

# Leadership and Management Theories in Indic Traditions

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*This article aims to rediscover some key aspects of leadership and management latent in ancient Indian secular texts of statecraft and governance that are relevant in contemporary times. These include leadership essentials such as self-control in order to acquire the habit of self-discipline; basics of education as it pertains to sharpening the intellect and a spirit for enquiry and thirst for knowledge; the principles of counsel and breakdown of a task to be performed for effective delivery and implementation of a policy or plan; and some attributes of the successful art of persuasion and communication skills. Many of these traditions, because of their enduring nature, are also applicable to the military.*

## INTRODUCTION

Exploring and reinterpreting traditional knowledge, available in a vast range of untapped traditional literature, for its contemporary relevance is not a new phenomenon. Interpretative work on statecraft, warcraft and diplomacy has been undertaken at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) under the project 'Indigenous Historical Knowledge' since 2012.<sup>1</sup> Yet, much more of this type of scholarly work still needs to

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be done. For example, the Kothari Commission (1964–66) on education urged that our science must not bypass India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage. It also emphasised on the need to rediscover and reinterpret the insights of our rishis of 'cultivation of 'Knowledge' with 'wisdom'—'*Jnanam vijñana sahitam*'. The Commission implied a spirit of 'rational enquiry'.<sup>2</sup>

It is indeed remarkable that the qualities of leadership are given in a very scientific and logical way in the foundational text of political science and statecraft, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*,<sup>3</sup> and also in the basic tenets of Buddhist philosophy. The process begins with the mastering of self-development and self-discipline, including getting rid of arrogance and anger. Having thus obtained self-control and discipline, the next stage is that of learning and getting educated. Further, how a job is to be performed depends on good counsel and is achieved by breaking up an activity into logical and systematic steps. This process is akin to any modern theory of leadership and its managerial aspects, applicable to the military as also other professions.

In this article, some aspects of leadership and management theories from Indic traditions have been selected for analysis and interpretation. Their relevance to the military is also discussed. The first text under consideration is Kautilya's *Arthashastra* of fourth century BCE, combined with few aspects of Buddhist philosophy. This is followed by *Nitishastra* by Kamandaka, attributed to the sixth century CE. The south Indian tradition in Tamil, *Kural* by Thiruvalluvar, a text of the period from the second century BCE to the sixth century CE, and the *Hitopadesa* (The Wholesome Advice) by Narayana between the ninth and tenth centuries CE are also covered. On the topic of leadership, in the next section, the article discusses leadership essentials, namely, self-development and self-discipline. The subsequent section covers learning and education, followed by sections on counsel and task completion, and skills in communication. The last section concludes the article.

## LEADERSHIP

### Self-development and Self-discipline

#### *Book I of Kautilya's Arthashastra*

The first book itself lays out the attributes of leadership that need to be inculcated. Some sutras are reproduced here to give an understanding of the comprehensive approach to this topic:

1. '(Duties) common to all are:  
abstaining from injury (to living creatures), truthfulness, uprightness, freedom from malice, compassionateness and forbearance' (1.3.13).
2. Control over the Senses, Casting out the Group of Six Enemies:
  1. Control over the senses, which is motivated by training in the sciences, should be secured by giving up lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and fool-hardiness.
  2. Absence of improper indulgence in (the pleasure of) sound, touch, colour, taste and smell by the senses of hearing, touch and sight, the tongue and sense of smell, means of control over senses; or, the practice of (this) science (gives such control).
  3. For, the whole of this science means control over senses. (1.6.1-3)

Kautilya then illustrates further by giving examples from ancient stories and legends, such as:

1. Bhoja king, Dandakya, entertaining a sinful desire for a Brahmin maiden perished.
2. Ravana, not restoring the wife of another through pride (perished); and (so did) Duryodhana (not returning) a portion of the kingdom.

