

# Leadership Decision-Making Styles and Managerial Practices in Organizational Excellence from the Case of Ramayana

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## Abstract:

Wealth and happiness of a nation depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of the economic activities of the economic units of all sizes and microeconomic objectives. Scholars from the West and the East have long suggested ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. It is unanimously agreed by all scholars that leadership of the organization plays a critical role besides better management practices in determining the efficiency of all the human resources and thereby the other resources and ultimately that of the whole organization. Also it has been widely believed in India that works such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, as a single big case themselves, deals with many problems of various types and prescribes guidelines thereof. It is also generally believed that the case method of teaching and learning was pioneered by the Harvard Law School and popularized by the Harvard Business School. However it is common knowledge in India that Ramayana and Mahabharata, Panchatantra, etc has pioneered the case method of teaching and learning thousands of years before the recent rediscovery of the case method. This paper attempts to analyze only a part or module of the case of Ramayana for its varied implications (including legal issues, succession issues, conflicts, manipulation by the top-management, etc.) prescribing leaders and managers for their organizational excellence in the modern times. These implications seem to be not only consistent with the modern concepts but also very relevant even today!

**Keywords:** Leadership, leadership qualities, leadership style, managerial practice, Decision-making, organizational behavior, organizational excellence, Indian management, Ramayana, Panchatantra.

## 1. The case of King Dasharatha's two boons to Queen Kaikei<sup>1</sup>

The ancient kingdom Kosala was ruled by Dasharatha the Kosala was situated in the present day Uttar Pradesh. The capital of Kosala was Ayodhya. The king Dasharatha was loved by everyone. He had three queens namely Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra. The eldest queen is Kausalya and gave birth to the eldest son Rama. The second wife Kaikeyi had one son Bharata who is younger than Rama, the third wife Sumitra gave birth to the Lakshmana and Shatrughna, both are twins. All the princes were grown up to be tall, strong, handsome, and brave. Of the four brothers, Rama was closest to Lakshmana and Bharata to Shatrughna. After Dashratha was growing elder he planned to crown his elder son Rama as prince of Ayodhya. He announced his decision and arranged for crowning ceremony.

Kaikeyi was in the palace conquest with the other queens, sharing the joyful news of Rama's crowning ceremony. She loved Rama as her own son. Kaikeyi wicked maid Manthara planned to confuse Kaikeyi by telling about the promises given by Dasharatha at the time of war happened between asuras long back. Kaikeyi remembered about the promises given by Dasharatha regarding the two boons. When Dashratha was wounded in the battle field, he was safe guarded by his wife Kaikeyi by swiftly driving his chariot to safety. Dasharatha was happy that time and promised by giving two boons to Kaikeyi as open document. Kaikeyi asked Dasharatha to grant her those two boons. She told that her son Bharata be crowned as king of Ayodhya for first boon and the next boons is Rama has to drive out from the kingdom for fourteen

years. Dasharatha was shocked and he was fallen down unconscious. He fainted and lay down on the floor. When Rama arrived, Dasharatha explained about the conversation of about promises given to Kaikeyi.

Rama replied with smiling face and he started to go for forest on that day and he accepted his brother Bharata took over the crown of Ayodhya ruler. So, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, driven by Sumantra, continued their journey alone to forest. Bharata can't believe that his mother was the cause of the disaster. Bharata refused to take the leadership position of Ayodhya, as he was very much respectful and affectionate over his brother Rama.

## 2. Implications of the case for Organizational excellence

The above case has interesting implications for managerial practice even in this modern times for organizational excellence in such areas as leadership, leadership qualities, leadership style, case analysis, legal, contract, agreement, scandal, top management, conflicts, role conflict, stupidity in brilliance, succession planning, politicking, management by agents, management by proxy, organizational behavior, etc. These points are discussed below.

### 2.1. Contract:

Contract, in general, is a mutual agreement between two parties with the following essential elements for a contract to be valid. (i) two parties, (ii) valid offer (offer must be precise, certain, definite,

unambiguous and not loose or vague), (iii) valid acceptance (acceptance must be absolute, unconditional and should concern with the terms of the offer), (iv) intention to create legal relationship, (v) valid and lawful consideration, (vi) capacity of the parties, and (vii) possibility of performance. This case is discussed with respect to these essential elements of a valid contract.

