

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

“Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.”

General Colin Powell

There will be reference to history of an ideal king, popularly known as Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya, solely responsible for the greatness of Chandragupta who can be called one of the greatest leaders in the entire history of mankind. It is difficult to define a leader, as it is impossible to define fire. It is useless entering into a high profile debate on the semantics of leadership especially school leadership in this age of globalization and modernisation. A leader is a person who leads the team to achieve the targeted objectives, it implies following things:

- A team leader, whose role should be to constantly encourage independent thinking among the team members. They should feel free to approach him with problems and solutions.
- A team comprising members with diverse skills and personalities.
- A definite objective. The team and its leader should know what to achieve. It must set goal it wants to achieve. If that is not done the team will be on a wild goose chase.
- A strategic plan indicating how the resources at the disposal of the team will be utilized to achieve the desired goals in minimum time. A good plan will anticipate roadblocks by figuring out what could possibly prevent the success of the plan. It would take care of them in advance of the problem.”

A school Principal is the remarkable example of school leadership, who sets the short and long term goals on daily basis. Principals strongly shape the conditions for high-quality teaching. High quality principals therefore are vital to the effectiveness of our nation's public schools, especially those serving the children with the fewest advantages in life.

Principals are exceptional human beings who take organizations to higher and higher levels of performance. Researches on leadership have shown that hallmarks of effective leadership are as follows:

- Credibility
- Managing conflict
- Problem Solving

- Leader as Role Model
- Keen Listener
- Sharing the spotlight

Knowing the latest trends, policies regarding academics for holistic development of children is need of the hour. NEP and CBSE framework have defined clear cut goals and related training, updation and implementation strategies. All school leaders have to pass the litmus test to emerge successful and effective ones. With their years of experience and orientation programmes, it is hoped that they will be able to implement it in letter and spirit.

Key Words: History, Credibility, Vision, Updation, Implementation, globalization.

INTRODUCTION

“Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.”

General Colin Powell

Leadership is one of the most essential qualities for the remarkable growth of a human being. The paper will take into consideration the following aspects- one mythological event - Samudra Manthan ,one historical character - Chanakya, and one modern day leadership thinker named Robert K. Greenleaf,s views to deliberate and find comprehensive leadership traits for schools.

WHAT A SCHOOL LEADER CAN IMBIBE FROM THE EPIC-SAMUDRA MANTHAN

Samudra Manthan is one of the most influential events of Indian history. The aim of this reference to Samudra Manthan is to co-relate the leadership issues where the Milk Ocean was churned by Suras who wanted to drink the holy nectar to regain the power which they had lost due to a curse by Sage Durvasa. The whole episode of Churning Milk Ocean is interpreted as a different perspective of social and managerial aspect, that manifest determination towards the goal, team work, facing the weakness, dealing with the negativities, controlling our mind, ignoring of distractions and more. The gems that were obtained while churning the milk ocean are, Uchchaisravas, Kaustuba gem, Halahala, Danvantri, Amrita, Surabhi, Airavata, Apsaras, Shanka, Varuni, Moon, Goddess of Wealth Powerful bow, Parijata tree Wish fulfilling Tree Kalapakavriksh. Each Gem reflects an issue in our social life, like controlling our mind, proper utilization of wealth, avoiding the distraction etc. Getting nectar after a lot of struggle and hard work symbolizes success or the desired goal. Samudra Manthan is not only an episode that solves problem against an issue in Hindu mythology, but it also reflects many issues that can be solved and followed for leadership.

The episode of Samudra Manthan is narrated in Bhagwat Purana. It is not only episode to be heard from our ancestors but there are many hidden meaning which can be applied in our

institutions. We can learn from the episode of Samudra Manthan that comes out to be an improvement tool for our society which has many perspectives to consider. There are many aspects of Management which includes staff management, time management, employee's satisfaction and stakeholders' happiness. Various symbols and their interpretations teach us several qualities in context of leadership. Management is not a new concept; it was present in the era to mythology, if mythology being nudged abundant knowledge will be found. In each and every episode or the incident of mythology lessons on leading is being proven for making wise decisions: leadership lessons can help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions. This research has implications for institutes, who can get a new dimension to think about handling human resource especially the young impressionable children

Team work in this episode shows that Gods and Demons were working together on a same platform. It can be interpreted as team work. Team work can be defined as a joint effort for a common goal. Since the ancient time it has been teaching us that collaborative effort is important for achieving a goal. Personal issues are not to be given importance whereas collaborative effort should be counted. There are many factors influencing team work of which is internal behavior among the team members. There are two types of workers- Task Team and another is Team Work. Marks(2001) has included more that "task work represents what it is that teams are doing where as team work describes how are they doing it with each other"(p.357) predominantly when task work include enactment of core spirit, abilities, performance with in the provided task. There can be interpersonal issues among the team but it should not affect the overall goal or mission for which they are working together. The Tortoise/Kurma symbolizes hard work and dedication to help the team in the need of hour. For success of any institution the three main components are hard work, problem solving ability, and the most important part is strong determination. One needs to put in a lot of hard work and effort to equip oneself for the skills required to take the lead.

