

Leadership Lesson from Mahabharata for Corporate World

¹Durga Ghosh, ²Dr. Harmeet kaur,

¹Research Scholar, Jharkhand Rai University, Raja Ulatu, Namkum, Ranchi, India

¹Teaching Assistant, Amity University Jharkhand, India

Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Management, Jharkhand Rai University, Raja Ulatu, Namkum, Ranchi, India

Email - drghosh30@gmail.com, ² harmeet.kaur @jru.edu.in

Abstract: Managing human resources has become extremely difficult for leaders in this globalized business scenario due to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) nature of the environment. An organization can flourish with the help of strong leadership. However, weak leadership has the potential to destroy any institution or organization. To effectively and efficiently lead the organization, executives employ a variety of leadership styles. Thus, guiding the organization and advancing its vision is one of the most important challenges. Therefore, finding outstanding leaders and developing the best traits are the main problems and the true concerns of any firm. This problem has been scrutinized and debated from a variety of angles and ideas. Modern management theories have covered a wide range of leadership traits and approaches. It's fascinating to note that our ancient texts, including the Mahabharata had given us a variety of viewpoints on what leadership is and how it might benefit an organization.

For example, Lord Krishna, the divine incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was very intelligent, had excellent communication skills, was a great influencer and a convergent thinker. One could argue that, in the current situation, Lord Krishna has served as the world's best crisis manager. Krishna was the greatest strategist, according to the Mahabharata. Even though numerous other Mahabharata characters have addressed the significant issues of the day. Krishna was a wise and situational leader who changed his strategy depending on the situation, the people, and the time. This paper primarily examines how ancient Indian texts like Mahabharata had different stances on leadership theory and how they can be applied to modern leadership challenges.

Key Words: Leadership, Mahabharata, Leadership Lessons, Corporate World.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Leadership

Koontz and O'Donnell characterize leadership as a means of influencing others in a favourable way so that they will voluntarily contribute to the accomplishment of group objectives. According to Chester I. Bernard, leadership is a certain trait of a person's behaviour that allows them to organize and lead others in their activities. It is not a quality reserved for professionals in higher positions. For each of us to succeed in our personal and professional lives, we must all have the quality of leadership. Effective decision-making abilities, assertiveness, optimism, empathy, interpersonal intelligence, and a long list of other traits are all part of it. The ability to inspire others to take goal-directed action is another crucial trait of a leader.

Leadership is a quality that is required at all organizational levels and can be demonstrated by anyone who has not been given a formal position within the company. It is not limited to those who hold the highest positions within an organization. The complex process of leadership involves guiding an organization in a way that makes it more logical and coherent and persuading others to carry out a purpose or goal effectively and efficiently. The need for leaders is growing daily as businesses expand, but the supply cannot keep up due to a decline in the quality of the workforce.

This is one of the world's most difficult problems today. One way that businesses are trying to identify good leaders is by looking for a small number of high-quality brand executives. Another way that businesses are addressing this issue is by putting more of an emphasis on leadership development and training in order to generate a fresh pool of leaders for the company.

1.2 Mahabharata

The most well-known epic in history, the Mahabharata, was composed in India as least as early as the fourth century BC. Basu (2016). The narrative still dominates all forms of art and it has an immense influence on us today. There are many lessons to be learned from the Mahabharata in both our personal and professional lives as managers and leaders. There are numerous lessons to be learned from the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata provides a number of leadership lessons. It is divided into 18 chapters and has 200,000 lines of verse. Hindus view the Mahabharata (Sanskrit: "Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty") as a history (itihasa, meaning "that's what happened") as well as a text of Dharma (Hindu moral law). (Hindu Literature, Mahabharata, 2020). It's "central heroic narrative tells of the struggle for sovereignty between two groups of cousins, the Pandavas (sons of Pandu) and the Kauravas (sons of Dhritarashtra, the descendant (2020) 9427 of Kuru)."

