

**Strategic Managemet for Competitive Advantage**  
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**Lecture 35**  
**Strategic Leadership – III**

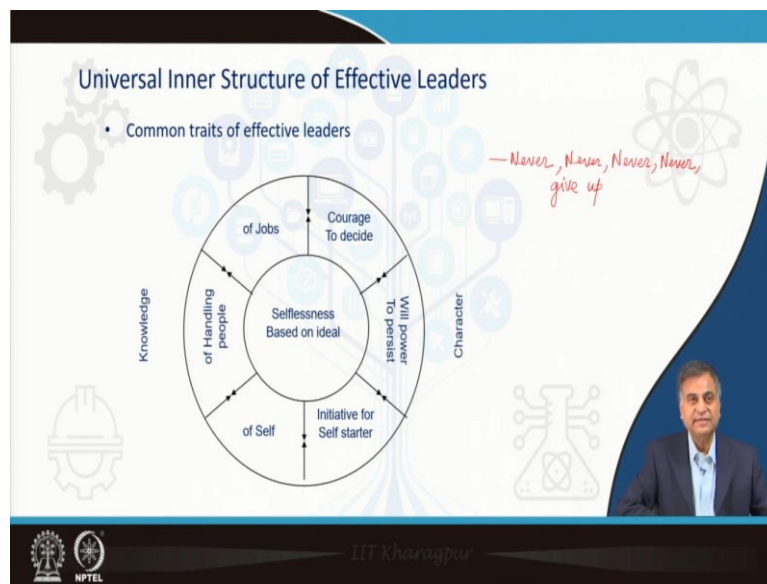
Welcome to the course Strategic Management for Competitive Advantage.

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In continuation with the last lecture, today we will be talking about this universal Inner Structure of Effective Leaders. So, these are what we have already, this role, the definition of leadership, process leadership, functions of leadership, and why good leaders are as scarce as we have done previously. Now, we will be covering this.

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To start with, what is this universal Inner Structure of Effective Leaders? There are common traits of effective leaders. If you see the leaders across the world, at different times, at different eras, and in different fields, you will find there are some commonalities among them. What are those commonalities?

Those commonalities are what we are terming the ‘universal inner structure of effective leaders. The tall leaders have castor influence on the people, castor influence on the society and they are remembered for long even after they have gone long ago. You can see those leaders. And then are these common traits? There are two distinct commonalities.

One is called is they all were gentlemen. And secondly, they had some inner hardcore of certain universal virtues these two. Gentleman means it is just not a term. Some researchers have explained and shown what gentleman means. Gentleman means that the person is honest, the person is loyal, the person keeps his word whatever he (says) and keeps those deeds.

His integrity is high, he does not take a shortcut in life, he does not respect others, he does not put his power over the weak, and he gives due respect for the weak people also. Their many other attributes they have talked about. And another one is the inner hard core of certain universal virtues. What are those?

Those are the three first three main components. One is selflessness, other is the character and knowledge. These are the three main components of a leader. And there may be many

sub-components or sub-factors consisting of these. (say) Napoleon has found (say) 90 components for a good leader. Anyway, these are knowledge, character and selflessness. These are the main components we will be talking about.

Selflessness is the hub of leadership. It is the heart and hub. It is in the middle. And selflessness is based on an idea or anything the vision. The higher this ideal, the higher the selflessness will be required. We will talk about selflessness more in the next slide. Now, we will be talking about this knowledge and character.

The other two components are knowledge and character. What is knowledge? Knowledge gives that a leader what to do in a certain situation and knowledge is the capacity to make a planning frame a plan. So, this knowledge has many sub-components, (say) knowledge of the jobs, knowledge of handling people, knowledge of self, we will be taking each of these.

Suppose the knowledge of jobs. What is that? That is the domain knowledge that is required for the leader. So, that will help him what to do in a given situation. And the handling people like this is a major job of a leader—knowledge of handling people. So, the leader should be able to bring out the best in his employees and the best of the people under him. (say) more than a hundred per cent involvement bring out this.

