

Leadership Styles In Ramayana And Lord Rama A Leader To Emulate For His Ethical Leadership Style

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Abstract:

The paper highlights the importance of the leadership behaviour of Lord Rama. Leadership defines various dimensions of behaviour study that stimulate followers to work to achieve organisational goals. Ethical leadership mainly focuses on fairness, Integrity ethical guidance, power sharing, and people orientation. Lord Ram's value-based learning is really admirable, not only for the individual level but for the family, society, and world. Acceptance and emulation are both different terms. Today, it is found that people accepting the values of Shri Rama everywhere, but his ethical leadership is merely emulated anywhere. In this paper, an investigation has been done to find out the various leadership styles demonstrated by Lord Rama, with special reference to the ethical leadership style demonstrated by him. It also attempts to find out the relevance of leadership styles in the present corporate world.

Keyword: ethical leadership, fairness, ethical guidance, power sharing, people orientation

Introduction

The name of Lord Rama itself is sufficient to justify his character, his deeds, and his values. Even after many thousands years, people speak highly of Lord Rama in the present era also. The present situation of society, corporations, and individuals has put emphasis on bringing out Lord Ram's value in practice for corporations, society, and the world as a whole. The holy epic Ramayan was written by several saints of different ages according to their perceptions and knowledge. A few of them are the Ramcharitra Manas by Tulsidas and the Srimadbalmikia Ramayana by the great saint Valmiki Ji. The Valmiki Ramayana is supposed to be one of the greatest epics in the world. Lord Rama is the main character of the Ramayana, and the whole story revolves around him. It is said that Lord Rama was an incarnation in the form of a human being by Lord Vishnu, the God who looks after the welfare and wellbeing of the whole universe. Hence, Lord Rama had all the bright, valuable, ethical, and path-showing character to guide and

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direct people of even the present day to emulate him for the peace, prosperity, and harmony of the world.

Leadership styles in Ramayana

Various leadership styles were demonstrated by various characters of Ramayana. Few of them have been mentioned in the following paragraph as described in Ramayana.

- **Transformational leadership styles**
- **Ethical Leadership Style**
- **Participative Leadership Style**

The present study undertakes to explore the leadership styles in the Valmiki Ramayana with special reference to the ethical leadership style of Lord Rama. The leadership styles demonstrated in the Valmiki Ramayana are as follows:

Transformational leadership style:

Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership is quite remarkable as it encourages and inspires subordinates to develop, create, or transform more leaders. Transformational leaders are able to create the effectiveness of an organisation and, in addition to looking after employees wellbeing, transform them into leaders. Transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the organisation and have an extraordinary effect on followers by transforming them. (Robbins and Sangly, 2005). Transformational leadership has gained much significance, and various authors and researchers have mentioned this style as an outstanding style of leadership. (Bass, 1985; Singh, P. et al., 1990; Avolio et al., 1985) The transformational leadership style of Lord Rama had a wonderful impact on the leadership of his followers, and such inspiring lessons will guide and inspire the whole world, says Muniapan (2007). Lord Rama had an unparalleled and unique transformational leadership style. (Gupta & Sinha, 2020). According to Bass and Avolio (1993), transformational leadership comprises four dimensions: inspirational motivation, idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The supporters of the concept of transformational leadership speak highly of this style, and according to them, every organisation would aspire to follow it. The transformational leadership style demonstrated by Lord Rama, in the Valmiki Ramayana may be observed as he transformed many leaders in his era and continues to transform millions even in today's era. Transformational leadership motivates followers by appealing to them to aim for higher ideals and moral values. The style of transformational

leaders positively changes the organisation, society, and country and also provides future leaders.

Lord Rama, as a leader, transformed many characters of Ramayana. He transformed Sugriv into a great leader who was once a depressed person, and his state and wife were abducted by Bali. Later, Ram killed Bali, and Sugriv was appointed King of Kishkindha. He later helped Lord Rama with his vanar sena (monkey army) in the war with Ravana played a very crucial role. Lord Rama transformed Angad, the son of Bali. He was a very good orator, so Ram gave him a chance to talk to Ravan as an Ambassador. Angad and Hanuman were two distinguished leaders in Ram's team who were very good at communicating with others. Initially Angad was very disappointed and under depression after the death of Bali. But with the blessing of Lord Rama he was finally transformed into a highly enthusiastic and motivated prince of Kishkindha. This is how lord Rama transformed many characters as depicted in Ramayana.

