

**Leadership for India Inc: Practical Concepts and Constructs**  
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**Week - 05**  
**Leadership Processes**  
**Lecture - 24**  
**Agile and Precise**

Hi Friends, welcome to the NPTEL course Leadership for India Inc. Practical Concepts and Constructs. We are in week 5 discussing Leadership Process. In this lecture, we will discuss Agile and Precise.

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The evolution of knowledge has had very fascinating journey. If you see this image, self-driven human evolution; the Darwinian theory saw the evolved human being evolve over centuries of development. Nature, in its broadest sweep is macrocosmic and microcosmic splendor and life in its microcosmic splendor is extremely impressive and intriguing.

Nature and life are the two most powerful and amazing creations of god. The human race has distinguished itself in this creative canvas as the one which is driven by the ability to think, analyse and execute, all the while developing itself and the society continuously. The development of the society became possible through the deployment of arts, science and technology.

They have been the first domains of organized knowledge building. Management and leadership have been more recent additions to the domains of knowledge. Together, all of these make, human race a differentiated species capable of structured development. The domain of arts remains as an eternal aesthetic aspect of knowledge, while science and technology are the two unstoppable drivers of socio-economic development.

Management in contrast has emerged as a stylistic rather than substantial domain, something which can influence various other domains, but may not by itself create new things as science and technology would do. The difference between science and technology and management is that science and technology verily create certain things which are new, inventive and innovative.

Management and leadership excel in use of science and technology as innovative tools and also create business models which are innovative.

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**The Means of Learning**

It is typical that science and technology are experimentally learned, and management and leadership are experientially learned.

Life and nature have been the greatest models of learning and development as well as challenge and opportunity for science and technology.

Whether it is the airplane that mimicked the bird or the camera that mimics the eye and whether it is synthetic life or artificial intelligence, products of science and technology are invariably developed by emulating life.

In contrast, management and leadership seem to learn or unlearn little from the nature and biological forms of life, save some references to the cheetah's ferocious competitive spirit, and ostriches for being blind to realities.

Interestingly, the Panchatantra—a classic of ancient Indian fables—teaches several lessons of management and leadership through tales from the animal kingdom.

Products of science and technology are invariably developed by emulating life.


Camera

Submarine

Aeroplane

This lecture considers one of the most interesting parables of all times, the hare and tortoise story (of 'slow and steady winning the race') to develop some contemporaneous management and leadership insights.

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The means of learning, while we see our colleges, universities and also workplaces as the means of learning, everything has been learned by the human being from nature, management and leadership are experientially learned.

Typically, the products of all science and technology are invariably developed by emulating life. Camera, it is the replica of eye, submarine of whale, airplane of a flying

bird. Life and nature, therefore, have been the greatest models of learning and development as well as challenge and opportunity for scientists and technologists.

Whether it is the aeroplane that mimics the bird or the camera that mimics the eye and vice versa, whether it is this synthetic life or artificial intelligence, products of science and technology are invariably developed by emulating life. In contrast, management and leadership seem to learn or unlearn very little from the nature and biological forms of life, save some references to the cheetahs for competitive spirit and ostriches for being blind to realities.

I am not understating the importance of management and leadership by making these statements in comparison with science and technology; I am only wanting all of us to understand that the fundamental drive for industrial and economic wealth creation comes from deployment of science and technology, development of science and technology.

Management and leadership have got a great responsibility in deploying science and technology in a manner that society and economy are benefited. Staying on management the Panchatantra, a classic of ancient Indian fables, teaches us several lessons of management and leadership through tales from the animal kingdom. Before, I consider decisiveness with agility and precision as the hallmarks, I would like to take you through a fable.

This lecture considers one of the most interesting parables of all times, the hare and tortoise story of slow and steady winning the race to develop some contemporaneous management and leadership insights.

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### Fast or Smart?

In the increasingly competitive world, "speed of..." and "time to..." are considered the critical facets of competitive advantage. Successful industrialists who build new-generation brands, firms, and conglomerates in short frames of time validate and encourage the thesis that time is the most important resource, even more than costs.



**The thesis implies that cost overruns could be recovered but not time overruns**

Fast growth usually focuses on only one dimension of growth

For example, revenue, market share or profit

**Unidirectional fast growth does more harm than good in the long run**

Fast growth often entails saturated deployment of resources

A strategy that could prove questionable in the long run

**Smart growth attempts more balanced growth. For example:**

Revenue with profitability

Market share with profit share

Smart growth, in contrast, often entails judicious deployment of resources, including integration of differentiated and niche strategies within mass generic strategies. Smart growth impresses with intellectual prowess and commercial cleverness as its drivers.



The question here is should managers and leaders subscribe to the theory of being fast or the theory of being smart? In the increasingly competitive world, speed of anything, like speed of development and time to anything, like time to market are consider the critical facets of competitive advantage. Successful industrialists who build new generation brands, firms and conglomerates in very short frames of time validate and encourage this thesis, that time is the most important resource, probably more important than even cost.

The thesis implies that cost overruns could be recovered, but not time overruns. Fast growth usually focuses only on one-dimension of growth. For example, revenue, market share or profit. Unidirectional fast growth does actually more harm than good in the long run. Fast growth often entails saturated deployment of resources. You tend to inject more resources than necessary to be able to do the project in a shorter time frame.

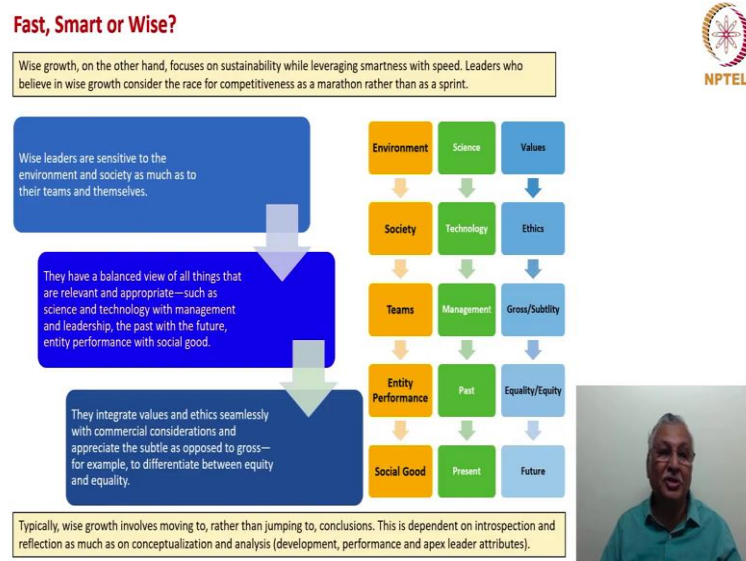
A project can be built with 100 people in an optimal manner, it could also be built with 200 people and double the capital expenditure, but that would be an extravagant way of building a project. A strategy that could prove questionable in the long run is this strategy of unidirectional fast growth. Smart growth on the other hand attempts more balanced growth.

For example, revenue with profitability, market share with profit share, establishment of project with optimal capital expenditure, selection of equipment keeping the long run capacities in mind. Smart growth in contrast, therefore, often entails judicious

deployment of resources, including integration of differentiated and niche strategies within the mass generic strategies. That is, you should be able to cater to the widest spectrum of population, but also look differentiated.

Smart growth impresses with intellectual prowess and commercial cleverness as its drivers that is what being smart is.

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But the question again comes, should we be only fast, and smart should we also be wise? Wise growth, according to me focuses on sustainability while leveraging smartness with speed, that is this speed and agility, smartness and wisdom together make for good leadership.