Poison or the 'Halahal' consumed by Lord Shiva needs to be the mantra for the vast vision of personal responsibility and digesting critical views for the welfare of humanity. Which can be further distinguished as outer negativity, i.e. the negativity from the environment. Initially it is ineffective but it acts as a slow poison. Elongated vulnerability in social environment tends to increase the vibes and potency of negativity (Andries, 2011) whereas other negativity is our inner negativity. A well known proverb says "If you say you can, you can if you say you can't, you can't" which means negative self input does not bring positive outcomes. Thus, Halahal represents poison or negativity here in the episode it is being shown that not even the Asura and Devtas cannot accept this poison or negativity. Lord Shiva accepted and stored it in his neck from where we can learn that negativity cannot be neglected but to accept it rather to give it an importance. Negativity is active till it is given importance. Thus, negativity cannot be thrown out but to embers in ourselves and given least importance.

Ucchaishrava and Airavat: Control of Mind Ucchaishrava, the seven headed horse represents the speed. Well the speed of mind is to be controlled to be focused and dedicated whereas Airavat, the four teeth elephant represent the intelligence where the teeth represents greed, Desire, enchantment and anger. This lesson is essential both for management as well as social life. Since control of mind is important factor that need to be given importance. It is a quality of a being to be focused and concentrated as it's one of the elements to direct one's thought process. (Grewal, 2014). Our intelligence works very well when it is ineffective with greed enchantment and Desire we all have face whenever we are supposed to focus on a particular work how to be very much determined our mind makes a tour this is because of the uncontrollable speed of mind the gems from the Manthan signifies is each essential element that to be included in our Lifestyle.

Goddess Lakshmi represents money prosperity dignity etc. In real life it can be in a form of salary, designation, authority etc. With goddess Lakshmi three more gems came out as a result of Manthan was Varuni, Jyestha and Apsaraa these gems where the symbol of distraction, like Varuni represents addiction. Jyestha represents sloth sorrow, Apsara represent entertainment on the way to success. There may be many diversification and destruction; it just needs to be overlooked. Many times it is been found that with lots of money or prosperity one misuse its position. Money is used as a means of addiction. Select some bad means of entertainment. Likewise the gain money or prosperity will be lost. From here we can interpret the scenario, as we cannot hold money until it is utilized well. It can be invested in many forms to gain more from it and increase its liquidity. In day to day administration this lesson is very vital. In terms of position in an organization that is also to be handed over as succession planning. There may be many destructions or diversifications which are needed to be overcome.

Dhanvantari represents a man with every kind of medical knowledge and empowerment. Here in context to a school a person with every solution. After many hurdle jobs a man becomes too much experienced that they have solution for every problem. This man can be accepted as an adviser of an organization.

The Amrit according to Hindu mythology is Immortal nectar that to be drunk by the Devas to get back their power and to be immortal. In context social life immortality is in ones work, practically one cannot be immortal but the work done will always be remembered. A man makes a difference only when he does hardwork. One can only gain success with perseverance and dedication and encountering hurdles. The above interpreted episode teaches us the utmost success after the hurdle. On the way of success there will be positivity and negativity. The lesson is to balance both positivity and negativity. It's not only the western theories but the Hindu mythology which gives us many lessons in context to handle functioning of a school.

WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS CAN LEARN FROM CHANAKYA

There is a fascinating example of leadership. A group of children was playing but there was a something noticeable.. One child was playing the role of a king while others were obeying

his orders. The boy was showing all the qualities of a strong leader in his game. A great man was observing the game being played by the group. He was searching for someone who could change the shape of the country. The boy was picked up by him and trained for eight years to become an ideal king, popularly known as Chandragupta Maurya. Chanakya, solely responsible for the greatness of Chandragupta who can be called one of the greatest leaders in the entire history of mankind. None of the great leaders like Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Adolf Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, could attain such feats of leadership as he did.