That is more important because of who will carry out those plans and who will carry out those objectives to achieve those objectives. It is the people he is handling. He has to handle it appropriately. That is the knowledge of handling people. Another is the knowledge of self. Leaders must know their limitations unless you know your limitations you cannot rise higher.

Because suppose nowadays new knowledge is coming in (say) AI, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Language. If the leader pretends, he knows he has hit a glass ceiling. So, he has also to update himself. So, to know that is growing because we learn every day, we learn throughout our life. There is nothing to be ashamed of it that we do not know certain things. So, that leader has to also grow with the environment with the changing times. So, this is the knowledge.

Now, mere knowledge without character makes what makes a leader indecisive. And if a leader has a strong character but no, but poor knowledge then what happens? In such cases leader hits, the glass ceiling, he cannot go beyond that level. So, knowledge, character and selflessness.

So, knowledge and character complement each other. So, both support each other. So, you have to be knowledgeable and have character. Now, I will talk about character more. Character is something that consists of many factors. One is the courage, courage to decide, the willpower of the leader and the initiative for self-starter (say) we will be deciding that.

Character, this courage, willpower, all these things, it cannot be taught in business school. These are built in childhood days. These are built with the value systems, attitudes, and culture of the family where you are growing up. So, these are the (say) courage, you cannot teach courage, you cannot teach that willpower, this knowledge part can be taught in the business school.

Knowledge parts, the analytics, how you optimize, how you take the decisions making with scientific tools, techniques, and methods, those things are the knowledge part that can be taught. But the character part cannot be taught in business school. So, usually, we teach it. But it has to be within the people, they have to imbibe that.

So, now, for the character, courage, courage is one component which is adored in all societies in all time in history. If you see this is the most admired quality of the leader which is added. What is courage? Here you feel, (say), the courage of Bhagat Singh, the courage of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, these are remembered also they are selflessness. These are remembered.

For a leader, what is courage? Courage is to take a decision and not only act to that decision. Take a decision and act on that decision. And also the courage to (say) no. No to the unethical activities, unethical work, courage to, you should have that courage to (say) no. Many people we see do not have the moral courage to (say) that no and we attribute it, we just reason it out the pressure from the top or pressure from the union. These are the want of courage.

Then another quality of a leader is the willpower to persist. That is why leaders if you see outstanding leaders, have solid willpower or the very determined. They go even everybody leaves them; they are focused on their goal. They will go alone that is why that is a great song by Tagore 'akla Chalo, akla cholo, akla cholo re'. This means that even in the phase of difficulties everybody leaves you to go alone. You will see, if you are right others will again rejoin you. That is the willpower of the leader.

So, I will give you one example of this willpower. Two examples of this willpower. This is (say) you have heard the stories of Robert Bruce, King Robert Bruce of Scotland. No? All of you may be knowing it in your childhood days you must have read it. What was that? That Robert Bruce lost the battle, for seven successive battles he has lost.

He tried to regroup again and again and again, but he lost every time. The seventh time he when lost his armies battle, those armies disintegrated. Nothing, he was left alone, he was hiding in a cave. There he lost all hope. Now, he was resigned to fate then he saw some spider trying to make that net, web. So, that spider was failing repeatedly. That spider could not do it, failing, failing, failing. So, for the eighth time, the spider succeeded. So, that gave him the will that I will also succeed. So, that is willpower.

Similarly, another story I can tell you that Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill during his second world war, during the high time of second world war, was invited by his school as the guest and keynote speaker for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school. That was at the height of the second world war, and you can imagine what the pressures for the prime ministers of Britain at that time were.

