

“To Study Servant Leadership Style, as the Need of the Day in a ‘Democratic-Constitutional Setup’ to serve the Subject Befittingly and Developing Second String of Command by Empowering Them” (Part-I)

* Dr. VK Gautam

** Dr. Rajesh Chaba

*** Ms. Meenakshi G Trivedi

Abstract- Both the words ‘**servant and leader**’ look as being antonym of each other, but when two opposites are brought together in a creative manner, a self-contradiction emerges that brings togetherness to create the paradoxical idea to think about **Servant leadership**. Now-a-days, as a result of the information revolution, there is seen a rapid change in the corporate world, VOs/ NGO/ or public/private sector organisations, their work culture and awareness. The conventional styles of leadership like; autocratic, democratic, various models of leadership or managerial grid or many contemporary schools of leadership do not hold good, *in toto*. Hence, as a way of being in line with the changes, to meet the modern challenges, and to get the desired results, Servant Leadership as a management style (not only by leading rather developing them), holds good. In the past few decades, we have witnessed a shift in that long-held view, wherein, standard practices are rapidly shifting toward the ideas put forward by Robert Greenleaf, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, Margaret Wheatley, and others who suggested that there is a better way to lead and manage our organisations. Accordingly, Servant-leadership, first proposed by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, is a conjectural agenda that promoted a leader’s principal incentive and role as service to others (**Greenleaf,1991**), thus, making Servant leadership a very prevalent leadership model.

Even today, political leadership claims to be the Servant (Guardians/ Saviours/ Chaukidars) of the nation. What they preach and what they practice may need further study? However, it would be evident that those who do not follow Servant Leadership style cannot sustain for a long period, in any nation. In the context of Défense services, it is myth that officers follow autocratic leadership style. All officers, on the contrary are taught **Chitwode motto** to the young **officers passing out from the Military Academy** (quoted ahead in the paper). This paper is based on primary and secondary study, wherein; endeavour has been made to bring out desired traits/characteristics and pillars of Servant leadership, as this concept?

Catch Words: Servant leadership, (VO/GO/NGO-Volunteer / Government / Non-Govt. Organisations), traits, listening, principles and practices, humility, culture, development, Défense services, self-efficacy.

*Erstwhile President, Parivaar-NCPO, New Delhi and President, Tenna Gautam Charitable Trust Ahmedabad, vkgautam13@rediffmail.com 9426446402 (M)

** Major General (Dr.) Rajesh Chaba (Army Headquarters, New Delhi), rajchaba61@yahoo.co.in, 7534822224, 9435386448 (M)

*** Ms. Meenakshi G Trivedi, Founder Shining Spiral School Ahmedabad, Shining.spiral.ahmedabad@gmail.com, 9328009778 (M)

**“National interest comes first always and every time;
Honour, safety and welfare of their command comes next; and
Leader’s safety and welfare to come last, always and every time”**

- Chitwode motto

1. Introduction:

Servant leadership is an ancient philosophy, though contemporarily, it was coined in the last five decades. As far as India is concerned; “**Ram Rajya**” era was full of Servant Leadership traits, wherein; for the happiness of subject, king (Maryada Purshottam) took bitter decision before becoming a king and being a king; whereby, sacrificed earthly enjoyment and spouse’s companionship. Again 3000 years later Bhisham Pitamahya, accepted a great challenge and not only remained loyal to the Crown but just before the last journey to the heavenly abode, he guided all (whether friends or foes in war) how to rule the nation, as a King (by way of conducting oneself like as a mother (king) to son (subject)-clear indication of Servant Leadership. Even China advocated ‘Servant Leadership’ during the period of ‘Tao Te Ching (an older contemporary of Confucius), by Lao-Tzu, (570 BCE and 490 BCE).

2. Concept:

Servant Leadership: Servant Leadership is a leadership philosophy. Traditional leadership generally involves the exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid.” By comparison, the servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people to develop and perform optimally. Servant Leadership turns the power pyramid upside down, which puts the customer service associates at top of pyramid; instead of the people working to serve the leader, rather a leader exists to serve the people. When leaders shift their mindset and serve first, they unlock purpose and ingenuity in those around them, resulting in higher performance and engaged, fulfilled employees (**Servant Leadership Institute**).

3. Definitions of Servant leadership:

3.1 “Servant leaders lead with others in mind.” -Skip Prochard

3.2 “Servant leadership is a blend and balance between leader and servant. You don’t lose leadership qualities when becoming a servant leader.”