### 2.1.1. Two Parties:

The element of „two parties“ is present in this case since the agreement was between Dasarath and Kaikei.

### 2.1.2. Valid offer:

The offer to be valid must contain precise, definite, certain, unambiguous and not loose or vague terms. Dasarath made an offer to Kaikei and the offer was accepted by Kaikei. But the terms of the offer of „two boons“ was not precise, not certain, ambiguous, loose and vague. Hence the offer itself is not valid causing the agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei to come void. Moreover on hearing the demands of Kaikei, Dasarath made a counter offer by asking Kaikei to ask for anything else but these. Kaikei refused to accept the revised offer. This amounts to rejection of the offer. When the revised or counter offer is rejected, then there is no agreement at all between Dasarath and Kaikei.

### 2.1.3. Valid acceptance:

A valid acceptance must be absolute, unconditional and should correspond with the terms of the offer. In this case, Dasarath made an offer and Kaikei accepted the offer. But the acceptance was not unconditional and therefore not absolute. Since Kaikei, at the time of acceptance of the offer, said that she would name and ask for the terms or considerations (i.e. the two boons) „later“. This amounts to rejection of the offer since the acceptance is subject to some conditions. Thus, the acceptance of offer by Kaikei is also not valid making the agreement void.

### 2.1.4. Intention to create legal relationship:

In the agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei, there was no intention of creating a legal relationship, because, agreements between the husband and wife generally lack intention to create legal relations. Also agreements of social or domestic nature do not contemplate legal relations.

### 2.1.5. Consideration:

„Consideration“ under Law of Contracts is known as *quid pro quo*, i.e. something in return for something. A valid consideration, among other things, is (i) something in return for something (ii) should not be illegal, immoral or opposed to public policy. The consideration in this case under analysis refers to the two boons offered by Dasarath to Kaikei in return for saving his life in a battlefield by driving him to safety as a soldier-chauffeur. Firstly, the „something“ for which the boons were offered as consideration is saving the life of Dasarath. At the time of agreement, the consideration of two boons was not unambiguously specific and hence the consideration is not valid. Secondly, when Kaikei defined specifically the two boons for 14 years, the consideration becomes unlawful since Dasarath had already announced in public that Rama would be the crown prince. Thus any act against crowning Rama becomes unlawful. Thus the undefined consideration lawful at the time of agreement becomes unlawful at a later date. Thus the agreement becomes void. Thirdly, there already existed an employer- employee like relationship between Dasarath and K as the king and the soldier-chauffeur. Thus as a soldier-chauffeur as an employee, Kaikei is already bound to perform the duty of safeguarding the life of the King, Dasarath, the employer. Therefore there was no consideration in return from Kaikei to Dasarath. When there is no consideration in return, the agreement becomes void.

### 2.1.6. Capacity of contracting parties:

capacity means the competence of the parties to understand the nature of the contract and the rights and liabilities arising out of those contracts. The Laws normally consider the age of majority, soundness of mind, non-disqualification from contracting by any Law. Firstly, Dasarath though gave two blank-cheques like boons to Kaikei, Dasarath never made a clear and specific statement to the effect of crowning Bharath and banishing Rama to the forests for 14 years. Thus the agreement is void *ab initio*. Secondly, Dasarath does not have the authority or right to bind Rama, a stranger to the agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei.

### 2.1.7. Free consent:

Consent in an agreement should be free from coercion, undue influence, fraud, misrepresentation of mistakes. When there is no free consent, there is no contract or agreement. In this case, Dasarath made the offer to Kaikei, at the time of agreement, and Kaikei gave a free consent assenting to the offer, of course, conditionally (i.e. she would ask for the two boons whenever she wanted at a later date). The boons were not imposed on Kaikei by Dasarath in a delighted mental state, though there existed the husband and wife relationship. Later when Kaikei asked for the two boons by specifying them clearly to crown her son Bharath as the first boon and to banish Rama to forest for 14 years as the second boon whereas Dasarath had long before announced already that Rama would be crowned. To this Dasarath did not agree. Instead Dasarath asked Kaikei to ask for anything else but these two. Kaikei did not yield. At the same time Dasarath maintained silence (i.e. he did not expressly or orally gave consent to the two demands of Kaikei). Legally it is well settled that silence would not tantamount to consent. Thus it could be seen that Kaikei was applying undue influence for obtaining the consent of Dasarath. The mere application of undue influence on the promise or offered makes the agreement voidable, besides the fact that there was no consent from the part of Dasarath.

