

Leadership Lessons from Satra Institutions of Assam and their Applicability in Modern Organisations

Satyakam Dutta^{1*}, Dr. Monoj Kumar Chowdhury²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Gauhati University, India.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4117-8791

²Professor, Department of Business Administration, Gauhati University, India.

Abstract

The Satras have been the bed-rock of Assamese civilization for more than 400 years now and have continuously provided the various communities and tribes that comprise the land and people of Assam, a unifying heritage, tradition, and a common culture. The Satras have evolved over a long time and have their ideologies refined over the period. And therefore it becomes pertinent to analyse leadership lessons that can be relevant to the Satra institutions and their longevity. Modern organisations, with all their pomp and show, cannot usually survive beyond hundred years, but Satras have existed for a much more extended period. This study dwells on the Leadership anecdotes relevant to the Satra institutions and on whether based on their efficacy can those lessons be implemented in modern organisations to increase their life expectancy. Several leadership traits and models were in place in the Satra institutions, right from their inception. Decision making was truly democratic and decentralized. These virtues are, today, the hallmark of any successful organization. While profit-oriented organizations aim at financial goals, the Satra Institutions focus on non-economic goals and place the “human-being” and his search for God at the center of functioning. This depicts that when a humane approach is the baton of the leadership, they can survive over 400 years, as the Satras have. Even otherwise, monasteries can be seen as pioneers of management, accounting, and governance. Hence, study of monastic leadership, which is a unheralded territory for researchers and students, should be analysed more and traits which become evident from such research should be brought into the mainstream management in tandem.

Keywords: Satra, Vaishnavism, Mahapurusha, Srimanta Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva, Management, Management Principles, Leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement, which propagated through the entire country of India in the period between 12th and 16th century AD was a “Bhakti (devotional) movement based on the liberal doctrine of bhakti or devotion.” In Assam, a state in the North-Eastern part of India, through which the mighty river Brahmaputra with all its major tributaries flow, this Movement was initiated by the great Vaishnava saint,

Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva along with his most decorated pupil Shrishri Madhavadeva and was propagated after their deaths, through the distinctively unique institutions of the Satra (Vaishnavite monasteries, literally meaning, “Holy areas”) and its offshoot, the Namghar (community prayer halls). These institutions have become bedrock of Assamese culture and heritage, uniting the Assamese people across castes and tribes. The Neo-Vaishnavite movement brought about renaissance in Assam. The movement was unique in the sense that unlike other reformers in the rest of India during those times, Srimanta Sankaradeva’s Neo-Vaishnavism rested not on a discursive reasoning and abstract thinking, but emphasised more on ethnic integration, societal reforms, and spiritual uplift. It propagated an innovative mode of religious conduct based on indigenous elements of the region present at those times in history, when the society in Assam was in turmoil, fragmented into many small parts, always at horns with each other. The Satras have evolved over a long time and have their ideologies refined over the period. While Mahapurush Srimanta Sankaradeva along with his most decorated pupil Shrishri Madhavadeva, established the institution of Satra and fructified the idea of a monastic institution in the form of a Satra, it is their direct disciples and subsequently their lineages, who formalised the structure, traditions and its religious administration giving a distinct paradigm to the Assamese society.

The word Satra has a revered intention, which is identified with the neo-vaishnavite movement of Assam, started by the great saint Srimanta Sankaradeva, amid the latter half of the fifteen century. In the social sphere, Sankaradeva was a great organizer. To propagate his teachings, he and his disciples established Namghars (prayer hall) and a network of Satras (monasteries), respectively.¹ The Satras were instrumental in the spread of the neo-vaishnavite movement in Assam’s length and breath within a very short span. Thus, it can be said that it is the institution that is central to the religio-cultural resurgence initiated in Assam between the 15th-17th century. The whole extent of religious, social and cultural activism radiating from the Bhakti movement was focused on the Satra in Assam, with the Namghar or kirtan-ghar as its core.

