Chapter 28
Reflections from Indian History: Story-Telling for the New Age Mentor

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Abstract This article seeks to trace the concept of 'Mentoring' as a channel of communication through a 'Conversation Schema' and a 'Mentoring Story-Telling matrix through Indian Historical Cases/Traditions'. Although lot of work has been done in the past in silos, the author tries to draw newer interpretations of Indian classics for modern management education and Philosophy. Insights are offered into the practices adopted by some of the Indian Kings and Historical leaders to enhance individual competencies in various domains. We strive to highlight the development of 'mentoring as a channel of communication' in the Indian past and draw lessons to be learnt for the new age mentor. Some of the traditions and legends discussed in the article are indicative of the author's effort to co-relate the evidence in the past Indian tradition to the modern management practice.

28.1 Introduction

With the world becoming a global village, the challenges faced by individuals working in organizations are manifold. They relate to instability, how to ensure a life-long career, increased and discontinuous competition – all in a cross-cultural environment. There are other forces also at work which threaten an individual's employability. For example, how the employers view the job market of today taking into consideration the economic viability of a hiring decision. There is always a trade-off in terms of 'Talent' and the 'Cost' involved with employers looking at procuring best talent at minimal costs. Trends like 'Temporary staffing' or 'Contract-Staffing' is a reality. Countries like U.S and U.K are constantly in the process of hiring from countries like India, China, and Philippines due to the cost factor. In developing countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa (BRICS),

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the challenge is to constantly ensure that the blue-collared work force keeps pace with the emerging needs and challenges that arise with growing economy.

Once an employee joins an organization, it is imperative to create a unique 'brand equity', developing a brand 'I' by differentiating from peers within and outside the organization on a continuous basis. This is only possible if one is aware of the key areas (skills) to improve upon, the contemporary realities, and enhancement of emotional intelligence quotient apart from gaining the technical know-how of the job undertaken. This is where Mentors play an important role**.**

28.2   Literature

A study conducted by Harvard professor Linda Hill during the late 1990s (Coaching and Mentoring 2004) pointed to three characteristics of 'Mentors':

- They set high standards,
- They make themselves available to their protégés – in other words, they are willing to invest the time and effort required for good mentoring,
- They orchestrate developmental experiences for those they counsel. This is accomplished by steering protégés onto important projects, teams, and into challenging jobs.

  Other critically important characteristics mentioned suggest that mentors:

- Are successful and respected citizens of their organization,
- Demonstrate good people-development skills,
- Understand how their protégé learns best,
- Have access to information and people who can help others in their career,
- Are transparent in their dealings.
- Have good "chemistry" with their protégé,
- Are solidly linked to the organization.
- Reflect a high level of Integrity.

Psychologists Timothy Butler and James Waldroop have described this type of person as one who has an embedded life interest in coaching and mentoring others. For some people, nothing is more enjoyable than teaching, which in business usually translates into coaching and mentoring. These individuals are driven by the deeply embedded life interest of counselling and mentoring, allowing them to guide employees, peers, and even clients to better performance (Harvard Business Essentials 2004).

Megginson and Clutterbuck (2008) discussed the portfolio of techniques and approaches for coaches and mentors, in helping others. They focused on a long list of situations, through their own coaching and mentoring activities and enriched it further with the help of other experienced professionals in the field. The techniques they focused on are:

1. Establishing and managing the coaching or mentoring relationship,
2. Setting Goals,
3. Clarifying and understanding situations,
4. Understanding other people behaviour,
5. Dealing with roadblocks,
6. Stimulating creative thinking,
7. Deciding what to do,
8. Committing to action,
9. Managing the learner's own behaviour,
10. Building wider network of support, influence and learning,
11. Review and ending the coaching or mentoring relationship,
12. Building your own technique.

Effective communication plays an important role in nurturing the existing human capital and talent towards achieving the individual and organization goals through Mentoring. According to Chaturvedi et al. (2009) effective Communication (efficient process of sending and receiving messages) helps business in numerous ways, for example:

- Stronger decision making,
- Early warning of potential problems,
- Increased productivity and steadier workflow,
- Stronger business relationships,
- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages,
- Enhanced professional image for both employees and companies,
- Lower employee turnover and higher satisfaction,
- Better financial results and greater return for investors.

Conversely, when communication breaks down, the results can be just the opposite. At every stage of an individual's career, communication is the key to success, and the higher you rise in an organization the greater its importance grows. Top management spend as much as 85 % of their time communicating with others (Jones and George 2003, 512, 517).

