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## Servant Leadership – the Most Purposeful Way

*Editorial*

*J. Felix Raj, SJ*



If you ask me to name some servant leaders, of course many names come to my mind from different spheres of life. I choose specifically three of them here – Jesus Christ, Pope Francis and Swami Agnivesh.

Who is a leader? I cannot think of a better answer than what Albert Camus, a French philosopher, author and Nobel Laureate in Literature at the age of 44 in 1957, had said, “Don’t walk in front of me... I may not follow, don’t walk behind me... I may not lead, walk beside me... just be my friend.”

Leadership is important; it is collaborative and an expression of companionship. Webster’s Dictionary defines a leader as “a powerful person who controls or influences what other people do, a person who leads a group, organization, country, etc.” It is further defined as “to point out a way, direction or goal...to influence others toward it...and to make good choices...in order to achieve results.” Leadership is essential for overall governance of Countries, businesses and organisations that shape the way we live, work and play. It transforms the potential into reality and makes an organisation vibrantly thriving.

Chris Lowney has written a book on Heroic Leadership. He defines it as “the art of influencing others to their personal best and maximum performance in accomplishing any task, objective or project while putting their needs and those of the mission above your own. Heroic leadership is the pinnacle of leadership, conducted by a transformed and enlightened leader who seeks to transform and enlighten others. The four pillars of heroic leadership are self-awareness, ingenuity, heroism and love.” In John’s Gospel (Chapter 13), Jesus met his disciples at supper. After the meal, he got up from his seat, took off his outer clothes, and wrapped a

towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

In Jesus, we find a role model for servant leadership, “I came not to be served but to serve.” He even gives some very specific instructions about the path to great leadership that is paved with the road to becoming a servant. He teaches leaders lessons that are counterintuitive and countercultural with the goal of becoming great leaders, potential servant leaders.

Pope Francis is the people’s pontiff – a leader like Simon Peter, an apostle like Paul, a religious figure like Francis of Assisi, a missionary like Francis Xavier and a reformer like Ignatius of Loyola. On his first papal day itself, Pope Francis displayed a deep sense of humour and humility when he told his cardinals who elected him as Pope, “May God forgive you for what you have done.” On his first stepping out as the new Pope, he discarded much of the formal papal trappings of office, save the white cassock and the simple cross.



He shunned the papal limousine and boarded a public bus. He is the first Pope to carry his own luggage and pay his hotel bills at the Vatican after the election, and chose to reside in the Domus Sanctae Marthae guest house rather than in the papal palace. Francis has a refreshing style of leadership in living and functioning in the Vatican. This is what we call servant leadership.

His leadership is attentive to the contemporary concerns of the Church



and the world, such as migration, refugees, economy of exclusion, climate change, marriage and family. He sees the importance of dialogue with religions, churches, science and society for the common good; he encourages pastoral care of L.G.B.T and is willing to discuss on matters of women's leadership in the Church and married clergy.

Swami Agnivesh or Vepa Rao, as he was earlier known, was truly “a man for others.” He stood tall, both on the national and international stage, as an educationist, a philanthropist, a philosopher, a spiritualist and, most of all, as a humanist. The sublime words of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order applies to him perfectly, “He is contemplative in action, finding God in all things and all things in God.”

While teaching at St Xavier's College, Kolkata from 1963 to 1969, the 24 year old Rao was inquisitive and curious to know the inner workings of the Belgian Jesuits. One day, he sneaked into the Jesuit residence known as cloister and peeped into one of the rooms. The austerity and simplicity of the Jesuits astounded him ... only a table, two chairs, a bed and a wooden almirah. While coming out of the Jesuit cloister Rao met a senior Belgian Jesuit in the corridor. He asked the priest as to what had motivated him to come to the distant shores of India leaving behind his home and the comforts he had had there.

The Jesuit answered him, “I am here like my fellow Jesuit Fathers. Our mission is to serve the people of India, particularly of Bengal, mainly to impart quality education to Indian students; this is the humble contribution we hope to make.” Swamiji was deeply impressed and he has often reiterated that this response by the Jesuit priest had an influence on his future life and missionary zeal. He said, “It made me ponder what is MY mission for India, MY motherland.”

Swamiji was a relentless fighter for the downtrodden, not caring for personal attacks or even results... just fight till something positive emerges was his firm conviction. As

Shakespeare said, reiterated by Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer and “What a piece of work is a man; how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel; in apprehension how like a god; never at rest but ever in meditative communication with God.” The most purposeful way to lead is through servant leadership, as demonstrated by servant leaders. While it is a timeless concept, the phrase “servant leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 'The Servant as Leader,' an essay he first published in 1970. Greenleaf said, “Servant leaders are self-aware, authentic and committed to purpose greater than self (heroic).”

They are ingenious, they accept that leadership entails suffering, and manifest the courage to persevere. They are servants first, they grow with the deep feeling that they are meant to serve first, Service comes first before Self and that is their leadership style. They are different from 'leader first'. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Their life is praxis: of a pattern of reflection – action – reflection and further action – a process towards untiring progress.

