

Leadership Transformation in Changing Times

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Abstract

Leadership plays a crucial role in facilitating a smooth transition for an organization. By making strategic decisions and shaping these shifts, transformational leaders help their organizations maintain competitive edge. While the principles at the heart of leadership transformation are timeless and present, the ways in which they are manifested in practice can vary widely from one culture to the next. This paper makes an initial investigation into the ways in which Leadership Transformation manifests itself in Indian society. Only the year 2020 has so starkly illustrated the benefits and drawbacks of leadership, as well as the need for its further development, as never before. Due to our obsession with leaders, the constant stream of leadership theory and practice rarely delves into the essence of leadership, leaving us unable to find long-term solutions to the problem of poor leadership. Instead, we tend to cling to tired, outmoded paradigms like smelly comfort blankets on a journey to the land of fairy tales, in the hopes that they will provide us with the security and insight we need to face the real, and often terrifying, challenges we face today. However, in order to bring about transformation, leadership and management must be rethought and recast. We need leader who leads, motivates and manages the individuals, a group, organization or any country towards shared goals. A leader should always lead by example. And leadership is all about taking risks and challenges. The top most qualities of a leader are its vision, inspiration, critical and strategic thinking, its effective communication, open mindedness, flexibility, and its responsibility. Regardless of their own interests, leaders engage in leadership transformation when working with their teams or followers. Identification of the necessary change facilitates the development of a vision to direct the transformation through inspiration, influence, and motivation.

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Basically, it is the theory of change in the social ecosystem and individuals then transforming followers into leaders through so many mechanisms like influence, motivation, inspiration and morale support. A leader should be inspiring others, Challenging, taking ownership, working on their strengths and weaknesses and performance optimization. Qualities of Transformational Leader includes Able to encourage, Inspiring, Responsible, Supportive, Proactive, Genuine, Open minded, Adapting, helps others to communicate and participate, Listening skills, Adaptability, Authentic, Creative.

Keywords

Leadership Transformation, Changing Times, Organizational Transformation, Indian Culture

Introduction

This paper takes place in the context of India's high-trajectory industry, which is undergoing revolutionary transformations at unprecedented rates. A glance at the most recent data from the Indian market sheds light on this issue. India's economy is now widely acknowledged both nationally and globally as one of the fastest-growing in the world. Economic success in India was a contentious issue in the 2016 U.S. election, and it continues to be so in many other nations as well (NASSCOM, 2005). According to the National Association of Software and Services Companies of India (NASSCOM), IT and IT-enabled services work worth \$16.3 billion (Rs. 71,720 crore) will be offshored to India in 2005. Many Indian companies have ventured overseas, including Reliance, Tata, Birla, Ranbaxy, Cipla, and even Infosys and Wipro. Indian corporations spent almost \$1 billion (Rs. 4,400 crore) on international acquisitions in the previous fiscal year, further demonstrating India's arrival on the world scene. Both Nokia and LG have announced plans to build massive factories in this country to assemble cell phones. Multinational corporations with overseas ownership have established a clear footprint in India, to the point where some are even shipping out products created in India (Business Today, 2005). After reaching its peak in December 2004, the Sensex is forecasting a 7% GDP growth rate for 2005-06. (Nathan, 2005). The government plans to invest Rs. 20,00,000 crores in infrastructure over the next decade, creating a massive market for essential industries (Dobhal, 2005b). Both the nationalized banks and the public sector heavy hitters are up for sale (Gupta, 2005). Several state-owned financial institutions, such as the State Bank of India and its 57 Associate Banks, have publicly stated their desire to merge with one another in order to expand their services and customer base. A total of \$7.5 billion (Rs. 33,000 crore) was transacted in mergers and acquisitions by India Inc. in 2004. As analysts have predicted, the trend of consolidation and reorganization within the industry will accelerate (Jayakar, 2005), making strategic and structural shifts an increasingly important part of the functioning of Indian businesses.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) & DSP Merrill Lynch, among other investment firms, have both given India their stamp of approval for potential investments. Since India is now widely seen as a safe haven for investments, FDI, which reached \$13.2 billion (Rs. 58,080 crore) in 2004, is expected to rise even

further. India was ranked third most attractive investment destination worldwide by A.T. Kearney in their 2004 FDI Confidence Survey (behind China and the U.S.). India was also named the top BPO destination in the report. UNCTAD and Corporate Location, both of which rank India in their respective top three investment "hot spots" for the next four years, have reached similar conclusions. Evidenced by the above, the Indian market is thriving at the moment but needs more preparation for the upcoming challenges. Investment in cultivating effective leaders is crucial for businesses to thrive in the current economic climate.