Leaders who are believing in wise growth consider the race for competitiveness as a marathon rather than as a sprint. Wise leaders are sensitive to the environment and society, resource utilization and resource conservation. So, they are concerned about teams and resources about themselves, but they are more sensitive to these environmental and resource factors.

They have a balanced view of all things that are relevant and appropriate such as science and technology with an adequate input of management and leadership, they try to remember the past, review the current and judge the future, they look at the entity

performance as well as social good. Wise leaders also integrate high values and high ethics seamlessly with commercial endeavors.

They appreciate the subtle as well as the gross of doing anything. They will be able to demonstrate and differentiate equity and equality that is very important. If you look at environment, science and values as three streams; environment, society, teams, entity performance, social good these are one stream of activities, these are the stakeholders directly.

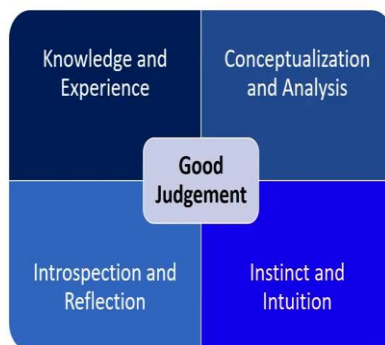
The science, technology, management, past and present factors are the second vertical of factors; values, ethics, grossness and subtlety of strategies, equality and equity of wealth distribution and the futurism, these are all higher-level aspirational, emotional and philosophical drivers of growth. Typically, wise growth involves moving to, rather than jumping to, conclusions.

We are talking about agility and precision, but we are also advocating that we should deliberate before jumping to conclusions. This is dependent on introspection and reflection as much as conceptualization and analysis. We need to combine all of the developmental, performance and apex leader attribute so that we are not only agile and precise, but also be appropriate to the decision making canvas.

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### Wisdom

Wisdom is not easy to define. Most definitions come close but cannot define in an exact manner. For example, wisdom is the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgement. It depends on the following.



These factors have been earlier considered as components of apex leadership, along with others. Wisdom is an essential characteristic of apex leadership.



How do we define wisdom? Wisdom is not very easy to define; it is not just knowledge. Wisdom is the quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgement. We can express this as follows: one, it comprises knowledge and experience, it has conceptual and analytical capability, it is introspective and reflection, it is marked by instinct and intuition and finally, there is good judgement tapping all these things. A leader who has got all these five factors would be a wise leader.

These have earlier been considered as part of apex leadership traits along with others. Wisdom is an essential characteristic of apex leadership as we have considered in the previous lecture.

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**A Proverbial Story**

The proverbial hare and tortoise story has relevance in these three shades of growth. A summary takeaway:

Managers and leaders who drive rapid, and often reckless, growth are like **hares** that push themselves, and their firms, into unacceptable or unsustainable positions.

Managers and leaders who constantly look for niche expertise are like **tortoises** whose success is measured in comparison with that of bumbling hares with random ideas—their relative success tends to be based on relativity of smartness.

Managers and leaders who ensure sustainability in their firms, in every dimension of their performance, are like hares that act as tortoises, combining speed with sensitivity and fastness with smartness. They tend to be **wise leaders**.

Hares and tortoises have certain characteristics that make them what they are. A corporate hare and tortoise analogy to leadership considers a prudent combination of the appropriate characteristics of hares and tortoises.



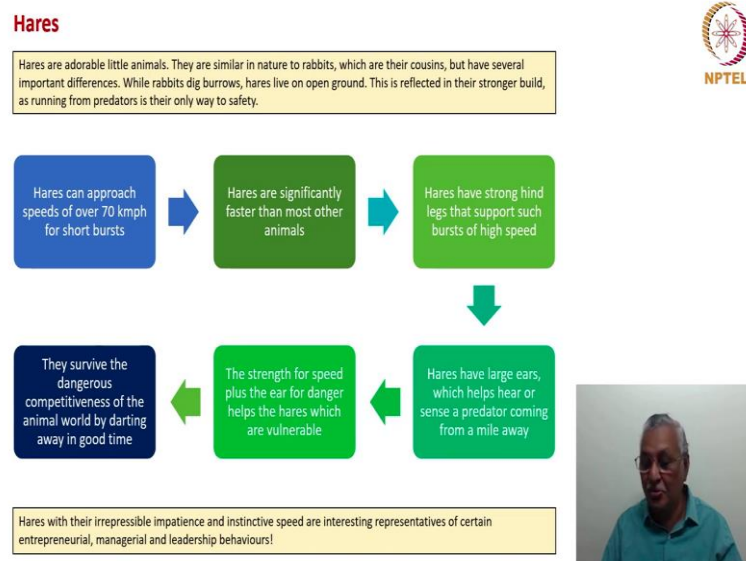
Before we get into decisiveness or decision making and the related principles of agility and precision, let us look at the proverbial hare and tortoise story. It is relevant to the three shades of growth. A summary take away from this fable is that managers and leaders who drive rapid and often reckless growth are like hares that push themselves, and their firms into unacceptable or unsustainable positions.

Managers and leaders who constantly look for niche expertise are like tortoises whose success is measured not by standalone measure, but in comparison with that of bumbling hares with random ideas. Their relative success tends to be based on relativity of smartness. Managers and leaders who ensure sustainability in their firms, in every

dimension of their performance while driving growth are like hares that act as tortoise, combining speed with sensitivity, fastness with smartness.

They tend to be wise leaders. Hares and tortoises have certain characteristics that make them what they are. A corporate hare and tortoise analogy to leadership considers, a prudent combination of the appropriate characteristics of these two very interesting representations from the animal kingdom, hares and tortoises.

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Hares are adorable little animals. They are similar in nature to rabbits, which are their cousins, but have several important differences. While rabbits dig burrows, hares live on open ground. This is reflected in their stronger build, as running from predators is their only way to safety.

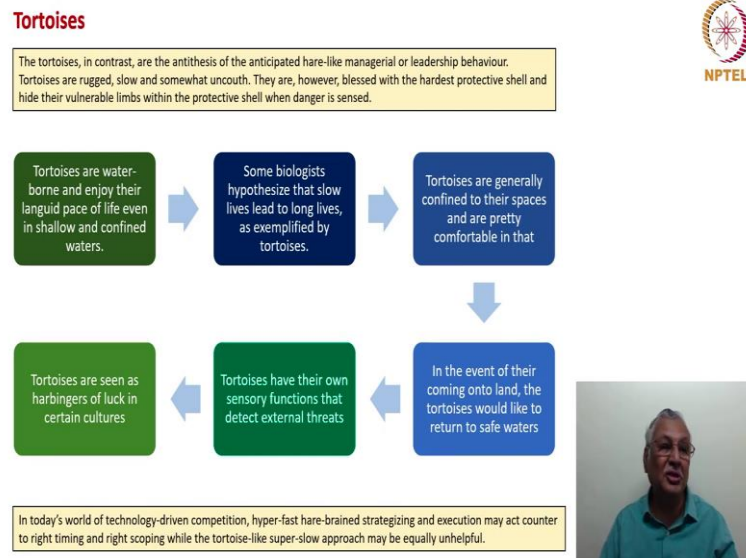
Hares can approach speeds of over 70 kmph for short bursts. They are significantly faster than most animals. They have strong hind legs that support such bursts of high speed. Hares have large ears, which help them hear or sense a predator coming from a mile away. The strength for speed plus the ear for danger helps the hares which are vulnerable. They survive the dangerous competitiveness of the animal world by darting away in good time.

Hares with their irrepressible impatience and instinctive speed are interesting representatives of certain entrepreneurial, managerial and leadership behaviors. Who are



willing to be open in the field, who are wanting to move very fast, who have got the strengths to be agile that is very speedy in the field, they are open to competition, seeking competition, but at the same time, they are very random in the way they propose their actions and respond to others actions.

