

The Holistic Approach to Task Accomplishment: Hanuman as a Role Model

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Abstract

In the face of the challenge of the dynamics of change, the requirements and the priorities of not only the corporate world but also the personal and social life are not the same as they used to be in the past. In such a scenario, leaders who are daring, dynamic, and daredevils are the first choice in every walk of life. There is every possibility of the fact that such effective and creative leaders may not be available in plenty so as to meet the challenge. When the role-models from real life are in scarcity, we may look for them in religious and cultural scriptures. One such role model happens to be Hanuman, a God-like figure, who is worshipped by a large number of people throughout the world. Though numerous leadership qualities may be found in his persona, the quality of holistic approach to task accomplishment deserves to be studied and analysed from the research point of view. In this paper, this aspect has been explored with the help of conceptual framework routing through (i) The Magic of Missionary Zeal, (ii) The Trait of Readily Acceptance, (iii) The Impact of Seeking Blessings, (iv) The Aesthetic of All-time Happiness, (v) The Miracle of Complete Faith (vi) The Instinct of Adaptability, (viii) The Award of Strategic Thinking and (viii) The Dividend of Putting Slices Together. The comprehensive study of these qualitative features in the character of Hanuman proves that he is a fit role model of the concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment. The findings of the paper seem to be quite relevant, meaningful and motivating for a number of those leaders who aspire to achieve success in their respective fields.

Keywords : Hanuman, Holistic, Management, Role-Model.

Introduction

With the fast changing scenario of the modern global perspective, the challenges for getting success in personal, social, and business life have been on the rise. In today's context, the meanings, the responsibilities, and the priorities relating to work culture have been changed due to the cut-throat competition. The focus has been changing from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Today, the business world has come to need the creative, innovative, daring, and dynamic professional/leaders with a "can-do" attitude. The qualities that are passionately looked for in a leader now include not

only knowledge, aptitude, and academic intelligence but also skills, attitudes, and emotional intelligence. People who have rockstar personality and can work at the bottom of the pyramid are known as successful in various ventures. But those who lack such qualities are not likely to get success in life.

Unfortunately, most of the people do lack these qualities in some proportions. They have to handle the maximum burden with the minimum qualities, and are likely to end up in frustration and depression. These qualities can't be cultivated merely theoretically. They have to be instilled into the being of a person practically through motivational grooming, following some role model, attending practice-sessions, etc. Following a role model may be a good option in this regard. But the availability of human role models is likely to be insufficient. Then we may look towards the mythological, religious, or spiritual mighty figures as gods who appear in various scriptures and epics of the world. One such mighty figure is Hanuman who appears in the great epic named *Ramcharitmanas* of Hindu religion and mythology. The exploration of his personality and character brings before us a large number of leadership qualities that are urgently required in today's context. By virtue of Hanuman's exceptional qualities and skills, he may be deemed as an appropriate example of a role model by whom people may feel motivated towards developing their leadership qualities. One such quality that has been taken for study here in this paper relates to Hanuman's holistic approach to task accomplishment.

The Purpose and Scope

The purpose this paper is to study the concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment as we find in the persona of Hanuman that can be significant and relevant for people in today's context. The paper focuses on exploring the various characteristic features relating to the concept in hand. It is based on some of the significant premises that contribute to the concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment. The vital components relating to the said concept have been explored with special reference to Hanuman in the context of the religious and mythological resources namely *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Sundarkaand (Ramcharitmanas)* by Goswami Tulsidas.

