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Concepts on leadership qualities management in Shishupalavadha

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Abstract

Objective: Management of organizations, people and entities has been a subject matter of great interest today. All Indian business schools teach management concepts propounded by the western scholars in the last 100 years or so. Management as a concept must be as old as rocks and rivers. While civilizations flourished in the West only in the last two millennia, countries such as India has had established civilizations running to several millennia in the past. This naturally raises a question of whether management thoughts and concepts were practiced in ancient times in India. In particular, the thesis seeks to explore the following questions in some detail:

- Are there management concepts and practices that were practiced in India in ancient times?
- Based on a study of a specific text pertaining to the ancient tie period, is it possible to distill some management concepts?
- What can current-day organizations learn from the insights gathered from such a study? Are there a few workable ideas that current-day organizations need to imbibe?

India has a vast repository of literary resources spanning more than three millennia. A preliminary list of works was shortlisted for our consideration. The list includes Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Bhagavad Gita, ArthaShastra, Vidhuraeethi and Shishupalavadha. It was finally decided to take up Shishupalavadha for a detailed study.

This excellent poetry by Magha shows us his fantastic vocabulary, comparisons, and great meanings. We all should be immensely proud to have had these kinds of marvelous poets fabulously rich in literacy, knowledge, and culture in the past centuries.

Hence, I have tried with my humble effort in bringing out the various management concepts described in Shishupalavadha from various reference books mentioned in the Bibliography at the end.

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Principal findings

- Concepts on speech management
- Concepts on leadership qualities management
- Concepts on anger management
- Concepts on knowledge management
- Concepts on enemy/enmity management
- Concepts on general management

Conclusion: The above management concepts advised as per Shishupalavadha, may be used in our organisations/industries for day-to-day management as well as advice to the senior management in taking important decisions whenever there are ambiguities.

Keywords: Leadership qualities, Shishupalavadha, management concepts

Introduction

Shishupalavadha is an extremely popular literature in Sanskrit written by Mahakavi Magha in the 7th century AD. He was a Sanskrit poet in the court of King Vatsaraja at Shrimala, the then capital of Gujarat.

Shishupalavadha is of 20 सर्गों of 1630 verses based on Mahabharatha episode in which Krishna beheads Shishupala with his disc Sudarsana chakra. Magha is said to have been inspired by Poet Bharavi.

In Sargas 2,11,16,18 & 19 the poet provides many slokas explaining the various management concepts, through the words of Krishna, Balarama, Uddhava & the messenger. Magha is highly popular among Sanskrit critics and is extensively quoted by them. His work is known for his articulate wordplay, textual complexity, verbal ingenuity, and rich vocabulary.

Below is the popular Sanskrit verse about Magha:

उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् |
दण्डिनः पदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥

Kalidasa is famous for his comparison (upama), Bharavi is famous for prestigious meaningful poems, Dandi is famous for his charming words, in Magha we can see all these three qualities.

In Shishupalavadha, Krishna as promised to his aunt, waits for Shishupala to make hundred mistakes, then when he goes beyond hundred, as per his promise, he starts the war against him and finally slays him with his Sudarsana chakra. Thus ends the story of Shishupalavadha.

Here are a few Slokas mentioning the concepts of Leadership qualities
Qualities of a righteous man

तीक्ष्णा नारुन्तुदा बुद्धिः कर्म शान्तं प्रतापवत् ।
नोपतापि मनः सोष्म वागेका वाग्मिनः सतः ॥ (सर्ग २ – १०९)

Transliteration

tīkṣṇā nāruntudā buddhiḥ karma śāntaṃ pratāpavat |
nōpatāpi manaḥ sōṣma vāgēkā vāgminaḥ sataḥ ॥

In case of a righteous man, his intellect is sharp, but not cutting others' essentials, his action is heroic but peaceful his mind is warm but never harmful and his speech, though powerful, is firm.

Uddhava says that a righteous man whose intellect is sharp, but he does not cut others' essentials, his action is heroic but peaceful, his mind is warm but never harmful to others and his speech is powerful but is firm.

