

# **Dharma and Organizational Ethics: Lessons from the Mahabharata**

## **Introduction**

### **Dharma:**

The term "dharma" originates from the Sanskrit word "dhr," which means to maintain, uphold, or support. In essence, dharma can be defined as a way of living that sustains, enhances, and gives significance to one's life. It encompasses a set of behaviors and principles that contribute to the overall well-being and flourishing of an individual.

Life is a two-way process, involving both the individual and the world around them. The concept of "concern for life" encompasses both aspects, and from this idea arise three main principles:

(i) **Care for Self-development:** The first principle of dharma is the idea of self-development, which involves striving for excellence in one's own unique qualities and abilities. Dharma recognizes that every individual possesses specific virtues and talents that give them a unique social value. Similar to how fire has heat as its characteristic quality, and salt has salinity, individuals have their own distinct qualities that they should cultivate to their fullest potential. Dharma promotes the idea of individual liberty and opportunity, allowing each person to fully express their personality and reach their full potential.

(ii) **Care for the Development of Others:** The second principle of dharma emphasizes that the expression of one's individuality should not hinder the development of others, but rather, it should contribute to the collective growth and progress of society as a whole. This requires a balance between self-development and self-control. Dharma recognizes that order (Vyavastha) is necessary for society to function properly, and this can be achieved through the principle of justice (Nyaya), which ensures that everyone is treated fairly and equally. Both liberty and justice are fundamental aspects of dharma.

(iii) **Universalizing the Individual:** The third principle of dharma acknowledges that all life is interconnected and part of a greater cosmic movement. It recognizes the presence of an all-transcending spirit that pervades the entire creation. The highest state of happiness for a person is to realize this truth in their own personal experience, in every aspect of life. This requires a complete identification with all that is, which can only be achieved by letting go of narrow self-interests and identifying with a broader sense of community and universal oneness. This ethical stance should be reflected in the practice of universal fellow-feeling, brotherhood, compassion,

and loving-kindness. These virtues are the first steps in a spiritual journey towards the eternal home of the soul.

Thus, Dharma can be understood as living an individual life that is in harmony with the world around us. The practical aspects of dharma can be classified into two categories: the Sadharana or General, and the Vishesha or Particular. The Sadharana dharma refers to general principles that are applicable to all individuals, regardless of their background or social status. The Vishesha dharma, on the other hand, pertains to specific obligations and duties that are unique to particular individuals based on their social roles, family traditions, and personal circumstances. In essence, dharma provides a framework for individuals to live a meaningful and purposeful life, while also contributing to the well-being of society as a whole.

The practical requirements of dharma can be divided into two categories: the Sadharana (Samanya) or General, and the Vishesha or Particular. The Sadharana dharma consists of universal moral principles that apply to all individuals, regardless of their social status or background. Manu, a Hindu lawgiver, outlines ten essential components of Sadharana dharma, which include self-possession, forbearance, bodily discipline, non-theft, purity of body and mind, sense-control, intellectual efficiency, learning and knowledge, devotion to truth, and non-anger.

On the other hand, the Vishesha dharma consists of specific obligations and duties that are unique to each of the four varnas (or castes) and the four stages of a Dvija (or twice-born) person. Each varna has its own set of duties and responsibilities, based on their particular role in society. Similarly, each stage of a Dvija person's life comes with specific obligations and expectations that must be fulfilled. These Vishesha dharma requirements vary depending on an individual's social status, family traditions, and personal circumstances. ([www.dharmadispatch.in](http://www.dharmadispatch.in), n.d.).

### **Organizational Ethics:**

Ethics is a philosophical branch concerned with distinguishing between right and wrong. Ethical principles provide valuable guidance for businesses, helping them make moral decisions and take responsible actions. Organizational ethics encompasses fundamental ethical values, such as integrity, honesty, fairness, and responsibility, which are shared by all members of an organization. It provides a framework for ethical discussions and considerations throughout the entire organization, and enables the organization to acknowledge the impact it has on others, both positively and negatively. By recognizing the relational nature of its

existence, an institution can create a framework for ethical discourse that promotes responsible behavior and decision-making.

Companies must have the ability to implement ethical strategies based on these principles. They have a responsibility to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders. In addition to satisfying shareholder needs such as increasing profits, companies must also safeguard the interests of other parties such as preserving the natural environment and protecting human rights. (Wesarat et al., 2017).

Thus, Organizational ethics refers to a set of principles and values that guide a company's operations and business practices, particularly in the relationship between management and employees. These ethical standards act as guidelines that promote social values beyond purely economic considerations and uphold moral standards in the workplace. ([www.ca.indeed.com](http://www.ca.indeed.com)).

Businesses are expected to serve and protect their stakeholders as well as the wider community according to the principles of organizational ethics. To support this, companies must have an ethical vision and strategy in place. While developing a set of ethical principles can provide a guiding framework for ethical practices, the effectiveness of these practices ultimately depends on the capabilities of both employers and employees. This includes the ability to analyze ethical issues, identify alternative ethical solutions, and choose the most appropriate ethical course of action. By promoting organizational ethics, companies may achieve sustainable development goals (Wesarat et al., 2017).

### **Importance of Dharma and Organizational Ethics:**

Vedic Hindu mythology considers business as a legitimate and essential component of society, responsible for generating wealth through various activities like manufacturing, trade, financing, and domestic distribution. The ideology focuses on the importance of working towards an economic structure that promotes the well-being of all stakeholders, known as Sarva Loka Hitam. To maximize the benefits of business, it is essential to strive for excellence in all aspects, with quality maintenance being a crucial factor (Sharma, 2004).

Integrating the principles of dharma with organizational ethics can foster a culture of ethical conduct in a business, promoting values such as honesty, fairness, compassion, and respect for others. Dharma can also serve as a useful framework to guide decision-making, especially when there are conflicting values or interests. By taking into account both organizational ethics

and dharma, a business can make ethical decisions that are consistent with its values and objectives (www.iasindepth.com,2022).

### **Mahabharata and its significance:**

The epic of Mahabharata is centered around the rivalry between two branches of a family - the Pandavas and Kauravas - who battled for the kingdom of Hastinapura on the plains of Kurukshetra. The story is chronicled in a manuscript consisting of one lakh verses compiled into eighteen sections, including "Aadi Parva," "Sabha Parva," "Ban Parva," "Virat Parva," "Udyog Parva," "Bhishma Parva," "Drona Parva," "Karna Parva," "Shalya Parva," "Sauptik Parva," "Stri Parva," "Shanti Parva," "Anushasan Parva," "Ashwamedhik Parva," "Ashramvasik Parva," "Musal Parva," "Mahaprasthanik Parva," and "Swargaarohan Parva." The majority of the sections center around the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, in which the former had an army of eleven Akshouhinis while the latter had seven. An Akshouhini refers to a unit comprising 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses, and 109,350 foot soldiers (in a ratio of 1:1:3:5). The battle raged for eighteen days, with the Kauravas losing all of their warriors one by one until the Pandavas emerged victorious and claimed the kingdom of Hastinapura (Karnika Gupta, 2020).

