

# “Panchatantra” Way for Organizational Problem Solving

चिन्तनीया हि विपदाम् आदावेव प्रतिक्रिया ।  
न कूपखननं युक्तं प्रदीप्ते वह्निना गृहे ॥

-समयोचितपद्यमालिका अध्यायः ७

*It is improper to start digging the well after the house has caught fire! We should be proactive i.e. we should have the solutions ready even before some problem comes to us.*

## INTRODUCTION

Problems form an inescapable passage in every person’s life. Regardless of one's efforts to evade them, the fact remains that challenges must be encountered, comprehended, and sometimes surmounted. Relying on a balanced combination of inquisitiveness and ability, motivation and creativity, logic and assets, chance and rational thinking, human beings solve a wide range of issues that arise in different aspects of their lives, including social, economic, political, cultural, and literary spheres.

Organizational problems refer to any difficulties or issues that arise within the functioning of an organization or company. These can be related to various aspects of the organization, including its structure, culture, policies, processes, and communication channels.

Organizational problems can manifest in different ways, such as poor performance, low productivity, high turnover, conflicts between employees or departments, lack of accountability, insufficient resources, unclear goals or roles, and inadequate leadership.

On one hand addressing organizational problems typically requires a systematic approach that involves identifying the root cause of the problem, gathering data, analyzing the situation, developing and implementing solutions, and monitoring progress. It may also involve changing organizational structures, culture, or policies to improve the overall functioning of the

organization. On the other hand lateral thinking or out-of-the-box thinking can also be a way of solving most kinds of problems. This comes in handy, especially during crisis management. These ways are abundantly available in the ancient Indian texts. Panchatantra is one such text which provides solutions to various problems and primarily it was written to educate three ignorant sons of a king. Apart from this lot of stories on problem solving are depicted in Ramayana and Mahabaratha as well.

### **Panchatantra, Ramayana and Mahabaratha as source for problem solving:**

Written in the 3rd century BC in Sanskrit language by Vishnu Sharma, Panchatantra is the oldest collection of animal fables in verses and prose. Its primary purpose was to enlighten three ignorant princes and assist them in governing and leading effectively. The book is divided into five "tantras" or systems of Nitishastra, which deal with the conduct of life. The stories in Panchatantra contain valuable lessons on organizational problems and their possible solutions, providing guidance on how to sustain and achieve an organization's objectives.

The Indian epic Mahabharata, which date back around 5000 years, is renowned for its depiction of the struggle to maintain Dharma or righteousness. This epic portray various situations where problems arise and solutions must be derived. Mahabharata, in particular, showcases the consequences of facing problems. The stories in Mahabaratha provide valuable insights into the best practices for solving organizational problems and challenges, offering a comprehensive perspective on what should and should not be done.

The article will consist of three sections. The first section will feature a resolved challenge from the Panchatantra story, while the second section will include an unresolved situation similar to it from the Mahabharata. In the last section, the article will focus on identifying contemporary organizational problems and their perspective on similar challenges.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the various problems in an organisation.
2. Suggesting techniques to solve the problems from the Panchatantra.

3. Identify the contemporary example of different organisations that tried solving the problems mentioned in Panchatantra.

Organizational problems can arise in any workplace and can be caused by various factors such as a lack of direction, ineffective decision-making, or conflicts among team members. These problems can hinder the growth and progress of an organization, leading to low productivity and reduced performance. The ancient Indian book Panchatantra provides a unique and effective approach to solving organizational problems. Written over 2000 years ago, the book contains numerous stories and fables that offer valuable insights into the art of problem-solving, leadership, and decision-making. By examining the lessons from Panchatantra, modern organizations can gain a fresh perspective on how to tackle their challenges and create a successful and sustainable workplace. In this article, we will explore the Panchatantra way of organizational problem-solving and its relevance in contemporary times.

The selected list of problems are as mentioned below:

1. Limited Innovation in organization
2. Inability to firefight
3. Inequality of roles within the organization
4. Focus on monetary gains
5. In effective teams
6. Role conflict
7. Improper decision making
8. Lack of trust
9. Absence of clear direction

The following table depict a summary of the Panchatantra solutions to selected organizational problems and Mahabaratha Stories to learn lessons from with a contemporary example of a Company

Organizational Problem	Name of the Panchatantra Story (Do's)	Mahabaratha Story (Don't's)	Company from which contemporary example is taken
Limited Innovation in organization	उपायेन शक्यं सर्वम्	Story of Duryodhana's failed attempts to win the throne	Innovative Strategy of Ola Cabs
Inability to firefight organization	Servant Supporting the Organisation in the times of Crisis	Inability of Shalya Raja to stand on the side of Kauravas	Tata company employees who stood by their organisation during 26/11 Terrorist Attack
Inequality of roles within the	A merchant's ill-treatment of the wealthy and the poor	Dhritarashtra's standpoint while choosing the right king for the throne of Hastinapura	Zomato food delivery company and its policy of equality
Focus on monetary gains	The story of a merchant	Duryodhana's greed for the throne	The top industries in India are successful because of their focus on the basic needs
In effective teams	A story of a Sparrow and Elephant	Lack of combined strength on the side of Kauravas while fighting the war	Ratan Tata the great industrialist as the powerful team player
Role conflict	A story of the Monkey who interfered in someone else's business led to the hardship	The role of Shakuni in the administrative court of Hastinapura	The companies in India taking role conflict as an advantage in the form of healthy role conflict form
Improper decision making	Thousand-Wit, and Single-Wit	The role of Dhritarashtra while ruling Hastinapur	The cheap rates of Tata Nano car
Lack of trust	Frogs and Snake	The trust relationship between Karna-Shalya and Sri Krishna-Arjuna	Example of Tata Consultancy on trust in an organisation
Absence of clear direction	Lion and a Jackal	Dhritarashtra's lack of the right direction	Dhritarashtra's lack of the right direction

Source: Self Compiled

In the following section of the article few selected organizational problems and its solutions in the Panchatantra story and stories from Mahabaratha on unresolved problems along with contemporary organizational problems and their perspective on similar challenges are discussed.

