

“May the Self of the universe be pleased with this sacrifice of words and bestow His grace on me. May the sinners no longer commit evil deeds. May their desire to do good increase, and may all beings live in harmony with one another.”

– Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter 1

Introduction



1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of cultural civilization, humanity is persistently in quest of competent leadership. It is experienced repeatedly in history, the necessity for any society, nation or organisation to have leaders who act as agents of change towards development. Rather history of world is nothing but history of actions of these leaders and history of how progress or decline of society is outcome of nature of leadership by kings or rulers of that time. Leadership theories of the last few decades show that early theories started from a focus on the individual leader and proceed to include the effects on followers and context.

This thesis work is an attempt to provide a contribution towards filling these needs by providing the model of Leadership based on Advaita Vedanta – the ultimate reality of existence. Work is organised with two objectives - first developing Vedanta Model of Leadership which is based on extensive literature research of ancient texts and second is providing empirical evidence using modern theories and measurement tools based on them.

1.1 Leadership Theories & Leadership Phenomenon

We are exploring new model of leadership through this research.

1. Self when acting as Leader, in view of Ultimate Truth is Brahman.
2. People when act as Followers are also Brahman in the form of Individual souls (Jiva), hence are not separate from Him. People and followers are just an expression of Leader and they *are* leaders themselves.

3. While situations and contextual states of management are modifications of forces in Prakruti and are nothing but collective expressions from leader and his followers.
4. There are propelling forces running this triad are Sankalpa of Brahman & Jiva, Conviction by Self & people and Will-Power of Leaders & Followers.
5. These forces enables them control Prakruti, Situations or Context. [Table 1]

Model	Vedanta view	Social view	Organisation view
First Circle	Brahman	Self	Leader
Second Circle	Jiva	People	Follower
Third Circle	Prakruti	Situations	Context
Propellant	Sankalpa	Conviction	Will-Power

Table 1: Triad Concept of ‘Vedanta Model of Leadership’

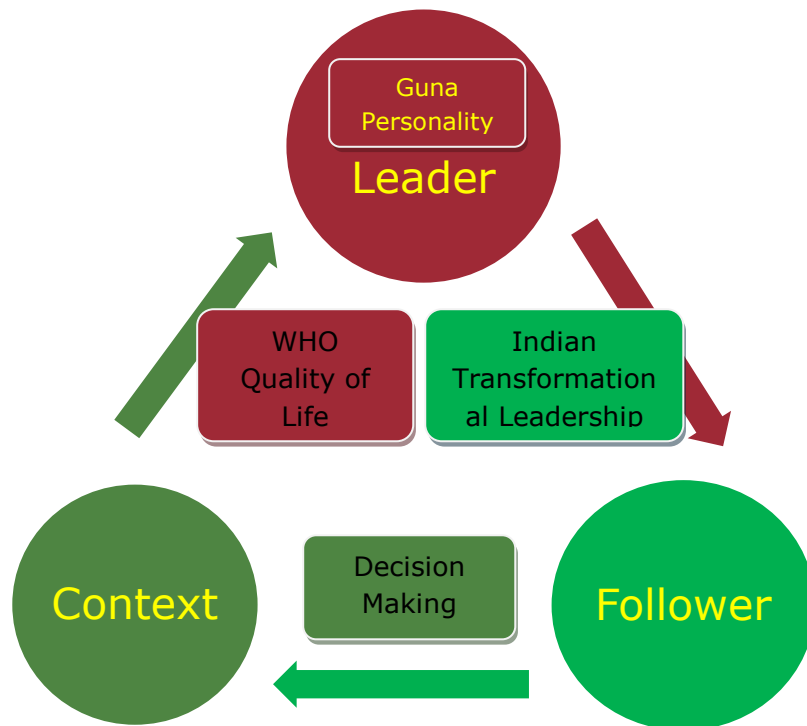


Figure 1: Vedanta Model of Leadership – Process and Measurement Schematic

1.2 New Perspectives in Leadership:

There are studies on partnership, followership, empowerment, teams, networks, and the role of context. Margaret Wheatley (2009) explains the complexity of relationships that contribute to a leader's effectiveness. Ethical and moral questions are no longer religious concepts but **key elements** in the relationship any organization has with colleagues, stakeholders, and communities. Eberly, Johnson, Hernandez, & Avolio (2013) has given a process model comprising multi-centric structure of leadership **event cycles** which have interaction between leader, follower and context and explained the probable mechanisms behind the leadership process.