Strategy cannot be successful unless it has no application. Searching Sita was a tough task, but after meeting Jatayu, it became easy when he informed Lord Rama that Ravan had stolen Sita and carried her towards South. Lord Rama sent his trusted warriors to look for Sita. So he sent Neel, Angad, Hanuman, and Jambvant for this purpose. As a leader, Lord Rama developed the leadership qualities of all the warriors. Nal and Neel helped in constructing the bridge. Angad was sent as an Ambassador to Ravan as he was very good at communication. Sugriv was a very brave warrior, and since Ram helped him get his kingdom back from Bali, he helped in the war and played a very crucial role. Hanuman was very brave and intelligent. He played a sankat mochan (problem solver) role in the whole epic. He brought the mountain with the much needed herbs to save Laxman which was a great endeavour.

Ethical leadership style of Lord Rama:

Ethical leadership is related to the concept of respect for ethical beliefs and values. Ethical leadership includes integrity, respect, trust, fairness, transparency, and honesty. Bass initially did not differentiate between ethical and unethical transformational leadership, but finally he found that unethical transformational leadership is not a true indicator of transformational leadership. Avolio and other associated resercher (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008) forwarded this concept of authentic leadership. Internalised moral perspective, which is a component of authentic leadership, is most closely related to ethical leadership. Similarly, Bass and Avolio (1993) forwarded four dimensions of transformational leadership, in which idealised influence is most closely related to ethical leadership. Many other researchers have

propounded papers on ethical leadership (e.g. Chulla,1998;Hollander,1995;Scidman,2004; Bedi etal.) In the whole epic, we found that Ram was a symbol of ethical leadership. Even in the war with Ravan, he did not use any unethical means. At one point in the first war with Ravan, Ram made him weaponless but did not kill Ravan as it was against the war ethics. In Kishkindhakand, he killed Bali because he had done unethical deeds with Sugriv's wife. He had all the elements of ethical leadership, like honesty, respect, justice, empathy, fairness, leadership value, and many more. The best part of the Ramayana is that Lord Rama is the main hero of the epic. He provides an immensely valuable lesson on ethical leadership. Bharat wants to know what is the noblest of all religions. Ram replied that the greatest religion is that of doing good to others which is an ethical principle of beneficence.

As an ethical leader, Lord Rama has the following leadership behaviours: Lord Rama was a solicitous and humble man. In fact, Rama declared his dedication to dharma when he offered Ravana a final chance to make peace on the battleground. When Ravana walked to battle on the first day due to inadequate preparations and was rendered weapon less, Rama, being a leader by ethics, followed the code of chivalry during war and stipulated that an unarmed enemy should not be attacked. Humility was Rama's most outstanding virtue, which made him so popular. He had no hesitation in eating the fruits offered by Shabri (a low caste women) during his exile. When Vibhishana finally reached Lanka, he welcomed by lord Rama, to his side and embraced him like a brother. In spite of knowing that Vibhishana was the brother of the demon King Ravana, Lord Rama identified true and pure devotion and love by Vibhishan and he was made king of Lanka after winning the war. He welcomed him warmly and made him his best friend instantly, in spite of some differences and arguments against this in his camp. Lord Rama, being a humble leader helped everyone to show genuine concern, and managed to fight a war on his own terms and conditions and finally won it.

A leader has a personalised point of view that is exhibited in its own unique way. In the Ramayana, Lord Rama shared his views, thought processes, and opinions with Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sugriva, and Vibhishana. There was no prejudice against anyone as far as the king-subject relationship was concerned. It is a well-known fact that the vanar sena (monkey army) proved to be one of the most essential links to winning the battle. A leader also creates more leaders by his virtues and ethical guidance. Rama, as a true leader in war, believed in his army's abilities and hence strengthened them as per the overall objectives. Lord Rama helped Sugriva and Vibhishana establish their kingdom. Similarly, good leaders should create and inspire potential among subordinates to become a leader for the future.

The mission of the army led by Lord Rama had a clear vision: to rescue his wife Sita from the clutches of Lankan King Ravana. This clarity of thought enabled the army to put in their best effort to win the battle and finally achieved the desired positive outcome. Lord Rama, despite his immense hardships and adversity, never stepped aside from his chosen ethical path. He always maintained a certain yardstick for himself and his team, thereby gaining big dividends in terms of achieving his ultimate goal as an outstanding ethical leader.