### ***Kural***

The Tamil Veda or *Kural* by Thiruvalluvar of south India has combined, for the lay reader, key aspects of virtue (*aram*), wealth (*porul*) and love (*kaman*), which correspond to *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* of Sanskrit, which is also the key feature of the *Arthashastra* and other texts. This south Indian tradition indicates the bonding and common civilisational nature of India. Although the text may have been composed from a period varying from second century BCE to sixth century CE, its wisdom appears timeless.

### **On Self-control**

The *Kural* also has a chapter on self-control. One verse that stands out and is like that of Kautilya is: '130. Who learns restraint, and guards his soul from wrath, Virtue, a timely aid, attends his path. *Virtue, seeking for an opportunity, will come into the path of that man who, possessed*

*of learning and self-control, guards himself against anger* (emphasis in original).<sup>4</sup> Another translation of this last verse of chapter 13 of *Kural*, titled 'On Self Control', by Drew and Lazarus is: 'Virtue seeking for an opportunity will come into the path of that man who guards against anger and has learnt to control himself.'<sup>5</sup> In a more recent translation, Gopalkrishna Gandhi constructs this last verse of chapter 13 as: 'Who rising anger quells by the power of self-control, In composure dwells and lets that virtue save his troubled soul.'<sup>6</sup>

Over and over again, much like what is called 'anger management' by the psychologists today, the wise counsel tells us to be wary of the problem of anger and the need to control all negative emotions. The literature does not have any vague aphorism. Thus, all the methods of control over senses are emphasised and almost everything is explained.

The attributes of self-control and self-discipline remain relevant for military leaders even today. Self-discipline and self-control in a leader are infectious. By imbibing these attributes, the leader can gain full confidence and respect of his subordinates. It will also make him more resilient and flexible in the privations of war. With mastery over self-control, and without anger and negative emotions, the leader's decision making will also be better. However, mastery should not lead to arrogance. Many wrong decisions and flawed judgements are made due to arrogance. Indic traditions, in fact, remind us to be mindful of arrogance. Thus military leaders especially must learn to steer clear of arrogance. They must be able to understand and be conscious of the difference between self-control and arrogance.

### **Explaining Arrogance**

As mentioned earlier, giving up lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and foolhardiness is the key. Kautilya assumes that the causes of arrogance are well known and need no further elaboration; but it is only an educated guess as to what is meant by arrogance in the Indian tradition. Kshemendra, a Sanskrit scholar of eleventh century Kashmir, lists out seven causes of arrogance: family, wealth, learning, beauty, heroism, charity and holy penance.<sup>7</sup> These causes of arrogance are an original contribution to point out flaws in character that need to be overcome. Likewise, Greek philosophy also emphasises the merit of humbleness shorn of hubris and arrogance:

[Hubris is] one of the self-destructive behavioural patterns described by Greek tragedy...in our age, as in antiquity, powerful

actors tend to become complacent about risk and put their trust in hope rather than reasons and overvalue their ability to control their environment, other people and the course of events.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, control over senses leads to self-development and self-discipline. And over and above this, arrogance is consciously neutralised. This leads to the making a real leader. Having deliberated on these issues in the Hindu philosophical tradition, I now propose to discuss some gems on leadership and management that are embedded in Buddhist philosophy, another arm of the Indic tradition.

### **Buddhist Philosophy regarding Self-development and Self-discipline**

Besides Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy also has a rich store of guidance for self-improvement. Interestingly, as is often assumed, the concept of non-violence is not given only in Buddhist texts. There is, in fact, an overlap. For instance, take the Kautilyan sutra 1.3.13: '(Duties) common to all are: abstaining from injury (to living creatures), truthfulness, uprightness, freedom from malice, compassionateness and forbearance'. This is very similar to the Buddhist concept of four sublime states of *Brahmavihar*: *metta* (loving kindness); *karuna* (compassion); *mudita* (sympathetic joy); and *upekha* (equanimity).<sup>9</sup> The contemporary Buddhist philosopher Thich Nhat Hanh lists the following 18 objects of the mind (*dharmas*):