A unified theory of leadership was developed with reference to Transcendental Meditation, which suggests that development of consciousness is a fundamental causal variable underlying the complexity of behaviors and psychological qualities associated with leadership. They explained four levels of leadership in which development of consciousness is first and fundamental level. They further argued that world class leaders have more frequent experiences of higher states of consciousness than comparison groups (Harung, Heato & Alexander, 1995). These concepts have further opened up discussions on Indian leadership recently. Reddy & Srinivasan (2015) have distinguished between leader development & leadership development and their implications for the design of training programmes - the knowing, being and doing gap and the need to synthesize Western and Indian approaches to leadership development.

Different Models of leadership based on Indian Wisdom and conceptualized & empirical research are given by Uday Pareek (2002).

The schools of leadership emerged as below –

1. Trait school
2. Behaviour School
3. Contingency School
- 4. Charismatic or Transformational School**
- 5. Emotional Intelligence School**
- 6. Competence School**

Meta analytic study by Gang Wang showed that transformational leadership is positively related to individual-level **follower** performance across criterion types, with a stronger relationship for **contextual** performance than for task performance across most study settings. In addition, transformational leadership was positively related to performance at the **team and organization** levels. (Gang Wang, 2011)

As we leave behind the machine model of life and look more deeply into the dynamics of **living systems**, we begin to glimpse an entirely new way of understanding fluctuations, disorder, and change. The layers of complexity, the sense of things being beyond our control and out of control, are but signals of our failure to understand a deeper reality of organizational life, and of life in general. Leadership, an amorphous phenomenon that has intrigued us since people began organizing, is being examined now for its relational aspects. Few if any theorists ignore the **complexity of relationships** that contribute to a **leader's effectiveness**. Instead, there are more and more studies on partnership, followership, empowerment, teams, networks, and the role of context.

1.3 Advaita Vedanta Philosophy:

Western philosophers also give emphasis on the concepts of leadership being rooted in holistic human development. Plato in his *The Republic* explained concept of 'Human Excellence'. Socrates went further with "philosopher king" as example for deciding on right conduct with regard to policy and principle, convention and nature, the world and the divine. (Darrell Dobbs 2003.)

The essence of all scriptures as monism or Advaita Philosophy is most scientific and logical theory of what we see and experience as Divine. **Advaita Vedanta Philosophy by Sankara**, through his criticisms and debates, has effectively negated other contemporary schools of philosophies and thinkers. Sankara has given intellectually insightful interpretation of Shrutis, Upanisads and Vedanta sutras and commentaries at the time when Hinduism was on decline and confusion had prevailed regarding religious truths in Indian Philosophy. (S. Radhakrishnan, 2006)

Indian Traditional Knowledge Base can leadership competencies as a whole based on Vedanta philosophy of oneness of existence i.e. 'Advaita Vedanta of Adi Shakaracharya'. The main principle of Adi Shakaracharya's philosophy which describes ultimate Truth is as mentioned below and it is said that everything else in religion is just a way to prepare your self for that stage of realisation.

1. There is only one existence known as Brahman.
2. Brahman manifests itself as Jivas and Prakruti.
3. Whatever experienced through mind-body complex is illusion - called as Maya.

This indicates three components – Brahman, Jiva and prakruti which are inter-operational through a power called as Maya.

1.4 Vedanta Model of Leadership:

World, like human beings, is a **Complex Adaptive System (CAS)**. As managers are part of the change **context itself**, they have to act in a way that is different from the traditional role of the administrative leader to become successful change leaders. (Blomme, 2012). One of the Process Model of leadership is studied by Marion B. Eberly other researchers. Their Process model of leadership examines the application of an integrative leadership to help determine the **psychological interactive processes** that constitute leadership. In particular, they identified the various dynamics involved in generating leadership processes by modelling how the **loci and mechanisms** interact through a series of **leadership event cycles**. (Eberly et al., 2013). In an organisational system of healthcare service provider Company, CAS provides managers of health and social care with an alternative mindset. Guiding principles are offered to these managers to facilitate development towards a more integrated system of health and social care. The possibility to benefit from the user's own resources is increased when organizations are viewed from a CAS perspective. CAS promotes emergent ways of working. (Edgren & Barnard, 2012).

