



Towards an Ideal Administrative Leadership Model for Managing People: A Sri Lankan Indigenous Perspective (With special reference to public administrative organization in pre-colonial era)

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ABSTRACT

The concept of leadership has been widely accepted as a phenomenon which is featured with both culture-specific and universal characteristics. Perceptions of implicit leadership attributes are said to be culturally specific where certain attributes of leadership are commonly viewed as universal across cultures. The Effect of culture on leadership behaviour, has been widely acknowledged by many researchers throughout the past couple of decades. Especially, implicit leadership theories recognize the cultural specificity of perceptions towards effective leadership traits and behaviours. It is argued that in Sri Lanka too the indigenous culture has an identifiable perception about the attributes associated with ideal administrative leadership. This paper attempts to examine the salient traits of an ideal administrative leadership prototype in an emic perspective, as perceived in light of traditional Sri Lankan culture. The temporal context of the study covers the mediaeval period and the indigenous social organization existed in pre-colonial era. The main source of information for the study is archival records where the data and findings were drawn through comprehensive documentary analysis of data. It was observed that righteousness; lawfulness and justice; respect to shared values; concern on public expectations; democracy; leading by example; wisdom and knowledge; equity and impartiality; generosity; and self-control as the dimensions which explain the traditional perception of an ideal leadership prototype. These findings seem to have implications for managers to identify a set of Sri Lankan core historical values pertaining to the concept of leadership survived through drastic changes, utilizing the still relevant concepts for possible applications in the contemporary context while eliminating the errors of the past.

KEYWORDS: *Administrative Leadership, Indigenous Perspective , Managing People.*

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Introduction

The field of cross-cultural research often acknowledges the distinction between culture-specific and culture-free or cross-culturally generalizable aspects. Proponents of the culture – free or convergence viewpoint believes that the majority of the modern western originated theories and principles utilized in the current context for managing people in organizations are universally accepted. Culture – bound or divergence viewpoint stands for a perspective which recognizes differences between country situations, including national culture to be considered in management efforts.

With regard to the concept of leadership, it has been widely accepted that both culture-free and culture-specific approaches are of immense importance (Bass, 1990; Dorfman et al. 1997). Bond and Smith (1996), observe that although the search for universals and an emphasis upon indigenous culture-specifics are often cast as contradictory enterprises that exemplify contrasting etic and emic approaches, these concepts are no more separable than nature and nurture.

Organizations are often considered as sited at the micro level of the wider culture (Lees, 2003). Leadership exists in all societies and is essential to the functioning of organizations within societies (Wren, 1995). Thus, it can be contended that the leadership within an organization is fundamentally influenced by the societal culture. Some researchers have shown that situational factors, including national culture play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of leadership behaviour. Further, culture has been identified as an overall moderator of leadership effects and is shown to have a direct effect on the behaviors exhibited by leaders (Dorfman et al., 1997).

Members of different cultural backgrounds may have varying conceptions with regard to the characteristics of effective leadership. It is assumed that, different leadership prototypes occur naturally in societies that have differing cultural profiles (Bass, 1990; Hofstede 1993). Individuals have their own ideas about the nature of leaders and leadership and hence they tend to develop ideosyncratic theories of leadership (Hartog et al. 1999). Matching an observed person against an abstract prototype stored in memory play an important role in attributions of leadership by followers (Lord & Maher, 1991). Leadership perceptions are based on cognitive categorization processes in which perceivers match the perceived attributes of potential leaders they observe to be an internal prototype of leadership categories (Foti & Luch, 1992). The way in which the social environment is interpreted is strongly influenced by the cultural background of the perceiver where it is implied that the attributes that are seen as characteristic or prototypical for leaders may also strongly vary in different cultures (Hartog et al. 1999). Cultural variations of implicit leadership have been identified as an important aspect of leadership studies (Broadbeck et al., 2000; Avolio, 2007; Ayman & Bassari, 2009). Yukl (1998) points out that much of the research on leadership during the past half century was conducted in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. But there are some few studies which focus attention on other parts of the world including Asian countries as well (Dorfman et al., 1997; Hartog et al., 1999).

