

# A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT USING THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF LEADERSHIP FROM BHAGAWAD GITA

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**Abstract - This study examines the leadership concepts which has been explained in detail in Bhagawad Gita. Bhagawad Gita explains to each one of us the essence and conceptualisation of the teaching, which can be modelled in our day to day life, as well as in our job. In this study, few samples from Bhagawad Gita has been taken, where Krishna demonstrates the use of transformational leadership. Samples like Individualised Consideration, Intellectual stimulation, Idealized influence and Inspirational motivation are few instances in Bhagawad Gita where transformational leadership can be applied in daily life. A full leadership model has been developed comprehensively and it has been linked with bhagawad gita so as to study the personalities of leaders those of which comes under transformational leaders. Thus this study gives a correlation of transformational leadership and the leadership teachings from Bhagawad Gita so as to apply this in our practical life for us to become leaders in our own ways.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is said that a leader knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. So, when Krishna came to the world, he did all these 3 things. He is god, so he is omniscient, so he knows the way but when he lives in this world as a normal human being, he goes through all the experiences, challenges, problems, enemies, rivalry, criticisms that everyone else has to go through, but he shows us the way on how he goes through all these and when Arjuna is in a crisis, he shows Arjuna the right way. So many times, the best leaders are not those who teach in a classroom but who makes the world into a classroom which means that they use experiential learning. Krishna uses the most unlikely setup for teaching (a battlefield) as he transforms a battlefield into a classroom. At the time just before the start of the battle, Krishna's words to arjuna were carefully chosen and arguments were peacefully reasoned. By his presence and his presentations, Krishna lifts arjuna faraway out of the battlefield and in their conversation, subjects rise to levels of wisdom that the world has rarely scaled ever before and after. So when arjuna returns from the heights of wisdom to the end of Bhagawad Gita, he is fully equipped, he was always physically martially equipped but he had become emotionally overwhelmed and Krishna

empowered him so that he could bring his emotions under control and act honourably.

Bhagawad Gita is not a book of violence nor a book of silence, it is a book of transcendence. It helps us to rise to a higher reality from where we can perceive things differently and find ways which would otherwise be not seen. But the essential message of Bhagawad Gita is how we can master ourselves and bring out the latent divinity within us for our own good and for the good of the world.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

You can only unlock something that is within you. The meaning is that leadership skills cannot be taught and learned. These are qualities that are present in everyone. It is only to be realised when we possess those qualities and we need to unlock and uncover those qualities which are residing within us [2]. These are infinite powers within us and it raises awareness to understand our abilities and strengths.

A company becomes great only because of good leaders as they could raise the potential of the company. A team would usually consist of 5 levels of leadership. The levels are moving from level 1 to level 5. The team consists of members that are highly capable, contributing team members, competent manager, effective leader and exquisite leaders [3]. In any organisation, there will be a gradual progress among these levels.

Arjuna was suffering from performance anxiety and nervous breakdown, so he was unable to perform his dharma on the battlefield. Previously before entering the battlefield, he had been saying that he desires his kingdom back, but when he is faced with a real problem that is confronting him, he is unable to perform due to his performance anxiety and this happens to everyone. Krishna is a leader but Arjuna is a leader in making. Krishna is able to understand the dilemmas of Arjuna, so he is trying to convince Arjuna that it is his duty as a warrior or Kshathriya to seek justice for his family and when the time came, he didn't want to fight. He wanted Krishna to help him out as he was depressed on How can he kill his relatives, his guru and his friends. But the point is that he should have thought about it earlier itself before entering the battlefield and not when the war is about to start. This happens

with most of us as people lack confidence when the actual time arrives. It could be anything from giving a public speech to presentation in the class. This is when we should come out of our comfort zone and try to perform at our best.

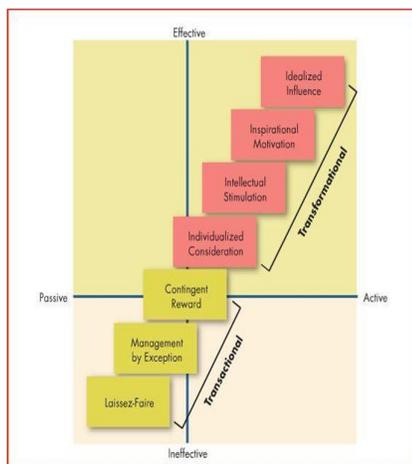
Reflecting on the life of Krishna, I believe there are 10 Cs that define and shape true leaders that have been extracted from Krishna's life and behaviour which could be Common sense, Communication, Commitment, Competent, Confidence, Conviction, Character, Courage, Clarity and Coach. These have been formulated from the shlokas, verses from chapter 13 and 16, Bhagawad Gita. These 10Cs are the hidden potentials within ourselves and it is we who need to unlock or uncover these potentials.

### KNOWLEDGE OF ONESELF

The potential of the human mind is subjected to our individual beliefs so as to whether we can accomplish the work that we do. The human mind's power is unlimited in its potential to create the desired results so as to whatever they might be on the mental (spiritual) or physical plain. If the human perceptions can discover the ultimate truth, then it is possible to achieve a purposeful life and fulfilment without much struggle and sacrifice[1].

By implementing and learning some simple principles, time tested strategies to enhance mind function and development, one could find that they can literally attract and allow success to flow in. There have been many scientific studies done and experiments performed on the subject of human mind power through these years. It is important to understand that the mind and human brain are not the same things. Both the mind power and mind are purely a non-physical consciousness that is capable of thought only, while the brain can be said as the physical tool that the mind uses to carry its intended purpose.