Successful Communication is result of a stronger connect with the audience under any circumstance. If one keeps in mind 'the communication process' as the base, one can improve the chances of success as a mentor by using 'Story-Telling' as a tool. The original version of the communication process was created to describe electronic communication (Baldwin and Roberts 2006, 5), but this model has been further developed (by Chaturvedi et al. 2009, 11). I have used 'Story-Telling' as an *alternate channel* while communicating with the 'mentee' in this new model given below. (Fig. 28.1)

The above process is based on a 'Conversation Schema' which uses a 'Story-Telling' tool. The word **schema** comes from the Greek word "σχῆμα", which means *shape,* or more generally, *plan*. The plural is "σχήματα" (schemata). In English, both *schemas* and *schemata* are used as plural forms. The first half of the paper seeks to explore a communication framework *–the conversation schema-* which uses 'Story-Telling' as a tool for effective mentoring.
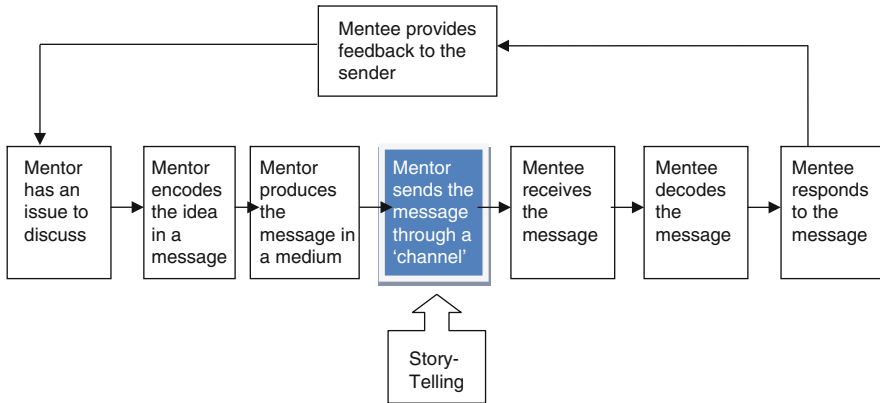
Fig. 28.1 Conversation schema using 'story-telling' as a mentoring tool (sender = mentor, receiver = mentee)

The steps to be followed are:

1. The mentor decides on the specific issue to be communicated. The issue could be relating to General Management, Socialization, Administration, Soft-Skills, People management etc...,
2. The mentor encodes the idea in a message,
3. The message is communicated through a channel (the tool used is **Story-Telling**),
4. The mentee receives the message, decodes the message through the 'cues' present in the story narratives,
5. Mentee responds to the message and gives feedback to the mentor on his understanding,

Upon feedback, if the mentor feels that his message is not fully decoded then he/she must have an alternate similar story to cite and reinforce the idea.

28.3   Story-Telling as a Tool of Communication

Michael Hattersley (1997) highlights story-telling as one of the talents important for 'managerial success'. His article focuses on Sheldon A. Buckler who worked with Edwin Land in the early days of Polaroid and Karen Anne Zien, a cultural anthropologist, who set out to find what made innovative corporations like HP and Gillette remain innovative. A substantial part of the answer was story-telling. Their innovation processes almost always were influenced by stories about great corporate successes, total failures, or failures that turned into successes.

Douglas A Ready (2002) describes story telling as an approach that is as old as Homer, which can be one of the most effective means of developing successful

managers and leaders. Story-telling by a company's senior-executive is a way of providing potential leaders with the necessary and relevant contextual inputs from successful role-models. Story-telling has been an effective means of communicating important substantive and cultural messages for thousands of years. The Bible is one of the best examples of story-telling which has been used to shape behaviour, cultural norms and core values. Ready states "Great stories create a visual imagery in our minds, and great story-tellers invite us to walk the landscape that is created by this imagery". The various elements of effective stories are:

- Context specific
- Level appropriate
- Told by respected role models
- Drama
- High learning value

The above mentioned elements get explicitly reflected, through cases like Continental Tyre, RBC Financial Group. Ready also explains the strategy of implementing a 'Story-Telling Leadership Programme'. The Companies should be prepared to follow these steps:

1. Get the top team actively engaged,
2. Develop a collective point of view,
3. Consider all available alternatives like structured coaching, action-learning, university sponsored programs, benchmarking etc. in conjunction with storytelling,
4. Get the right team in place to carry out the program,
5. Coach the story-tellers and orient the participants,
6. Use stories to stimulate, dialogue, for reflection and action.