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study leadership lessons from Mahabharata.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Satish, M., & et. al. (2020) learned Indian Knowledge System leadership lessons. Secondary data gathered from published sources served as the foundation for the investigation. The study focused on leadership teachings from the Bhagwat Geeta, Ramayana, and Mahabharat. Additionally, the study attempted to compare the ancient Indian Knowledge System with modern managerial practices. According to the study's findings, the ancient Indian Knowledge System is crucial for overcoming the difficulties of the modern business environment.
- Rajpurohit, N. (2020) examined the numerous leadership philosophies found in the ancient Mahabharata and their applicability to inspiring and discouraging staffs. The secondary data included in the study was obtained from reliable sources. The study also mentioned how Lord Krishna's guidance enabled the Pandavas to defeat the Kaurvas. The author used the case of King Dhritarashtra as an example of poor leadership in the study.
- Mehta, B. H., and Tailor, R. (2015) examined how Mahabharat's spiritual ideas and business principles may help manage the modern corporate environment. Secondary data served as the study's foundation. The study highlights key leadership and management lessons from the epic Mahabharata.
- Priya, S. E., & Vivek, N. (2015) talked about a number of Mahabharat management ideas that are important for running the contemporary business environment. Secondary data served as the study's foundation. The study mentioned a few Mahabharat stories that are important for business management.
- Prasad L. Kaipa (2014), the purpose of Mahabharata leadership lessons is to assist leaders in contemplating how to make tough choices by cultivating practical knowledge grounded in Indian customs.
- Thaker, K. (2011) studied Mahabharat's management lessons. Secondary data collected from books, websites, articles, and other sources served as the study's foundation. The DMA framework—direction, motivation, and ability—that the Pandavas used to defeat the Kaurvas was also mentioned in the paper. The article also discusses some of the most important management control strategies that can be derived from the epic Mahabharat in India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature and secondary data has been used in the study. The secondary data has been collected through published sources only.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Leadership Lessons from Mahabharata

- **Discovering actual potential of Individual:** On the first day of the battle, Arjuna, the best warrior, lost his will to fight after witnessing his friends and family members as opponents. Anxiously, he dropped his weapons. Krishna gave Arjuna the Geeta speech at this very moment, enabling him to recognize his actual power and potential. After he recovered, Arjuna made the decision to face the battle and fortified his mental resolve.
Lesson: Recognizing subordinates' genuine potential and assisting them in developing and reaching their full potential are also the most important responsibilities of a corporate leader.