Mahabharata is considered to be the fifth Veda that contains spirituality within its pages and advocates for equality of access. It serves as a comprehensive guide that encompasses various aspects of Indian philosophy such as individualism, foreign policy, taxation, and the well-being of people. The text is a philosophical masterpiece that captures the essence of Indian culture through storytelling. The ideas of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha expressed in the Mahabharata were relevant to kings, kingdoms, and their subjects five millennia ago and remain just as relevant today to individuals, families, organizations, communities, and nations (Gautam Chikermane, 2019).

In the Mahabharata, the characters are presented with moral quandaries and ethical dilemmas, and the concept of dharma is frequently invoked to guide their decisions and actions. However, dharma is portrayed as a flexible and contextual concept that demands careful interpretation and application, rather than being a rigid set of fixed rules (Matitlal, 2014). Moral dilemmas in the Mahabaratha

Hence, this article aims to explore the concept of dharma in the Mahabharata and how it can be applied to organizational ethics, drawing on examples from the epic to illustrate its relevance and practicality in contemporary business contexts.

## Dharma in the Mahabharata

प्रभावार्थाय भूतानां धर्मप्रवचनं कृतम् ।  
यत्स्यादहिंसासंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥ ०१० ॥

12-110-10

Source: sanskritdocuments.org

“Dharma exists for the welfare of all beings. Hence, that by which the welfare of all living beings is sustained, that for sure is dharma.” — Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 109.10

The Mahabharata highlights the importance of the concept of Dharma, which plays a central role in shaping the plot and actions of its characters. Throughout the epic, characters such as Yudhishtira, Bhishma, Arjuna, Bhima, Draupadi, and Dhritarashtra frequently inquire about Dharma in various contexts (Bodhananda, 2010).

The Mahabharata portrays dharma as an all-encompassing and eternal law that governs every aspect of human life, including personal morality, social and political affairs. The text explores the intricate ethical dilemmas faced by its characters, who must balance their individual interests with their responsibility to society and the divine. It includes two crucial sermons on dharma, namely The Bhagavad Gita and The Dharma of Kings, which have significant relevance to spiritual seekers and present-day leaders alike (Iván Kovács, 2012).

### Types of Dharma discussed in the Mahabharata:

Mahabharata discusses different types of Dharma that are important for leading a righteous life. Here are some of the main types of Dharma mentioned in the Mahabharata:

**Varna Dharma:** Varna Dharma pertains to the obligations and roles allocated to the four varnas (castes) in ancient Indian society: Brahmins (priests and scholars), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (merchants and traders), and Shudras (laborers and artisans). Every varna had its own specific set of duties and responsibilities. According to Sheldon Pollock, "The

Mahabharata offers perhaps the most sustained study in world literature of the undecidability of conflicting moral claims – what the text itself repeatedly calls the 'subtlety' of the moral order...’’ (Pollock: 2006: 554). The Mahabharata suggests a more radical idea through these stories, that caste or birth may not be important in the pursuit and practice of dharma, and that anyone, regardless of their caste, can embody dharma.

**Ashrama Dharma:** Ashrama Dharma refers to the responsibilities and duties associated with each stage of life in ancient Indian society, which were divided into four stages: student life, householder life, retired life, and renunciate life. Each stage had its own set of duties and functions which helped to regulate and guide the natural impulses of human life. The Ashrama Dharma not only had social implications but also emphasized the importance of renouncing worldly desires in the final two stages of life. The Ashrama system was a way of training individuals to reach their ultimate goal (Puja Mundal, n.d.).

**Raja Dharma:** Raja Dharma refers to the obligations and duties of kings and rulers in ancient India. These included upholding the principles of Dharma, safeguarding their subjects, and working towards the betterment of society. The concept of Rajadharma is extensively explored in the Shantiparva of Mahabharata, where Yudhishtira seeks advice from Bhishma on how to govern effectively.

Bhishma refers several experts in Rajadharma and lists their teachings for Yudhishtira's benefit. He mentions Brihaspathi, Vishalakhsa, Shukra, Indra, Manu, Bharadwaj, and Gaurshira as the main proponents of Rajadharma. Bhishma then outlines the duties of a king and the functions he must perform on a daily basis.

- Maintenance of Varnashrama system
- Protection of the people
- Establishment of rules and general principles of activity in the state
- Appointment of royal servants
- Inspection of the functionaries, and economic well-being and social welfare of the people of the state

कृषिगोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं यच्चान्यत् किञ्चिदिदीदृशम् ।  
पुरुषैः कारयेत् कर्म बहुभिकर्मभेदतः ॥<sup>46</sup>  
विक्रमेणमहीं लब्ध्वा प्रजा धर्मेण पालयेत् ।  
आहवे निधनं कुर्याद् राजा धर्मपरायणः ॥<sup>47</sup>

Source: Nain, Ansuiya & Sharma, Sanjeev. (2021).

The king has to perform all his duties according to Dharma; he is forbidden to do such things, which the people with reason have denied and he should protect the people as well as Dharma.

**Kula Dharma:** Kula Dharma refers to the set of duties and responsibilities that are associated with an individual's family and lineage in ancient Indian society. The customs and traditions of the family were considered to be of great significance, and individuals were expected to follow them.

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।  
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ १-४० ॥

kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanāḥ  
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnamadharmo'bhibhavatyuta

Source: [www.cisindus.org](http://www.cisindus.org)

When Arjuna expressed his fear about the destruction of families and clans leading to the collapse of dharma, Krishna guided him towards spiritual understanding and emphasized the importance of Swadharma, or one's own duty based on their individual nature and responsibilities. As a Kshatriya, it would have been a grave sin for Arjuna to give up the war, and Krishna urged him to fulfill his duty without attachment to the outcome, as it was ultimately up to fate and karma (Rajabhishek Dey, 2022).

### **Importance of Dharma – Illustrations from Mahabharata:**

The Mahabharata offers numerous examples of ethical leadership, social responsibility, and the importance of upholding Dharma in organizational settings. The text emphasizes the importance of leaders who embody ethical values and lead by example, as well as the need for

organizations to prioritize the well-being of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, and society as a whole.