The Satras have remained the fundamental organization to spread the teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva. But, after the demise of Sankaradeva, four factions have risen into the “Ek-

* Corresponding Author: Satyakam Dutta

Śaran-Nāma-Dharma,” called four samhatis (denominations): Brahma-samhati, Kal-samhati, Nika-samhati and Purush-samhati, and these samhatis or sects have propounded newer philosophies and beliefs. Subsequently, the Satras of Assam have stayed occupied to establish superiorities of their particular factions, which is regrettable. However, inspite of all their shortcomings, the Satra Institutions of Assam have survived for 400-500 years, and thus, their administrative setups require deeper studies for gaining insights into their functionings, which can help even corporate and other organisations to propagate over ages.

The Satra is a centre of religion, learning and cultural activities with a Namghar or kirtan-ghar (prayer house) next to a manikut (sanctum sanctorum). Bhakats (or disciples) live in huts (boha), which are organized in linear fashion called “hati.” Satradhikar lives in the main house. Officials like the Bhagavati, Pathak, Gayan, Bayan, Sutradhar, Medhi, Satola, Pujari, Bharali, Deuri, Khanikar, Likhak, Pasoni, Majumdar and Muktiyar and others have specific functions.²

The Adhikar (Aatradhikar) or the Burha-adhikar or the Burha-satriya is the religious head of a Satra institution. In some Satras, one more person from the locality is appointed to assist the Satradhikar in his works. His position in the Satra institution is next to the Adhikara, and he is known as the Deka-Adhikar or the Deka-satriya.³

The Satra Institutions in Assam are excellent examples of the plentiful religio-cultural activities of the Vaishnavite era and have maintained a lot of their old traditions intact. The rich heritage of enlightened socio-cultural activities, art, culture, and literature and the firm foundation of the religious beliefs of the Bhakti cult of the neo-Vaishnavism of Sankaradeva are treasured and nurtured in these Satras. In a few words, the Satra institutions are still the nerve centres of the Vaishnava society in Assam for the last 400-500 years.⁴

Having said that the Satra institutions have proliferated over centuries due to the inherent management and governance mechanism within, it becomes imperative for us to discuss a few Management models which have an apparent bearing on the Satra Institution.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad interdisciplinary summary of governance and leadership analysis concerning Management Models from a monastic viewpoint while identifying gaps in existing studies and to sketch out areas for further research. Besides, we want to examine the significance of the monastic administration and management principles through relevant management models for secular institutions like big corporations and enterprises.

2. LEADERSHIP AND SATRA INSTITUTIONS

Leadership within a monastic setting is a new promising field of study that could offer a diverse outlook on some issues in contemporary companies. However, this concept lacks an adequate theoretical foundation and is not yet supported by empirical study. The dominant theoretical frameworks used in prior research are the Rule of Benedict, the organisational theories, the agency theory and stewardship theory.⁵ We have

tried to analyse the writings related to monastic leadership and develop a theoretical model on its basis. The newly constructed model of monastic leadership serves as a foundation for practical application as well as for future study. In addition, we wish to address the relevance of monastic leadership principles to modern companies, in particular to the family business, which is closely knit organisations.

Although studies on monastic leadership and administration are still in its infancy, the number of articles on this subject growing rapidly.⁶ As mentioned, the Rule of Benedict, supplemented by the traditions, history and experience of each community, forms a basis for the monastic way of life and has an immense influence on the daily life of monks in the Byzantine monasteries⁷. The principles of monastic leadership include having a shared vision - common objectives and values⁸ that go far beyond 'codes of best practice'^{9,10} and define the attitudes, behaviour and actions of monks in their daily routine¹¹. Every monastic community member has to go through a long-lasting selection and socialisation process that helps them to implement the core values in the community. Further integrative parts of monastic leadership are a clear hierarchy within the community¹² and at the same time a consultative and participative approach to decision-making, as every monk with the solemn profession has an impact on this process.¹³ Besides, the leadership function of an abbot (of a monastery) involves encouraging the personal growth of community members¹⁴ and ensuring the economic and social sustainability of the monastery¹⁵ which is always true even in the case of the Satradhikar of a Satra. A dedicated leader is also expected to teach by being an example as well as serve the whole monastic community and other communities he feels responsible for.¹⁶

Governance is a process in which societies and institutions are managed and directed. More importantly, it covers issues like how to organise their affairs, exercises their powers, manage relationships, and make decisions. Governance methods contain commonalities and variations in lighting concepts, principles and applications of leadership. These features are not developed in a vacuum. Instead, they reflect the core values, traditions and other governance standards set out in organisational structures. The principled approach to various affairs highlights the importance of their followers' expectations and perceptions of the leader, while transformational leadership emphasises the central role of followers in "a more robust leadership system than relying on central and vertical leadership."