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Tortoises, on the other hand are the antithesis of the anticipated hare-like managerial, or leadership behavior. Tortoises as animals are rugged, slow and somewhat uncouth. They are, however, blessed with the hardest protective shell and hide their vulnerable limbs with the protective shell when the danger is sensed.

Tortoise as we know are water born and enjoying their languid pace of life even in shallow and confined waters. Some biologist's hypothesis that slow lives lead to the long lives and when we say slow lives, probably, we also mean stress free lives. This is exemplified by tortoises. Tortoises are generally confined to their spaces and are pretty comfortable in that.

In the event of their coming on to land, which is not a friendly space to them, the tortoises would like to return to safe waters, they would like to stay in their zones of comfort. Tortoises have their own sensory functions that deduct external threats though not the same level as the hare. Tortoises are seen as harbingers of luck in certain cultures. In today's world of technology-driven competition, hyper-fast hare-brained strategizing

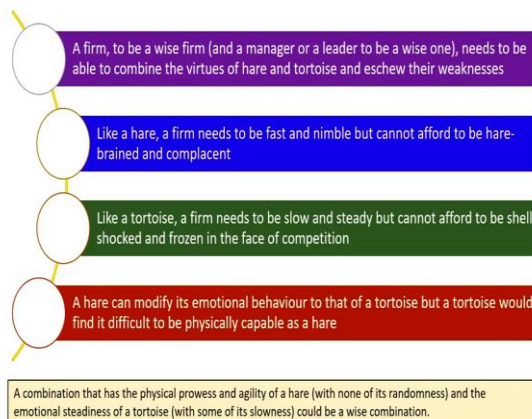
and execution may act counter to right timing and right scoping while the tortoises like super-slow approach may be equally unhelpful.

So, when you talk about hare and tortoise as models to draw inspiration or insights from, we are not suggesting any comparison with the animals per se, what we are saying is that there are certain behavioral patterns which god has given us in terms of our human life and there are also certain things which we could observe from the nature, from the wild life and then, take them as appropriate behaviors and they could very well be applicable in the management and leadership arena, that is the simple point that is being made here.

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### The Hare and Tortoise Story

The hare and tortoise story imbues certain wisdom to the tortoise of making steady but slow progress to the winning post in contrast to the hare that sprinted off to a great start only to doze off with a false sense of invincibility vis-a-vis the slow tortoise. For the corporate world, the story is a simile with certain meaningful insights.



So, the hare and tortoise story imbues certain wisdom to the tortoise of making steady and slow progress to the winning post in contrast to the hare that sprinted off to a great start only to doze off with a false sense of invisibility vis-a-vis the slow tortoise. For the corporate world, the story is a simile with very much meaningful insight.

A firm, to be a wise firm and a manager or leader to be a wise leader or a manager needs to be able to combine the virtues of hare and tortoise and eschew their weaknesses. Like a hare, a firm needs to be fast and nimble, but cannot afford to be hare-brained and complacent.

Hare-brained is being random and not having judiciousness or thoughtfulness in what is being contemplated and what is actually executed and also a manager cannot be complacent as a hare thinking too much of the abilities.

Like a tortoise, a firm needs to be slow and steady. When we say slow and steady, it is being deliberative and cautious, but cannot afford to be shell-shocked and frozen in the face of competition. You got to be responsive like a hare. A hare can modify its emotional behavior to that of a tortoise, but a tortoise would find it difficult to be physically capable as a hare.

So, a combination that has the physical prowess and agility of a hare and none of its randomness and the emotional steadiness of a tortoise, with some of its slowness which we equate for this parable with reflectiveness or introspection, this could be a wise combination.

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### Corporate Wisdom

Wisdom in a corporate sense is difficult but not impossible to define and practice. Certain insights are as below.



The famous philosopher Aristotle called wisdom the master virtue. He defined it as "Figuring out the right way to do the right thing in a particular circumstance, with a particular person at a particular time".

The *Bhagavad Gita*, Hinduism's theological treatise, says that wise leaders understand how to balance the extremes and act from a state of equanimity. The *Gita* also imbues wisdom to the tortoise, saying, "Just as a tortoise draws in its limbs, the wise can draw their senses in at will".

Wisdom requires a firm and a leader to be smart on five dimensions on which the organization is anchored. These are people, function, marketplace, product, and business that are essential to serve the customer well.

These five dimensions of wisdom cannot be completely delegated to other leaders, however smart they are—instead they must be an integral part of wise leadership.



What does corporate wisdom suggest in a corporate sense? Wisdom in a corporate sense is difficult, but not impossible to defend practice. I would like to state some certain insights.

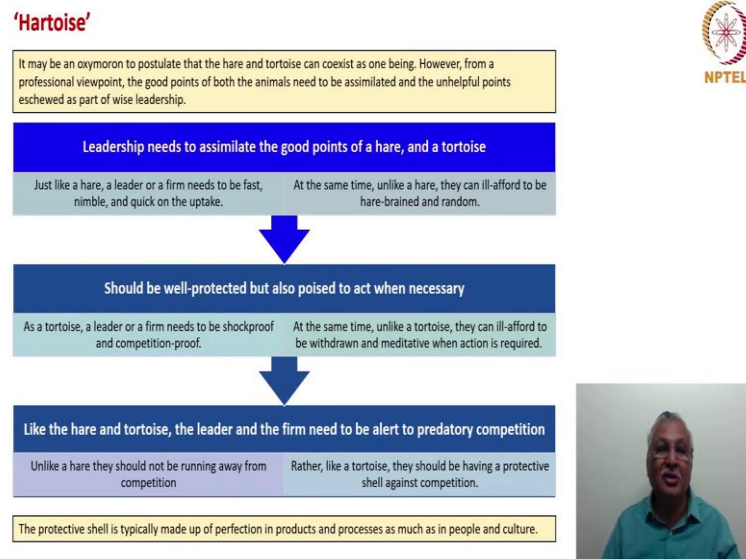
The famous philosopher Aristotle called wisdom the master virtue. He defined it as "Figuring out the right way to do the right thing in a particular circumstance, with a

particular person, at a particular time.” So, appropriateness and the righteousness and the rightness of doing things is the underlying principle of wisdom as a master virtue.

The Bhagavad Gita, Hinduism’s theological treatise, says that wise leaders understand how to balance the extremes and act from a state of equanimity. The Gita also imbues wisdom to the tortoise saying, “Just as the tortoise draws in its limbs, the wise can draw their senses in at will,” that is you have to have control of your sensory factors and be able to do things in an appropriate and equanimity filled manner.

Wisdom requires a firm and a leader to be smart on five dimensions on which the organization is anchored. These are people, function, marketplace, product and businesses that are essential to serve the customer well, that is the principle of corporate wisdom. These five dimensions of wisdom cannot be completely delegated to other leaders, however, smart they are, instead they must be an integral part of wise leadership. That is why apex leadership distinguishes itself from other leaders in a very clear manner.

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So, I would like to define hartoise. We, you must have heard of the word oxymoron. Oxymoron is a word which signifies the presence of two contradictory features in that particular phrase. Suppose, you say faithless faith, it is an oxymoron. How can faith be faithless? So, if I coin word called hartoise, you may think that is an oxymoron, but it is indeed a concept that could be really analyzed and absorbed for great leadership insights.

It may be an oxymoron therefore, to postulate that the hare and tortoise can coexist as one being. However, from a professional point of view, the good points of both the animals need to be assimilated and the unhelpful points eschewed as part of wise leadership. Leadership needs to assimilate the good points of hare and a tortoise. Just like a hare, a leader needs to be fast, nimble and quick on the uptake and also should have the physical abilities to respond to a situation.