It also emphasizes the importance of Dharma in times of crisis and conflict, such as the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas (Bodhananda, 2010). Few examples of the many instances or characters in the Mahabharata that illustrate the role of Dharma in organizational ethics is discussed below:

**The Battle of Kurukshetra:** The Mahabharata's main conflict is the Kurukshetra War, a battle between two branches of a royal family fighting over an inheritance. The war symbolizes the clash between individual desires and the responsibility to uphold Dharma. The Pandavas, who fight on the side of Dharma, aim to restore justice and reclaim their rightful position in society. The war serves as an analogy for the ethical challenges leaders face in organizations, where they must balance the competing interests of various stakeholders while remaining faithful to their ethical values (Karnika Gupta, 2020).

**The Story of Yudhishtira and the Yaksha:** The Mahabharata contains a well-known story in which Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, is challenged by a Yaksha who poses a series of ethical questions. Yudhishtira's answers show his dedication to upholding Dharma, even in challenging circumstances. This tale underscores the significance of ethical leadership and emphasizes the necessity for leaders to make ethical decisions based on moral principles rather than their self-interest. (Prasad, 2014).

**The Character of Arjuna:** Arjuna, one of the Pandava brothers and a skilled archer, faces doubt and refuses to fight in the Kurukshetra war upon realizing that he would have to fight and kill his own family members. Lord Krishna advises him on the significance of fulfilling one's duty and adhering to Dharma, even in challenging circumstances. Eventually, Arjuna picks up his bow and enters the war, comprehending that it is his obligation to fight for what is just and right (Siddharatha, 2020).

**The Character of Bhishma:** Bhishma, an important character in the Mahabharata, was a renowned warrior and statesman who was well-known for his uncompromising adherence to Dharma, even when it meant opposing his own family. Bhishma's father had asked him to remain celibate and not have children, which he dutifully followed, despite the potential loss of heirs to his family lineage. Additionally, Bhishma chose to fight on the side of the Kauravas, despite knowing that the Pandavas were in the right. His story exemplifies that upholding Dharma can require making difficult choices and personal sacrifices (Dolan et.al, n.d.).



**The Character of Vidura:** Vidura was an impartial and wise advisor to the Kuru dynasty, known for his commitment to justice. He warned the Kauravas against their plot to kill the Pandavas but was ignored. The ensuing war between the two factions showed the importance of standing up for what is right and speaking truth to power, as Vidura did (Prasad Kulkarni, 2019).

**The Character of Krishna:** Krishna's character in the Mahabharata is a model of ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of wisdom and compassion in decision-making. His actions and words demonstrate the need for leaders to uphold Dharma and act in the interest of all stakeholders. Krishna's character serves as a valuable lesson for leaders seeking to cultivate an ethical leadership style and to make a positive impact on the organization and society (Shrinivas, 2022).

### **Organizational Ethics and the Mahabharata**

Organizational ethics is concerned with the ethical principles, values, and standards that shape the behavior of individuals and organizations in their dealings with others. This is crucial because it helps organizations establish a climate of trust, respect, and accountability, and fosters an atmosphere in which employees, customers, and other stakeholders feel appreciated and treated fairly (Satyendra, 2022) [www.ispatguru.com](http://www.ispatguru.com), Organizational Ethics and Values and their Importance

In Indian philosophy, ethics and dharma are closely connected concepts. Dharma is the set of moral and ethical obligations that individuals have in their life, including values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for others.

In an organizational context, dharma can be understood as the set of ethical principles that guide the behavior of individuals and organizations in their interactions with others. It is important for organizations to incorporate dharma into their ethical practices because it helps create a sense of purpose and meaning for employees, and fosters a culture of trust and respect for all stakeholders.

Moreover, dharma emphasizes the importance of social responsibility and the need to contribute to the welfare of society. This is particularly relevant for organizations in today's world, where social and environmental issues have become critical concerns. By incorporating dharma into their organizational ethics, companies can contribute to the greater good while also creating value for their stakeholders (Bhangaokar et.al. 2009).

Bhangaokar, Rachana & Kapadia, Shagufa. (2009). At the interface of 'Dharma' and 'Karma': Interpreting moral discourse in India. *Psychological Studies*. 54. 96-108. 10.1007/s12646-009-0018-1.

Thus, organizational ethics is important because it helps organizations establish a culture of trust and respect, and dharma provides a framework for ethical behavior that is rooted in moral and ethical duties and responsibilities. By incorporating dharma into their ethical practices, organizations can create a sense of purpose and meaning for employees, contribute to the welfare of society, and foster a culture of trust and respect for all stakeholders.

### **Ethical dilemmas of few selected characters of the Mahabharata.**

An ethical dilemma, sometimes referred to as a moral problem or ethical paradox, occurs when a person faces a difficult decision between two choices, neither of which completely aligns with ethical principles. While many of the ethical and moral issues we encounter in life have straightforward solutions, there are some situations where making the right choice can be challenging (Hegde, 2021).

The ethical dilemma is not of recent origin but has its root in our ancient Indian scriptures. Different ethical dilemmas faced by the characters in the Mahabharata are described below:

#### **Bhishma's dilemma**

Bheesma's decision not to marry and have children in order to fulfill his father's wishes was a bold and selfless move. However, this decision ultimately led to negative consequences. This situation highlights the complexity of ethical decision-making, as what may seem like the right choice in one situation can have negative impacts in another. It is important to consider all factors and potential outcomes when making ethical decisions, in order to avoid unintended consequences. Similarly in organizations one need to have a holistic view before taking any decision. Holistic view will ensure benefit of the decision to reach all the concerned stakeholders. Best Corporate example for this dilemma would be Satyam Scandal by Ramalinga Raju. (Gupta, et.al, 2022).

#### **Kunti's dilemma**

Kunti received a boon from Durvasamuni that allowed her to invoke any deity and have a child. However, she invoked the Sun deity out of curiosity, even though the circumstances were not

suitable. This incident illustrates the importance of waiting for the appropriate time to conduct experiments, as premature testing can have negative consequences and lead to feelings of guilt (Bisht, 2012). This episode from the epic Mahabharata can be well co-related to the current time with the failure of the Kingfisher Empire of flamboyant Vijay Mallya. The impulsive decision to take borrowing for unplanned expansion set the sun on Kingfisher. The business turned to borrow money in whatever way it could, including from linked parties and by overvaluing the Kingfisher brand (Gupta, et.al, 2022).

### **Karna's dilemma**

Karna is a tragic character in The Mahabharata who experienced much suffering throughout his life and faced constant humiliation and ridicule. Despite knowing the consequences, he remained determined to support Duryodhana. Karna was knowledgeable about the Vedas and understood that Dharma always prevails over Adharma, and the Pandavas, who represented law and justice, would eventually emerge victorious in the Dharmayudh. Karna's story teaches us the importance of understanding the reality behind situations and not blindly supporting others without careful consideration (Rima & Nath, 2020).

