

## SIGNIFICANCE OF IDEALISTIC AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF INDIAN EPICS

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### ABSTRACT

*In this novel world the art of Management has become an intrinsic part of our lives, be it at home, in the office or factory and also in the Government. In the Great Epics of India, Ramayana and Mahabharata, war ends not with commemoration of triumph but with imparting of wisdom. Lessons from Ramayana are a part of teaching leadership, management and corporate social responsibility at many prestigious management institutions. Leaders of today can learn about the art of leadership from stories written thousands of years ago, things no management course can teach them. The objective is to understand and conceptualise the differences between the Idealistic and Practical approach followed by the greatest minds of Ancient mythology from the exemplary cases of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The author advocates, that there is no better or favourable way of managing and leading people in an organisation. Every leader performs and makes appropriate strategies according to the situations that arise and deals with challenges considering the resources at hand. The purpose of this paper is to help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions. Author highlighted the strategic approach and its importance in today's corporate world of their leaders of Hindu mythology through related cases or incidences of Indian Epics. The researcher stresses on the need of assimilating both the approaches in order to get fruitful output. The paper explains both the approaches through descriptive research method in order to make the readers understand the relevance and usefulness of different leadership styles.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Idealism, Strategic Management, leadership Styles, Corporate Social Responsibility.*

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### Introduction

The Vedas have great practical relevance. The Vedic statements apply aptly to the modern business management practices. In this novel world the art of Management has become an intrinsic part of our lives, be it at home, in the office or factory and also in the Government. In the Great Epics of India, Ramayana and Mahabharata, war ends not with commemoration of triumph but with imparting of wisdom. The Ramayana also known as Adikavya is one of the greatest epics of Hindu Mythology. It is not just a tale, but also an educational platform used by the ancient sages to uphold the importance of doing your dharma (duty). Lessons from Ramayana are a part of teaching leadership, management and corporate social responsibility at many prestigious management institutions. Mahabharata the longest poem in the world known as Mahakavya is a gift of knowledge to the world. It is not a mere story of kings, queens and war, but it is a story of struggle for power, establishing empire and making a mark in the in the minds of all those who come across it. Business in the current world is more than a battlefield. Gone are the days when business was defined by the profit and loss it made. Now, business is a consolidation of tactics, finance, strategies and having a competitive advantage with keeping in

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consideration the Holistic vision. Several injunctions can be extracted from the epic story of Mahabharata. Bhagavad Gita is the essence of Vedic Literature and a complete guide to practical aspects of management lessons. Both contain important lessons that not only used as a epics stories but also in the management institutes to deliver several learning's to future managers and entrepreneurs and significance. The Vedic wisdom can be applied fruitfully to the modern business organizations as well. Applicability of ancient Indian concept in modern business management is of significance because of the fact that without the foundation of strong management techniques India could not have seen systematic and successful organisation in the corporate world. The Indian culture throughout was very much organized and had its own leadership style and that can be learnt from Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. The Indian epics encourage every manager and leader to replicate, explore and deliberate new insights.

Drawing from sources as diverse as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, various events provide a fascinating account of what leadership entails how to choose the right leader, effective communication with a king and adversaries, maintaining the right balance between discipline and leniency – and other workplace situation. Leaders of today can learn about the art of leadership from stories written thousands of years ago, things no management course can teach them. There are many learning's that can be drawn from these great Epics but in this paper researchers focus their attention to two very important approaches of Leadership – the Idealist and the pragmatist .The two protagonists of the paper are Lord Rama and Lord Krishna.

The purpose of this paper is to help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions. In complex scenarios, when organisations are in crisis, leaders often tend to rush into decisions without proper reflection, rely too heavily on data and analytics, and demonstrate an inability to decide based on subtle, intangible and often very important elements like emotion, intuition and spiritual discernment. In this paper, the author discusses what it means to make wise decisions based on the Hindu concept of discretion (viveka) – that is, the ability to perceive and make fine distinctions and also to notice and value quality which is very important part of spiritual discernment.