At the same time, unlike a hare, they can ill-afford to be hare-brained and random, that is they have to function with lot of thought just as the tortoise thought about the best way and steady way to go about its race. The tortoise leader should be well-protected, but also poised to act when necessary. As a tortoise, a leader or a firm needs to be shockproof and competition proof. He should have that protective shell that can protect the business from competition.

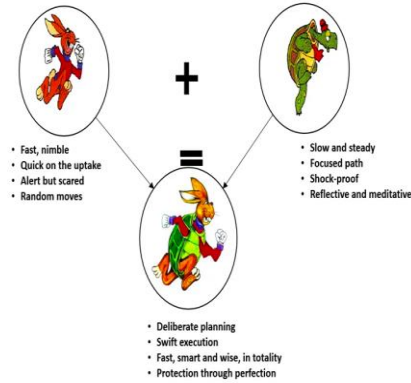
At the same time, unlike a tortoise, the firms and the leaders can ill-afford to be withdrawn, cocooned and meditative when action is required. Like the hare and tortoise, the leader in the firm need to be alert to predatory competition. Unlike a hare, they should not be running away from competition. Rather like a tortoise, they should be having a protective shell against competition while proceeding on the path of development.

The protective shell in respect of the leaders and the corporations is made up of perfection in products and services, processes as much as in people and the culture of the organization.

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### The Analogy of Hare and Tortoise for Leadership

Hartoise is a great biological analogy of the hybrid personality that nimble and wise leaders must possess.



Competitive organizations require leaders and managers who combine thoughtfulness with agile execution.



The hartoise is a great biological analogy of the hybrid personality that is nimble and wise, and which wise leaders must always possess. The characteristics of the or the best characteristics of the hare, fast and nimble, quick on the uptake, alert but scared, random moves. These are the swiftness characteristics.

The tortoise characteristics, slow and steady, focused path, shock-proof, reflective and meditative. You have got to combine these features into a hartoise kind of leadership where you have deliberate planning, swift execution, fast, smart and wise in totality and protection through perfection. Competitive organizations require leaders and managers who combine thoughtfulness with agile execution. That is the summary of the hare and tortoise fable for leadership.

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### From Inaction to In-Action: The Hartoise Analogy

Planning in a slow and steady fashion like a tortoise, and executing with speed like a hare but on a predetermined path would be a wise characteristic of a 'hartoise'

Reflection on every situation, inflection at every challenge and acceleration at every opportunity helps leaders and firms to be fast, smart, and wise in totality.

The foundation for wise leadership is contextual sensitivity. It appreciates that fastness and smartness have their utility but have their limits, too.

Leader should recognize and reflect on the challenges and opportunities that people, functions, regions, products and businesses offer.

Leaders should respond appropriately either as a hare with speed and focus, or as a tortoise with poise and smartness. This would be the touchstone of wise leadership.

Fast and smart or slow and steady as required would be the right "hare as tortoise" analogy for leaders and firms targeting sustainable success.



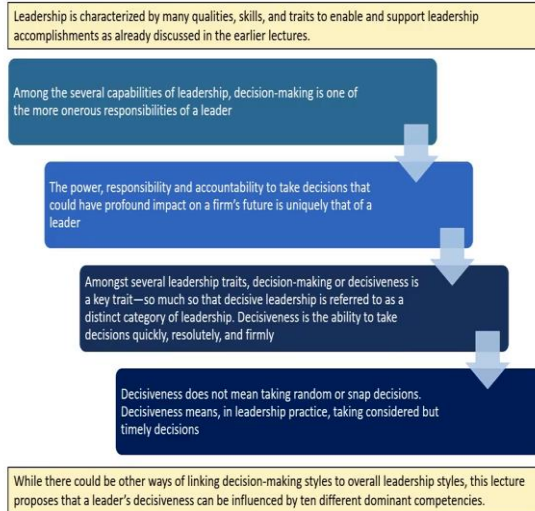
What does this hartoise analogy help us with? It will move us from a state of inaction to being in action. Planning in a slow and steady fashion like a tortoise and executing with speed like a hare but on a predetermined path would be a wise characteristic of a hartoise leader. What are the more detailed expressions of this? We should be reflective on every situation; we should look at inflection at a very challenge and seek acceleration at every opportunity, this helps leaders and firms to be fast, smart and wise in totality.

The foundation for wise leadership is contextual sensitivity. It appreciates that fastness and smartness have their utility but have their limits, too. Leaders should recognize and reflect on the challenges and opportunities that people, functions, regions, products and businesses offer.

Leaders should respond appropriately either as a hare with speed and focus or as tortoise with poise and smartness. This would be the touchstone of wise leadership. Fast and smart or slow and study as required would be the right "hare as tortoise" analogy for leaders and firms targeting sustainable success.

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### Decisiveness



So, having laid the ground with this fable which has got several insights for us, let us talk about decisiveness. Leadership is characterized by many qualities, skills and traits as we have discussed, and we have distilled 30 such qualities. But to enable and support leadership and accomplishments, we need to really discuss a little more of one characteristic which is decisiveness.

Among the several capabilities of leadership, decision-making or decisiveness is one of the more onerous responsibilities of a leader. The power, responsibility, authority and accountability to take decisions that could have profound impact on a firm's future is uniquely that of a leader. Amongst several leadership traits therefore, decision-making or decisiveness is a key trait so much so that decisive leadership is referred to as a distinct category of leadership.

People are called decisive leaders. Decisiveness is the ability to take decisions quickly, resolutely, firmly and if I may add appropriately. Decisiveness does not mean taking random or snap decisions. Decisiveness means, in leadership practice, taking considered and timely decisions what I call appropriate decision earlier. While there could be other ways of linking decision-making styles to overall leadership styles, this lecture proposes that a leader's decisiveness can be influenced by ten different dominant competencies.

As you would see from this lecture, as with the previous lectures, I am trying to make you think in several directions simultaneously. I am trying to dissect the same leadership



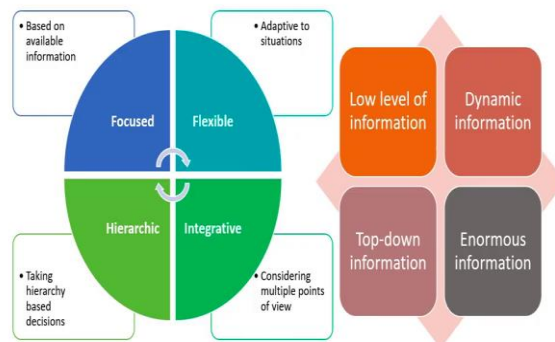
domain in respect of several viewpoints, trying to provide different constructs and also in this process, I am trying to encourage you to develop your own constructs, your own way of looking at things and for everything, we can develop a construct and when we work in a particular situation, even if you have studied this construct or another construct, you need to adapt this construct to your own situation and possibly even develop your own construct.

The entire thesis of this lecture and the spirit of this lecture is that it should be able to make you more creative in understanding the leadership and managerial facets of corporate management and that I believe can come through by absorbing several construct, several insights so that you are able to develop your own constructs and insights as you move on your leadership journey. So, let us look at decisiveness as a paradigm which is influenced by ten factors.

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### Decisiveness as a Style Attribute

While there are several leadership styles, leaders are required to be decisive in all the styles.



Leadership is all about converting a vision into reality through an organization, which requires decisions to be made by leaders all the time.



Before that, let us also look at decisiveness as a style attribute. The decisiveness is a key factor of all leadership styles. I would propose several leadership models in the forthcoming lectures, but you will find that decisiveness is the key aspect of any leadership style. In fact, a leader who is not decisive will not be considered as a leader. Deliberativeness which we recommend should be part of the deliberativeness and deliberativeness or deliberation approach should never be an excuse for being indecisive.

