Leadership Model based on Spiritual Intelligence -A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT Recently, researchers have included broader concepts of intelligence beyond IQ in their study of leadership (Chermers, 2001). Various other studies suggest that EI (Emotional Intelligence) is important for individual performance (Lam & Kirby 2002), well-being, team and leader effectiveness (Goleman, 1998a, 1998b). This paper explores the role of Spiritual Intelligence (SI) in leaders. It can be defined as the ability to create meaning, based on deep understanding of existential questions, awareness and the ability to use multiple levels of consciousness in problem solving (Vaughan, 2002). Till date there are no validated measures of SI (Halama & Strizenec, 2004), but spirituality measures have been validated and correlate spirituality to improved health and well-being (Veach & Chappel, 1992). A few studies suggest that spirituality contributes to effective leadership (Jacobsen, 1994). After studying the existing models on leadership, the authors propose an innovative model of leadership, based on the 'highest level of intelligence: Spiritual Intelligence'.

Introduction and Importance of study:

Daily life practices like respecting others, fair and just treatment, displaying care and concern, active listening, acknowledging contributions of others, are emphasized upon in numerous spiritual teachings which are extremely crucial leadership skills. Today, need of good leaders is felt intensely. If we have to have a global sustainable development, we need people who can lead and convert it into a reality! On one hand feeling of insecurity, loss of trust, unhappiness, loneliness is on rise, on the other hand individuals with values and ideals like integrity, honesty and humility also exist! There is an inspiration, energy and above all, divinity that supports and helps progress of individuals. Human intelligence and imagination alone cannot explain life's complexities. Realising the existence of divine support is the 'spiritual component' of life.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) primarily deals with problems of logic and rationale, whereas Emotional Quotient (EQ) judges the situation and guides to take decisions and respond to situations appropriately. Spiritual Quotient (SQ) or Spiritual Intelligence (SI) is above all. SI is the expression of innate spiritual qualities of peace, love, purity and bliss through- thoughts, attitudes and behaviours. Lack of this component can drift towards violence, depression or suicidal tendencies.

Leaders from politics, sports, social work, entertainment or business, achieve organizational goals by motivating their followers, creating a positive ethical climate, instilling trust, and promoting positive relationships. There are various dimensions of workplace spirituality- alignment with organizational values, work enjoyment, societal impact, community and inner life. Organizations where leaders and employees live such values can achieve goals of higher productivity, lower rates of attrition, greater sustainability, and improved employee health. Individuals, who demonstrate spiritual leadership, don't necessarily have to be spiritual or religious by identity to provide such leadership. Personal insights, experiences and belief systems, determine one's state of spiritual intelligence. Leaders in spiritual organizations are higher on leadership effectiveness than leaders in other settings.

Objectives

Now- a- days, several corporate employees in India are attending programmes offered by spiritual organizations such as Brahmakumaries, Art of Living Foundation or similar organizations. They believe that they get to learn various tools and techniques through such programmes which help them in excelling both at personal and professional fronts of their lives. It has been observed that people with a spiritual bend of mind have a better work life balance. Leaders with spiritual bend of mind visualize a new reality, take risks, and inspire and transform people and situations. The question is does a higher Spiritual Intelligence prove to be a better tool to manage or lead people effectively? This paper tries to examine this and gives a framework for constructing a new leadership model.

Literature Review

Leadership theories form an important area of study in management and social sciences especially Psychology. Since time immemorial, we have been trying to study what makes authentic leaders stand apart from the rest; what makes them so effective. Naturally, there are as many theories on leadership, as there are scholars, thinkers, researchers and professors, out of whom many have published their leadership theories. The most commonly known are: Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behavioural Theories, Contingency Theories, Transactional Theories and Transformational Theories.

Fiol, Harris, and House (1999) noted that the theories of the (neo-) charismatic paradigm have been subjected to over one hundred empirical tests. Collectively, the empirical findings demonstrate that leaders described as charismatic, transformational, or visionary have positive effects on their organizations and followers, with effect sizes ranging from 0.35 to 0.50 for organizational performance effects, and from 0.40 to 0.80 for effects on follower satisfaction, commitment, and organizational identification (Fiol et al., 1999). From the recent meta-analytical studies of the literature, two studies in

particular support this conclusion (Fuller, Patterson, Kester, & Springer, 1996; Lowe, Kroek, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). In their meta-analysis, Lowe and associates (1996) find a 0.81 corrected correlation between charisma and subordinates' ratings of leader effectiveness and a 0.35 mean corrected correlation between such leadership and independent ratings of leader effectiveness.