Barbara Kaufman (2003) refers to story-telling as one of the oldest, powerful modes of communication. She laments, in the world of corporations and non-profit organizations, how this highly effective tool has taken a back seat to the more efficient electronic means of communication such as email and teleconferencing. Though savvy leaders are now adding storytelling to their toolkits to "sell" organizational goals and priorities to employees and other stakeholders. Through stories, these leaders align organizational mission and values with people's intrinsic needs to belong and to contribute. Storytelling is far more convincing to an audience than rational arguments, statistics or facts.

In 'Corporate Legends and Lore: The power of storytelling as a management tool', Peg Neuhauser outlines the results of a study with MBA Students, which demonstrates the power of a story. Statistically oriented students were divided into three groups. The first group was given only statistics related to the potential success of a winery. The second group was given statistics and story. The third group received only the story. The story ended with "And my father would be so proud to sip this wine". The findings revealed some curious results. Majority of students in the third group believed that the winery would be successful, while in

the other two groups sceptics dominated. So the group which was persuaded was done so through story not statistics.

Having explored and understood 'Story Telling' as a tool of communication, it is important to seek answer to the question: What type of stories to use? Barbara Kaufman focuses on finding stories with impact. The task is to observe day-to-day activities in the present and look for stories that answer the following questions:

1. Who are the risk-takers in the organization?
2. Who are the informal influence leaders?
3. What are the average employees doing that really makes a difference?
4. Who are the organization heroes, the people who walk that extra mile?

The South West Airlines is very good in story telling that demonstrate employee commitment. Finding even a failure makes a good story when it is positioned to focus on the learning experience derived from it. Kaufman (2003) highlights the story of a creative Southwest Airlines mechanic who demonstrated his commitment to customer service by walking that extra mile. During a blizzard in Buffalo, the employee used his snowmobile to drive seven miles in 20 ft of snow to get to the airport to free up a plane for take-off.

Though there are enough concepts relating present management to past classical traditions, most of the story-telling cases are contemporary and thus there is a need to explore the classical traditions which brings us to the second part of this research paper.

28.4 Exploring Stories from Classical Tradition

I have explored the concept of mentoring as a channel of communication, through Indian classical traditions like the 'Guru-Shishya' Parampara, historical figures and legends. The question might arise as to what is the need to go back to Indian historical traditions?

The prime consideration would be referring to current trend of looking at the past to draw management lessons for the present. Rakesh Khurana and Nitin Nohria in a 2008 issue of Harvard Business Review state that "Managers have lost legitimacy over the past decade in the face of a widespread institutional break down of trust and self-policing in business". They came up with a rigorous code of ethics –A Hippocratic Oath for Managers – inspired by Hippocratic Oath of Doctors. Management Leadership lessons have been drawn from Greek history by authors like Lance Kurke (2009) who relates riveting episodes from Alexander's expansion, while imparting valuable lessons from the timeless legend of one of the greatest leaders in history. Thus I seek to draw newer interpretations from Indian history classical traditions, legends etc for the modern management education and Philosophy.

I have reviewed literature and created a **Mentoring Story-Telling matrix through Indian Historical cases/traditions** (Fig. 28.2). This gives insights into the practices adopted by some of the Indian Kings, Historical leaders, to enhance

	Case/Tradition	Mentoring Implication Through Communication
1	Guru–Shishya Parampara	Achieve potential, Talent Development
2	Krishna Arjuna – *The Bhagavatha Gita*	Persuasive Communication, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Conflict Management, Crisis Management
3	Duryodhan /Danveer Karnan	Increase in Self-Esteem, Recognition, Socialization
4	Abhimanyu's Chakravyuha	Failure due to incomplete mentoring
5	Theravada Buddhism – Eight fold path	Developing Action-plan, Disciplined approach
6	Kautilya's *Arthashastra* during reign of Chandragupta Maurya	Virtues of a leader, Guide for organizational effectiveness
7	Akbar/Birbal	General Administration and Polity, Reverse Mentoring
8	Stories from 19th Century Indian History: Bhairabi Bramhani, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda	Relationship Management with Mentee, Unique Communication Style, Presentation Skills

Fig. 28.2 Mentoring story-telling matrix through Indian historical cases/traditions

individual competencies in various domains. The mentor may use this to create a 'conversation' with the mentee by using these cases/traditions as stories to focus on the 'Mentoring Implication through communication'.