### Review of Literature

**L. Kaipa, P. (2014). Making wise Decisions:** Leadership lessons from Mahabharata, *Journal of Management Development*, 33(8/9), 835-846. The purpose of this paper is to help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions. In complex scenarios, when leaders are in crisis, they often tend to rush into decisions without proper reflection, rely too heavily on data and analytics, and demonstrate an inability to decide based on subtle, intangible and often very important elements like emotion, intuition and spiritual discernment. In this paper, the author discusses what it means to make wise decisions based on the Hindu concept of discrimination (viveka) – that is, the ability to perceive and make fine distinctions and also to notice and value quality which is very important part of spiritual discernment.

**Sharmal, Subhash. (2016). Towards RAM (Real Awakening of Mind):** A New Perspective on Ramayana. *IBA JoUrNAI of MANAgEMENT & LEADERShip*, 8(1), 7- . The researcher states that the concepts of Ramrajya (Good Governance) and 'Maryada Puroshottam model of Leadership' (Good Leadership) provide us foundational premise for this future direction of humanity in terms of 'sacro-civic society'. Ramayana is also a guide book for ethical leadership as its focus is on virtues and ethics ('virtue ethics') combined with responsibility and duty (deontological approach). In the idea of Maryada Puroshottam, virtue ethics and de ontological approaches are combined to deal with the practical matters of the society

**Thaker, K. B. (2011). Management Control and Strategy Implementation:** Insights from Mahabharata, *Intl J of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 4(4). The paper focus on the practices and preaching of Sri Krishna, the mentor in the epic Mahabharata, offer some interesting lessons on how the causes of management control failure in Kauravas led to the victory of Pandavas. Pandavas' camp established the balance on direction, motivation and ability structure identified here, and thus shaped a winning organisation. The five Pandavas and the generals worked under the direction and strategy of Sri Krishna. On the other hand, the generals of Kauravas' army, namely, Bheeshma, Karna, Dronacharya, Duryodhana, etc., fell prey for Sri Krishna's strategy trap.

**Aithal, P. S., & Acharya, R. K. (2016). Strategic Management Models & Indian Epics,** *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research*, 5(4), 180-189. The researcher focuses on strategies used in Indian epics as examples for various modern strategies are analysed and

their instances and also strategy implementations are discussed. The researcher also discussed the global strategy of the organizations should be the optimum mixture of all the strategies and is to be called as White ocean mixed strategy. This is according to the lessons learned in great Indian epics where the winners Pandavas in Mahabharata and Lord Sri Rama in Ramayana have used optimum mix of all modern strategies.

### Research Methodology

The researcher adopts Descriptive research design for the paper to analyze & interpret the existing literature. Secondary data is used wherein the related cases of Ramayana and Mahabharata were studied for understanding the concept of idealistic and practical vision of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna respectively.

### Objectives of Study

- To understand the significant point of difference between the strategic management approach of two leaders of Hindu Mythology.
- To understand and conceptualise the differences between the Idealistic and Practical approach followed by the greatest minds of Ancient mythology- Lord Ram and Lord Krishna from the exemplary cases of Ramayana and Mahabharata.

### Idealism V/S Pragmatism

**Idealism** is the belief that we should adopt righteous principles, even if they have contrary effects on our lives. The **idealist** is willing to endure hardships in order to do what he / she thinks is right. An ideal leader is always after the formidable - best or worst. He thinks in terms of ideals and applies those ideals everywhere. They are extremely stubborn to change ideals. They might change the world for their ideals to work. They generalize everything and refuse to see the elusiveness. Their innermost desire (even if they know or not) is to find the purpose of life and in everything in the universe, when they cannot find the purpose they feel incomplete. They are believers of perfection and do not give importance to practice. They are Deep thinkers, hence good planners and orators. Impossible is not in their dictionary, they get upset if things don't go as they expect.

Pragmatism, on the other hand, is a rejection of idealism. It is dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations. A Pragmatic Leader has a charismatic personality. He believes in protecting the people near to him. He gives credit to actually who deserves. He fear none but has a lot of courage to face the inevitable and challenges. Loves all creatures without differentiation, believes in team work, inspires, stimulates, and counsel them according to need, works on ground reality and understands the need of the hour, forgiveness and self-respect are important for him, accepts weakness and acknowledges curses with a smile, believes in avoiding disputes, a great motivator.

