

LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN SHAKESPEARE'S KING HENRY V

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Abstract- Now the study of Literature is not contracted within its own field. Today it is regarded as 'multidisciplinary' study, because of the inclusion of many disciplines like Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology into literature. In the same way study of leadership with reference to Shakespeare's King Henry V is a broad area of interest for today's corporate world. King Henry V is a historical play written by William Shakespeare, which is believed to have been written in approximately, 1599. This play focuses the events before and after the battle of Agincourt (1415). King Henry V is the final part of a tetralogy, which is preceded by Richard II, Henry IV Part I and Henry IV part II. In Henry IV plays Shakespeare introduced us with young prince Hal, who later on becomes King Henry V. This play may be counted as the most inspiring "case studies" and may be compared to the challenges faced and conquered by some of today's most successful business leaders. This research paper explores how Shakespeare beautifully portrayed leadership skills in King Henry V.

KEYWORDS: - Shakespeare, leadership skills and tetralogy.

INTRODUCTION-

William Shakespeare wrote no doubt brilliantly almost all kinds of human affairs. He is usually known as a playwright and a poet who possessed great wit and wisdom. To imagine Shakespeare as a management consultant is a strange thing to do but his wisdom may be applied thoroughly on a business level. In his plays he explores deeply the problems of today's corporate world. He is not only a perfect artist, poet and playwright but he is also a great businessman who really knew how to manage people, how to use his talent, how and where to use power of communication, this is proved by the plays he has written. It is said, that the Elizabethan age is the golden age of the drama. The drama was everywhere

because drama was the only source to entertain them. Every night drama was performed on the theatres. Shakespeare possessed great wit and wisdom of management and leadership, as he was the son of a businessman; he also tried his hand in business.

Shakespeare created prince 'Hal' as a very successful and heroic leader, who later on became King Henry V. In this play he demonstrated different jobs and skills of a leader and how a leader should perform. In Shakespeare's time it is believed that leaders come from different world. They born to rule over the people, it is in their blood to rule over the people, and these people are followers, who have no other option instead of following their leader. Shakespeare in his plays argued strongly against this view and presented before us successful as well as unsuccessful leaders. Shakespeare through the characters of his kings, queens and monarchs proved that successful leaders are not born but made.

To establish a bridge between Shakespeare and today's leaders, no any example is better than King Henry V. King Henry V is Shakespeare's most admirable heroic leader. Shakespeare developed this character at the centre of three plays, King Henry IV, part I, and Part II, and King Henry the V. In King Henry IV Part I and Part II the young prince Henry, is introduced as Harry, who has been called 'Hal' by Falstaff, his old and rough friend.

Leadership is the basic and vital quality of a manager, which is lacking in day to day managers. Some people treat the term "managership" and "leadership" as synonymous to each other, but these two should be distinguished. Leadership is actually an important trait of managing. Harold Bloom and Heinz Wehrich, in their treatise "Essentials of Management; An International Perspective" define leadership as follow:

"Leadership is the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group

goals. Ideally people should be encouraged to develop not only willingness to work but also willingness to work with zeal and confidence”.

Further they give us some essential ingredients of leadership in same treatise. Which are as follow:

1. Power
2. Understanding people
3. Inspiring followers
4. Decision making
5. Communication

1. POWER – Shakespeare in his all plays personified power in some or other ways. He shows us how power is passed down through the generation. For instance, Harry Bolingbroke knocks Richard II off the throne and ends up causing the Wars of Roses hundred year strife between the House of York and the House of Lancaster. Shakespeare shows how power slips away this power goes to the hand of Henry V. Henry V builds an empire, but his son Henry VI makes so many mistakes that he ends up wandering around the countryside, alone.

The proper exercise of using the power is one of the most persistent challenges faced by us in today’s era. But Shakespeare’s King Henry V have the sense of how and where to use this power. Understanding power – its strength – and limitations – and knowing when and where to use it, is the main step to follow in the business world today as well as in our personal life today. This is what; King Henry V did throughout the whole play.

2. UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE – A good leader must first know his people or subordinates. To know his people prince Hal first spent his entire adult life hanging himself around common people so that he can think and act within their culture. To establish a good and healthy atmosphere of an enterprise, it is necessary to know people and their culture. So that when a leader takes an action he always keeps his subordinate’s necessity.