1. Six sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind.
2. Six sense objects: form and colour, sound, smell, taste, tactile objects and mind objects (every concept and everything which belongs to the sphere of memory and mental experience).
3. Six consciousness: eye consciousness (or sight), ear consciousness (or hearing), nose consciousness (or smelling), taste consciousness (or tasting), body consciousness (or touching) and mind consciousness.<sup>10</sup>

All *dharmas* are contained within these 18 realms (*dhatus*), which include psychological, physiological and physical aspects. There is also *samyojana* (knots, fetters, agglomeration, binding together) which, in its internal formation, has two types of classification:

1. Five dull knots: confusion, desire, anger, pride and doubt.
2. Five sharp knots: view of the body as self, extreme views, wrong views, perverted views and superstition.

In other words, over and above the theological or religious aspect, we find that the heterodox Indic traditions, which include Buddhism (with a similar emphasis in Jainism), make a strong case for control over senses, as do Hindu orthodox traditions. These texts, more so of Buddhism, are not just for the purpose of spiritual upliftment or to be just considered as 'scriptures'; they also have deep philosophical and secular messages for successful leaders and managers. It is no wonder that Buddhist philosophy and psychology is becoming popular in a non-religious, secular and scientific way. Today, it indeed has a foundational value for leaders and managers.

With regards to non-violence, although the job of the military is management of violence/use of force to solve a social problem, it has to be legitimate and regulated by *dharma*. Non-violence as an attribute of character guards against the worst flaw: of being a warmonger and/or bloodthirsty. This is possible if there is a mastery of *Anvikshiki* (discussed in the forthcoming section).

Thus far, we have seen merely the theoretical aspects. How these positive attributes are to be converted to habits today, as in the past, depends on learning and education. The most relevant syllabus and pedagogy with respect to this is in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which is covered next.

## LEARNING AND EDUCATION

### Steps in Learning and Education

Being mindful and conscious of self-control sets the stage for progression towards learning and education. This mastery of self-control can also be understood today as the emotional quotient, or EQ. As to intellectual training, it is pointed out in the text that a necessary condition is a desire for learning or spirit of inquiry. This rule of thumb is self-evident and today, in our pedagogy and instructional methods, the teachers need to use innovative methods to kindle this desire, that is, a 'thirst for knowledge', in the hearts of the students. Although Kautilya does not give any guidelines as to how to spark the desire to learn in students, it is possible that anyone who follows precepts such as compassionateness and forbearance, as given in the text, would also be a good motivator of the students. This is a golden rule of the art of method of instruction, which is also relevant across all levels of military training.

In the *Arthashastra*, Kautilya lists the excellences in sutra 6.1.4 to say: 'Desire to learn, listening, learning, retention, through understanding, reflecting, rejecting (false views) and intentness on truth—these are the qualities of intellect.' But these human attributes can only come out by nurturing. In fact, Kautilya gives in progressive steps the foundations of a systematic education regime. The four subjects to be studied in progression are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

### *Anvikshiki*

*Anvikshiki* or 'the science of enquiry' is the top priority for the syllabus. It consists of three disciplines of the Indian schools of philosophy: Samkhya, Yoga, and Lokayata. Each of these disciplines have their own intrinsic values. Samkhya is derived from Sanskrit, which means 'reflection' through knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Samkhya's rationalistic approach is best captured by M. Hiriyanna who writes:

The Samkhya prefers a rationalistic explanation and does not, like some other systems, invoke the aid of revelation in support of its conclusion. The very name of the doctrine, derived from *Samkhya* which means *buddhi*, indicates that it is based on reflection rather than on authority.<sup>12</sup>

As for the inclusion of Yoga in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, there are some opinions to be considered. Yoga, say around the fourth century BCE, 'probably [referred] to the system of logic, later known as Nyaya, rather than to the well-known system of mental training.'<sup>13</sup> Wilhelm Halbfass finds it difficult to determine the logic of insertion of Yoga and argues that:

