

RELEVANCE OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES OF GANDHIJI

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ABSTRACT

Gandhiji was the preeminent leader of the Indian freedom struggle. Gandhiji was one who achieved greatness through his efforts. This study highlights the importance of leadership qualities of Gandhiji. Leadership is the study of leaders' influence over the thoughts, feelings, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and actions of the followers. The purpose of this paper is to consider valuable leadership lessons which can be learnt from the Gandhiji that may prove useful for the business organizations. This theoretical research is based on the existing literature on Gandhiji's leadership in India. Gandhiji opened a new dimension of the thinking about leadership skills and their impact on institutions and people. He is a man of vision and master communicator. Leadership qualities of Gandhiji instilled and encouraged patience and persistence in Indian people. In current business scenario, to lead, managers should not only have the right skills but also a vision and mission for themselves and others.

Keywords: *Gandhiji, Leadership Qualities, Vision, Satyagraha, Business Organizations.*

Introduction

Gandhiji was the important architect and significant leader of the Indian freedom struggle. He is a symbol of peace, unity, non-violence, truth, and morality. Mahatma Gandhi is a name which inspires and fills the Indian hearts with patriotism. He is an ever inspiring force for the public, ever guiding source for the politicians, and has become a never fading image for the government as well as the business world.(Naida, 2020)

Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2,1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat, in India. He went to London to study Law in 1888. After becoming graduate in Law, Gandhiji returned to India in 1891. Unable to find a suitable job in India, he left for South Africa in 1893. When Gandhiji returned India, he led Indians to fight the Britishers by adopting the strategy of Ahimsa and Satyagraha. His movement of Satyagraha, non- cooperation, civil- disobedience, Dandi march and Quit India movement has left an incredible mark across the world. The impact of Gandhiji's persona was so deep and irresistible that it changed the mind sets of the people. He showed them a new method of non- violent and non- invasive management, and how to settle differences and grievances through dialogue, persuasion and passive resistance.(Pratap, 2009)

Leadership: Meaning and Definition

Leadership plays a vital role in the management. The success of all the leaders largely depends on the capacity to lead their followers, however, it is not easier to master the art of leadership. Leadership is the process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically towards achieving the objectives.(Case, 1990) It motivates people to work together with a common vision and purpose. Leadership is, therefore, the study of leaders' influence over thoughts, feelings, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and action of the followers.(Rao, 2012)Throughout the history it has been distinctly evident that the difference between success and failure, whether in a war, a political movement, a business, or a team game, can be attributed largely to leadership.(Prasad, 2008)

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Today's business environment is very complex and unpredictable. Hence, good leader (manager) is necessary for effective and efficient functioning of an organization. Good leadership is essential for all aspects of managerial function whether it is planning, organizing, directing and coordinating.

Mahatma Gandhi is recognized as one of the greatest leaders in twentieth century. His leadership skills were so immense that without any official position and power, he remained an unmatched leader who controlled the psyche of millions of people from all rungs of the society. His leadership skills inspire youth toward working with less to create more values for more people. Gandhiji exemplified leadership capabilities in varied situations.

Objective of the Study

- To gain insight regarding leadership traits of Mahatma Gandhi.
- To underscore significance of leadership qualities of Gandhiji and its relevance to the field of business management.

Review of Literature

Swaroop Simha (Simha, 2018) in her study on "Significance and Relevance of the leadership qualities, Ideals and Values of Mahatma Gandhi, in Sustaining Successful Business in Today's World" noted that Gandhiji's leadership ideals and values can be termed as timeless and relevant to all working professionals. He was both a transformational and transactionable leader which was the prime reason for his lasting impact on the struggle for Indian independence.

Dr Samer Kumar (Panigrahi, 2018) argue that Gandhiji attempted to stimulate his followers not only to overall vision, but also to educate them regarding the risk and challenges ahead.

According to **Samuel O obaki, Anthony Sang and Paul Ogenga** (Samuel O. Obaki, 2013) Gandhiji opened a new dimension of thinking about leadership styles and their impact on institutions, people and other resources. His leadership inspired Indians to be creative and development conscious that have made them self-reliant.

Annette Barnabas and Paul Sunndararajan Clifford (Clifford, 2012) highlighted the importance of servant leadership qualities of Gandhiji like service, self-sacrificial love, spirituality, integrity, implicitly, emphasizing followers' need and modelling.

