

A RESEARCH ARTICLE ON MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM INDIAN MYTHOLOGY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIAN EPICS

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Abstract:

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is deeply rooted in Vedic literature and aims to address contemporary societal issues through a structured approach. It encompasses traditional wisdom from the Vedas and Upanishads, fostering interdisciplinary research and education. IKS aims to preserve and disseminate indigenous knowledge for further research and its practical applications in society. Indian ethos and values originate from ancient wisdom. Today's business world demands strong ethics and adaptability. The Management lessons effectively can be drawn from the ancient manuscripts & epics like Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita. Epics offer guidance on leadership, decision-making, and planning. This effort connects modern management with Indian epics. This literary effort encapsulates the generation of further literature pertaining to the Indian Mythology.

A Research Article on Management Lessons from Indian Mythology with special reference to Indian Epics is a descriptive study conducted by the help of secondary data. The authors aim to understand the essence of Indian Mythology and respective learning. They further aim to Study the management lessons gathered from Indian Epics with special reference to Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita. The study enlists the Key Learning as recommendation to Organisations at large with respect to functioning of Management Practices. The scope of study encompasses the domain of Indian epics with special reference to Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita. The inferences are indicative in nature and not exhaustive. This research paper examines the connections between Modern Management principles and Indian ethos values, with reference to Indian epics.

Key Words: Management Lessons, Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita

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Introduction:

The Indian Government has taken efforts with respect to the IKS promotion. IKS/Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Vibhag is the division of Ministry of Education, government of India, established in 2020 at AICTE Head office, with an aim to promote Indigenous Indian System of knowledge. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is deeply rooted in Vedic literature and aims to address contemporary societal issues through a structured approach. IKS refers to the comprehensive body of traditional knowledge developed in India over millennia, covering fields like management, arts, science and ethics. Efforts include syncing IKS courses with digital platforms, training educators, and promoting innovation through competitions and collaborations. IKS is linked to Indian

Mythology and the relative learning from Indian epics have the potential to guide the mankind. Indian ethos and values are deeply rooted in the country's ancient wisdom. This research paper examines the connections between Modern Management principles and Indian ethos values, with reference to Indian epics. The management discipline has evolved significantly in adapting to the constantly changing business environment changes. The evolving nature of today's world raises concern about how businesses should handle their increased ethical sensitivity and competition to thrive. Our connection to the literature and epics of our ancient India offers an ideal prognosis of management styles that are still present in an organization's governance. In numerous work of Indian literature, including the Bhagavad Gita, Kautilya's Arthshastra, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana, the concepts of management vision, good achievement, decision-making process and planning are all explored.

Objectives of the Study:

- To understand the essence of Indian Mythology and respective learning.
- To Study the management lessons gathered from Indian Epics with special reference to Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita
- To enlist the Key Learning as recommendation to Organisations at large with respect to functioning of Management Practices.

Research Methodology & Process:

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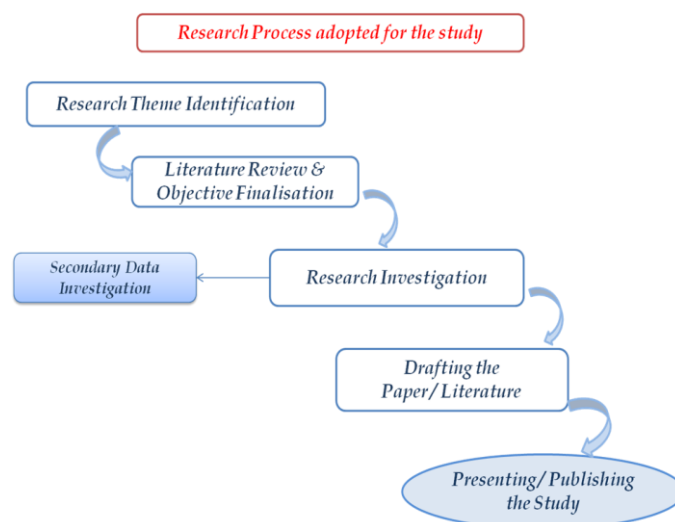


Chart No. 1: Research process adopted for the study
Source: Authors' Study

Essence of Indian Mythology and it's Learning:

