

Spiritual Leadership and Ethical Management

Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy *

So far, all over the world, concepts have been drawn from secular and materialistic values which have been evolved in a competitive commercial world. Management is not merely of business and industry but is all pervading component of all the human endeavours. Therefore, it is high time that Management Scientists also take a look at India's Ancient Thought and Wisdom and draw ideals and ideas from spiritual and philosophical concepts. This has become essential since the planet and its inhabitants have to be saved from the present deteriorating tendencies in all walks of life, which may even endanger life in the planet. Enough is known about leadership from the conventional wisdom, being taught in educational and training institutions, which teach lower knowledge (Apara Vidya), based on senses, intellect and mind. IAW is based on higher knowledge (Para Vidya), based on meditation and silencing the mind. India's sages and saints discovered mysteries of nature and the cosmos without any equipment, such as evolution, speed of light, planetary movements, gravitation, age of the earth, etc.

Swami Vivekananda had predicted that this Century will be India's, when scholars and scientists from all over the world would come to India to find solutions to the problems afflicting the planet, animals and mankind. It is obvious that the present concepts of leadership, management, administration, policies, etc cannot arrest the deteriorating trends seen in every sector. This is the Commercial era of Kaliyuga, when every action, transaction and relationship are commercial in nature, where motivation is based on self interest, which ultimately ends in exploitation of man, animal and nature for the comfort and pleasure of the Establishment. This is true of India and the whole world. In every sector, leadership tends to destroy mankind rather than elevating him to a higher state of being.

Paul Sweezy, a socialist thinker, wrote long ago "Entrepreneurs create corporations while managers are created by the corporations. Entrepreneurs steal from the

* Padma Bhushan & National Research Professor in Management, Director CARTMAN-IHA, 870, 17E Main, Koramangala 6th Block, Bangalore 560 095. Ph: 2553 0121/2553 0304, Mobile: 93412 59392, 94480 47014, Email: cartmanblr@hotmail.com , indheritage@hotmail.com, nsramaswamy@hotmail.com Web: www.heritage-cartman.co.in

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corporations while managers steal for the corporation". Evidence of this phenomenon can be seen in every sector and field of human activity. In India (and elsewhere in some parts of world) politicians have converted democracy into mobocracy. Goondaism prevails in the political arena. Scandals and frauds are common in some organizations. Corruption is the order of the day. Fundamentalism and extremism have led to terrorism and militancy. These trends cannot be contained by conventional concepts of leadership and management.

In formal organizations, supervisors, managers, executives, officers, administrators and others derive authority from the Constitution and rules. Leaders derive authority from their values – spiritual and temporal. Managers can imbibe leadership qualities, which would enhance their effectiveness. Gandhiji, Mao and Lincoln were leaders with ideals and values. Janaka was half ruler and half sage. Leaders and managers ought to be half sage with noble values and ideals.

In government and non-government formal organizations – political, economic, business, social, educational, scientific, religious, etc – supervisors, superintendents, managers, executives, officers and administrators derive their authority as per the Constitution, rules, regulations and conventions. Leaders in all areas of human endeavour get informal authority by virtue of their noble qualities and attributes, credibility and integrity, contribution to society, selfless

service, dedication and commitment to ideals and welfare of man, animal and nature. Some individuals in the first category also possess certain leadership qualities, which would improve their effectiveness as managers and administrators. Therefore, managerial effectiveness is enhanced by moral excellence and ethical leadership qualities. Good leaders are admired and adored by society. As regards managers and administrators, they lose their authority when they leave their position and power vested on them in formal organizations. Throughout history, in every country, genuine leaders have exercised authority not only in formal organizations, but also over people at large.

Gandhiji was not even a Member of the Congress Party, and yet his word was law in the Party. Further, people all over India voluntarily followed him and his ideals in non-cooperation and satyagraha movements. Sri Satya Sai Baba and Amritanandamayi have devotees all over the world. On their own, followers carry out social work, bhajans etc. Similarly, Sri Ravi Shankar and hundreds of monks have worldwide organizations. Their followers adore their teachers and carry out their missions. Such evolved persons can be considered to be spiritual leaders. Most of the devotees observe ethical and moral values and carry out selfless service without recognition and compensation.

Mao Tse Tung was a political leader whom millions admired, who carried out his mission of not only emancipating China from foreign oppression, but also helped in rebuilding

China. One instance worth quoting here is connected with Mr Nixon's visit to China. Mao was informed that Nixon's visit has to be postponed as they could not remove snow in Peking streets. Mao went on the Radio asking Peking citizens to remove the snow. Millions put in their effort and removed the snow. The Yangtze river was dammed in 11 months, while as a similar dam in Ramapada Sagar took 11 years. Except Mahatma Gandhi no other political leader was able to evoke such enthusiasm among people.