The purpose of the below mentioned matrix is precisely to give an indicative tool to the new age mentors and to inspire the readers to create their own inventory of stories from the rich Indian classical traditions. The mentoring implications may go beyond the mapped parameters in the matrix and gives credence to the sustainability factor of this perspective research paper.

The boundaries of the review have been defined period wise, with major focus on cases/traditions from Ancient Indian History. Stories from the Medieval and Modern Indian history have also been included. The cases /traditions have been selected taking into consideration the implications for the new age mentor. This being an indicative matrix, the new age mentor may be further motivated to explore other stories from the Classical traditions in India.

The above matrix indicates how the traditions, legends of ancient, medieval and modern Indian history relate to the modern management practice.

Let us discuss each in greater detail:

28.4.1   Guru: Shishya Parampara

This concept of lineage or parampara is traced to the traditional Indian culture and dharmic traditions of a succession of teachers and disciples. The basis of the spiritual relationship is mentoring in Hinduism where the sacred teachings were passed on from the guru (the teacher) to the sisya (the disciple) or chela. The continuous enriching relationship between the guru and the disciple is the 'funnel' of knowledge transmission.[1] The earliest literary sources in Indian civilization is the Rig-Veda, parts of which were originally composed in 1000 B.C. (Romilla Thapar 1966). It is believed that a seer called Ved Vyas compiled the content of the Vedas into four major books: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda. Each Veda consists of poems that glorify god; brahmanas that enumerate procedures for carrying out rituals, Aranyaks (Forest Books) developed primarily for the forest dweller, and the Upanishads or Vedanta considered to contain the essence of the Vedas. Upanishadic thoughts have influenced Western philosophers significantly in both ancient and modern times.[2]

According to Eknath Easwaran (1996) etymologically the word "Upanishad" suggests "Sitting down near", i.e., at the feet of an illumined teacher in an intimate session of spiritual instruction, as aspirants still do in India today. Often the teacher is one who has retired from worldly life to an ashram or "forest academy" along the banks of the upper Ganges, to live with the students as a family, teaching in question and answer sessions and by example in daily living. Other settings are explicitly dramatic: a wife asks her husband about immortality, a king seeks instruction from an illumined sage; one teenage boy is taught by death himself, another by fire, beasts, and birds. The New age Mentor can relate the Upanishadic traditions to the mentee to enhance the self-confidence of the mentee by focussing on individual's strength. Another learning for the new age mentor is to motivate the mentee to learn from surroundings, failures, successes and most importantly from the mentor.

There are conversations/dialogues which may be used as reference 'stories' to inspire mentors in a modern organization, who are constantly faced with dynamic and volatile situations. Amanda Wood (2000) states how some ideas from Upanishads can be translated into modern terms. Philosophical questions are often discussed by telling a story, in which someone approaches a teacher and receives instructions. The new age mentor on being approached by the mentee can use story-telling in a similar fashion during the mentoring sessions.

The Puranas (18 books) contain examples and stories to illustrate the concepts found in the Vedas in much simpler language. The two major epics – Ramayana and Mahabharata, the historical narrations of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna serve as a guide for the common man to live a moral life. The implication for the mentee would be to lead a disciplined and focussed life to achieve professional success.

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[1] Guru-shishya tradition http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru-shishya_tradition

[2] Hinduism.pdf *Essentials of Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma*, The Bharatiya Temple Detroit.

Balakrishnan A/L Muniapan (2007) refers to the 'transformational leadership style' demonstrated by Sri Rama in Valmiki Ramayana which has transformed and continues to transform millions of Indians even today. Burns (1978) characterized transformational leadership as a process that motivates followers by appealing to higher morals and values. The transformational leaders are able to define and articulate a vision for their organization; society, country and their leadership style can transform their followers towards higher performance. Balakrishnan's paper relates the transformational leadership style demonstrated by Lord Rama, 1,000 of years before the introduction and the development of TL model by Burns (1978) and later by Bass and Avolio (1994). Various episodes are narrated reflecting Lord Rama's style which can inspire a modern day mentor. The new age mentor in the modern context who seeks to focus on achieving potential of the mentee and develop talent may refer to Lord Rama's leadership style to inspire and suggest a role-model.

