

Book Review

Pritam Singh, Asha Bhandarker, and Snigdha Rai. 2016. *The Leadership Odyssey: From Darkness to Light*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 322 pp., ₹ 975, ISBN: 978-93-515-0736-9

*Let a man raise himself by himself,
Let him not debase himself,
He alone indeed is his own friend,
He alone is his own enemy.*

—Bhagavad Gita

This quote from Sri Bhagavad Gita describes the initial journey of leadership transformation which this book is all about. The authors with their in-depth experience have highlighted and addressed the current issues of leaders and their leadership styles: lack of virtuous leaders and plethora of toxic leaders. The book is a result of a detailed qualitative and quantitative research and enlists the qualities of a toxic leader as well as a virtuous leader from the follower's lens. The lucid style of writing, primary focus on Indian context, and bold views of the authors on contemporary issues are the unique features of this book.

The book is divided into four chapters, beginning with an introduction, analysis of toxic leadership, analysis of virtuous leadership, and finally suggesting ways to change from toxic to virtuous leadership. The first chapter gives a brief introduction to the book and edifies the reader about the leadership styles—both toxic and virtuous—its antecedents, and consequences. The authors have identified various leadership attributes of both toxic and virtuous leaderships based on pilot research, and the same are used for final data collection. The second and the third chapter represent the results and analysis focusing on toxic leadership and virtuous leadership respectively. 110 respondents for 11 Toxic leaders and 81 respondents for 5 Virtuous leaders were interviewed for the qualitative study. The quantitative data was collected from 734 respondents. The research methodology used in this book is robust and based on scientific principles. The distinctive feature of the research presented in this book is the unique blend of both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The authors have been able to classify what attributes are considered more toxic or more virtuous based on the profiles of the followers and also demographic variables like age, job-related factors such as work locus of control, and individual dispositions

such as resilience. The fourth and final chapter is the real punch of the book justifying the line “from darkness to light” in which the authors are trying to show a path to become a virtuous leader from a toxic leader.

This book could have come at no better time. Frauds, deceits, and corporate malpractices are more prevalent today than ever. More importantly, the role of leaders in these issues have become all the more evident and important for today and future generations, and this book attempts to answer the question of how to become a virtuous leader. Since the book has listed the attributes of a toxic as well as a virtuous leader, it will be of utmost help to the existing leaders to start their journey of transformation by self-introspecting their own behaviours. The book will also help the institutions to shape their budding leaders for virtuous leadership styles. Apart from leaders, this book is highly recommended to researchers. Linking research and practice is the primary need today, and this book can be considered as a torch bearer in this direction. Even though this book is research oriented, the way the real-life issues and dilemmas have been woven into the text is just exemplary. The authors have written it in a way that a reader, be it a practitioner or a researcher, can relate to the book as per their own perspective. Another striking feature of the book is the use of quotes, from both Indian and Western perspectives. The authors have used these quotes so as to highlight the point they are making and they have succeeded in doing so.

You know the starting line, you know the finishing line, but what you do not know is the way from start to finish. This book, though well written, may seem a little less explained on the same. The path from toxic to virtuous leadership could have been explained and elaborated little more to help leaders and institutions to internalize and practise. However, in the final chapter, the authors have explained about the internal issues of the self in achieving goals. And, thus, they have highlighted the importance of motivation, persistence, determination, and perseverance in the attainment of the final goal. Undoubtedly, by the end of this book, a reader will be highly motivated to become a virtuous leader. But, since the primary focus of the book is India, there is a possibility that the leaders are forced to exhibit toxic behaviours due to systematic and bureaucratic pressures.

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Thus, when a leader tries to shift his/her own attitude from toxic to virtuous, he/she is bound to face some resistance from the external environment.

Having said all this, the clarity of text will undoubtedly amaze the reader. The authors have to be given credit for their paraphrasing the text in such a manner that the book offers different things to different readers. Even though the book is primarily focused on leadership, the readers will also get the feel of a self-help book. This will increase the readership of the book not only among leaders, to know how to become a virtuous leader, and researchers but also among the people who are vying for self-transformation.

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Nand and Sarika Dhameja. 2016. *Infrastructure Development and Financing*. New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, ISBN-10: 813093454X; ISBN-13: 9788130934549.

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The global infrastructure needs are immense. Private sector estimates peg the requirements at US\$57 trillion during 2013–2030, simply to keep up with the projected global growth. It is also estimated that by following best practices in enhancing efficiency in investments, the countries could save as much as US\$1 trillion per year in infrastructure development costs. While the advanced economies invest in maintaining ageing transport, power, water, and telecom networks, the developing economies have a greater challenge in putting the basic infrastructure in place. The infrastructure gap that exists in India is substantial. India is ranked 87th out of 148 countries for its infrastructure in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2014–2015. The McKinsey report estimates that an increase in infrastructure investment equivalent to 1 per cent of GDP would translate into an additional 3.4 million direct and indirect jobs in India.

Therefore, the development of infrastructure is absolutely critical to the India growth story. However, in the light of lack of other long-term funding alternatives, notably corporate bonds, pension, and insurance funds, bank credit has been playing a critical role in infrastructure financing in India. Lately, defaults in this sector have led to a bit of a slowdown even in the bank lending to this sector.

At a time like this, *Infrastructure Development and Financing* by Nand and Sarika Dhameja is a well-organized,

thorough exploration of the issues and policy challenges related to development and financing of infrastructure sector. What makes this book unique is the emphasis and coverage that is given to social infrastructure education, prison privatization apart from power and transport sectors.

The book is spread over 18 chapters. The first five chapters relate to infrastructure meaning, significance, public–private partnership (PPP) models, and the sources of finance. A discussion on Viability Gap Funding in Chapter 4 is timely and addresses some of the problems inherent in the scheme. Short case studies to illustrate adoption of PPP approach are also given as annexure. Chapter 5 covers the global experiences of the use of PPP projects approach in infrastructure sector.

As I had explained before, what gives this book an edge is the discussion on higher education in Chapters 6 and 7 and prison administration in Chapter 15. Prison privatization experiences of countries such as the USA, UK, France, and Australia are detailed along with suggestive frameworks for involving private agencies.

The book focuses on the transport system (including Railways) in India in Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 13, and the case studies such as IGI Delhi Airport, Delhi Metro Rail Transit System, Noida Toll Bridge Company, and National Highway (Gurgaon–Delhi) highlight the approaches and importance of involvement of private sector in infrastructure. Given the fact that the end user of infrastructure projects is public, whose opinion can be swayed by politics, (e.g., protest against tolls in several states), the above chapters make for interesting reading.

The important issues in the power sector are discussed in Chapter 14, and the latter chapters focus on the most difficult aspect of infrastructure development, that is, financing. Issues and constraints are discussed including bonds and securitization. The book also gives a brief introduction to the newly introduced real estate investment trusts (REITs). Finally, in the last chapter, the Western world experiences of infrastructure development and financing are laid out.

Overall, the book is indeed a valuable piece of research work and covers almost all bases while discussing infrastructure development and financing. Government servants, administrators, bankers, research scholars, and all those who are responsible for planning and executing PPP projects at the corporate level would find it meaningful. Students who study public policy, public finance, and public sector administration will also find the book useful.

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