Transformational managers go beyond mere transactional exchange by acknowledging the reciprocal nature of ongoing interaction, and the contextual settings in which it occurs. This transformational approach views leadership from the perspective of the leaders' ability to mutually involve followers in the pursuit of a compelling vision. The central tenet of transformational leadership is that managing can only occur through engagement with those being led. It involves an influential process between leaders and followers in which leaders stimulate individualised consideration, empowerment and involvement within a communal context¹⁷. Leadership in a monastic context respects the contribution of all participants without diminishing the differences between leaders and

followers.¹⁸ These collective bonds create communal rights and responsibilities, provide constructive discipline, and manage collective resources. Different terms are used for describing similar processes such as collaborative¹⁹, shared²⁰ or servant leadership²¹, and ethical governance²² to cite several.

Benedict had predicted that governance in the unique monastic structure needs to be held accountable for its sustenance. The organisational setting also plays a crucial role in the leadership style. Leadership is an indispensable element that defines communal culture and supports organisational continuity. The Rule of Benedict lets a time-tested practical model of governance²³. It demonstrates an approach to leadership that can coordinate vertical and horizontal activity so that leaders are placed “among” and not “above” other community members. This type of leadership is also found in the Satras. Governance is viewed as a collaborative activity with no emphasis on the leader or followers as individual agents. It maintains explicit vertical relationships that do not negate the mutuality inherent in horizontal relationships between monks. Such a governance framework advances a conceptualization of leadership that according to Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, and Bergman (2012)²⁴ “...must expand from that involving only a single, vertical leader to one involving both formal, hierarchical leadership and leadership shared among team members” (p. 37).

The monastic practice of leadership and governance supports a balanced style that embraces both vertical and horizontal processes. The purposive integration of these two processes facilitates flexibility and adaptability²⁵. On an organisational level, the ability to adapt is essential to the sustainability of monastics communities. As the history of Satra Institution shows, on the one hand, this flexible system creates strongly diverging organisations with local, situational and temporal adaptations. On the other hand, it continues to rely on basic principles which are still viable after more than 400 years. Satra’s integration of both traditions demonstrated recognition and respect among followers (i.e. horizontal courses) and between leaders and followers (i.e. vertical courses) for communal solidarity and sustainability. Monastics generally do not rely on bureaucratic controls but rather on what Ouchi (1980)²⁶ referred to as “clan controls”, namely controls that rely on reciprocal trust and less on formalized reporting in numbers and figures, as is the case with bureaucratic controls²⁷. Benedictine Monasteries remain successful, stable communal enterprises with relatively few managerial problems as a consequence of the Rule of Benedict²⁸. The Satras have also survived through the ages due to the sense of devotion towards duty proliferated by controls placed by the leadership.

The sustainability of monasteries, in contrast to the transience of secular organisations, depends upon the selection and enculturation of its leaders²⁹. The governance of Satras is devoted to leadership conducive to collaborative governance. The Satras promote leaders who cultivate an ethical environment. It emphasizes the central role of the monastic leader, here the Satradhikar, alongside the pivotal role of the entire community in decision-making. The Satradhikar is not

in a leadership position to serve self but to serve and support the whole monastic community.

Monastic governance practices provide an example of how shared leadership transforms. The Satras promotes an organisational structure that can be leader-centered, follower-centred, and community-centered at the same time and in the same relationship. For instance, the Satradhikar consults with others in the community when matters require attention. Consultative decision making is inexorable in monastic Satras.

Monasteries are considered pioneers in organisational design. As against most other establishments, religious governance comprises of three important pillars: shared value systems, participative, democratic system, and amalgamation of internal and external oversight³⁰.

Firstly, it is important that monastics are rooted in shared value systems. Values and norms are of tremendous importance in monastic communities. While many other organisations establish authority and supervisory practices in order to observe performance, the inculcated shared value system necessary in monasteries articulates standards of suitable behaviour and provides the basis for responsible, sustainable communal organisation. The monastic value system of the Satras is based on three pillars: the ideals of both the Gurujona, the Satradhikar and the tradition of a particular Satra. In order to implement this value system, monastics developed careful selection and socialisation customs, routines, and practices. These value systems help with discernment and decision-making in important business affairs.