28.4.2 *Krishna Arjuna:* The Bhagavatha Gita

Pujan Roka (2008) quoting Peter Senge, Renowned Management Guru, states "In these times of unprecedented global stress, leaders of all sorts need to achieve deeper levels of clarity and connection (with nature and their higher selves) than traditionally required in order to do business as usual". So it is not surprising that many are renewing serious study of ancient wisdom traditions of all sorts, including timeless texts like the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Both ancient and modern wisdom still boil down to a wisdom, which is the most precious commodity of all times of profound change. Roka (2008) emphasizes on how the *Bhagavad Gita* is predominantly considered as a work of ancient wisdom and yet to be explored in the context of leadership. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is known as the "the sacred song of the god". It presents the dialogue between the two prominent leaders –Lord Krishna and the Warrior Prince Arjuna– before the Battle of Kurukshetra in the epic of Mahabharata.

The original Sanskrit text of the *Bhagavad Gita* has been translated in many languages. Scholars like Ralph Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, and T.S Eliot have studied Gita with great interest. Leaders like Gandhi and many scholars throughout the ages have considered the *Bhagavad Gita* as a practical guide to leading a meaningful and fulfilling life. The Gita espouses Arjuna's journey of leadership when he is confronted with the challenges of a war. As a leader, he is faced with the challenge of leading his organization –the clan of the Pandavas. The teachings of Krishna transforms Arjuna in embarking on that leadership journey and take up challenges of a leader. As Arjuna laments his dilemma of fighting the battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna tries to console him by saying (translated):

> It is not wise for an intelligent being like you to lament at the time of crisis. You should not be weak at the time of adversity; you should fight the adversities with a brave heart.

Avoiding actions and work does not give a person his freedom. Excellence cannot be attained by inaction or by giving up work.

Krishna counsels when Arjuna asks him about the path to the supreme state:

It is wise to be proactive when it comes to fulfilling responsibilities.

Roka stresses that apart from being friends, Krishna and Arjuna had a mentor-mentee relationship. These conversations/dialogues are indicative of Krishna's persuasive communication style. Parallel for the new age mentor would be to relate these conversations when the mentee faces self-doubt and challenges in corporate life. Modern Management can also draw inspiration from this persuasive communication for problem solving and decision making while handling situations of conflict and crisis.

28.4.3 Duryodhan: Danveer Karnan

One of the famous stories in Mahabharata relates to Karnan who was the son of Kunti and the Sun God but due to certain circumstances, Karnan was forced to be given away and grew up as a charioteer's son. Duryodhana and his 99 brothers were jealous and sworn enemies of their cousins, the Pandava Brothers (King Pandu's sons). Meanwhile Duryodhana, the son of Pandu's brother (and now king) Dhritarastra patronized Karnan and made him the king of Angadesh. Duryodhana, in fact positioned him up as a counterweight to Arjuna. In fact, Duryodhana was responsible for his 'socialization' into the warrior community. So indebted was Karnan that he lay down his life in the famous battle of Kurukshetra. He is also referred to as "Danveer Karnan", a man who would never refuse the request to make a gift or donation, howsoever costly that might be and irrespective of the consequences of giving to his own well being and security. So the lesson for the mentor is to build mentee relations by developing self-esteem, recognizing talent and induction into socialization, especially when the employee joins the organization to such an extent that when required the mentee would go beyond the call of duty to perform.

28.4.4 Abhimanyu's Chakravyuhu

Abhimanyu is a tragic hero in the Hindu epic -Mahabharata. He is the son of Subhadra, who is the half-sister of Krishna. He was killed in the Mahabharata war and there is a legend relating to his mentoring. Abhimanyu learnt the tricks of warfare, especially how to break through the battle formation called Chakravyuhu, while he was inside his mother's womb! The failure of his medium – his mother not absorbing the key to exiting the Chakravyuhu led to his death-rendering the

learning process incomplete. So this story implies that if mentoring is incomplete it leads to harmful consequences. At any given point of time, the new age mentor should ensure that the Conversation/Dialogue with the mentee relating to issues/actions, should be complete in all aspects. Otherwise the repercussions could be different than anticipated, in conflict with organization goal and objective.

28.4.5   Theravada Buddhism –Eight Fold Path

"Focussing on trends from the religion", Buddhism (2,500 year old), John Bulllitt[3] states in his article -Theravada (pali: thera"elders + vada" word, doctrine), the 'doctrine of the elders' is the name of the school of Buddhism that draws its scriptural inspiration from the Pali Canon, or Tipitaka. The Pali Canon is Theravada's scriptures. After delivering his first sermon, shortly after his awakening, he laid out the essential framework upon which all his later teachings were based.