## **Solutions to organizational problems addressed through Panchatantra**

### **1. Limited innovation in an organisation:**

#### **The Story From Panchatantra: “उपायेन शक्यं सर्वम्”**

The inability of an organisation to harness new ideas, to exceed the competitors leads to limited innovation in the organisation. Those who do not have new innovative ideas fail to feel responsible and empowered for working for the betterment of an organisation. The story in Panchatantra “उपायेन शक्यं सर्वम्” means that everything is possible with the right strategy.

Once upon a time, there was a cruel lion in the jungle. He was cruel to animals and he used to kill them without any cause. The other animals in the jungle were scared and requested the lion that they would send one animal every day but he should stop killing innocent animals without a cause. Lion agreed to the request and every day one animal began to come to Lion’s doorstep. The lion was happy. One day, it was the turn of the rabbit. All the animals bid farewell to the rabbit with heavy hearts. The rabbit was on his way to sacrifice his life for the sake of his fellow animals. The rabbit was walking very slowly and was thinking of some way to get rid of the lion forever. Since Rabbit was late, the lion was furious and decided that he will kill all of the animals. A rabbit apologised and narrated that he met another lion on his way. That lion has decided to kill the cruel lion since he claims to be the real king of the Jungle. The cruel lion became angry and decided to kill the other lion first. As instructed by the cruel lion, the rabbit started walking and he took the cruel lion near the well. Rabbit narrated that another lion lives in the well. When the cruel Lion bends down to see, e saw his own reflection. He roared and jumped into the well. This foolish act led to his death and all of the animals lived happily ever after. As the title says, "By applying the right tactics, even a bigger enemy can be defeated."

The story above narrated the innovative act of the rabbit. A rabbit without any fear confronted the lion and won his trust. By taking him near the well and showing him as his own reflection, Lion confirmed that it was another lion. The foolish act of the lion and his anger let him down and the innovative quality of the rabbit made him live longer. The other animals on the other hand lost their lives by promising the lion, the sacrifice of one animal every day.

### **The Story of Duryodhana's failed attempts to win the throne**

In Mahabharata, Duryodhana tried different ways to sit on the throne by gambling, trickery, murder and even negotiation. He tried to kill Bheema when they were young, and he planned to burn the Pandavas along with their mother, Kunti in the Lakshagruha, while playing "Dyuut" he made the Pandavas and Draupadi his slaves and abused Draupadi, while Pandavas were in Adnyaatvaasa, he tried to catch them. But none of these plans worked and eventually it lead to a physically violent war. Even while in the war, he planned many tricks and strategies to win but he could not.

This is one of the examples which signifies the negative impact of solving the problem with innovative ideas with the wrong intention. The different ways that Duryodhana used did not show good intentions and he failed because of the wrong use of innovative ideas.

- The story from Panchatantra, "उपायेन शक्यं सर्वम्" which means that everything is possible with the right strategy.
- The rabbit could find innovative way to get rid of the cruel Lion by bringing the fake Lion superiority and showing him his own reflection in the water.
- The cruel Lion fell for it and died while drowning.

the two different dimensions, an ideal way of innovating different ideas can be understood from the Panchatantra story narrated above and the wrong use of innovative strategies can fail and it can lead to worse situations can be understood by Duryodhana's way of dealing with the problems.

### **Example Of Contemporary Times: Innovative Strategy of Ola Cabs**

An example from contemporary times of innovative ideas can be "OLA CABS". It is an Indian company of rental transportation which involves bikes, autos, cars, SUVs, and

minicabs for transport. With their innovative model, they have made sure that the long drives (from one city to the other) or the shortest of the rides (of about 600m) can be addressed by either of their transportation models.

## 2. Inability to firefight:

### **The Story from Panchatantra: Servant Supporting the Organisation in the times of Crisis**

“Servants, when disaster  
Comes upon their master,  
If alive and well

Tread the road to hell.” (Ryder, p-108)

States one of the stories from Panchatantra.

This story involves the 3 friends lion, a fox and a crow who live in the jungle together. One day, they find one camel alone, wandering in the jungle. When the lion asked the camel about his arrival in the jungle, the camel explained that since he was ill, he was separated from his master and the rest of his family. Lion promised the camel about his security and offered to wander around the jungle with him and his friends.

One day, while hunting in the jungle, the lion was attacked by an elephant with tusks and he was injured. Since the lion could not hunt for days, he and his friends, fox, crow and camel were starving. Lion instructed fox, camel and crow to go in the directions and find food, otherwise, they will die out of starvation. After some days, all of them came back with no food and decided that one of them will sacrifice their life and satisfy the lion and other animals. Crow offered his life first, but fox came in front and replied that crow’s flesh will be less. By seeing the situation, the camel decided to offer his flesh for all three of them. Without a second thought, all three of them killed the camel and satisfied their hunger.

This story suggests that when the lion promised the camel the security of his life, the camel felt the safety and security. With the feeling of gratitude, the camel did not think twice and in the situation of crisis, he offered his own body as food for the lion and his friends.