Chanakya was a Brahmin lecturer in the Nalanda University. He not only uprooted the dasi putra - Chandragupta Maurya, but he also harmonised and strengthened the then political system of the India. His famous work NitiShastra is one of the important guideline for every individual. He employed commendable economic strategies, welfare schemes, enhancement and other schemes in Chandragupta's rule.

Magadha had the strong base and was centrally located. He envisioned an India free from any foreign invasion in future. He wanted to inculcate the spirit of Indian nationalism in the kings of different states under Chandragupta Maurya. According to Chanakya, only when respective policy planners are efficiently trained can internal peace prevail, which is essential for the success of a nation. This effective policy planning leads to the specialization of the administrative network, under the capable honest hands. Chanakya also implemented the secret agency lead by Bhagurayana and Siddharthaka faithfully. Chanakya wanted to bring political integration under the banner of Chandragupta Maurya with a feeling of "Bharata is one." Acharya Chanakya was a socio-political scientist at the university of Takshashila, became very upset with the invasion of Alexander, but did not lose his heart. He organized many conferences and seminars to save Bharata from monarchical invasion from outsiders. The Chancellor of the Takshila university impressed his inborn genius and selfless dedication, gave him permission to hold public and private meetings. He mobilized the masses to set India free of foreign rule of Alexander and generated an awareness for the formation of the Central government. This would make Bharata a powerful military nation.

He succeeded in his mission, through Chandragupta Maurya, who studied the military science as well and was appointed the Senapati Kartikeya/Commander of the Liberation force's with the head quarters at the university of Takshashila. His political wisdom alongwith an extensive research of the diplomatic policies, history of the socio- political though of Indian helped him succeed the mission. Despite his efforts Alexander still acquired the territory of the frontiers and his military acquired the land. But after Alexander died during his return, he contracted a marriage between Carnivallia- the daughter of Seleukos and Chandragupta Maurya under the treaty of "Jus connubi" or the rights earned by marriage. This made him stronger politically and diplomatically in his dealings with the Indo Greeks. Due to his diplomatic vision Seleukos could mark a victory over his enemy Antigonos. In consideration of the victory, the territory of Kabul, Gandhar and Heart were given to Chandragupta. Later he annexed Panjab and Saurashtra and was rewarded with the port of Patal of the sea shore.

He succeeded to be the greatest and truly the one and only servant leader for generations. The cause comes to identify Chanakya as a true leader and why is there a need to usher in a servant and not a feudal leader in this conniving nexus of politicians and executive body of India.

Chanakya has a lot to guide modern school principals to make Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat. . Some of the important lessons one needs to learn from Chanakya are:

- Energetic and Hardworking
- Effective Communication
- Fear of Failure & Stress Management
- Decision Making
- Keeping employees Happy

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

“True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.”

Robert K. Greenleaf

The servant-leader concept offers an alternative approach to leadership practice — leading others by serving their mutual interest. The concept of servant leadership was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in the essay 'The Servant as leader' which was published in 1970. For about twenty five years he had worked in large institutions and his idea of servant leadership was inspired and developed by his experiences there. According to him, “the great leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is central to the leader's greatness.”

A theory that basis its roots on the mutual interest offers an alternative approach to leadership practice. In Spear's words, is “increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making”. It is a theory that was developed later by several other leadership consultants and is widely acclaimed.

According to the theory, a servant- leader is a servant first. Due to an increased consciousness one aspires to attain a leadership role. He asks these questions to test the servant leadership.: “Do those served grow as persons, do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to be servants...?”

Though the word has been coined and defined by Greenleaf the idea of the theory was imported by the famous strategic thinker Chanakya or Kautilya from ancient India, wrote about servant leadership in his 4th century book, Arthashastra. Larry Spears who

teaches graduate courses in Servant-Leadership for Gonzaga University has extracted the characteristics of servant leaders.

From Greenleaf's original writings Larry Spears has extracted 11 characteristics of servant leaders. Out of these some characteristics are inborn while others can be developed through education and practice. For instance, characteristics such as care, empathy, healing and stewardship are more of inherent personal traits than acquired skills. To be successful at a servant-leadership practice a leader must have tested positive for these traits. The remaining characteristics — listening, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, growth and building community can be learned and developed by servant-leaders.

