Indian Perspective on Leadership Traits in context of Sri Ramcharitmanas (Tulsikrit-Ramayana)

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Abstract:
This paper explores and explains the traits of the leadership from old Indian wisdom (Sri Ramcharitmanas). India is very rich in literature and culture. Indian philosophers and thinkers have produced so many concepts and ideas in different areas of academics. Leadership is not untouched area from great Indian thinkers. In the mid of 15th century, there was a great Indian philosopher Goswami Tulsidasji, he presented his work on leadership traits and an ideal state (Ram-Rajya) in the form of great epic SriRamcharitmanas. He described the attributes of a true leader which are beyond the boundaries of nations. If any body will have these attributes he could handle any situations. This paper is based on a qualitative research methodology called hermeneutics, which are the interpretations of ancient or classical literature (Sri Ramcharitmanas-Tulsidasji) and the review of literatures in leadership. Sri Ramcharitmanas is undoubtedly the most popular Indian epic of all time. It is a complete story, a moving parade of devotion, love, romance, drama, plotting, sacrifice and valour; a virtual treasure of Indian cultural values and colourful episodes of our past which shaped our thinking, beliefs and philosophy. Sri Ramcharitmanas is considered as a marvelous epic, it contains many principals of management. This study identifies the traits of effective leader in any situation- from great Indian literature Sri Ramcharitmanas. The study determines the traits of a leader who are in the crisis situation. The goal of this study is to determine the attributes of leaders.

Keywords: Sri Ramcharitmanas; leadership; leadership traits, Indian wisdom

Introduction:
21st century faces challenges of fast changing environments. This is the era of globalization. An important change in the dynamics that organizations and their leaders face is that a rapid changing cross cultural environment. The changes in the economic environment--from local, to national, to global markets--require new perspectives. Dealing with this dynamic environment, organizations are focusing on the development of their employees as leaders. So many researchers are working on this issue and lots of philosophies and literatures are produced by the management scholars and researchers on leadership. These researches attempt to identify the key traits and key behaviors that enable a manager to become an effective leader. By identifying the effective leadership traits and behaviors, an organization can identify the skills necessary for their managers to develop in the leaders. Once these skills are identified, leadership training can be implemented to promote an effective leadership style in an organization. Current theories, such as Transformational Leadership Theory, Situational Leadership Theory discuss and imply development but do not go into specific details of how leaders can be developed. Studies of charismatic Therefore, there is a need to supplement the current theories with an effective leadership theory that will better explain the key traits and key behaviors of an effective leader. In the early of 20th century many researches have been conducted on the traits of the leaders and these studies have produced so many traits (Bass, 1990). The list of important leadership traits is long, and includes such traits as diligence, trustworthiness, dependability, articulateness, sociability, open-mindedness, intelligence, confidence, self-assurance, and conscientiousness. To identify these key traits researchers are showing the interest in rich Indian scripture and philosophy. In contemporary leadership literature, there seems to be a growing interest in exploring philosophy, in developing leadership. The Indian civilization, with recorded history of more than 5,000 years is one of the oldest
civilizations in the world. In the Indian context, the studies to explore Vedanta, Ramayana, Upanishads, the Mahabharata and Bhagavad-Gita, and Arthashastra of Kautilya were made by scholars such as Satpathy (2006; 2007), Muniapan (2006, 2007, 2009), Muniapan and Dass (2008, 2009), Satpathy and Muniapan (2008). However, due to the vastness of Indian literatures and philosophies many of the above studies are considered to be limited as several areas within the Indian literature are yet and needs to be explored. One of the literatures which need to be explored in the context of management is Sri Ramcharitmanas, considered to be the most glorious Indian epic in the world. As there is no detailed papers written on Sri Ramcharitmanas in the context of leadership, this paper by the authors aims to fill the gap in the management and Sri Ramcharitmanas literature.

