

THE EFFECTIVE ROLE OF INDIAN TEXTS IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Management Insight
14(1) 6 - 9

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21844/mijia.14.01.2>

Nidhi Kaushal*, Sanjit Mishra*

Correspondence Email: nidhi.k3333@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Management studies have been always seen as a discipline based on theories of the western world. It has a prominent place in all kind of modern education. Since it has been explored so much and there are numerous philosophies and researches available on the topics related to the management, but available Indian texts and philosophies by great scholars have dominance over modern theories and practices. They have written the lessons for the management of complexities in life and business. Those rules and values have been practiced since the ancient times and proved to be successful and fruitful in every aspect. Even the modern entrepreneurs have a strong belief over them and they have accepted as the best and more useful alternative over modern concepts of studies. Thirukkural is one of such ancient text on wisdom and ethics. The scholars from the contemporary fields admitted and respected the Indian texts because the wisdom and intellectually never shades due to changes and advancement. It has a bright shine for its existence ever. The current paper in the form of a review article is an attempt to highlight this magnanimity in the contemporary world of management.

Key Words : Ethics, Leader, Management, Thirukkural

INTRODUCTION

Thirukkural written by Thiruvalluvar (or Valluvar, popularly) is one of the most notable and literary and ethical treatises in Indian languages. There is consensus among historians and literary authorities that *Thirukkural* was written around 2000 years ago (Pablos, 2012). According to Das (1997), '*Thirukkural* has been written in couplets ten of which form a chapter, there being in all 133 chapters. They have been arranged in three books, the first book being on dharma, the second on Artha and the third one on Love. Each chapter is like a poem on any aspect of the forgoing human activities, like devotion to God, ascetic life, family life, compassion, charity, leadership or kingship, military spirit, friendship gambling etc. the style is terse, epic grammatical. The word Kural in Tamil language means anything short and in literature it refers to a poetic form

using the shortest possible metre. It is a treatise on the art of living; asset of wholesome principles or counsels for the various sections of the society for a harmonious collective living. According to many scholars *Thirukkural* belongs to the period of Sangam literature. Sangam was a college or assembly of poets held under the patronage of a king or an eminent landlord. The literature produced by these assemblies was compiled in the period spanning over 300 A.D. to 600 A.D. The Sangam literature can broadly be divided into two categories one is narrative and other is didactic. *Thirukkural* belongs to the didactic category. It is rated very high as classic. *Thirukkural* is a unique guide with helpful practical hints to achieve what may seem to be a mere counsel of perfection.' Thiruvalluvar says "To be successful learn thoroughly and apply it in your own life" Enjoy reading Folks.

*Senior Research Fellow, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (Uttarakhand)

‘The writings of *Thirukural* defined by Tiruvalluvar (2000) are not for enriching human resource management and for other social leaders who aspire to the top and wish to remain there. So from these writings we can learn to right thought, right speech and right action are total must for right government of a corporation, the political arena, for a king and for a manager or leader. Indeed, these precepts apply to all of us who aspire to survive without conflict, to think ahead and prepare, to analyze and understand before we act. It is all here; an irrefutable and clear message for success. Valluvar explains how to learn and the importance of learning. He states that life is continuum of constant learning, keeping up with the times.’

THE COUPLETS OF *THIRUKKURAL* RELEVANT IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

From righteous conduct does man gain wealth and fame on earth. Is there anything preferable to practice on life’s path? ‘Observing righteous conduct brings man plenty of fame and wealth earth than practicing any other thing. That ensures peace of mind and happiness to man. Instead of engaging in any other pursuit man should observe righteous conduct and gain peace of mind on earth in life (*Das, 1997*).’ According to Venkatachalam (2015), ‘A trader’s practice befits his profession only when he considers the interest if all the stakeholders connected to his trade on par with his interest.

- Help may be as tiny as a grain of millet. Those who are able to appreciate its contributory calibre in a process across the time will hold it as big as a palm tree.
- A deep learning will lead you to a life of humbleness and studentship. Appreciating your humbleness along with what you have intellectually achieved people will shower their appreciation on you.
- Since Best practices deliver excellence; they shall be preserved more than life.
- If you want your greatness not to leave you; Forbearance will achieve it, mind you.
- Jealously free nature is the best of all

treasure; for attaining laurels none equally measures.

