Leadership Qualities From
The Indian Management Thought: The Yajur Veda

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Abstract
Efficiency, Effectiveness and prosperity of an organisation whether in a small scale like a company or in a large scale like an economy, depends on the leadership. Leadership has been a focus of much research. Many leadership qualities and theories have been proposed. This paper attempts to highlight the leadership qualities identified and thus prescribed in Indian Management Wisdom especially from the Yajur Veda.

1 Leadership and Efficiency
Efficiency of an organisation depends on the effectiveness and efficient utilization of the resources such as raw materials, various machines, money etc. The utilization, in turn, depends on the efficient and effective utilization of the input namely the human resource in an organisation. The efficiency of all the raw materials and the human resource is determined by the quality of the leadership or in other words leadership qualities as emphatically declared in The Panchatantra.

“In case of horse or book or sword
Of women, men, or lute or word,
The use and uselessness depends
On the qualities the user lends.” (Ryder, p. 108)

This thus explains the pivotal role of leadership without which any organisation is like headless body, as declared by the Panchatantra:

“Save the chieftan of the clan,
Whatso’er the pain;
Lose him, and the clan is lost;
Hubless spokes, are vain.” (Ryder, p. 108)
It is generally believed that the Vedas contain all the knowledge required by the mankind. A careful study of Yajur Veda reveals that it has extensively dealt with the leadership qualities. This paper attempts to highlight these leadership qualities identified, and thus prescribed in the Yajur Veda, and grouped into physical qualities, mental qualities, knowledge and behavioural qualities.

2 Leadership Qualities

Many scholars have identified leadership qualities either directly or through theory. Some of leadership qualities are: ‘Ambition, Energy, Desire to lead, Honesty and Integrity, Self-Confidence, Intelligence, High Self-Monitoring, Relevant Knowledge’ (Trait theory of Leadership); ‘Extroversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness to Experience’ (Big five Factor Model); ‘Initiating Structure and Consideration’ (Behavioural theory – Ohio University studies); ‘Employee Orientation and Production Orientation’ (University of Michigan Studies); Leader – Member relationship, Task structure and Control (Contingency Theory); Personal ability, Self-confidence, Confidence of the subordinates, ideological issues, use of personal example, vision, articulation, personel work, environmental sensitivity, Sensitivity to followers needs, unconventional behaviour (Charismatic Theory of Leadership); ‘Charisma, Inspiration, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised consideration’ (Transformational Leadership Theory); Positive Psychological capabilities, Greater self-awareness, self-regulated, Positive Behavior, Confident, Hopeful, Optimistic, resilient, Transparent, Moral, Future Orientation, Giving priority for developing Associates (Authentic Leadership Theory); ‘Leadership wedded to Ethical Behavior’ (Ethical Leadership Theory); ‘Guiding, and Motivating’ (On-Line Leadership Theory); ‘Never Failing, Courage, Magnamity, Intelligence, Enthusiasm, Promptness, Education, and Bravery, Pride of Ethical Behavior, Nice-talk, Justness, Impartiality, Mercilessness in disciplining, Tolerance, Ethical Behaviour and avoidance of ethical behavior, Rewarding, People Orientation, Protecting the follower, Giving grants, Good Governance, Care for the Welfare of the People.

3 Leadership Qualities from the Yajur Veda

Yajur Veda has authoritatively insisted on certain qualities for a King or the head of state (i.e. leader) and thus it has prescribed the leadership qualities. A King is the leader of an organisation bigger in scale and scope. Hence the qualities of a King can rightly be taken as the qualities of a leader of any modern business organisation whether big or bigger or small. The leadership qualities pointed out in Yajur Veda can be broadly categorized into physical, mental, knowledge and behavioural.
3.1 Physical Qualities for a Leader

The yajur veda has authoritatively emphasized physical qualities of a leader and thus seems to prescribe the following physical qualities: 14. August personality (ch-7/sl-35), beautiful and healthy body (ch-4/sl-27), strength (ch-6/sl-27, ch-19/sl-6, ch-23/sl-20), strong in body and soul (ch-7/sl-38, ch-18/sl-53), vigour (ch-6/sl-32), possessor of prowess (ch-23/sl-20), long lived (ch-29/sl-46), and maintainer of vitality of the body (ch-20/sl-37).

