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Mahabharata – A Management Guide for Millennials

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Overview

The *Mahabharata* is one of the oldest and greatest epics of Hindu mythology that the world has ever witnessed. It revolves around complex human emotions and family relationships that culminated in a great battle between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas* for the throne of *Hastinapura*. Beyond its dramatic storyline, the epic holds immense moral and ethical wisdom that can inspire today's youth to move in a righteous direction and achieve their goals.

The *Mahabharata* is filled with numerous instances that can enrich and transform the way people and organisations function. Management, as we know, involves functions such as planning, organising, leading, controlling, and coordinating. Ancient Indian sages, in their guidance to kings, emphasised proper planning, strategy formulation, decision-making, and efficient management of human and natural resources, agriculture, and trade. People were also advised to live in harmony with nature and maintain balance in their communities and organisations. The moral virtues and self-confidence of the leaders, administrators, and policymakers of that era continue to guide us in uplifting both society and the business world today.

Guiding Principles

Preparation

Preparation leads to quality. As the army saying goes, "The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war."

Before the war, the *Pandavas* prepared thoroughly and turned their weaknesses into strengths. For example, Arjuna went on a mission to acquire divine weapons (*Divyastras*), while Yudhishthira learned the art of spear fighting. Similarly, in management, preparation is the key to achieving goals. Without preparation, success is impossible. Therefore, always strive to "Turn your weakness into your strength."

Concurrence

Concurrence relates to interpersonal relationships — maintaining harmonious relations within the organisation. Healthy relationships lead to better networking and encourage sustained growth.

For instance, despite limited resources, the *Pandavas* effectively managed their allies to fight against a powerful enemy. Their unity and coordination became their greatest asset.

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Team Spirit

To achieve synergy and common organisational goals, employees must work together in a unified direction. Team spirit fosters sustained growth and collective success.

The *Kauravas*, however, lacked this spirit. Each fought for personal reasons. *Bhishma* fought to uphold his vow, Karna fought to prove his worth against *Arjuna*, and *Duryodhana* fought to retain power. Without team unity, even a mighty force can fail.

The Right Manager

The *Mahabharata* teaches us the qualities of a right manager through the examples of Krishna and Yudhishthira.

A good manager understands competitors' weaknesses and converts challenges into opportunities through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges (SWOC) analysis. A good manager takes calculated risks, inspires and counsels the team in moments of need, and provides clarity by answering why, when, and how. Effective managers analyse every aspect before taking decisive action.

Sharing Responsibility

When pursuing large goals, sharing responsibilities is crucial.

A decentralised system with clearly defined roles ensures timely and efficient task completion. Unity of command and proper delegation not only enhance confidence and learning among staff but also lay the foundation for long-term growth and effective succession planning within the organisation.

Commitment over Competence

When selecting a team, it is often better to choose members who are passionate and committed rather than merely skilled.

The best person for a job is not always the most competent, but the one with the strongest commitment. A striking example is Abhimanyu, a 16-year-old warrior who fearlessly entered the *Chakravyuha*. It took the combined might of seven great warriors to defeat this single committed soldier. His dedication exemplifies the power of commitment over mere competence.

Conclusion

The *Mahabharata* continues to serve as a timeless management guide, offering lessons on leadership, ethics, teamwork, and resilience. Its teachings remind millennials that success is not only about strategy and skill but also about moral strength, preparation, unity, and unwavering commitment to purpose.