Research in this area also shows that transformational/charismatic leadership is closer to perceptions of ideal leadership than transactional leadership (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1989). As Lord and Maher (1991) note, being perceived as a leader is a prerequisite for being able to go beyond a formal role in influencing others. They hold that leadership perceptions can be based on two alternative processes. First, leadership can be inferred from outcomes of salient events. Attribution is crucial in these inference-based processes. For example, a successful business 'turnaround' is often quickly attributed to the high quality 'leadership' of top executives or the CEO. Another example of an inference-based process is that the attribution of charisma to a leader is more likely when organizational performance is high, i.e., charismatic leadership is inferred from business success (Shamir, 1992). Meindl's romance of leadership approach is an example of a perspective in which these inference-based processes are taken to be central to the conception of leadership (Meindl, 1990; Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). Alternatively, leadership can be recognized based on the match between person's characteristics with the perceiver's ideas about 'leaders'. Research shows that perceiver's use of categorization processes (Rosch, 1978) and matching an observed person against an abstract prototype stored in memory play an important role in attributions of leadership by followers (Lord & Maher, 1991). Cultural groups may vary in their conceptions about most important characteristics of effective leadership. Different leadership prototypes would be expected to occur naturally in societies that have differing cultural profiles (Bass, 1990a; Hofstede 1993). In some cultures, one might need to take strong decisive action in order to be seen as a leader, whereas in other cultures consultation and a democratic approach may be a prerequisite. Given so many different conceptions, the evaluation and meaning of many leader behaviors and characteristics may strongly vary in different cultures. In a culture that supports an authoritarian style, leader sensitivity might be interpreted as weak, whereas in cultures endorsing a more nurturing style, the same sensitivity might be essential for effective leadership. Ralph Nader in his book 'Leadership and Motivation' explained that "I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."

In response to the concept of global village and transition of society from labor intensive to knowledge intensive, the concept of leadership has also gone through the sea change. There is a paradigm shift in the selection of leaders, be it in any walk of life. In the present globalized world, it became imperative for the leaders to have group interest above the self-interest as modern era is based on networking, not competition. People are well informed and they take informed judgement when it comes to the choice of leader.

A leader definitely requires conventionally accepted skills of cognitive thinking, perception, analysis, synthesis, and reasoning (IQ). In addition to these to be truly effective, a leader must also have a high Emotional Intelligence (EI) – through which he/she possesses the ability to empathize with and understand the feelings of those they are dealing with and even their own feelings. Through these, a leader's confidence in his own abilities and self control is apparent; this enables him to use his interpersonal skills to respond to the feelings and needs of

his people in appropriate ways. EI people have started to see that if one really wants to motivate people and transform them, one need to have a noble cause, and when one starts talking about noble causes, one is in the realm of Spiritual Intelligence. Recent thinking about leadership takes us to the spiritual dimension of life and work (Danah Zohar, Spiritual Capital, Wealth we can live by). People are constantly searching meaning and value in their life and work. They want to do something that makes a difference to people's well-being. Spiritual Intelligence has been on the margins of business thinking since the 1990s. Spiritual Quotient (SQ) refers to the degree to which an individual can demonstrate Spiritual Intelligence and 'Spiritual Capital' refers to a company's ability to generate wealth through Spiritual Intelligence. The transformative power of SQ distinguishes it from IQ and EQ. IQ primarily solves logical problems. EQ enables to judge the situation we are in and behave appropriately. SQ allows us to ask if we want to be in that situation in the first place. It might motivate us to create a new one (Danah Zohar & Ian Marshall, Spiritual Itelligence-the Ultimate Intelligence). So, the deepest level of intelligence is Spiritual Intelligence (SI) which has nothing to do with religion or any rigid belief system. Spiritual Intelligence is what a successful executive uses to discern meaning, intuit purpose, create vision and identify core values from which actions will spring. Spiritual intelligence draws on our higher motivations, relates what we do to the greater good, connection with the infinite, helps us discern true principles that are part of our conscience, which are symbolized by the compass, and aims therefore, at sustainable development. These are the foundations of both personal empowerment and the leadership of others, especially during turbulent times (Brian Bacon, Chairman & CEO, IPC Worldwide, in an interview by The Augere Foundation of Spain)". According to Danah Zohar, by building spiritual capital, individuals and organizations can become much more sustainable. Sustainability depends on building up the foundations of one's collaboration, one's life, one's organization. If we make the transformational changes, if we develop the kind of capitalism that has wider concerns, deeper values, and higher purposes, it will not only be sustainable, but we will find, it makes more profit. Till 2000, business leadership was primarily a mixture of the three contexts: paternal mechanistic (its influence in decline); humanistic (in its prime); and holistic (on the rise).