Review of Literature

Hanuman is a prominent character in Indian culture and mythology. In recent times, scholars are trying to explore a number of characteristic features in his persona. Efforts are being made to analyse his character for studying various dimensions in terms of leadership qualities as mentioned in the introduction of this paper. The concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment in the context of Hanuman seems to be unexplored yet. It is possible that some scholars might have referred to this

concept, but it seems that it has not been exclusively analysed so far. Moreover, every study does bring out some fresh view-points irrespective of the studies conducted in the past. The concept has been explored and studied in this paper purely on the basis of the primary sources namely *Hanuman Chalisa* and *Sundarkaand* that have been formed the part of my prayers. I have been exploring spiritual insights in these scriptures since long. After my exposure to management studies, the spiritual insights flashed upon my sensibility making me aware of the interesting and meaningful characteristic features of Hanuman's persona as a saviour, an emissary, a servant, and a warrior. Besides, what has personally impressed me most is the aspect of leadership skills in Hanuman's character that have been gradually revealing to me since long. In the present paper, only those leadership qualities that contribute towards making his holistic approach to task accomplishment have been taken for the detailed study.

Research Methodology

In this study, the textual data from the above-mentioned scriptures has been analysed in the context of religious and cultural dimensions and correlated with the managerial qualities. But no emphasis has been laid upon the subject of management as such because it is equally relevant to the personal and social contexts. The personal observations and insights have enormously formed the part of the study as the various connotations of the textual data have been interpreted and correlated with the topic in hand. All the dimensions related to the topic have been amply supported by textual references and figures given at the end of the paper.

Characteristic Features of the Concept

The concept of the holistic approach to task accomplishment as observed in the persona of Hanuman shall be discussed through the following premises so as to contribute to the final conceptual structure of the concept:

1. The Magic of Missionary Zeal
2. The Trait of Readily Acceptance
3. The Impact of Seeking Blessings
4. The Aesthetic of All-time Happiness
5. The Miracle of Complete Faith
6. The Instinct of Adaptability
7. The Award of Strategic Thinking
8. The Dividend of Putting Slices Together

1. The Magic of Missionary Zeal

The first characteristic feature of the concept of Hanuman's holistic approach to task accomplishment relates to his remarkable missionary zeal with which he takes up the task for accomplishing it. Actually, he takes up the task as a mission and not just as a routine activity taken in a casual manner. He has a mindset that enables him to consider a task as a huge responsibility and not as a labour. He doesn't carry loads of expectations and rewards after accomplishing the task. The only reward he expects is the sense of self-satisfaction and the genuine appreciation that he might get from the people around after the successful accomplishment. It is Hanuman's attitude that makes him distinguished because he takes the task not as an order but as a polite request made to him. In the face of the challenge of locating the kidnapped Sita, the Goddess, Lord Rama feels helpless as he is not sure about the warrior capable of doing the great job of finding Sita. Though there are present a large number of warriors in the camp, nobody is quite confident. At last, it is Hanuman who becomes the centre of attention of all concerned. He remains to be the last hope. In such a situation, Hanuman is seen sitting silently and calmly and thinking of accomplishing the task successfully. The moment Jaambvant, the commander, comes forward with the polite request to him for accomplishing the great task, he takes it in all seriousness:

‘Jaambvant ke vachan suhai,
Suni Hanumant hardiya ati bhaai.’¹

2. The Trait of Readily Acceptance

The second component of the concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment as found in Hanuman, is concerned with his quality of readily acceptance of the task assigned. The moment Hanuman happens to know about the task assigned, Hanuman hears these words patiently and likes them as the reward for himself. He is neither disturbed nor baffled, rather feels overjoyed that he has been deemed the fittest person for the task in hand. He not only feels overjoyed but also eagerly and readily accepts the task to accomplish it:

‘Vidyavaan guni ati chaatur,
Ramkaaj karibe ko aatur.’²

Hanuman has no fears, no conflicts, no doubts, no grudges whatsoever. He doesn't indulge in procrastination, rather he gets ready to set out. Had there been some other fellow, he would have oscillated like a pendulum facing the Hamletian dilemma – ‘To be or not to be – that's

the questions.’ Everybody doesn’t have a mindset of Hanuman’s type that he is ever ready to accept the task assigned to him for accomplishment. There may be a number of issues and considerations involved in the final decision-making. Most of the time people are noticed to be in a dilemma whether they should come forward for the assigned task. They may make a number of excuses so as to get rid of the burden imposed. But there are people who have a self-motivated and growth-oriented mindset of accomplishing a task with ready acceptance, naturally, without any selfish motive. Hanuman is such a personality who attach value to the task assigned and its results.