### 2.1.8. Misrepresentation of fact:

Representation refers to a statement of fact which one party makes in the course of negotiation with a view to inducing the other party to enter into a contract. When this representation is wrongly made innocently, then it becomes a case of innocent misrepresentation. When the misrepresentation is made willfully, it becomes a fraud. In the case under discussion, Dasarath never said to Rama that he had given two boons of crowning Bharath and banishing Rama to forest for 14 years. It was only Kaikei who said to Rama that Dasarath had given the two boons, and thus desired crowning Bharath and banishing Rama to forest for 14 years and this was not a fact, and hence false, simply because Dasarath never expressly or orally consented to the demands of Kaikei. Therefore it was a case of willful misrepresentation of a fact by Kaikei to a stranger-to-the-agreement, Rama, and therefore a fraud.

### 2.1.9. Lawful object:

Both the object and the consideration in an agreement must be lawful, otherwise the agreement is void. For, in some case, consideration in an agreement may be lawful but the purpose for which the agreement is entered into may be unlawful. In the case under discussion, the object or purpose of agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei was lawful. But when Kaikei demand the two boons of crowning Bharath and banishing Rama (denying the crown to Rama in spite of earlier announced that Rama would be crowned and even the date for coronation was fixed). The purpose of Kaikei was not to crown Rama in spite of Dasarath's announcement of the date if coronation demanding Rama's banishment to forest was against the King's public announcement and hence Kaikei's purpose or object was unlawful. Also Kaikei's purpose was to crown her son Bharath and this also was against the King's earlier public announcement to crown Rama. Thus it could be seen that the object or purpose of Dasarath and Kaikei

are not in the same meaning and sense and that Kaikei's objective was unlawful on more than one count, including the harm it did on Dasarath causing his death being watched by Kaikei, the other party to the agreement.

#### 2.1.10. Certainty of meaning:

The agreement, to be valid, should contain the terms of agreement such as consideration, and time element, place and manner of performance the meaning of which should be definite, precise, clear, certain, and unambiguous. The meaning of "two boons" and consideration and the time element, though not essential in this case, are not precise, definite, clear, certain and unambiguous. Therefore the offer and the thus the agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei becomes void.

#### 2.1.11. Possibility of performance:

The agreement in general, should be possible for performance both at the time of agreement and performance. Because the terms of agreement such as consideration, place, time, and manner were not clearly defined, it was not possible to perform that which were not clear. Also, with the death of Dasarath, the performance of agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei, of whatever type, stands „discharged-by-death“ or the agreement become null and void.

#### 2.1.12. Consensus-ad-idem or Identity of Minds:

The parties to the agreement must have agreed about the subject matter of agreement at the same time and in the same sense. In the present case, identity of minds was present at the time of agreement. But when Kaikei demanded the performance of the agreement by specifying the two boons the identity of mind was absent. Dasarath made a revised offer to Kaikei to ask for anything else but these. But Kaikei rejected the revised offer by refusing to accept. This clearly shows that there was no agreement about the subject matter of agreement in the same sense at the same time. Therefore the agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei becomes invalid.

From the above discussion, it could be seen that almost all the essential elements of a valid contract or agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei were absent resulting in the agreement *void ab initio* and void on many counts. Yet the agreement was performed resulting in much harm to many. The agreement between Dasarath and Kaikei could be categorized under the following classifications: (i) express agreement since the terms of agreement was expressly agreed upon at the time of formation of the agreement; (ii) voidable contract since many essential elements of a valid contract were lacking; (iii) void contract since there was no consideration from Kaikei to Dasarath; (iv) legal at the time of agreement but subsequently the agreement became illegal since the demand of the offeree, Kaikei, is against the Law (a royal utterance by the King is a Law unto itself and Dasarath had public announced that Rama would be crowned and hence Kaikei demanding Dasarath to crown Bharath is illegal); (v) unilateral agreement since Dasarath's offer of two boons to Kaikei in the belief of Dasarath, has already fulfilled the obligation (of saving the life Dasarath) at the time of the agreement or before the agreement came into existence. The primary inference, thus suggestion, from the above discussion is not to enter into any agreement or contract without knowing the terms and meaning precisely, definitely, unambiguous, clear with respect to consideration, time, place, manner of performance, legality and ensure the validity of the contract or agreement.