And how does this decisiveness come up as a style? It comes up as a focused style that is based on available information, you are able to analyze. A flexible approach that is being adaptive to situation, there would be times when decisions are required very quickly and times when decision have to come after due deliberation. It could come as hierarchic viewpoint that is taking hierarchy based decisions and integrative which is the most important aspect, that is considering multiple points of view before making a decision.

And you have as far as information is concerned several types, one in many cases, the information level will be very low. In some other cases, the information level will be very dynamic that is today's information is not going to be valid tomorrow. An example, again in our situation relating to covid pandemic, whatever even is happening in the world, the trials, the successes, the concerns, the challenges are not the same throughout the course of the pandemic, they keep changing.

So, you got to keep taking appropriate decisions, timely decisions and also course correct them, based on the dynamic information that gets available every now and then. Information tends to be topped down. At times, as a problem is posed and a solution is desired that directive also comes with lot of information which is provided by the super leaders or superior leaders and many times, you have enormous information, data analytics has become a mainstream profession by itself.

So, there is no dearth of information that is available. We have also seen in a previous lecture, how several corporations are monitoring everything on a real time basis and getting more data than ever. So, leadership is all about converting a vision into reality through an organization, which requires decision to be made by leaders all the time. Hence, the importance of decisiveness.

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### Decisiveness Styles

While there are several leadership styles, leaders are required to be decisive in all the styles. The triggers and influencers for decisions can come from different sources.



Leadership is all about converting a vision into reality through an organization, which requires decisions to be made by leaders all the time. Decision making is one of the important leadership processes.



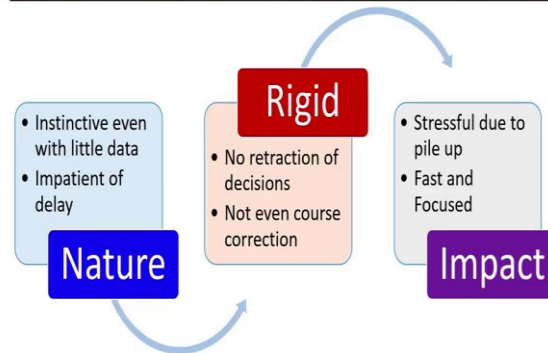
There are ten decisiveness styles which I could think of and which I proposed to you. One by nature, we could be decisive. Secondly, by authority that is given to us or we have taken, we could be decisive. By our share intellectual power, we could be decisive. By our experience, we could be decisive. Another way of being decisive is by intuition, which even talked about in great length earlier.

We could be decisive by being goal focused. We could be decisive prompted by incentives, decision making gets us. We could be decisive as a process. We could seek recognition and become decisive, and we could be decisive by people. When we want to convert leadership of a vision into reality through an organization and when decision have to be made by leaders all the time, decision-making is one of the important leadership processes, it is worthwhile repeating this point.

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### Decisive by Nature

Specific personality traits such as emotional dominance, self-belief, self-worth, social boldness and task orientation imbue certain leaders with the natural tendency to be decisive. Such people use internalized data and personal instinct and intuition to make immediate and compulsive decisions when they encounter new situations or problems.



The unique nature of naturally decisive leaders is that they can be decisive even in the face of little information—a situation that is not infrequent in real-life situations. It could turn out to be a big advantage in such situations but could be disruptive when more considered action is required.



When we talk about decisive by nature, we have certain personality traits which are specific and in away personal to us, these are emotional dominance, self-believe, self-worth, social boldness and task orientation. We have also discussed several other characteristics when we talked about the personality trait analysis.

These imbues certain leaders with the natural tendency to be decisive. Some people use internalized data and personal instinct and intuition to make immediate and compulsive decisions when they encounter new situations or problems. By nature, when you are instinctive, you tend to take decision even without much data. When you are an impulsive person, you tend to be impatient of delay.

When you are an intuitive person, you seem to process the information or the lack of it super fast and still make a good decision that is your nature. You also tend to be rigid, when you are decisive by nature. You do not easily retract your decisions. Some leaders do not even course correct their decisions and the impact of this could be stressful due to pile up or it could be fast and focused.

The unique nature of naturally decisive leaders is that they can be decisive even in the faces of little information. A situation that is not infrequent at all in real-life situations. It could turn out to be a big advantage in situations if you are a naturally decisive leader, but it could be disruptive when considered action, when deliberation, thoughtfulness is required before taking an action.

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### Decisive by Authority

Some leaders wield, and live by, abject power. Authoritarian leaders are almost like military generals— whether they have strategized their actions objectively or not, they make it appear that all their mandates stem out of their authority.



Authoritarian leaders are unlikely to be very collaborative but could excel when organizations are structured to clearly reflect boundaries of power and authority.



The other decisiveness style decisive by authority, some leaders wield and live by abject power. These are highly task-oriented leaders. Authoritarian leaders are almost like military generals whether they have strategized their action subjectively are not, they make it appear that all their mandates stem out of their authority and they must be obeyed at all cost, because they believe and they articulate that that is the only way in which they can win the battles or the wars of competition and management.

In this case, formal and informal boundaries are recognized. People who are decisive by authority excel in dealing with structured people. If people are naturally empowered and are questioning type, decisive by authority leaders would find it difficult to manage them.

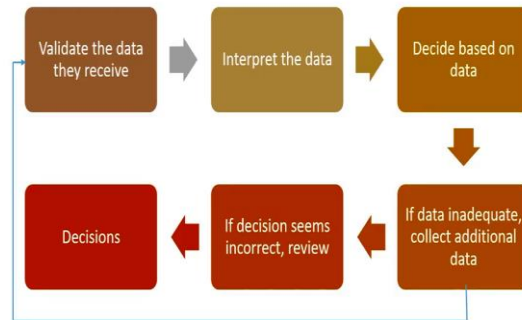
These people or these leaders excel in domains marked by wide and deep spans of control such as infrastructure projects, because they are very fast, they are very task oriented and at times we required their authoritarian to keep moving things, keep pushing things forward.

They are uncomfortable with new age millennial employees and knowledge workers. So, it is a strong and insistent leadership style which is task-oriented, outcome-oriented, hierarchy bound. Authoritarian leaders by their very nature are unlike to be very collaborative but could excel when organizations are structured to clearly reflect boundaries of power and authority. This is the second leadership style by decisiveness.

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### Decisive by Intellect

Some leaders are very intellectually driven—they possess knowledge and, in turn, respect knowledge-seekers. They tend to be boundary-less in their quest at times. Sometimes, intellect can lead to quick decision making too.



Intellectual leaders tend to be slow in decision-making but they tend to make exceptionally sensible decisions in areas driven by intellectual matters such as product and manufacturing innovation, patenting, and futurism. Intellectual leaders could do exceptionally well in technology-intensive industries.



There is also the third very important style of decisiveness, that is by intellect. Some leaders are very intellectually driven, they possess significant amount of knowledge and in turn there are also knowledge seekers. They respect knowledge seekers, they value their inputs, they tend to be boundaries in their quest at times. Sometimes, intellect can lead to quick decision making too.

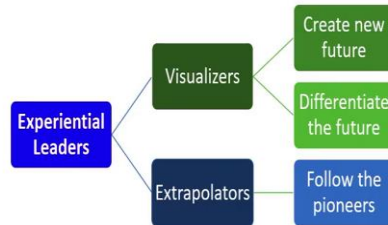
They validate the data they receive, they interpret the data, they decide based on data, if data is inadequate, they tend to collect additional data so, they go back to the first starting point and if decision seems to be incorrect, they also review and they take decisions. Intellectual leaders by the very process and the features of intellect, tend to be slow in decision-making,

But they trend to make exceptionally sensible decisions in areas driven by intellectual matters such as product and manufacturing innovation, patenting and futurism. Intellectual leaders could do exceptionally well in technology-intensive industries.