Likewise, a leader in the organization should be strong enough, he should not have any wavering of mind here and there. He should have sharp intellect, heroic actions, a warm mind without harming others and powerful and firm speech.

Leaders' intellect and enthusiasm

प्रज्ञोत्साहवतः स्वामी यतेताधातुमात्मनि ।
तो हि मूलमुदेष्यन्त्या जिगीषोरात्मसम्पदः ॥ (सर्ग २ – ७६)

Transliteration

prajñōtsāhavataha svāmī yatētādhātumātmani |
tō hi mūlamudēṣyantyā jigīṣōrātmāmasampadaha ॥

Therefore, a king should cultivate for himself intellect, and enthusiasm which two are the basics of the future personal power of a conquest minded King.

Balarama says that a King must cultivate intellect and enthusiasm in him, which are the two basics of the future personal power in the mind of a great conqueror.

Likewise, a Leader should cultivate intellect and enthusiasm in him, so that he can conquer the entire world with his intellectual speech and enthusiastic approach towards the people.

In earlier days, leaders like MGR, NTR, Ms. Jayalalitha, etc were successful in their leadership roles just because of their intellectual speeches and their charismatic and enthusiastic approaches towards the people.

Once these two qualities are lost, then the leader loses the charisma among the people and loses in the elections.

Valorous leader

समं समन्ततो राजामापतन्तीरनीकिनीः ।
कार्ष्णिः प्रत्यग्रहीदेकः सरस्वानिव निम्नगाः ॥ (सर्ग १९-१०)

Transliteration

Samam samantatō rājāmāpatantīranīkinīḥ |
Kārṣṇiḥ pratyagrahīdēkaḥ sarasvāniva nimnagāḥ ॥

Just as the sea without anyone's help blocks countless rivers, likewise Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna ran in all the four directions and single handedly stopped all the enemies who were nearing.

In the war front, Lord Krishna's son Pradyumna ran in all the four directions and single handedly stopped all the nearing enemies, just like the sea without anyone's help blocks (absorbs) countless rivers in it.

Likewise, a leader should be valorous such that he should have the capability to handle single handedly all the challenges faced by his team in the organization, and he should be capable enough to provide solutions to various types of problems faced by his team.

Great deeds of a good leader

कुन्तेनोच्चैः सादिना हन्तुमिष्टान्नाजानेयो दन्तिनस्त्रस्यति स्म ।
कर्मोदारं कीर्तये कर्तुकामान्किंवा जात्याः स्वामिनो ह्वेपयन्ति ॥ (सर्ग १८-२३)