Secondly, monasteries promoted democratic fabrications along with broad participation rights for their members. Monastic institutions are characterised by transparent structures and processes, understandable to every member. They are designed in a democratic fashion to foster a culture of peaceful coexistence. Discipline, as well as such participation practices, promote and preserve members’ internal investments in the monastic enterprise. It also promotes checks and balances to minimise dispute and settle problems. Every monk with a divine profession has the same rights and can vote in the elections. Religious institutions democratically choose their leaders and also keep a watch over their actions. The monastery assesses whether members suggested for leadership roles are eligible to take up that assignment or not. They complement participation methods with additional internal control processes.

Finally, monasteries conceive inimitable environment that encourages intrinsic motives to conduct routine exercise and achieve a shared goal. While not totally ditching external oversight, monastic establishments arrange it in a different way. External control is hierarchically established within the local administration with monitoring members from the Satra, the local Government and the local community, in comparison to internal control that is more idiosyncratic and particular to a specific (i.e. local) Satra. Monasteries recognized by the Satra Mahasabha are governed by certain common rules, with however no strict binding. Thus, external control in the case of the Satras involves jurisdiction and periodic external

evaluation that is directed by the confederation of which monastic Satra affiliates with and rarely by the Government.

3. DECENTRALISED DECISION MAKING IN THE SATRA CONTEXT

As Henry Mintzberg noted in "The Structuring of Organisations" in 1979, "The words, centralisation and decentralisation have been bandied about for as long as anyone has cared to write about organisations." And that is a pretty long time, at least since 400 B.C., when Jethro advised Moses to distribute responsibility to various levels in the hierarchy. The decisions arising from a process of decentralised decision-making are the functional result of group intelligence and crowd wisdom. Decentralised decision-making also contributes to the core knowledge of group intelligence and crowd wisdom, often in a subconscious way a la Carl Jung's collective unconscious.

Decentralised leadership was a prominent feature of the Eka Sarana Nama Dharma order established by Srimanta Sankaradeva. There was no dictatorship in this order, unlike in many religious orders. The saint involved all members of the order in the decision-making process. When he wanted to go on a pilgrimage, he always took the opinion of the devotees. When the pilgrims reached a crossroads towards Vrindavana during the journey, Sankaradeva asked them to decide whether they should return home or visit Vrindavan. There are many such cases of decentralised decision-making process. Once he decided to send Madhavadeva to higher Assam for preaching religious ideology there because devotees living in upper Assam wanted someone there as a representative of the saint. But this decision was overturned only a short time later when Narayanadas Thakur vehemently protested that the decision to send Madhavadeva to higher Assam would affect the entire order, as Madhavadeva was important to the entire order. The decentralized leadership became more accentuated when Madhavadeva, the chosen successor of Saints Sankaradeva, asked the disciples just before his death to decide the issues of the order at that time, through discussions between them, not by dictating any leader. The practice of choosing Satriya / Satradhikar of Barpeta Satra came into being as a result of such instruction.

Decentralised Leadership Management (DLM) is a systematic behavior responsible for reducing all kinds of management corruption. Responsibilities were not centralised. This approach means seeing all DLM members as experts on their own as unique sources of knowledge, experience and wisdom. It is part of the development of human resources. Srimanta Sankaradeva was a personification of the DLM. He delegated various responsibilities to his disciples. For example, he entrusted the duty to initiate Brahmin devotees to Damodaradeva. He empowered two disciples to initiate others. They were Damodaradeva and Madhavadeva. He once entrusted Than's leadership to Damodaradeva when he went on the second pilgrimage. There has been no parallel with the management of Srimanta Sankaradeva except in contemporary history. His leadership model was continued by the next generation leaders, Damodaradeva and

Madhavadeva. They trained Gopal Ata, Badula Ata, Bangshi Gopal Ata etc.