**A story from Mahabharata: Inability of Shalya Raja to stand on the side of Kauravas**

The Mahabharata tells us the story of Shalya, whose sister, Madri, was the second wife of Pandu. Her twin sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, were the youngest Pandavas. When the war was declared between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, Shalya naturally planned to support his nephews against their cousins. But on the way to the battlefield, he was tricked into supporting the other side.

As Shalya's army moved south from Madra towards Kurukshetra, Shalya found refreshments being arranged for his army along the high road. Much pleased, he declared unwavering support for the provider of these refreshments, assuming this was the work of the Pandavas. To his surprise, the organiser of these refreshments was Duryodhana, the leader of the Kauravas. Shalya had no choice but to uphold his words and fight against his own nephews.

Though king, Shalya was asked to serve as a charioteer to Karna, the charioteer's son. Karna liked this until, much to his irritation, Shalya kept praising the archery skills of Arjuna, Karna's arch-rival. This constant praising and comparison demoralised Karna. Later, when the wheel of Karna's chariot got stuck in the ground, and Karna asked Shalya to pull it out as it was the job of charioteers, Shalya said, "But I am a king. I don't know how to pull out the wheels of the chariot. That is what charioteers like your father do." Shalya thus turned out to be a liability for Karna. Karna was forced to get down and pull out the chariot wheel, and while he was busy thus, he was killed by Arjuna.

### **Example of Tata company employees who stood by their organisation during 26/11**

#### **Terrorist Attack**

The TATA company is one of the most successful companies in India and they are popular for their commitment to their work. Their commitment is, without doubt, the result of the given organisational support. The 26/11 attack on the Taj Hotel in Mumbai showed an example of committed and hard-working employees during times of crisis. An unforgettable feat of commitment was shown by the General Manager of the Taj Hotel - Karambir Singh Kang. He stated that he would be the last man to leave the hotel whatever happened (Deshpande & Raina, 2011), and this did not change even when he got the news that his family was threatened and later confirmed that they were no more. The given example can definitely show the speciality of the TATA group when it comes to their employees.



### 3. Inequality of roles within an organisation:

#### **A story from Panchatantra: A merchant's ill-treatment of the wealthy and the poor**

It has been seen that managers often end up playing politics and favouritism while assigning work. They often treat employees differently and bring their own biases into the employees. They do not assign the work or deal with the employees on their merit. From one of the stories from Panchatantra, In a city called Vardhamana, lived a very efficient and prosperous merchant. The king was aware of his abilities and therefore made him the administrator of the kingdom. With his efficient and intelligent ways, he kept the common man very happy, and at the same time, he impressed the king on the other side. Such a person, who can keep everybody happy, is rarely found.

The merchant had arranged a huge reception for his daughter's marriage. He invited the king queen and respected people from the kingdom. One of the servants in the kingdom who was not invited came to attend the reception. By knowing this, the merchant became furious and asked his servants to throw him out. With this insult, the servant decided to take revenge. On the following day, the servant started cleaning the area around the premises of the king and mumbled that "Good heavens! The merchant has become so carefree now that he dared to embrace the queen!" After listening to this, the king was furious and he started doubting the merchant. The king was troubled with jealousy. From that day onwards, he withdrew his favours from the merchant and even forbade him to enter the palace.

When the merchant understood the whole situation, he decided to invite the servant to his home. He treated the servant with the utmost respect and apologised for his behaviour during the reception. He treated him with many gifts. After experiencing the royal treatment, the servant decided to help the merchant gain the king's trust back.

The next day, while sweeping the floor near King's room, the servant mumbled, "Our king is crazy, he eats cucumber in the lavatory!" After listening to this, the king realised that he should have not trusted the mumbling of the servant. He wondered, "After all, he has been so efficient in the whole administrative system, that without him it has become slack." He invited the merchant into the palace and treated him with the respect and sent many gifts to him.

The story above has skilfully explained the two qualities. One should not discriminate between the privileged and the unprivileged. One should treat all people equally. And the second quality can be studied through the king's impulsive decision-making. With half knowledge, he ignored

all of the good qualities of the merchant and did not trust the merchant. Hence, it is necessary to have employees in the organisation who can be trusted and who have good qualities in them.

### **Dhritirashtra's standpoint while choosing the right king for the throne of Hastinapura**

Dhritirashtra favoured his son Duryodhana, despite being aware of Duryodhana's wrongdoings, as he was emotionally blind too. He did not think like a king but like a father. He failed to control his son's actions and arrogance. Despite Vidura helping Dhritirashtra to see what is right and ideal, he chose to support what is wrong and on the side of his son, Duryodhana. He could not balance his emotions over righteousness and balance. The effective leader must rate employees according to their merit and capacity, not based on their proximity to the leader. 'Balance in relationships' and the 'organisation above individual' is always ideal way to deal with the inequality in the roles of people.

### **The example of Zomato food delivery company and its policy of equality**

The food aggregator startup leads the charge of inclusivity and diversity in the Indian startup scene and stands out as an equal employer and thoughtful initiative for people of all genders, promoting gender equality in the workplace.

These are some initiatives that Zomato has introduced to bring about a sense of gender inclusivity and diversity:

1. 50% of directors at Zomato are women as an initiative toward cognitive diversity
2. The leave policy now allows women and transgender employees to use 10 menstrual leaves in a year
3. Equal parental leave policy for parents by birth, surrogacy, and adoption
4. Conscious employment of women at all levels- from delivery partners to board of directors
5. Aim to increase the number of women in the delivery fleet from 0.5% to 10% by the end of 2022

#### 4. Focus on monetary gains:

##### **The story of a merchant from Panchatantra**

Once, there lived a cloth weaver called Somilaka, who wove very exquisite clothes that served only kings and princes. However, he earned very less and could hardly afford to live. Other weavers in the locality were rich, despite the fact that they weaved many inferior clothes.