Discussion of Model:
In this evolutionary leap, organizations are moving from 'competition to cooperation' and from 'sympathy to empathy'. A self-empowered leadership has the cognitive skills of thinking, perception, analysis, synthesis, and reasoning (IQ), and also has the ability to understand the feelings and needs of oneself and others, to display self-control and self-confidence, and to use interpersonal skills to respond to others' feelings and needs in appropriate ways (EQ). The emotionally intelligent manager has an inner anchor, does not crave for satisfaction or approval from others, and is compassionate towards colleagues. He manages employees according to their needs. He also makes them realize their true potential by directing their need for self-actualization. This means that an emotionally intelligent leader ensures performance through understanding, alertness, and passionate connect between the employees over merely a performance oriented perspective.

Cognizance, understanding, backing, compassion, and collaboration, will lead us to achieve collective evolution! Further, social and environmental issues can only be addressed through the actualization of these traits. This indicates an imperative need to embrace SQ. High Spiritual Quotient (Intelligence) leads to happiness, peacefulness, high self-esteem and symphonic relationships.

This model (refer figure given below) shows spiritual context as the basis for business leadership. IQ and EQ are considered as inherent of this third dimension-SQ. This context changes the canvas of business itself – the very existence of business and leadership is spiritual fulfillment and a service to society. Deeper understanding of self, ability to maintain inner stability regardless of the situation, knowing the purpose of life, capability to control ego and connecting to the higher self are the highest virtues of human intelligence. If the leaders derives performance through these virtues and by recognizing the inherent talents and abilities of the employees, he can get the best out of employee in such a manner that it provides a fulfilling experience to the employees. It is commonly observed that talents of individuals get manifested through due nurturing and mentoring by leaders. When leaders target the hidden potential of employees they perform at their best! Spiritually inclined leader can prove to be a 'change agent' for an organization, making sensible and kind decisions.

Figure: Model based on Spiritual Intelligence

Future Scope of Study:
Present study is an attempt to develop a new model for leaders. The underlined premise for the study is that leadership in any individual can emerge through their own conscious process of development as a leader in their respective area of operations. In the present work, the authors have explained importance of spiritual intelligence for leaders which can be further validated with the help of case studies on leaders.

Conclusion:
World has experienced four waves of civilization. First-agriculture focused, second- industrialization, third-Information and Technology revolution and the fourth- based on spiritual inclination (Toffler, Alvin, 1980).

During economic downturn, people get demotivated and start looking beyond conventional materialism. They start looking for meaning and purpose of life. In today's highly competitive world, importance of Spirituality at workplace is increasing. Every organisation is looking for differentiating factor in order to sustain. Merely rational and emotional intelligence is not sufficient. Today's complexities can be resolved with stronger orientation towards 'meaningful existence and purpose'. Leaders of organisations have started recognising the importance of the value of a person as a whole rather than just skills for the job. Business Schools are now introducing 'spirituality' for study and research. People want to be aware of meaning of their life and want to bring difference in the life of others, work places becoming more humane.

Our lives are often centered on asking the question 'how'? SQ is all about asking the question 'why'? Spirituality is the ultimate level of intelligence having no religious bias to understand self. It is all about becoming more and more aware of one's own inner processes; adopting a new style of thinking and perceiving and learning to see oneself and one's problems in from a new perspective. A leader's true power lies within.

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