However, corporate houses like DHFL fail to take lessons from such a great Indian epic and invite misery for themselves. The first fraud to ever occur in a housing finance firm, DHFL, was primarily caused by promoters' active participation in money laundering allegations and the alleged syphoning of cash through the granting of loans to linked parties of promoters. The loans were made to those with bad credit or others with the same addresses but lived in remote areas. The creation of roughly 6 lac phoney accounts at one branch using the names of previous loan applicants. These accounts were used to make loans, which were then used to transfer money to companies that promoted products. In the end, it was discovered that these loans were not recoverable. (Gupta, et.al, 2022).

### **Arjun's dilemma**

Arjuna faced a dilemma when he saw his relatives on the opposing side during the Kurukshetra war, which led to the Bhagawadgita narration. Initially, he refused to participate in the war and laid down his bow, the Gandiva. However, Krishna, his charioteer, tried to reason with him and then used his divine status to persuade Arjuna that it was his duty to fight, regardless of his personal feelings. Krishna emphasized the importance of fulfilling one's dharma, or moral duty, and that Arjuna must fight for what is right and just.

The Yes bank, one of the significant private banks developing momentum as a viable challenger to other private banks, was brought to a premature and untimely end by fraud. The bank had a unique business strategy that included, among other things, a focus on retail loans, a broad branch network, and an emphasis on technology. Unwise lending methods and loan renewals were used in the scheme. The bank used a strategy outside industry standards by charging borrowers a hefty commission. Additionally, earnings were overstated due to front-loading commission income, which was grossly under-provisioning NPAs compared to RBI norms (Gupta, et.al, 2022).

### **Lessons from the Mahabharata for Organizational Ethics:**

**The Importance of Leadership Ethics:** Dharma is closely linked to ethical leadership, as leaders play a vital role in promoting a culture of ethics within their organizations. Leaders can lead by example and model ethical behavior, such as honesty, integrity, and transparency. They can also promote ethical conduct to employees through communication and accountability measures. The Mahabharata's story of Yudhishtira and the Yaksha illustrates the importance of upholding Dharma even in challenging situations. Yudhishtira's responses to the Yaksha's ethical questions demonstrated his commitment to Dharma and his wise leadership in making selfless choices. Despite the difficulties, he maintained his ethical values and learned from the encounter.

The story highlights the importance of ethical leadership and the need for leaders to make decisions based on moral principles rather than personal gain.

The Mahabharata offers examples of both successful and failed leadership, highlighting the importance of thoughtful decision-making in times of rapid change and uncertainty. Effective leaders are able to make informed decisions quickly, taking into account both explicit and implicit factors. Reactive or impulsive decision-making can lead to negative consequences, emphasizing the need for a thoughtful and deliberate approach (Kaipa, 2014).

**The Consequences of Unethical Behavior:** The Mahabharata highlights the negative outcomes of unethical conduct. Duryodhana, the main antagonist, serves as an example of a selfish and ruthless leader who prioritizes his own interests above those of his people. His immoral behavior eventually leads to his downfall and the destruction of his kingdom. Duryodhana is representative of leaders who are driven by greed and arrogance, unwilling to learn or accept opposing views that challenge their authority. These leaders prioritize their own interests over those of the organization or society, favoring quantity over quality. However,

their success is typically short-lived due to their constant power plays and greedy tactics, and they fail to earn the respect of their teams (Jatinder, 2020).

**The Importance of Teamwork and Collaboration:** The Mahabharata stresses the significance of teamwork and cooperation in accomplishing the objectives of an organization. The Pandavas, who were a team of five brothers, collaborated effectively by utilizing each other's strengths to defeat their opponents. They also collaborated with their allies, seeking their support and guidance whenever necessary. The Pandavas' team members were committed to their goal and were selfless, prioritizing their ultimate aim of dharma. They supported and encouraged each other even in challenging times. Organizations can learn from the Pandavas' example and foster a strong team spirit among their employees while prioritizing employee care (Shubham Singh, n.d.).

The story of the Mahabharata teaches that building a successful team is not just about having a large number of people, but rather about identifying the key areas and talents that are necessary to achieve organizational objectives with minimal loss. The Pandavas, despite being just five, had a perfect blend of guidance, talent, leadership, youth, flamboyance, and strength, which allowed them to overcome their enemies. In contrast, the Kauravas had a full-fledged army and a league of extraordinary warriors, but their over-ambitious aspirations and lack of coordination led to their defeat and eventual downfall. Therefore, organizations should focus on building a cohesive team that leverages the strengths of each member and works towards a common goal, rather than just having a large number of people. (Rao, 2016).

**The Importance of Ethical decision-making:** The story of Arjuna from the Mahabharata highlights the significance of ethical decision-making and the need to balance personal interests with the collective good. Leaders can leverage this story to inspire employees to take into account the ethical consequences of their actions and make wise and compassionate choices. Dharma can function as a guiding principle for ethical decision-making within organizations. By emphasizing the importance of fulfilling moral and social obligations, dharma can assist individuals and organizations in making decisions that are not only compliant with legal regulations, but also socially responsible and ethical.

**The Importance of Impartiality and transparency:** The character of Vidura in the Mahabharata exemplifies the importance of impartiality, wisdom, and transparency in organizational settings. Known for his intellect, Vidura was believed to embody Dharma himself. His voice was considered the voice of reason and wisdom, and his statecraft or Niti

was a precursor to Chanakya's Niti. Dhritarashtra, the blind king, sought Vidura's advice on various matters of governance due to his unmatched intellect. His most famous advice, known as Vidura Niti, became a guiding principle for ethical leadership. After the great war of Mahabharata, Yudhishtira appointed Vidura as his Minister, and his advice was followed in all matters of statecraft. Thus, Vidura's influence on the course of events in the epic highlights the importance of wise and impartial leadership in achieving organizational goals.

The story of Vidura can serve as a useful tool for leaders to encourage transparency, accountability, and fairness in decision-making within organizations. One way to apply this principle is by establishing a dedicated ethics committee, implementing a code of ethics, and providing ethics training to employees. These measures can promote ethical behavior and ensure that organizations act in a socially responsible manner. By following Vidura's example of impartiality and wisdom, leaders can help create a culture of transparency and accountability in their organizations (Mishra, 2018).

**The Importance of practising Svadharma:** The concept of swadharma, rooted in ancient wisdom, is still relevant today. The Bhagavad Gita provides valuable insights on this concept, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling one's responsibilities and maintaining ethical principles, no matter what the situation may be. In modern organizations, leaders can encourage employees to take ownership of their roles and act responsibly for the greater good, thus promoting the idea of swadharma. Ultimately, swadharma inspires individuals to perform their duties in a conscientious manner that benefits their environment (Dutt, 2018).