## 2. Stupidity in brilliance

The Ramayana has been singing the song of brilliance of Dasarath and Rama and the country enjoying prosperity because of the brilliant governance. However Ramayana stands to claim that there could be utter stupidity also in brilliance that would be hard

to believe! Any leader however rich and powerful cannot enter into any agreement or contract without knowing the terms of the contract precisely and unambiguously. Dasarath out of happiness offers a blank-cheque like two boons or promises to his own soldier-chauffeur, Kaikei (employee), who defers the honoring of the boons indefinitely. When Kaikei was demanding Dasarath, applying undue influence, for the performance of the agreement by defining (filling up the blank cheque) the two boons of crowning Bharath (against the King's earlier announcement that Rama would be) and banishing Rama (the dearest one to Dasarath) to forest for 14 years (amounting to denying Rama's right to be crowned as per King's earlier public announcement), Dasarath could have simply told Kaikei to mind her business or simply refuse to honour his blank-promises. For, it is quite normal between husband and wife to have „family quarrels.“ Instead the brilliant Dasarath made the family problem a national problem! Dasarath died after the departure of Rama to forest. Rama, the beloved of not only Dasarath but also all the subjects, left the country for hard forest life for 14 years! The whole nation was sad on the departure of Rama and death of Dasarath. Also Rama's brother Lakshman with his wife accompanied Rama to the forest. Bharath, Kaikei's son, left his mother in great anger and refused to get crowned! All these and other subsequent losses and pains the Ramayana describes could have been simply prevented, had Dasarath kept his senses, intelligence and emotional balance and asked Kaikei to mind her business and not interfere in the governance! Dasarath was a great stupid to faint and lose his senses on hearing Kaikei's demands!

Rama is being celebrated not only as a warrior par excellence, but also for his knowledge, brilliance and skill. Dasarath did not ask Rama to go to forest, for, he was lying helplessly only uttering Rama's name. It was only Kaikei who told Rama that Dasarath desired to fulfill his two promises by crowning Bharath and banishing Rama to forest for 14 years. Rama was also stupid enough to believe Kaikei's words and act on it. Rama should have, using his brilliance (leave alone common-sense) doubted or suspected the inconsistency in Kaikei's behavior and he should not have taken her words and acted on them! He could have simply said, "Mother! It is the agreement between a husband and wife and it is not any of my business! You should sort out this with your husband! Moreover I was not a party to your agreement with Dasarath and therefore I am not liable to you! Even in a hypothetical scenario, had Dasarath asked Rama to give up the right to the Crown and leave for the forest, Rama could have simply replied or educated him that "Dad, it is your problem with your wife. It is a problem between a husband and wife and this family or domestic problem cannot be extended to the whole country! Besides, I was not a party to the agreement and therefore I cannot be bound by your agreement! Also you have already public announcement that I would be crowned. Now it is a case of your word of honour (a King's word is a Law unto itself) to the whole country against your word to your wife! But Rama started acting on the hearsay (i.e. the words of Kaikei) and leaves for the forest. Rama was also stupid enough not only to give up his right to the Crown but also acted on hearsay and left for the forest disobeying the King (because Dasarath never asked Rama to go forest, mere silence cannot be taken as a consent; Dasarath had already announced that Rama would be crowned and also a date fixed for the coronation; there was no further announcement from the King negating or cancelling the prior announcement of crowning Rama). Of course, Rama's unhesitating acceptance to go to forest may also be interpreted to show that a leader should also have the quality of being ready and willing to sacrifice or give up power implying that power should not get into his head!

Kaikei, though a noble lady and loved Rama very much like her own son, got influenced by a servant and became a great stupid to attempt to crown Bharath and Rama knowing full well that „Dasarath would never fall back on his words“. Kaikei was stupid enough not to realize that Dasarath would never fall back on his

words given to the whole nation to crown Rama! Kaikei was stupid enough to put Dasarath in a position of his own words or promises conflicting with each other! Unable to solve this conflict Dasarath dies stupidly! Kaikei demanded Dasarath for crowing Bharath which could never happen because Dasarath's words to crown Rama was more alive! Kaikei was stupid enough to see her husband, the King, also die due to the shock of his own conflicting promises! Thus Kaikei, once drove Dasarath to safety earlier, stupidly drove Dasarath to death now! Thus though Dasarath, Rama and Kaikei were noble and brilliant, they were also stupid enough, not so visible to the public! The inference from this discussion is that stupidity can be found even in great brilliance!