At the same time, the studies which have focused explicitly on culture-based differences in leadership prototypes or implicit theories of leadership are very few. Since implicit leadership theory, with its core construct of “leadership prototypes,” has been found useful in understanding leader behavior in the United States, there seems no reason why this would not also be found in other countries (Hartog, 1999). Leadership models are inherently culturally dependent and therefore culturally relative with respect of ideals of leadership behaviour and accepted ways to enact those ideals (Weathersby, 1993). Especially administrative leadership research (literature that is more interested in leadership in public-sector bureaucratic settings) has experienced neither the volume nor the integration of the mainstream (Wart, 2003).

It has been noted that although socio-cultural factors are powerfully present in a contemporary context, their effects are lessened in contemporary work place (Weathersby, 1993). Traditional leadership styles unique to Sri Lanka have evolved from the ancient practices of able and autocratic Kings (Weathersby, 1993). On the view that socio-cultural background drives the people’ perception of leadership prototype, it is argued that Sri Lankan traditional culture also contains a unique perception on ideal leadership. A sufficient attention has not yet been paid on identifying the traits and behaviours of ideal leadership as perceived by the traditional Sri Lankan society. Thus, the present study attempts to identify the perceived implicit leadership traits of the traditional leadership prototype as depicted by secondary data including archival records and research findings. The study aims to examine perceived ideals of effective leadership traits and behaviours which represent the traditional Sri Lankan leadership prototype based on socio-cultural context.

Implicit Leadership Theories

Leadership has been explained as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members (House et al. 2000). The concept of leadership has been examined in explicit and implicit theories. The explicit theory is based on observation and evaluation of the overt behaviour of leaders where the implicit theory explores the covert conceptual structure of leadership (Ling et al. 2000). Implicit leadership theory (ILT) suggests that people develop sets of beliefs about the behaviors and characteristics of leaders versus non-leaders as well as effective versus ineffective leaders (House, Wright, & Aditya, 1997). Implicit leadership theories represent cognitive structures or schemas specifying traits and behaviors that followers expect from leaders (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004). Implicit leadership theory conceptualizes that the cognitive structures or prototypes specifying the traits and abilities characterize leaders (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Lord et al., 1984; Lord and Maher, 1991). ILTs and associated leadership prototypes may be salient for particular positions, contexts, or individuals (Yukl, 2006). According to Kenney et al. (1996) these structures are stored in memory and are activated when followers interact with a person in a leadership position. Since leadership prototypes influence the extent to which an individual accepts and responds to others as leaders (Lord & Maher, 1991), these prototypes are also thought to influence the selection and appraisal of leaders (Wanasika et al., 2011). ILTs can potentially offer important insights in the process of “sensemaking” (Weick, 1995) in work settings and especially in how employees interpret managerial behavior (Epitropaki and Martin, 2004). Organizational members may use these schemas or prototypes as cognitive bases for understanding and responding to managerial behavior, and they are essential elements of organizational “sensemaking” (Poole, Gioia, & Gray, 1989; Weick, 1995).

Administrative Leadership

Administrative leadership is broadly defined by Wart (2013) as the people and the accompanying processes and networks that lead, manage, and guide government and non-profit agencies; it focuses on civil service and appointed leaders rather than political leaders, and focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on implementation and the technical aspects of policy development over policy advocacy. Administrative leadership, being a bureaucratic function, is defined as the actions of individuals in formal managerial roles who plan and coordinate organizational activities (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Pearce and Conger (2003) refer administrative leadership to the leaders of public agencies, no matter whether they are the chief executive officers or employees functioning as lead workers. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) identify the power to make decisions for the organization based on authority and position as an inherent feature of administrative leadership. Leadership, particularly in public administration, is viewed as an illusive concept. In a context where leadership researches are often based on private sector management and leadership theories and practice, leadership in public administration has been under-researched as a practice and in theory (Rusaw, 2008). Karz and Kahn (1978) assert that the essence of leadership is the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with routine directives in the organization. Managers can generally perform social tasks better if they are seen as leaders and being perceived as leaders may be a significant determinant of recognition and promotion for managers (Konard and Kranjec, 1997). Therefore the role of administrative leadership in achieving effectiveness and efficiency in organizations can be identified as highly important.