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the Mahabharata provides a wealth of knowledge and insights on the concept of dharma and its relationship to organizational ethics. The epic illustrates how individuals and organizations can uphold dharma by following ethical principles and moral values, and how doing so can lead to long-term success and prosperity. The lessons from the Mahabharata on dharma and organizational ethics are highly relevant to modern-day organizations, which are increasingly expected to act in a socially responsible and ethical manner. By incorporating these lessons into their management practices, organizations can build trust with their stakeholders and create a positive impact on society as a whole.

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Bisht, S. (2012). The Ethical Dilemma Faced By Kunti And How It Impacted Karna, In The Epic ‘Mahabharata.’ *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research*, IV(II), 1–6. <https://www.ijllr.com/post/the-ethical-dilemma-faced-by-kunti-and-how-it-impacted-karna-in-the-epic-mahabharata>

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Michael Dolan, B.V. Mahayogi, [www.mahabharata.pro](http://www.mahabharata.pro), The Teachings of Bhishma, <https://www.mahabharata.pro/teachings-of-bhishma>

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This article was originally written for the Conference on Mahabharata and Management organized by Bodhananda Research Foundation for Management and Leadership Studies, in 2007, at Tiruvananthapuram. Vol:2 n Issue:1 n July-December 2010, 3D... IBA JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP Vol:2 n Issue:1 n July-December 2010 Swami Bodhananda Chairman, Sambodh Foundation, New Delhi

Gautam Chikermane, (2019), *Reclaiming the Mahabharata for India's 21st Century manifestation*

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Karnika Gupta & Ishu Garg, (2020), *Lessons of Strategic Management From Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita*, Vol. 15, Number 1 & 2, January & July 2020, 1-10, Apeejay Journal of Management & Technology

Sharma, A., & Talwar, B. (2004). *Business excellence enshrined in Vedic (Hindu) philosophy*. *Singapore Management Review*, 26(1), 1+.

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[www.dharmadispatch.in](http://www.dharmadispatch.in) Manusmriti as a digest of the Hindu Philosophy of Life

<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/organizational-ethics>

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

1. Dutt, Priyanka, The Concept of Swadharma and Effect on Leadership (June 30, 2018). SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3205992> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3205>

**About the reference:** SSRN is devoted to the rapid worldwide dissemination of research and is composed of a number of specialized research networks.

The concept of swadharma is ancient but its application holds modern relevance. The ancient wisdom of Bhagavad Gita engulfs thought provoking ideas on the concept of swadharma. The concept without any formal rules or guidance procedures is intertwined in the lifestyle of a human civilization through the framework of varna vyavastha and ashrama vyavastha. These terminologies have been explained in the paper based on the study of commentaries and translations of Bhagavad Gita. In order to view the visible results of swadharma an additional dimension has been studied. This is done by studying the inter-relationship between swadharma and leadership. The findings are based on secondary data sources that provide an overview of the topic. The paper concludes by stating avenues for future research in terms of variables closely associated with swadharma and leadership. Also, the additional areas of study have been suggested that can provide with primary data sources.

2. Nidhi Mishra, 2018, Vidura- The Man of Righteousness <https://myvoice.opindia.com/2018/06/vidura-the-man-of-righteousness/>

**About the reference:** Vidura is the embodiment of intellect in Mahabharata. It is believed that Dharma himself took birth in the form of Vidura. In the Mahabharata, his voice is treated as the voice of reason and wisdom. That is why Vidura's statecraft or Niti is a precursor to the Chanakya's Niti. Vidura was the half-brother of Dhritrashtra and Pandu. He was blessed to be a sagacious person so he was appointed as the Prime Minister of Hastinapur. His unmatched intellect became the reason behind Dhritrashtra taking his advice on various matters of governance and that became his most famous 'Vidura Niti'.

3. 6 Corporate Lessons from Mahabharata, Sunanda Rao, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, <https://www.peoplesmatters.in/article/watercooler/6-corporate-lessons-from-mahabharata-14128>

**About the reference:** World's best leaders take a leaf out of Mahabharata every time they meet a challenge in their professional life. From managing relationships to fulfilling goals, Mahabharata is considered as the most reliable guide book for corporate that comes handy in resolving all kinds of issues in the organization.

Following are the 6 corporate lessons from Mahabharata which are widely followed.

Right mentor, Team work with talent, Believe in second innings and many more, Win the right allies, Make Promises sparingly, Have the right ammunitions

4. 6 Distinct Management Lessons I Learnt From Mahabharata, Shubham Singh, n.d. <https://www.nashikites.com/6-distinct-management-lessons-i-learnt-from-mahabharata/>

**About the reference:** Mahabharata is known as largest epic of the world. A gift of knowledge to the world. It is not only a tale of kings, queens and war, but a story of establishing an empire, struggling for the power and knowing about in-depth human behaviour. Business today not only consist of profit and loss it makes but also many other things like amalgamation, finance, strategies and competitive advantage etc.

Kauravas and Pandavas can be considered as two strong competitors in a market. There were too many factors that made Pandavas win over Kauravas in spite of Kauravas having more resources than what Pandavas had. Well, a business has got several lessons to be learnt from Mahabharata. Following are few of the many management lessons found in Mahabharata – Inspiring Leadership, Finding a Perfect Opportunity, Neglecting none, Right Teamwork, Women Empowerment, Diversification

5. Leadership lessons from the Mahabharata, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, Jatinder S, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/leadership-lessons-from-mahabharata-jatinder-singh/>

**About the reference:** Mahabharata, revered as one of the greatest epics, also presents us a preview of different leadership styles of the modern era. While it has various characters, depicting many styles of leadership, you can find four of the types in most of the organizational setup.

6. L. Kaipa, P. (2014), "Making wise decisions: leadership lessons from Mahabharata", Journal of Management Development, Vol. 33 No. 8/9, pp. 835-846. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-06-2014-0061>

**About the reference:** The purpose of this paper is to help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions. In complex scenarios, when leaders are in crisis, they often tend to rush into decisions without proper reflection, rely too heavily on data and analytics, and demonstrate an inability to decide based on subtle, intangible and often very important elements like emotion, intuition and spiritual discernment. In this paper, the author discusses what it means to make wise decisions based on the Hindu concept of discrimination (viveka) – that is, the ability to perceive and make fine distinctions and also to notice and value quality which is a very important part of spiritual discernment.