Srimanta Sankaradeva instilled multi-faceted characteristics in his disciples and developed personalities of all proportions. He saw that his disciples mastered several arts such as music, dance, playing, making articles like Sanchi-Pat at the same time. The saint was a good motivator. His disciples were encouraged to learn many new things, for which he also made learning tools easily accessible to them. In the medieval period, learning tools were confined to the upper echelon of society. But Sankaradeva made them available in different forms. He developed a system of Knowledge Management (KM) so that the knowledge can be disseminated. The devotees were made to train in the knowledge of the supreme absolute through the multi-media productions of the saint. These included Bargeet, Ankiya tracks, songs, prayer books, etc. They were also asked to maintain Kirtanghar, as well as residential areas in Satras. Sankaradeva shadowed the unrealistic intellectualism. All of his disciples were firmly rooted in ground realities.

Democratic governance was the corollary of decentralized leadership. Feudal elements generally seen in religious organisations were not seen in the Thans set up by the saint. The Satras received no charge from the devotees for the religious services that were offered to them. The Satras were designed to be self-sufficient and durable. Not only was Satra sustainable, but it taught people to be sustainable in life. The Satras offered the possibility for devotees to learn art, literature, crafts, etc. The "Gurukar" religious tax was an aberration and came later. Everything established by Srimanta Sankaradeva continues to be led by representatives chosen by the devotees. Even the Satras, who are hereditary institutions of the selected followers, have gradually adopted this way of managing their institutions.

Proper feedback management always empowers Democratic governance. If a system's members are allowed to provide feedback, they sympathise with the system. Srimanta Sankaradeva realized it and he allowed the feedback from the devotees fully. So even illiterate pupils could address him and communicate with him anything they wanted to, even if irrelevant, he created such an atmosphere. He appreciated the comments made by his pupils seriously and all devotees were encouraged to communicate with him directly without any intermediary.

Mutual support and responsibilities are the pillars of Eka Sarana Nama Dharma founded by Srimanta Sankaradeva. Devotees perform all business together. Srimanta Sankaradeva stressed the concept of team management (TM). All devotees felt the oneness, thanks to the teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva. Whether it's setting up performances at Kirtanghar, preparing Bhaona's uniforms or dyes, or practising on dance forms, devotees have done everything together. Responsibilities were well defined in the order. The Than or Satra was dedicated to singing prayer hymns, playing the drums, calling devotees to pray, preparing performances, distributing Prasada, etc. This well-distributed work customisation makes the Satra systematic institution. But it was not a hierarchical system, because even a prominent

follower like Madhavadeva distributed Prasada when needed. Srimanta Sankaradeva himself cleaned and washed the floor of Kirtanghar once. So there was enough flexibility in the system. Srimanta Sankaradeva has always emphasised exploring points of agreement among members of the system before any decision. Thus he practised all the rules of human resources management.

Openness to fresh approaches was one of the great merits of the saints. This character is often missing in many people as they do not see the viewpoint of others. There is a need for openness and flexibility to run a diversified group of people - like the Eka Sarana Nama Dharma. People from all walks of life, ethnic tribes and castes came together to be part of a community. Sankaradeva showed flexibility, and he was able to adjust to everyone. This quality was seen in other spheres, as in the production of goods. For example, in cloth weaving, he quickly incorporated a new style of weaving while still working on the famous Vrindavani cloth at the express request of Koch king Naranarayana. That method of weaving was not in fashion anywhere in India during that time and certainly not so in Assam. As such, it was a great achievement.

Characterised by reciprocal respect and harmony at every level, the life of Sankaradeva is worthy of emulation. He respected the individuality in every person. As a result of this, he did not force his wife to accept his religion and allowed her to realise it herself. After Kalindi had talks with Madhavadeva, she decided to take Eka Sarana Nama Dharma. He gave respect to one and all. The most notable example is the honour shown by Radhika, a follower from the repressed society. He put her in charge of the dam construction in Tembwani. He also rehabilitated her family next to his residence. Such attitude enabled Sankaradeva to mobilise people in large numbers to construct the dam in Tembuwani.

All these characteristics of the saint we've mentioned so far so far were suitable for the heterogeneous community in which he lived, where the tribals make up the majority. Tribal communities had some of these qualities in their traditional cultures. For instance, we can talk about decentralised leadership, mutual respect, social harmony, mutual assistance, shared responsibilities, democratic governance, etc. Therefore, it became easy for them to adapt to the life of Eka Sarana Nama Dharma. Thus, the social life in the Brahmaputra valley can easily be linked to the Eka Sarana Nama Dharma system. Thus the transition has become a smooth affair.