It is difficult to define a leader, as it is impossible to define fire. A large number of shelves in all libraries are full of autobiographies of leaders and empirical studies on leadership. It is useless entering into a high profile debate on the semantics of leadership especially school leadership in this age of globalization and modernization. Therefore, in simple words, a school leader is a person who leads the team to achieve the targeted objectives, it implies following things:

- A team leader, whose role should be to constantly encourage independent thinking among the team members. They should feel free to approach him with problems and solutions.
- A team comprising members with diverse skills and personalities.
- A definite objective. The team and its leader should know what to achieve. The goals that are to be achieved must be set in advance. If that is not done the team will be on a wild goose chase.
- A strategic plan indicating how the resources at the disposal of the team will be utilized to achieve the desired goals in minimum time. A good plan will anticipate roadblocks by figuring out what could possibly prevent the success of the plan. It would take care of them in advance of the problem.

A school Principal is the remarkable example of school leadership, who sets the short and long term goals on daily basis. The role of the Principal plays a pertinent role in shaping the conditions for high-quality teaching. Principals with good leadership skills are vital to the efficiency of our nation's public schools, especially those who serve children from the marginalized sections of the society.

Principals as leaders of the school are not ordinary people; they are exceptional human beings who take organizations to higher and higher levels of performance — Performance that might not have been imagined before. Researches on leadership have shown that hallmarks of effective leadership are as follows:

- **Credibility:** The leader should have a high degree of credibility. He must carry the reputation of doing what he says and doing the right thing. It was the greatest asset

of Mahatma Gandhi on whose one word, millions of people came out on streets and willingly gave their life.

- **Managing conflict:** Conflict is a normal part of the work process — so much so that most of the leaders typically spend 25 percent of their time dealing with it. Under emergency situations, it is not uncommon for that figure to rise to as high as 80 percent. Managing conflict involves selecting an appropriate resolution process, building strategy that meets the organizational needs, blending individual expectations, setting the stage for negotiations, and searching for permanent solutions. It may not be easy, but there will be no escape from it. If the leader would not manage the conflict, conflict will manage him.
- **Problem Solving:** A successful leader will create an atmosphere of understanding and awareness by getting the whole team focused on the solution of the problem. First he would understand the nature of the problem and the urgency of resolving it. Then he would assess the availability of information. Finally, he would set a task force of two to four persons to go deeper into the problem and how best to tackle it.
- **Leader as Role Model:** The leader is the role model for his team members. They all see in him an ideal person who is to be imitated and followed. He is a sort of a support system as they look towards him in moments of crisis as the solver of all their problems. Therefore, he has to play different roles for his team members.
- **Keen Listener:** There are innumerable benefits of good listening. It leads to an improvement in personal and professional relationships, productivity and work performance. It also increases the morale, and the team gains a better perspective and understanding of the team's mission. Good listening skills engender trust. And trust is what separates effective participatory leaders from autocratic ones.
- **Sharing the spotlight:** The workers must be given adequate credit for everything that goes right. The leader should not take credit for a team member's work. This would not endanger his career. In fact, his credibility would skyrocket in the organization if due credit is given to workers. With the education evolving at an increasing rate the leaders must keep pace with the changes Research carried on great leaders has consistently highlighted five major strengths. The following five key areas are really helpful for the SHARP framework of every great leader:
 - **Strengths:** Great leaders try to eliminate weaknesses and learn to focus on their strengths.
 - **Health:** Great leaders try to eliminate stress and learn to integrate periods of new policies.
 - **Absorption:** — Great leaders learn how to achieve consistent engagement and presence.
 - **Relationships:** Great leaders stop trying to exert power and control. They strive to create healthy relationships through positivity and authenticity.
 - **Purpose:** Great leaders learn how to find meaning and commitment in everything they do.

The greatest quality of peak performance comes not from focusing on just one of these areas, but from learning to ignite the fire of all aspects of SHARP and function naturally with them on a daily basis. If a person just cultivate one or two aspects of leadership skills then it is unlikely to succeed.. It is essential to focus on all the five aspects as they essential for effective performance and will give the best chance of enjoying the synergy of performance multiplication.

With the beginning of new session in 2019, CBSE has put an intensive responsibility on the shoulders of school Principals i.e. to work as pedagogical leaders. As per the CBSE circular Acad-15/2019, the school principals have to act as pedagogical leaders of their school. Alongwith preparing a pedagogical plan for the academic session they have to monitor the same. Essentially Pedagogical leadership is about Centre Leaders coaching and mentoring teaching and learning to implement the curriculum and quality improvements for their centers. Pedagogical learning is totally focused on the learner and the learning.

An efficient and competent Principal as a pedagogical leader keeps the academic environment healthy in the form of teaching and learning activities among teachers and students and the physical environment in the form of the condition of a school which attract the students, parents and teachers for the best academic results. This approach to leadership is not always easy. It takes time and continuous investment.

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