7. Ethical Dilemma: Lessons from Ancient Scriptures for Indian Corporates, Dr. S. K. Gupta & Dr. Hardik Bhadeshiya, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022, <http://www.lawstreetindia.com/experts/column?sid=698>

**About the reference:** Every one of us encounters circumstances where our moral behaviour is tested, whether we are producers, distributors, or consumers. There are countless instances where they may need to go to court; sellers often try to hide information about their goods or services; purchasers frequently work with sellers to avoid legal proceedings and pay taxes owed to the government. If taxes are added to the prices they pay for goods, buyers are more likely to reject bills. Every time this happens, an ethical problem arises. A famous story from the ninth century BCE is the Mahabharata. Ved Vyasa wrote and assembled it. In the context of India, the epic is significant, and it has imparted to our culture the meaning of dharma and morals. The narrative travels a route of morality, humanity, divinity, spirituality, deceit, cheating, and abhorrence. It is the most important Hindu holy text. The readers come across numerous moral conundrums that the characters in the epic face as they read the Mahabharata. An ethical dilemma is a moral situation in which a choice has to be made between two equally undesirable alternatives. Dilemmas may arise out of various sources of behaviour or attitude. For instance, they may arise from the failure of personal character, conflict of personal values and organisational values and organisational goals, organisational goals versus social values etc.

8. Rima, M., & Nath, R. (2020). Ethical Dilemma Of Karna In “The Mahabharata”: A Critical Study Of Karna’s Character In The Light Of Episode “The Temptation Of Karna.” *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR)*, 10(3), 1–6. [www.tjprc.org](http://www.tjprc.org)

**About the reference:** Along with Valmiki’s ‘The Ramayana’, Ved Vyasa’s ‘The Mahabharata’ is the most classic epic of all times to come. Although The Mahabharata is an Indian epic, its popularity and fame is not only confined within the geographical boundary of India but throughout the world. It is a long narrative poem consists of more than two lakhs shlokas.

The story of the Mahabharata is divided into 18 large books popularly known as parvas. Each parva consists of many episodes. The story displays Lord Krishna’s (an incarnation of Lord Bishnu) endeavour to establish dharma all over the world. The epic marks the dawn of a new era and the end of another one. The epic introduces heroic figures like the Pandavas on the one hand, who always stands on the side of goodness and Kauravas on the other who born to commit only evil deeds. But whenever we recollect the story of mahabhata, a character immediately comes to our mind which arouses the feeling of utmost pity and sympathy i.e. the character of maharathi Karna. The story of Mahabharata teaches us what ethical dilemma is and most of the major figures in the epic suffered from ethical dilemmas at different point of their lives, where they had to choose between dharma and duty. The character of Karna is one among them who faced an ethical dilemma just before the outbreak of the battle of Kurukshetra. The dilemma that Karna was going through was not an easy one because that was a decision making time for him where he had to make a choice between his mother and his friend. He did not want to violate his duty to the either. But at the same time, he could not choose both of them. Hence, Karna undergoes a very traumatic situation. This paper is an attempt to explore the ethical dilemma of karna as reflected in the episode ‘The Temptation of Karna’.

9. Bisht, S. (2012). The Ethical Dilemma Faced By Kunti And How It Impacted Karna, In The Epic ‘Mahabharata.’ *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research*, IV(II), 1–6. <https://www.ijllr.com/post/the-ethical-dilemma-faced-by-kunti-and-how-it-impacted-karna-in-the-epic-mahabharata>

**About the reference:** Mahabharata is an epic tale from the 9th century BCE. It was written and compiled by Ved Vyasa. The epic holds great relevance in the Indian Context. It has taught our civilisation the meaning of dharma and principles. The tale

follows a path of morality, humanity, divinity, spirituality, deception, cheating and detestation. The tale of Mahabharata also consists of the Bhagavat-Gita, which follows course of Arjuna's dilemma and his questions before the battle of Kurukshetra, and Shri Krishna's answers to the same. It is the leading Hindu holy book. Along the tale of Mahabharata, the readers encounter multiple ethical dilemmas that are faced by the individuals in the epic. We encounter the prince Devarata, who took the oath of Bhramacharya (celibacy) and vowed to never claim the throne for himself out of love and affection for his father Shantanu. He then became Pitamah Bhishmah. We encounter the ethical dilemma faced by the Pandavas, whether to obey the command their mother gave unknowingly, of splitting Draupadi among the five brothers, or not. We come across the ethical dilemma of Yudhisthira in choosing deception in order to defeat Dronacharya, his enemy and teacher. This paper will discuss and interpret the character of Kunti: the Rajmata of the Kuru Kingdom in depth and then discuss the various ethical challenges she had to face, and their impacts and consequences for Karna, her son that she bore divinely from the blessing of Surya Deva. This paper will cover important relationships she had with other figures in the story and how they impacted her actions and ultimately their consequences.

10. Hegde, S. (2021). What Is An Ethical Dilemma: Definition, Examples and Explanation. Science ABC. <https://www.scienceabc.com/social-science/what-is-an-ethical-dilemma-definition-examples-real-life.html>

**About the reference:** An ethical dilemma is a conflict between alternatives where, no matter what a person does, some ethical principle will be compromised. Analyzing the options and their consequences provides the basic elements for decision-making.

11. Prasad Kulkarni, (2019), Vidura: The Unsung Hero Of Mahabharata, histonerd.com
- About the reference:** Krishna and Pandavas' were saviours of those times. Together, they ushered a new era. However, even saviours need help and guidance from able men and Vidura was that man. Also, it would be unfair to forget that he was the only man along with Vikarna to have opposed Draupadi's disrobing. Lastly, he gave a great treasure of knowledge through his Vidura neeti, which is a precursor to the famous Chanakya neeti.

12. Michael Dolan, B.V. Mahayogi, [www.mahabharata.pro](http://www.mahabharata.pro), The Teachings of Bhishma,

<https://www.mahabharata.pro/teachings-of-bhishma>

**About the reference:** The Mahābhārata conceals many levels of meaning. It is saga and epic, history and holy writ. It is the story of kings and heroes, of conflicts between empires, but it is also the story spiritual journeys of quests for inner truths. These levels of meanings reveal themselves not only through the teachings of saints and sages but also through the lives and stories of the hero's journeys. Heroes like Arjuna, Yudhisthira, and Karna all have important stories to tell not only through their words but also through their deeds and the examples of their lives. At the center of our telling is Bhishma, son of the Ganges, last of the old guard.

Bhishma is a kshatriya. His religion is raja-dharma. To fully understand Bhishma's sense of honor we must look forward a number of centuries to the Japanese code of Bushido and the honor of the Samurai. His character is noble, his death, tragic. He gives his life to guard the old social order, even knowing that it will soon end. The Battle of Kurukshetra ushers in the beginning of Kali-yuga where the old feudal order of sages and saintly kings will die.

