



Dynamics of Indian Scriptures & Epics as Reform Agents: A Roadmap towards Sustainable Growth

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Abstract

In present global scenario, business organizations are facing multiple challenges and threats day by day and can be overcome by the knowledge which is to be found in the scriptures and epics as of supreme authority despite being ancient. In fact the veracity of such knowledge has never been more than in the present ages when everything is in the state of constant change. This paper goes on to highlight how one can benefit immensely by practicing the various concepts of different scriptures and epics to come out of the changing paradigms in a way not known before.

Keywords

Scriptures, Epics, Competition, Professional growth.

Introduction

White (1967) suggested that that in the world of complexities, religious scriptures and epics helps individual to lead their lives with simplicity. Learning and teachings acquired from different epics and scriptures facilitate the individuals to understand better and can make the work done in more simpler and fruitful form without having the desire of results or personal benefits. The information receive in the form of learning through the epics and scriptures helps in developing aura in individual life that is been reflected in his or

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her work. Lester (2013) have recommended that Individuals who has sight but has no vision is more in troublesome situations but if they are accepting and formulating the insights provided by the different scriptures that will increase their insights to progress.

Bandura (2000) found awareness achieved through scriptures and epics motivates the person to ignore self-interests and work for the larger good of the entity to achieve significant accomplishments; focusing on which in turn will reap benefits for the welfare for everyone as a stakeholder. If we look at our own roots, then solutions to most of the issues can be found in our own scriptures and traditions. Today, organisations are searching for new approaches and broader understanding to guide their actions. This search makes our scriptures & epics highly relevant in the modern society.

Orientation from the Mahabharata

The Mahabharata, the longest epic in the world, is replete with teachings applicable in the present era to resolve day-to-day issues. Applicability of Mahabharata towards resolving critical management situations can be understood with the help of examples involving the Kauravas and the Pandavas:

- 1. Synergy:** To succeed, a manager must know the art of teamwork which brings synergistic effects. Muniapan (2014) had also thrown light on Kauravas that they never worked as a team and adopted individualistic approach in their actions and decisions. Pandavas always relied on team spirit. They believed in collective decision-making and remained coordinated as a team which consequently brought laurels and eventual victory stated by L. Kaipa (2014).
- 2. Competitive Edge:** To compete in challenging business environment, managers must attempt to convert their weaknesses into strengths. Kaurvas invaded other kingdoms and acquired wealth, which consequently resulted in loss of manpower and also created number of enemies. Pandavas, during the period of their exile, tried to overcome the weaknesses and accumulated strengths from various sources. Arjuna got the strength of Divyastra, Bhima got strength from Hanuman and Yudhisthira acquired blessings of various Mahatmas.
- 3. Strategic Allies:** Ramachandran & Sharma (2013) suggested that in order to sustain the upheavals of the markets, managers must develop strategic allies which, tangibly as well as intangibly, bears numerous advantages.. Kauravas did not believe in allies. Pandavas tried to form powerful alliances to strengthen themselves. Panchala on the virtue of marriage solemnized with Draupadi, Dwarka when Arjun married Subhadra, Magadh who married off his daughter Vijaya to Sahadeva, alliance of Nakula with Karenmayi brought Chedi on board, Kasi was

brought in the fold when Bhima married Balandhara, Kekaya on the virtue of marriage of Yudhishtira & Devika, Matsya who married off his daughter Uttara to Abhimanyu, Rakshasas when Bhima wed Hidimba and The Nagas on the virtue of their daughter Uloopi getting married to Arjuna.

4. **Prominency of Organisational Goals:** In order to sustain and survive, everyone in an organization must have a strong belief of subordination of individual goals towards the cause of organisational goals. Kauravas' self goals overshadowed their group goals whereas Pandavas believed more in collectivism.
5. **Decentralisation & Delegation:** A manager cannot perform entire task alone. Therefore, it deems fit to share the responsibilities. Decentralisation & Delegation multiplies the abilities of managers and brings opportunities for subordinates to prove their abilities. Kauravas believed in centralised leadership. Pandavas believed in decentralization by appointing many commanders for their army and giving them autonomy to the right extent.
6. **Competitors' Analysis:** A manager must be able to gauge the weaknesses of competitors and make strategy accordingly. Yudhishtira went to the Kauravas to seek the blessings of elders with the ulterior motive of knowing the secrets to defeat them.
7. **Just & Equitable:** Manager must remain just & equitable and avoid discrimination on the basis of caste, colour or gender. Kauravas kept on playing the game of favouring & disfavouring and never realized the ground realities of life whereas Pandavas, even during exile, met and befriended people from various walks of life and experienced the harsh realities of life first hand.

