

## LESSONS FROM LORD RAMA ABOUT ETHICALITY, LEADERSHIP, AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS; GIVEN CSR INSIGHTS FROM THE RAMAYANA

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### ABSTRACT

*Among the classic Indian epics, The Ramayana offers valuable perspectives on corporate social responsibility, leadership, and moral behaviour. People and organisations can learn important lessons to direct their actions in the modern world by looking at how leadership traits and CSR principles are portrayed in the epic. His ability to lead inspires managers to give their best effort in trying circumstances, particularly given the corrupt times we live in. An overview of the management and leadership lessons learned from Lord Rama in the Ramayana is the goal of this study. The information is gathered using hermeneutics, another name for qualitative research methodology. Results indicate that Lord Rama was a perfect leader, king, brother, and son. An organisation can expand more quickly by pursuing his path.*

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**Keywords:** Ramayana, CSR, Management Lessons, Leadership.

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### Introduction

Indian scriptures, with their emphasis on self-awareness, mindfulness, empathy, and ethical conduct, provide insightful lessons on management and leadership. Inspired by Lord Krishna's Bhagavad Gita and Lord Rama in the Ramayana, they offer insights into leadership styles, team dynamics, conflict resolution, and organisational governance. While the Bhagavad Gita teaches us to lead with clarity and integrity, the Ramayana emphasises the value of upright character and righteousness in leadership roles (Suhail Vij, 2023). Mahadevan (2012) examines the ancient Indian epic to offer insights into leadership. Effective communication, self-transformation, and self-realization are among his key themes. The significance of having a clear vision and motivating people to work towards common objectives is also emphasised in the text. Mahadevan's writings offer leaders a useful framework for addressing modern issues with age-old wisdom. Rajpurohit (2020) examines the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, as a useful tool for learning leadership skills. Characters like Arjuna and Bhishma serve as examples of the epic's emphasis on moral principles, integrity, and responsibility in addition to strategic thinking and decision-making. Unfortunately, not many scholars have studied the Ramayana's management lessons.

Generations of Indians and people in Southeast Asian nations like Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malaysia have drawn great inspiration from the Ramayana for spiritual, cultural, sociological, political, and artistic purposes. In Sanskrit literature, Sri Valmiki Muni, the author of the Valmiki Ramayana, is referred to as Adikavi, the first poet, and the poem itself as Adikavya, or the first poem. The epic consists of 24,000 verses that are divided into six sections, or Kandas, which are the Yuddha, Ayodhya, Aranya, and Bala Kandas. The Ramayana's Uttara Kanda, or seventh Kanda, is separate from the main narrative (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2010).

Ahimsa, Karma, and Dharma are among the values that Lord Rama upholds in the Ramayana. Other values include respect for elders and younger people, the value of family, and so forth. One of the main themes of the Ramayana is dharma, which is Sanskrit for righteousness or duty. No matter how dire

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the circumstances, Rama in the epic Ramayana never gives up on his dharma. He serves as an excellent example of the value of carrying out your duties with integrity, particularly in trying situations. Because it teaches us the importance of morality and ethics in business, the dharma principle is pertinent to management. Another fundamental principle of Indian culture is karma, or the idea that everything you do has an effect. Rama follows his karma, and he takes responsibility for the results. The idea of karma encompasses societal collective actions as well because an individual's karma can be influenced by their collective actions. This is mirrored in the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam concept, which holds that everyone is related to everyone else and that every individual's actions have an effect on others. Rama avoids using violence and settles disputes amicably in the Ramayana, which is a prime example of the value of ahimsa, or non-violence. Ahimsa includes not only abstaining from physical or mental abuse but also people's obligation to keep others safe. The idea that nonviolence is the way to truth and that truth triumphs over violence is mirrored in Satyameva Jayate, highlighting the significance of nonviolence in achieving victory without the use of violence (Tiwari, n.d.).

People and organisations can learn important lessons to direct their actions in the modern world by looking at how leadership traits and CSR principles are portrayed in the epic. His ability to lead inspires managers to give their best effort in trying circumstances, particularly given the corrupt times we live in.

