trips, sports and hobby activities in company premises, work from home option and many more.

Delegation of Authority

Rama set the best example of delegating authority in proper hands. He divided Vanaras into four groups in search of Seeta. He not only delegated the authority but also guided them in appropriate direction. Hanuman was in the team of Jamabvanta, who was a perfect planner. When Hanuman got information that Seeta was abducted in Lanka, Jamabvanata motivated Hanuman to explore his lost powers to go there. Hanuman visited Lanka four times during the Ramayana and followed all the orders of Rama. Rama delegated each one of them certain authority as per their capabilities like Lakshmana was assigned on security of Seeta, Hanuman was assigned to fly to Lanka and get the information, Angad appointed as a his delegate to negotiate the peace talk with Ravana, Sushen was elected as the chief medical officer, who suggested the *Sanjeevani butti* that saved Lakshmana's life. In short wherever Rama assigned the authority, all of them performed well, and this is not only because they were capable of doing so but the most important lesson we get from this study that a manager should know who should assign what!

Personal qualities: Difference between Rama Vs Ravana

A successful manager should always focus on his personal qualities to be improved continuously and he should always have a few to lead a team to achieve desired goal. Rama had many qualities like he was self-motivated, wise decision maker; he always had a positive attitude, he always kept his cool even in the disastrous situation, he was a good commander and a fighter, he had sound knowledge of mythology, geography, archery, war strategy and psychology. These qualities made him a winner in the battlefield of Ramayan against Ravana, a king who was greedy, self-centered, egoistic and manner less man, his over confidence made him a loser in the war. On personal qualities account he was way behind to Rama and thus Rama is considered as god and Ravana as the biggest villain of all time. One fine quality that Rama had was never give up with learning process, even though Ravana was taking his last breathe, Rama sent Lakshmana to get some tips from him about good governance, this shows his attitude towards learning and self-development where as Ravana was more conscious on his practices and blessings gifted by Lord Shiva.

Management lessons from Kumbhakarna

According to Ramayana, Kumbhakarna is a rakshasa and younger brother of Ravana, despite his monstrous size and great hunger, he was described to be of ethical character, when he was informed of the circumstances of Ravana's war with Lord Rama, he tried to convince his brother that what he was doing was wrong. However, he chose to fight in the battle against Rama due to his loyalty to his brother and towards his nation. This shows his dedication and commitment towards the relationship and a combined motive yet he felt that the

action what he was going to perform is wrong still he did it being a good team member and a great subordinate by proving a true follower of senior's orders. Able to realize the mistakes and wrongdoings of Ravana, even trying to interact and cautious at certain times, he is unable to openly oppose him, feeling bound by his moral ethics. Fighting on what he knows is the unethical and wrong side; he is in the end killed in the war. When he was defeated after a tough fight, he surrendered to Lord Rama and got rebirth. He not only sacrificed his life for the nation and his team but also he sent his two sons, Kumbha and Nikumbha, who too fought in the war against Rama and were killed. This sort of dedication and commitment is needed in any organization to achieve desire goal.

Management lessons from Queen Mandodari

Mandodari was the wife of demon King Ravana, most beautiful, intelligent and blessed women, who always tried warning Ravana. Knowing that her husband was walking on a path of his own demolition, she made all efforts to guide him towards righteous path as she was the finest guide who not only shown the ethical path to Ravana but also she begged him to send back Sita to her husband, because she knew that one day Rama would come and kill Ravavan, as per the curse pre written in his destiny. To achieve success and to accomplish goal, an organization needs a guide like her to show the right path and monitor the direction and working style so that nothing would go wrong. One more committed character to teach us a management lesson.

Management lessons from Vibhishana

Vibhishan younger brother of Ravana, one more guide who always suggested Ravana that what he was doing was wrong but unlike his brother Kumbhakarna, he chose to be at Rama's side. Throughout his life he ensured that they don't lead towards destruction. He was no less powerful than Ravana and Kumbakaran because he also did 'Yajna' for the same period as they did. He had chance to get any kind of boon from brahmaji. Ravana chose power while he chose Peace and spirituality. The same peace he wanted between Rama and Ravana, so he tried his level best to settle down the war and enlighten peace but Ravana refused his offer and thrown him out of his kingdom, then he went to Rama and shared all the dark secrets of Ravana that ultimately killed him. After Ravana's defeat, he became the rules of Lanka and wisely he ruled his tenure. In spite of his commitment towards peace, his efforts for opposing war and killing innocent people involved in a war he is treated as a traitor in the history. What we can learn from Vibhishana, is that his effort to bring peace around and in the organization so that everyone can live happily and easily can achieve goal. Many corporates are facing the problem of internal politics between employees that affects the working performance and a deep impact on desired goal. So by applying Vibhishana's teachings we can easily sort this problem and may explore a good human being within ourselves.

Management lessons from Hanumana

Hanumana was a mighty warrior monkey prince, an ape-man who served Rama throughout his life without any expectation.

Through the teachings of Management, he clearly the role of an employee in an organization that one should be polite, humble and dedicated towards his superior and organisation, one should never raised a query and or asked a question. In fact whenever organization needs extra effort, one should always stand by the team, just like he stood aside of Rama. Once Seeta was about to commit suicide in depression, but Hanumana gave her the spirit and confidence that soon Rama will come to take her back by defeating Ravana. His role was to accomplish what his peers in his lifetime considered impossible and thus show the world that where there is a will there is a way. He flied all the way to Himalaya ranges and carried a complete mountain on his shoulder to save Lakshmana's life.

Conclusion

The Valmiki Ramayana is productive guide with several lessons through several characters in the development of managerial effectiveness, interpersonal development & leadership qualities. Ramayana is one such write up that provides quintessential management teachings that are globally correlative. Rama & other characters of Ramayana teaches us the power of self-control, self-belief, keeping patience, values of justice, equality, anger management, wise decision making power, being one with team, time management, constantly focusing on the desired goal, utilizing powers, importance of being an ethical being and most important teaching amongst all is rather than being blissful, be peaceful. Valmiki Ramayan is one of the world's most remarkable classics and excels in its moral appeal. We can take several lessons from the each character of Ramayana, even though Ravana is considered as a villain still there is a lot to study on him and to take some positive lessons from him. Thus we believe the Ramayana is a perfect book for a management scholar or manager.

Reference

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