3. INSPIRING FOLLOWERS - In King Henry V, King Henry recognizes that without people, whom he managed and lead, nothing can be achieved. According to Paul Corrigan He recognizes too that he is in the hands of people and at crucial moments if they don’t perform well then he is bound to fail. In each battle he communicate motivational speeches to his troops, so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically their goal. The two battles in King Henry V are adorned by fantastic motivational speeches. King Henry delivered motivational speeches to enrich the potential and zeal of his troops. The first speech was delivered before

Harfleur where Henry’s army was besieging the town. To motivate his soldiers impatient Henry rallies them and gives them an inspiring message which still called one of the greatest speeches in the world of literature.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
 Or close the wall up with our English dead.
 In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man
 As modest stillness and humility,
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
 Then imitate the action of a tiger,
 Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard – favored rage,
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect,
 Let it pry through the portage of the head Like the
 brass cannon.
 Let the brow o’erwhelm it
 As fearfully as doth a galled rock
 O’hand and jutty his confounded base,
 Swilled with the wild and wasteful ocean....
 Dishonor not your mothers. Now attest
 That those whom you called fathers did beget you.
 Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
 And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,
 Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
 The Mettle of your pasture. Let us swear
 That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not,
 For there is none of you so mean and base
 That hath not noble luster in your eyes
 I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
 Straining upon the start. The game’s afoot.
 Following your spirit, and upon this charge
 Cry “God for Harry, England, and Saint George!”
 (III.II.1-14, 22-35)

This is the speech which a leader should make to motivate his staff. This speech makes them realize that everyone comes from same place and everyone has some kind of ‘noble luster in their eyes’.

4. DECISION MAKING – A decision is something that takes place prior to the actual performance of a course of action that has been chosen. Decision making involves the entire process of establishing goals, defining tasks, searching for alternatives and developing plans. The most outstanding quality of a successful leader is his ability to make sound decision. A leader has to make up his mind quickly on certain matters. King Henry V has outstanding quality to take decisions. Before deciding to invade in France, Like a good leader first he sought for the search of his advisors after hearing them Henry called the ambassador from France into

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the conference room and decided to invade in France, Though Dauphin (the son of the King of France) mocked at him. But he didn't care about it.
 King Henry – Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

Now are we well resolved; and by God's help
 And yours, the noble sinews of our power,
 France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,
 Or break it all to pieces; or there we'll sit.
 (Act I, scene II, 221 - 225)

He led his army with full enthusiasm and finally got success. Secondly, after found traitors who intended to betray him in his own kingdom, Henry quickly decided to punish them, although they beg for mercy, but King Henry was very inflexible in his decision that he orders them to be executed.

5. COMMUNICATION – communication is a managerial skill which is essential for effective leading and motivation of people at work. A leader who is in a position to communicate well, will be able to get the cooperation of subordinates towards the objectives of the organization. The word communication is derived from Latin word 'communis' which means common. If a person affects a communication, he has established a common ground of understanding. Thus, communication involves imparting a common idea.

According to Hudson "Communication in its simplest form is conveying of information from one person to another". The success of a leader depends to a great extent on his ability to communicate with his subordinates. Shakespeare's King Henry V has the great ability to communicate with his troops and subordinates. Before becoming a king, prince Harry learnt the way of living and most importantly language or communication way of low life people, that is, common people in order to know them and to win their heart and support. Throughout the play King Henry communicates with his troops, giving them wonderful motivational speeches. Such speeches arouse passion, and enthusiasm in his troops. Unlike any other of Shakespeare's leaders he has the ability to talk and to listen. The way King Henry communicates is not ordinary. Even with his foes he communicates in sweet and sublime manner. For instance – When in the beginning of the play an ambassador brings the message from France, and offers him tennis balls on behalf of his king Dauphin. King Henry replies the ambassador in a very exalted

manner. And proves himself to be capable to run a kingdom and invade the France.

King Henry – We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;

His present and your pains we thank you for.
 When we have matched our rackets to these balls,
 We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
 Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
 Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
 That all the courts of France will be disturbed with chaces.
 (Act I Scene II , 259 - 265)

The above lines from the plays show Henry's communication power well, he knows how to communicate with others. Whether it is his enemy or friend or any other subordinate Henry being a King or leader, knew it well where to reply and what to reply. When he replied the ambassador of France, He had to show his strength and confidence before him so that they do think Henry to be weaker. Henry also communicated with him in such a way that the message of his strength directly reach to the majesty of the ambassador. He also replied for the mock which Dauphin made on Henry.

CONCLUSION:

King Henry V is Shakespeare's great heroic leader. Throughout the entire play he listens and talks with his troops in such a way that his speeches still motivate us and others. Henry being a good leader first recognized that nothing can be achieved without the people he manages and leads in other words he recognized the power of 'we', the power of union. His speeches may still be applied in today's corporate world. Shakespeare's Henry's speeches are masterpieces of communication between a leader and his subordinates. Finally Shakespeare's Henry V's succeeds as a good leader and the chorus at the end of the play *King Henry V* makes clear his success. In the epilogue Shakespeare states that Henry was the "Lord of the world's best garden"

Fortune made his sword;
 By which the world's best garden he achieved,
 And of it left his son imperial lord.
 (Henry V, Epilogue lines 6 - 8)

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