We come across a model where we are considering the underlying truths of our existence. Scriptural evidences from writings have suggested this phenomenon much before. Gaudapada in *Mandukya Karika* established the view that no real creation ever took place. Everything that exists being in reality the non dual Brahman while according to Sankara, Man cannot ignore the world as long as he sees it; nor can he deny his relationships with other human beings or objects of the world as long as they appear to be real. Maya or **Prakruti** is said to consist of the three gunas, known as *sattva, rajas and tamas*. Brahman associated with collective ignorance is designated as **Isvara**. Brahman or pure consciousness associated with individual ignorance is called

the **Jiva** or individual living soul. Brahman uses Maya as material of creation. Besides fourteen world systems, the five gross elements produce the four kinds of gross bodies dwelling therein and food and drink appropriate to them. The body that *Jiva* assumes on earth is determined by its past *Karma*. (Swami Nikhilananda, 1947).

The Universe is manifested from Singular Brahman. They say that these existences – God, nature and soul are one. God is as it were the Soul and nature and soul are the body of God. (Swami Chetanananda, 2011). Hence Eternal Brahman has first the ‘Will’ to manifest at the beginning of each creation cycle, mentioned as ‘May I Be’. Then the creation takes place in maya to manifest the reality as we experience it in our material world.

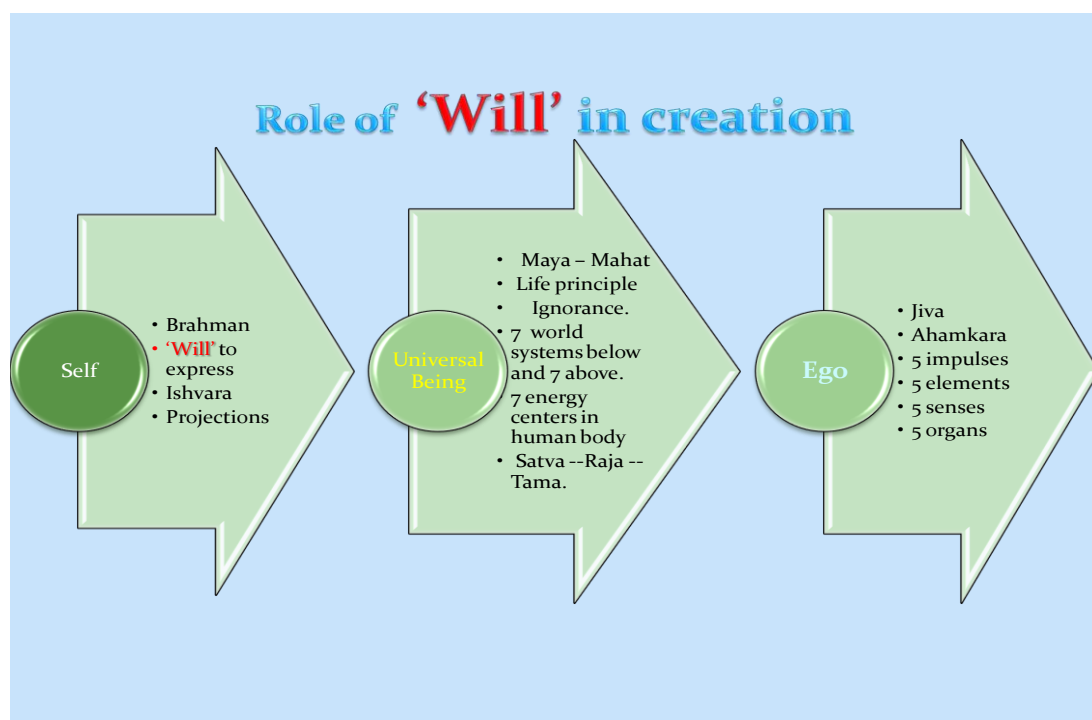


Figure 2: Role of ‘Will’ power – (Sankalpa) in creation of entire existence.

Components of Vedic Model of Existence [Figure2] are considered to explore the external manifested Leaders followers and contextual Situations.

The process of manifestation this Leadership is through leaders’ thoughts and ‘will’ (Sankalpa). [Figure- 3a &3b]. This Will-power is further operational in triad

model of Self – People – Situations. This ‘Sankalpa Shakti’ or Will-power is used by Leader to influence the people and situations. This competency can be developed through systematic practice of Yoga as given in Indian Traditional Knowledge base. This Will is termed as Sankalpa in Indian Scriptures and is expressed externally in organisational context as decision making by organisational leaders. If leadership is process of attaining the equilibrium then it operates between the components of system where the leader expresses his own will to influence others and controls the Situations.

