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A Study on management concepts in Tamil Literature

T.Lakshmi Pradha¹

ABSTRACT

Tamil literature is more than 2000 years old and it is quite interesting to note that many management concepts that are currently practised universally have been quoted in these literary works at such an early age. This paper is an attempt to connect the management concepts from the researcher's perspective in the classic literary works like Purananuru, Agananuru, Silappathikaram, Kambaramayanam, Thirukkural and modern literature works of poets like Subramaniyan Bharathiyar.

Keywords: Management, Tamil literature, Globalisation, Decision making, Communication, planning.

INTRODUCTION:

MEANING OF MANAGEMENT:

The word management generally refers to the administration of an organization by means of effective planning, organising, controlling, leading, communicating, motivating the human resources and thereby achieving the goals and objectives. It involves the interdependence of the resources to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. There are many concepts in management proposed by many scholars at different time periods. This paper is an attempt to connect the management concepts with the ancient treasures of Tamil language.

TAMIL LITERATURE-A GLIMPSE:

Tamil is one of the oldest Indian languages that has many literary works contributed by Tamil scholars belonging to the different time periods. It is more than 2000 years old history that has evidence of people belonging to different time periods portraying their life, love, bereavement, tradition, culture, trade, governance, war, king, social status, religion, faith, peace and so on. The

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, Guru Nanak College (Autonomous), Chennai.

Tamil literature is roughly divided into 3 categories based on their anthology as pathinenmerkanakku noolgal, pathinen kizhkannaku noolgal and the five great epics namely Silapathikaram, Seevaga sinthamani, Manimekalai, Kundalakesi and Valayapathi. The different time periods can be categorised as the Sangam period, medieval period and the modern era

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The major objectives of this study are to identify and connect some of the management concepts in Tamil literature during the Sangam period, medieval period and the modern time period.

METHODS OF RESEARCH:

This is a descriptive research study that aims to understand the different management concepts in Tamil literature through standard text books, articles from journals and publications that are referred, studied and analysed.

While analysing the literature works available in the Sangam period there is a lot of evidence of management concepts. This part of the article attempts to identify the concepts from the *Pathinenmerkanakku* noolgal like Purananooru and Agananooru, Thirukkural, Silapathikaram, Kambaramayanam and modern tamil literary works of poets like Bharathiyar and Bharathidasan.

Evidences of Globalisation in Purananooru:

Purananooru as the name suggests is a classic collection of 400 poems on kings, wisdom, war and public life during the Sangam period. The anthology on 'yaathum oore yavarum kelir' (யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்) written by Kavian Poongundranar literally when translate means 'All the towns are one and the men are our kith and kin' which when connected to the management concepts talks about Globalisation. The concept Globalisation describes the interdependence of global economies, culture and population which is possible because of the cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, flow of information, investments and people. This word globalisation has gained a lot of popularity in this century and the global market condition proves the same now-a-days

Decision-making and Silappadikaram:

Silappadikaram was composed by Ilango adigal who is supposed to be an ascetic-prince and younger brother of Chera king Senguttuvan. The story revolves around an anklet belonging to the chief character Kannagi who seeks revenge on the Pandya Kingdom for her husband who was wrongly put to death. This leads to the point of discussing decision-making in management. Decision-making is generally discussed as a step-by-step process that involves identifying the problem, analysing the options to resolve it and choosing the best to execute. On the other hand, if any of these steps is not handled properly it leads to chaos and even unpredictable results as in the case of silapathikaram, If the Pandya king has analysed the situation before giving his judgement the whole story of silapathikaram might have been different. Likewise, in a real time scenario, the internet pioneer yahoo that turned down an offer from another software company is an example that portrays the need for effective decision making in this competitive world.