4. Historical Aspects and Literature Review:

4.1 History: Period covering 2500 years back to Contemporary Period (1970 to 2019):

Servant Leadership is an ancient philosophy. There are passages that relate to **Literature Review** in the **Tao Te Ching**, attributed to **Lao-Tzu**, who is believed to have lived in **China sometime between 570 BCE and 490 BCE**:

(a) Chinese Concept on Servant Leadership:

- The highest type of ruler is one of whose existence, the people are barely aware.
- Next comes one whom they love and praise-Next comes one whom they fear-next come one whom they despise and defy.
- When you are lacking in faith-others will be unfaithful to you. `
- The Sage is **self-effacing** and scanty of words.
- When his task is **accomplished** and things have been completed,

- All the people say, ‘We ourselves have achieved it! (**Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching. 2006**).
- (b) **Chanakya** wrote, in the 4th century BCE, in his book *Arthashastra*:
 - The king [leader] shall consider as good, not what pleases himself but what pleases his subjects [followers] (Ch. 19: The Duties of a King); **the king [leader] is a paid servant and enjoys the resources of the state together with the people.**
 - Servant Leadership can be found in many religious texts, though the philosophy itself transcends any particular religious tradition.
- (c) **In the Christian tradition**, this passage from the Gospel of Mark is often quoted in discussions of Servant Leadership (**Mark, 10:42-45**):
 - 10.42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.
 - 10.43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,
 - 10 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

4.2 Robert K. Greenleaf and the Modern Movement: While Servant Leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase “Servant Leadership” was coined by **Robert K Greenleaf** in "The Servant as Leader", an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, Greenleaf said:

- (a) “The Servant Leadership is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.”
- (b) “The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?”
- (c) Robert Greenleaf recognized that organizations as well as individuals could be Servant Leadership. Indeed, **he had great faith that servant-leader organizations could change the world.**
- (d) In his second major essay, "**The Institution as Servant**" (1972), Greenleaf articulated what is often called the “credo.” There he said: “Studies also revealed that: caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built. Whereas, until recently, caring was largely person to person, now most of it is mediated through institutions – often large, complex, powerful, impersonal; not always competent; sometimes corrupt. If a better society is

to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them.” (**Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership**)

4.3 Formulations after Greenleaf: Most writers see Servant Leadership as an underlying philosophy of leadership, demonstrated through specific characteristics and practices. The foundational concepts are found in Greenleaf’s first three major essays; (1) "The Servant as Leader", (2) "The Institution as Servant", and (3) "Trustees as Servants."

4.4 Building on Greenleaf's work, these writers have offered a variety of formulations of Servant Leadership. The same are given in sub-Paras below:

(a) 10 Characteristics by Larry Spears: Larry Spears identified 10 characteristics of servant leaders in the writings of Greenleaf and they are are; (1) Listening, (2) Empathy, (3) Healing, (4) Awareness, (5) Persuasion, (6) Conceptualization, (7) Foresight, (8) Stewardship, (9) Commitment to the growth of others, and (10) Building community. Leadership experts such as Bolman, Deal, Covey, Fullan, Sergiovanni, and Heifitz also refer these characteristics as essential components of effective leadership.

(b) Seven Characteristics by James Sipe and Don Frick: In their book **The Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership**, state that servant-leaders are individuals of character, (1) Put people first, (2) Are skilled communicators, (3) Are compassionate (4) Collaborators, (5) Use foresight, (6) Are systems thinkers, and (7) Exercise moral authority.

(c) Priorities and Principles by Joe Iarocci: Joe Iarocci, author of “**Servant Leadership in the Workplace**”, identified **(03) Key Priorities**; (1) Developing people, (2) Building a trusting team, and (3) Achieving results), again they identified **(03) Key Principles**; (1) Serve first, (2) Persuasion, and (3) Empowerment) with **(03) Key Practices**; (1) Listening, (2) Delegating, and (3) Connecting followers to mission) that distinguish Servant Leadership in the workplace context (**Joseph J. Iarocci, 2017**).

(d) Kent Keith, author of “**The Case for Servant Leadership**”, states that servant leadership is ethical, practical, and meaningful. He identified **(07) seven key practices** of servant leaders: (1) Self-awareness, (2) Listening, (3) Changing the pyramid, (4) Developing your colleagues, (5) Coaching not controlling, (6) Unleashing the energy, intelligence of others, and (7) Foresight.'