3.2 Mental Qualities for a Leader

The Yajur Veda has focused much more on the mental qualities of a leader at different places throughout the book. They are: virtuous (ch-17/sl-22, ch-8/sl-50, ch-9/sl-1), propitious (ch-12/sl-17), gracious (ch-12/sl-17, ch-15/sl-1), lustrous, controller of his senses (ch-12/sl-22), free from vice, irreligious, love for propriety and protection (ch-8/sl-46), splendour, knowledge, power, dignity, quick (ch-6/sl-32), patient (ch-7/sl-18, ch-17/sl-20), just (ch-7/sl-18), charitable (ch-8/sl-50, ch-9/sl-35), qualified and active (ch-9/sl-8), friend of all (ch-9/sl-33), lover of truth (ch-9/sl-35, ch-18/sl-53, ch-20/sl-4), conduct with justice, behave in religious spirit (ch-9/sl-35), dutiful, serviceable, large hearted (ch-10/sl-29), benevolent in thought and spirit (ch-15/sl-2), justice-lover (ch-17/sl-12, ch-20/sl-4), peaceful through austerity (ch-17/sl-20), considerate (ch-17/sl-49), cool, fond of gold, impetuous, nourisher of all, great, steadfast (ch-18/sl-53), endowed with wisdom and enterprise, imbibes of truth, good natured (ch-20/sl-2), famous (ch-20/sl-4), free from favouritism (ch-20/sl-9), fearless (ch-20/sl-37, ch-20/sl-47, ch-20/sl-51), heroic (ch-20/sl-4), bravery (ch-8/sl-35, ch-19/sl-6), boldness (ch-19/sl-6), desires enterprise (ch-27/sl-36), enmity to fraud (ch-4/sl-27), antagonism to the thoughtless (ch-4/sl-27), and self-efflusive (ch-5/sl-2). In nutshell, the yajur veda seems to suggest that a leader should have “all good qualities, actions and attributes” (ch-8/sl-47), and endowed with noble qualities (ch-12/sl-6, ch-12/sl-33, ch-9/sl-1).

3.3 Knowledge and Leadership

The Yajur Veda has repeatedly emphasized knowledge as an essential requirement of a leader throughout the book. A leader should have knowledge (ch-6/sl-32, ch-9/sl-23, ch-27/sl-5), full of knowledge (ch-23/sl-20, ch-27/sl-7), be an encyclopedia of knowledge (ch-7/sl-45), learned and educated (ch-8/sl-49), well versed in knowledge (ch-9/sl-2), knowledge of all affairs as essential (ch-9/sl-20), master of spiritual knowledge (ch-10/sl-28), aspirant after knowledge (ch-12/sl-15), knowledge of subjects (i.e. followers), most thoughtful (ch-12/sl-18), and highly renouned for knowledge (ch-33/sl-16). Perhaps this may imply that illiterate are rightaway declared as misfit!

3.4 Behavioural Qualities for a Leader

The Yajur Veda has also highlighted the behavioural qualities (i.e. etiquette) to be followed by a leader. A leader should have eloquence, pleasing manners, friendship, longing for delight (ch-4/sl-27), humility (ch-7/sl-20, ch-9/sl-2, ch-11/sl-20, ch-27/sl-5), respectful (ch-7/sl-20), showing no disrespect (ch-15/sl-1), affection (ch-9/sl-2, ch-9/sl-3), behaves
properly, conducive to prosperity (ch-9/sl-25), amiable (ch-9/sl-26), with love (ch-12/sl-16), be gracious (ch-12/sl-16, ch-12/sl-17, ch-15/sl-1), easily accessible to all, just manner (ch-19/sl-79), and friendly (ch-34/sl-30), rightous (ch-7/sl-45), non-violent (ch-33/sl-70), hearing complaints, kindle justice, listen to grievances (ch-6/sl-26), justness (ch-8/sl-23, ch-9/sl-23), lover of impartial justice (ch-9/sl-27, ch-17/sl-12, ch-20/sl-4, ch-20/sl-9), conduct with justice (ch-9/sl-35), master of just behaviour (ch-20/sl-37).

3.5 Gender and Marital Status for a Leader

It is quite interesting to note that the Yajur Veda seems to imply at various places throughout the book that a leader should be a male in that Yajur Veda addresses the leader as ‘Oh King’ at numerous places. This can also be evidently inferred from the Yajur Veda’s role prescription of women to stay at home and be contended with domestic life only. It also goes further to specify the qualifying marital status for a leader as ‘married’ (ch-8/sl-35), perhaps only then the leader would understand the problems and prospects of married life of the followers but also perform role-modeling and that only a married person becomes competent to advice and lead other married people!