4. THE RELEVANCE OF MONASTIC MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The financial crisis, corporate scandals, recent cases of inflated manager compensation, corruption, and falsified financial statements have shown very clearly that current corporate governance practice is not able to prevent the abuse of power, manipulation of incentives, and excessive risk taking³¹ (Rost, Katja, Inauen, Emil, Osterloh, Margit and Frey, 2010). To regain control and restore trust in the economic system³² (Pirson and Turnbull, 2011), it is necessary to look at leadership and governance issues from a different point of view. The Satra Institution seems to offer a

model of leadership and governance that has been successfully used for almost 500 years in different economic, social, and political settings. Having established basic governance instruments very early, the Satra Institutions were able to survive over centuries and had an essential impact on the development of the economy in Assam. For this reason, monasteries can be seen as pioneers of management, accounting, and governance³³ (Zamagni, 2010).

A democratically elected Satradhikar, sometimes with limited franchise, is in charge of governing the autonomous monastic communities in the Satras. This position is somewhat similar to CEO in modern companies. The Satradhikar nominates officials who are responsible for specific matters, such as economy, education, monk care, and others. Their counterpart in modern organisations would be "executive board." All monks with solemn profession form the *Samuha* that participates in making decisions in important affairs. On many other issues, the Satradhikar and his officials are advised by a council consisting of members elected by the monks and members appointed by the Satradhikar. The role of the council could be compared to the role of the advisory board in a private company. Based on the strong participation right of the monks, it is possible to say that all decisions about the monastic community and its future development are the result of internal democracy. To sum up, the monks possess both the instrument of democratic vote and the instrument of monitoring. Moreover, they have created a unique organisational structure where important issues are solved in open discussions, and people have the intrinsic motivation to fully invest their potential in the long-term future of the community.

Internal governance tools of the Satras include the responsibility of community members concerning financial affairs to the Satradhikar, monitoring and advising the Satradhikar and his administrators through the committee, duties of the Satradhikar to report the fiscal health of a monastery and participation of the entire institution when it comes to decision-making.

Participative decision-making not only provides priests with a mechanism for partaking in daily problems and honestly examining important issues but also fosters shared affective states in the long run³⁴ (Janotík, 2012). agency problems that are typical for modern corporations (divergence of interests of managers/owners/employees of a company). The fact that every member identifies himself with the community and knows that his voice is heard encourages crucial organisation-specific investment necessary for long-term economic success³⁵ (Janotík, 2012). Moreover, Moreover, a shared understanding of values, goals and principles of action provides additional internal incentives for appropriate behaviour³⁶ (Inauen et al., 2010a).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Monastic communities and modern businesses can benefit from each other's wisdom and experience³⁷ (Schütz, 2009). Thus, monastic leadership and governance principles could be used as a framework for addressing certain issues in

leadership and organizational control in other types of organizations. Several papers published between 2002 and 2018 investigate the relevance of those principles to knowledge-intensive firms³⁸ (McGrath, 2005), public institutions³⁹ (Inauen et al., 2010b), modern-day religious institutions⁴⁰ (Prieto et al., 2006), stock corporations⁴¹ (Rost et al., 2010), and other types of organizations⁴² (Holzherr, 2009, Inauen et al., 2010a; Kleymann and Malloch, 2010; McGrath, 2002). In their recent work, Inauen et al. (2015) argued that the extension of auditing and monitoring procedures by including measures to strengthen the sense of community and support individual members is worth considering toward better governance beyond religious organizations. Governance by rules implemented by the Satra Institutions would also be a superior governance mechanism for multinational organizations as it would help them to better cope with organizational and environmental complexity and uncertainty. The ways that the Satras develop and maintain a healthy community might also be of interest for contemporary organizations.