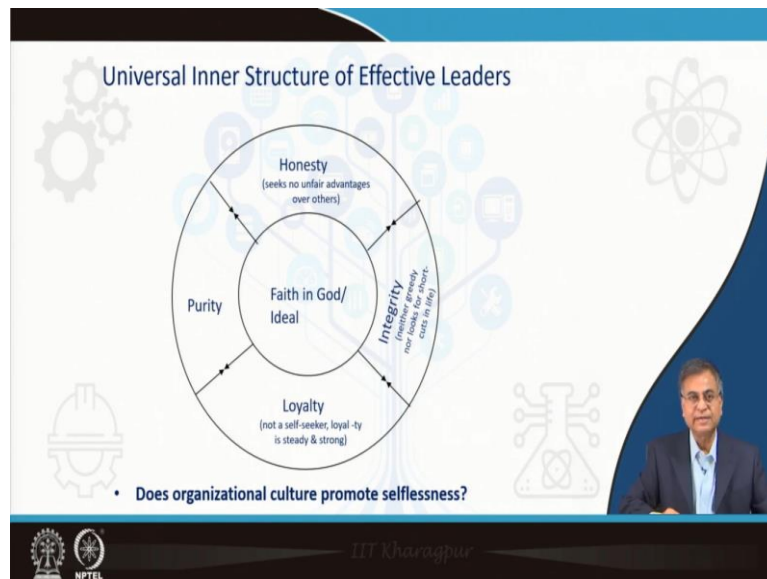
But he accepted this invitation then on the appointed day everyone was very eager, the society was eager, everyone, people came in, invitees came in good numbers, it was the hall was jam-packed. So, he came and when he was invited to speak, keep the keynote address, what did he do? He just got up and went to the podium, and he just brought out a piece of paper, and from there he read only five words. What was that?

He read never, never, never give up. Then he came back to his seat. People could not get it first. They were a bit disappointed. After that after 30 seconds or so, they realized what he had told them. Then there was a standing ovation for minutes together. So, this is the willpower, that willpower of the leader. Then there is an initiative for a self-starter. What is this?

This leader should always be two steps jumps ahead of others with intelligence and anticipation based on sound information systems. That means when you are initiatives for self-starter you are self-dynamic. So, you invent yourself. So, these are the components of character. Now, what is required? That no person can be, and no leader can be adept in all three. No. So, what is required is the strength and balance between these three components knowledge, selflessness and character.

No one can be hundred per cent selfless. No. No one can be fully knowledgeable, no one is having that character that is very strong. So, what is required? All these three components, should have strength and balance. That is required. These are the common traits of an effective leader.

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Next, we will be talking about this selflessness. What is this? Selflessness has many components in it. The heart of selflessness is faith in the ideal or faith in God, whatever it may be. And it consists of this higher this faith, you know, higher this faith or higher this ideal. The higher this ideal, the more selflessness is required, and the more you will be remembered.

The tall leaders are remembered for long more your selflessness, the more you will be remembered. Like if you take them for example Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, then Mahatma Gandhi, then Mother Teresa and many other leaders are remembered for a long because of their selflessness and courage.

So, other factors for this selflessness are honesty like a leader seeks no unfair advantage over others. They will not take. Then they should have doubtless integrity should be without doubt. So, this is that unwavering integrity that he is not greedy, and he does not take any shortcut in life. Then another one is loyalty. The leader is always loyal to the cause and loyal to the objectives. He is not a self-speaker. His loyalty is steady and very strong.

And another part is the purity in the heart. A leader has to be pure in heart. Whatever he (says), it comes out from the heart. Whatever he does his words, whatever he (says) he does it. He does not give only the lips services. That is why people follow them. These are the components of selflessness.

You have seen that selflessness in history. Lots many people, lots many leaders Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ram Krishna Paramahansa those Guru Nanak, Kabir and Mohammed Prophet, you have seen that through all those things. So, these are some of the elements.

So, now, to answer, does organizational culture promote selflessness? This is I receive a conflicting reply. So, true in some sense. Some people (say) it does not. It is nowadays the society, the organization are run by that materialistic world, and in organizations, those leaders and CEOs get a huge payout.

So, selflessness cannot be equated with every spare. There are some thoughts on that. But yes, the organization's culture promotes selflessness. I will give you an example. Take the case of RB. All over the world, in many countries, you will find what they go for. This is they go for selflessness.