(e) The Center for Servant Leadership at the Pastoral Institute in Georgia defined servant leadership as a lifelong journey that includes discovery of one’s self, a desire to serve others, and a commitment to lead. Servant-leaders continually strive to be trustworthy, self-aware, humble, caring, visionary, empowering, relational, competent, good stewards, and community builders.

(f) Traits of Servant Leader: There are nine qualities of the Servant Leader as per Skip Prichard:

- **Values Diverse Opinions:** A Servant Leadership values everyone's contributions and regularly seeks out opinions. If you must **parrot back the leader's opinion**, you are not in a servant-led organization. Hence, "Servant leaders regularly seek out opinions".
- **Cultivates a Culture of Trust:** People don't meet at the water cooler to gossip. **Pocket vetoes are rejected.** Hence, "Servant leaders cultivate a culture of trust."
- **Develops other Leaders:** The replication factor is so important. It means teaching others to lead, providing opportunities for growth and demonstrating by example. Hence, "Servant leaders give up power and deputize others to lead."
- **Helps People with Life Issues** (not just work issues): It's important to offer opportunities for personal development beyond the job. Let's say you run a company program to lose weight, or lower personal debt, or a class on etiquette. None of these may help an immediate corporate need, but each may be important. Hence, "Servant leaders care about people's lives, not just their jobs." -Skip Prichard
- **Encourages:** The hallmark of a servant leader is **encouragement** and a true servant leader says, "**LET'S** go, do it," not, "**YOU** go do it." Hence, "The hallmark of a servant leader is encouragement."
- **Sells Instead of Tells:** A servant leader is the opposite of a dictator. It's a style all about **persuading, not commanding.** Hence, "Servant leaders sell and persuade where others command and control."
- **Thinks "You," not "Me.":** There's a selfless quality about a servant leader. Someone who is thinking only, "How does this benefit me?" is disqualified. Hence, "Servant leaders think 'you' not 'me'."
- **Thinks Long-term:** A servant leader is thinking about the next generation, the next leader, the next opportunity. That means a tradeoff between what's important today versus tomorrow, and making choices to benefit the future. Hence, "Servant leaders sacrifice some today to develop more for tomorrow."
- **Acts with Humility:** The leader doesn't wear a title as a way to show who's in charge, doesn't think he's better than everyone else, and acts in a way to care for others. She may, in fact, pick up the trash or clean up a table. Hence, "Servant leaders act with humility."

5. Objectives of the Study: There were primarily five objectives:

- To define and understanding of new concept.
- To find out what kind of leadership traits/ characteristics are required to become real Servant Leader?
- To identify, who are the real Servant Leadership in recent past or present?
- To differentiate between conventional leadership and servant leadership.
- To find out what are the advantages and constraints in Servant Leadership style?

6. Methodology and Research Approach: This paper is based on primary and secondary study, wherein; factor analysis was applied to get clear answer to the objectives. The

respondents were from various segments of society and also students of ‘School of Liberal Studies form PDP, Gandhinagar (However students were made to fillup questinnaire with 62 questions after having taught the topic). Thus, results differed from the general survey by (Paul, T. P. Wong, & Don Page,) and of the students, as they were of an average of 18- fresh secondary school passed out from schools of India and abroad. The instrument had 62 questions with (Likert’s scale 1-7).

6.1. The following seven key factors emerged and they were:

Factor	Key factors	Named as
Factor-1	16, 21, 23, 27, 31, 37, 38, 39, 42, 46, 48, 49, 53, 59, 61, 62	Empowering anddeveloping others Factor
Factor-2	9, 14, 15, 18, 28, 29, 56, 60	Power and pride (Vulnerability and humility, if scored in the reverse) Factor
Factor-3	6, 17, 30, 44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 57, 58	Serving others Factor
Factor-4	2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 34, 35, 36	Open, participatory leadership Factor
Factor-5	1, 13, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26	Inspiring leadership Factor
Factor-6	40, 41, 43, 54, 55	Visionary leadership Factor
Factor-7	3, 4, 24, 32, 33	Courageous leadership (Integrity and authenticity)

6.2 Best Definitions after Literature Review: Duirng the study, three definitions were found too benefitting (Greenleaf, 1991):