### FULL RANGE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP



The most ineffective way in the transactional model leadership style is the Laissez-Faire where there is absence of leadership and there is no one to take the final decision or there is a lack of leader in the entire system. This model doesn't provide a chance to take

a decision or taking stand in the issues. Another failure of the system is that follow up of action doesn't take place which in turn cause the lack of result. A leadership model which is more effective is the Management by Exception model, where actions are performed before or after a mistake has been done and also by pointing out what mistakes have occurred and ensures that warning is given to the miscreant [7]. It is divided into two, which is passive management by exception and other is the active management by exception. Drawbacks of this model is that there is no intervention until the standards are not met and also waiting for things to go wrong before taking action. As a result, this model shows up only when things have already gone wrong. Contingent reward system is the most important model in the transactional model where rewards are provided for excellent performances and behaviours. In this model, the goals are set by the leader with his co-workers and on attaining these goals, specific rewards are given to the people to motivate them. The advantage of this model is that there will be more clarity and also creates trust among the workers.

Another type of leadership model is the transformational one where the leader understands the present culture of the organization and changes the culture of the organization with his effective leadership model.

According to Tracey and Hinkin (1998), transformational leadership is a process that can motivate people by appealing to their higher ideals and moral values, defining and articulating a vision of the future, and forming a strong base of credibility. Conversely, transactional leadership is based on bureaucracy and organizational standards. The difference between transactional and transformational leadership styles can be defined by denoting the transactional style as a manager of planning and policy and the transformational style as a leader of innovation (King, 1994).

### KRISHNA AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER

Given the sudden as well as unexpected change in the mood of Arjuna, it falls upon Krishna his charioteer, to counsel him. Sensing upon the critical urgency of the situation, Krishna with his immensely charismatic personality suddenly transforms himself into an authority who speaks with conviction and power to inspire Arjuna to do his duty and inspires him to have a new vision of life and empowers him to act according to his Dharma (duty) as a warrior.

Krishna does this by focusing on the vital psychological needs of Arjuna in order to bring him out of his sorrow and confusion and even offers himself as a role model whose ideal self is worth emulating. Krishna's approach is consistent with the strategy of transformational leadership, using which, leaders are able to uplift their followers and enable them to follow and share a powerful vision of the future.

We can examine in detail Krishna's response to Arjuna using the four components of transformational leadership behaviour that are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Krishna's goal is to uplift Arjuna's spirits by explaining to him the nature of death, life, and the immortal spirit, and the way to overcome such mental obstacles that stand in the way of doing his duty.

Given below are a few samples from the Bhagavad Gita to demonstrate Krishna's use of transformational leadership.

1. *Individualized Consideration:*

First model in the transformational leadership is the Individual Consideration model where the leader personally understands each and every employee and builds a personal relationship with each of its member based on the strengths and weaknesses of each individual. In this model, the ideas and concerns of each employee is considered and coach each other on a regular basis [8]. This model creates affection and compassion among the workers and make the employees feel needed and important.

Krishna's addressing of Arjuna's personal duty as a warrior and advising him what he needs to do to achieve his goals does specifically points out that Arjuna, given his background as a warrior prince, cannot shirk from a battle that is righteous. The words mainly are meant to remind Arjuna that his people are depending upon him to protect them from harm, and if Arjuna now retreats, there will be chaos and some very serious consequences undermining his reputation, past achievements and hindering his future potential and growth as a person and a warrior.

2. *Intellectual Stimulation:*

The next stage is the Intellectual Stimulation, where the emphasis is given to the value followed by the leader and in turn challenges the employees. In this model, the leader finds new way of doing things and considers different perspectives while considering a solution to the problem. This model ensures that the feedback reaches the leader and makes the employees brainstorm and in turn result in new idea generation [9].

The other component of transformational leadership is for the leader to show different paths as well new ideas to the followers and different ways of understanding so that the followers can integrate this new knowledge into their actions and behaviours. Krishna demonstrates this approach when he explains to Arjuna the nature of death and life of the body and the eternal nature of the Atma (Soul – Self Spirit).

3. *Idealized Influence:*

Leaders who are the role models to the employees and also who motivates the employees and possess strong and charismatic personality is often idealized by the employees. These types of people effectively perform the Idealized Influence model. This type of leader communicates the values and visions and strictly stick on to them and effectively follow them. He provides everybody equal and fair chances in the opportunities.

In this component of transformational leadership, the leader offers himself as the ideal role model whose high ethical and moral conduct is worth emulating. We see in Bhagawad Gita that when Krishna needs nothing and has nothing to obtain, yet he still does not give up action and does his duty so as to set an example to others.

4. *Inspirational Motivation:*

When the rational thought is to be stimulated, the leadership model of Inspirational Motivation is used. This model ensures that the future is kept safe along with articulating the visions to the employees. This model ensures that the goals are achieved by the

means of communication and also by expressing confidence in each other's abilities.

The last essential component of transformational leadership is the ability to energize and inspire the followers to act on the shared vision of the leader and empower the followers to carry it out. Krishna's inspirational motivation does remove Arjuna's confusion about the right course of action.

This model involves gaining knowledge and trust from others and then motivates them to work hard and attain the vision and goal. Every leader is a mix of all these models and the most effective one is the one in which there is a perfect mix of all these traits.

### III. CONCLUSION

As many have forgotten the potential learnings in each and every field of psychology from ancient Indian literature, this research serves as a bridge to contribute to various fields of requirement. With the upcoming several studies concentrating on the traditional psychological studies in ancient India, this paper supports such claims of possible learnings from such great forgotten works. This has also laid the root for further studies in similar domains by various other researchers.

With the completion of this study, we have understood the relationship between the great Vedic teachings taught in Ancient India and Management in the present world. This study gives us a clear understanding of the various intricacies that Arjuna encountered which can be used by us in management or in our daily life.

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