Orientation from the Ramayana

The Ramayana, the oldest epic in the world, that is prescribed as where one can discover how to attempt for supreme sacrifice; generate or develop honour, promise and loyalty; a legend of valour and courage; last but not the least also explain how to win good over evil. The whole story of Ramayana provides innumerable ideals worth following in day to day life. Some of them are enlisted here.

1. **Offers a real vision to followers:** Rama has a clear cut vision of the future. In relation to this, under his supervision, the army had the role motive of rescuing Sita by defeating the rakshasas. To achieve this, numerous steps were taken such as search parties being sent, an overseas bridge being built and challenging Ravana for the final war. The clarity in steps enabled the army to perform with precision. A

compelling dream which is accompanied by a clear scenario is needed to achieve the end result.

- 2. Enhance confidence within the subordinates to accomplish goal of life:** Manager should be too much confident on his subordinates that they can achieve everything in the organization and his believe that subordinates can accept any kind of challenge able task in every nook and corner of the firm. Belief of Rama helped his army to fought with rakshasas. Setting ambitious goals should be done along with motivating the troops.
- 3. The importance of Equality:** Clubbing of justice and kindness manifests into equality. It brings loyalty in the organization by treating with equality that is without biasness and increases the loyalty towards organization. Equity demands sanity, exposure and affable nature. Relationships should be developed with people without thinking much about their social status.
- 4. Stand boldly in the face of great hardship:** During the time of adversity and crisis one should stand courageously in front of the problem that the problem should be scared from you. Work and struggle till the time, until and unless you have achieved your goal. Even during the most testing times, Rama maintained his composure and never gave up on courage. This inspired his army to the extent that it went ahead and won the war. Crisis should be managed and thereby averted by taking proactive steps.
- 5. Morality as base without being judgmental pretentiousness:** Manager is the person is to be followed by the subordinates in that perception he should know how to set the example for others. Being honest, loyal, trustworthy and positive to person (Sita) has shown the importance of a man being wedded to one. Rama, as a person tried to show attempt that he has only one wife as a morality. However, Rama did not object when Sugriva married Bali's widow even after being already married. Leadership doesn't mean coercion.
- 6. Consult Approach and providing freedom to opt freely:** Initiative is all about with thinking well and follow it up with execution. Participation and giving the opportunity to subordinates to provide suggestions increase zeal and energy on the part of human beings. Rama had this uniqueness wherein he empowered his subordinates to question his decision. On other hand, Ravana never allowed anybody to contradict him. Empower subordinates and see the difference.
- 7. To work with Ethical Code and be ready to sacrifice to follow it:** Managers should not forget the code of ethics, principles, values, culture and traditions in order to set the examples for their subordinates which are to be followed by others. Thus, when Ravana came to fight without much preparation and soon was without

any weapons, Rama allowed him to return because the code of chivalry followed by Rama propounded that an unarmed enemy be treated like this. Build credibility by living according to cherished virtues.

Orientation from the Gita

Holy Gita, written by Rishi Veda Vyasa, is one of the greatest Epics of India and the most pious work for the Hindus. This Holy Scripture empowers management through the following tenets of life-

1. **Detachment:** The Gita discourses that the actions as performed during the course of duty should not be attached to results. Committed work means work for the satisfaction of working. If anyone works for anticipated benefits, the quality of performance goes down and brings stress vis-à-vis anxieties about the future. Gita advises not to forsake the present commitments for some unseen & uncertain future development.
2. **Efficient Utilisation of resources:** The most important principle of management is to ensure efficient utilization of scarce resources. During Mahabharata, Duryodhana opted for Sri Krishna's large army to assist him in fighting Pandavas while Arjuna prudently selected Shri Krishna for his support. It explains that prudent manager should rely on quality and not quantity of resource. Muniapan & Satpathy (2013) advocated that management makes effective utilization of such resources which are scarce in nature and keeps looking for viable alternatives. Through planning & organization and proper learning management eliminates all types of wastages & achieves efficiency in many of the business operations. Therefore, motivated workers are able to put in their best performances. This would lead to the effective working of the business.
3. **Duty to act - Nishkam Karma:** The concept of "Nishkam Karma", as mentioned in Bhagavad Gita, talks about action without attachment to both work and fruits expected thereafter. If applied properly it can resolve number of management problems. A number of scarce resources given by nature like trees, sun, rivers are the live examples of giving without expecting anything in return.