Rama was the son of Dasharath, a King of Ayodhya. Even as the son of the king, he always treated people equally. He never imposed discrimination. He took help from monkeys and bears etc., he built relations with Guha and Kevat, and he took blessings from Shabari. Lord Ram treated everyone equally, and that's how he earned the love and respect of everyone. No matter if a person was younger or older, poor or rich; he behaved harmoniously with everyone. Even when Shabri offered him the already-tasting berry fruits, he ate them without giving them a second thought. He was always kind and humble towards people. We should uphold this quality and not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, gender, or caste. Organisations must learn the concept of equality and should focus on employee's performance and skill development. Treating all people equally is a fundamental ethical principle which Lord Rama always practised.

The delegation of responsibility is to provide the responsibility to the subordinates. In the Ramayana, when monkey army had to go in search of Sita, Ram sent his most efficient warriors Hanuman, Nal, Neel, and Angad towards the south. Similarly before delegating the responsibility, the organisation must look for the most efficient employee for the particular task. If the right employee is not chosen, then in spite of having a talented employee, one cannot achieve the goal. Identifying the real potential of the employee is the most crucial job for the organization. We should know the talent of the employee so that they can be utilised according to their strength, as in the Ramayana. When it was time to cross the river in search, of Sita, Hanuman was chosen. He was not only powerful but intelligent, just as Angad was sent as a doot (Ambassador) because Angad was very good at communication, so he was sent to talk to Ravan for treaty.

Participative leadership style:

Lord Rama throughout the epic demonstrates the participative style of leadership. He involved his siblings and later on his lieutenants in his entire decision-making process. He did not impose his decisions on others, and thus he created a positive and harmonious atmosphere. All the members of the team worked together to achieve a common goal. Ram worked with different species, and they all worked together

in search of Sita. Lord Rama was greatest incarnation of God and had many virtuous qualities worth emulating

Value based learning from Lord Rama to emulate

(1) Extraordinary Patience:

Lord Rama was known for his extraordinary patience. Patience is the key to success for any leader. Patience was the key that helped Lord Ram to conquer Ravana. Patience was the only thing by which he got his wife Sita. He patiently lived in forest without being disgusted for long 14 years and that was really admirable. His journey of life teaches us that to be a leader or king; one does not require palaces, soldiers, and other things but patience. Due to his leadership style, he was associated with Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman, Nal, Neel, and many more. They were all ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Lord Ram. He never showed anger and never imposed his decision on anyone in the time of suffering and pain. He always shared his opinion with others, and then proceeded further.

(2) Harmony of Family:

Prince Ram was all set to be appointed as the King soon, being the eldest of the four sons of the King of Ayodhya. Yet an otherwise envious stepmother, Kaikeyi, was unnecessarily instigated into obstructing the path to Ram's ascendance. But Lord Ram did not behave bitterly towards anyone, including the stepmother. He kept his father's promise, which he could have easily sidestepped. Father's honour became a question of his own honour. This kind of bonding and positive attachment between members of the family could finally make the Lord Rama an extraordinary leader. He respected all member of the family including the step mother Kaekai who was solely responsible for exile of Lord Rama and consequently death of his great loving father.

(3) Value relationships more than greed, pride, and honour:

Lord Ram left the palace for the sake of his father's promise. He could have easily denied it and become king, but he did not do it. Even when Bharat came to Lord Rama requesting to return Ayodhya, he denied it, as per the promise which was given to step mother kaekai by his great father, Lord Rama wholeheartedly respected the promise of his father, a great son indeed. Lord Rama thus set out for the forest and gladly lived there for 14 years. Although Lord Rama was a son of King, he took help from Kevat; he ate berries from Shabari, who was from a lower caste, but he enjoyed these things and gave respect to everyone. During the entire journey, he never showed that he was the king's son. He never had any misunderstandings for Bharat and his mother,

Kaikeyi, in spite of his 14-year exile. He always showed respect to Sugriv, Jambvant, Hanuman, and Vibhishan etc. He maintained a good relationship with Vibhishan, the brother of Ravan. When he came to surrender before Lord Rama instead of rebuking him, he made Visbhisan comfortable by accepting his friendship. He was always down to earth in relationship building.

(4) Love and respect for everyone:

Lord Rama always showed respect to his guru, saints, parents, brothers, wife, friends, and even enemies. He paid respect to Mandodari, wife of Ravana, when she came to meet Lord Rama after the death of Ravan. As soon as she came near Lord Rama, he paid a great regards to her, as Mandodari was a virtuous wife of Ravana. Lord Ram did not marry anyone else apart from Sita and thus he kept his promise made to Sita.

(5) Humble and kind:

Lord Rama was very humble and kind by nature. He gave respect to Jatayu, who tried to save Sita from Ravana but was wounded in the war with Ravan, when he was trying to abduct Sita. After the death of Jatayu, Lord Ram paid tribute to Jatayu, which shows the kindness of Lord Rama towards natural beings. His kindness and humbleness have no parallel in history of mankind.