As a story-telling case, this is important because, the truths are not fixed dogmatic principles, but living experiences to be explored individually in the heart of the sincere spiritual seeker. Buddha taught to his followers through the Eight-Fold-Path, a 'gradual' system of training, beginning with the development of sila (virtue – right speech, right action, right livelihood), followed by the development of Samadhi (concentration and mental cultivation – right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration), culminating in the development of panna, or wisdom (right view, resolve). The inference for the modern mentor is to draw and develop an action plan for the mentee. This can be achieved by appropriate training, and inculcating virtues like continual focus towards achieving deadlines through a disciplined approach towards life.

28.4.6   Kautilya's Arthashastra

L.N Rangarajan (1987) raises the question as to 'Who was Kautilya, this mastermind, who could write a definitive treatise on economics and government at a time when large parts of the world were steeped in intellectual darkness?' All sources of Indian Tradition –Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain –agree that Kautilya (also known as Vishnu-Gupta) destroyed the Nanda dynasty and installed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of Magadha. Thus he was a King-Maker. Dhana Nanda, the king in whose court Kautilya came to approach him to build a powerful Magadha dynasty and unify India, was considered evil and disliked by his subjects. He was a king who was deeply immersed in the pleasures of life and was least concerned about his

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[3] http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/whats-thera.htm

kingdom or the country. The arrogant king insulted Kautilya who vowed revenge. As Alexander was advancing towards India in his pursuit of conquering the world, there was no powerful Indian King who could unify India. Kautilya thus wandered disguised as an ascetic in search of a suitable individual who could help him achieve his objective of building a powerful and unified India. He came upon the boy Chandragupta, of royal line but fostered by a cowherd, playing with his companions on the village grounds. The boy was acting the role of a king, dispensing justice and giving orders to his 'ministers'. On the ascetic beseeching him for alms, the 'king' grandly gave away a herd of someone else's cows! Kautilya was so impressed with the boy's leadership qualities that he bought the boy then and there for a 1,000 panas, took him to Taxila and gave him an education fit for the king by acting as his mentor. The modern age mentor can take cue from this story to give evidence, especially while identifying leadership potential talent and grooming him for position of responsibility within an organization.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (c.350–283 BC) is an ancient treatise on state administration, polity, warfare, economic policy, is mainly in prose of the sutra form, with only 380 slokas. Though Sutra can be translated as 'maxim', it is for sake of convenience also referred as 'verse'. The *Arthashastra* is, by nature, instructional. For, e.g., The *Arthashastra* focuses on the qualities and the disciplined approach expected of a Rajarshi (a virtuous king). A 'Rajarshi' is one who has qualities like self-control (having conquered the temptation of senses), keeps his eyes open through spies (network), a good role-model, through knowledge of all branches inculcates discipline etc. Kautilya says: artha (sound economics) is the most important for both dharma and kama are both dependent on it.

28.4.6.1 Arthashastra (Duties of King)

> If the king is energetic, his subjects will be equally energetic. If he is slack [and lazy in performing his duties] the subjects will also be lax, and thereby eat into his wealth. Besides, a lazy king will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence, the king should always be energetic

The modern management mentors may emphasize on the qualities of a good leaders through the duties of the King highlighted indicated in *Arthashatra*. The *Arthashastra* is also a treatise for leadership, organizational effectiveness and a Soft-Skills/Employability skills guide for continuous learning, self-management, initiative/enterprise, planning and organizing, problem-solving, decision-making and above all team building.

28.4.7 The Legend of Akbar-Birbal

Exploring the **'Akbar-Birbal Relationship'** which existed during the Mughal period of Indian History, one senses a story with evidence of 'Reverse Mentoring'

a concept revolutionized by the legendary Jack Welch in the modern day management. Birbal was the Grand Vizier of Akbar's Mughal court and also one of his trusted advisors (part of the Navaratna-inner circle of advisors, i.e., nine jewels). Going beyond his courtly duty of military and administration, he gave Akbar friendly and genuine advice through humorous exchanges which reflected his sagacity and problem solving acumen, and have become part of folklore and legend.

The exchanges between Akbar and Birbal have been recorded in many volumes. Mrinalini Pandey (2008) examines the problem solving technique of Birbal and evaluates his thinking habits with that of 'lateral thinking'. The tools on lateral thinking given by Edward De Bono are used as a base to analyze the thinking and problem-solving technique of Birbal. The author highlights how Birbal's stories, enumerate tools and their meanings like 'Alternatives, focus, challenge, Random Entry, Provocation & Movement, Harvesting Treatment'. These stories could be used by the modern age mentor to demonstrate the 'Problem solving Techniques' and encourage 'Lateral Thinking'. With modern organizations embracing 'Reverse Mentoring' as a accepted platform for organization communication and innovation, the Akbar-Birbal relationship explored through the stories and tools provided by Pandey give valuable insight for both mentors as well as mentees.