Indian mythology is a vast collection of traditional stories, beliefs, and teachings that form an important part of Indian culture and heritage. These mythological narratives are mainly derived from ancient scriptures, epics, and ancient literature. Indian mythology is not only about gods and supernatural events but also more values, social duties, and philosophical ideas that guide human life. The essence of Indian mythology lies in the concept of dharma (righteousness), karma (action), and moral responsibility. These principles are reflected in many mythological stories and characters. The epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata portray the struggle between good and evil and demonstrate how ethical conduct ultimately leads to victory and harmony in society. For instance, the character of Lord Rama symbolizes ideal leadership, honesty, and commitment to duty. His life teaches the importance of discipline, sacrifice, and responsibility toward family and society. Similarly, the teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita emphasize the importance of performing one's duties without attachment to personal gain. This concept promotes dedication, ethical decision-making, and self-control.

Indian mythology also provides lessons related to leadership, conflict management, teamwork, and strategic thinking. The stories of mythological heroes and kings highlight qualities such as courage, patience, wisdom, and justice. These values are relevant not only in personal life but also in organizational and managerial contexts. Furthermore, mythology acts as a medium for passing knowledge from one generation to another. It preserves cultural traditions, ethical standards, and philosophical insights that help individuals understand the purpose of life and the importance of righteous actions.

Management Lesson from Indian Epics:

Indian management thought based on Indian Ethos will not only help Indian organisations to become effective and globally competitive but has much to offer to the world in general. As a matter of fact, there exists a need to explore the Indian epics, scriptures and the literature for the managerial philosophy and thought. Management of any type, whether in business or in some other human activity, is an act through which people are brought together to work for achieving a desired goal. Generally, management is defined by the following five functions as planning, Organizing, Leading, Controlling and Coordinating. These points are worked upon keeping in context the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Learning from the Epic the Ramayana:

The Ramayana, composed by Sage Valmiki, is more than an epic narrative of divine characters and ancient kingdom, it is a moral compass that continues to influence personal and public life across generations. Central to the epic is the portrayal of Lord Rama as the ideal man (Maryada Purushottama), who embodies virtue, justice, and unwavering commitment to dharma. These attributes resonate closely with the professional values required in today's complex and value-deficient world. The Ramayana offers numerous episodes that serve as ethical case studies, demonstrating the importance of integrity, duty, leadership, justice, and sacrifice core values expected in all professions.



Chart No. 2: Professional Values reflected in the Ramayana

Source: Authors' Study

Integrity and Truthfulness: Rama's life exemplifies the principle of truth and moral uprightness. His acceptance of exile to honor his father Dasharatha's promise to Kaikeyi reflects an uncompromising adherence to Satya (truth) and dharma, even at the cost of personal suffering.

Commitment to Duty (Svadharma): Rama's actions demonstrate an unflinching commitment to his role and responsibilities. Whether as a Son, Husband, Warrior, or later as King, he performs his svadharma, his duty without selfish desires.

Leadership and Accountability: Rama's leadership during the exile and later as king of Ayodhya is rooted in moral clarity, justice, and accountability. His concern for public opinion, even leading to the controversial decision to send Sita away, illustrates the tension between personal values and public duty.

Compassion and Empathy: Rama's treatment of others, regardless of their social status—be it the tribal woman Sabari or his devoted follower Hanuman—reflects compassion, humility, and respect for diversity.

Justice and Moral Courage: Throughout the epic, Rama is portrayed as a just ruler who values fairness and righteousness. His moral courage in confronting Ravana, despite Ravana's formidable strength and power, shows a commitment to justice over fear.

Teamwork and Strategic Thinking: Rama's collaboration with the Vanara army, especially Hanuman and Sugriva, highlights the importance of teamwork, delegation, and strategic decision-making.

Professional Ethics in the Mahabharata:

The Mahabharata, attributed to Sage Vyasa, is one of the most profound and complex texts in world literature. Unlike the Ramayana, which presents a relatively clear moral landscape, the Mahabharata delves into grey areas of human behaviour, ethical ambiguity, and moral conflict. Through the lives of characters like Arjuna, Yudhishtira, Bhishma, Krishna, and Duryodhana, the epic explores the challenges of morale choice, leadership, accountability and justice in deeply nuanced ways.



Chart No. 3: Professional Values in the Mahabharata

Source: Authors' Study

Ethical Dilemma and Duty: Arjuna's Crisis: Arjuna's moral confusion on the battlefield of Kurukshetra where he is asked to fight against his kin, teachers, and friends reflects a universal ethical dilemma. When personal emotions conflict with professional duty, what should one do? The Bhagavad Gita, a philosophical dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, addresses this question by emphasizing nishkama karma; performing one's duty without attachment to the results.