In a general sense, it is important to remember that the word *yoga* is by no means exclusively associated with the Yoga system of Patanjali, or with other doctrines and techniques of meditation and inner discipline. Its root *yuj-* also accounts for the word *yukti*, 'reasoning': and likewise, the word *yoga* itself is occasionally used to refer to disciplines of 'reasoning' and 'argumentation' such as Nyaya and Vaisesika.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the third component of *Anvikshiki* is Lokayata, which so far has been hidden from public memory. R.P. Kangle, in his translation, mentions that Lokayata once held an equally honourable place. Lokayata is 'essentially texts prevalent (*ayatah*) among the people (*lokesu*)', etymologically 'that which is prevalent among the people and

also this-worldly (*lokesh ayatah lokayaya*).<sup>15</sup> In the theory of knowledge (epistemology), the Lokayata, also called *Carvakas*, only believes in perception as source of knowledge (*pramana*). For this school of Indian philosophy, materialism is the only reality.<sup>16</sup> Its unique quality is that ‘among the philosophical views of traditional India, Lokayata is about the only one that puts an uncompromising emphasis on direct observations as the primary ways of knowing.’<sup>17</sup>

All the three above-mentioned sub-disciplines, or stems of philosophy, are combined as *Anvikshiki*. In contemporary terms, *Anvikshiki* is similar to what we now term ‘how to think’ or ‘theory of reason’ (*hetu-shastra/hetu-vidya*). It is important to remember that *Anvikshiki* got bifurcated and was treated as two subjects, namely, the soul and the theory of reason. Kautilya focused only on *hetu*, or theory of reason, and did not incorporate the soul or *Atma-vidya*, which is now part of philosophy called *Darshan*.<sup>18</sup>

Today, due to silo-like compartmentalisation of various subjects in higher pedagogy, philosophy appears to be a rare subject meant only for a miniscule number of students. It is thus not a popular subject and has got sidelined and even ignored, more so the rich Indian philosophy. But Kautilya is very clear on the need for philosophy (*Anvikshiki*) and explains that:

(philosophy) confers benefit on the people, keeps the mind steady in adversity and in prosperity and brings about proficiency in thought, speech and action. Philosophy is ever thought as the lamp of all sciences, as the means of all actions (and) as the support of all laws (and duties).<sup>19</sup>

In the past, a successful king was also supposed to be a philosopher-king or *Rajarshi*, akin to the Greek philosopher-king. In other words, one has to train the mind first for performing an executive action in war or peace. One has to control oneself first, before thinking of controlling an enemy or adversary. *Anvikshiki* is the ‘oxygen’ for this detached, self-controlled and professional attribute. In earlier times, this was known unambiguously; in current times, it can be said that there is a need for greater education and training in the science of enquiry and *Anvikshiki* is the toolkit to enable this. In the military, at the tactical level, it is necessary to know ‘what to think’. Under the stress and strain of battle, drills and procedures mastered through individual and collective training during peace help in performance of job as a routine skill. But for higher

commanders, just focusing on what to think will not generate better options and strategies. For this, the key is to practice and master ‘how to think’, which is the aim of *Anvikshiki*.

### *Trayi*

The three Vedas or *trayi* are then listed in the syllabus at the second place. The Vedas, as is well known, are the root text of Indian philosophy and their essential knowledge is even sought after today. This does not mean that only learned pundits who have knowledge of the Vedas can be combat or corporate leaders. Rather, it implies that the summary of Vedas, as in Vedanta and Upanishads, needs to be known. In fact, the essence of this knowledge is in the Gita.

### *Vartta*

The third subject which comes after *Anvikshiki* and the Vedas is the knowledge of economics or *vartta*. This includes all means of production in agriculture and industry. We can say that this now includes the service sector, as well as emerging defence technologies.

