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MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS IN THIRUKKURAL

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ABSTRACT

One of the most valuable literature in Tamil is Thirukkural. Thirukkural was authored by Tiruvalluvar, the book comprises with 1330 Kurals under 133 titles each title has ten couplets encompassing with various themes of various dimensions. It gives guidance for people for living a worthy life so it is considered as scripture for valuable living. The entire articulate broadly covers three major heads – Araththuppaal, Porutpaal, and Kaamaththuppaal. Araththuppaal deals with dharma and value based life, Porutpaal deals with material domains that help to understand the fine line of difference between materialism and spirituality. Kaamaththuppaal deals with the personal emotions of a human being. The entire book is a capsule of wisdom and practical guidelines, with simple and effective communication. It is true that Thirukkural is an ocean of information in all aspects, from the ocean the research paper brings few drops on the concept of leadership and management.

KEYWORDS

Thirukkural, leadership, management.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most valuable literature in Tamil is Thirukkural. It gives guidance for people for living a worthy life so it is considered as scripture for valuable living. Thirukkural was authored by Tiruvalluvar, the book comprises 1330 kurals under 133 titles each title has ten couplets encompassing various themes of various dimensions. The entire articulate broadly covers three major heads – Araththuppaal, Porutpaal, and Kaamaththuppaal. Araththuppaal deals with dharma and value based life, Porutpaal deals with material domains that help to understand the fine line of difference between materialism and spirituality. Kaamaththuppaal deals with the personal emotions of a human being. The entire book is a capsule of wisdom and practical guidelines, with simple and effective communication.

It is true that Thirukkural is an ocean of information in all aspects, from the ocean the research paper brings few drops on the concept of leadership and management.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**MANAGEMENT**

Management has been defined in various ways. Simply stated, “Management is the art of getting things done through others.” This is a very popular definition. It is very simple to understand. It reveals that a manager accomplishes objectives by guiding the efforts of other people. According to Drucker, “Management is a multipurpose organ that manages a business and manages managers and manages workers and work.” A leader is one who guides and directs other people. He gives the efforts of his followers a direction and purpose by influencing their behavior.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explain about the concept of leadership and management.
2. To elucidate about the leadership and management concepts in Thirukkural.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is a Qualitative research, based upon the secondary data collected from Books, Journals, Blogs, Articles, Websites etc.

WHAT IS MANAGEMENT?

We are born in an organization (a family), live in an organization (society) and work in an organization (business, college, school, Government, army, etc.). Each one of these organizations is a group of persons working together to achieve some common objectives. The organizations can be successful only when the efforts of various individuals in the group are integrated into teamwork. The central agency which performs this task is known as management. It plays the same role in an organization which the brain does in the human body.

In the words of Knootz and O'Donnell, “Management is the creation and maintenance of an interval environment in an enterprise where individuals, working in groups, can perform efficiently towards the attainment of group goals.” This definition contains three main elements: (a) Managers are responsible for creating an environment conducive to group performance (b) Managers operate through individuals and groups of persons and (c) The aim of management is to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in the accomplishment of common objectives.

MANAGEMENT AS A HUMAN / SOCIAL PROCESS

Essentially management is what the managers do. Therefore, management can best be defined as a process consisting of several interrelated elements. These elements of the management process are known as managerial functions. These elements or functions are:

Planning (preparing for future), organizing and staffing (assembling resources and creating inter-relationship among them), directing (guiding, supervising, motivating, leading, and communicating), controlling and coordinating (keeping activities on the right track and integrating efforts into a team). Management is a human or social process because it involves human beings and interrelationship among them. A manager becomes effective when he understands and makes proper use of human behavior for the smooth functioning of his unit. Thus, management is a social process.

LEADER AND LEADERSHIP

A leader is one who guides and directs other people. He gives the efforts of his followers a direction and purpose by influencing their behavior. Therefore, leadership may be defined as the quality of behavior of a person by which he is able to persuade others to seek the goals enthusiastically. It is the force which binds a group together and motivates it towards certain goals. According to George R. Terry, “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for mutual

objectives." Koontz and O'Donnell have defined leadership as "the ability of a manager to induce subordinates to work with confidence and Zeal." In the words of Alford and Beatty, "leadership is the ability to secure desirable action from a group of followers voluntarily without the use of coercion."

NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

- Leadership is a process of influence
- Leadership is a function of stimulation
- Leadership gives a feeling of contributing to common objectives
- Leadership is related to particular situation
- Leadership is a shared experience
- Leadership is not headship or bossism
- Leadership is an ongoing activity in an organization
- Leadership implies existence of followers
- Successful leadership leads to goal accomplishment

QUALITIES OF A LEADER

- Self discipline
- Mastery in knowledge
- Self confidence
- Self assessment
- Inner drive
- Human relations attitude

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CONCEPT IN THIRUKKURAL

Thirukkural was a book written 2000 years ago. All the emerging concepts of management and leadership were clearly described by Thiruvalluvar 2000 years ago. This shows in ancient days how the Tamil culture was well established. We have development in all aspects like science and technology, management concepts, managing finance and investments, taxation process, women empowerment, architecture etc.