(6) Trust: Integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness may be considered as dimensions of trust (Schindler & Thomas, 1999) Trustfulness and honesty are considered to be integral part of Integrity. When assessing trustworthiness and honesty of other, Integrity is the most important and critical among these five dimensions of trust (Tan & Tan, 2000). Leader's access to cooperation from the followers depends upon the trust in the leaders (Zand, 1997) It is most indispensable parameter of ethical leadership. Lord Rama was trusted by all his followers like Hanuman, Angad, Vibhishana, Sugriv and monkey army including subjects of Ayodhya. Even today Lord Rama is being remembered for his honesty, integrity, competence, and openness.

Ethical leadership style of Lord Rama to emulate

The interpretation of leadership behaviour itself describes the ethical character of Lord Ram. Here are some of the ethical behaviours that are in practise. Some factors of ethical leadership are enunciated below

1: Fairness

2: Ethical Guidance

3: Power Sharing

4: People Orientation

5: Justice

(1) Fairness:

Fairness is considered an important aspect for development of organisation. Fairness includes working ethically, avoiding favouritism, and doing what is right (Hassan 2012). Lord Ram was very fair to everyone. Lord Rama always empathised with the common people and was just and fair in his dealings with them. He was known for love for his subjects, and he always emphasised their welfare first and with foremost care. Of course, his love for his brothers and wife Sita was legendary. Lord Ram set an example to kill Bali: it did not matter how strong Bali was as he was unethical, sinful and wicked hence Lord Rama did not think it proper to take help from Bali. This clearly indicates fairness in decision making by Lord Rama. Lord Rama was incarnation of goodness and fairness.

(2) Ethical guidance:

Ethical guidance is characterised by individuals, organisations, or groups to define what actions are morally right or wrong in course of discharging their duties. Lord Rama always guided ethically to the monkey army. He never went for unethical deeds. He offered even treaty proposal to Ravan before the final war, as he did not want to cause harm to innocent people of Lanka for no fault of them.

(3) Power Sharing:

Power sharing is often purported to lead to peace and prosperity, though its effects are disputed. (Gates et al., 2016) Lord Ram did not receive credit on his own; he shared the credit with Hanuman, Angad, Sugriv, and others. It shows the real character of an ethical leader that Lord Ram possessed. He showed confidence in these warriors and transformed them beautifully because of his outstanding leadership; Lord Ram developed many leaders like Sugriv, Hanuman, Angad, and many more who played a vital role in battle.

(4) People Orientation:

People orientation is also known as consideration (Stodgil, 1950) or the human need for healthy and mature relationships (Blake and Mouton, 1962). People-oriented cultures give importance to fairness, supportiveness, and respect for individual rights. Lord Ram always thought for his subjects. People-oriented behaviours are often described as participative (Kahai, Sosik, & Avolio, 1997), democratic (Gastil, 1994), and empowering (Conger, 1989; Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). As Lord Rama was people oriented leader, he took

absolute care for development of his subordinates like Hanuman, Angad etc. and as a king of Ayodhya he looked after his subjects with great love and justice. All were fully satisfied. There was no mental, physical, social and spiritual suffering in his kingdom

5 Justice

Justice means providing equal opportunities and respect of rights of people. Moral equity is one of the dimension of ethical judgement and it is evaluated on the action of judgement, moral etc. (Resick et al.,2013). Lord Rama always exhibited the decisions on basis of moral justice. He provided equal opportunities to each and every follower according to their strengths. He showed justice in case of Bali and Shugriv episode and killed Bali as he was sinful and immoral. Even Lord Rama heard the suffering of a wounded dog and proved justice. So, justice was inherent in ethical character of Lord Rama.

Conclusion

Lord Rama's value is worth emulation by people. It is not only limited to society but it is to be adopted by corporations, Institution, Industries, business, organisation etc. as well. The current situation of society and the lack of ethics in common man have put emphasis on the ethical leadership of Lord Ram to emulate. Various studies have shown shortcomings in corporate leadership, and the Ramayana can be presented as a solution for these situations. Lord Rama's values are much needed for society to create a perfect human being. Even today, society is finding the person who has the excellent qualities like Maryada Purushottam Ram, or a person whom he could emulate. By emulation ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by Lord Rama, peace and prosperity of all nations, mankind and other living being can be achieved. Kingdom of peace, permanence and prosperity of whole world can be achieved by emulating outstanding ethical leadership characteristics of Lord Rama.

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