Socio-Cognitive Approach to Administrative Leadership

Administrative culture and leadership preferences as one of its expressions, is shaped by historic, political, economic, and societal factors. The cognitive science based leadership literature is an area of research and theory containing a wide range of approaches that are united by their focus on explaining the way leaders and followers think and process information (Avolio, 2009). The relationship between socio-cultural environment and leadership has been widely analyzed in socio-cognitive approach. Social Cognitive Theory elaborates the link between a person’s behaviour and external environment through the psychosocial functioning in terms of a triadic reciprocal causation. In this causal structure, behaviour, cognitive and other personal factors and environmental events operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally (Wood and Bandura, 1989). Socio-cultural factors represent an important part of the external environment of an organization where the psychological functioning of the person affected by cognitive, affective and biological factors can be represented by their perception towards ideal leadership. Thus, it can be assumed that both leadership behaviour as well as subordinates’ perceptions of leadership is influenced by socio-cultural environment. Accordingly the relationship

between socio cultural environment, perceived ideal leadership prototype and behaviour of leaders and members can be traced in light of this identification as bi-directional. On this ground it is important to examine the shared socio-cultural perception of ideal leadership.

Culture and Administrative Leadership

Organizations are viewed as social entities integrated into the institutional and value structures constituting the culture of a society (Smircich, 1983). As a result organizations cannot exist in a vacuum like isolated settings. Among many other contextual factors, national culture has been identified as an important influencing factor which shape the nature and functioning of organizations (Lammers and Hickson, 1979; Child, 1981; Hamilton and Biggart, 1988; Hofstede, 1991; Scott, 1992; Hickson and Pugh, 1995; Aycan, 2000). Cross-cultural researchers make a distinction between culture-specific and cross-culturally generalizable or universal aspects of behavior. Berry (1969) uses the term 'emic' to denote culture-specific nature and the term 'etic' to denote culture-free or universal nature. An emic or culture specific analysis of these behaviors would focus on behaviors unique to a subset of cultures or on the diverse ways in which etic activities are carried out in a specific cultural setting (Hartrog, 1999). According to Dorfman (2007) the culture specific perspective reflects the view that certain leadership constructs and behaviors are likely to be unique to a given culture. It has been widely accepted that there is a strong connection between culture and leadership (Jackofsky, Slocum, & McQuade, 1988; Smith et al. 1989; Hartrog et al. 1999; House et al., 2000; Dickson et al, 2003; Broadbeck et al., 2000; Avolio, 2007; Ayman & Bassari, 2009; Ayman and Korabik, 2009). Weathersby (1993) views leadership as a cultural phenomenon which is heavily embedded in the ways in which meaning is created in particular social contexts. The way in which the concept of leadership has been enacted in a particular culture in terms of ideal leadership attributes, behaviours and prototypes can be investigated through an in-depth study based on the emic or culture-specific approach.

Methodology

The present study is designed as a qualitative study based on positivistic philosophy. Usually, a culture specific analysis focuses on a single culture and employs descriptive and qualitative methods to study the behavior of interest (Hartrog et al. 1999). To study the pre-colonial era, the medieval period is considered, which is identified between the two landmark events; invasion of Magha of Kalinga in 1235 (13th century) and British conquest in 1815 (19th century) (Mendis, 1957). During the early part of this period of time the country was not politically stable and the only region which remained independent under the local rulers was the Kandyan Kingdom. When the British arrived in Ceylon at the turn of the 19th century, a long period of European rule of Maritime Provinces had resulted in a partial change in the feudal organization that had existed there, while in the Kandyan kingdom it remained virtually intact (Kannangara, 1964). Therefore with a special emphasis on the period of Kandyan Kingdom, the medieval period is considered for identifying the perceived ideal leadership traits and behaviours. For the purpose of collecting data on the social organization the structures associated with it and the related functions were considered, focusing on administrative leadership. 'Administrative leadership' in this study is referred to superiors or heads of the various divisions of public administrative organization in ancient Sri Lanka who lead, manage, and guide the organization and its divisions. The study is based on secondary data available in archival records, leading research publications and landmark texts relevant to the field. Gathered data were comprehensively reviewed by utilizing coding, memoing, and categorizing as the main qualitative methods. The twenty one initially drawn codes were reduced into ten categories considering the co-occurrence and resemblance of some codes. These ten categories characterized the perceptions of traditional society on ideal leadership and they were labeled finally to represent the substance.

Results and Discussion

Pre-colonial social Organization and its Leaders

Kandyan Kingdom, the chief governing structure existed during the 17th and 18th centuries is considered as the successor of old civilizations and kingdoms in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa (Dewaraja 1985; 1995) and is considered as an integral part of the traditional Sinhalese monarchical system (Dewaraja, 1995). According to Dewaraja (1995) in the Kandyan Kingdom, the whole political system was based upon, and the social system too revolved around monarchy. She further points out two other principle features of the Kandyan administrative system as bureaucratic nobility whose appointments were derived from the King

and the rigid grading system of the administrative class controlled by the unwritten yet inexorable laws of caste. De Silva (2005) brings up that Kandyan administrative system was closely bound up with land tenure, caste and rajakariya.