One day, he said to his wife, "My dear, this place does not deserve me! I weave superior clothes, and yet I earn so little. On the other hand, the other weavers grow richer by the day with their inferior clothes. I shall seek my success somewhere else." His wife, however, did not want to leave, for there was no assurance of betterment somewhere else. But the weaver had made up his mind and left the place in search of better prospects.

He went to another city, where he indeed was successful. His clothes became popular for their high quality, and in three years he had saved three hundred coins of gold. Now that he was rich, he decided to return home to his hometown and his wife. During his journey, in the middle of the jungle, he heard two voices:

Destiny: "Action, you should not have let the weaver earn three hundred coins of gold. He does not require that much for his living!"

Action: "Destiny, I had to reward him according to his efforts, but you may decide how much he should retain!"

He checked into his bag to find that the gold coins were lost. He became very sad. He thought, "I will not be able to face my wife! All my efforts for the last three years have been lost." So, he discontinued his journey and returned to the city. He worked very hard, and within a year, earned five hundred gold coins. Now that he was rich again, he decided to return home to his wife.

During his journey, in the middle of the jungle, he heard the two voices again:

Destiny: "Action, you should not have let the weaver earn five hundred coins of gold. He does not require that much for his living!"

Action: "Destiny, I had to reward him according to his efforts, but you may decide how much he should retain!"

When he heard this, remembering the last time, he quickly checked into the bag and found that the gold coins were missing. He became very sad and wished he died. He sat down and thought, "There is no point in living. I have lost my money again, and cannot face my wife in this state

of poverty! I shall hang myself on a tree!" He wove a rope from the nearby grass and tied it to a Banyan tree. He made a noose around his neck.

Just as he was about to hang himself, he heard a voice from heaven, "I am Destiny! I have taken the gold coins from you as you did not need the money for your living. But I am pleased with your industrious deeds. I permit you to ask for a boon that I shall grant." Somilaka replied, "Please give a lot of gold coins, that is the only boon that I ask you to grant"

Destiny asked, "You are not destined to earn more than you need for a living. Why do you ask for the money that you cannot enjoy?"

But the weaver was adamant. So, the wish was granted, "I shall grant you your wish, but you must return back to the city and visit any two merchant's houses. Study their behaviour and let me know how you would like your money to be"

So, he discontinued his journey once again, and returned to the city. He went into a merchant's house, and was greeted as a guest according to local traditions. This merchant was very rich, but did not like this unwanted guest. They gave him food in the most insulting manner, and offered a dirty bed for the night. At night, he heard the two voices again:

Destiny: "Action, you should not have let the merchant provide food to the weaver. He has forced himself as an unwanted guest!"

Action: "Destiny, the weaver needed to be provided for the night, and the merchant did so in his miserly ways, but you may decide the outcome!"

The next morning, he went into another merchant's house, where he was warmly welcomed. He was provided with new clothes and water to bathe. He was then served a lavish dinner, and a comfortable bed to sleep in. During his stay, he realised that the second merchant was not rich. At night, he heard the two voices again:

Destiny: "Action, you should not have let the merchant provide entertain the weaver so extravagantly. He has forced himself as an unwanted guest!"

Action: "Destiny, the weaver needed to be provided for the night, and the merchant did so in his generous ways, but you may decide the outcome!"

The next morning, the weaver watched the king's servants bring money for the second merchant. Destiny had rewarded him for his good deeds. The weaver thought, "The second merchant is not rich, but he leads a life which is better than the first merchant, who is very rich" On his way homeward, the voice from heaven asked, "*How do you want your money to be?*"

The weaver at once said, "Please give me only the money that I will be able to enjoy to the fullest like the second merchant." His wish was granted, and Somilaka returned home with some money that made his wife happy. They lived happily and were content with whatever they earned.

### **Duryodhana's greed for the throne**

Duryodhana was known for his greed for material gains. Before the Mahabharata war, Sri Krishna visited Hastinapur and offered peace from the side of Pandavas. He asked the King to give Pandavas Indraprastha and the throne of Yudhishtira back.

After listening to this, Duryodhana stood up and replied that he had won Indraprastha and the throne in the gambling. He would not give the throne back at any cost. As Dhritarashtra was already hoping to make peace he tried to convince Duryodhana, but out of his greed for material gains, he did not agree to his statements. He timely insulted Vidura and Bheeshma. His lust and greed for the throne made him Leo the greatest warrior Vidura.

Sri Krishna offered Duryodhana to let Pandavas rule at least 5 villages and that will do for them. This offer was agreed even by his beloved friend Karna but out of Duryodhana's greed, he did not let them have even a single village.

Duryodhana's greed led to the downfall of the whole kuruvansh (all of his brothers) including the warriors like Bheeshma, Dronacharya and Karna. The lust and greed for monetary gains of one person in an organisation can take down all of the members in an organisation.

### **The top industries in India are successful because of their focus on the basic needs**

Infosys, Reliance Industries, Tata, Mahindra & Mahindra are the leading companies found in India. In one of the interviews, it was observed that they have created several insurance policies for their employees. Because of this assurance, the employees work fearlessly in the organisations.

Some of them agree that many times the employees are found greedy and they need more than what they want.