Surendra Munshi (Munshi, 2010) pointed out that Gandhiji as a leader challenged the entire nation to think in a radically different way for realizing an objective which he perused with all the strength of "a pragmatic dreamer".

Joan F. Markques (marques, 2007) in his study observed that Gandhiji was most famous for his Satyagraha ideology which entailed a non-violent strategy of leading. He throughs light on Gandhi's outstanding traits such as (a) his authentic appearance, (b) his charisma and knowledge and (c) his great motivational skills.

The review of all these studies helps in assessing the significance of leadership qualities of Mahatma Gandhi.

Leadership Qualities of Gandhiji

A successful leader has four common traits: having a vision, communicating it, earning trust, and managing oneself so that there is the possibility of constant learning. Gandhiji owns all these. He was the prominent leader of Indian nationalism in British ruled India. By identifying himself with the masses, living among them and empathizing with them, Gandhiji won their respect and trust. Gandhiji has enormous capacity to innovate. The Dandi March he undertook to make salt from sea water appealed to all classes of Indians. If the British lost the United State over tea, they lost India over salt. (Pralhad, 2005) The corporate manager of twenty first century should inculcate the following leadership qualities in their behavior in order to ensure sustainable development.

Gandhiji is an inspiring leader of there surgent India who has given the Indians a new spirit, a sense of self-respect and a feeling of pride in their civilization. He is something more than mere a politician. He is great statesman, a man of vision. (Ismail, 1939) Effective leadership requires making goals and objectives, meaningful for followers, leading to the overall formulation and articulation of the vision. Gandhiji knew how to create a vision which would be widely shared by the people. Gandhiji travelled throughout the country to share his vision of independence among the people living in different parts of

the country. His vision was very clear where he accepts Ahimsa as a creed. By combining truth, non-violence and self-suffering, he fashioned his innovative Satyagraha strategy. Likewise, managers of today's World, should also share their vision and mission with their workforce by effective means.

Communication is eminently essential in business, government, military organizations, hospitals, schools, communities, homes- anywhere people deal with one another. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine any kind of interpersonal activity which does not depend upon communication. (Haney, 1983) Gandhiji was an excellent communicator. He succeeded reaching close to the people by combating all barriers of communication viz. language, distance, ego, perception, motive and hierarchy. Gandhiji switched between Gujarati, Hindi and English, depending on who he was addressing. He ensured his messages reached the mass population, through regional language newspapers. Messages given by Gandhiji contained soul reaching questions and her winning answers. Even the most sequestered and deprived communities, in that time, were netted close to him since they felt blessed and protected beside him.

A good leader also has determination and persistence towards the achievement of the vision. Gandhiji has that quality of persistence. A critical success of Gandhiji was the support he got across the nation. He could achieve this primarily due to the persistence and articulation of his vision and methods. Determination of Gandhiji in following through, on what he preached, was often at cost to his own well-being. His march to Dandi to protest the tax on salt, is an epitome of his persistence in following non-violence. Gandhiji continued wearing hand spun clothes in order to demonstrate that hand spun clothes were as good as imported ones. In business organization context, a leader should visualize future and should persist to achieve that.

One of the important leadership quality of the Gandhiji is ability to strategize and to reinvent according to the situation. Gandhiji reinvented the rules of the game to deal with tricky situations where all the available existing methods had failed. He broke tradition and conventional approach like non-violence and Satyagraha to deal with British. Gandhiji emphasized having leadership styles that were situation dependent. He was an outstanding strategist. Gandhiji strategized every action on non-violence and moved masses to fulfill the objectives.

Gandhiji never told people to regard himself as the leader. His simplicity, self-confidence, truthfulness and empathetic nature made people admire him. Gandhiji became a leader because of the belief nurtured by the people in his deeds.

Conclusion

Success of the Gandhiji made him the leader worthy to follow and seek inspiration. Leaders and managers too may be successful in their leadership if they emulate and practice Gandhiji's leadership qualities that guided and transformed Indian people. The journey of his life is full of stories of great leadership which are so relevant as well as applicable for business organizations. He always laid emphasis on leading authentically for the greater good. Currently, to lead, managers should not only have the right skills but also a vision for themselves and for others and have the right attitude to achieve their goals. So every Indian manger could be exposed to the leadership practice of Gandhiji, which truly offers guidance for a new era in human development.

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