The administrative structure of the Kandyan Kingdom was identified as a territorial one with a functional division at the bottom of the administrative ladder (Dewaraja, 1995). In the territorial division there were twelve 'Disawani's and nine 'Rata's each headed by a 'Disawe' and 'Rate Mahatmaya' respectively (D'Oyly, 1929). Under these officials there were several other officials who controlled smaller subdivisions.

The top level of the public administrative organization was represented by the King, whose power was supreme and absolute (D'Oyly, 1929). According to Coomaraswamy the king ruled as an absolute monarch. Percival (1803) views that the government of Kandy was an absolute despotism, but adds that people believed if the King ventures to encroach upon the traditional laws and values, he was amenable to the justice of his country. As the chief authority of the public administrative organization the King was obliged to consult the principle chieftains and the religious dignitaries who represented the citizens before making decisions (D'Oyly, 1929). In that sense the powers given to the king were not legally unlimited and his powers were determined by custom or law (Jennings, 1952). As Coomaraswamy (1908) views, the acts of the kings' government were presumed to be guided by the institutions of his kingdom where it was usual to consult the principal chiefs and priests in making important decisions.

Although the king was vested with a supreme power, there were village level and caste level decision making entities like Gamsabha and Rata Sabha, where the members could discuss together and make decisions relevant to issues among them. It was evident that Gamsabha; the village courts had both civil and criminal jurisdiction (Heyley, 1932), and discharged certain administrative functions during the Kandyan times (Karunananda, 2005). Rata sabha or Variga Sabha can be identified as a mechanism of settling caste based disputes and infringements of customary conventions.

In each level of this administrative mechanism there were people who ensured the smooth functioning of the system by leading the subordinates, some of them were appointed by the King and some are natural leaders. Both appointed and natural leaders had considerable roles in the social organization and were respected highly by the members. Being the head of the public administrative organization, King represented the top level leadership. Different levels and the departments of the administrative structure were headed by leaders appointed by the king. In addition to these appointed leaders, natural leaders were playing a vital role in regulating the functioning of the social organization. Though these leaders did not have formal sources of authority, their role has been accepted and acknowledged by both formal administrative mechanism as well as the general public of the society. The leaders who headed Gamsabha and Ratasabha can be shown as examples for this.

Determinants of Ideal Leadership in Traditional Society

Grounds on which the traditional leadership prototype has been flourished can be categorized into two as customs and conventions and religious influences (Buddhist and Hindu). The Niti Nighanduwa in its prefatory observations (Patuna) identifies three types of laws which governed the behaviour of the individuals in ancient society as Raja-nitiya (the King's Law), Dharma-nitiya (Ecclesiastical Law), and Loka-Nitiya (customary law). In many instances, the attributes and traits which are required to possess by the leader is explained and discussed relating to the leadership behaviour of Kings or rulers.

Conventional and Customary Directives

Customs and conventions can be identified as the invisible thread which knit the social fabric including the most superior level to lowest level of the social hierarchy. Jennings (1956) comments that the whole social system from the monarchy to the slaves was regulated by customs. As Hayley (1932) points out "At the time of Kandyan Convention, Sinhalese law was common law in the strictest sense. It was contained in no book; it was almost untouched by legislation; it acknowledged no judicial decisions. It was essentially the custom of the realm, known to the people, administered by the judges, free from all interference by the courts of the King, and marred by no sophistries of interpretation".

Conventions and customs play a vital role in traditional social organization. Values indigenous to the traditional system which are embedded in the conventions and the customs were placed in a prominent domicile within the concept of leadership. Five main categories of leadership attributes were identified

under which these conventional guidelines can be grouped. These categories can be seen as the dimensions of ideal administrative leadership.

In addition to the unwritten codes of conduct embedded in customary conventions, the written directives provided like 'Lak Raja Lo Siritha' and 'NitiNiganduwa'. The monarch was expected to follow the example of good princes, to observe the customary laws, as well as the written rules handed down for his direction (Pieris, 1956).Chronicals like Mahavansa and Culavansa contain historical records of the public administrative organization and its leaders where much of the early historical information can be found in Inscriptions.