- (a) *“A Servant Leader” harmoniously blends characteristics of leadership with service”* -Skip Prichard
- (b) *“Do not judge each day by harvesting you reap, but the seeds that you plant”*- Robert L Stevenson
- (c) *“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality”* -Max DePree

6.3 Should we become a Servant Leader Assorted Views of Respondents?

General views: General views were taken from various segments of society and students. Their views were; “In a wider perspective, providing participative management/leadership style, or working for an NGO, or develop second string of leadership, Servant Leadership is must for succession or successful change in command; wherein, Indian pre-historical period has failed” To review this consensus, it was decided what all to learn to be an effective Servant Leadership. Hence, based on the existing literature (refer Para-4.4 above), 10 charactersitics and seven pillars, were found to be adequate and they were matching with primary study.

6.4 How to become a Servant Leader? According to Larry C. Spears, former President of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, there were the 10 most important characteristics of servant leaders (C-1 to C-10) amplified as below:

C-1 Listening: You will serve people better when you make a deep commitment to listening

intently to them and understanding what they're saying. To improve your listening skills, give people your full attention, take notice of their body language, avoid interrupting them before they've finished speaking, and give feedback on what they say?

Note: Listening is an art and science, and today whole world's leadership is affected/handicapped by 'lack of listening'.

C-2. Empathy: Servant leaders strive to understand other people's intentions and perspectives. You can be more **empathetic** by putting aside your viewpoint temporarily, valuing others' perspectives, and approaching situations with an open mind. Servant leaders strive to understand other people's intentions and perspectives. You can be more **empathetic** by putting aside your viewpoint temporarily, valuing others' perspectives, and approaching situations with an open mind. (mean-others problems in your heart).

C-3. Healing: This characteristic relates to the emotional health and "wholeness" of people, and involves supporting them both physically and mentally by applying QWL as a tool.

First, make sure that your people have the **knowledge, support and resources** they need to do their jobs effectively, and that they have a **healthy workplace**. Then take steps to help them be **happy and engaged** in their roles. You could also use a tool such as the **Triple Bottom Line** to think about how your organization can make a positive impact on the people you lead and the customers you serve.

C-4. Self-awareness: Self-awareness is the ability to look at yourself, think deeply about your emotions and behavior, and consider how they affect the people around you and align with your **values**. You can become more self-aware by **knowing your strengths and weaknesses, and asking for other people's feedback on them. also, learn to manage your emotions**, so that you consider how your actions and behavior might affect others. This aspect one can learn by developing EQ, following Business ethics and doing SWOT Analysis.

C-5. Persuasion: Servant leaders use persuasion – rather than their authority – to encourage people to take action. They also aim to build **consensus in groups**, so that everyone supports decisions. There are many **tools and models** that you can use to be more persuasive, without damaging relationships or taking advantage of others. You should also build your **expert power (no use of authority at all)** – when people perceive you as an expert, they are more likely to listen to you when you want to persuade or inspire them.

C-6. Conceptualization: This characteristic relates to your ability to "dream great dreams," so that you look beyond day-to-day realities to the bigger picture. If you're a senior leader in your company, work through and develop a robust organizational **strategy** (Planning minimum of five years ahead). Then, whatever level you're at, create **mission and vision statements** for your team, and make it clear how people's roles tie in with your team's and organization's long-term objectives. Also, develop **long-term focus** so that you stay motivated to achieve your more distant goals, without getting distracted.

C-7. Foresight: Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easier to identify. One knows foresight when one experiences it. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.

C-8. Stewardship: Peter Block (1993)- author of “Stewardship and The Empowered Manager”—has defined stewardship as “holding something in trust for another” (p. xx). Robert Greenleaf’s view of all institutions was one in which CEO’s, staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. Servant Leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion, rather than control.

C-9. Commitment to the Growth of People: Under this characteristic, servant leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her organization. The servant leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything in his or her power to nurture the personal and professional growth of employees and colleagues. In practice, this can include (but is not limited to) concrete actions such as making funds available for personal and professional development, taking a personal interest in the ideas and suggestions from everyone, encouraging worker involvement in decision-making, and actively assisting laid-off employees to find other positions.

C-10. Building Community: The servant leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution. Servant leadership suggests that true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions. (Greenleaf, 1977/2002) said: All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (p. 53).