Sri Ramcharitmanas is an epic composed by the great 16th-century poet, Goswami Tulsidasji (c.1532–1623). As he mentions in Baal Kaand of the composition, he started writing it in Vikram Samvat 1631 (1574 AD) in city Ayodhya, India. It was completed in two years and seven months. A large portion of the poem was composed at Varanasi, where the poet spent most of his later life. It is considered one of the greatest works of Hindi Literature. The great poem is popularly called Tulsi-krita Ramayana, but entitled by its author Sri Ramcharitmanas. Sri Ramcharitmanas relates the adventures of Rama, who, together with his three half brothers. It is written in pure Baiswari or Eastern Hindi, in stanzas called chaupais, broken by dohas or couplets, with an occasional sortha and chhand.

Sri Ramcharitmanas has been traditionally divided into seven chapters, dealing with the life of Rama from his birth, his exile, and his kingdom.

1. **Bala Kanda**
2. **Ayodhya Kanda**
3. **Aranya Kanda** –
4. **Kishkinda Kanda**
5. **Sundara Kanda**
6. **Lanka Kanda**
7. **Uttara Kanda**

This great epic focuses on the Traits and Characters of Sri Ram. Sri Ram had to face various situations in his life, and in facing these situations he showed various traits and characters. Sri Ram has a unique place in the heart of millions of Indians because of these characters and traits. So long before Henry Fayol, Fredrick Taylor, Bass, Peter Drucker, and other management philosophers introduced modern management concepts, Tulsidasji, had applied the leadership thought in Sri Ramcharitmanas. Tulsidasji argued that leadership is determined by sets of attributes that contain motives, values, and an array of skills and competencies. Leadership qualities today are so important that organizations and academic institutions look for them while recruiting or admitting. Someone who shows any signs of being a wayward follower is not looked at as an initiator or decision maker or who can win the respect of team member. Tulsidasji specified the following as key leader attributes: patience, courage, honesty, good conduct, firmness etc. A leader would also possess the following behaviors: advisor, charismatic, competitive, delegator, developer, focused, and supportive. Sri Ramcharitmanas indicates that the person who wants to become a position of leadership in the group, he must show these attributes. A positive relationship between these traits and leadership status can be established. The positive relationships of intelligence, adjustment, and honesty to leadership are highly significant. In addition, Patience, courage and interpersonal sensitivity communication etc. are found to be positively related to leadership. Tulsidasji emphasized a person who has these attributes; he could be leader in any circumstances and situations. One who emerges as a leader in one group situation also can be seen as leaders in different groups with different members, and across different situations, if having following attributes. Tulsidasji described the traits of a leader in the chapter -Lanka Kanda where Sri Ram and Ravana was ready for final battle and then Vibhishan asked to Sri Ram, how will you defeat this mighty Ravana and Sri Ram give the answer to Vibhishan and he elaborate the essential attributes for winning any adverse circumstance.
**Objective of the Study:**

This paper specifically explores and explains the attributes of a leader, described by Tulsidasji in Sri Ramcharitmanas. In context of modern management and leadership research work is very limited on Sri Ramcharitmanas. But we can draw various principles and attributes which are useful for today corporate manager. Sri Ramcharitmanas is full of different situations and incidents, no single trait could be useful for handling all the situations. As a leader one should require a skill sets to deal the different situations and the major objective of the study is to indentify those traits which are essential for handling any situation.

**Scope & Limitations of the research:**

Sri Ramcharitmanas is unique epic offering leadership skills and abilities. This study will help to find out the factors associated with this epic in current managerial practices. However the study is restricted only to the epics Sri Ramcharitmanas (Tulsidasji).

**Research Methodology:**

This research paper is based on a qualitative research methodology called hermeneutics, which is the interpretation of classical literature (Tulsidasji-Sri Ramcharitmanas).

