

## **Editorial**

### **The Art of Leadership in Contemporary Society**

The authors in this issue of IJSRI highlight the importance of transformational leadership, be it health care managers, politicians, marketing directors of small companies or news reporters. Hence, we dedicate this editorial to imagining what transformational leadership could look like. Leadership in contemporary society comes with high demands to be the best person we can be, for ourselves, for our families, for our colleagues, our friends, our community, and for our country, and most importantly, for protecting our planet. Importance of listening, trust, love, understanding, compassion, dialogue, participation and engagement permeates modern discourses on leadership. We delve deeper into this discourse while highlighting the current reality of leadership within the Maldivian context.

The importance of listening deeply and compassionately to the needs of people, communicating clearly without confrontation, with compassion and understanding are identified as hallmarks of good leadership. To be listened to without feeling blamed and judged requires training in how to listen. Through listening, we begin to understand the barriers and the fears that not only our employees and colleagues have, but fears and misperceptions that we ourselves have, which prevent us from collaborating effectively to find solutions not only to the problems which confront us in our workplaces, but with how to care for ourselves, to protect each other, and other species that share our planet with us. Modern business leadership requires leading at the intersection of company ambitions and stakeholder demands for social and environmental justice.

To cultivate good health, it is important to invest our time, energy and physical presence, be there for each other, and support each other to successfully achieve common goals and aspirations. We need to be leaders our colleagues and subordinates can count on and support. We need to ask ourselves, “Am I getting in the way of others? How can I inspire others to put their hearts into achieving our shared goals? How can I develop trust and commitment to each other? Am I a leader who plants seeds and provide abundant information, training, mentoring and support? Do I involve colleagues in planning and let them take ownership?”

Often, bald, direct, “speaking the truth as it is”, and one way speech without considering consequences to the recipient can cause harm and damage trust.

With training in compassionate communication, we can learn to express our views with calmness. If misunderstandings arise, if the expected progress is not made, separate one to one sessions can be arranged with a facilitator, to identify emotional, physical or financial fears, to understand where we are coming from, our experiences, our concerns, and the root causes of our inertia, preventing us from moving forward, to take action, to work together, to take initiative, and to be creative in finding solutions.

To have a code of conduct or mission statement which is inclusive and open to diversity of views requires the creation of safe spaces where we are open to different views, insights and experiences, where not only tea, coffee and snacks are shared, but our time, our thoughts and resources are shared with generosity and sincerity.

Hussain Rihsaan Mohamed, in his study on impact of leadership style on physicians' job satisfaction levels demonstrated that only 25% of physicians' supervisors in the Greater Malé region, involved the physicians in the decision making process, where challenging standards are set for both the leader and the subordinates, professional development needs are met, and moral and ethical consequences are considered. Only 25% of physicians stated they felt listened to, understood their needs, and encouraged and motivated to think creatively, perform to high standards, and take pride in their work.

Ahmed Shahid and Ali Shareef's case study of a failed initiative to introduce electricity from wind energy to the Greater Malé region demonstrates that the biggest challenge to provide green, secure, sustainable, affordable electricity is actually overcoming the inertia. The challenge is not the new idea, as demonstrated by the success stories of electricity generation using offshore wind farms worldwide, but not having strategic direction and guidance to move away from established norms and ways of doing things. It is by coming together, and taking the situation into our own hands, sharing knowledge, skills and physical resources, allowing for inclusion, creativity and technological innovation, that we can find a diverse range of solutions to meet our energy needs. This at island level needs political activism and a culture of learning. High quality products and services which make successful businesses require passion, dedication, technical skills and time.

While not all small businesses may be keen to expand their business to wider markets, marketing is essential for the survival and growth of the small business sector in the Maldives. Ahmed Abdul Rasheed and Abdulla Nafiz's paper on social media marketing in micro, small and medium-sized businesses

(MSMEs) highlight that it is the interactivity and competitiveness of social media marketing which is attractive. In a world where the virtual platforms are competing with our real world, an online presence is essential to attract customers and for networking. Before adopting any e-marketing platform, marketing strategies need to be developed that are realistic and beneficial to achieve each enterprise's targets, goals and vision. For example, advertising in a research journal can reach academicians, tertiary students, policymakers and business leaders, which can lead to collaboration and sharing of innovative and creative ideas. However, these groups of people may not have the time to be on Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram or actively choose not to be on certain social media platforms.

Maryam Fahmy and Fazeela Ibrahim's paper evaluating impact of news coverage of child sexual abuse in the Maldives on families found that news reporters mainly focus on episodic framing, blaming the perpetrators and highlighting the inept social institutions that fail to protect the children, but rarely is there any mention of the social causes of crime. Political leaders fire institutional leaders to pacify the public, reinforcing the seeded notion by the media that social institutions are ineffective in addressing child sexual abuse. This engenders in families a fear of child sexual abuse, general mistrust, anxiety and stress, that they cannot protect their children from a perpetrator lurking in every corner.

Social crimes require media to actively promote justice for the victims and the bereaved, to inform and educate the public on new solutions. Prevention of this heinous crime requires addressing poverty and social vulnerability, which are often the root causes of poly-victimisation across generations of families. The binary of victim and perpetrator does not allow for recognition that the perpetrator often is a victim of past or ongoing violence against them, and in cases of child sexual abuse, often is a family member, neighbour or someone from the island community.

To summarise, in the globalised, digitally connected modern world, leaders' technical skills and personal ambition need to go hand in hand with identifying new ways of listening, communicating, leading and setting strategic direction. It requires continuous dialogue, debate, and training on effective leadership in a fast changing world.

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