It is common knowledge that the modern business world is characterized by information overload, instant communication, and complexity⁴³ (Tredget, 2010). This means that leaders have to make prudent decisions quickly in order to live a morally good life in relationship to other individuals and stakeholders⁴⁴ (Tredget, 2010). The principles of monastic leadership offer a daily framework for acquiring practical wisdom, which enables people to make prudent judgments and take actions guided by values and morals^{45, 46} (Leavy, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2011). When leaders are able to create space for flourishing practical wisdom and cultivate such tacit knowledge, they are able to make enlightened decisions⁴⁷ (Udani and Lorenzo-Molo, 2013). This ability is of great importance for leaders of any organization, irrespective of its size and activity. While profit-oriented organizations aim at financial goals, the Satra Institutions focus on non-economic goals and place the "human-being" and his search for God at the center of attention. For this reason, the extent to which the principles of monastic leadership and governance are applicable in modern organizations requires further investigation and demands an interdisciplinary approach.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kakati, Satish Chandra (1977): 'Mahapurush Sri Śankaradeva' in Teachings of Sri Śankaradeva, (ed. R. Malakar), Sankarjyoti Association, Chandigarh, p 93.
- [2] Samudra Gupta Kashyap (2015): Satra Sutra, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/satra-sutra/> as on 23.07.2016
- [3] Champak Kumar Bharali (2015): LEGENDS OF VAISHNAVITE SATRAS WITH REFERENCE TO THE SATRAS OF LOWER ASSAM, Gauhati University, pp 21.
- [4] Dwijendra Nath Bhakat (1991): THE ASSAMESE VAISNAVITE SATRAS OF NORTH BENGAL AND GOALPARA, Gauhati University, pp 27.
- [5] Keplinger, K. and Feldbauer-Durstmüller, B. (2013) 'Monastic approach to governance and leadership: A literature review'. Paper Presented at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management. Capitalism in Question. August 9-13, 2013. Orlando, Florida, US.
- [6] Ibid
- [7] Feldbauer-Durstmüller, B., Sandberger, S. and Neulinger, M. (2012) 'Sustainability for centuries: Monastic governance of Austrian Benedictine abbeys', European Journal of Management, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp.24-34.
- [8] Gerry, J.J. (1992) 'Abbatial leadership', The American Benedictine Review, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp.29-46.
- [9] Inauen, E., Rost, K., Osterloh, M. and Frey, B.S. (2010a) 'Back to the future: A monastic perspective on corporate governance', Management Revue, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp.38-59.
- [10] Inauen, E., Rost, K., Frey, B.S., Homberg, F. and Osterloh, M. (2010b) 'Monastic governance: Forgotten prospects for public institutions', The American Review of Public Administration, Vol. 40, No. 6, pp.631-653.
- [11] OSB (Ordo Sancti Benedicti) (2014a) 'The Order of Saint Benedict', available: <http://www.osb.org>, [17 Apr 2014].
- [12] Tredget, D.A. (2002) "'The Rule of Benedict" and its relevance to the world of work', Journal of Managerial Psychology, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp.219-229.
- [13] Chan, C.C.A., McBey, K. and Scott-Ladd, B. (2011) 'Ethical leadership in modern employment relationships: Lessons from St. Benedict', Journal of Business Ethics, Vol. 100, No. 2, pp.221-228.
- [14] Ibid
- [15] Feldbauer-Durstmüller, B., Sandberger, S. and Neulinger, M. (2012) 'Sustainability for centuries: Monastic governance of Austrian Benedictine abbeys', European Journal of Management, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp.24-34.
- [16] Chan, C.C.A., McBey, K. and Scott-Ladd, B. (2011) 'Ethical leadership in modern employment relationships: Lessons from St. Benedict', Journal of Business Ethics, Vol. 100, No. 2, pp.221-228.
- [17] Chaleff, I. (2003). *The courageous follower: Standing up to & for our leaders* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- [18] Galbraith, C., & Galbraith, O. (2004). *The Benedictine rule of leadership*. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation.
- [19] Kramer, M., & Crespy, D. (2011). Communicating collaborative leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 22, 1024-1037.