28.4.8   Stories from Nineteenth Century Indian History

Religious traditions in Hinduism lay emphasis on intuitive knowledge 'realization' of God, perception of truth through the guidance of a guru- mentor who himself has realized god and truth, knowing the pathways to such knowledge and realizations. Sadhana (constant practice) is the essentiality and such practitioners (Sadhakas) are the fearless souls who can submit themselves to a system of application and rough discipline having the sanction of age-long experiment behind them.

Against this backdrop a figure whose role has been analysed is Ramakrishna Paramahansa, famous mystic of nineteenth century India. His school of thought led to the formation of Ramakrishna Mission by his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda.

(a) **Bhairabi Bramhani & Ramakrishna:** Ramakrishna followed the way of Bhakti by blind instinct first without any guidance/assistance, exhausted himself through superhuman effort, maddened with solitude, almost lost himself when help came to him through a woman. She was a Brahmin of a noble family, a devotee of Vishnu, highly educated and very learned in holy texts, in the bhakti- scriptures; she was looking for the man inspired by God whose existence had been revealed to her by the Spirit. She became the spiritual mother to whom Ramakrishna confided all his tortured experiences of his life in God and of his sadhana. She comforted him and told him of having reached one of the highest states of Sadhana and his sufferings as measures of his ascent. She was conversant with the roads of knowledge and showed him all its phases and their

import including the tantras. His mentor recognized in him an incarnation of the divinity and accordingly called a meeting after learned discussions by Pundits, she insisted that the theological authorities should give public recognition to the new Avatar. Then Ramakrishna's fame slowly began to spread.

The take away for the new age-mentor is to show the similar passion in channelizing the competencies of the mentee, by being a confidante first. Then the mentor by sharing knowledge of similar experiences shows the right path and direction in achieving the full potential of the mentee. The mentor should also become a strong advocate of the mentee irrespective of the situation being favourable or unfavourable. This would in turn inspire the mentee to be steadfastly loyal to the mentor and the organization.

(b) **Ramakrishna and Vivekananda:** Let us now explore what did Ramakrishna, the Guru/Mentor teach his disciples and what were his methods and teachings. In India till then, the word of the master was law. Gurus extracted deeper respect from disciples than the parents but Ramakrishna would have none of it. He put himself on a level with his young disciples; he was their companion, brother, talked familiarly without any trace of superiority. His advice was not his own but came directly from Mother Goddess, through his lips. He believed that true instructions does not consist in inculcating doctrines, but in 'communicating' the 'inner abundance of the vital and digested riches' called the spirituality as a flower might be given in the same way that a good gardener dispenses the sun and the sheltering shade to the budding souls entrusted to him. He propounded 'Let the lotus of character expand naturally'. The moral is in times of need if the mentor comes down to the level of the mentee through communication, the mentee's potential is maximised without inhibitions. On account of being a mentor, the superiority feeling should be done away with, for high impact mentoring in a modern day management scenario.

The Disciple Naren (later Vivekananda) was his beloved disciple and Ramakrishna treated him in an exceptional way. He had chosen him at the very first glance for what he was and what he might become- a spiritual leader of humanity. With his intuitive genius for souls, he could discern in adolescent Naren, his great disciple the future leader of his evangelist mission. Naren was eighteen, then preparing for his first University examination and the mentor saw him in the house of a friend singing a religious hymn. Ramakrishna asked Naren to come to see him at Dakshineswar. Naren made a number of visits to his would be mentor and initially he was ambivalent in his views about his mentor (Rolland, 1929).

During his third visit, Naren was on the defensive with all his critical faculties on the alert. The Master asked many questions about his antecedents, mission in this world and Naren dived deep into himself, gave fitting answers which only confirmed the inferences of his master about him. Ramakrishna then knew that Naren had a privileged place among the disciples. But Naren did not want to be the disciple of anyone and his reason would not submit to domination. However, he was struck by the incomprehensible power of Ramakrishna. It attracted him as a magnet attracts iron. The implication for the new age mentor is that the mentor

should evolve to be such a role-model that the mentee accepts the mentor without any hesitation.