Leadership Transformation

Leadership transformation is an approach to leading those results in changes in followers and their communities. In its ideal state, it encourages positive change in its adherents with the ultimate goal of developing them into leaders. Leadership Transformation, when carried out in its purest form, boosts followers' drive, spirits, and output in various ways. Among these include setting an example for followers, which inspires them, requiring followers to take more responsibility for their work, and having a firm grasp of the vision and shared values of the company, which enables the leader to match followers with tasks that maximize their output.

Development of concept

Burns argues that "leaders and followers help each other advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" in the process of transforming leadership. Burns acknowledged the ambiguity between management and leadership and argued that the distinction can be found in observable traits and actions. He coined the terms "transformational leadership" and "transactional leadership" to describe two distinct styles of management. In Burns' view, the transforming approach is the most effective way to bring about lasting change in an individual's or a group's circumstances. As a result, workers' outlooks and priorities shift, along with their aspirations and expectations for the future. As opposed to the transactional approach, which is based on a "give and take" dynamic, transformational leadership is based on a leader's special blend of charisma, vision, and drive to motivate followers to act. People look up to transformational leaders as a moral standard because of how hard they work for the greater good of their team, organization, and/or community. According to Burns's theory, "the two types of leadership—transformational and transactional—cannot coexist". While transformational leaders can attempt to alter the established culture of an organization, transactional leaders typically make do within the bounds of what already exists.

A leader's ability to transform an organization begins with how much sway he or she has over subordinates. As a result of their trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader, the followers of a transformational leader are willing to go above and beyond what was originally expected of them. The reason a transformational leader can achieve these results is because they give their followers a sense of purpose and a direction beyond just making money for themselves. A leader's idealized influence (previously called charisma),

intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration are the means by which the leader transforms and motivates followers. Further, this leader inspires followers to think outside the box and devise novel approaches to changing the status quo and creating favorable conditions for success. Finally, Bass argued that, contrary to Burns, leaders can demonstrate both transformational and transactional styles at once.

Four components of Leadership Transformation are introduced to cover the gamut of leadership:

1. **Individualized Consideration** – The extent to which a leader cares about their followers, coaches and mentors them, and pays attention to what they have to say. The team's leader demonstrates compassion, supports the group, fosters open communication, and assigns challenges. Recognizing and appreciating the particular value that each follower provides to the group is another aspect of this. The followers have a sincere desire to improve themselves.
2. **Intellectual Stimulation** – How much the leader questions norms, takes chances, and encourages input from subordinates. This kind of leader inspires originality in their followers. Independent thinkers are fostered and developed in this environment. Such a leader places a premium on education and views setbacks as teachable moments. The adherents probe, reflect, and devise novel approaches to completing assigned tasks.
3. **Inspirational Motivation** – how well the leader communicates an inspiring and enticing vision to his or her followers. Leaders who are able to motivate their teams by inspiring hope in the future, enthusiasm for the present, and a deeper significance in the work at hand are rare. If you want your followers to take action, you need to give them a reason for doing so. Meaning and purpose give a group its vitality, which in turn propels it forward. The ability to articulate one's vision in a way that is accessible to followers is a crucial leadership quality. The adherents are inspired to work harder, see a brighter future ahead, and confidence in their own abilities.
4. **Idealized Influence** – Sets an example of integrity, inspires pride, and wins the admiration and confidence of others.

Leadership Transformation is widely used in the public and private sectors of western societies. The Finnish armed forces, for instance, have adopted Deep Lead Model as their primary method for fostering future leaders. The idea of Leadership Transformation serves as the theoretical foundation for the Deep Lead Model.