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### Decisive by Experience

Most leaders have loads of experience. Only some, however, make their decisions purely out of experience.



They could be needlessly biased by both positive and negative experiences. Most leaders are likely to belong to the class of deciding by experience, as they think, behave, and act through their prior experiences.



Decisive by experience, most leaders have loads of experience. We have considered how an experienced man could be anywhere between 30 to 40 years and in some case; it could extend to 45 to 50 years as well. However, out of such leaders, only some make their decision purely out of experience.

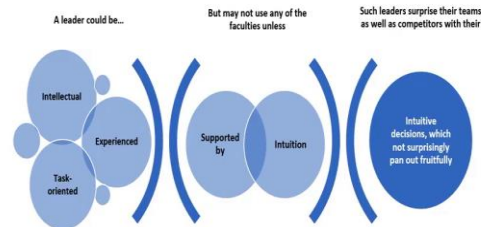
Experiential leaders are essentially either visualizers or extrapolators. Visualizers create new future. They differentiate the future from the present and the past whereas, extrapolation follow the pioneers. So, in their decision making style, they are very quick in familiar situations, but they are slow in responding to new situations what does it mean? Decisions are delayed due to negative experiences and faster decision are taken due to positive experiences.

Those leaders who are decisive by experience could be needlessly biased by both positive and negative experiences. Most leaders are likely to belong to the class of deciding by experience as they think, behave and act through their prior experiences.

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### Decisive by Intuition

Intuition is one of the important hallmarks of successful leadership. Leaders stand by their visions mainly due to their intuition.



As considered in an earlier lecture, the role of intuition in leaders crafting unique vision and strategy would go beyond what plain data analysis could suggest.



Another very interesting decisiveness which is by intuition needs to be kept mind by leaders, because most leaders are also tending to be intuitive, but they do not recognize their intuitive capability. Intuition is one of the important hallmarks of successful leadership. Leaders stand by their visions mainly due to their intuition.

A leader could be intellectual, experienced and task oriented, but the leader may not be able to use any of these faculties unless that leader is supported by intuition. People who are intuitive in their decision making could surprise their teams as well as competitors with their intuitive decisions and which most times pan out very fruitfully.

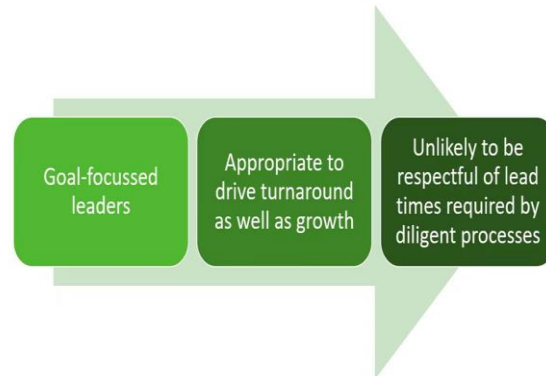
As considered in an earlier lecture, where we discussed intuition at great length, the role of intuition in leaders crafting unique vision and strategy would go beyond what plain data analysis, could suggest that is an important aspect we need to keep in mind.



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### Decisive by Goals

Goals are the critical drivers of company performance. Leaders who swear by goals tend to be obsessively focused on pre-set goals and quite often miss the woods for the trees, especially when the business context keeps changing.



Their decision-making is based on accomplishment of set goals rather than any inputs, whether the goals themselves need improvement or different strategic approaches.



Then, decisive by goals- as we all agree, goals are the critical drivers of company performance. Leaders whose swear by goals tend to be obsessively focused on preset goals and unfortunately at times, miss the woods for the trees, especially when the business context keeps changing.

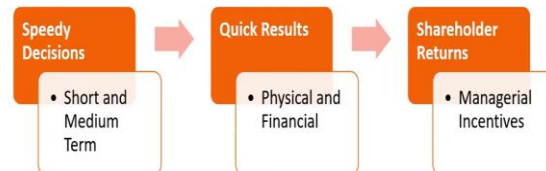
Goal focused leaders are quite appropriate when there is a need to turn around or when there is need for growth. They are not probably so appropriate when the job of managing a corporation is a maintenance job that is keep it at the same level. They are of course, unlikely to be respectful of lead times required by diligent process, because they are always anxious and keen to meet the goals as fast as possible. They are unlikely to be respectful of lead times required by diligent and deliberative process.

The decision making by goals style requires the decision making is based on accomplishment of set goals rather than any inputs, whether the goals themselves need improvement or whether they require different strategic approaches.

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### Decisive by Incentives

A whole lot of leaders belong to this category. With the emergence of variable pay, performance bonus, profit commissions, stock options and long-term incentive plans as new ways of incentivizing leadership performance, leaders tend to take decisions and pursue actions that are incentive friendly.



Such leaders tend to excel in turnarounds and priming growth stories. *Per contra*, it is unclear if such leaders help companies build long term value and sustainability in their businesses.



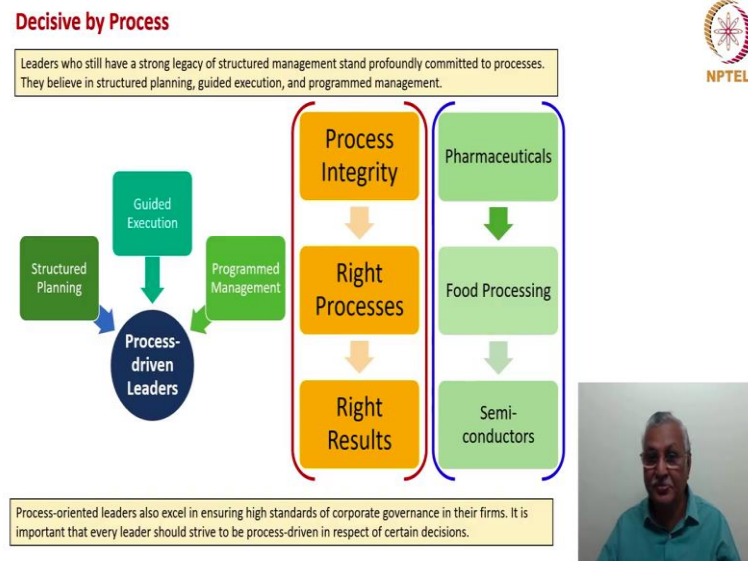
Decisive by incentives- A whole lot of leaders belong to this category. With the emergence of variable pay, performance bonus, profit commissions, stock options and long-term incentive plans as new ways of incentivizing leadership performance, leaders tend to take decisions and pursue actions that are incentive friendly to themselves and their team members.

So, if you are able to increase the short-term performance of a company, if you are able to boost the profit performance of the company, if you are able to overcome the hazards of rescission and if that could be achieved by speedy decisions, they would like to take those decisions without really looking at the long-term impact of such short and medium-term oriented decisions.

They always aspired for quick results which is physical and financial performance of the company rather than the long-term stability and sustainability of the company. They look for shareholder returns all the time; they would like to maximize the market capitalization and in the process also maximized the managerial incentives.

Such leaders definitely tend to excel in certain cases, in turnaround situations or when growth is to be primed very fast, those leaders who are fired by incentives would be the appropriate choice. *Per contra*, it is also unclear if such leaders help companies build long-term value and sustainability in their businesses that is also the case.

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Then, there are leaders whose decision making is guided by their process integrity. Such leaders have a strong legacy of structured management and they stand profoundly committed to strong and rigid processes. They believe in structured planning, guided execution and program management. These are processed driven leaders who are guided by these three elements: structure planning, guided execution, program management.