- **Timely Attainability and Convergent Thinker:** The best thing about Krishna was that he was always willing to lend a hand to his buddies. Krishna was always there to support people who believed in him, regardless of the embarrassing event involving Draupadi's Vastraharan in Hastinapur court or his friend Sudama's financial difficulties.
Lesson: Effective leaders assist their staff in resolving issues and are constantly available to them. They will gain loyalty and trust as a result.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Krishna was aware that Karna had obtained Indra's heavenly "Shakti Astra" in order to execute Arjuna. Krishna therefore made sure that Arjuna and Karna would not meet in person. He then sent Ghatotkacha into combat, where he wreaked havoc on the Kauravas' army. In the end, Karna had to murder Ghatotkacha using the Shakti Astra at Duryodhana's urging. Krishna sacrificed Ghatotkacha to save Arjuna.
Lesson: A leader should always have a long-term plan and vision for the company, and he must be willing to forgo short-term advantages if necessary to achieve that.
- **Learning and Development:** Arjuna gained knowledge from everything that was thrown at him. He received from Drona the best military scientific expertise. He was also keen to learn from Indra about divine weaponry. In addition, he regarded Krishna and Yudhishter as his gurus.
Lesson: A leader should always be ready to learn new technology and skills to upgrade his as well as his team potential.
- **Commitment and Shared Objective:** Every member of the Kauravas army had personal biases. The Pandava army, on the other hand, has never stopped fighting for their own rights. In order to achieve their shared objective of defeating the Kauravas, the Pandavas worked toward it. The Pandavas achieved triumph because of their boldness and tenacity.
Lesson: Leaders should align his team to organization's goal.
- **Leadership and Mentorship:** While the Pandavas were supervised by various generals and received various orders from various generals, the Kauravas were led by a single man and received decisions solely from that one man because they were operating under a single man's hierarchy of leadership. While the Kauravas were receiving commands from Karna, Bhishma, Dronacharya and others, the Pandavas were adhering to Lord Shri Krishna's guidance. The Pandavas won because of the advice they received from Lord Shri Krishna. The first step in entering the corporate world is choosing the correct mentor and leader.
Lesson: Just like Arjun received direction from his mentor, it is crucial for corporate workers to pick up skills from their leader.
- **Providing Guidance:** Bheema and Jarasandha engaged in combat for days, matching one another. Bheema divided Jarasandha's body in half after killing him several times. However, Jarasandha's body mysteriously reconnected each time. Bheema sought counsel from Lord Krishna. Knowing the tale of Jarasandha's birth, Lord Krishna took a stick, split it in two, and tossed the two halves in opposing directions. Then, Bheema killed Jarasandha by dividing his body in two and throwing them in opposing directions.
Lesson: A leader should always mentor their staff and provide them with the appropriate guidance to meet their goals.
- **Strength and Ability:** Strong moral integrity and the capacity to make and stick to a choice are other aspects of leadership. It was an awful let down for Dhritarashtra. His weakness was never more evident than when Draupadi was degraded in his court, but he chose to remain mute even though he had the opportunity to right a wrong. In addition to losing the trust of their subordinates, leaders who keep quiet about the organization's urgent problems or in difficult situations can come across as poor decision makers.
Lesson: A leader must take a stand and address difficult issues head-on without faltering.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Averted clashes between the Pandavas and Kauravas resulted from Dhritarashtra's incapacity to resolve their disputes. Chaos and, eventually, a catastrophic battle tore the kingdom apart. Coordination among individuals, as opposed to dispersed groups pulling the organization in different ways, is an organization's greatest strength. It makes sense for a company to have many competent employees. In order to accomplish a convergent goal rather than a divergent one, the leader must make sure that their skills are applied for the greater good of the business and, more crucially, in line with the organization's vision.
Lesson: To avoid conflicts among staff members, supervisors must simultaneously exercise fairness and balance in their decision-making and role-playing. It's possible that King Dhritarashtra's greatest gift to modern corporate executives is to set an example by telling them what not to do as leaders.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study covered a few leadership lessons from the ancient scripture “The Great Mahabharata”. Mahabharat has been the primary source of leadership lessons acquired in this study. The lessons learned from this ancient Indian scripture offer practical answers to the complex leadership problems facing the corporate world today. The study concluded that leadership lessons from the Mahabharat is very helpful for corporate people because they help them overcome their fear of failure and increase their competency and talents. The efficacy and efficiency of the business can be increased by using the lessons provided in different Indian knowledge systems.

REFERENCES

1. Satish, M., & et. al. (2020). Leadership Lessons from Indian Knowledge System. Purushartha, 12(2), 1-13.
2. Rajpurohit, N. (2020). “Leadership lessons from the ancient Indian epic of Mahabharata”. PJAEE, 17(6),9426-9431.
3. Mehta, B. H., & Tailor, R. (2015). Spirituality and Management/ Business: 9 Management lessons from Mahabharata. GJRA - GLOBALJOURNAL FOR RESEARCH ANALYSIS, 4(6), 24-26.
4. Priya, S. E., & Vivek, N. (2015). A descriptive study about the management concepts depicted in great Indian epic Mahabharata. Worldwide journal of multi-disciplinary research and development, 2(8), 1-6.
5. Prasad. L Kaipa (2014). "Making wise decisions: leadership lessons from Mahabharata", Journal of Management Development, Vol. 33 Issue: 8/9, pp.835 – 846.
6. Thaker, K. (2011). Management control insights from the Mahabharata. Int. J. Indian Culture and Business Management, 4(4), 377-389.