- [20] Pearce, C., & Conger, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [21] Autry, J. (2004). *The servant leader: how to build a creative team, develop great morale, and improve bottom-line performance*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- [22] Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly* 17 (2006) 595–616
- [23] Tredget, D. (2002). The Rule of Benedict and its relevance to the world of work. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17, 219-229.
- [24] Bergman, J., Rentsch, J., Small, E., Davenport, S., & Bergman, S. (2012). The shared leadership process in decision making teams. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 152, 17-42.
- [25] Rivera, O. (2012). *Collegial hierarchy: The integration of vertical and shared leadership at Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota*. Dissertation submitted to Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. UMI Number: 3532748. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest.
- [26] Ouchi, W.G. (1980). Markets, bureaucracies, and clans. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, 129-141.
- [27] Payer-Langthaler M., & Hiebl, W. (2013). Towards a definition of performance for religious organizations and beyond: A case of Benedictine abbeys. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 100, 213-233.
- [28] Inauen, E., Rost, K., Frey, B., Hamberg, F., & Osterloh, M., & (2010). Monastic governance: Forgotten prospects for public institutions. *American Review of Public Administration*, 40, 631-653.
- [29] Winthrop, R. (1985). Leadership and tradition in the regulation of Catholic monasticism. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 58, 30-38.
- [30] Chan, C., McBey, K., & Scott-Ladd, B. (2011). Ethical leadership in modern employment relationships: Lessons from St. Benedict. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100, 221-228.
- [31] Rost, Katja, Inauen, Emil, Osterloh, Margit and Frey, Bruno S., "The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys: What Can Stock Corporations Learn from Monasteries?", *Journal of Management History*, Volume 16, Number 1, Pages 90-115, 2010.
- [32] Pirson, Michael and Turnbull, Shann, "Toward a More Humanistic Governance Model: Network Governance Structures", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Volume 99, Number 1, Pages 101–114, 2011.
- [33] Zamagni, Stefano, "Catholic Social Thought, Civil economy, and the Spirit of Capitalism", in: Finn, Daniel K. (Ed.), *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and Economic Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, Pages 63-94, 2010.
- [34] Janotík, Tomáš, "Benedictine Monasteries from the Point of View of Happiness Economics", *Economics Bulletin*, Volume 32, Number 2, Pages 1215-1225, 2012.
- [35] Ibid
- [36] Inauen, Emil, Rost, Katja, Osterloh, Margit and Frey, Bruno S., "Back to the Future – A Monastic Perspective on Corporate Governance", *Management Review*, Volume 21, Number 1, Pages 38-59, 2010a.
- [37] Schütz, Christian, "To Serve Life: The Rule of Benedict as a Guide for a Benedictine School", *The American Benedictine Review*, Volume 60, Number 2, Pages 154-167, 2009.
- [38] McGrath, Paul, "Thinking Differently about Knowledge-Intensive Firms: Insights from Early Medieval Irish Monasticism", *Organization*, Volume 12, Number 4, Pages 549-566, 2005.
- [39] Inauen, Emil, Rost, Katja, Frey, Bruno S., Homberg, Fabian and Osterloh, Margit, "Monastic Governance: Forgotten Prospects for Public Institutions", *The American Review of Public Administration*, Volume 40, Number 6, Pages 631-653, 2010b.
- [40] Prieto, Begoña, Maté, Lorenzo and Tua, Jorge, "The Accounting Records of the Monastery of Silos throughout the Eighteenth Century: The Accumulation and Management of its Patrimony in the Light of its Accounts Books", *Accounting History*, Volume 11, Number 2, Pages 221-256, 2006.
- [41] Rost, Katja, Inauen, Emil, Osterloh, Margit and Frey, Bruno S., "The Corporate Governance of Benedictine Abbeys: What Can Stock Corporations Learn from Monasteries?", *Journal of Management History*, Volume 16, Number 1, Pages 90-115, 2010.
- [42] Holzherr, Georg, "The Hidden Treasure: The Relevance of Regula Benedicti", *The American Benedictine Review*, Volume 60, Number 2, Pages 168-182, 2009.
- [43] Tredget, Dermot A., "Practical Wisdom and the Rule of Benedict", *Journal of Management Development*, Volume 29, Number 7/8, Pages 716-723, 2010.
- [44] Ibid
- [45] Leavy, Matthew K., "The Meaning of Monastic Stewardship", *The American Benedictine Review*, Volume 45, Number 3, Pages 229-248, 1994
- [46] Nonaka, Ikujiro and Takeuchi, Hirotaka, "The Wise Leader", *Harvard Business Review*, Volume 89, Number 5, Pages 58–67, 2011.
- [47] Udani, Zenon A. S. and Lorenzo-Molo, Caterina F., "When Servant Becomes Leader: The Corazon C. Aquino Success Story as a Beacon for Business Leaders", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Volume 116, Number 2, Pages 373-391, 2013.