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Servant Leadership

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5 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a philosophy concept where an individual interacts with other people to attain authority rather than power. The person in jurisdiction applies strategies that boost the wellbeing of those around by exercising empathy, active listening, and individual growth to benefit and grow as well. Robert Greenleaf developed the term in 1970 claiming servant leaders are those with a natural attitude to serve and lead others without the need to have personal interests. The concept has been adopted in different cultures and religions, in shaping the philosophies and values prioritized. The literature describes the servant leadership concept as used in the Indian culture and Hinduism religion, noting the similarities and differences concerning the beliefs and values implemented between the two.

The principles of servant leadership in Indian culture are explained in Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) approach developed by Sendjaya and Santaro (Sachdeva & Prakash, 2017). The qualities are expressed in Mahatma Gandhi, one of the notable leaders in this culture. Voluntary subordination is one of the merits where the individuals have to leave the self and become a servant to others by applying acts of service. Here, the aim should not be uplifting the person but others by developing a commitment to resolve their problems. For example, Gandhi focused on poverty in the region and put himself in the shoes of the people. He did not mind his social class but interacted closely with the low-income people and behaved like they did while uplifting them. The other servant leadership principle is an authentic self where the leaders have to ensure humility, integrity, security and vulnerability, among others. Gandhi showed the quality while serving as Indian National Congress. Later young leaders showed interest to help where the leader offered the chance, a sign of humility.

In Indian culture, servant leaders have to build covenantal relationships. In this aspect, the leaders have to ensure collaboration, whereby cooperation with the followers is

maximized (Alok, 2017). For instance, while making decisions, all the people have to be involved and their ideas considered. Equality association should also be practiced, where all people are treated the same regardless of color, race and gender, among others. Availability and acceptance are also expected; where the leaders create an attitude in that, the followers would access them anytime whenever the need arises. The principle means that the leader has to act as one of the followers. In this culture, servant leadership entails responsible morality where moral actions and reasoning are applied. The actions taken should be legitimate, thoughtful and ethically justified. Gandhi was non-violent, forgiving and ensured peaceful civil disobedience, making him considered as a servant leader (Alok, 2017). In moral reasoning, individuals should act right even without supervision. The people should also have transcendental spirituality and have a transforming influence.

The Hinduism religion also practices several principles regarding servant leadership. Notably, the doctrine is unique as it lacks a systems value approach. For example, there are no particular rules to follow and behaviors to adhere to. Nevertheless, they believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and respect of aspects such as Truth and karma. The beliefs in Hinduism religion describe its approach in servant leadership idea. To them, servant leadership entails the idea that Truth is eternally defined as the essence of the universe and the sole reality (Dobe, 2019). As the Vedas says, there is only one Truth but can be described in different forms. The people leading become servants if they acknowledge that Truth is eternal. Hinduism religion also states that servant leadership is accepting that Brahman is the Truth and reality and thus the sole God. The Being lacks firm, inclusive and eternal entailing both the seen and the unseen aspects in the universe. Thus, the people serving others should act as directed by Brahman and should not attempt to be more than God.

Hinduism religion believes that servant leadership requires one to consider the Vedas as the only source of Truth. Vedas are scriptures narrating on revelations written by the sages.

They accept all that is written and insists that even when everything in the world would be destroyed, the Vedas shall remain (Gümüşay, 2019). Notably, the followers are not supposed to question a thing in the scriptures based on the belief that the ancestors were wise and directed the people correctly. Servant leaders are, therefore, those who understand the Vedas accepting the truths written without questioning. Finally, the religion believes that all people should attain dharma which is a concept used to comprehend the Hindu faith. However, the dharma is not like the Bible, where one would understand the writing and thus determine the right and wrong. As at that, Hindus are expected to do the right things and accomplish their duties, and in the end, one attains dharma. It is to say that the people have no book of rules, but when one does the expected and right, dharma is achieved, which depicts servant leadership.

Based on the above description, several similarities and differences are noted regarding philosophies and values between the Indian culture and Hinduism religion. In the two concepts, empathy is needed in leadership, referring to where one feels the needs of others emotionally. In Indian culture, leaders must develop covenantal relationships where equality is ensured. Treating people as they are without discrimination means empathy is exercised where the aim is to improve their conditions. The same aspect is noted in Hinduism religion, where every person should achieve dharma. Here, people should only engage in right actions, where empathy is included. Listening value is also evident in the two aspects, where in the culture; the leader has to listen to the people to serve them right. On the other hand, Hinduism followers should consider Vedas as the ultimate authority by listening and following the scriptures. Besides, leaders in the two contexts must become selfless and work for others. Gandhi came to the followers' level and behaved like them to improve their states. Hinduism followers must also stand for the Truth, where helping each other rather than discriminating is one of them.

The concepts differ because, in Indian culture, the practicing of servant leadership is on serving the followers while in the religion are serving God. The practices implemented such as empathy and listening are similar as noted above, but the receivers of the actions are different. Also, the concepts are different because, in the Indian culture, there are defined qualities that leaders should observe in becoming servants. There is the Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) approach which leaders must adhere to named servants as Gandhi did. It is not the case with the Hinduism religion, as no rules are given. Instead, people should do the right things and execute their duties. It brings confusion among them on who servants are since the definition of right and wrong is different from one person to the other. In religion, one would claim to be a servant while they are not. Still, in the culture, the exact qualities must adhere. Apart from that, there is a difference in the aspects themselves, wherein the culture; moral reasoning is applied. It means the leaders have the chance to make decisions as long they are legitimate and morally justified. However, in the Hinduism religion, the exact scriptures must be ensured without questions.

In conclusion, having described the servant leadership concept as used in the Indian culture and Hinduism religion, noted the similarities and differences concerning the beliefs and values implemented between the two, it is evident that the servant leadership concept describes the way leaders should serve, but the implementation is different. Culturally, the aspect is taken to help the followers while in religion, it is to God. Nevertheless, the concept of servant leadership where the people practice empathy, listening and forecasting among the others as discussed in the paper is the same.

2 References

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