### **Ramayana's Importance**

Since Lord Rama is associated with the Indian ethos's ideal human being and model leader, Lord Ramayana is chosen as a text to guide effective management practises for state and organisation. The Ramayana offers insightful guidance on corporate leadership. Rama establishes a high standard for humanity through his deeds such as befriending Nishad Raaj, refusing to return to Ayodhya, carrying out the final rites of Jataayu, accepting Vibhishana, and being reunited with his family, despite his poor behaviour in how he treated Sita upon her return from Lanka (Aveling, 2012). His ability to lead inspires managers to give their best effort in trying circumstances, particularly given the dishonest times we live in (Kumar Agarwal & Srivastav, 2014).

The main character of the Ramayana, Rama, is presented as an ideal son, king, and practical person who sustains high moral standards and adheres to righteousness or dharma. The Ramayana has a lot to teach us about business, including how to be disciplined and alert at work, maintain composure, and more. Since motivation boosts both individual and group morale, it is essential for high productivity and quality in systems. It is influenced by behavioural inputs such as perception, attitude, and learning. With few resources, an unconventional army, and high motivation, Rama waged war on Lanka, expecting little in the way of facilities. Based on their intelligence, men are classified in the Ramayana as intellectual elite (Mahat), mediocre (Madhayam), and common (Jaghanya). Regular jobs that require plan implementation are filled by mediocre people, while intellectual elites are appointed to prime positions requiring planning and decision-making. Regular individuals are assigned to support the organisation and jobs that need less intelligence and manual labour (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2010). A CEO looking to gain market share requires the assistance of driven salespeople who, when properly motivated, will go above and beyond to win over customers' hearts and wallets.

Rama was a real economist, as we also find out. He followed every economic policy. Five sections were effectively created out of the revenue that was generated. According to Pathak and Singh (2016), one portion was devoted to dharma, the second to duty fulfilment, the third to popularity, the fourth to material concerns, and the fifth to spiritual advancement.

Strategic management, statecraft, good governance, and values-based leadership are among the management lessons that can be learned from the Ramayana. The centre of attention is righteousness, or Dharma, which ought to serve as the cornerstone of every leadership action. Ayodhya Kanda, a treatise on good governance, is one of the chapters that offers modern lessons on important facets of management practise. The conversation between Lord Ram and his brother Bharat offers insightful guidance on efficient management techniques (Pathak & Singh, 2016).

The Lord is not happy with the Ocean God's indifference to reasonable requests, as demonstrated in Sundar Kanda, a classic story of strategic management. Rama asks Lakshmana for his bow and arrow to forcibly dry up the ocean after pleading with the Ocean God for three days. The Ocean God trembled and surrendered at the sight of the arrow, so the Lord teaches Lakshmana that an unreasonable person only comprehends fear. There are many more lessons on how to deal with unreasonable people (Pathak & Singh, 2016).

### A Lesson from Lord Rama on Ethical Leadership and Social Consciousness

A strong leadership team plans, directs, and persuades its members to accomplish goals with the least amount of resources possible. The ethics and values of a leader must be understood, and these principles should be reflected in their behaviour. According to Sharma et al. (2013), leaders should exemplify these principles through their daily behaviour.

Lord Rama had a clear vision and a clear objective. He desired to free his wife Sita from the grasp of the evil king Ravana. Then he laid out his plan and started to implement it piecemeal. According to Tiwari (n.d.), Lord Rama had confidence in his actions regarding the execution of his plan.