### *Dandaniti*

The final and fourth topic which comes after having mastered the first three is the science of politics or *dandaniti*. Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is very clear that the political domain called *arthashastra*, or *dandaniti*, or *nitishastra*, can only be mastered by progressively building on the first three subjects listed earlier. For the smooth functioning of the services, the rules, regulation, orders and instructions can be related to this aspect.

### *Anvikshiki and Shakti*

Conceptually, the mastery of these four disciplines can make a perfect leader. Yogis tell us that the humans have the capacity to use the power of thought and the power of will, but this comes with practice and habit. As leaders, there will always be the need of agency or power. Thus, mindful of self-control, widened with *Anvikshiki*, combined with the knowledge of the Vedas, skilled with *vartta* and trained in science of politics or *dandaniti*, the Indian traditions emphasise repeatedly the use of power by sticking to the priorities: *mantra shakti* (counsel or diplomacy); *prabhav shakti* (economic and military power); and *utsah shakti* (leadership). It can be argued that all these attributes and priorities are applicable even today as the ‘human’ part has not changed over the centuries. Rather,

these traditions seem to be quite modern. Thus, at the highest level, leadership needs to be conscious that the most apt strategy to win is by diplomacy (*mantra shakti*). But this diplomacy is only possible if both the formation and unit-level units are 'fit for war', that is, have the highest standards of *prabhav shakti*. And across the leadership, from a section or squad to the top, all need to be imbibed and fired-up with *utsah shakti*.

Having developed a character with positive qualities of leadership, an enquiring mind and professional competence, Indian traditions do not suggest a hit and trial method. Rather, the traditions suggest very sensible approaches to economic and managerial activities and how to go about achieving the goals. In this regard, the texts lay emphasis on two attributes. The first is about components of counsel and task completion. This is followed by emphasis on efficiency in action and very practical suggestions on the art of persuasion. In the following section, I discuss the importance of sound counsel and the five components of counsel to complete a task and efficiency in action.

## COUNSEL AND TASK COMPLETION

### Importance of Sound Counsel

Considerable effort and time is devoted in the military for staff work and appreciations. The essence of war games is to arrive at various options and also to think out of the box innovatively. This forms part of good 'counsel'. In the past as also today, sound counsel is considered essential for decision making, especially to avoid the pitfalls of 'group think'. In sutra 1.15.22, Kautilya counsels: 'He should despise none, (but) should listen to all opinion of everyone. A wise man should make use of the sensible words of even a child.' The ancients thus understood that it was not a rule that wisdom lies only in seniority of either rank or age. For example, the famous observe, orient, decide and act (OODA) loop used as a military and business jargon was the thought of an American fighter pilot during the Korean War. The breaching and crossing of the Bar Lev Line was the idea of a young officer of the Egyptian Army in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. In the cyber domain, a 'child', so to speak, may be far ahead of an aged general. At the other end of the spectrum, however, there is also a warning. In sloka 12.17.4, Kamandaka writes: 'All matters of state should be decided upon after deliberation with trustworthy ministers. Trustworthy fools and untrustworthy counsellor must be avoided.'

### Five Components of Counsel to Complete a Task

At the macro level, the format of counsel has five components to accomplish a task. They are explained not only in the texts such as Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Kamandaka's *Nitishastra* but also the *Hitopadesa* by Narayana, based on stories from animal kingdom. The remarkable thing is that there is a lot of continuity of management wisdom. For example:

1. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (1.15.42): 'Counsel has five components: strategy for initiating the undertaking, men and material of exemplary quality, allocation of place and time, precautions against failure, and bringing the undertaking to a successful conclusion.'
2. Kamandaka *Nitishastra* (12.17.36): 'In undertaking any state matter, counsel (or deliberation) should be of five counts or *pancanga* (i.e., considerations): viz., state's own equipment, ways and means (*sadhanopaya*), suitability of particular place and time, provision against unforeseen dangers and prospects of successful completion (*siddhi*).' In the next sloka, it is advised: 'Counsels or deliberations should be aimed at completion of the work undertaken, of (new) projects not yet taken up (*anarabdhham*), and ensuring perfection of accomplished works' (12.17. 37).
3. *Hitopadesa* (4.54): '...There are five subjects to be determined through counsel and consultation. These are: the method for initiating a measure; the maximum mobilization of men and money; the management of time and space; insuring against accidents; and the successful conclusion of an enterprise.'<sup>20</sup>

The five essential steps just described are a blueprint for any action even today. What is remarkable is that it caters for contingency. This concept can be applied to a military activity, or implementation of a policy, or for any project management organisation and to any government or private scheme. These theoretical steps to be successful now need implementation. Implementation of any policy is as important as its conceptualisation. Today, we often hear the lament that there are enough schemes but the delivery and implementation is lacking. Well, Indian traditions have also catered for this guiding principle of maintenance and achievement of the aim and execution of the task.

### Efficiency in Action

It is often argued that we make grandiose plans but what is lacking is its

execution. What constitutes a ‘successful conclusion of an enterprise’? Thiruvalluvar lays down some key principles of efficiency in action and guiding principles in the art of persuasion. The *Kural* counsels us on this, with some of its key message being as follows:

1. ‘Efficiency essentially consists in a resolute mind; other things come thereafter.’<sup>21</sup>
2. ‘Anyone can formulate plans, but it is only exceptional men that are able to carry their plans to fulfilment.’<sup>22</sup>
3. ‘Plan with a clear brain, and when once you have decided and launched on an undertaking, be firm and unmoved by difficulties, and avoid dilatoriness in action.’<sup>23</sup>

The three quoted passages from the *Kural* may well be from some modern manual of a motivational speaker on ‘how to win and be successful’. The other aspect is that a leader also has to carry along his team members, each with differing capabilities. Therefore, good communication skills are essential for the leader, who also has to double up as a teacher or an instructor, for persuading his team. The *Kural* does not leave out these essentials. Let us examine them as communication skills and the art of persuasion.

#### SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION

##### Communication Skills and the Art of Persuasion

Mastery of classical skills of communications is essential across cultures. A Japanese scholar from Nagoya University, Katsunori Hirano, has given a good lead in communication theory in his examination of Indian philosophy and text science: ‘Basic communication consists of four elements: a sender, code(s), a message, and a receiver.’<sup>24</sup> If sender and receiver have a common understanding of a subject or text, then the code(s) and message on receipt are understood. However, this ideal situation may not be there most of the time. So, the sender has to be conscious of this problem and then structure his/her communications accordingly. This problem becomes acute when textual interpretation is to be carried out. For example, in case of Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, it has been seen that rather than having read the original text, many are familiar with commentaries or *bhashya*. Fortunately, the *Kural* does not face this problem as it is very brief and crisp. It can be even argued that very good translations into English and other languages are now available

to understand and apply the basic ideas in the text. Here, a common understanding is the key.

The *Kural* devotes 10 chapters (64–73) just for the ministers on various matters of counsel and communications. Good communication skills, combined with the art of persuasion, are a prerequisite for any successful social or political endeavour. For example, in the military, staff officers have to give considered opinions for action. At the higher level, for healthy civil–military relationships, military leaders have to give sound advice to the civilian leadership in unambiguous terms. At international fora, surely diplomats must have experienced what is given in chapter 72, ‘On Judging an Audience’. Drew and Lazarus translate verse 8 of the chapter as follows: ‘Lecturing, to those who have the ability to understand (for themselves) is like watering a bed of plants that are growing (of themselves).’<sup>25</sup> Gopalkrishna Gandhi has further given a new and contemporary translation of this verse in modern English: ‘To speak high and wise to one who already knows, Is to try to irrigate grown grain standing in ripe rows.’<sup>26</sup>