Servant leadership is a leadership mantra, a philosophy that flows from the heart to set the world on fire with the goal of service. It is heroic and deeply spiritual. This is different from traditional leadership where the leader's main focus is the thriving of their business or organizations. It is a leadership that cares for and promotes team spirit and work. The servant leader never enacts power, he realizes that the authority he has is to serve with love and fellowship.

Think of a mother who serves her family without hesitation. What do we call her? A leader or a servant? Mothers are the best examples of servanthood. Family members are drawn towards the mother who serves them sacrificially. Mother's services make her a servant leader. Service adds value to the family, communities and to society as a whole. Service is not about position or skill. It's about attitude. Leaders seek ways of adding value to others, and the primary way they do it is by serving them.

Servant Leaders are motivated by the love to serve they put others ahead of themselves, they possess a sense of confidence and security to take risks, they serve and promote service, they look for opportunities and take initiatives, they do small things with great love, they know their people and walk the talk. They are fully human and deeply spiritual. They profess and practice progression through association.

As Lao-Tsu, a Chinese Philosopher of 400 BC observed, the best leaders are not noticed by people, the next best are praised and honoured, the next ones are feared and the next are hated. When the best leader's work is done, people say, 'we did it ourselves.'





# Servant Leadership - A Biblical Perspective

Dr. Fr. Antony Arockiasamy, SJ



Crisis! Crisis! Everywhere crisis! Crisis for leadership! Crisis even to find a paradigm for leadership among the existing leaders in the modern world, be it in the secular or the spiritual world. As a result, there is a dearth of honest, committed and people - centred leaders today.

## The Reality of today...

During the pandemic COVID - 19, it was very obvious that our leaders, in general, were more worried about safeguarding the welfare of the rich at the cost of the life and safety of the poor, marginalized, migrant workers, farmers and labourers who hardly make both ends meet through their daily wages. The announcements of lockdowns, cessations of the transport systems, banning people from coming out of their homes and going for work, and the harassment meted out to the public in various ways, hampered the very livelihood of the poor and downtrodden rather than the rich. This explicitly manifests the attitude of our leaders today.

As a result, during the time of lockdowns, the rich, by and large, died of the pandemic, whereas the poor, in general, died of starvation. Adding insult to injury, like Nero fiddled while Rome was burning, our leaders were engaged in conducting *Bhoomi pujas* for the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya while the whole country was reeling under COVID – 19. As history repeats, we all witness the situation of today which is not, in any way, better than that of what prevailed during the time of the Prophets of the Old Testament:

Then Yahweh said: “*You rulers of the house of Israel, is it not your duty to know what is right? Yet you hate good and*

*love evil; you tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones. Those who eat my people's flesh and break their bones to pieces, who chop them up like meat for the pan and share them like flesh for the pot ...*” (Micah 3, 1-3).

## Countercultural leadership of Jesus

Given the present political scenario, I am struck by the type of leadership, which is beyond my imagination, that was initiated by Jesus in the New Testament, and it attracts me very much and poses challenges to the leaders of today and so it is worth mentioning: Jesus then called them [disciples] to him and said, “*As you know, the so called rulers of the nations behave like tyrants, and those in authority oppress the people. But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. Think of the Son of Man, who has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to redeem many*” (Mark 10, 42 – 45). What type of leadership does Jesus speak in the above text?

## A Model of Paradigm Shift: Servant Leadership

In the modern world, we talk of leadership at various levels. But the type of leadership Jesus talks in the above text is entirely different from that of others. This leadership is either the combination of the Leader who is equally the Servant or the leadership that is the combination of the Servant who is equally the Leader. That is, this concept of leadership seems to be the part and parcel of two extremes – **Leadership and Servanthood**. Therefore, the only implied prerequisite to be eligible to be a leader is to become a **SERVANT OF ALL**. That means, the inherent nature of Leadership is contained in the inherent nature of Servanthood and vice-versa. Therefore, in this leadership, there is no place for authority and power, which are prevalent among the leaders of today and that is the precisely the leadership proposed and practiced by Jesus, which is depicted in Jesus' washing of the feet of the disciples (John 13, 01-15). Such a leadership is called **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**.

Fascinated by the above liberative leadership of Jesus, I would like to dwell on the same at length by enumerating the salient features of Servant Leadership through the following, as it becomes the model of leadership for today's generation:

**Leadership of the Attitude of Jesus:** The first and foremost quality of being a servant leader is “*to let each of you gently consider others, as more*





*important than yourselves. Do not seek your own interests, but rather, that of others. Your attitude should be the same as Jesus Christ had” (Phil 2, 3b–05).*

**Leadership of Accompaniment:** According to Donald H. McGannon, “*Leadership is an action, not a position.*” Thus, the action - oriented God of the Bible became person-oriented: “*God said to Moses, You will say to the Israelites ‘YAHWEH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me’*” (Ex 03,15). The same God took the form of an ordinary human being in the person of Jesus: “*The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he will be called Emmanuel, which means: God with us*” (Mt 01, 23) who came in contact with human beings and rubbed shoulders with them. These two instances of Yahweh and Jesus demonstrate how the all-powerful and infinite God could come close to human beings in a humble way, respecting them, listening to them, guiding them and training them to handle themselves in difficult situations and empowering them to develop their emotional and adversity quotients (EQ and AQ).