During the freedom struggle, many of our political leaders, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, commanded respect. In the political arena now, there is hardly anybody who can inspire people. Gandhiji was against politics without morality. Recently, Dr. Abdul Kalam said that governmental decisions should be based on "country first and politics second". In very few instances only, this ideal is being followed by our political leaders. A significant portion of our leaders in the legislatures have criminal records. A large number are corrupt. Part of the reason for such widespread corruption is inappropriate political economy system and the bureaucratic state apparatus. Lack of ethical leadership has made the government a parasite and a block to development.

Though Dr. Abdul Kalam is no longer President of India, he is being invited by educational institutions and other social forums, because of his sterling qualities, and the dignity and informal behaviour he displayed during his tenure as President.

In this Commercial Era of Kaliyuga, which started in 3102 BC, all transactions and

relationship have been commercialized. Supported by the media, cricketers and movie stars have large following. Even political parties are making use of them as icons for garnering votes. Voters are bribed with money, liquor and other inducements. Thus there will be no chance for genuine political leaders emerging in India. Next to politics, it is the media which influence the attitude and values of people. In the media also, commercial considerations are the dominant motivation. Therefore, genuine leadership in the service of the people is not likely to emerge in the political and media fields.

It is well known that a leader ought to have many noble qualities, such as honesty, integrity, humility, selflessness, dedication, commitment, patriotism, selfless service, sacrifice, etc. Education sector ought produce noble leaders. In fact, in the Indian culture, teachers are considered to be above Gods. Thus Vasishta and Sandeepani were advisors to Rama and Krishna. Even Sankaracharya, the greatest thinker of all time, had Govindapada as his teacher. In our Itihasas and Puranas, teachers were advisors to kings and emperors. They were highly knowledgeable and wise, totally selfless, endowed with noble ideals, integrity and honesty, who renounced the worldly pleasures for serving mankind. Our one million pages of spiritual literature, consisting of the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmasutras, Bhagavad Gita, Itihasas, Puranas, Upa-Puranas, Neetisastras,

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Arthasastra, Vedangas and thousands of commentaries were written by teachers and philosophers, who dedicated their lives for welfare of man, animal and nature. Keeping away from the worldly life, they stayed in forests, and by practising yoga and meditation they achieved the highest of knowledge about the cosmos. Their contributions to mankind have now been recognized by great scholars all over the world, including Arnold Toynbee, Will Durant, Thoreau, Emerson, Frawley, Rolland, Basham and others. Hundreds of discoveries in the area of Science and Mathematics, now attributed to foreign scientists, were actually discovered by ancient sages and saints. A few samples of what some foreigners have written about IAW are given elsewhere.

During the last 100 years, there has been spectacular growth in Science and Technology, bringing affluence to upper one-third of population and reasonable standard of living for the middle one-third, leaving the lower one-third in poverty and privation. But concurrently, planet earth has been plundered and pillaged. Forests are disappearing. Soil is becoming infertile. Global warming may bring disaster to many parts of the world. Pollution has gone beyond tolerable levels. Billions of animals are subjected to unimaginable suffering, while being used for food, work, experimentation and entertainment. Man himself has become sick. New diseases have emerged, such as HIV. Man has become lonely and alienated. Families have been fragmented. All the three categories mentioned above are suffering due

to tension, anxiety, fear and a sense of purposelessness. More money is being spent on armaments to destroy mankind than to elevate him to a higher state of being.

To add to these dangerous trends, the recent financial and economic crisis, recession, frauds and scams in the Corporate world, rising violence and crime, reckless sensuality and sexuality, perversion and vulgarity have increased in public life. The extraordinary developments in transportation, communication, television, internet, mobile phones, computers, etc are wonderful to educate mankind for leading a noble life and bringing forth harmony and peace. Unfortunately, the opposite is taking place. These equipments and gadgets are being used for distorting and perverting man's mind.

Spiritual leadership and ethical management can arrest these deteriorating trends, and even reverse them. For this purpose, spiritual and ethical leadership and management should permeate and pervade every human activity, attitude, behaviour, transactions, relationships, organizations and administration.

This is India's Century, as predicted by Swami Vivekananda, when the whole world would come to India to seek solutions to the problems afflicting mankind. India ought to become a spiritual leader and teacher for the whole world, for which all segments of society in all sectors of our life – political, economic, social, educational, scientific, cultural, corporate and public administration – ought to imbibe the secular concepts of India's ancient thought and wisdom.