Transliteration

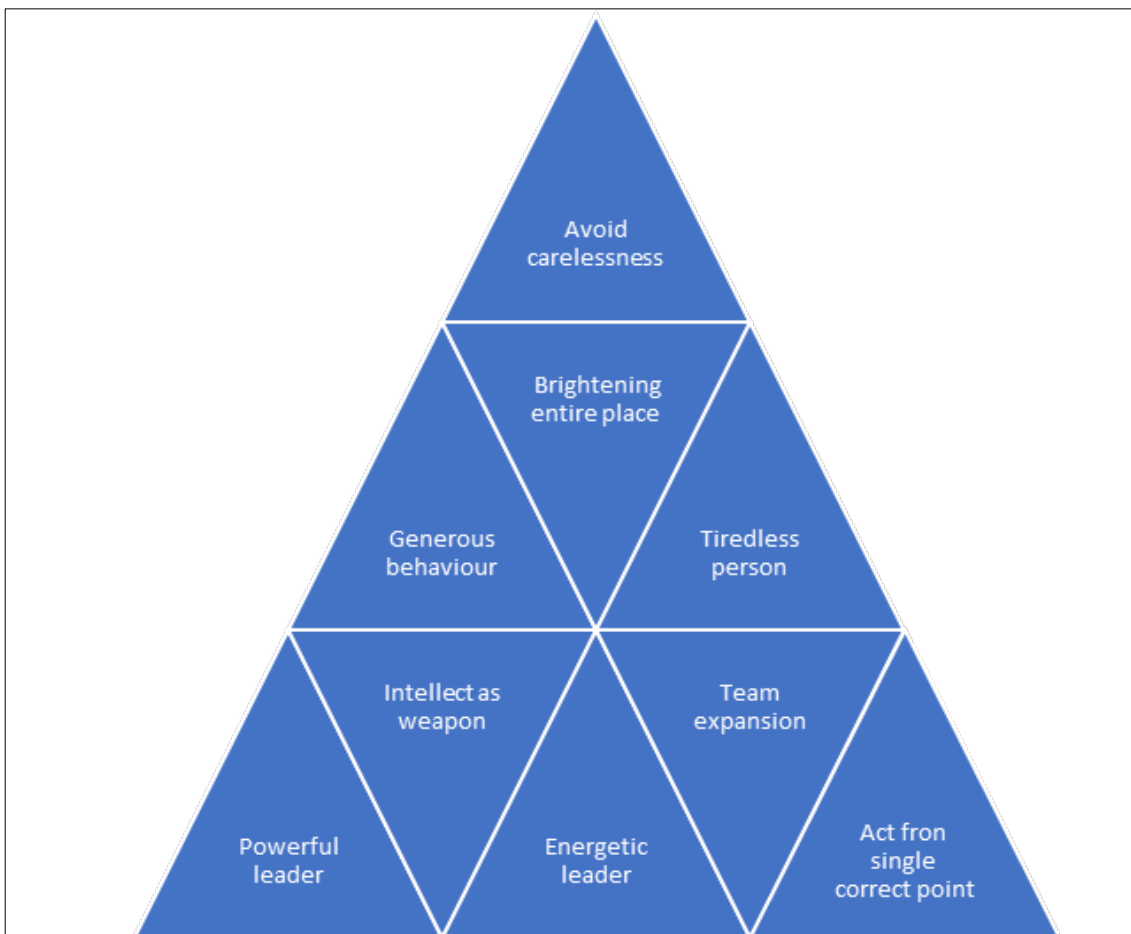
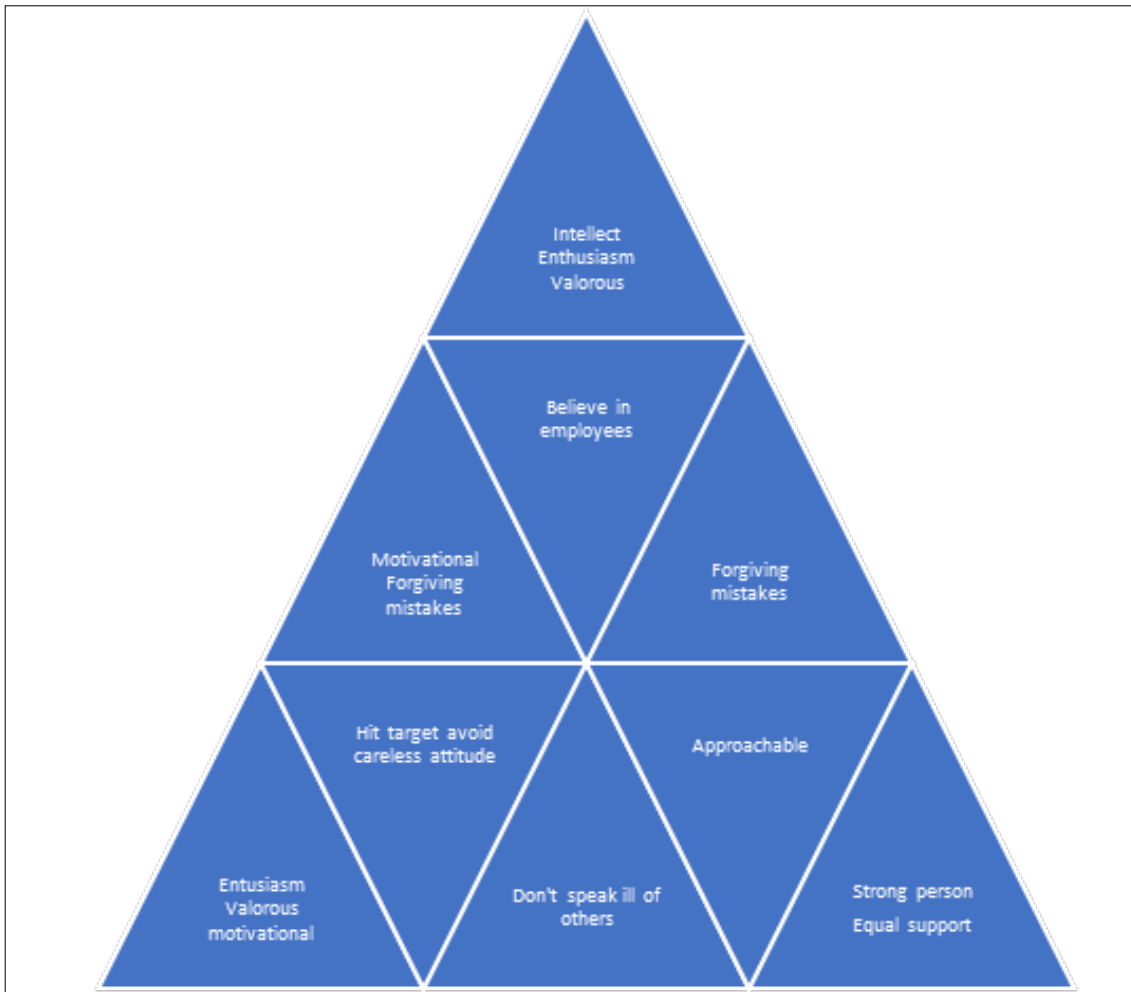
kuntēnōccaiḥ sādinā hantumiṣṭānnājānēyō dantinastrasyati sma |
karmōdāraṃ kīrtayē kartukāmānkiṃvā jātyāḥ svāminō hvēpayanti ॥