### 3. Leadership qualities

The modern management literature has identified and text books describe leadership qualities such as „Ambition, Energy, Desire to lead, Honesty and Integrity, Self-Confidence, Intelligence, High Self-Monitoring, Relevant Knowledge“ (Trait theory of Leadership); „Extroversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness to Experience“ (Big five Factor Model) „Initiating Structure and Consideration“ (Behavioural theory – Ohio University studies) „Employee Orientation and Production Orientation“ (University of Michigan Studies); Leader – Member relationship, Task structure and Control (Contingency Theory); Personal ability, Self- confidence, Confidence of the subordinates, ideological issues, use of personal example, vision, articulation, personnel work, environmental sensitivity, Sensitivity to followers needs, unconventional behaviour (Charismatic Theory of Leadership); „Charisma, Inspiration, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized consideration“ (Transformational Leadership Theory); Positive Psychological capabilities, Greater self-awareness, self-regulated, Positive Behavior, Confident, Hopeful, Optimistic, Resilient, Transparent, Moral, Future Orientation, Giving priority for developing Associates“ (Authentic Leadership Theory); „Leadership we Dasarath led to Ethical Behavior“ (Ethical Leadership Theory); „ Guiding, and Motivating“ (On-Line Leadership Theory); „ Never Failing, Courage, Magnanimity, Intelligence, Enthusiasm, Promptness, Education, and Bravery, Pride of Ethical Behavior, Nice-talk, Justness, Impartiality, Mercilessness in disciplining, Tolerance, Ethical Behaviour and avoidance of unethical behavior, Rewarding, People Orientation, Protecting the follower, Giving grants, Good Governance and Care for the Welfare of the People.

Dasarath, the King, being the leaders of the country had many noble qualities and qualities of a leader of excellence. However from the above discussion in the previous sections, it could be obviously seen that Dasarath lacked a few leadership qualities that are very much critical and essential. They are: (i) the power of discrimination: Dasarath could not discriminate between the good and bad for the nation when confronted with conflicting promises to honour! (ii) Emotional balance: Dasarath lost the emotional balance and fainted on hearing his wife's, Kaikei, demands for the two promises. Also Dasarath got so emotionally excited when he was driven to safety in the battlefield by, Kaikei, his soldier-chauffeur, he was so emotionally excited he gave blank- cheque like boons to Kaikei. These two boons were responsible for his premature death later!

(iii) Objectivity: Dasarath could not exercise objectivity or unbiased when his wife, Kaikei, demanded for honoring the two promises made years ago in view of the greater national interest as its leader, the King, as against his personal self-interest of honoring his promises to Kaikei.

(iv) Diligence: Dasarath failed to exercise diligence before giving blank-cheque-boons to Kaikei that changed the course of events later including his own death! A leader can wish to be generous but not so blind! (v) Decision-Making skill: Dasarath

simply fainted and lost his senses on hearing the demands of Kaikei. This shows the lack of prompt and correct decision-making skill „at that time“ (i.e. „when faced with conflicting interests“); (vi) Integrity: Though Dasarath exhibited the lack or failure of many essential and critical leadership qualities, one particular and unique quality stands very tall namely his integrity and his quality of never falling back on his words. He was a man of his words. All, including Kaikei, strongly believed in this quality of Dasarath. When he was faced with the situation of honouring two conflicting and mutually exclusive promises, he could not honour both his words (namely the two boons given to Kaikei and his public announcement that Rama would be crowned as the King) and he died. This character makes him stand tall as a role model for all other to follow. Perhaps, this explain why Dasarath is a celebrated figure even today in India, in spite of his stupidities discussed earlier and despite his lacking some of the critical and essential leadership qualities.

The inferences from the above discussion are: (i) the leader must have these essential and critical leadership qualities namely the power of discrimination, emotional balance, objectivity, diligence, decision-making, and integrity; (ii) the leadership quality of integrity tops all other qualities; (iii) the leader must honour his words or promises once given at any or all costs.