4 Concluding Remarks

The productivity of any resource is determined by the productivity of the people, the productivity of the people, in turn, is determined by the quality of the leadership. Many modern management thinkers have identified many leadership qualities. However it is very interesting to find that the Yajur Veda, respected as one of the four original sources of knowledge in India, also identified the leadership qualities more than 5000 years ago but yet consistent with the modern thinkers and very relevant to this day! And this may represent the Indian contribution to the management thought long before the birth of the modern management science! The leadership qualities of the modern scholars and that of Yajur Veda is presented in Table-1 along with that of Thirukkural for easier comparision. Another interesting finding of this paper is that the Yajur Veda seems to suggest that the leader should be a ‘male’ and ‘married’ too! In sum, the Yajur Veda categorically states tht a leader should have ‘all good qualities, actions, and attributes and endowed with noble qualities.’ Thus the Yajur Veda gives any one aspiring to become a leader to acquire as much of these qualities and attributes as possible, like Mahatma Gandhi!

NOTES:

1. This paper implies itself to the leadership qualities can be learned from animals, birds, etc. only as pointed out in Yajur Veda. It may also be mentioned that the Yajur Veda also, authoritatively prescribes other leadership qualities in many places as well.


8. Ibid. p. 562.
9. Ibid. p. 566.
14. This reference can be read as “Chapter/Sloka”. For instance, “ch-7/sl-35” refers to the “Chapter-7, Sloka-35.” Similarly other ensuing references can also be read.
15. Henceforth the full text of the sloka will not be given in this paper with a view to reduce the length of this paper. Those who are interested in knowing the text of the sloka may please refer Devi Chand (1964).

REFERENCE


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Qualities Modern</th>
<th>Leadership Qualities from Thirukural (2000 yrs old)</th>
<th>Leadership Qualities from Yajur Veda (More than 5000 years old)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Ambition, Energy, Desire to lead, Honesty and Integrity, Self-Confidence, Intelligence, High Self-Monitoring, Relevant Knowledge’ (Traits theory of Leadership); Extroversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness to Experience’ (Big five Factor Model); ‘Initiating Structure and Consideration’ (Behavioural theory–Ohio University studies); Employee Orientation and Production Orientation’ (University of Michigan Studies); Leader – Member relationship, Task structure and Control (Contingency Theory); Personal ability, Self-confidence, Confidence of the subordinates, ideological issues, use of personal example, vision, articulation, personalwork, environmental sensitivity, Sensitivity to followers needs, unconventional behaviour (Charismatic Theory of Leadership); Charisma, Inspiration, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised consideration’ (Transformational Leadership Theory); Positive Psychological capabilities, Greater self awareness, self regulated, Positive Behavior, Confident, Hopeful, Optimistic, resilient, Transparent, Moral, Future Orientation, Giving priority for developing Associates’ (Authentic Leadership Theory); ‘Leadership wedded to Ethical Behavior’ (Ethical Leadership Theory); ‘Guiding, and Motivating’ (On-Line Leadership Theory); ‘</td>
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<td>The doer of all good acts, Lovable, Independent, Competent, Giver of happiness to others, Grant power to others (delegating), Heroic, invincible, Powerful to subdue foes, Powerful like a lion, Afford protection to his people, Shouldering responsibility of managing, Bearing burden, Strong, protectective, Straight and just, Intellect and honour (Ch.XIV; Sl. 9); Sharp and brilliant, Lustrous, fast (Ch.XXIX; Sl .20). Quick, Internally pure, Believing in progress, Active and valorous, Knowledgeable.(Ch.XXXIII, Sl. 85)</td>
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<td>Physical qualities:</td>
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<td>Physical qualities: august personality, beautiful and healthy body, Strength, Vigour, Strong in body and soul, prowess,long-lived, maintains the vitality of the body .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental make-up (including ethics): Virtuous, good natured, Propitious, graciously minded, lustrous, controller of his senses, Free from vice and irreligion, love for prosperity, protection, splendour, power, dignity, quick, Patient, patient mind, charitable, benevolent in thought and spirit, Qualified, active, friendly, lover of truth, imbiber of truth, behave in religious spirit, Dutiful, serviceable, large-hearted, peaceful through austerity, considerate, cool, fond of gold, impetuous, nourisher of all, great, steadfast, endowed with wisdom, desires enterprise, enterprise, famous, free from favouritism, extremely wise, wealthy with gold, applauded, fearless, heroic, Brave, boldness, Learned, educated, Knowledge, full of knowledge, Knowledge of subjects, most thoughtful, Asprant after knowledge, Encyclopaedia of knowledge, Well versed in knowledge, Knowledge of all affairs is essential, Master of spiritual knowledge, highly renowned for knowledge, enmity to fraud, antagonism to the thoughtless, Self-effulgent.</td>
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