Religious Directives

Religious influences made through the ecclesiastical laws associated with Buddhism and Hinduism can be identified as another powerful drive behind the leadership perceptions in the early society.Guidelines for forming ideals of leadership can be found in both Buddhist and Hindu religious principles. The Buddhist perception on leadership mainly appears in Thripitaka; the key record of Buddhist canon and in various Jathaka stories. At the same time ancient texts like Saddhmarathanavaliyaand Pujavaliya provide further guidelines on leadership in light of Buddhist teachings.

It can be assumed that recurrent political, economic and socio-cultural interactions with the Indian subcontinent exposed the ancient Sri Lankan society towards Hinduism and related philosophical directions. The teachings of Hinduism are basically declared in Veda and Bhagavad Gita. In addition, Laws of Manusmriti and Arthshastra of Kautily are considered as most remarkable ancient treatises about Hindu spiritual guidelines on leadership.Thirukkural; a treatise on ethics and conducts based on Hinduism is another such source.

The tenfold royal virtue mentioned in Buddhism; 'Dasa Raja Dharma' provides a guideline for a leader to perform his or her role effectively. Dasa Raja Dharma includes Dana (generosity); Sila (virtue); Parithyaga (sacrifice); Thapasa (honesty and integrity/ austerity); Irju (uprightness); Murdu (softness); Avihimsa (non-violence); Akrodha (freedom from ill will); Khanthi (patience and forbearance); and Avirodha (non-conflict). According to Pujavaliya, where a monarch was unable to comply with the Dasa-rajadharma he had no moral authority to administer justice and he should, as one monarch did in the circumstances, hand over the administration of justice to his minister. Another guideline for leaders in treating the subordinate community contains in 'SatharaSangrahaVastu'. Accordingly, Dana (giving); PriyaVachana (speaking gentle and soft words); Arthacharya (working for the benefit of others) and Samanathmatha (treating everyone equally) are the accepted behaviours of a leader for proper performance. According to Low (2001) Bhagavad Gita guides Leaders to be loving and compassionate; to follow the Dharma and Lead Well, to have a vision; to consider about others than himself; to be disciplined; to grow resilience and to have spiritual strength for stability and steadiness. According to Laws of Manu a leader should be like Gods;Indra, Vayu, Yama, Surya, Agni, Chandra and Kuber who represent different qualities.

Many archival records, including inscriptional and chronicle sources reveal that the rulers of the ancient social organization observed these guidelines. The writings of early British period also bear testimony for the recognition given to the Buddhist principles associated with leadership. As the top level leader the King was required to follow the Buddhist precepts faithfully (Silva, 1956). Davy (1821) notices that good monarchs, avoided evil conduct caused by the four kinds of error (*sataragathi*) and practiced the four heart winning qualities (*satarasangrahavastu*).Girital stone-seat inscription of King Nissankamalla and slab inscription of Queen Lilavathi declare the respective King and Queen observed Dasa Raja Dharma; ten royal qualities. According to CulavansaKing Buddhadasareigned the country by practicing four heart winning qualities; SatarasangrahaVastu and avoiding evil conduct; Sataragathi. Influence of Hindu philosophy is evident in many historical records contained in inscriptions and chronicles. For instance, Paravithana (1933) traces the similarity between the political directives stated in Nissankamalla Inscription with the principles of Manu laws relating to 'MathsyaNyaya'.

Dimensions of Ideal Leadership in the Traditional Society

By reviewing the sources of literature relevant to conventional system and religious guidelines it was realized that following attributes and qualities were expected from the leaders. Some of these expectations are established on the conventional shared values while some other are rooted on religious background.