### 4. Leadership style

Basic text books provide six basic leadership styles namely autocratic or authoritarian, participative or democratic, Laissez-faire or free rein style, Narcissistic leadership and Toxic leadership. However “leadership style refers to a leader's behaviour. It is the result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader”<sup>3</sup> The management scholars, through various leadership theories, have identified various styles based on their philosophy, personality and experience followed by leaders such as the following: (1) behaviour of the leader in terms of two independent dimensions namely initiating structure and consideration or in terms of leader's orientation towards employees or production or tasks or a combination of these two (Behavioral Theory); (2) the intelligence and experience (Cognitive Resource Theory); (3) belief of the leader in managing creating and using „in-groups and out-groups“ (Leader-Member Exchange Theory); (4) belief of the leader in a set of rules to determine the form and amount of participation in decision-making in different situations (Leader Participation Theory); (5) charismatic or personal abilities (Charismatic Leadership Theory); (6) Leader's ability to shift the values, beliefs, and needs of the followers through charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Transformational Leadership Theory); (7) leaders' belief in greater awareness and self-regulated positive behaviour on the part of the leader and associates fosters positive development (Authentic Leadership Theory); (8) leaders helping their followers to lead themselves (Self-leadership theory); the leadership sticking to ethical means of achieving goals through their charisma (Ethical Leadership theory); (9) leaders using email in guiding, inspiring and motivating geographically dispersed people (On-Line Leadership Theory).

From the case under discussion, it could be seen that Dasarath seems to have been practicing

„role modeling“ as his leadership style especially on integrity. For as per the implications of the Arthashastra (If a king is energetic, his subjects will be equally energetic. If he is reckless, they will not only be reckless likewise, but also eat into his works. Besides, a reckless king will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence the king shall ever be wakeful. (Shamasastri, 1967, p- 39), the leader has to perform it first which the leader desires the followers to perform, in other words, the leader has to be a role-

model for the followers to follow. By inference, if the leader is honest, the followers will also try to be honest. If the leader is corrupt, the followers will also become corrupt.

## 5. Conflict Management

Conflict generally refers to a disagreement of some sort or conflicting or opposing interests. Conflicts are of different types such as intra-personal conflict, inter-personal conflict, goal conflict, role conflict, group conflict, etc. Generally conflicts are managed by applying one or a combination of these methods namely avoid, accommodate, compete, compromise and collaborate. In the present case under discussion, Dasarath suffers from intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict and role conflicts. Dasarath suffers from intrapersonal conflict of his own making namely he desires to honour his two boons given to Kaikei (crowning Bharath and banishing Rama to forest). There was also interpersonal conflict between Dasarath and Kaikei in that Dasarath desires crowning Rama (and has already announced to his subjects that Rama would be crowned) but Kaikei demands that Bharath be crowned and Rama be banished to forests. Also Dasarath put himself in a role-conflict as well when he, as husband, was faced with the demands of his wife, Kaikei, to crown her son Bharath banishing Rama whom Dasarath, as the King, had already announced to the public that Rama would be crowned the King on a designated date. When faced with these conflicts, namely intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict and role-conflict, he got shocked, fainted and lost his senses instead of resolving or managing the conflicts as the King, the leader. Dasarath did not apply any of the methods of conflict management namely avoid, accommodate, compete, compromise and collaborate. It may be argued that Dasarath „avoided“ resolving the conflicts, as may be necessary in some cases, but in this case Dasarath's behavior cannot amount to postponing or avoiding the conflict resolution. He simply fainted, lost senses, started crying and blabbering on regaining his senses and quickly died. Thus it could be seen that Dasarath did not resolve these conflicts at all! Thus he lacked conflict resolution or management skills!

It was Bharath who finally resolved this conflict by convincing Rama to lend his name to rule the country on his behalf only as a representative of Rama. Bharath satisfied Rama's desire (also Kaikei's desire at the same time) by ruling the country but not as a crowned King but only as the representative of Rama and on Rama's name. At the same time Bharath satisfied Dasarath's desire also that the country was ruled on Rama's name as the King in absentia, though not crowned, and at the same time Bharath was not crowned the King. Thus the conflicting interests of Dasarath and Kaikei are satisfied, i.e. Bharath ruled the country without being crowned (though only as a representative of Rama) and at the same time it was Rama's rule (since Bharath ruled on Rama's name as a representative of Rama)! Thus it can also be said thus: Rama was the uncrowned King but did not rule personally whereas Bharath ruled the country (as Rama's representative) but was not the crowned King! In other words, Rama was the King and at the same time he was not the King. Similarly Bharath was the King but he was also not the King! Thus Bharath brilliance in conflict resolution is clearly visible.