Universal Attributes of Leadership Transformation

Because leadership is a global phenomenon, we can use this fact to support the transformative nature of leadership. This study by Den Hartog et al. (1999) showed that certain leadership qualities are transferable across cultures, and that

many characteristics of the Leadership Transformation model are generally well-received in any setting. According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), there are universal characteristics of effective leaders. Woycke (1990) conducted Using a content analysis method, researchers determined that the characteristics exhibited by charismatic leaders in developing countries correspond to the four overarching dimensions of Leadership Transformation proposed by Bass. According to a study cited by Conger, Kanungo, and coworkers, transformational leadership styles were associated with increased performance and job satisfaction on the part of their subordinates. Both Indian and American researchers confirmed the study's findings. Substantial evidence indicates that prototypes of national leaders share traits that can be described as transformative. Also, research conducted with Indian samples has shown that effective Indian leaders share many traits with transformational leaders. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been used in studies of leadership change in India, with satisfactory results. However, there is evidence that within this overarching framework, there are minor variations in its operationalization across cultures. Societal culture is shown to affect group processes in organizations, including leadership, according to these studies. The primary goal of this research was to examine how cultural factors might impact the process of Leadership Transformation.

Influence of Culture on Leadership Transformation

Since leadership is fundamentally a socialization process, culture becomes significant in its impact on leadership efficacy. Leadership effectiveness is directly related to the leader's ability to identify and meet the genuine desires of those they are tasked to guide. Some argue that Western leadership theories are Western-centric because they assume Western values and norms, such as a preference for individualism over collectivism, hedonism over altruism, the primacy of rights over responsibilities, and rationalism over asceticism, religion, tradition, etc. According to research bridging cultures, not every society holds these beliefs. Despite widespread agreement that one particular style of leadership produces excellent results in the United States, studies have shown that its global export has often fallen short of expectations and even backfired. Transfer of Western-based management practices and ideas without any evaluation or questioning has exacerbated organizational inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in countries like India.

Method

The decision of conducting an entirely qualitative study was inspired by a few factors, not the least of which was Parry's (1998) plea. Using this method, we were able to learn specifics about the most encouraging actions taken by leaders. Intuitive methods of learning or extracting such rich details are uncommon in quantitative research. Conger (1998) argues that qualitative research methods are

necessary when attempting to capture the leader's specific behaviors that go so far as to touch the followers' underlying fundamental sentiments, thoughts, and ideas. In this paper, we use grounded theory to investigate how subordinates in Indian businesses feel about managers' Leadership Transformation actions. Taking leaders' self-described behaviors would have introduced the possibility of socially desirable response into the data, so we instead looked at things from the followers' point of view.

Sample

Executives based in India with at least twelve months of experience & six months or more working under their current supervisor were contacted. Researchers were able to collect usable data from 250 business leaders from all over the country and all different sectors. Among these executives were some who were also enrolled in an online managerial program at the same university. Table 1 displays the sample statistics. The open-ended questionnaires yielded 1,617 response sets, which were then subjected to content analysis to extract the underlying themes.

Rather than wade into the discussion of whether or not Leadership Transformation is unique to India, we chose to examine the impact of transformational leaders in Indian businesses. Only the impacts of transformational leaders on their followers were described in detail to the respondents. Bass's model served as the basis for these consequences. The results were that followers were (a) more alert to matters of importance, (b) more focused on the group's or organization's needs, (c) more willing to put aside their own interests for the

Table I. Respondents' Demographical Profile

| Categories | Subcategories | Data |
|--|------------------------------|---------------|
| Average age of respondent | | 39.8 years |
| Average years of work experience of respondent | | |
| Average years of work experience with leader | | |
| Gender of respondent | Male | 86 per cent |
| | Female | 14 per cent |
| Managerial level of respondent in organization | Junior | 23.6 per cent |
| | Middle | 60 per cent |
| | Senior | 14.4 per cent |
| Educational qualification of respondent | Below graduation | 2 per cent |
| | Graduation | 65 per cent |
| | Post-graduation | 29 per cent |
| | Above post-graduation | 4 per cent |
| Functional area of respondent | Marketing and sales | 34 per cent |
| | Human resources | 1 per cent |
| | Research and development | 2 per cent |
| | Systems | 41 per cent |
| | Finance | 6 per cent |
| | Engineering | 11 per cent |
| | Others | 5 per cent |
| Industry | Manufacturing | 24 per cent |
| | Banking & financial services | 7 per cent |
| | IT & ITES | 43 per cent |
| | Services | 16 per cent |
| | Process industry | 4 per cent |
| | Others | 6 per cent |

greater good, and (d) willing to put in more effort than they had anticipated. People were prompted to recall any instances in which they had worked with such a leader. We have omitted the data from the three respondents who said they had never encountered such a leader. If they said they had encountered such a leader, we asked them to describe the most common actions taken by this person (that led to the effects mentioned). Throughout the process of data collection, we aimed to pull out only the leadership behaviors that had been actively implemented to effect change in the follower. We were able to get reliable reports from people who had witnessed the phenomenon, and the results weren't skewed by our own assumptions about what we were looking for.