13. Siddhaatha, (2020), Management lessons from life of Arjuna, [www.newsstation.media](http://www.newsstation.media).

<https://newsstation.media/news/management-lessons-from-life-of-arjuna/#:~:text=Arjuna%20had%20to%20accept%20defeat,even%20be%20younger%20than%20you>.

**About the reference:** It is a well-known fact that Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics of the world. It offers some fascinating insights into human character. One of the main protagonists of the epic the greatest fighter, archer, and third brother of Pandavas Arjuna's life was a lesson in itself.

14. Karnika Gupta & Ishu Garg, (2020), Lessons of Strategic Management From Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, Vol. 15, Number 1 & 2, January & July 2020, 1-10, Apeejay Journal of Management & Technology

**About the reference:** Strategic management refers to the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and control of strategies to maintain a competitive advantage. The concept of strategic management is not new; but, as old as Mahabharata



and Bhagavad Gita: the two Holy Scriptures which have lots of religious value in people' eyes. The epic Mahabharata makes a distinction between dharma and adharma, right and wrong, morality and immorality, and goodness and badness with the main eccentrics of Kaurvas (represented evil) and Pandavas (symbolized for goodness). The worth mentioning point is: whenever there is a war between dharma and adharma, the victory of dharma is certain. This truth is inherent in Pandavas victory over Kaurvas. However, the path of victory for dharma is not so easy. To beat evil practices of adharma, the supporters of dharma ought to have made some strategies as was done from Pandavas side by Lord Shri Krishna for the establishment of dharma on Earth. With this backdrop, the present paper takes into consideration Shri Krishna's strategies in Mahabharata, lessons of dharma in Bhagavad Gita, and correlates them with present strategic management concepts. It is obtained that what is understood today as the process of strategic management is actually been told and operated by Lord Shri Krishna in Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita.

15. Rajabhishek Dey, Kuladharm and dilemma of Arjuna: Analysis under the light of Sri Aurobindo, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

<https://cisindus.org/2022/07/07/kuladharm-and-dilemma-of-arjuna-analysis-under-the-light-of-sri-aurobindo/>

**About the reference:** Till the life is molded as per that spiritual teaching, established and understood in the equality, indisputable unity and calmness of soul beyond the notion of sin and virtue, a man is bound to demote if he ignores the sense of sin and virtue. Since, Arjuna was in doubt and yet to attain that state, Krishna first explained to him the importance of Swadharma or own duty aligned to individual nature and liability, as the first step towards enlightenment. Arjuna was a Kshatriya and hence it would have been an absolute sin if he gave up his war.

16. Nain, Ansuiya & Sharma, Sanjeev. (2021). Kingship as Rajdharma in Mahabharata: Revisiting the Shanti Parva with Contemporary Perspective in The Indian Journal of Politics A Peer-Reviewed Journal. VOL. 54, NO. 3-4. 85-98.

**About the reference:** In the present paper, we have attempted to find, locate, understand and narrate some aspects of good governance discussed at length in the Shantiparvam of Mahabharata with special reference to kingship. The king is in a

moral position due to his attained knowledge to stipulate, validate and regulate the particular Dharma for particular beings. This authority of designating and demarcating the specific Dharma of a particular being in the state is achieved by the king not only by authority but also through diligently performing his own Dharma. This fundamental idea is the basis of the legitimacy of the authority of the king. This analysis is a modest attempt in the direction of the understanding ancient polity with contemporary perspectives and undertakes to peep into details of structural and functional aspects of ancient Indian politics.

17. Puja Mundal, Essay on Ashrama System in India, [www.yourarticlelibrary.com](http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com), n.d. <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/hindu/essay-on-ashrama-system-in-india-1360-words/4009>

**About the reference:** Ashrama Vyavastha is one of the fundamentals of Hindu Social Organization. The old Hindu thinkers have taken man into account as a social being. The life of an individual is influenced by four factors, namely the place of work where a man lives, the time in which he lives, the effort which he makes and his natural trait. The Ashrama system is based on particular point of view with regard to the problem of life and the problem of conducting life. The literal meaning of word Ashrama is “a halting or resting place”. Hence, Ashrama signifies halt, a stoppage or we may say a stage of rest in the journey of life to prepare a man for further journey. The word Ashrama is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘Srama’ which means to exert oneself. According to the scheme, life is divided into four stages- Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Every stage has its own duties and functions. The theory of Purusharthas is given concrete expression in the Hindu scheme of Ashramas. Each Ashrama has its own duties and functions which provides healthy restraints on the instinctive and impulsive life of man. By passing through these Ashramas and by performing the prescribed duties, a man can prepare himself for Moksha.

18. Pollock, Sheldon, (2006), The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India, Berkeley, University of California Press.

**About the reference:** This book is an attempt to understand two great moments of transformation in culture and power in premodern India. The first occurred around the beginning of the Common Era, when Sanskrit, long a sacred language restricted to religious practice, was reinvented as a code for literary and political expression. This

development marked the start of an amazing career that saw Sanskrit literary culture spread across most of southern Asia from Afghanistan to Java. The form of power for which this quasi-universal Sanskrit spoke was also meant to extend quasi-universally, “to the ends of the horizons,” although such imperial polity existed more often as ideal than as actuality. The second moment occurred around the beginning of the second millennium, when local speech forms were newly dignified as literary languages and began to challenge Sanskrit for the work of both poetry and polity, and in the end replaced it. Concomitantly new, limited power formations came into existence.

19. Iván Kovács, Spring 2012, The Concept of Dharma and its Significance in the Mahabharata, The Esoteric Quarterly

**About the reference:** As the title suggests, the theme of this article is the concept of dharma and its significance in the Mahabharata. After a general introduction, the concept of dharma is looked at in terms of Hinduism, followed by some background information about the Mahabharata as seen in the context of dharma. This is followed by a sampling and discussion of a selection of verses from the Bhagavad Gita in which the god Krishna delivers his sermon to Arjuna before the commencement of the battle of Kurukshetra. Lastly dharma is looked at in its specific sense known as Raja dharma, or the dharma of kings, in which Bhishma, a key figure of the Mahabharata instructs King Yudhisthira in making the right choice by assuming his responsibilities as king. The two sermons, one delivered by Krishna, the other by Bhishma, are not only looked at in the historical context in which they took place, but also examined from our modern day perspective, and how they can possibly impact our present day lives.

20. This article was originally written for the Conference on Mahabharata and Management organized by Bodhananda Research Foundation for Management and Leadership Studies, in 2007, at Tiruvananthapuram.