## 5. Ineffective teams:

### **A story of a Sparrow and Elephant from Panchatantra**

A couple of sparrows lived happily in their nest on top of a huge tree in a jungle. The female sparrow had laid her eggs in the nest and they were expecting their newborns soon. On a particular day, unable to bear the heat of the summer sun, an elephant went berserk. He crashed into all trees in his way. On his way, he broke the branches of the tree that supported the nest of the sparrow couple. As the branches fell, so did the nest and all the newly laid eggs smashed against the ground. Although the sparrows managed to escape by flying away, they were heartbroken to see that they had lost the eggs. The female sparrow began to cry and wail loudly. After observing, a woodpecker came to help and took the grieving sparrow to his friend frog for help. A frog gave thought to the whole situation and decided to ask his friend to flee for help. A flee decided a plan to deceive the cruel Elephant.

A frog decided on a plan. "Fly! When the sun is scorching, your task would be to buzz in his ears. When he closes his eyes in sheer ecstasy, the woodpecker's task would be to peck his eyes and make him blind. In this scorching summer, he will certainly search for water, but being blinded already he will not be able to do so. I will then sit on the edge of the nearby pit and croak at the top of my voice."

He continued, "When the thirsty elephant hears me, he will think there is a pond or lake nearby and follow my voice. And when he does so, he will fall into the pit and perish. This way, we can avenge the death of the sparrow's children!" The others agreed to the plan and organised to do their part of the tasks as laid by the old frog.

They executed their tasks successfully, and the elephant fell into a muddy pit and was severely wounded.

### **Lack of combined strength on the side of Kauravas while fighting the war**

The battle of Mahabharata showed the two distinct sides of the same coin. Pandavas with their unity and allies and Kauravas with weak unity and controversial characters all along. Kauravas had some of the supreme and undefeatable Generals like Bheeshma, Master Dhronacharya, and Karana. Each one was comparable if not superior to Arjuna and was capable of taking on all the Pandavas alone. (Thaker, 2010) Kauravas had the greatest empire of the time. They did not have many strong allies. Most allies were forced, coerced and induced instead of being

defeated in a war with Karana (Thaker, 2010). Thus the ability of the Generals on Kaurava's side remained constrained due to curses, vows, blunders and personal constrain on the use of the Divya Astra, disagreement, lower motivation, etc. (Thaker, 2010)

The ineffective team structure and internal conflicts on the Kaurava side led to the downfall of the whole group despite their multitalented team members. They could not use the right feature at the right place which resulted in arguments, insults, and death.

### **The example of Ratan Tata the great industrialist as the powerful team player**

Ratan Naval Tata, better known as Ratan Tata, is the former chairman of the Tata Group. He's a popular Indian industrialist, who led his company to global success. Apart from his pioneering leadership qualities, Tata is a team player with a golden heart. After the nightmarish 26/11 attacks at the Taj Mahal Palace hotel, he made personal visits to some of the bereaved families of the employees. Throughout his professional life, Tata continued to set examples of effective teamwork. He became a successful leader because he was a powerful team player. He valued his employees as individuals as much as he valued working with them.

## **6. Role conflict:**

### **A story of the Monkey who interfered in someone else's business led to the hardship**

There was once a merchant who employed many carpenters and masons to build a temple in his garden. Regularly, they would start work in the morning; take a break for the mid-day meals, and return to resume work in the evening.

One day, a group of monkeys arrived at the site of the building and watched the workers leaving for their mid-day meals. One of the carpenters was sawing a huge log of wood. Since it was only half-done; he placed a wedge in between to prevent the log from closing up. He then went off along with the other workers for his meal. When all the workers were gone, the monkeys came down from the trees and started jumping around the site, and playing with the instruments.

There was one monkey, who got curious about the wedge placed between the log. He sat down on the log, and having placed himself in between the half-split log, caught hold of the wedge and started pulling at it. All of a sudden, the wedge came out. As a result, the half-split log closed in and the monkey got caught in the gap of the log and as a result, he was severely wounded.

"One, who interferes in another's work, surely comes to grief".

### **The role of Shakuni in the administrative court of Hastinapura**

Shakuni was a King of Gandhar and his sister was married to the king of Hastinapura, the administrative unit in Kururashtra, King Dhritarashtra. King Shakuni's role with his nephews gave the perfect idea of role conflict. Shakuni continuously influenced Duryodhana to play games, tricks and unwholesome strategies. Duryodhana was very influenced by Shakuni, in many situations, Duryodhana chose "Adharma" because of Shakuni.

The King of Gandhar stayed with his nephews in Hastinapur and was lured into administrative work. He wanted his nephews to sit on the throne and rule the kingdom. For this cause, he played many tricks and gambled with the Pandavas. The role of Shakuni in Mahabharata led to many misunderstandings and conflicts between Pandavas and Kauravas. Shakuni intentionally became close to Duryodhana from his early childhood. Even more than his father. This built a sturdy courting between Shakuni and Duryodhana. Each time Duryodhana fell into a plight, he might call Shakuni for advice. He provided emotional help to Duryodhana seeing his enmity towards the sons of Pandu. Observing this factor Shakuni understood that the emotions of Duryodhana and his hatred towards Pandavas could be used to brainwash Duryodhana. Shakuni used this jealousy as a core element to persuade Duryodhana. (Sharma, 2021)

### **The companies in India taking role conflict as an advantage**

The Indian companies have turned the challenge of role conflict into an advantage. The co-workers who face role conflict are told to take others' interference as a valuable opinion. Many organisations have come up with the "healthy role conflict".

## **7. Improper decision making:**

### **Story from Panchatantra: Thousand-Wit, and Single-Wit**

In a pond, there lived two fishes named "A thousand wits" and "hundred wits". In the same pond, lived a frog named "single-wit". All of them used to spend time with each other and enjoy the edge of the water. They used to have conversations about their wits and again used to go back to their families.