Orientation from the Quran

A good manager knows what to do and how to get the things done by others. Some of the principles of Quran as applied to management are:

1. **Unity of Command:** Quran: Obey the Allah and His Messenger

As one of the prime principles of management, unity of command has been referred to in the holy Quran. In organizations, subordinates are expected to follow the instructions of the managers with commitment and respect. Hierarchy will serve its purpose only when everyone at each level will respect & follow his senior. In order to eradicate complexity, more convenient way is to have a single superior to whom one reports. It leads to less conflict in instructions better sense of responsibility.

2. **Motivation and Commitment:** *Quran: “(telling the Prophet). If you had been stern and fierce by heart, they (the companions and followers) would have disappeared from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the conduct of affairs.”* Through motivation only people can be made committed to their jobs. Attitude of a manager has a direct impact on the level of motivation and commitment of subordinates in an organisation. The teachings of Quran emphasize upon being compassionate and sympathetic thereby adopting a participatory approach i.e., involvement of subordinates in taking and fulfilling business commitments. Manager’s work thrives on co-operation, mutual confidence and bonhomie between management and workers. “Substitution of war of peace, hearty and brotherly co-operation for contentment and strife, replacement of suspicious watchfulness with mutual confidence, of becoming friends instead of enemies. For this, commitment must be present.”
3. **Coordination & Teamwork:** *Quran: Pass over (their faults) and ask for (God’s) forgiveness*

We can’t live in isolation. Similarly, organisations can not be operated by one person. Wisdom of people through coordinated efforts can produce outstanding results. It also requires sacrifices, adjustments, adaptation and maturity in order to generate high energy teams. In this competitive era for the growth and prosperity requires hard work which results into effective teams. History as evidence that the wars are win with these two strategies, that is, coordination and teamwork.

4. **Equality:** Quran teaches that people of similar qualification and skills-set should be treated on same footage. Discrimination promotes inferiority amongst people and leads to undesirable effects. Discrimination on the grounds of gender or race violates people’s basic rights and affects human welfare which results in stress, fatigue and turnover.
5. **Honour Commitments:** Quran: Allah says, ‘Fulfil your contracts, contracts will be asked . . .

In order to perform business activities, businessman enters into a number of contracts everyday. To gain trust and confidence of stakeholders as well as to run

business successfully, everyone should fulfill his promises, which consequently establishes rapport with everyone associated as prescribed by MK Alhyasat (2012).

Orientation from the Bible

In the present context, references from the Bible are quite relevant in management. Teachings of Bible can contribute to the cause of management in the following ways:

1. **Managing Stress:** Hamilton, Moor, Johnson, & Koenig (2013) shared that environmental factors of an organisation, attitude, perception, values and personality traits of an individual generate stress in today's business life. Teachings of Bible such as control of thoughts, introspection help an individual to manage stress effectively.
2. **Time Management:** Teachings of Bible act as a source of time management. Listing of activities, prioritizing them, following the deadlines, delegation of work and maintenance of records are some of the relevant teachings of Bible which, on one hand, increase the efficiency level and, on the other hand, eliminate wastage of time and frittering of resources.

Orientation from the Guru Granth Sahib

Sacred scripture the 'Guru Granth Sahib' is one of the world famous sacred text, a scripture suitable of a single religion. Hence, many global thinkers, philosophers and holy men consider it as a dignified heritage and a unique treasure for all humankind. The selected six core ethical values are interpreted are as under:

1. **The value of integrity:** According to him "Truth is higher than everything, but higher is still truthful living". He also emphasized that those who do not have the asset as truth, how one can find the peace in them. In managing people if someone is creating mistakes and flaws then one who is scolding should know the fact that being the superior of any one even you can also make the mistake. One should know the hard fact of the life. Discard false traits and practice goodness.
2. **The value of compassion:** Manager should also express the feeling of pain, sufferings, sorrows and grief of others and try to minimize or better eliminate them. An individual should not forget the golden rule, "Love for others what you love for yourself". Felderhof & Thompson (2015) stated that consideration of other as human being will help them to achieve those interests for which you are struggling in the organizations.
3. **The significance of Equity:** Equity implies justice. Providing each person what is theirs as well as recognizing their needs based on their traits is what

characterizes equity. Managers in the organization treat all the employees without the discrimination of above mentioned factors .by involving justice and fairness in treatment. Person as employee should treat that no one is their servant or they are the masters of them as they should think they are the fellowmen send by the supreme power to make your work easier.