- **Social Skills:** To inspire staff members, managers require more than just expertise, resources, and methods. This is the result of several elements working together, including mutual trust, confidence, a shared goal, and upholding standards. In the Ramayana, Sri Rama urged Bharata to distribute success among the populace, fostering a sense of "We" or collectivist viewpoints. Sri Rama gave Bharata advice on how to treat preceptors, virtuous family members, learned people, and gods, ancestors, dependents, teachers, fathers, doctors, and brahmanas (the intelligentsia class) with great respect and without envy.
- **Lord Rama's Teachings on Decision-Making:** An organization's or a kingdom's health is not only based on its economy and production, but also on how satisfied its customers and employees are. Sri Rama highlights the significance of a group decision-making process in fostering organisational democracy and preventing obstacles like information scarcity, difficulty identifying problems, choosing logical solutions, and the presence of unofficial power structures within an organisation.
- **Humanism;** the Valmiki Ramayana explains the well-being of the nation and its citizens, stressing joy, wealth, harmony, and bliss for the populace while highlighting the king's fundamental obligation to uphold the dharma. Sri Rama felt that by protecting merchants and farmers (Vaisya), the king could grant his subjects material prosperity. Lord Rama stated "राजातूधर्मन्हीपलायतवामहिपतिदंडधराहप्रजनम्," "the king (or manager) who is righteous and rules his subject righteously is wise, and thus becomes the rulers of the entire world (industry)."
- **Value of Subordinates:** The main factor in Lord Rama's success was his possession of Kshmaguna. He worked lovingly and affectionately with his subordinates. He lent his ears and made decisions at the right time and place with his smile and good manners. The Rama-Ravana yuddha in the Ramayana resulted in deaths and injuries on both sides. Being a good Samaritan, Rama gave the wounded Sena medicinal herb treatments, which allowed him to recover and become whole again. In contrast, Ravana gave the order to cast the sena into the sea in a hurry. Due to his own foolishness, Ravana's sena was only half as powerful as before, which caused him to suffer emotionally. Rama's sena came back, strengthened once more. This example of man management shows how powerful motivation and encouragement can be. Ego-driven success is unachievable, as Ravana's persona proves.
- **Competition Appreciation:** Lakshmana was enthralled with the splendour of the golden Lanka and cheered, desiring to begin his rule here. The description of the beauty kept going from one verse to the next, impressing even Rama. Rama said, "जननीजन्मभूमिश्कस्वर्गदापीगारियासी," emphasising the need for gratitude in a proficient manager and urging us to return to our homeland. Vanara sena, too, declined, saying that since their master was not on board, then they should too. All they could do was submit to their master. This event shows our reverence for the Almighty or the Boss.

Equanimity, which is a psychological state of psychological stability and composure, is one of Lord Rama's personality traits. He is a brave and valiant man who maintained his composure during his exile in the forest, despite experiencing emotions, pain, or other situations that could cause mental instability. Even in the face of innocence, his composure and sharp intellect enabled him to make wise choices. His integrity and virtue added to his self-assurance.

Lord Rama had a free, wise, and perceptive nature that enabled him to step back from actions and embrace change without opposition. Lakshmana, his brother, was a model of composure during their banishment and demonstrated the same qualities of tolerance and hope for a better future.

- **The Nurturing Quality of Lord Rama:** Rama is a compassionate leader who places a high value on his followers' material and spiritual well-being. He is kind, dependable, and eager to work with followers who have not yet been put to the test. He treats his allies as family, even his

enemies, and this nurturing is demonstrated throughout the Ramayana. His generosity isn't dependent on their actions or output. As an illustration, in Sabari's case, Lord Rama purposefully eats the fruit after biting into it to guarantee its sweetness.

Lord Rama's effective communication technique is shown when Hanuman delivers the good news of Sita's return from the ocean. Repaying the debt would cause him the same suffering, so he wishes he had never had to. Rama also talks Bharat into taking care of Ayodhya and calms down an enraged Lakshman.

Ed Oakley and Doug Krug define enlightened leadership as "the willingness and ability to draw the vision from their people and inspire and empower those people to do what it takes to bring the vision into reality." Khatri et al. (2012), in contrast, argued that charisma and vision are the most important and central characteristics of new leadership. Rama is so charismatic that everyone flocks to him and follows. Throughout his life's journey, he encounters people whose actions and reactions reflect his magnetism.