**An Indian wisdom –Sri Ramcharitmanas on Leadership Traits:**

From the beginning of the 20th century, researchers have focused a great deal of attention on the unique characteristics of successful leaders. Thousands of studies have been conducted to identify the traits of effective leaders. The results of these studies have produced a very long list of important leadership traits; each of these traits contributes to the leadership process. Tulsidasji had presented his unique work on trait leadership in his famous epic in Sri Ramcharitmanas. He described the skill sets by which a person can hold a leadership position.

“Sauraj Dheeraj Tehi Rath Chaka, Satya Seel Dradh Dhawaja Pataka”
“Bal Vivek Dam Parhit Ghore, Chama Krupa Samata Rajju Jore”
“Ees Bhavan Sarathi Sujana, Birati Charma Santosh Kripana”
“Dan Parshu Budhi Shakti Prachanda, Bar Bigyan Kathin Ko Danda”
“Amal Achal Man Trone Samana, Sam Jam Niyan Silimukh Nana”
“Kavach Avedh Vipra Guru Pooja, Ahi Sam Vijay Upay Na Duja”
“Sakaha Dharmmay Rath Jaken, Jitan Kahan Na Katun Ripu Taaken”

--- Lanka Kanda

Analyzing these lines following traits will emerge for becoming a successful leader.

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**Courage:**

Tulsidasji describes that courage is fundamental requirement of all effective leaders. Courage is a commitment to doing what is right. External and internal environment are very challenging and facing the challenges one should have courage. Even in daily life leaders face lots of responsibilities and have to take decision. A single decision can impact on thousands of life in the organization and there may be so many pressure groups who can be oppose a right decision also so one should have dare to
implement the policy and decisions. Leader must demonstrate courage in controlling adverse situations and take a stand on what’s right rather than popular choice. People respect honesty, trustworthiness, equity, and honor. They respect leaders who stand up for what is right.

**Patience:**
According to Tulsidasji patience is an essential trait in the leadership. An impatient leader can destroy the organization. Patience gives the chance to accept others at different level of maturity and it also gives the chance to understand the different opinions. It is an ability to handle difficult and unpredictable situations. If a person who has the patient as an attribute, he will buy the time to react any situation and will not react emotionally. It gives the opportunity to a person in selecting the right action rather than a simple reaction. Patience will give the clarity in understanding the situation. Dealing with people or situations requires immense patience. Patience includes balancing action and inaction.

**Truth and Good Conduct:**
According to Tulsidasji truth and good conduct is one of the important characteristic of a good leader. Being a leader one should honest with yourself and his people. People can accept the mistakes of a leader but they will not forgive lying and cheating. Good conduct and truth will help in transparent environment and this will help in winning the trust and confidence of the people. Leaders who show good conduct and truthfulness, they will gain the assurance of others very easily. Dishonesty creates mistrust in others, and dishonest leaders are seen as undependable and unreliable. Honesty helps people to have trust and faith in what leaders have to say and what they stand for. Honesty also enhances a leader’s ability to influence others because they have confidence in and believe in their leader. People believe and follow someone they trust. Leader cannot afford the burden of corrupt behavior. By the truth and good conduct leaders win the respect of others. Good conduct of a leader inspires to others and it gives the confidence to the followers. Trust and good conduct make them loyal.

**Determination and Dedication:**
Determination is another trait that characterizes effective leaders. If you believe in your goal, you have to show so through your dedication to work at it constantly. Determined leaders are very focused and attentive to tasks. They know where they are going and how they intend to get there. Determination is the decision to get the job done; it includes characteristics such as initiative, persistence, and drive. People with determination are willing to assert themselves, they are proactive, and they have the capacity to persevere in the face of obstacles. Being determined includes showing dominance at times, especially in situations where others need direction. What distinguishes all of these leaders from other people is their determination to get the job done. Of all the traits, determination is probably the one trait that is easily acquired by those who lead. All it demands is perseverance. Staying focused on the task, clarifying the goals, articulating the vision, and encouraging others to stay the course are characteristics of determined leaders. Being determined takes discipline and the ability to endure, but having this trait will almost certainly enhance a person’s leadership.