- Those who, are inclined to enjoy a life of blissful joy forever will not be found erring on equity in search of transient pleasures.
- If someone makes a critical observation about another person his observation will be accepted as credible only when people hold him as good critic.
- Of all the wisdom, the top one is the wisdom which forbids inflicting hurt even to an enemy as a retaliatory measure.
- Men who are conscious of their duty to the society will not back out even when they attain poverty.
- Maximizing yield and sustaining it with suitable strategy; a capable means finder shall act to make the synergy.
- A king in whom sloth is totally absent attains what bestrode by Lord pertains.’

Some described by Iraianban (1997) are, if a man who knows that self-control is the wisdom, and if he controls himself in the correct way, such self-control will bring him glory.

- Code of conduct should be painstakingly safeguarded, though a person knows and practices and outstanding in many virtues of this code of conduct will be the main help to all other virtues.
- A man who always speaks the truth whole heartily is greater than those who do penance and do charity.
- A man’s ability to understand comes from his mind, but it is decided by the friends he joins with.
- A king who starts any work after careful thought and discussion with tested advisors will not find any trouble that stops the progress of achieving his purpose.
- The importance of action should be judged, one’s own strength should be estimated, the strength of one’s enemy and the strength of one’s friends, and then take up any action.
- The right action at the right time is the rope that ties the goddess of fortune to the king and will not break forever.
- The standard by which a person greatness

or meanness can be judged is the person own deeds.

- A minister or a leader is one who has these five qualities in him such as fearless determination, an interest in the welfare of the people, a happy state of mind, sturdy, education and brave effort.

THE QUALITIES OF A LEADER DEFINED IN THIRUKKURAL

According to Venkatavaradan (2017), 'Brevity is the soul of wit and Valluvar says in just two lines of poetry, the quintessence of any subject. He talks about Administration, Benevolence. Courtesy, Duty, Entrepreneurship, Friendship, Gratitude, Humility, Industry, Justice, Kindness, Leadership, Modesty, Non-violence, Optimism, Patience, Quality, Respect, Speech, Talent, Unity, Vision, Wisdom and Zeal and more and more. Here are a few vignettes from *Thirukkural* that may inspire a Manager:

- * Do not waste time in useless gossip. Speak with a purpose that will lead to good things.
- * Avoid Greed, Jealousy, Anger and Violent speech.
- * Speak sweetly and gently. Speak with a smile blooming on your face.
- * There is no gift better than kind and loving words.

And so if you want to be a successful Entrepreneur or Manager or Administrator begin with *Thirukkural* and success will be guaranteed.'

According to ancient Tamil poet Thiruvalluar, "A worthy leader should have ears to tolerate the bitterest criticism." For example: Goldquest International a flagship company, became one of the world's top three numismatics company- selling unique range of gold coins, medallions, time pieces, and jewellery. Mr. Eswaran, a third generation Malaysian of south Indian origin and one of the ten co-founders of Goldquest, held that the foundation of their business was based on Mahatma Gandhi, whom he described as one of the greatest management experts and *Thirukkural* the ancient south Indian classic." Following Gandhi, simplicity, truthfulness and greatest good of the largest

number were deemed as intrinsic to the company business philosophy. Following Gandhi's emphasis on serving the customers in true spirit, Eswaran said, "About 65 per cent of the Company's turnover is recycled to employees and customers, who are encouraged to enlist other customers and shared the benefits" (Gupta, 2007).