- 4. The importance of Tolerance:** Tolerance can also be known as power in terms of acceptance towards cultural, social, ethnic, diversity of opinion, and religious opinions as well. Basically, having high tolerance provides the ability to listen others in a more accepted form, no matter whether the person is of different mind-set thereby paying heed to numerous ways of understanding. Tolerance helps in developing and generating patience in an individual's life, with that can attain laurels in professional as well as in personal life.
- 5. The significance of Selflessness:** Selflessness enables to dedicate life towards assisting others without a selfish motive. Gill & Kaur (2008) advocated that the virtue of putting others before self, the care with a mother provides to her child. Basically selflessness is that kind of tool which helps to generate in employee motivation, encouragement, zeal and excitement in the mind of the employees.
- 6. The importance of Stewardship:** Stewardship is the virtue by which a person becomes the in-charge of a situation which has been bestowed upon them. Gill & Gopal (2010) stated that leaders are just like a ship of the captain who knows how, when and with what strategies to make his ship to reach well in time to the destination. Here he is the man who is going to exercise every possible heed in the management of the organization.

Discussions

To conclude, we can say that most of our Scriptures and Epics not only portray essential skills-set expected of a manager but also open up the vistas for multiple options to resolve critical business issues be with a positive approach. This research work was an attempt to focus on the aspect as to how the teachings and references of our Epics are still applicable and very much relevant in the present business scenario. Further, it reveals the fact that by moving back towards the basic values of the yesteryears, peace & prosperity can be brought in all spheres of the life, all it requires is a prudent approach on our part to realize the significance of the same and imbibe them in our day-to-day activities and decision-making. This would channelize the positive energies and metamorphose our lives for the better. With this sole aim the present work was carried out and it is hoped that it would help the reader vis-à-vis realizing his/her true potential.

The present work has been carried out with the help of extant literature whereby the authors have reviewed the existing work as carried out by various experts over various points of time mentioning the scriptures and how they have shaped human thought process. Also, they have gone through the Epics which have been discussed during the course of this work. Additionally, the authors have reviewed the work of such experts who have pointed out the lessons in leadership and management in the Holy Scriptures.

Fundamentally, it has been observed that the thoughts incurred from western management deals with the issues related to material, external and peripheral levels, whereas the epics show the path as to how these issues can easily be resolved at the grass root level of human thinking. Thus, this ancient information encourages one to face the unknown facets of life, howsoever difficult they are, with much ease and assuredness and that is the theme of this paper which puts together the significance of Scriptures and Epics, their subsequent impact on managing change in today's world of clutter, confusion, chaos and competition and also this paper puts into perspective the various concepts which have proven the worth over the course of time as to how one can successfully adjust to and even anticipate change in one's life, both professional and personal.

The present work has implications for practicing managers as well as leaders from various domains on the virtue that it has such teachings from the mentioned scriptures which are as much relevant as they were when these Epics were written. The thoughts on building leadership skills, team-building, having a vision for your organization are well reflected in the present work which would be of much worth to practicing leaders and organizations. At the same time, there are other Epics which also talk about various principles and leadership qualities which have not been a part of the present work. Also, the authors have relied on existing work and their own wisdom and interpretation of the scriptures which could be limiting under various circumstances.

The teachings of Mahabharata, Gita, Quran and Bible are becoming relevant in the present context and serving as guiding force for resolving a number of management issues. All the relevant management issues of present era such as Vision, Leadership, Motivation, Efficiency, Goal directed behaviour, Manpower Planning, Performance appraisal, Decision making and Coordination, Managing service quality, Managing brands at global level are very well discussed in most of our Epics. The present work makes an attempt towards highlighting how the teaching from these Epics could be of significance for the present-day managers to perform better.

The present work is of value as it brings together the learning of Scriptures and Epics and the requirements of today's managers and organizations on various fronts as leadership, managing conflict, being effective with regard to ensuring growth of

the organization as well as self. The paper amalgamates the ancient wisdom with contemporary worldly requirements thereby presenting a balance which has become the pre-requisite for success in modern times.

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