3. The Impact of Seeking Blessings

The third premise of the concept in hand highlights the impact of Hanuman’s qualities showing grace and humility that are expected from a cultured and value-oriented performer like Hanuman. In spite of his great power, knowledge, and intelligence, he seeks blessings of others so that his task is performed successfully. He acknowledges and respects the divinity inside everybody’s persona. Firstly, after getting the request from Jaambvant to take up the task, Hanuman seeks the blessings of everybody present there:

‘Yeh kahi naai sabinhi kahu maatha.’³

Secondly, Hanuman pays his respects to everyone present in the camp before his departure:

‘Hanuman tehi parsaa kar puni keenh pranaam.’⁴

Thirdly, after handling the obstacles created by Surasa strategically while crossing the sea, Hanuman takes her leave and bows his head before proceeding further:

‘Maaga bida taahi siru naava.’⁵

Fourthly, during his stay at Ashok Vaatika Hanuman pays his respects to Sita in different situations:

(i) before showing his presence, he pays his respects silently –

‘Dekhi manhi mahu keenh pranaama.’⁶

(ii) after meeting her in person, he bows his head a number of times :

‘Baar baar naisee pad seesa.’⁷

(iii) before getting Sita’s permission for eating fruits from the garden:

‘Bola bachan jori kar keesa.’⁸

(iv) after getting Sita's permission for eating:

‘Chaleu naai sir paitheu baaga’.⁹

It is really great to observe that Hanuman, in spite of his great competencies, displays cultural values for involving divinity present in the persona of other people; seeking their blessing to support his energy and confidence level; and getting psychological, emotional, and spiritual boost for the successful accomplishment of the task in hand. All this work magically towards getting success. On the contrary, the modern performers may hesitate to seek blessings of other people because they may not attach value to the concept, though it happens to be quite helpful at the psychological level. Their egoistic tendencies may stop them to go for it. If practised the Hanuman way, they may also reap the rich dividends like Hanuman in this regard.

4. The Aesthetic of All-Time Happiness

The fourth aspect of the holistic approach to task accomplishment deals with the aesthetic of Hanuman's all-time happy moods in whatsoever situations. Right from the beginning to the end, he is not seen worried, frustrated, and angry. The moment he is asked to take up the task, he expresses that

‘Hohahi kaaj mohi harsh bisheshi’.¹⁰

Having started his journey, he comes across a number of hurdles that are mostly created deliberately by supernatural powers to test his power and intelligence.

Firstly, a huge monster named Surasa stops him for gulping him down. But Hanuman manages to tackle the crisis with his intelligence and strategical thinking. Even at such a disturbing incident, Hanuman feels quite relaxed and happy:

‘Chaleu harsh hiye dhari Raghunatha.’¹¹

Secondly, when Hanuman meets Vibhishan and comes to know that he is a man with spiritual inclinations, he feels very happy:

‘Haridya harsh kapi sajjan cheenha.’¹²

Thirdly, Hanuman accepts happily the bangle that Sita gives him as a token of her identity and love meant for Lord Rama:

‘Chudamani utari tab daiu,
harsh samet pawansut laiu.’¹³

Fourthly, after coming back to Rama's camp, Hanuman approaches his master Rama, with a sense of ecstatic joy, to inform him and to be informed from him about the incidents that have already happened both the sides:

‘Chale harsh Raghunayak paasa,
Puchhat kahat nawal itihasa.’¹⁴

Fifthly, after approaching Rama, Hanuman is extremely overjoyed having performed the task not only successfully but also holistically:

‘Ram kapinh jab aawat dekha,
Kiya kaaj mun harsh bishesha.’¹⁵

Sixthly, Rama feels happy and praises Hanuman for his adventurous success. At this, Hanuman also gets quite happy to hear his master's words and to look at his face and body radiant with happiness:

‘Suni prabhu bachan buloki mukh gaat harsh Hanumant.’¹⁶

Seventhly, after the battle in Lanka is over and Hanuman is returning to the awaiting Sugariva, he is the happiest man of the world. He is once again possessed with a great sense of happiness over the successful completion of the challenging task:

‘Mukh prassan mun tej biraja,
Kinhesi Ramchandra kar kaaja.’¹⁷

It is a great occasion for Hanuman to take pride in himself because he has performed not only one but a series of great tasks showing his holistic approach to the task accomplishment. He has a great sense of satisfaction because his tremendous success has enhanced the image of not only himself but also his master. And moreover, he gets genuine applause from every corner which serves as the reward for him. His master and colleagues are overbrimmed with a rare sense of achievement and the credit of which goes to Hanuman. It seems to be more than a reward for a committed warrior like Hanuman who stands apart from today's role models in the relevant context.

5. The Miracle of Complete Faith

The fifth feature of the concept of holistic approach to task accomplishment involves the miracle of complete faith that Hanuman has. Faith in what? Faith in not only the task but also himself and his master. Actually this firm faith strengthens his sense of assurance, within and outside. It constantly energizes his creative faculty within his whole personality and starts releasing the internal force or energy. The moment Hanuman gets the polite-orders to perform the challenging task, this force or energy gets converted into a kind of explosion of

action. Then a series of such explosions starts within which inspires and empowers him to perform the task whole-heartedly. Hanuman starts his journey happily having firm faith in his great master:

‘Chaleu harsh hiya dhari Raghunatha.’¹⁸

Besides, before starting any task, however small, Hanuman does it with firm faith in his master. Before entering the city of Lanka, he remembers his great master:

‘Prabisi nagar keeje sab kaaja,
Haridya rakhi kosalpur raaja.’¹⁹

Then having entered Lanka, Hanuman does the same thing repeatedly :

‘Paitha nagar sumiri bhagwana.’²⁰

Though Sita gives him permission for eating the fruits in Ashok Vatika, even then Hanuman does remember his master, Lord Rama:

‘Raghupati charan hardiya dhari,
taat madhur phal khaahu.’²¹

Thus, Hanuman has a strong and convincing conviction that it is his master, Lord Rama, who wants that particular task to be performed by him. With this kind of mindset, he adds his master with him as his partner for getting his own vigour doubled and accomplishing the task. This kind of belief-system multiplies his capabilities within him. He becomes aware and comes to experience this miraculous power of his being and his soul when he has that unshakable faith in his master, in himself, and in the task assigned.

It may be easily observed in the modern context that most of the people seem to lack this kind of conviction towards having complete and firm faith in his Master, in himself, and in the task to be accomplished. If they are exposed to such type of faith, they may be in a position to get their tasks accomplished with greater results like Hanuman.

6. The Instinct of Adaptability

The sixth component of the concept of Hanuman’s holistic approach to task accomplishment relates to his instinct of adaptability to the circumstances and situations around. Hanuman displays a unique quality of adapting himself on the physical level, symbolically to the everchanging situations around. As and when it is required, Hanuman changes the shape and size of his body, either magnified or miniseuled. Firstly, soon after beginning his journey, he encounters with a supernatural monster called Surasa who wants to stop his way by gulping

him down. As the monster increases the size of her body, Hanuman doubles the size of his body in comparison to the size of Surasa's body:

- (i) 'Sorah jojan mukh tehi thaiu,
turat pawansut battis bhaiu.'²²
- (ii) 'Ja jas Surasa badan badhava,
Tasu doon kapi roop dekhava.'²³
- (iii) 'Sat jojan tehi aanan keenha,
Ati laghu roop pawansut leenha.'²⁴

Secondly, while entering the city of Lanka, Hanuman does the same thing as there was a lot of security around:

'Ati laghu roop dharon nisi nagar karon paisar.'²⁵

Thirdly, having reached 'Ashokvatika', he hides himself from the monsters reducing his body to a miniscule shape:

'Ati laghu roop dhureu Hanumana.'²⁶

Fourthly, while assuring Sita of the authenticity of his identity, he follows the same pattern:

'Sita mun bharos tab bhaiu,
Muni laghu roop pawansut laiu.'²⁷

After this whenever Hanuman is in need of such a physical adaptability, he does it according to the situations around:

'Suksham roop dhari siyahi dikhava,
Vikat roop dhari lank jarava.
Bheem roop dhari asur sanghare,
Ramchandar ke kaaj sanware.'²⁸

Hanuman reduces himself to the miniscule shape to show Sita surrounded by the monsters, adopts ferocious shape to burn Lanka, and adapts himself to a very huge figure to destroy mighty evil monsters. This he does only to accomplish the great task of his lord.

Spiritually, this physical adaptability means that you have to be egoless to get the rewards of 'Karmayoga' and 'Bhaktiyoga'. Hanuman has to become near-violent, rather assertive, when the evil gets enormously magnified and it needs to be destroyed by forceful efforts. Mild efforts are not

enough to encounter the strong evil. Lanka is a symbol of huge evil of exploitation, corruption and dictatorship, and it has to be reduced to ashes by some spiritually awakened karamyogi like Hanuman, Lord Rama and others. Hanuman maximizes the size of his body (efforts) to combat the great sinful monsters (morally and ethically degraded workforce) so that the great task of the master (organization) can be performed successfully. When some business organization becomes sick due to plenty of corrupt practices, it needs overhauling by some leader who is truly a Karamyogi like Hanuman. It is equally applicable at the individual level. Every successful leader has to have this quality of adaptability to the everchanging scenario. In the absence of this great quality, the desired results may not be achieved in the context of task accomplishment at the individual as well as the organizational level.

7. The Award of Strategic Thinking

The seventh qualitative component of the eight-dimensional concept in hand focuses on the need of strategical thinking in the context of holistic approach to task accomplishment.

Hanuman possesses a rare kind of ability to think analytically and strategically so as to accomplish the task. This quality is displayed by Hanuman at a number of occasions. It is this kind of thinking that he makes use of for handling complex situations:

‘Braham astra tehi saadha kapi keenh bichaar.’²⁹

Before taking action, Hanuman analyses the situation before him and think strategically so as not to take any risk towards the task accomplishment. Firstly, while entering ‘Ashokvatika’ to meet Sita, he doesn’t jump to action out of desperation. Being a new place and a confused situation, he doesn’t know what to do and how to do. But logical thinking enables him to take right actions. He doesn’t appear in front of Sita in the very beginning because they are not familiar with each other. In an atmosphere of fears, doubts, and tight security, it is very difficult for Hanuman is prove his identity and also for Sita to trust him as the genuine emissary of Lord Rama, her husband. Also, if he had spoken something loudly while hiding himself behind the trees, Sita would have been much more frightened and confused. Hence, he decides to throw Rama’s ring in front of her so as to conjure up her confidence and trust:

‘Kapi kari haridya bichar deenhi mudrika daari tab.’³⁰

This is the best possible thing he can do and this does serve his purpose.

Secondly, after throwing the ring, he doesn’t appear there instantly. He starts describing Rama’s noble qualities while hiding himself behind the vegetation. He appears only after both of them get

assured of mutual trust. Even now Sita is still a little bit hesitant and that's why Hanuman takes a pledge to assure her that he is really the ambassador of Rama.