7. An Exploratory Study: A study was further extended, after conducting series of lectures on leadership in PDP University, Gandhinagar, wherein; 415 students of diversified segments of society starting from Gujarat, all India and other countries (Africa, South Asia, neighbouring countries and Middle East in descending order) were the respondents. During the leadership programme for three months, 100 leaders were also discussed about their views in general, as a lesson or messages to the whole world. During the opinion pole, they were found more inclined to servant leadership vis-à-vis any other leadership style, if one has to prove to be real leader of masses in the national interest. They identified Servant Leader in the following presidency; (1) MK Gandhi, (2) Netaji-Subhash Chandra Bose and Sardar VV Patel, (3) Nelson Mandela (4) Mother Teresa (5) Abraham Lincoln (6) Winston Churchill (7) Chhatrapati Shivaji. Notwithstanding the facts that there were numerous leaders, who could

be classified as Servant Leader but the above classification were, due to restricted knowledge and it had regional impact.

8. Differences between Conventional Leadership and Servant Leadership: To compare various styles of leadership may not be possible, as there are numerous schools of thought and variable styles are existing, but differences between conventional leadership in general and Servant Leadership in specific can be, tabulated as below:

Conventional Leadership	No. & Differences	Servant Leadership
It is a short-term process to get desired results.	1. Pay off period	Long term process to get desired results.
Use of authority rather than Persuasion, to get work done.	2. Use of authority	Use persuasion – rather than their authority – to encourage people to take action
Not assured always but tried to assure	3. Results	Assured, though not tried as a hard and fast rule.
It is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.	4. Choice and Process	The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.
Emotional maturity is desirable but may not have of that desired level	5. EQ	Should be perfectly/more emotionally matured
In-borne leadership traits	6. In borne	May be developed like an EQ
Main task may be; 1. To get results or 2. To lead or 3. Develop leaders	7. Main tasks	1.Priority tasks are; 1. Develop leaders, then lead.
More of dictatorship style to some extent or apply situational leadership	8. Style	Absolutely a democratic style and act with humility.
Power-oriented leaders want to make people do things.	9. Power V/s Service	Servant-leaders want to help people do things.
The power model assumes a hierarchy. Only a few people have power— those at the top of the hierarchy	10. Hierarchy of Power	In the service model, the hierarchy doesn't matter. Anybody can respond to the call to be a servant-leader.
(Source: Gautam, et. al., 2018- lecture series in PDPU, Gandhinagar)		

9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Servant Leadership: Based on the study in question, there were numerous advantages and a few constraints or disadvantages, as explained below:

9.1 Advantages: Considering the openness in the present scenario, awareness, challenges, corporate culture and society at large, there are many advantages:

- This concept is seen as a long-term concept to life and work and therefore has the potential to influence the society in a positive way (**Robert K. Greenleaf, 2008**).

- The exemplary treatment of employees leads to an excellent treatment of customers by employees of the company and a high loyalty of the customers.
- There is a high employee identification with the enterprise.
- An excellent corporate culture is developed.
- Leaders of a company define themselves by their significance to the people.
- Servant leadership can be used as a principle to improve the return on investment of staff, in all economic sectors. **“Managers who empower and respect their staff get better performance in return” (Pink, D. (2012- Pp. 219-21) .**

9.2 Disadvantages: Two main disadvantages were identified:

- Servant leadership is seen as a long-term application and therefore, needs time for applying (**Robert K. Greenleaf, 2008**).
- Servant leadership assumes low level of control over team. (Considered an advantage in non-profit service group sector) as it promotes open communication and group problem solving, if combined with leadership accountability and delegating of work.

10. Conclusion and Suggestions:

10.1 Conclusion: The above mentioned 10 characteristics of servant leadership are by no means exhaustive, so goes to 07 factors those have emerged. However, they do serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to those who are open to its invitation and challenge. Interest in the meaning and practice of Servant Leadership continues to grow. Hundreds of books, articles, and papers on the subject have now been published. Many of the companies named to Fortune Magazine’s annual listing of **“The 100 Best Companies to Work for”** espouse **Servant Leadership and have integrated it into their corporate cultures. As more and more organizations and people have sought to put servant.**

10.2 Suggestions: If you really want to be a Servant Leader, then as per the keynote speaker, CEO, and business leader Skip Prichard, there are nine qualities to be developed by a servant leader as mentioned at Para-4 (f) and seven pillars of servant leadership by James Frick mentioned at Para-4 (b) above. In short, a **servant leader places their needs and desires below the needs and desires of others, placing the focus on building up and encouraging individuals whenever possible.**

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