

Business Management and Mahabharata

By Amruta K R,15008

***Abstract:** Studying of Business management started in India from past 50 years but knowledge of management existed even before British rule started in India. They have existed in the form of mythological stories and folk tales which have been passed on from generation to generation. However we have been ignorant towards the hidden knowledge and have rarely taken it seriously to apply in business situations. In this article let us examine the lessons of management and leadership camouflaged in the epic poem of Mahabharata. Mahabharata is a tale of dispute among the Kaurava and Pandava princes. It closely observes the behaviour of human beings revolving around love, protection, ambition and competitiveness and makes it relevant to current business scenario.*

***Keywords:** Kauravas, Pandavas, recession, business management*

Mahabharata is a gift of knowledge to the world. It is not a mere tale of kings, queens and war, but it is a story of struggle for power, establishing empire and making a mark in the minds of all those who come across it. Business in the current world is more than a battlefield. Gone are the days when business was defined by the profit and loss it made. Now, business is an amalgamation of tactics, finance, strategies and having a competitive advantage. And hence business has several lessons to be picked from the epic story of Mahabharata.

Kauravas and Pandavas can be considered as two strong competitors in a market. It is well known that Pandavas won the battle over Kauravas through their strategies and sheer determination. Other than that, the few hidden factors that made Pandavas win over Kauravas in spite of Kauravas having more resources than Pandavas are:

Leadership:

"Leaders become great not because of their power but, because of their ability to empower others" --John Maxwell.

The leader in the whole story of Mahabharata is undoubtedly Lord Krishna who guided Pandavas all through their tough times and kept their spirits high by reminding them of their duty and their objective of life. Though Krishna was the leader, it can be seen that he never played any role in the battle. Instead he acted as a beacon to the Pandavas and stood to the John Maxwell's definition of a leader. Lord Krishna empowered five brothers of Pandavas with proper guidance and support. He motivated them to develop all the skills required to fight for themselves and the betterment of the world (for dharma). Without Krishna, the Pandavas would have failed.

Like Pandavas, every organisation needs a leader with dexterity comparable to Krishna of Mahabharata. Making the organisation achieve its mission is in the hands of a leader. Organising, strategizing, and managing people efficiently is what is called for from a leader. In the modern days, the credit of the success of companies like Apple, Infosys and Tata goes to their respective leaders. They are the ones who made the company tread the path of success in difficult times.

Seeing an opportunity:

When Pandavas were sent on exile, they did not lose their heart. Instead, they saw it as an opportunity and focused on further developing their competence in their area of interest. Yudhishtira, Bhīma, Arjun, Nakula and Sahadeva worked hard in spite of challenging conditions and hardships. Yudhishtira worked on building his expertise in the dice game from several rishis (wise men) and became undefeatable. Bhīma worshipped Lord Hanuman and became an expert in mace fighting. Similarly Arjun developed several skillsets apart from archery. He learnt dance from Chitrasena, at the abode of his father Indra; Nakula and Sahadeva too developed their mastery over medicine. Thus a stronger team was created by perseverance and determination.

If we consider the exile period of Pandavas as recession for the business world, then we can see that those companies which stood strong and continued to deliver the same efficiency and improved on their drawbacks grew stronger once the dark clouds of recession had passed. Intel, Amazon and Dominos are the companies worth mentioning.

Neglect none:

Nakula and Sahadeva were the step brothers of Yudhishtira, Bhīma and Arjun were never ill-treated or neglected. They were loved and cared by their step brothers as one among them. Nakula was known for his knowledge in medicine and Sahadeva was known for his expertise in astrology. Even though Nakula and Sahadeva played a minute role in the battle field, they did lot of work behind the screen. They treated all injured soldiers and healed their wounds. The Pandavas even though had less man power than Kauravas, they were able to sustain themselves because of the backbreaking work done by Nakula and Sahadeva.

If we consider the five Pandava brothers of Mahabharata as different departments of an organisation, then we can see that the companies need to give equal importance to all their departments. It may be Finance, HR, Marketing or Research and Development department. None of them is to be taken lightly and due importance is to be given to each department as they have their own role to play in building a healthy organization and growing in the market.

Necessity of diversification:

“Do not put all your eggs in the same basket” is repeatedly told in management classes. This is what is exactly done by all the brothers of Pandava family. Product diversification of the companies too is of great significance. If one product fails or is strongly hit by changes in its respective market, then other shall take care of the company’s survival. In case the company survives on single product, then the risk involved is extremely high.

Team work:

Team work of Pandavas is one more thing that needs to be highly appreciated. The common goal of establishing the rule of law in the Indian sub-continent was the one that kept them working diligently. Everyone on the side of Pandavas was highly committed to their goal. They were selfless and bound to their ultimate aim of dharma. Even in the times of difficulty they motivated and stood by each other.

Thus, all the organisation need to build a good team spirit among its employees and care for their employees. The success of HCL technologies by adopting the policy of Employees first

and Customers second stands as proof for the significance of valuing the employees. A well-defined vision and mission with which employees connect is also equally important for the success of the organisation.

Mahabharata is a story of challenges which makes it comparable to business situations. Every chapter of Mahabharata has a lesson to offer which could help business executives to plan their strategy and make a meaningful impact. Hence being Indians let us start looking at Mahabharata and other mythological stories with business perspective and make maximum out of them.

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