Thirdly, Hanuman has to do a lot of things to convince and persuade Vibhishan and he does everything with the help of his skill of analytical and logical thinking:

‘Mun mahun tarak karai kapi laaga,
Tehi samay Vibhishan jaaga.’³¹

Fourthly, Hanuman handles the situation strategically when he appears in Ravana's court to convince him for allowing Sita to go back to her husband, Lord Rama. As an ambassador he displays various tactics to please Ravana, such as morality, ethics, ancestors, honour, ritual, warning and greedy assurance. While doing this, Hanuman says:

‘Binti Karaun gori kar Ravana,
Sunhu maan taji mor sikhavan;
Taason baioru kabhoon nahi keeje,
More kahe jaanki deeje;
Ram charan pankaj ur dharhun,
Lanka achal raaju tumh karhu.’³²

He tries to persuade Ravana politely and with folded hands. He advises him to leave his ego and pride. He also advises him not to be the enemy of Rama, the Lord. He asks him to approach Rama and have faith in him as the Lord, Rama will forgive him and also make him the King of the Island of Lanka. Hanuman pleads again and again to release Sita from his captivity.

Fifthly, having failed in persuading Ravana, Hanuman strategically plans to create havoc just for the sake of giving a warning towards showing Rama's war power to him. Hanuman burns the Lanka island with the help of his long tail and ultimately making Ravana think over the issue.

8. The Dividend of Putting Slices Together

The eighth and final premise of the concept relates to the dividend of accomplishing the task as a whole and not a part of it.

Hanuman was assigned to accomplish the task of locating Sita only. Had Hanuman come back after finding and having a glimpse of her in Lanka, he would have accomplished the assigned task of locating Sita. But this would have been done only by a performer whose approach towards task accomplishment hasn't been a holistic one. Hanuman doesn't belong to this category. He is a complete performer and an achiever with a broad vision of holistic

nature. The task assigned to Hanuman is a whole cake and not the slices. When he takes up a task, he takes it up as a whole with futuristic vision and handles the various situations that might come up during the accomplishment of the single task. He does not stick to only the single task assigned to him but also handles the unexpected situations by taking quick decisions on the spot with the help of strategical thinking. This is the characteristic quality of a true performer like Hanuman. He locates not only Sita in Lanka, but also proves his identity to assure Sita, talks to her for consoling her, creates fear among Ravana's demons, tries to persuade Ravana for releasing Sita of the captivity and hand over to Rama so as to escape war, and shows the power of Rama's camp by setting Lanka on fire.

It is the series of relevant and unexpected tasks, however small, that makes the assigned task accomplished completely.

Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, it can be summed up that there is no point of getting accomplished the only task that has been assigned to the performer if other relevant and unexpected tasks that might come up during the performance are not accomplished along with the main task. A performer can only become a true achiever if he has the mindset of holistic approach like Hanuman. Had Hanuman come back to Lord Rama just after finding Sita, he or his master Rama would have to go to Lanka time and again for handling different situations that might come up after it. It is so judicious on the part of Hanuman to guess the future development, and to handle them in this very single visit so as to avoid the wastage of time and energy. He is a true performer and a complete achiever with a broad vision of holistic approach. Any task assigned to him is accomplished as a whole and not in pieces. He takes up a task only to accomplish it thoroughly so as to get complete results alongwith a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

Thus, Hanuman comes before us as a true role model of holistic approach to task accomplishment and his characteristic features may be of some practical use in the context of today's scenario.

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Figures



Jaambvant assigning the task to Hanuman of locating Sita.



Hanuman's encounter with Surasa while crossing the sea.



Another monster trying to stop Hanuman from crossing the sea.



Hanuman's meeting with Vibhishan while entering Lanka.



A view of Ashokvatika in Lanka where Sita is captivated.



Hanuman assumes the miniscule shape before meeting Sita in Ashokvatika



Hanuman introducing himself and assuring her of the release by Rama.



Ravana trying to persuade Sita to become his queen.



Hanuman's encounter with Demons while creating havoc in Ashokvatika.



Hanuman trying to persuade Ravana for getting Sita released.



Hanuman's setting Lanka on fire with his burning tail.



Hanuman approaches Rama with a happy Mood to brief him of his successful visit to Lanka