Coding Procedure

Through an iterative, inferential process, we were able to distill the most important areas, as indicated by the expression of behaviors observed repeatedly in responses from respondents. Two specialists well-versed in the literature on leadership independently reviewed all of the responses. The judges narrowed the range of possible responses down to just two: "Universal" and "Unique Indian" factors. The "Universal" common themes were mirrored in the dimensions of behavior indicators, especially the Multidimensional Symptom Questionnaire. The paper already addresses these concerns. Chart 1 provides a visual representation of this.

The "universal" dimension was separated out as its own category for the sake of this paper's narrow focus on distinguishing Indian-specific dimensions. The "Unique Indian" dimensions were split into seven sub-categories as a result of this operation. A second authority on leadership was consulted at this point to double-check and verify the findings. As a result, we were able to divide the responses in to eight distinct groups: one "Universal" & seven "Unique Indian."

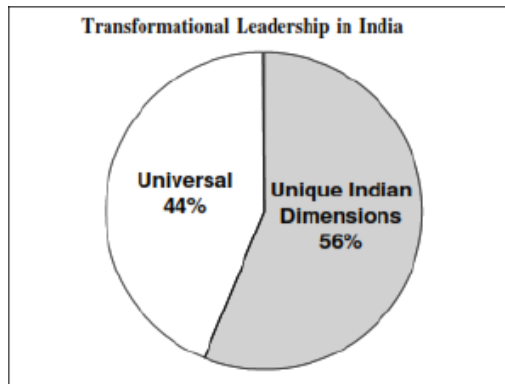


Chart 1. Differences Between the Universal and Indian Contributions.

Results

Seven broad themes on Indian culture emerged from the data after triangulating with the current literature on the subject. Chart 2 is a visual representation of the seven themes. While it's possible that the data can't be neatly partitioned into these seven categories, we treated them as such when classifying responses and we think that these themes best capture the overall tone of the information. The "percentage of responses" is shown in Table 2 to indicate the importance of each category.

Overall, 56% of the responses fell under the "Unique Indian" dimensions, while 44% fell under the "Universal" dimensions. Many of Singh and Bhandarkar's proposed dimensions have been confirmed as valid in this paper's empirical analysis (1988). Even after more than a dozen and a half year, their conceptual structure appears to be sound. There, the seven themes listed below have been considered as an overarching construct, similar to Sinha's (1995) "Karta" like figure. Indicators of behavior for each of the 07 categories are listed in Table 2. We start with the dimension that contains the most answers.

Discussion

This paper argues that there is no universal description of what makes a transformational leader because each culture has its own unique characteristics that make it impossible to generalize about a social process as fluid as leadership. The Indian culture has its own unique characteristics, but there is also a universal element, this paper demonstrates that above than 50% of the behaviors of transformational leaders are attuned with "Unique Indian" dimensions, helping to close differences between theoretical arguments and experimental results. Accordingly, while there is an essential component of Leadership Transformation that is universal, there are also characteristics that are not. No matter how well-intentioned an organization is, it will always be influenced by the dominant national culture or societal culture and milieu. This is especially true for