In words of Swami Vivekananda, *“God is a circle with its circumference nowhere and centre everywhere...Individuality in universality is the **plan of creation**. Each cell has its part in bringing about consciousness. Man is individual and at the same time universal. It is while realising our individual nature that we realise even our national and universal nature. Each is an **infinite circle** whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. By practice one can feel universal Selfhood which is the essence of Hinduism. He who sees in every being his own Self is a Pandita (sage)...”* (Swami Vivekananda, 1907)

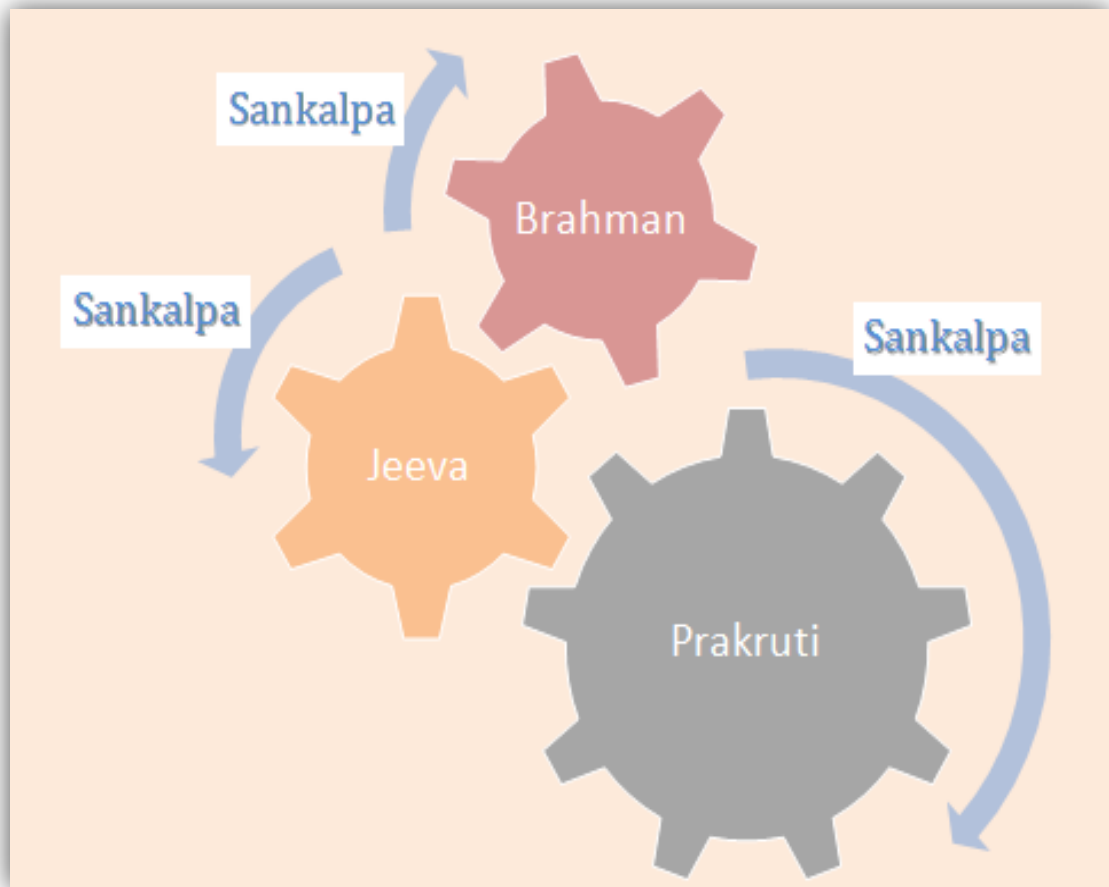


Figure 3a: Yogic Model of Existence – ‘Sankalpa’ as propellant.

Entire Existence is moved through ‘Sankalpa’. Brahma’s Sankalpa to ‘BE’ manifested the universe and then Karma chain has resulted in propelling the world of Maya.