There are some industries which are very well suited to such process driven leadership which has these aspects of process integrity, right processes and right results. Pharmaceuticals, where the quality and patient safety is extremely important, where process compliance is extremely important. These kind of this decisiveness by process is extremely important.

Even if there is a business result or business action that is required, if there is going to be any process shortcoming or any process deviation such leaders are loathe to follow those goals or any other impulses. They would say that, process demands, this kind of deliberate and step wise action and the industry requires that so, we will follow that. So, pharmaceuticals, food processing, semiconductors are some examples of having high degree of process integrity, right process and right results.

When I say these, what even mean to say is that the risks of error are enormous, the risk to reputation are humongous if something goes wrong in these kinds of industrial ventures, it does not imply that it is ok to have poor quality in comparison to these

industry standards in other industries, but the issue is that in such industries, you can rectify, you are not going to cause enormous harm to the society, because you have got several stage gate and milestones through which the product must pass before you can give it to the customer.

On the other hand, as I discussed probably in an earlier context, medicine is one product which everybody takes by faith and belief rather than validated physical experience, because human body differs from person to person, the way the human body responds to a medicine differs from person to person. Over and above that if we have inconsistency medicine; it could be really dangerous for the human body.

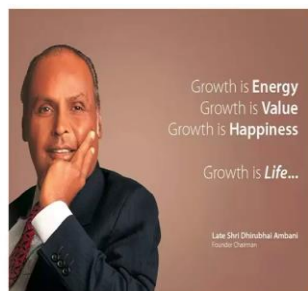
Therefore, pharmaceutical is one industry where a very high-level of process integrity, right processing and right result seeking is required, food processing is also one thing similar. And semiconductors which powers huge number of devices including autonomous cars etcetera also puts in so much by store in having the right chipboards, right motherboards and underlying all that the right quality of chips. Process-oriented leaders, therefore, excel in ensuring high standards of corporate governance as well.

It is important that every leader should strive to be process-driven in respect of certain decisions at least.

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### Decisive by Recognition

Some leaders are inspired by the opportunity to carve a place for themselves in the hall of fame. While they are driven by some of the various faculties and traits described above, and are motivated by goals and incentives, they are literally inspired and self-actualized by the potential of standing out in the crowd of leadership.



Dhirubhai Ambani (1932-2002)

#### Hall of Fame

- First generation entrepreneur
- Rags to Riches
- Textiles (1966) to Plastics and Chemicals, and Oil and Gas
- Pursuit of scale
- Technology-intensive and Investment-intensive Domains
- Equity culture in India
- Base for Retail and Digital

Leaders who reach iconic status in their industries are typically motivated by the lasting recognition that their legacies leave behind.



The leaders who are decisive by the recognition are inspired by the opportunity to carve out a place for themselves in the hall of fame. They are of course, driven by the various faculties and traits discussed earlier, they are also motivated by goals and incentives, we discussed earlier. However, they are literally inspired and self-actualized to the greatest extent by the potential of standing out in the crowd of leadership.

Dhirubhai Ambani, chairman of Reliance Group, the founder of that group who believe that growth is energy, growth is value, growth is happiness and growth is life was proponent of this hall of fame concept without really saying so. He wanted to break new grounds in an era when the entire economy was under a socialistic regime. It has it still transited to the economic liberalization phase.

He made an excellent leadership model by being a rags to riches kind of leader. Started with textiles in 1966, went on to make plastics and chemicals and then, set up oil and gas as the major hub to support future growth. Pursuit of scale is something which he brought to the Indian industry. Being bold and pursuing global scale, probably came first with Dhirubhai Ambani.

Technology-intensiveness and investment-intensiveness of the domains never deterred him; he decided to go into those domains specifically. He also was the key person who brought in equity culture in India which benefited lakhs and millions of Indian retail investors and he also provided the base for expanding into retail and digital. Leaders who reach iconic status in their industries are typically motivated by the lasting recognition that their legacies leave behind.

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### Decisive by People

And finally, there are leaders who are decisive when standing by people. Mahatma Gandhi is the unparalleled example of leadership that was dedicated to people, and seeking final fulfillment in serving people.

Socio-economic equity, social harmony and equitable distribution of wealth are their primary drivers.



J R D Tata – Builder of Tata Group



Industrial pioneers establish firms to generate employment and create national wealth, and considered their firms as trustees for public good.



Iconic leaders of this worthy, and hard to follow, leadership community



Eminent entrepreneurs such as Jamsetji Tata and J R D Tata established firms and developed industries to generate employment and create national wealth. They considered their firms as trustees for public good.



Then, there are leaders who are decisive by people. Their decision-making style is prompted by a desire to be with the people and to serve the people. These leaders are decisive when standing by people, for people. Mahatma Gandhi is the unparalleled example of leadership that was dedicated to people and seeking final fulfillment in serving the people.

For such people, socio-economic equity, social harmony and equitable distribution of wealth are their primary drivers. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one of the greatest religious philosophers. Nelson Mandela, Swami Vivekananda, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa come under the same banner of leadership, of course, Mahatma Gandhi the is the tallest among all of the modern day leaders who were with the people and worked for the people.

Iconic leaders of this worthy, and hard to follow leadership community should actually be role models for individuals in this stressful period of life. When you look at industrial leaders, we can see that industrial pioneers established firms to generate employment and create national wealth and they considered their firms as trustees for public good. Eminent entrepreneurs such as Jamsetji Tata and J R D Tata established firms and developed industries around their firms to generate employment and create national wealth.

They always consider their firms as trustees for public good that is being decisive by people.

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**Leadership Mix**

Just as no two businesses are identical, no two leaders or two leadership styles are also identical. Logically, multiple businesses require multiple leadership styles; the same business may require different styles in various phases of evolution.

The ten decisiveness templates discussed are appropriate in one context of the other. Admittedly, being decisive is only one, albeit very important, link in the leadership value chain.

Anticipating, evaluating, interpreting, detailing, resourcing, aligning and executing are the other links of the leadership value chain. All these also entail decision-making in one measure or the other.

A major responsibility of a leader is not only being decisive but also ensuring that the rest of the organization is decisive.

Individual leaders always find it a challenge to tackle institutionalized indecision. Optimal leadership mix lies in ensuring that autocracy and authoritarianism are not deployed to break indecision or that discussions and debates do not stymie decision-making.



So, what is the right leadership mix one must have? Just as no two businesses are identical, no two leaders or two leadership styles are also identical. Logically, multiple businesses require multiple leadership styles; the same business may require different styles in various phases of evolution. The ten decisiveness templates discussed are appropriate in one context or the other and as I said decisiveness is the hallmark of leadership.

Admittedly, being decisive is only one, albeit very important link in the leadership value chain. Anticipating, evaluating, interpreting, detailing, resourcing, aligning, executing and various other activities are also the very important links of the leadership value chain. We have considered several of them in the earlier lectures and we would also consider them in the future lectures.

We have also considered the 30 traits which prompt, which enable a leader to display these kinds of leadership activities. However, all of these things entail decision making in one measure or the other. Once you anticipate, you would have made a decision as to what you anticipate so, there is a decision making involved. When you evaluate, there is a decision making involved. When you interpret, there is a decision making involved.

In fact, there is no aspect of leadership that does not entail decision making in one measure or the other. While decisiveness is an important aspect of leadership, we cannot say that only leaders should be decisive or only leaders possess decisiveness, it is a major responsibility of a leader not only to be decisive by himself or herself, but also have the ability to ensure that the entire organization is decisive. Individual leaders always find it a challenge to tackle institutionalized indecision.