One day, during the sunset, the fishermen with their nets came to check if there were fish in the pond. After seeing the pond, they realised that there was plenty of fish and shallow water, they decided to return during the dawn.



After listening to the conversation of the fishermen, they saw the danger coming and decided to take a council meeting. The frog asked: hundred-wit” and ‘thousand-wit” if they should flee or stick in the same pond. The “Thousand-wit” replied that they should not trust mere words and anticipate the invasion. He promised to save the frog and others in case the crisis comes. He believed in his wit and asked others to keep faith in his wit.

The frog decided to speak up and said that he is only blessed with one wit and his wit is making him flee with his family. As decided to a frog with his wife and shifted overnight into another pond.

The next day, fishermen came with their nets to catch fish, turtles, crabs, and other water creatures. All of them were caught in the net. A “Thousand-Wit” died in between but the “Hundred-wit” saved himself but he was still in the net standing heavy on the fisherman’s head. Far away staying frog with his family, saw the bloodshed. The wife of the frog replied,

While Hundred-wit is on the head,  
While Thousand’Wit is limp and dead,  
Your humble Single; Wit, my dear,  
Is paddling in the water clear? (Ryder P. 46)

The verse mentioned above states that while making decisions that are an important threat to one’s life, intelligence cannot be the only determinant of fate. The wise men even if they are not very intelligent, can use the possible and safer solution that faces misery ahead. The “Thousand-Wit” along with his other fellow friends who trusted the “Thousand-Wit”, was dead as well.

Those who decide for the whole organisation, and the important decisions, if not taken correctly, there might be the downfall of the whole organisation, should take the decisions after thinking, taking opinions from others and using common sense as well.

### **The role of Dhritarashtra while ruling Hastinapur**

Mahamaheem Bheeshma always took the wrong decisions since starting. He promised the wrong vows which led to the downfall of what is right. He took the wrong decision of always staying by the side of “The Hastinapur kingdom” during the time of King “Shantanu”. This resulted in an unfortunate time during the Mahabharata war when he had to choose the “Kauravas” group which was full of “Adharma” instead of choosing “Dharma” by being on the side of Pandavas.

His vows at the wrong place and at the wrong time created a fiasco while in the war. He was not aware of the future action while making a decision which led to the organisational collapse.

### **The cheap rates of Tata Nano car**

Ratan Tata is one of the greatest industrialists known in India. One of the most loved products of TATA company is the “Nano” car. The speciality of this car is it is very compact and economical. While taking the decision on the price of the car, Ratan Tara dedicated the car to those who cannot afford expensive cars and to those who need the car for travelling in the small lanes of India.

When in one of the interviews, Ratan Tara was asked how he could take such the decision of making the Nano car cheap and affordable, he replied, that everything that he owns should be of help to the common man. He said that he had observed families having four to five members on one bike going on the road, which made him realise the need for affordable means of transport. He took a decision after noticing and observing the common needs of people.

His style of taking decisions is inspired by looking at the bigger picture which has been suggested by Sri Krishna in Bhagwad Geeta by fighting in the war to manifest Dharma. “Dharma Rakshati Rakshitah”

## **8. Lack of trust:**

### **The story from Panchatantra: Frogs and Snake**

There was an old snake named Mandavishya, who lived near a mountain. Due to his old age, he was unable to prey on frogs. He thought, "I am too old to hunt for food. I will not be able to live long without food, and it is only going to make me weaker to hunt, as well. I have to think of something".

Suddenly, an idea struck him. As planned, he went to a nearby pond, which was full of frogs, and relaxed on the bank of the pond without any intention to hunt. He behaved as though he had nothing to do with the frogs. At first, the frogs ran away, but as he was not hunting, the frogs gathered some courage and approached him. One of them asked, "O Snake! Why do you not hunt, as is your behaviour?"

The snake replied casually, "I have no desire for food, as I am unfortunate. I'll explain it to you. Last night, when I was wandering about in search of frogs, I bit a Brahmin's son in frustration

of not finding any prey. The Brahmin cursed me. He said, 'From now onwards, you shall be able to do nothing but serve frogs. You will have to live off what frogs offer to you!' And so, I lie here, to serve any frogs who want my services. I can give a ride on my back to any frog who wishes for a ride"

When the news reached the king of frogs, he visited the snake along with his ministers. On being assured by the snake that he means no harm, the king decided to take a ride on the snake's back. The snake rode him around the pond, and the king was very entertained. Even the ministers and other snakes took turns riding the snake, and they were very entertained, too.

The snake, too, proved himself a good entertainer by exhibiting various styles of crawling. The frogs, especially the king of frogs, were delighted. The frogs jumped and hopped all the way. The next morning the snake pretended to be weak and crawled slowly on purpose. The king of frogs, on the other hand, was excited to start the morning with a ride on the snake's back. He observed the snake's behaviour and enquired. The snake replied, "I am too weak to crawl. I have not eaten for so long, and must eat something to be strong to give you a ride."

The king of frogs thought for a while, consulted his ministers, and decided that they must serve the snake one frog a day to keep him strong. This was what the snake had planned for. He praised his kindness, and gave him and the other frogs a ride on his back.

From then onwards, the snake gave a ride to the frogs and got to eat one frog every day. In a short time, he regained strength. On the other hand, the king of frogs was too excited to realize the frogs were rapidly decreasing in numbers and there was only a handful of them that remained.

The frog king was so completely taken in by the snake's talk that he did not understand his real motive. One day, a big black snake arrived at the bank of the pond. He was very surprised to see the excited frogs hopping for joy, and riding on the snake's back. The black snake enquired, "O friend! Why are you carrying frogs on your back? They are our food!"