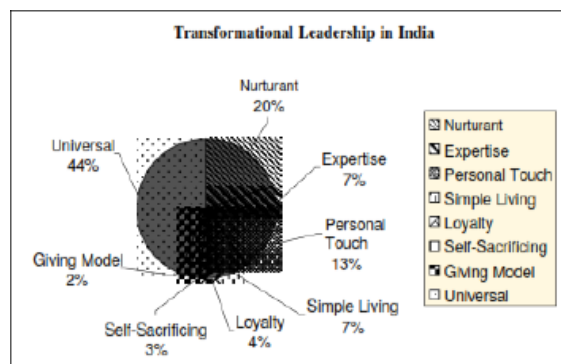


Chart 2. Contributions of Sub-themes within Specific Indian Features

| General Themes | Percent | Behavioural Indicators |
|---|---------|---|
| Nurturant | 21 % | <p>Allows for freedom and independence while maintaining close supervision.</p> <p>Time and space are always there to help me improve and grow.</p> <p>Demonstrates impartiality by reaching a verdict with 100% agreement, regardless of seniority.</p> <p>Forces one to put in effort, but also provides support and does not abandon us in the midst of a project.</p> <p>Allows for individual effort while providing guidance when needed.</p> <p>Finds the employee's strengths, emphasizes them often, and trains them to use those strengths effectively.</p> |
| Personal Touch | 13 % | <p>In-depth familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of each team member.</p> <p>Is always close by whenever I require his assistance.</p> <p>accepts the necessity of tailoring one's approach to each individual's unique set of circumstances.</p> <p>He was great at listening to others and learning something new about them during chats.</p> <p>available to meet with the affected party to discuss the issue hindering the completion of the task.</p> |
| Expertise | 7 % | <p>Expertise in the field and the ability to dig deep and see what others miss.</p> <p>Expertise in the field, with particular emphasis on its relevance to the department in question.</p> <p>Easily engages in conversation on a wide range of topics and offers helpful guidance to those around them.</p> <p>Finds a way around any difficulty.</p> <p>Someone who is well-read and has expertise in their field.</p> |
| Easy living with profound contemplation | 7 % | <p>There's a lot to be learned from his humility.</p> <p>Surprisingly for an AVP, this man put us at ease from day one.</p> <p>Consistency in one's interactions with others and in one's demonstration of one's guiding principles.</p> <p>Was successful in persuading his peers that hard work on its own is the primary tool for future advancement. Money and titles come as rewards for putting forth the effort.</p> <p>He kept his cool under pressure and never lost his composure.</p> |
| Loyalty | 4 % | <p>Assumes complete loyalty and promises his undivided attention.</p> <p>Puts a high degree of faith in coworkers.</p> <p>Does not engage in office politics and warns others against doing so.</p> <p>avoids putting team members on the spot or using them as scapegoats when results are lacking.</p> <p>Encourages a feeling of loyalty and pride in the company.</p> |

(Table continued)

(Table continued)

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Self-Sacrifice | 3 % | <p>He never was one to try to claim credit for his own work, and in fact actively avoided doing so.</p> <p>When things were tough, he led by example, putting in extra work on top of what everyone else was doing.</p> <p>Adopts a team-first attitude rather than pursuing individual gains.</p> <p>He put everyone else's needs before his own.</p> <p>person who "eats the frog" whenever the group fails.</p> |
| Inspirational Model of Giving | 2 % | <p>Requires that the team's attention be directed toward the end goal of the organization rather than to arbitrary metrics for measuring individual success.</p> <p>The fact that he prioritized the organization's mission over his own made me look to him for guidance.</p> <p>When it came to getting work done in the office, it was always "us" for us and never "I." As a result, we began to realize that our collective efforts would be more beneficial to the company.</p> <p>Rather than listing a specific set of duties, he paints a more comprehensive picture of what is expected of the employee.</p> <p>Discharging one's duty to the appropriate others, he would always insist, was of greater importance than following one's whims.</p> |

transformational leaders, who are counted on to comprehend their surroundings in order to meet their followers' actual requirements. It is only after a leader has had ample time to acclimate to the society's culture that he will have any hope of understanding its members' deepest aspirations, fears, and values.

Conclusion

This paper argues that it is important to examine how a transformational leader's performance is affected by factors such as national culture in the workplace. Leadership Transformation, as proposed by Kanungo (2001), occurs more frequently and productively when key tasks align with prevailing social ideals and provide an opportunity for moral engagement on the part of both the leader and the led. So it seems sense that a manager who assumes a socially acceptable image (simple living) and encourages socially desirable actions is more likely to become a transformative leader (selfless behavior, loyalty, culture of giving and personal touch).

Directions for Future Research

However, illuminating the follower's view of effective leadership may be, we should exercise caution before making it our own. There are a few caveats to the paper that should be mentioned. The first is that free-form data collection was used to produce the results. Before we may confidently embrace the seven "Unique Indian" dimensions, we must triangulate from other empirical

investigations. Second, a larger group of experts' scrutiny of the responses could have made for a more rigorous data analysis. There is room for improvement in India's leadership landscape, but research that helps managers understand the needs of their subordinates will serve as a useful guide.

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