**Power:**
Powerful leadership is the backbone of any organization. Leaders have to create vision, mission, policy, rules and procedure of the organization. People are working in a group in the organization and if they do not understand the vision and mission and do not follow the rules and regulation, organization cannot run. So organizations need a powerful leader who can settle the group conflict and motivate people in the right direction. Leaders must develop their full potential so that they can control the internal as well external environment. Leader should have the power to communicate strong message to the people.
Discretion:
Leaders must have the ability to recognize the sensitive issues and avoiding words, actions, and attitudes that could bring undesirable consequences. Discretion is necessary for leaders to make positive contributions to their organizations. When discretion is low, result and behavior are limited. When discretion is high, leaders are relatively free to do as they wish. Without discretion, leaders will unable to influence others. One can have the knowledge, but implement to that knowledge in a right way that is more important.

Self-Control:
The key to leadership is self-control; leaders must exercise good "self-control. Leaders should know how to manage their emotions so that they have more control over their reactions. Competition is fierce, leaders are facing high pressure, situations are beyond control, and in this scenario self-control is becoming an essential trait in understanding the complex environment and reacts on that. Self-control means that your actions and reactions are more strategic. People are working in tremendous pressure and they do mistakes also dealing with these people leaders should not loose their self-control. Self-control is a character trait required in all aspects of a leader.

Benevolence:
Benevolence is the power to achieve happiness, contentment and right human relations and the key to accessing greater powers safely. Benevolence refers to showing concern for the suffering or welfare of others, and shows mercy to others. Leaders should make an effort to understand the needs of their employees and take steps to address those needs and concerns.

Forgiveness & Generosity:
Forgiveness is also one of the important traits in the leadership. People are working in high pressure situations and mistakes are very common, as a leader one must show the mercy. Forgiveness gives a chance to accept the mistakes and learn from the mistakes. Forgiveness is a necessary trait to create good working conditions. Forgiveness allows communication to continue through tough times, and to improve communication in better times. Forgiveness could be a helpful tool to gain better working relationships, better environments. Leadership Generosity entails giving others latitude, permission to make mistakes, and all the information that they need to do their job. It is making sure they have the authority that goes with responsibility - it is giving them due credit for their ideas. In a nutshell, all of this translates to generosity of spirit, a quality we admire in leaders.

Evenness:
Evenness means an inner balance that keeps us undisturbed by changes in the mind. Leaders should show the evenness for every body. Performance will be only parameter of appraisal in the organization and leaders should show the consistency in behaving others. Evenness makes the leaders predictable and people consider them trustworthy. Leaders should not promote people on the basis of closeness or any relation. There is no place of personal liking in the organization.

Faith on God:
Believe on the divine power may be one of the trait of a leader. Believe on god mean believe on the humanity. Faith on the god means faith on your people. Mahatma Gandhi used to say “Truth is God”. Leaders should show the respect and follow the truth and honesty in dealing with others. Leaders who believe in this trait, they will not create a suspicious environment. Believe on the divine power will provide an internal strength to the leaders in the adverse situations.

Dispassion:
As the environment is very challenging and dynamic results are not in the hand of any one so focus should be on the process not on the outcome. So in this way dispassion or detachment will be important traits of the leaders. When a leader becomes obsessive, or very emotional, he can't function
properly. The leaders should not focus on personal likes or dislikes and should subordinate their individual preferences to the good of the organization.

Contentment:
Leaders should possess this quality because no one can avail unlimited resources. They must show the contentment and develop the ability in working under the limited resources. When leaders have this virtue, they understand the limitations of team and in any circumstances they behave calm and composed manner. As a leader one should require different tangible and intangible resources but no organization can provide unlimited resources, leader must have the quality to work within the constraint so leader must develop contentment as a trait.