Planning and Tamil literature:

‘Aganaanuru’ says that Sangam age women enjoyed freedom with good education. For instance, Sangam literature says that there were 26 poetesses in that period. Avvaiyar is one among the famous poetesses of this period. The following poetry showcases the need for planning and are instances showcasing women empowerment in the early time period. When we look at this vazhthiyal poetry from Purananuru (192):

வரப்புயர நீருயரும்
நீருயர நெல்லுயரும்
நெல்லுயரக் குடியுயரும்
குடியுயரக் கோலுயரும்
கோலுயரக் கோலுயர்வான்

Poetess Avvaiyar clearly points out the efficiency and effectiveness in planning that leads to total prosperity. The meaning of the verse goes like if the ridge is prosperous, it leads to better level of water and consequently better produce, and better standards of living of the citizens. And in turn, it leads to prosperity of the sceptre and the king. This proves women poets' contribution towards society's development and progress in that period.

Management Concepts in Kambaramayana:

Kambaramayana is one of the immortal literatures, translated by Kambar (who is supposed to have lived from 1180-1250 AD) from Sanskrit version of Valmiki's Ramayana. His works have drawn a large number of scholars for an application of many universal truths, described therein, which are ageless and timeless. Many verses in Ramayana of Kambar encompass a variety of Management concepts such as Planning, Organising, directing (Motivating, leading, Communicating) and controlling. This is the story of King Rama. King Rama and Transformational leadership:

Let's look at the verses that are portrayed by Angathan, Rama's messenger to Ravana before the war:

பூத நாயகன், நீர் சூழ்ந்த புவிக்கு நாயகன், அப் பூமேல்
சீதை நாயகன், வேறு உள்ள தெய்வ நாயகன், நீ செப்பும்
வேத நாயகன், மேல் நின்ற விதிக்கு நாயகன் தான் விட்ட
தூதன் யான், பணித்த மாற்றம் சொல்லிய வந்தேன் 'என்றான். (58)

Here Angathan calls Rama as the leader of the five forces and the universe. Angathan further describes that Rama is the leader of all the Gods and such a great man has sent him as his messenger to Ravana. Rama is defined as a transformational leader in this literary work right from the beginning. A transformational leader is the one who defines and articulates a vision for their organisation, society, country and with their leadership style they can transform their followers towards higher performance. In the epic the great writer narrates the life and character of Rama as 'the ideal man' who is personified as the ideal in all aspects. His character exhibited the characteristics of a transformational leader like a change agent in crowning Sugriva and Vibeeshana as the King of Kishkinda and Lanka. He was courageous, he believed in people, value driven and a visionary proving the concept.

There is one other small story that provides a perfect example for this in this epic. The people in Ayodhya were following Rama's moral values and principles leading a peaceful life during his 14 years of exile to the forest. Once there were 2 farmers who came down to Ayodhya kingdom seeking justice where Prince Bharathan was addressing the issue. They began explaining their case, its like one farmer has sold his land to the other and the farmer who bought the land has started ploughing the field and found a treasure the case was the farmer who bought the land told that the treasure belonged to the seller and the seller told since he has sold his land it belonged to the buyer Bharathan was astonished looking at the moral values that these people have acquired from the visionary leader Rama. He thought under such a great leader the entire kingdom will flourish.

Communication concepts in Ramayana:

There are lots of evidences of verbal, non-verbal communication throughout the epic Kambaramyanam.

Let's look into the incident When Rama tries to dissuade Sita from following him to the forest in Ayodhya kandanam. Sita gives her reply as:

பரிவு இகந்த மனத்தொடு பற்றிலாது
ஒருவு சிற்றவனை ஊழி அருக்கனும்
எரியும் என்பது யாண்டுடையது ஈண்டு நின்
பிரிவினும் சுடுமோ பெருங் காடென்றாள்

Sita asks her husband Rama to be compassionate and think what happens if he leaves her all alone in this place without him and questions if the forest is going to be more threatening than this loneliness without him whereby, she convinces Rama to take her with him which showcases how communication has helped in that case.