There are so many things to discuss in Thirukkural about management but, here in this study some of the management and leadership concepts in Thirukkural are highlighted.

MANAGEMENT BY THIRUVALLUVAR

DEFINITION OF MANAGEMENT

"Management is what to do, when to do, where to do, how to do and by whom to do". The management concept is explained in Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar in the Kurral 484 in Adhikaram Kalamaridhal was explained the thing that if we want success in a process we have to start it at a right time and at a right place.

"The pendant world's dominion may be won, In fitting time and place by action done". (Thirukkural 484)

Meaning: One can succeed in the attempt to conquer the world if the right time and the right place are chosen.

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is the process of choosing a course of action from available alternatives. This process involves understanding the problem, selecting a right alternative and implementing the chosen alternative at the right time. The decision making process is clearly define in the Kurral 668 in the Adhikaram Vinaithitppam explained that be clear in your decision and don't be delay in the execution of the decision.

"What clearly eye discuss as right, with steadfast will and mind unstrombering, that should man fulfill". (Thirukkural 668)

Meaning: What you have clearly decided to do, do it without hesitation and delay.

SELECTION

Selection is an important function and it must be performed carefully. Proper selection is very helpful in building up a suitable workforce. Selection means selecting the right person for the right job at the right time. The most important function in management is selection, Thirukkural explained about the process of selection in Kurral 516 in the Adhikaram Therindhuvinaiaadal, says that the success of the thing is in the hands of the person to whom it was handed over and the time in which it was processed

"Let king first ask, 'Who shall the deed perform?' and 'What the deed?'

Of hour befitting both assured, let every work proceed". (Thirukkural 516)

Meaning: The things to be done, the proper person for it and the appropriate time for doing it, must all be duly weighted.

Management is all about getting things done. A smart manager would know what needs to be done, who is the best person for doing it, and the right time to get it done.

WHO IS A LEADER - BY THIRUVALLUVAR

Leaders are usually evaluated by their actions. Society will qualify them to be a leader only by evaluating their actions.

"Though linked to splendours man no otherwise may gain,

Reject each act that may thine honour's clearness stain". (Thirukkural 961)

Meaning "one should not do any action that brings down the glory of the society even if it is unavoidable."

All actions of leaders should be focused on building values, ethics, confidence and positivity in the community. One cannot even dream of seeking avenues to leadership if his intentions are not focused on righteousness and building glory through positivity.

"The man endowed with greatness true,

Rare deeds in perfect wise will do". (Thirukkural 975)

Meaning "Glorious people will do all actions which are exemplary."

In a world of self-proclaimed leaders one has to understand that pseudo-leadership doesn't stand for a long time. A real leader needs to have relevant and visible competencies.

"Greatness humbly bends, but littleness always

Spreads out its plumes, and loads itself with praise". (Thirukkural 978)

Meaning: Great people will always show humility; small people always glorify themselves wondering their own actions)

It is important that the aspirants for leadership should display the quality of humility.

QUALITIES OF A LEADER - BY THIRUVALLUVAR**SELF DISCIPLINE**

Leaders stand for their values and principles. They illuminate the thoughts, actions and pathways of several others who trust them and follow them.

"In his station, all unswerving, if man self subdue,

Greater he than mountain proudly rising to the view". (Thirukkural 124)

Meaning "The image of a humble person who has not wavered from his position is glorious than a mountain"

Such leaders command respect from the followers, seekers and the community at large.

Leaders are role models whose actions speak louder than their words. These actions radiate positive energy all around and inspire the environment to replicate their models by dreaming to be like them or better and motivating them to learn and do more than what they are capable of. Thus, such leaders facilitate others to generate their own energy and maximize their outputs.

"A minister is he who grasps, with wisdom large,

Means, time, work's mode, and functions rare he must discharge". (Thirukkural 631)

Meaning "The role of governance (leadership) is to empower the instruments, the time, the operational strategies and the type of action."

Leadership is an indispensable part of the directing function and an important factor in organizational effectiveness. Without a good leader, an organization cannot function successfully.

MASTERY IN KNOWLEDGE

A leader is expected to have thorough knowledge of the subjects under his domain and experience in relevant skills. As he is supposed to guide others, he should be aware of and sensitive to the knowledge dynamics and should be familiar with the universe of his work station.