However it may also be pointed out here that by consenting to Bharath to rule on Rama's name as Rama's representative seems to make Rama's behavior inconsistent with his alleged attempt to fulfill Dasarath's promises only in letter but not in spirit!

## 6. Manipulation by the top-management

Dasarath, the King, had clearly declared that Rama, in the present case the eldest (i.e. the senior most), would be crowned and also the date of coronation fixed. On the day before the coronation,

Kaikei makes her demands on Dasarath to crown Bharath and banish Rama to forest. Dasarath instead of facing the conflict, assertively like a King, dies helplessly as a husband. Kaikei misrepresents Dasarath's desire to Rama with the clear intention of manipulating the course of events and finally Rama goes to forest thinking that he was fulfilling and obeying his father's, Dasarath, desires. This is a clear case of Kaikei manipulating the people to crown Bharath and to banish Rama and Dasarath died as a consequent side-effect. These incidents speak of the manipulation or politicking at the top-management for power. Perhaps, it may also be said that the wife of the leader influence the leaders and the course of events as well! These events can convey that (i) manipulation by the top-management (or scandal) may in practice anywhere since it was found even in the golden rule of Dasarath itself; (ii) leaders or their wives promote their own kind and kith to power even by manipulating people in power. There could be any number of real cases in the modern times especially in India where the Ramayana was written!<sup>4</sup> The above discussion reveals that the manipulation by the top-management or scandal is vividly portrayed in Ramayana very long ago but true, relevant and in practice even today!

## 7. Management by Agents and Separation of Ownership from Control

Management of companies by 'management-agents' was in practice in India decades ago but it is not present in India now in that name. But according to the modern day practice in corporations around the globe „professional managers“ manage the companies as representatives of the owners, i.e. the equity shareholders. The agency theory of the firm put it as separation of ownership from control or management. The spirit of this concept is that the so called "professional managers" are the representatives managing the affairs of the company on behalf of the rightful owners (equity holders) on their name. In other words, the equity holders are the real owners or King of the company. But they are not „ruling“ or managing the company. It is only the appointed or nominated or elected representatives of the owners! This concept is clearly visible in the case under discussion. Rama is the rightful owner (the King) but not crowned and not directly ruled the country but it is Bharath (who is not the rightful owner), the representative of Rama, who rules the country but on Rama's name. Thus the concepts of management by agents and separation of ownership from control or management are as old as the Ramayana of India! This case also implies that when the interests of Rama and Bharath are the same, the country prospers. Similarly an organization can prosper when the interests of the owners and the managers are the same like the representatives for Succession Planning

As a responsible leader Dasarath planned for proper succession to the crown as this was necessary for the long-term prosperity and well being of the country. This concept of succession planning is equally important even today especially in corporate. This case under discussion also points out the parameters to be considered for succession, namely (i) the leader should like the candidate and should be proud of as Dasarath like and was proud of Rama; (ii) the candidate should be the senior most like Rama among all the princes; (iii) the candidate must be meritorious than others like Rama; (iv) the candidate should command respect from all including the contenders like all his brothers loved Rama very much with great respect; (v) the candidate should enjoy the confidence and should enjoy great following like Rama who enjoyed the confidence of all including the subjects who held Rama very dear to them.

Also this case points out the issues associated with succession planning such as manipulation, to jump the succession criteria including seniority, when a junior succeeds to power, then it is not a good idea to have the senior who was a contender with good

following and lost the race to be around to prevent groups and consequent conflicts which would greatly undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole organization. Succession planning could have been devised perfectly but still hiccups could arise even at the eleventh hour as in the case of Rama's coronation!

## 8. Inferences and Lessons for Managerial Practice

From the above discussions many interesting and useful inferences and lessons can be drawn for managerial practice towards organizational excellence.