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Vol:2 n Issue:1 n July-December 2010 Swami Bodhananda Chairman, Sambodh Foundation, New Delhi

**About the reference:** The art of management is to generate maximum result with minimal resources. The art of leadership is to motivate people to work as a team and to envision and realise desired goals in given time frames. Much of the contemporary

and modern management and leadership principles are learnt from conduct of war, church organisations and royal practices. The Mahabharata is such a rich storehouse of management insights. It is the story of a deadly conflict and eventually all consuming war between two royal houses, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, of ancient India. Consisting of 100,000 verses, spread in 18 books, the Mahabharata is the premier epic of Indian culture. The war ends in total annihilation of the ruling families. But the main protagonists, the Pandava brothers, survive the carnage and rule India for thirty-six years and then leave the kingdom to their survivors Parikshit, son of the slain Abhimanyu and to Yuyutsu, son of Dritarashtra. The main characters in the Mahabharata are Bhishma, Dharmaputra, Krishna, Draupadi, Arjuna, Bhima, Kunti, Gandhari, Dhritarashtra, Vidura, Drona, Duryodhana and Karna. Primarily Mahabharata is the story of Dharmaputra's inner conflicts both as an individual and as the king concerning right conduct. What is 'right action' in an 'interactive world' is the primary subject of enquiry in this vast epic. Dharmaputra alias Yudhishtira is the epitome of this question. It is the same question that dominates the thoughts of modern leaders, managers, administrators, policy makers, scientists, scholars, thinkers and religious masters.

21. Gautam Chikermane, (2019), Reclaiming the Mahabharata for India's 21st Century manifestation

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/reclaiming-the-mahabharata-for-indias-21st-century-manifestation-49225/>

**About the reference:** The ideas of dharma, artha, kama and moksha the Mahabharata expresses and which were relevant five millenniums ago to kings, kingdoms and praja (the 'governed'), remain equally relevant to individuals and families, organisations and companies, communities and nations today.

Politically, it complemented the quest for power and powered colonialism. When reduced to caste and religion, it became a weapon.

The way forward lies in having the conviction to bring the Mahabharata into the Indian mainstream – in literature, of course, but equally in statecraft, foreign policy, military studies, philosophy, economic management, administration and justice.

22. Karnika Gupta & Ishu Garg, (2020), Lessons of Strategic Management From Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, Vol. 15, Number 1 & 2, January & July 2020, 1-10, Apeejay Journal of Management & Technology

**About the reference:** Strategic management refers to the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and control of strategies to maintain a competitive advantage. The concept of strategic management is not new; but, as old as Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita: the two Holy Scriptures which have lots of religious value in people's eyes. The epic Mahabharata makes a distinction between dharma and adharma, right and wrong, morality and immorality, and goodness and badness with the main eccentrics of Kaurvas (represented evil) and Pandavas (symbolized for goodness). The worth mentioning point is: whenever there is a war between dharma and adharma, the victory of dharma is certain. This truth is inherent in Pandavas victory over Kaurvas. However, the path of victory for dharma is not so easy. To beat evil practices of adharma, the supporters of dharma ought to have made some strategies as was done from Pandavas side by Lord Shri Krishna for the establishment of dharma on Earth. With this backdrop, the present paper takes into consideration Shri Krishna's strategies in Mahabharata, lessons of dharma in Bhagavad Gita, and correlates them with present strategic management concepts. It is obtained that what is understood today as the process of strategic management is actually been told and operated by Lord Shri Krishna in Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita.

23. Sharma, A., & Talwar, B. (2004). Business excellence enshrined in Vedic (Hindu) philosophy. Singapore Management Review, 26(1), 1+.

**About the reference:** The search for excellence and all-round happiness has been the important objective of mankind since ages. Happiness can be attained either through self-contentment or through fulfilment of desires. When someone tries to attain happiness through the latter, creation and distribution of goods and services occupy the central stage which is translated into business. In Vedic Hindu mythology, business is seen as a legitimate, integral part of society. Its core function is to create wealth for society through manufacturing, domestic distribution, foreign trade, financing and other such related activities. It emphasises the need to work for an economic structure based on Sarva Loka Hitam which means "the well being of all stakeholders". To enhance the benefits of business, it needs to achieve all round excellence where

maintenance of quality becomes important factor. The paper contains a broad discussion on business excellence and quality models of various countries and establishes a relationship of these with the similar inferences as already existing in the Vedic Hindu literature. A new outlook to business excellence has been attempted by taking clues from Vedic Philosophy, which provides another platform towards building business excellence models in future.

24. Wesarat, P.-on, Sharif, M.Y. and Abdul Majid, A.H. (2017) “Role of organizational ethics in sustainable development: A conceptual framework,” *International Journal of Sustainable Future for Human Security*, 5(1), pp. 67–76. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.24910/jsustain/5.1/6776>.

**About the reference:** The focus of many organizations worldwide has been changing from greater productivity and profit maximization to sustainable development. Those organizations that focus on profit-only often make short term decisions without concern for long-run sustainable benefits. The concept of organizational ethics has been widely discussed as it may provide the means to long-term business success. This paper considers the basis of organizational ethics as an integration of ethical climate and culture in organizations that has an important impact on ethical decision-making and outcomes, which in turn could lead to sustainable development. The challenge of businesses is to remain ethical to stakeholders under conditions of uncertainty. They are expected to serve sustainable development not only for the benefits of themselves, but also the interests of others in society.

25. [www.dharmadispatch.in](http://www.dharmadispatch.in) Manusmriti as a digest of the Hindu Philosophy of Life

**About the reference:** THE WORD *DHARMA* comes of a verbal root *dhr* which means ‘to uphold,’ ‘to support,’ ‘to maintain.’ It may be defined as that conduct which is calculated to support life, to enrich life, to give meaning and value to life.

Life is a bilateral activity. Concern for life includes individual man on the one side and all the world on the other side. From this meaning flow specifically three principles: *Care for Self-development, Care for the Development of Others, Universalizing the Individual*

*Dharma* is thus individual life lived in harmony with life around us. It forms an approach to transworldly Reality through the footpaths of the world. It is the bridgeway

connecting the temporal with the Eternal, the finite with the Infinite. *Herein is seen the distinction of Manu's Code from the other law books of the world.* The very foundation of Manu differs as wholly from the others' as spirit from the flesh. *It would be manifestly erroneous to evaluate Manu by the same canons as are applied to Justinian or Gaius, Maine or Macaulay. Manu's basic point of view is not theirs at all. He should be judged from the premises he set out.*

26. <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/organizational-ethics>

**About the reference:** The Indeed Editorial Team comprises a diverse and talented team of writers, researchers and subject matter experts equipped with Indeed's data and insights to deliver useful tips to help guide your career journey.

Organizational ethics are the set principles and the application of values that govern company operations and business conduct between management and employees. These professional standards serve as rules that promote non-economic social values and uphold moral standards in the workplace. The concept of professional ethics establishes guidelines for workplace interactions between company stakeholders and the quality of their products or services.