- **Righteousness:** Leaders were expected to lead a righteous and faultless life. If a king violates the laws and indulges in acts of cruelty and unrighteousness, the Council of Ministers is empowered to put a stop to that (Lak Raja Lo Sirita). Nobility of the bureaucracy appointed by the King is identified as a dominant feature of the social and political structure of the ancient society (Dewaraja, 1988). The belief that if the kingdom was to prosper the king had to rule righteously and virtuously in accordance with law is recognized in both religious and conventional directives. Leaders were always expected to lead a virtuous life in accordance with the tenets of Buddhism. Many archival writings describe the leadership of good rulers as righteous and impartial; Good kings reigned righteously and impartially – Dahamen Semen (eg. Saddharmarathanavaliya, Vamsatthappakasini). According to Sihalavattthupparana, a ruler is like a mother or father. When he rules righteously the people live happily where he acts unrighteously and rules in a cruel and miserable manner, the world is destroyed due to his fault (Amarasinghe, 1999). In accordance to Taittiriya Upanishadin Hinduism, the first and most essential virtue for a good leadership is to speak the truth (satyamvada) and the second instruction is practice virtue (dharma cara) (Low and Muniapan, 2011). A verse from Thirukkural says ‘where a king from right deflecting, makes unrighteous gain, the seasons change, the clouds pour down no rain’. It implies that when the leader is not righteous the environment becomes unsuitable for the existence and proper functioning of the society. Laws of Manu assigns a half of the guilt of an unjust on the leaders who make a wrong decision. Manu says that one quarter of the guilt of an unjust falls on the person who committed the crime; one quarter on the false witness and one quarter on judges and one quarter on the King. As such leaders were considered as the persons who are responsible for upholding righteousness.

- **Lawfulness and justice:** One of the main expectations of the society on leaders is their lawfulness and justice. D’Oyly (1929) observes that though the power of the King is supreme and absolute, the acts of his government are presumed to be guided by the institutions and customs of his kingdom. These institutions and customs provided the legal framework for the social organization. As Giegar (1960) views in order to be able to fulfill his duty in the most perfect manner the King must never disregard old custom and tradition. Amarasinghe (1999) asserts that the king did not add anything to the authority of the law to which he himself was subject. A king was expected to be just. According to the laws of Manu a king should be a just inflictor of punishment. It further asserts that if the rulers who are voluptuous, partial and deceitful will be destroyed. Laws which were established on conventions and customs formed a strong framework within which leaders have to perform their roles. It is clear from the authorities that the King’s power was not legally unlimited. As in all feudal systems, his powers were determined by custom or law (Jennings, 1956). If the written rules handed down for the direction of kings were not observed by them, his rule lacked legitimacy (Amarasinghe, 1999). Chronicle evidences support the contention that knowledge of the laws was considered as a qualification for leadership.

- **Observance of conventional norms and respect to common values:** The system required the leaders to make consensus based decisions respecting the common values. The king was expected to avail himself of the advice of his ministers and before any innovations of importance were introduced it was customary to consult the chiefs and not infrequently the chief monks also (Dewaraja, 1988). In spite of the despotic circumstances, the native look upon certain fundamental laws and regulations, existing among them from time immemorial, as the real depositaries of supreme power (Perceival, 1803). Even in the role of final appellate authority, the ruler was not permitted to exercise his powers beyond prescribed limits and he couldn’t arbitrarily set aside the decisions of a court (Lak Raja Lo Siritha). The absolute power which the king possessed in theory was, however, limited to a great extent in practice by public opinion which demanded of the ruler to follow fundamentally principles of justice and equity (*dharma*) and custom and precedent (*vyavahara* or *charitta/ sirit*) as established by the policies followed by earlier rulers who served as models of kingly behaviour (Paranavithana, 0000). When it was stated in the chronicles that a king ruled ‘justly’ or ‘with justice’, it was recognition of the fact that he observed the laws and conventions of the land (Amarasinghe, 1999). Monarchs consciously imitated their predecessors who had ruled justly by learning the laws and customs.

- **Concern on public expectations:** Leaders were expected to express paternalistic characteristics in serving the subordinates. There are numerous instances in chronicles recording the fact good kings fulfilled

public expectations. It was accepted that a leader should be like a mother or father to his subordinates (Sihalavaththupparakara). The king was expected to uphold the ancient laws and institutions and to protect the weak (Paranavithana, 1959). The monarch was the protector of the people and had to act in their best interest. It was believed by people in ancient times that a monarch who failed to ensure that justice was properly administered, e.g. by keeping bad judges in service, or by failing to lead a virtuous life, would attract evil consequences for which the monarch would be held responsible (Amarasinghe, 1999). There was a systematic procedure for seeking redress enforced by a considerable degree of liberty. Subordinates could appeal against the decisions given by immediate superiors to the higher levels of leadership. D'Oyly (1929) explains the systematic procedure existed in the Kandyan Kingdom for appeal. Such a system can be seen as a path for ensuring public interests. Buddhist teachings specify the basic duties of a ruler as protecting the rights of subjects; eliminating crimes; eradicating economic anomalies; and following fair and righteous policies (AggagngnaSuttha, DighaNikaya). Kautilya laid down three main responsibilities of a leader (king), they are raksha, which means security, palan, which means growth and yogakshma, which means welfare (Low and Muniappan, 2011). According to Manu, a leader to ensure effective performance from his followers should define his leadership style after considering four aspects of situation. Desh (Country/ area); Kaal (Time); Shakti and Karya.