Truth and Integrity: Yudhishtira's Character Yudhishtira, known for his unwavering commitment to truth, symbolizes ethical integrity. His refusal to lie even under pressure and his candid acknowledgment of mistakes during the dice game reflect a strong moral conscience.

Justice and Leadership: The Role of Bhishma and Duryodhana: Bhishma, though wise and respected, chooses loyalty to the throne over standing against injustice. His silence during Draupadi's disrobing is one of the most debated ethical failures in the epic. In contrast, Duryodhana represents unprincipled ambition and arrogance. His actions, rooted in greed and ego, led to widespread destruction. These examples underscore the critical importance of speaking out against injustice and making ethical leadership choices.

Strategic Ethics: Krishna's guidance throughout the Mahabharata reveals the concept of ethical strategy. While he often bends rules (such as advising Yudhishtira to speak a half truth to defeat Drona, his actions serve a higher moral order and ultimate justice. This introduces the idea that ethics in complex scenarios may require flexible thinking and prioritization of the collective good over procedural correctness.

Management Lesson from Bhagvad Gita:

Focus on Work, Not on Results:

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna teaches Arjuna to perform his duty without worrying about the outcome. In management, this means focusing on doing the work sincerely and efficiently. When people concentrate on their efforts and responsibilities, good results usually follow naturally.

Emotional Control and Self-Discipline: The Gita teaches that controlling emotions like anger, fear, and ego is important. Arjuna was confused and emotional before the battle, but Krishna guided him to stay calm. In management, emotional control helps leaders make better decisions and maintain a positive work environment.

Duty and Responsibility (Dharma): The Bhagwad Gita emphasizes that every person must perform their duty with honesty and dedication. In management, both managers and employees should take responsibility for their roles. When everyone performs their duties properly, the organization works smoothly.

Decision-Making in Difficult Situations: Arjuna was confused about whether to fight the war, and Krishna helped him understand the situation clearly. This shows the importance of clear thinking during difficult times. In management, leaders must analyze problems calmly and make wise decisions.

Leadership and Guidance: Krishna acted as a guide and mentor to Arjuna during the battle. This shows that a good leader supports and motivates others instead of only giving orders. In management, effective leadership involves guiding the team and helping them achieve their goals.

Key Learning as Recommendation to Organisations:

- ✓ Right Knowledge and Self-Awareness
- ✓ Selflessness and Teamwork
- ✓ Every Act as an Act of Prayer
- ✓ Stability of Mind and Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Power of Intention
- ✓ Commitment to Duty
- ✓ Utilization of Limited Resources
- ✓ Detachment from Materialism
- ✓ Creating a Positive Work Culture
- ✓ Leadership and Charisma

Comparative aspect with respect to the Learning from Indian Mythology:

The authors here in present the key comparative aspect with respect to the learning from Indian Mythology:

Table No.1: Comparative Aspect on Learning from Ramayan - Mahabharata - Gita

Aspects	Ramayana	Mahabharata	Gita
Leadership Style	Ideal & value based	Situational& complex	Guiding & philosophical
Ethics	Strong	Flexible	Value-based
Decision	Ethical	Complex	Logical
Nature of challenge	Clear Right vs Wrong	Grey ethical situations	Inner conflict & confusion
Main Focus	Duty and righteousness	Conflict & moral dilemmas	Inner conflicts & confusion

Conclusion:

Indian mythology is a vast collection of traditional stories, beliefs, and teachings that form an important part of Indian culture and heritage. These mythological narratives are mainly derived from ancient scriptures, epics, ancient literature. Indian mythology is not only about gods and supernatural events but also more values, social duties, and philosophical ideas that guide human life. Indian epics provide timeless management principles that have potential to guide Organisations. Such elements do have the base to effectively groom the employees and lead a better professional career. These Epics Promote ethical and responsible leadership. Combining traditional wisdom with modern practices improves organizational success. The authors have presented the comparative aspect based on the learning on the grounds of Leadership aspect decision making challenges and main focus of the epics. The essence of Indian mythology lies in its timeless teachings that guide individuals toward moral living, responsible leadership, and balanced decision-making. The lessons derived from mythological narratives continue to influence modern society and provide valuable insights for management, leadership, and ethical practices.

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