1. Never make a blank-cheque-like promises to anybody including the life-partners, for, it always lands the offerer in great trouble later. Hence a manager should consider issuing a blank-cheque-promise as equivalent to signing one's own death warrant. Take this lesson from Dasarath.
2. Know the terms of the contract precisely, definitely, unambiguously so that the cost or liability will be known for sure.
3. Ensure the validity and legality of the contracts being entered into to protect the interests of the organization. The Ramayana dealt with the many essential elements of a valid contract under Indian Contract Act centuries ago.
4. Bad contracting causes problems to all at huge costs.
5. Do not execute contracts that are illegal, invalid, void, voidable, for, they are problemfull, costly and make the managers look stupid.
6. Never yield to emotional blackmail. Instead the emotional balance should be maintained always.
7. Be careful before making a promise, but once made, it must be honoured at all costs. This will instill confidence in others on the integrity of the manager essential to lead others.
8. Do not believe hearsay, even from your mother, and act on it especially when the behavior is inconsistent.
9. Assert your rights of the role being played.
10. Make decisions for the organizational matters from the organizational-role point of view without giving any room for role-conflict.
11. Never give conflicting promises or instructions that conflict with the previous ones.
12. Be objective (unbiased) always and keep the organizational goal before any personal or domestic goals.
13. Do not allow to be unduly influenced by your wife or life-partner on official matters. Do not permit them to interfere in official business or organizational decision-making.
14. Keep your promise or word at any cost to maintain your integrity. Because integrity is the top most quality among the essential and critical leadership qualities and the leader should role-model on this quality foremost.
15. Follow the „role-model“ leadership style for all to command respect and for all others to follow. Because only the role-model has the moral right to expect others also to follow what they preach and practice. People follow or imitate the role-model leaders.
16. Resolve the conflicts towards the interests of the organization at the earliest. Indecisiveness or

postponement or avoiding conflict resolution may prove much costlier later. One type of conflict may give rise to another type of conflict.

17. Act in the interest of the owner (equity holders) in the interest of the organization in view of the separation of ownership from control in the modern times.
18. Managing a company through „representatives or agents“ is also a possible method of management and conflict management.
19. The concept of management by agents and separation of ownership from control is as old as the Ramayana from India.
20. Use the following criteria or parameters for selection to the top post: seniority, merit, commanding respect from all others, objectivity, integrity, role-modeling, decision making skill, and emotional balance.
21. Practice the essential leadership qualities such as power of discrimination, emotional balance, objectivity, diligence, decision-making, integrity of keeping words.
22. Hold integrity as your life, for, despite all their shortcomings Dasarath and Rama are celebrated seemingly because of their „integrity“ and role-modeling style of leadership.
23. Cure or Avoid intrapersonal conflicts in you.
24. Many leaders fulfill their personal desires at the cost of the followers or organization or country especially at the top-management level.
25. Succession planning is essential for the long-term interests of the organization.
26. Succession planning could be devised perfect, but manipulation and hiccups may occur even at the eleventh hour.
27. Jumping seniority or queue for succession to power is practice.

## 9. Concluding Remarks

From the above discussions it could be seen that a few incidents in, a drop of the mega case, the Ramayana has interesting implications and lessons, for the modern leaders and managers towards organizational excellence, in such as aspects like Leadership, leadership qualities, leadership style, case analysis, legal, contract, agreement, scandal, top management, conflicts, role conflict, stupidity in brilliance, succession planning, politicking, management by agents, management by proxy, organizational behavior, etc. This paper on a small part of the Ramayana could highlight that the case-method was in prominent use for learning in India many many centuries ago! Yet relevant and consistent with the modern management concepts! The Case of Ramayana could be further probed with management-researcher eye to find more management knowledge treasure that could also be used for teaching management students.

### Notes

1 This paper used the version of the Ramayana in-brief from <http://wiki.answers.com>. There exist a number of versions of the Ramaya at various lengths. However the incidents narrated in the case under study seem to the same in all of them. Hence the inferences drawn from this paper from analysis this case will not be affected by any other version of Ramayana. Moreover this paper does not intend to argue that the Indian Contracts Act was present in Ramayana nor the Indian Contract Act was based or derived from Ramayana. It only attempts to show that

Ramayanaa has dealt with legal aspects such as Contract very long ago but it seems to be relevant even today. The same idea underlies the other management concepts highlighted in the present case in this paper.

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