- **Leading by example:** It was the duty of the leader to work with the subordinates in a participatory manner. According to Knox (1681) working was not discreditable even to the best Gentleman. Even the most superior people had worked with the subordinates in their fields. Leaders were expected to lead a virtuous life which was the strongest foundation of moral authority. Righteousness, lawfulness, justice and respect to common shared values were expected to be displayed in a leader's behaviour. Chakkavaththi SihanadaSuththa explains in the Buddhist perspective, how the behaviour and attributes of a leader influence his organization or the community as a whole.

- **Democracy:** As discussed above, according to prevailing customs, King had to consult the chiefs of the government and the religious dignitaries in making decisions. Decision making and administration of justice had been decentralized with delegated powers where subordinates were enabled to appeal against the decision of the leaders at the lower levels. Subordinates could dissent against the leaders who deviated from the accepted behaviours. People rebelled against the unreasonable, cruel and oppressive reign of kings. The insurgents against King Parakramabahu in the 12th century, King Bhuvanekabahu VI in the 15th century and King Rajasinghe in 17th century noted in Mahavansaare some of the examples. According to Buddhist sources, democratic and humanitarian governance system practiced by Lichchavi and Vajji rulers was appraised by Lord Buddha.

- **Equitability and impartiality:** It is believed that a leader must be impartial and equitable in making decisions. Citing Saddharmarathnavaliya, Amarasinghe (2009) comments that one of the basic principles of fairness recognized in early Sri Lanka is that both parties to a dispute should be heard. Due to bias arising out of the factors explained in *SatharaAgathi*; known as *Chanda* (liking); *Dosa* (disliking or anger); *Moha* (ignorance); and *Bhaya* (fear), a leader may deviate from the accepted path negatively affecting the wellbeing of his subordinates.

- **Self-control:** Both conventional and religious guide line stress the importance of controlling the self for a leader. The foundation of kingly power is considered as the conquest of the senses. Lak Raja Lo Siritha, interprets the conquest of senses as the absence of covetousness at the sight of the wife or other possession of another, the ignoring of lying or malicious tales that are heard, indifference to the attractions of what smell or taste sweet, and to the allurements of bodily pleasures. According to 'Lak Raja Lo Siritha' the conquest over the senses arises from reverence towards one's parents, teachers and elders, which reverence is begotten of association with men of wisdom; this again is the fruit of learning, for learning makes one complete, and devotion to learning leads to the control of desire; all that is desired can be achieved by him who has learned to control the mind. One of the basic teachings in Buddhism in regulating one's own conduct is controlling Sitha (Mind), Kaya (Body) and Vachanaya (Words). 'Sathara Brahma Viharana' including Metta (kindness); Karuna (Compassion); Muditha (being happy in others' developments and achievements) and Upeksha (equanimity) is known as a set of mental qualities that should be possessed by a good leader. Manu says that day and night the leader must strenuously exert

himself to conquer his senses; for he alone who has conquered his own senses can keep his subjects in obedience. Kautilya's guidelines on self-control includes the importance of control over the senses by giving up kama, krodha, lobha, mana, mada and harsha i.e., lust, anger, pride, arrogance and foolhardiness (Radhakrishnan, 2005). According to the Arthshastra of Kautilya a King should acquire control over the senses, cultivate his intellect by association with elders, keep a watchful eye by means of spies, bring about security and well-being by (energetic) activity, maintain the observance of their special duties (by the subjects) by carrying out (his own) duties, acquire discipline by (receiving) instruction in the sciences, attain popularity by association with what is of material advantage, and maintain (proper) behavior by (doing) what is beneficial (Muniapan&Shaikh, 2007).

- **Generosity:** Generosity is a highly appreciated leadership quality in both Buddhist and Hindu canons. 'Dasa Raja Dharma' and 'SatharaSangrahaVastu' expressly specify generosity as an essential attribute of an effective leader.