For communication skills, public speaking and conveying an inspirational message, the precepts in the *Kural* seem to be contemporary. They feature prominently in the *Kural* in what we may today call ‘bullet form’ of a PowerPoint presentation. It is no wonder that this exceptional and remarkable work has been described by C. Rajagopalachari as a ‘masterpiece of brevity’.<sup>27</sup> Let us see some aphorisms as translated by Rajagopalachari on public speaking or briefing in an operational environment:<sup>28</sup>

1. ‘What is good speaking? It should be such as would hold fast the convinced and it should be pleasing to the unconvinced.’<sup>29</sup>
2. ‘Neither right conduct nor any worldly good can result from talking above the heads of those who are addressed. Speak suitably to the capacity and attainment of the audience.’<sup>30</sup>
3. ‘It is only those that have not learnt to speak briefly and correctly that indulge in much speaking.’<sup>31</sup>

A military officer, and even the lay reader, cannot miss the message in the above-mentioned three guidelines. The lesson plan, so to speak, has to be tailored for the type of audience. When submitting a military plan to the general staff or arguing a case, the first point applies. For addressing troops at muster or roll call, the second point is applicable, and the third is universal and always applicable. Here, I would like to

emphasise that it is important to know the type and composition of the audience as it is a vital link for a successful communication theory. The target audience definitely matters and the *Kural* addresses this aspect under the chapter, 'On Judging an Audience'.

### **On Judging an Audience**

There is, today, an overload of data in various mediums of information and communication technology. In fact, currently, the virtual 'on-line' world appears superficially more important than the real 'off-line' world. Today's impatient generation seems to desire short twitter-length answers that are forgotten the very next day. Many are not trained, or educated or interested in liberal arts, humanities or classics. However, in the final analysis, technology cannot replace human interaction and touch, for communication is dependent on the type of audience. In the chapter on judging an audience, the *Kural* has a verse on the negative aspect: 'Verse 72. 10. To utter (a good word) in the assembly of those who are of an inferior rank is like dropping a nectar on the ground.'<sup>32</sup> Here, 'an inferior rank' seems an inappropriate translation by Drew and Lazarus. Recent work by Diaz and Mahalingam may be a better translation of the same verse 10 of chapter 72: 'Indulging in learned discourse before a gathering who are not your intellectual peers, Is like pouring nectar in to the gutters.'<sup>33</sup> Diaz and Mahalingam argue that this is very much similar to what is given in the *New Testament* (Mathew: 7, 6): 'Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, Lest they trample them under their feet.'<sup>34</sup> This verse clearly tells us that what we present has to be tailor-made for the audience in mind.

### **CONCLUSION**

Leadership, training and education, communication skills and practical theories of what we now call management are also to be found in Indian texts of the ancient past. The ancient wisdom related to self-discipline and basics of education leading to sharpening the intellect with a spirit for enquiry and thirst for knowledge, juxtaposed with principles of counsel and breakdown of a task to be performed, effective communications, delivery and implementation of a policy or plan, are indeed time-tested attributes of leadership. That these concepts reside in ancient texts in India shows that human behaviour and attitudes over the ages have many continuities.

Why did the ancients have such a rich and deep discourse on leadership and management theories? It was for having the best human resource. This need exists even today. In this modern era, which is also an age of technology, human agency is central, and more so for modern military leadership. Therefore, it is necessary that we reinterpret the past knowledge for contemporary times. As I have demonstrated, many of the precepts and concepts seem to be of contemporary universal relevance, as the principles and values they emphasise are unchanged and fair for the benefit of society at large. The knowledge so embedded is indeed a hallmark of not only good military leaders but also leaders and managers at any level in the larger society. The values and concepts of these traditions must also be included in training and education in military units, institutes and establishments. Those experts who have domain knowledge of the latest theories of leadership and management may dig deeper into India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage to further enrich their knowledge.

#### NOTES

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