The old snake explained everything to the black snake. He continued, "I have discovered many different tastes after eating many different frogs here. I have this easy way of life, and enjoying it here." Over time, the snake had eaten even the larger snakes and started eating the ministers and the king's relatives. Finally, one day, he ate the king also and thus, the entire frogs in the pond perished.

### **The trust relationship between Karna-Shalya and Sri Krishna-Arjuna**

During the battlefield, Sri Krishna and Arjuna showed the qualities of great compatibility as a team and they could achieve all of the desired goals. Their compatibility included like-mindedness of the thoughts, actions and Arjuna's trust in Krishna's knowledge.

On the other hand, it could be observed that King Shalya and Karna showed a lack of compatibility on the battlefield while fighting in the war. King Shalya was trapped in the tact of Duryodhana and was forced to be on the side of Kauravas while fighting in the war. Along with this, he was humiliated and insulted by Duryodhana, Shakuni and even by Karna. He was made the charioteer of Karna. This led to the incompatibility between the charioteer and "Maharathi". When the wheel of the Chariot while fighting with Arjuna, got trapped in the mud, King Shalya did not help Karna. This led to Karna's death while releasing the wheel from the mud. There were several instances when King Shalya did not support Karna which showed a lack of trust for each other.

The above example gives an idea of having trust between employees and management and even with co-workers. The lack of trust can lead to the downfall of the whole organisation just like it did in the situation of Karna.

### **Example of Tata Consultancy on trust in an organisation**

*"Building on our customers' ambition and optimism to transform their businesses for the better so that their contribution is, in turn, felt by their customers and the communities they serve."*

This is a powerful quote taken from "TATA" company and the reason behind their success. TATA company since the starting believe in building customers with trust as the best policy to have a successful organisation.

## **9. Absence of clear direction:**

### **A story from Panchatantra of a Lion and a Jackal**

In one Jungle, there lived a lion called, "Vajradanustra" who has two attendants, a wolf and a Jackal. One day, they saw a camel who had given birth to a baby camel. After watching a suffering female camel, Lion attacked her. He and his attendants ate the camel and promised the baby lion his safety.

One day, while attacking the elephant, Lion was badly injured and he could not hunt for several days. The 2 attendants, the wolf and the Jackal suggested the Lion ask a camel if he could sacrifice his life. After thinking, that Lion saved his life, a camel decided to sacrifice.

A lion hunted the camel and asked his attendants to keep a watch on the dead camel so that he can go into the river and take a bath. During this time, their motive of Jackal was to eat the camel alone. He asked the wolf to start eating a little bit. After coming back from the river, the lion saw that wolf had already started eating. He was angry and started attacking his fellow attendant wolf. The wolf ran to his life and never returned back.

By this time, there came one Caravan with several camels along with the sound of many bells. The Lion was scared and asked Jackal to check if there is any danger. Jackal checked and told Lion that Yama raja (the god of death) has come to take the life of the lion because he killed a camel. After listening to this, a Lion was scared and he ran away.

Finally, Jackal could eat the whole camel by himself. This story gives the idea that the right counsel and the leader should be appointed while giving direction to the employees. Along with the leader who gives direction to employees, it is necessary that the management and other leading managers are acting with the right virtues. The right direction is needed through managers, leaders and the management itself.

#### **Dhritarashtra's lack of the right direction**

King Dhritarashtra always lacked in giving the right direction to his children. He always compared Duryodhana to Yudhishtira. In many situations, he decided to choose wrong over right. While giving the right direction as a king, he did not balance his personal opinions about Duryodhana with what is right for the whole organisation. Being a king, his duty was to give the right direction. Because of his love for his son, he gave the very responsibility to Duryodhana.

The ruler of the Hastinapur kingdom, Dhritarashtra was found to be the exemplar of how a leader should not be. The strength of any leader can be seen through his ability to give the right direction and stand by them. King Dhritarashtra lacked in giving direction and even standing by them. Vidura being the advisor of Dhritarashtra, helped the king many times but he could not give any powerful direction.

When Draupadi was humiliated in his court, despite having the power to stop Duryodhana, he preferred to stay silent. Leaders who remain quiet on the organization's pressing issues or when

faced with a tough situation not only lose their subordinates' confidence, but they also find themselves as bad decision-makers. Without wavering along the road, a leader must take a stand and deal with challenging problems. (L. Kaipa, 2014)

### **Ratan Tata's right direction since the establishment**

The right kind of direction is needed from the leader as well as from the managers, and other heads. In the TATA company, it was noticed that there were opinions of people that were always taken while deciding and guiding the employees. Ratan Data himself always believed in giving direction to people which shows the combined opinion of all of the organisation.

In one of the interviews, Ratan Tata explained the secret behind his successful organisation. He said, that all of the employees, managers and even heads know what they are working for. They are aware of the bigger picture. This approach helped the organisation to grow in one right direction.

## **CONCLUSION**

The stories from Panchatantra give an overview of ideal ways to solve the different challenges. Those challenges can either be solved with intelligence or by using the common traditional methods. Many stories from Panchatantra suggest seeing the bigger picture and acting. Modern times need different solutions to versatile problems and Panchatantra is successful in being versatile even with one story to solve the different problems.