- **Wisdom and knowledge:** The requirement that a leader should be a knowledgeable a person with an extensive wisdom was emphasized in several instances. According to Suttanipatha, a leader should be a talented, akillful, active and wise person (vyatta, patibala, pandita, and sakka).Kautilya said that the king who is well educated and disciplined in sciences devoted to good government of his subjects, and bent on doing good to all people will enjoy the earth unopposed.

As such it is clear that traditional perception on effective leadership ideal requires a leader to be righteous and lawful. Leaders were expected to respect shared values and conventions with a greater concern on his subordinates. Further he should augment democracy, equality and impartiality within his organization. The traditional perception wants a leader to be a role model who leads by example. Wisdom, knowledge and self-control were considered as the essential attributes of ideal leaders. According to the traditional view, leaders were required to be generous without being selfish. The identified dimensions of ideal leadership prototype as perceived by the traditional society can be summarized as follows.

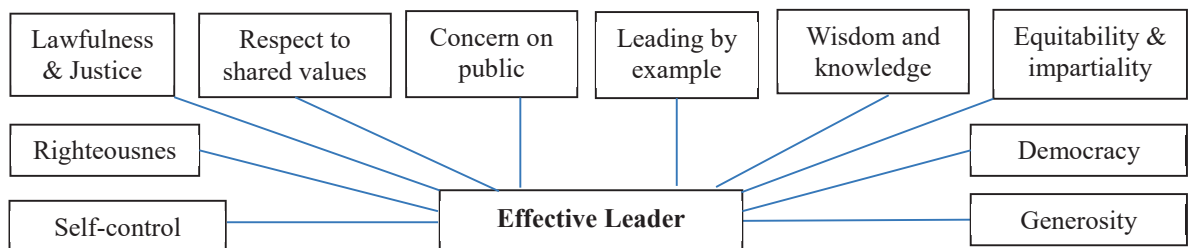


Figure 1: Dimensions of ideal leadership prototype, indigenous to traditional Sri Lankan society
Source: Developed by the researcher

Conclusion and Implications

It is clear that conventional and religious directives together create the foundation on which Sri Lankan traditional perception on leadership ideals. Accordingly traits and behaviours of perceived ideal leadership molded by socio-cultural context of the traditional Sri Lankan society can be summarized as righteousness; lawfulness and justice; respect to shared values; concern on public expectations; democracy; leading by example; wisdom and knowledge; equality and impartiality; generosity; and self-control. Needless to say that, the ancient socio-cultural, political and economic conditions exist no more in force in the contemporary context. World changes, so do the expectations of leadership. Therefore enforcing the ancient conception of leadership with its structural features is neither a valid, realistic nor meaningful effort. Still, there are reasons which preserve the importance of traditional mindsets and perceptions in the field of management.

Cultural forces influence how managers and employees interpret socially acceptable behaviours in the work roles (Holt, 2011). It has been widely accepted that the core values based on socio-cultural context are changing slowly than the secondary values. Therefore the influence of socio-cultural environment on the traditional perception of leadership prototype and its significance in the contemporary context cannot be further undermined.

Identification of dimensions of traditional leadership ideal opens a path for contemporary managers to revisit the role of leadership in the sphere of management. Stimulating the cultural synergy in management thinking may offer additional benefits for managers to form and develop competitive advantages by crafting a unique style of management which addresses effectively the minds of organizational members. Such identification may enable the managers to trace the similarities and differences between cultures and to develop methods to meaningfully integrate the systems with unique philosophies, policies and practices. As Amarasinghe (2009) views, there is value in looking at the past, to satisfy the curiosity about the past; to attempt to clarify misconceptions; to identify basic concepts that have survived many and serious changes, political, social, economic or other, and are still relevant; and above all, to avoid the errors of the past. Findings of the present study can also be utilized for the above purposes, clarifying and establishing the role of leadership appropriately in organizational management effort. Organizations and the society as a whole will be benefited when leaders can perform their role effectively to the satisfaction of their subordinates and to the wellbeing of the organization. Such an effort may enhance the long run success and sustainability of organizations.

foafjdAjiAi;+ ldf,akDevovassatuKalena (may the rains fall in due season)

iiAiiim;A;sfyA;+ pSassasampattuhetuca (may there be a rich harvest)

mSf;dANj;+ f,dAfldApPhitobhavatulokoca (may the world prosper)

rdcdNj;+ OiñfldARaja bhavatudhammiko (may the ruler be righteous)

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