Rama is a self-realized and enlightened leader with a special combination of abilities, principles, insight, and vision. His innate charisma, inclination, and guidance from sages such as Vasishtha and Viswamitra culminate in a spiritual wisdom. Rama emphasises compassion and an understanding of human frailties as he exhorts followers to realise their own potential. He acts harshly when necessary to further the greater good, and his good nature makes him happy even when he receives a favourable treatment. Rama's worldview is one of tolerance, mercy, and forgiveness, which enables him to make difficult choices when called upon (Gupta et al., n.d.).

- **Remain True to his Words and Promises:** Lord Rama has always kept his word under all conditions. His unwavering fulfilment of his father's promises, which included travelling to the forest to make sure they were kept, serves as an example of how crucial it is for leaders to keep their word in order to forge relationships with stakeholders.

The eight values of Uday Pareek's leadership model—Openness, Collaboration, Trust, Authenticity, Proactivity, Autonomy, Confrontation, and Experimentation—are emphasised in the ethical behaviour of Lord Rama for society. Being honest and self-assured, Rama exemplifies these virtues. He's an effective change agent who pushes for change through confrontation. It is morally right for Rama to have complied with Ravana and Bali's extermination. An organization's demise may result from moral decay. As a successful change agent, Rama makes sure that there is little disruption during the transition. This model demonstrates Rama's dedication to enacting reforms that will benefit society as a whole.

- **SWOT Analysis:** Hanuman was dispatched by Lord Rama to thoroughly study the environment in Lanka. He assessed each person's advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and difficulties by conducting a situational analysis. The necessity of competent management was highlighted by Ravana, who was a bad manager who disregarded the advice and recommendations of his staff in a time of need.

### Ramayana's CSR Lessons

The preservation of both human beings and natural resources is valued in Indian society. In order to heal health problems and strengthen the heart, Hindus are encouraged to offer water to the Sun. The custom of giving water to different trees during Poojas is also in line with Vedic literature, which highlights the significance of environmental aspects in Vedic times. Brahmins perform Poojas where they give "Aahuti" to purify the air, which may be the reason for celebrating "Holika Dahan." Indian society is strongly rooted in this all-encompassing approach to protecting and conserving natural resources (Barot, 2022).

The concept of sin in those who engage in self-indulgence, as well as the emphasis on charity, sacrifice, moral business practises, and harmony, can be found in the Rig Veda, which is where CSR first emerged (Mukherjee & Zsolnai, 2022). Ramayan demonstrates CSR in the sense of social responsibility. Goswami Tulisdas stressed the traits of Ram Rajya people, which are a reflection of Shri Ram's moral principles and ethically grounded leadership. These people were not envious or hostile; they were intelligent, disciplined, and well-educated. They were devoted to their faith, serene, joyful, and calm; they were also lost in thought. According to Sharma et al. (2013), Ram-Rajya was neither sensualistic nor pleasure-seeking, nor did he have any money or poverty.

No matter their position within the company, all employees are valuable, as the Ramayana reminds us. Organisations are managed through teamwork. For instance, in the Ramayana, very little human labour and monkeys were used to build Shri Ram's Sea Bridge. Indeed, a squirrel is thought to

have scampered to the location carrying whatever dust she could manage to gather on her back. Her two ounces of effort went into building the enormous bridge. She is said to have developed the stripes after Ram, apparently impressed, stroked her back. Many more CSR lessons can be drawn from different passages of Indian scripture.

### Conclusion

This study is a prime example of how to apply ethical behaviour, social consciousness, and leadership lessons from the Ramayana. Leadership attributes possessed by Lord Rama include his kindness, his reverence for elders, his value for subordinates, his respect for family, his integrity, his ability to make decisions, his interpersonal skills, his strategic management, etc. These are attributes that a manager can use to inspire their staff to work hard. Several of the Ramayana's other characters, like Hanuman, who always obeys his leader with dignity, and Vibhishan, who stands by Lord Rama by telling the truth about Ravan's demise and abiding by Dharma, provide excellent models of effective management.

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