"In subtle learning manifold though versed man be,

'The wisdom, truly his, will gain supremacy". (Thirukkural 373)

Meaning: Even if one has studied advanced books, what remains will be one's real knowledge.

"A minister has power to see the methods help afford,

To ponder long, then utter calm conclusive word". (Thirukkural 634)

Meaning: The duty of leadership is to know, to analyze and mentor, and to speak out courageously

Leaders with personal mastery only can go in search of factual knowledge and will be able to mentor and speak courageously.

SELF CONFIDENCE

Adequate knowledge in the relevant field of activity is only one facet of the leadership. It helps the leader to get some light in the direction in which he should move or operate. But unless the leader takes the first step towards the direction he has to move, rather he would like to mobilize the team behind him, nothing will change. This ability to take the initial step requires self-confidence and courage of conviction.

"What men call 'power in action' know for 'power of mind'

Extreme to man all other aids you find". (Thirukkural 661)

Meaning: The successful execution of an action depends on self-confidence; others are irrelevant.

This self-confidence and courage of conviction provides the much-needed energy for an individual to face all the ordeals with positivity and strength. He is not defeated by the difficulties that encounter him on his way towards his goal.

"Though toil and trouble face thee, firm resolve hold fast,

And do the deeds that pleasure yield at last". (Thirukkural 669)

Leaders need to have courage and conviction. In its absence, his leadership will always be looked at with suspicion.

INNER DRIVE

When a person is not deterred by the roadblocks in the path of progress and considers them as a routine course of life and enjoys the challenges with the same state of mind as he would deal with happiness, even his opponents love him for his commitment, courage and conviction. Thiruvalluvar calls such people 'exemplary' and says 'they are commended even by their rivals.'

"Who pain as pleasure takes, he shall acquire

The bliss to which his foes in vain aspire". (Thirukkural 630)

Meaning: The elevation, which even his enemies will esteem, will be gained by him, who regards pain as pleasure.

He further adds:

"Who griefs confront with meek, ungrieving heart,

From them griefs, put to grief, depart". (Thirukkural 623)

Meaning: "People who are not afraid of facing roadblocks, create roadblocks to challenges and thus win over"

SELF ASSESSMENT

While many people aspire for leadership and want to play a proactive role in shaping systems, institutions and concepts, their desire, competency and style do not necessarily match the skills required for an effective leadership. Consequently, when they take up positions of responsibility they are not able to discharge their duties effectively. They exhibit absence of vision, direction and focus.

"The force the strife demands, the force he owns, the force of foes,

The force of friends; these should he weigh ere to the war he goes". (Thirukkural 471)

Meaning "Before you engage in an action, assess your strength, strength of others, strength of the action and the strength of the support systems."

If a leader is hasty in his actions without considerations and judgment of all that is listed above, he is bound to face defeat and suffer humiliation.

Mere desire to do something, mere curiosity and a sense of enterprise will not help or assure one of success. As such this curiosity and enterprise has to be weighed against the competence. Otherwise, the leader is likely to desert his actions even half-way, just because his strength and that of the resources that support are not good enough to take him to the path of success.

"Ill-deeming of their proper powers, have many monarchs striven,

And midmost of unequal conflict fallen asunder riven". (Thirukkural 473)

Meaning "Many have broken halfway just because they got into action catalyzed by their enterprise without knowing their actual strength.

HUMAN RELATION ATTITUDE

In trying to mobilize support for the leader should be extremely careful about the persons with whom they associate. The choice of supporters is vital for safe mobility towards the path of success. If the people who stand by the leader are not dependable, their support will always be subject to suspicion and doubt. Similarly, if the leader always suspects the association of a dependable person, he will again be in trouble because such actions will frustrate those who want to give unqualified support.

"Trust where you have not tried, doubt of a friend to feel,

Once trusted, wounds inflict that nought can heal". (Thirukkural 510)

Meaning: To be very much careful while selecting a person for association, after selecting suspecting them will create more trouble.

A leader should be very careful in selecting a person as his supporters before selecting he can suspect him in all means but, after selecting it could not happen then the whole thing gets spoiled.

CONCLUSION

The kural of Thiruvalluvar written several centuries before reflect concepts which are true for any time. Thus, one finds the message of Thiruvalluvar is crystal clear in respect of leadership and management concepts, even though they were authored several centuries before. No wonder, the book is considered as one of eternal value. No wonder, the book is called "**Ulagamarai**" (global scripture) and hence has been translated into almost all known languages in several countries. Many concepts used in this modern world in science and technology, management etc. are used by us in ancient days itself, many Tamil writings like Ramayanam, Mahabaratham, Silapathikaram etc. have evidence for all such things. Thirukkural is one among them having all required human skills for live, from that ocean the paper provides only few drops.

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