The second incident is the conversation between Hanuman and Rama is again a proof for clarity in thoughts portrayed by the great poet. Rama is anxious and impatient to hear about Sita. Hanuman expresses:

கண்டனென், கற்பினுக்கு அணியை, கண்களால்,
தென் திரை அலைகடல் இலங்கைத் தென் நகர்,
அண்டர் நாயக ! இனி, துறத்தி, ஐயமும்
பண்டு உள துயரும்' என்று, அனுமன் பன்னுவான்,

The first word was 'kandanam' which is to clarify to Rama that Hanuman has seen Sita look at the intelligence of the poet in communicating it with just one word. Following that Hanuman conveys that Sita is safe, unharmed and faithful which he has seen with his own eyes in the gardens of Lanka. Here we evidently see the ABC of effective communication i.e, Accuracy, Brevity & Clarity of details. Similarly in an organisation communication plays a major role both in the internal and external environment to be successful. There are also incidences of non-verbal communication

The verses in Mithilai katchi padalam a part of Bala Kandanam describes the entry of Rama into Mithilai where in even all the flora (mani kodigal) were welcoming Rama and the beauty of the place was further engulfed with the charm of King Rama. This is the level of personification taken by Kambar showcasing his style of non-verbal communication even through the non-human forms. There is another place in the same kandanam which talks about the silent non-verbal communication between Rama and Sita 'Annalum Nokinal Avalum Nokinal'

Likewise, there are also instances of the miscommunication in Kambaramayanam like the case of Sugreevan and Vaali where Vaali mistook that Sugreevan has betrayed him and become the King if there had been a communication between the two that mortal enmity would not have developed.

Thirukkural and Management:

Thiruvalluvar referred as the Theivapular is the great poet and philosopher who authored the famous Thirukkural which is a classical collection of couplets which comprises of 1330 couplets divided into 133 chapters called as 'Adhikaram' here few couplets are taken for discussion in this part of the article. Thirukkural can be considered as a management treasure. This kural on:

பொருள்கருவி காலம் வினையிடனொடு ஐந்தும்
இருள்தீர எண்ணிச் செயல். (675)

Explains that five factors are needed for project planning like Project Capital, Machineries, Project Schedule, Action Plan and Suitable Location. These factors are to be evaluated to see whether the project will be successful or not.

Following that the second couplet is:

எண்ணித் துணிக கருமம் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவம் என்பது இழுக்கு (467)

This can be related to feasibility study and optimal decision making. Every action plan should follow careful judgement, with investigating all aspects of the problem and analyzing possible solutions, and finally arriving at the best solution possible, under the circumstances. It is always better to have a detailed planning and analysis before starting a venture than to regret after beginning the process.

The next couplet explains the qualities required for a leader:

அஞ்சாமை ஈகை அறிவுக்கம் இந்நான்கும்
எஞ்சாமை வேந்தற் கியல்பு. (382)

The couplet explains that there are four qualities that a leader (king) exhibits namely fearlessness, helping others generously, knowledge and motivation. Leadership is a responsibility through which an organization successfully achieves their goals and objectives thereby realising their vision and mission.

Another couplet:

வெள்ளத் தனைய மலர்நீட்டம் மாந்தர்தம்
உள்ளத் தனையது உயர்வு. (595)

This explains how an individual's motivation leads to greatness. The stalk of a lotus is equal to the level of water in the pond or lake where its seen similarly the self-motivation that an individual possess will drive to greatness.

Modern Tamil Literature and traces of Management Concepts:

The last part is about the modern era of Tamil literature which cannot be missed in the discussion when we think of this era the poet who immediately comes is Subramaniya Bharathiyar whose works are stimulating in their progressive themes like freedom and feminism that are translated to other languages. His puthukavithai (Lit.:new poetry) broke the rules and gave poets the freedom to express themselves.

When we talk about perseverance and determination Bharathi's 'manathil uruthi vendum' is a much appreciable work that defines the entire qualities required to run a business. An entrepreneur should have a firm vision and mission with a good team that will help him realise his dream. The great visionary Jamshedji Tata and his successors are leading their ventures in this line.

Conclusion:

This article attempts to showcase traces of management concepts from different time periods. Tamil literature is a vast area, only few instances are taken from classic works and discussed here. The verses taken and discussed in this paper are the researcher's interest from different literary works.

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