Bureaucracy, ossified organizations, organization's which are comfortable in their zones of comfort or the systems of the past, they are the companies which have institutionalized indecision. Optimal leadership mix lies in ensuring that autocracy and authoritarianism are not deployed to break indecision. While you may like to shake an organization free of its indecision, heavy task-orientation or authoritarianism are not the means to rid the organization of indecision,

Because just as indecision became institutionalized, you have to make decision making an institutionalized phenomenon which means that it has to go with empowerment, which has to go with inclusiveness, it should go with participation and ownership. Therefore, discussions and debates should be encouraged rather than used to stymie decision-making that is very important. It should not be a one-sided decision making based on one-sided decisions.

It would be inclusive, participative decision making that comes out of deliberative discussions with many people that is the leadership style, one should adapt as far as decision making is concerned.



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### Leadership Mix

Leaders should not only set the tone for decisiveness but also utilize a whole set of traditional corporate structures and systems to reflect a culture of decisiveness throughout the organization.



Structures such as executive committee meetings and processes such as strategy and budget reviews can be utilized by leaders to demonstrate how it pays to be decisive.

Decision-oriented dialogue, rather than either hypothesis or theory-oriented discussion, is a great way to embed a culture of decisiveness in an organization.

Boards and founders who select leaders, internally or externally, must be savvy to select leaders whose decision-making style matches the business context, in each case.

A seasoned leader must also recognize that he or she has as many as ten great endowments, as discussed in this lecture, in him or her to be decisive. By selectively and contextually deploying them in decision-making, he/she would make great contributions to a firm.



Let us look at ways in which you can get this leadership mix implemented in practice. We can have several structural supports to make this culture of decisiveness percolate throughout the organization.

We can have structures such as executive committee meetings and processes such as strategy and budget reviews, so that leaders can demonstrate their decisiveness capability and also demonstrate how problems can be identified, how solution pathways can be developed, how choices can be evaluated and how finally, decisions can be taken.

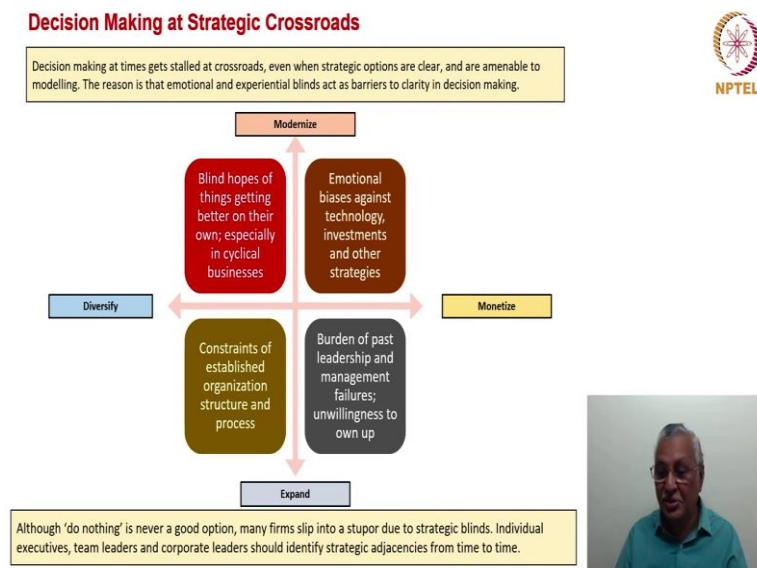
It is a great learning experience for the younger members of the executive committee meetings and a great opportunity for the leaders to bring in various points of view and of course, for the senior leadership team members who are part of the top crust of the executive committee, it is an essential mechanism to work together as a team. This next point is decision-oriented dialogue, rather than either hypothesis or theory-oriented discussion that would be a great way to embed a culture of decisiveness in an organization.

Boards and founders who select leaders, internally or externally, must be savvy to select those leaders who possess decision making style that matches the business context in each case. If you are selecting a leader for fast moving consumer goods company, you should be able to take a leader, who is really swearing by agility and precision in his or

her decision making and not by a comfortable way of doing things in a very regulated environment.

And again pharmaceutical could come out as one example of such regulated environment. So, you got to make the talent choice, meet the business context. A seasoned leader must also recognize that he or she has as many as ten great endowments, as discussed in this lecture, in him or her to be decisive. By selectively and contextually deploying them in decision-making, the leader would make great contributions to a firm that is the message from this lecture.

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However, strategic you are and however, great you are as a leader, you always get into some strategic crossroads. What is a crossroad? Crossroad is a place where you have several roads leading from that point where you are and you are a bit confused or confounded as to what is the right road particularly, when you do not have bill board which support you to the destiny which you want to take or when the destiny itself is unknown, unclear.

Decision making at times get stalled at crossroads, even when strategic options are clear and are amenable to modelling. The reason for that is that every leader and every individual has got certain emotional and experiential blinds that act as barriers to clarity in decision making.

Let us say, you are having an asset which is not really doing well, that asset could be a theater complex in current situation where there no movies being screened, which could be a huge investment made in a physical educational infrastructure, it could be industry which is catering to air travel requirements of a travelers, anything which is probably not having the right kind of business to support it.

So, there could be four options: one, one can blindly hope that things will get better on their own, especially if the business are cyclical. You could also have emotional biases against technology, investments and other strategies. You could be having the constraints of an established organization structure and process. You want to do something, but the whole team or the organization structure or the founder interest do not support you from doing something which is so different.

Then again, you may have had experience of doing something trying to get out of the difficult situations when faced with crossroads earlier and that would not have been a let us say happy decision or happy experience so, you carry a burden of past leadership and management failures and therefore, you would not like to move forward taking another decision of that nature.

Also at times, you have made a mistake nobody has recognized it and you have been unwilling to own up, in which case that burden stays in you silently and you are neither able to express yourself that yes, I made the mistake last time, but I would not make the mistake now, nor could you go out with conviction and say that I have never made the mistake so, I am going forward in this manner. So, there are some burdens of post leadership and management failures.

All of these things in one measure or the other contributed what they call strategic blinds. You could modernize the asset, you could monetize the asset that is sell away the asset, you could expand the asset, or you could reuse the asset to do something quite different, but none of this you would be able to do when you are having strategic blinds when faced with strategic crossroads.

One must remember always that doing nothing is never a good option and if you are in a do nothing option under the guise of deliberation or not having a clear pathway, you would be leading your firm into you stupor due to such strategic blinds. Individual

executives, team leaders and corporate leaders should identify strategic adjacencies at least from time to time, so that decision making at crossroads is easier and more helpful.

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### Agility Plus Precision

This lecture has focussed on two important components of leadership processes – being agile and precise. Agility is related with being fast, smart and wise as well as being future-proof. Precision is related to being perfect in decision making, appropriately deploying the ten principles of decision making.



As discussed, leadership is all about managing paradoxes, balancing extremes and merging contrasts. Agility and Precision could be apparently biased against each other but as reviewed they are synergistic too, with certain processes.



So, what does agility plus precision mean? We have focused through this lecture on two important components of leadership processes, being agile and being precise. Agility is related with being fast, smart and wise as well as being future proof. Precision is related to being perfect in decision making, appropriately developing the ten principles of decision making in this process.

When you look at the marathon runner, you can discover agility, speed, but also with strategy. When you look at people who reach the top, you will feel that they have precision in their thinking and their execution. They know the target; they know how to approve that with clarity. The winning combination of agility and precision makes you competent, makes you competitive.

As we discussed earlier too, leadership is all about managing paradoxes, balancing extremes and merging contrast. Agility and precision could be apparently biased against each other, but as reviewed, they must be seen as synergistic combinatorial factors and that too excellent synergy being derived when they are adapted with certain good leadership process.

Thank you and we will meet in the next lecture.