Charity:
Charity means giving something without hoping anything in return. Now a day leaders and organizations believe in charity, they are giving lot of contribution to the society in terms of wealth, education, medical etc. Even in the internally leaders are contributing much they give the time and support to their juniors; they are mentoring and helping others in their grooming. Giving time and support to any one it will be a great charity. Leaders should possess and understand the importance of this virtue.

Reasoning
Reasoning is one of the important attributes in leadership. As a leader one should have competitive intelligence, business intelligence and emotional intelligence. Leaders have to draw various conclusions and without reasoning it will not possible. Good reasoning means good understanding of the environment and it will help in giving right decision. It is important for leaders to be logical and poised. If leaders are able in explaining the logic and reasoning behind a decision, they can buy the trust and commitment. Sometimes a decision should be based on more than analysis, logic, and reasoning. No decision should ever be made in a vacuum, because a decision must finally be carried out by people.

Wisdom:
Wisdom is the ability to draw on one’s knowledge and experience to make well-formed judgments. It also involves the use of one’s power and personal authority to implement an effective course of action. Wisdom is one of the most important and key traits in the leaders to understand and analyzed the situations. Without wisdom one cannot take a right and effective decision. Wisdom comes with experience. Experience can teach a lot and also prevent any future mistakes. Wisdom emerges when individuals acquire new experiences and have the cognitive appraisal skills that allow them to draw the lessons from these experiences. A smart leader will always regard wisdom.

An open and firm mind:
An open and firm minded leader will become an inspirational force for the people. As a leader one should welcome any idea and suggestions, coming from any one. Leader should free from any ego problems. As a leader one should very firm on the decisions. Mind oscillates between different moods in different conditions. Leader should have the ability to maintain a calm and composed behavior in difficult circumstances. Exhibiting composure and firmness of mind leader can earn the trust and confidence of people. Leaders should open for receiving different ideas and even criticism also.

Quiétude:
Quiétude enables a leader to concentrate and reconstruct him different thoughts. Quiétude is a strong attribute in the leadership. Without calmness leader will be instrument of different situations. He will just react on the situation without giving proper thinking. Quiétude regulates the feelings and emotions and permits a leader to take a proper decision. Leaders have to work in adverse situations and in these circumstances quiétude will be important attribute.
Abstinence of other mean:
Abstinence of other means focus on the subject matter and to be disciplined. Discipline is one of the most important traits in leadership. Discipline in both professional and personal life is one of the best leadership qualities a person can inculcate in him. More importantly, discipline is also one of the simplest measures to achieve success in the life. One could have talent, inspiration and good communication but it will not function without discipline. The most discipline leaders are most effective and efficient leaders. Disciplined leaders are well organized and able to face any difficulties and by this virtue they can give the confidence in the people also. Discipline can enhance the capacity of leaders to influence others.

Observance:
Leaders should pay the respect the values, norms and regulation of the organization. If they avoid the rules and regulation, they will not have any moral rights to stop any body. They should lead with example. These rules and regulations give the guideline for proper behaving and decision. Under these rules and regulation leaders take the policy decision.

Homage to colleague and mentors:
Wisdom can be gained by experienced people. So leaders must pay the respect of seniors. People give the contribution for making a successful organization. As a leader one should show the respect and pay the tributes of other colleague and seniors. People come in different cultures and this diversity is also good for success so leaders must understand and respect the culture and value system of others.

Conclusion:
This study describes the different traits of a leader from Indian wisdom Sri Ramcharitmanas, and proved that Indian philosophers were aware from leadership and other management concepts. There are so many researches which provide insight of a leadership. Thousand of studies have been conducted to identify the traits of a leader. But before any known management, Tulsidasji discussed the leadership traits in his famous epic Sri Ramcharitmanas. So there is need to analyze our all great epics like Bible, Quran etc and find out the wisdom.

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