The stories from Mahabharata are found to be similar to modern-day organisational challenges. The stories from Mahabharata in this paper are intentionally taken negatively in order to show the negative impacts if the problems are not resolved properly. There are several instances where Sri Krishna solved some of the problems with his knowledge. This paper highlights the stories from Panchatantra that can be useful for modern-day problem-solving.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Thaker, K. B. (2010). Management Control and Strategy Implementation: Insights from Mahabharata. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1658331>

Sharma, N. (2021). A Qualitative Analysis of Communication Technique of Sri Krishna and Shakuni with Special Reference to Mahabharata. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3918780>

L. Kaipa, P. (2014). Making wise decisions: leadership lessons from Mahabharata. *Journal of Management Development*, 33(8/9), 835–846. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jmd-06-2014-0061>

Chendroyaperumal, C. (2009). Best Human Resource Management Practices: Prescriptions in Panchatantra. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1334658>

Sharma, N. (2021b). A Qualitative Analysis of Communication Technique of Sri Krishna and Shakuni with Special Reference to Mahabharata. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3918780>

Chendroyaperumal, C., & Sumana, B. (2008). HRM: “Avoid-Two-Bosses” as a Tactical Strategy from Panchatantra. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1335168>

Kielhorn, F., Bühler, G., & Bombay (India State) Dept of Public. (2022). *Panchatantra I.[-V.] . . (Sanskrit Edition)*. Legare Street Press.

Chendroyaperumal, C. (2009b). Retention Strategies from 5000 Year-Old Indian Wisdom on Human Resource Management. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1336026>

Ryder, Arthur. W., *The Panchatantra*, Jaico Publishing, Bombay, 1994.

## **Comprehensive overview of the literature that is referred and cited in the study:**

Panchatantra: A Treatise on Life Skills Education and Training (research article)

Vijendra Kumar SK\* and Dr. A.R. Krishnamurthy\*\*

**About the reference:** The present study is all about arguing that Panchatantra is nothing but life skills training model. It teaches „how to live a life, where there are adversities, hardships, and demotivating circumstances. It does not focus on how to lead a life, where the morals or ethics dominates the character. The vivid narrative and transaction among its characters focus on adapting day to day stresses and issues while being aware of consequences of a specific behavioural pattern; fulfilling the objectives and scope of modern life skills education and training, which helped many trainers and life skills researchers to use these stories extensively.

A qualitative analysis of the communication technique of Sri Krishna and Shakuni with special reference to Mahabharata

Phd Thesis by Nitesh Sharma

**About the reference:** The paper will present different instances with proper reference to the shlokas present in the epic of Vedvyasa where we could be able to judge the literature from the psychopolitical point of view. The paper will also disclose how Bhagwad Gita could be compared with Sigmund Freud's theory of consciousness and how Sri Krishna with his interpersonal persuasive skills brings Arjuna's Unconscious state of mind into complete consciousness with the techniques of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra.

Retention strategies from 5000 year-old indian wisdom on human resource management

Dr C Chendroyaperumal

**About the reference:** Efficiency, effectiveness and survival of any organization anywhere, whether big or small, depend on the recently rediscovered human capital. Thus acquisition of qualified human resources, developing them and maintaining them becomes all the more important. Employee turnover not only reduces the human capital in an organization but also organizational productivity besides incurring the costs of acquiring human resources for replacement and developing them. Hence increased emphasis is being laid on retention of human resources now a days especially with the onset of recent Revolutions such as Information



Technology, which is labor intensive in nature, supported by increased globalization. Text books on HRM suggest that retention problem is caused by organizational factors, lack of competitive compensation and rewards, inappropriate job design and work, lack of good employee relationships, etc. The prescriptions, by the text books, on retention intervention are: presenting the realistic job preview during the recruitment process, matching applicants to jobs, effective orientation and training after selection, giving competitive, fair and equitable pay, create opportunities for career advancement, fair and non-discriminatory treatment and enforcement of HR policies, etc. However this paper attempts to rediscover the Indian wisdom on HRM with special reference to the causes of employee turnover and the retention strategies as spelt out more than 5000 years ago in Panchatantra, a classical work on management, yet very relevant even to this day!

The Panchatantra of Vishnu Sharma

Book by Arthur W Ryder

**About the reference:** This is a translation of the original Panchatantra written by Vishnu Sharma. It has different stories from Panchatantra that are converted into the prose and poetry of English.

Panchatantra : Vishnusharmasankalitam

A book in the Sanskrit language by Vishnu Sharma

**About the reference:** This book includes all of the stories of Panchatantra along with their explanation in prose and poem format in Sanskrit.

HRM: 'Avoid-Two-Bosses' as a Tactical Strategy from Panchatantra

Research article by Dr C Chendroyaperumal and B Sumana

**About the reference:** This paper highlights a case from an Indian work on Management 'Panchatantra' and presents interesting management principles and suggests 'avoid-two-bosses' as a tactical strategy for the survival, full utilization of the potential of human resource and growth of any organization.

Best Human Resource Management Practices: Prescriptions in Panchatantra

A research article by Dr C Chendroyaperumal

**About the reference:** Human Resource Management has come into prominence only recently and its strategic importance recognized only very recently. The literature on human resource management is based largely on the western thought. The contributions to human resource management practices from India are rich and very effective but long remained ignored by the scholars. For instance, Lord Buddha and recently Mahatma Gandhiji have all proved the effectiveness of Indian human resource practices to the utter disbelief of the rest of the world. The aim of this paper is to highlight some of the human resource management principles prescribed in Panchatantra (one of the ancient Indian works on management using the case method, a method to be discovered by the West only 5000 years later!) related to employee qualities and work, leadership, motivation, employee turnover and retention, research and development personnel, conflicts, and employee care. It will of great interest to both scholars and practicing human resource managers to note that the human resource management principles found in Panchatantra are not only easily practicable but also look as if they were written for today! Practicing these HRM principles would result in better management and utilization of human resource and thus would enhance the efficiency and performance of the whole organization.