Couplets of *Thirukkural* described by Vincent (2013) relevant for a leader are as below:

- '*Persons in king's service, should neither go too close nor too far, they should remain like people who sit in an apt place beside the fire for warmth.* For example: 'In a cold weather, a person is sitting in front of a fire. If he goes too close, he will be hurt by overheat, if he moves far away, he will not get the required warmth, he has to sit in an apt place. He should not go too far or too close. This example is applicable to all those who work under higher authorities. Those who are working close to them should not take the advantage of their closeness and go too nearer. If displeased, it will lead to undesirable results. At the same time moving too far is also not advisable because, that will end in being branded 'inefficient' or 'incapable'. In modern days, those who are very close to political elements, when misunderstanding develops, face severe consequences.
- *After a careful discussion, boldly a decision should be made. Delay in executing that decision is totally harmful.* For example: In case of an unexpected flood, the construction of the roads can be delayed, but the relief works during a flood, earth quake, tsunami, etc. should not be delayed
- Courage, generosity, knowledge (wisdom), and motivation (zeal) are the four essential elements of a successful leader (king).'

IMPORTANCE IN MODERN WORLD

It contains wonderful insights of life and really teaches us how to deal with the various feelings and circumstances that come to us in our interactions with others. In this sense the *Kural*

is the most relevant sacred text, applying to everyday matters and common concerns. Although it has been translated into English by many scholars, it has never been widely known in the Western world. The *Kural* should be used in everyday life - its verses committed to memory and meditated upon, quoted freely as your very own. One will sound wise if he/she does remember and share these jewels. One of the greatest benefits of this scripture is to guide our actions and our thoughts, to direct our purpose in life and refine our interactions with our fellow man. Problems can be resolved in the light of the saint's wisdom. If something is going along wrong in our life, bring the forces of life back into harmony by studying it and applying its knowledge. That is perhaps its main function - to perfect and protect our lives in the everyday world by preventing mistakes which can cause an unhappy karma, by preventing erroneous attitudes which can bring unnecessary sorrow into our experience.

STATEMENT REGARDING VIRTUOUS CONDUCT

- Virtuous conduct leads a man to eminent greatness, therefore, it should be guarded as more precious than life itself.
- In your striving, be mindful to preserve good conduct. In your deliberations, discover it is your staunchest ally.
- Morality is the birth right of high families, While immoral conduct's legacy is lowly birth.
- Prosperity is not for the envious, nor is greatness for men of impure conduct.
- By honest conduct one achieves honourable eminence, while corrupt conduct brings one nothing but blame.
- Good conduct is the seed in virtue's field; wicked conduct's harvest is never-ending sorrow
- Those who cannot live in harmony with the world, though they have learned many things, are still ignorant.

UNDERSTANDING ONE'S DUTY

- The benevolent expect no return for their dutiful giving. How can the world ever repay

the rain cloud?

- Of all duties, benevolence is unequalled in this world, and even in celestial realms.
- He who understands his duty to society truly lives. All others shall be counted among the dead.
- Those who deeply know duty do not neglect giving, even in their own unprosperous season.

CONCLUSION

Management includes the arrangement and execution of the works and procedures effectively and ethically. The pure management science has its implication in fields business and totally concern with entrepreneurship. While, there are several fields of studies, including creative literary writings and other works of literature by noticeable scholars who have written various books on life skills, works ethics and management of all the activities so that everyone get benefited and guided from the writings. *Thirukkularis* one of such great writing on wisdom, which hold its position in all the disciplines of studies and has management lessons for the modern managers to run their business ethically.

REFERENCES

- Das, G. N. (1997). *Readings from Thirukkural* : Abhinav Publications.
- Gupta, V. (2007), *Business Policy and Strategic Management: Concepts and Applications*, PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- Iraianban, S. (1997). *Ambrosia of Thirukkural*, Abhinav Publications.
- Pablos (2012). *Business, Technology, and Knowledge Management in Asia: Trends and Innovations*. Hershey, PA 17033, USA : IGI Global.
- Venkatachalam, R. (2015). *Thirukkural - Translation -Explanation: A Life Skills Coaching Approach*. Partridge Publishing.
- Venkatavaradan, V. (2017, January 18). Management Lessons From Tamil Classic "Thirukkural". *Indian Herald*, p. 1.
- Vincent, M. (2013, July 25). *Thirukkural on Management (10 Kurals)*. Retrieved August 1, 2017, from Titbitsfromvincent: <http://titbitsfromvincent.blogspot.in>