One good breed of a horse, through his riding, with his lengthy spear, desires to kill the elephant nearby him, is not even afraid a little of the elephant, what is it like this – do good family born people for the sake of fame, make shameful the swamijis who perform great doings?

The varnana of the war front is made here in this 18th Sarga. In the war front, when a good breed of a horse with his lengthy spear, is not afraid to kill an elephant, it is like the good family born people for the sake of fame, making Swamijis feel shameful by their wrong deeds.

A great good leader will never be afraid of his enemies, he always fights for the sake of his King's victory, likewise, in an organisation, a good leader always works to his best and contributes his great deeds to the organisation's victory and improvements.

Leadership qualities



About Leadership in Kacchid Sarga

कच्चिन् मुख्या महत्सु एव मध्यमेषु च मध्यमाः ।
जघन्याः च जघन्येषु भृत्याः कर्मसु योजिताः ॥ २-१००-२५

Rama enquires Bharatha, "I hope that superior servants are assigned superior works only, mediocre servants in mediocre works and inferior servants in inferior works." Which means as a leader he has to know which work to be assigned to whom so that the work is completed on time with extreme professionalism and perfection.

Like the above there are many other shlokas in Kacchid Sarga on appointing of ministers and other officials, taking care of the people and Kingdom, performing the King's duties effectively and on time, decision making skills on Judiciary aspects, etc.

About Leadership in Vidhuraneethi

Vidhura explains to Dhritarashtra about the qualities of a wise man, a foolish man, a good human being, a good King, etc.

प्रवृत्त वक्त्रिकथ ऊहवन्प्रतिभानवान् ।
आशु ग्रन्थस्य वक्ता च स वै पण्डित उच्यते ॥ Adhyaya 33 -
Sloka 28

He who speaks boldly, can converse on various subjects, knows the science of argumentation, possesses genius, and can interpret the meaning of what is written in books, is reckoned as wise.

Like the slokas given above, there are many more slokas in Shishupalavadha, which explains about the leadership qualities and other management concepts also which is a part of my thesis in Sastra University.

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