### Strategic Management approaches of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna

The traditional ideals of prowess, nobility and generosity of Rama and immaculacy of Sita as expressed in Ramayana are beyond comparison with any other ethical endeavours. Rama's highest ideal in life is an unyielding and avid commitment to Satya Dharma. Rama was the quintessential character in Valmiki's mind that inspired him to rephrase the great Ramayana in his poetical vision. Because of the qualities of Lord Rama Ayodhya was known as the exemplary city and the kingdom as Ramrajya. Lord Rama epitomizes the characteristics of an optimal person (Purshottam). He was bound to follow the moral commitments (Maryada).

The Treta Yuga in which Lord Rama was born, believed in following the moral code or Dharma irrespective of all consequences. Lord Krishna on the other hand was born in Dwapar Yuga where morality was already deteriorated. Both Lord Krishna and Lord Rama played a role of custodian of Dharma and become a path shaker but still the modus operandi of both incarnations is very different from the point of view of their living and survival conditions.

Rama is not specially known for his strategic or tactical thinking or decisions. At every critical juncture, he chooses the decision based on *dharma*. He accepted exile of 14 years to protect the promise of his father, banished Sita after the war with Ravana was over to restore his pupils faith in justice, also a classic example of Rama's Dharma is the instance when to honour his words, he had to evict Lakshman from his life which was synonym to death for Lakshman and as a consequence he ended his life. Lord Ram's Triumph over Ravana was a splendid combination of path of righteousness,

ethics and morals with the right strategic management. Lord Rama with an army of monkeys and bears defeated asura king Ravana who was having incredible power and well known warriors. Lord Rama act as a tactful idealistic manager who shows the importance of right strategy formulation and implementation.

Krishna on the other hand, is believed to be a master strategist, tactician and politician. This is because of the various events in his life such as the stage managed kidnapping of his sister Subhadra by his friend Arjuna, the slaying of Jarasandha, numerous events during the Kurukshetra war – killing of Jayadratha; his advice to Ghatotkacha when he is getting killed (to grow and fall on the enemy soldiers); his plan to field Shikhandi against Bhishma, his bringing about the end of Drona by inspiring Yudhishtira to tell a white lie; the killing of Karna when he is weapon less and has lost the memory to invoke powerful weapons; his advice to Bh ma resulting in the eventual death of Duryodhana; all these are the high points of his strategic and tactical thinking. On the other hand the downfall of Kauravs can be accredited to Duryodhan. He compared his **strengths and weaknesses** against those of opponents. He never He did an **excellent SWOT analysis but failed to assess** Lord Krishna, the strategy maker. focused on strategies because his mind was obsessed with jealousy towards the Pandavas

Krishna was a perceptive communicator, with his abilities inspired Pandavas several times. He motivated them to serve greater means for achieving glorious results, simultaneously working towards achieving righteousness. A true leader or manager steps up and drives his colleagues towards acquiring goals. Lord Krishna was master strategist who used analytical problem solving approach throughout his life. He with his diplomatic skills won Mahabharatha war for Pandavas. He proves that a person who is skilled in planning or policy will win for sure in war and politics. A proper action plan is important to achieve your short-term or long term goals.

### Conclusion

There is no better or favourable way of managing and leading people in an organisation. Every leader performs and makes appropriate strategies according to the situations that arise and deals with challenges considering the resources at hand. Lord Rama could afford to be an idealist Leader because the surrounding environment in Treta yug in which he was born was characterised by less evils and more morals, and was the age of virtue and wisdom.as compared to Lord Krishna who was born in Dwapar yug , which was the dawn of Kal yug and filed with lowest morality standards. Lord Krishna did what he had to do. It was the age in which humans developed both divine and demonic qualities as enumerated in the Bhagavad-Gita. These inferences make us conclude that Idealism can benefit people by uplifting their ideological thinking but to survive in the dynamic environment it is necessary to indulge in the reality of the modern world challenges. In reality todays dynamic corporate world require a leader who is having a combination of both the approaches idealistic and pragmatic. By making a proper balance between both the thinking and working a team will ultimately leads to their best output.

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