Swami Vivekananda states - *“The highest Advaitism cannot be brought down to practical life. Advaitism made practical works from the plane of Vishishtadvaitism. Dvaitism—small circle different from the big circle, only connected by Bhakti; Vishishtadvaitism—small circle within big circle, motion regulated by the big circle; Advaitism—small circle expands and coincides with the big circle. In Advaitism "I" loses itself in God. God is here, God is there, God is "I".* (Swami Vivekananda, 1907)

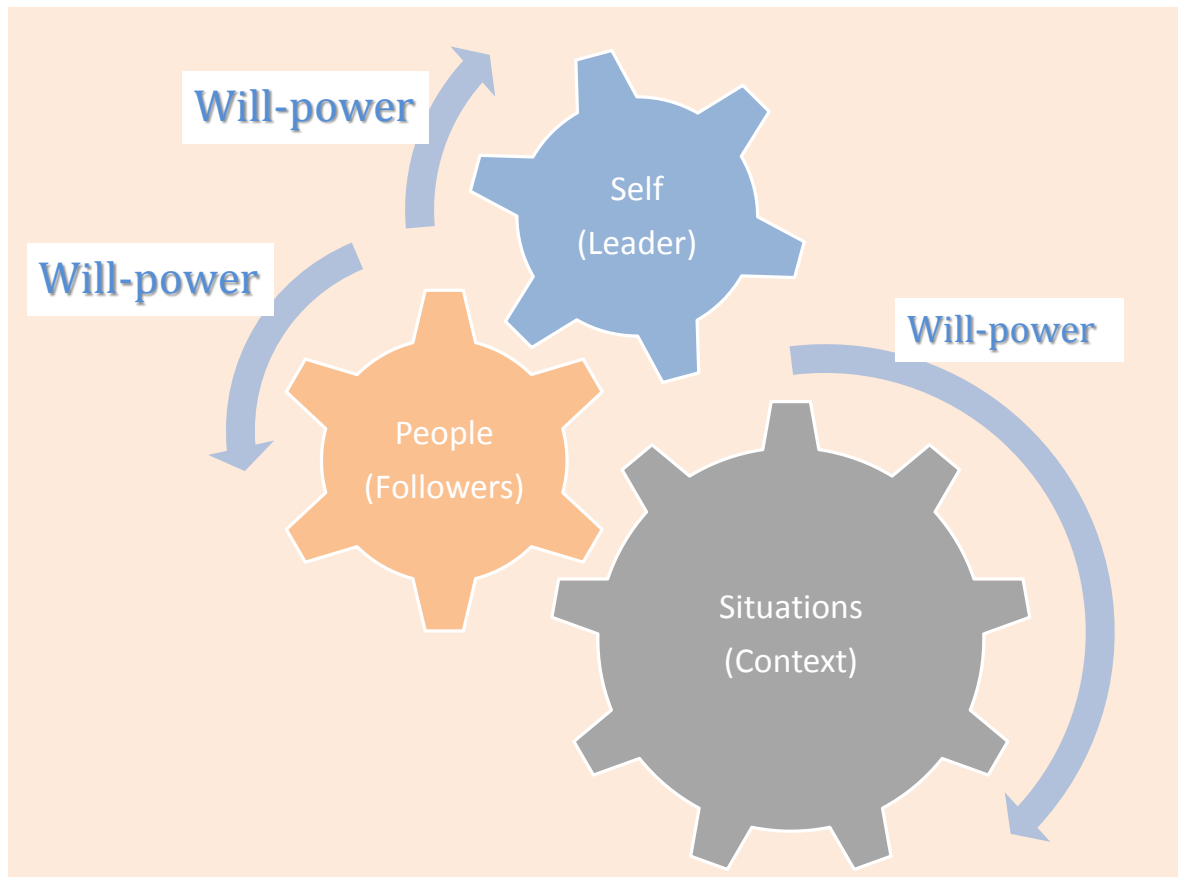


Figure 3b –Apparent Model of the Organisation - ‘Will’ Power as propellant

‘Will’ of leader and followers act as propellant. Chain of actions and reactions reflects the results in different situations.

Swami Vivekananda states – *“The soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere (limitless), but whose centre is in some body. Death is but a change of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere. When we can get out of the limited centre of body, we shall realise God, our true Self.”*
(Swami Vivekananda, 1907)

These concepts are represented by various scales. Each component is measured separately. Let’s explore following concepts -

- e) Leader or self – Indian Transformational Leadership
- f) Followers or people – Decision Making Style

g) Context or situations - Quality of life

Bruch and Ghoshal (2004) have tried to define and explain the meaning through deconstructing Will-power as a capability and rather argue that a person's willpower relies on a combination of his or her energy and focus.

This is the stage where Integrated Yoga Module seems to work towards development.