A strange relation was established between the disciple and the master, which lasted for about 5 years. He alone doubted and weighed all Ramakrishna's words. Far from being shocked, the mentor loved him. Before meeting Naren, he would pray 'O Mother, send me someone to doubt my Realizations'. He would often say to his disciples, 'Do not accept anything because I say so. Test everything for yourself'. Naren's keen criticism and his passionate arguments filled him with joy; his knowledge caused him such intense joy. The modern day mentor can draw inspiration from this story by testing new grounds with mentee and expect critical analysis which could add value to the new concepts.

Ramakrishna used rustic colloquial Bengali in his conversations. His unique linguistic style interspersed with philosophical Sanskrit terms and references to the Vedas, puranas, tantras. He was extremely skilled with words and had a unique style of preaching and instructing. His teaching style has been compared to Socrates. The point to be noted for the new age mentor here is that developing a communication style (like Ramakrishna) which is unique to the mentor is critical in developing the mentor-mentee relationship and creating a long-lasting impact.

It was Ramakrishna's chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who took the World of Religion meeting in Chicago in 1893 by storm and electrified his audience with his exemplary speech and powerful oratory. He started his speech with 'Sisters and Brothers of America' instead of the typical 'Ladies and Gentlemen' which made him famous overnight. Then new age mentor can illustrate this as a case for reflecting the power of persuasive communication inspiring through exemplary presentation skills using unconventional approach, much sought after in the corporate world.

28.5   Discussion and Implications

The challenge is to achieve potential and develop talent in a protégé irrespective of the environment. It is important to understand the role of the 'oral tradition' (a channel of communication) between the mentor and mentee.

Douglas A. Ready in 'How Story Telling builds next generation leaders' suggests that Story Telling can be an effective tool for developing leaders, but companies need to do the following in a nutshell:

(a) Get the top team actively engaged,
(b) Develop a collective view on leadership effectiveness,
(c) Consider all possible alternatives,
(d) Get the right team in place to carry out the program,
(e) Coach the story tellers and orient the participants,
(f) Use stories to stimulate, reflection and action.

The study of Classical Indian Traditions reveals certain trends:

(a) The building of a communication framework (THE CONVERSATION SCHEMA) which can be developed as a 'Story-Telling' tool for effective mentoring.
(b) Benchmark best-practices from Indian historical traditions through the "Mentoring Matrix", builds a 'Mentor Mentee Role- Inventory' which could serve as a roadmap for modern day mentoring to build winning organizations or entrepreneurship ventures.

The 'Conversation Schema' and the proposed "The Mentoring Matrix" is based on extensive literature review and analysis of Indian History across three timelines; Ancient, Medieval and Modern Indian History. The practical implications need to be tested in an actual organization setting.

To summarize:

28.5.1 Ancient Indian Cases/Traditions

While the Guru-shishya parampara (tradition) has the following implications for 'Socialization' of a new employee in a organization:

1. Through 'esoteric' wisdom -During 'Induction'
2. Initiation Ceremony -Understanding the organization vision, mission and culture
3. Meditation Techniques -Work-Life Balance
4. Guru-Dakshina- Going out of the way for the organization, beyond the call of designated duty

Krishna Arjuna conversations in the 'The *Bhagavatha Gita*' could inspire the new age mentor to consul the mentee when faced self-doubt and challenges in corporate life. The case of Duryodhana/Danveer Karnan may help the mentor to be daring in taking certain decisions while developing self-esteem, recognizing special talent and ensuring socialization of the mentee, especially when the employee joins the organization. Abhimanyu's Chakravyuha story has implications for the new age mentor by way of highlighting the harmful effects of incomplete mentoring. The eight-fold path of Theravada Buddhism could inspire the modern mentor to draw and develop a sustainable action plan for the mentee's development. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* may serve as a bible for the mentor in developing leaders for organizational effectiveness.

28.5.2 Medieval Indian Cases/Tradition

The Akbar/Birbal Relationship can be bench-marked in modern day management to supplement stories for 'reverse mentoring'.

28.5.3   Modern Indian Cases/Tradition

The nineteenth Century stories of relationship between Ramakrishna and his Guru Bhairabi Bramhani and between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda reflect facets in the context of Mentor-Mentee Relationship Management interspersed with Unique Communication Style.

Thus the Conversation Schema and Mentoring Matrix seeped in Indian historical traditions may be used as a mentoring tool and guide for critical reflection through communication to build trust, stimulate, reflect and act. This would also provide opportunities for the new age manager- mentor, a framework to develop competencies in the mentee. The opportunities to be explored are to practically implement the two concepts within the boundaries of a organizational mentor-mentee program. This would add a new dimension to the existing action research on Mentoring, leading to further exploration and inspiration from stories rooted in Indian Classical Traditions.

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