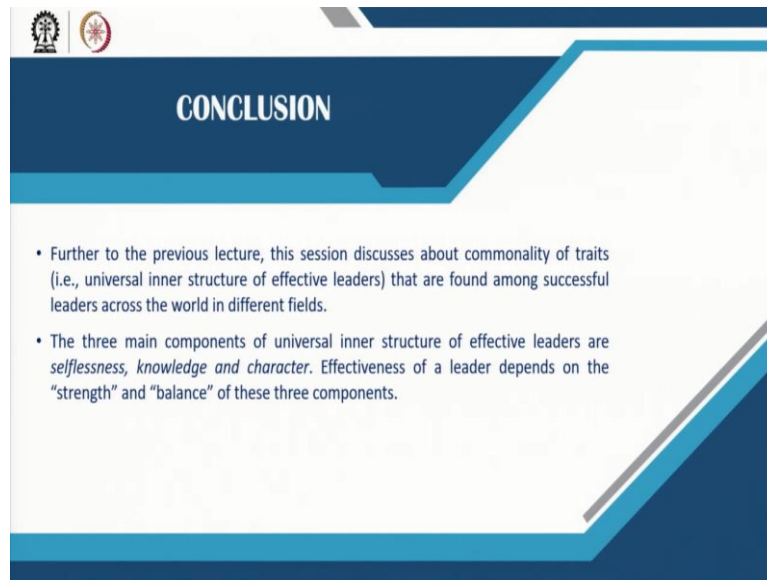
Because when young army officers, when a young cadet, (say) gentleman cadet is inducted in the IMA or NDA, they are taught a day in and day out. The honour, security and welfare of the country come first, and every time you are going for that then the security and the well-being and the safety of the command of the group you lead then comes second and last comes your that self that security or whatever the other things come the last and always. This is doctrine is injected into their day in and day out from the very first day.

And that is why you will find in the war that these young cadets go and give their lives without thinking about anything. So, if that organization's culture promotes selflessness. So, in fact, one of the researchers asked the german general staff, who was the second world war, who was looking after those German Defense Forces, then German forces were considered to be the most professional forces at that time in the world, even if they have got defeated, even where the very end they were a very integrated unit.

So, when they asked what is the one thing you look for the new recruits, new officers, when they join you, you select them, what are the qualities you look for that? He answered that we do not look for qualities as such, we see that he is not the officer is not or the young man is

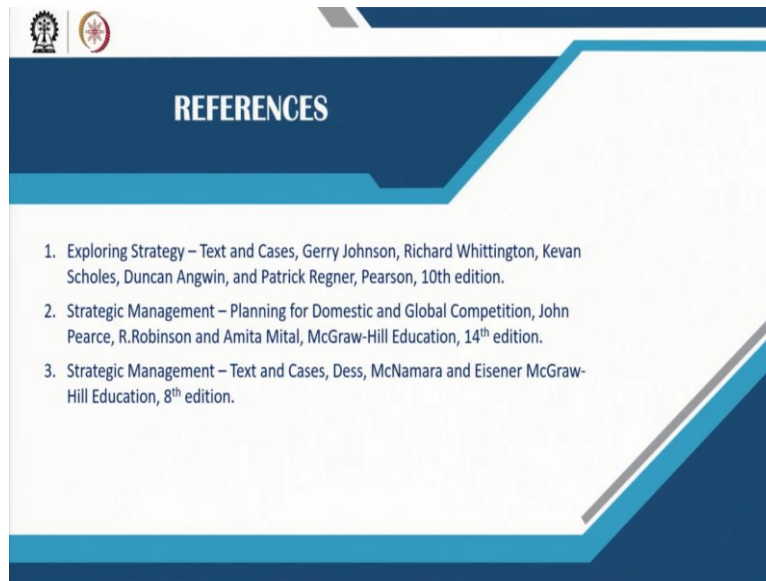
not that self, looking after their self-advancement. If that, we do not have any utility for him. We see, what he can do for the country, do for the others, that sacrifice, that is more important. So, it promotes a culture of selflessness.

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Now, whatever we have learned here, we conclude with this session that we discussed the commonality of traits that is the universal inner structure of effective leaders that are found among successful leaders across the world in different fields. We have talked about it. We have also discussed three main components of the universal inner structure of effective leaders. These are selflessness, knowledge and character. And the effectiveness of a leader depends on the strength and balance of these three components.

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These are some references you can go through and enrich your knowledge on this further.

Thank you very much for attending.