**Leadership of Mentoring:** Right from His birth, Jesus took sides with the poor, neglected, downtrodden, marginalized and the voiceless people and affirmed their identity and made them live happily with all the rights like other human beings. Moreover, he stood with them and promoted a system of natural justice and equity, allowing a fair judgment in a situation which was not practiced by the Jewish authorities and established the fact that the human beings are more important than the man-made laws and so helped them raise their social quotient (SQ).

**Leadership of Subsidiarity:** Servant leadership promotes the principle of subsidiarity and team work to develop the open quotient (OQ), which was very much evident in Yahweh delegating, training, motivating and encouraging the Patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings and Prophets to the mission of leading the Israelites to keep up the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Similarly Jesus

chose 12 disciples and empowered them to enhance their curiosity quotient (CQ) through parables and exhorted them to improve their intelligence and decency quotients (IQ and DQ) to continue his mission of establishing a just society (Ref. Rom 08: 30).

**Leadership of Empathy:** The four songs of the “Suffering servant of Yahweh” (Is 42, 01-09; 49, 01-07; 50, 04-09; 52, 13-15) and the parable of the Good Shepherd (Jn 10, 01-15) reveal another important component of servant leadership of the Bible. Feeling one with the suffering, the real servant leader, Jesus Christ, manifested his supreme sacrifice of love and solidarity with those afflicted through his passion and death on the Cross.

**Leadership of Passion to achieve the goal:** This quality of the servant leader was kept up throughout the Old Testament by reminding the Israelites to be ever faithful to the Lord, our God till the end of their lives. The same thread passes through the New Testament as well. Jesus initiated the process with passion to build up the human community of brothers and sisters under one Father by working hard with all perseverance, facing the challenges boldly, breaking the barriers of division, crossing over the hurdles and finally achieved His goal through His death and resurrection.

### Conclusion

Given the chaotic global political situation of today, the people of the world are frantically looking for better leaders. At this juncture, since they are like the sheep without the shepherd, the servant leadership model of Jesus inspires all of us. If the world leaders emulate the model of Jesus, they can very well empower the poor, marginalized, downtrodden, migrant workers, farmers, labourers and all those who have lost their identity, to live a life with dignity. If this happens, the heaven will surely come down and embrace the earth without an iota of doubt.





# Servant-Leadership in the Catholic Church

Fr. Sunil Rosario



## Introduction

Who is a 'Servant Leader'?

*"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. That person is sharply different from the one who is a 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."* - Robert K. Greenleaf

The idea of the servant as leader came partly out of Greenleaf's half-century of experience in working to shape large institutions. However, the event that crystallized Greenleaf's thinking came in the 1960s, when he read Hermann Hesse's short novel *Journey to the East* – an account of a mythical journey by a group of people on a spiritual quest. After reading this book, Greenleaf concluded that its central meaning was that a great leader is first, a servant to others, and this simple fact is central to his or her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.

Steven R. Covey, in his reflection, 'Servant Leadership and

Community Leadership in the Twenty First Century' says, "Servant - leadership is the enabling art to accomplishing any worthy objective. It's glorious to see the two organizations - The Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership and the National Association for Community Leadership – come together, and to see others join together, and to let go of the ego investment in words, semantics, and agenda, to realize the transcendent agenda that unifies us and the transcendent values of respect and service, servant-leadership, and the enabling values." (Focus on Leadership, Pg. 27)

Spears (1998) identified ten attributes from Robert Greenleaf's writings on servant leadership: "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community."

## Servant-Leadership in the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is undergoing many crises from within and due to the challenges the world is facing today. The most recent is the global pandemic, due to Corona. This has been an occasion to practice 'servant leadership' in many parts of the world. To exercise 'Servant-Leadership' within the Church administration and management has been a huge challenge. In recent times, the Church has faced the challenges of sexual abuse by the clergy and handling finance with transparency and accountability. Due to these challenges, the Christian faith is put into test. The



**"Good leaders must first become good servants."**

**Robert K. Greenleaf**

secular values have come to predominate and where the Church has been seriously discredited. The laity has very little voice in the matters of Church administrations. They are neither counted nor recognized as a part of the 'servant leadership' in making the Church participatory or collaborative. Those who are taken into confidence are the 'Yes' men/women of the hierarchical Church. Where does the 'Servant-leadership fit into these realities today. The Catholic Church leadership is very much hierarchical and still a 'Top-down' administration, that gives rise to clericalism. Are we truly service oriented, to address the needs of the poor, the marginalized and those disposable and deprived of the society?

Pope John XXIII and many others sensed prior to the Second Vatican Council, that the Church was becoming increasingly alienated from modern culture and locked into a defensive, apologetic stance that was perceived by the world as negative, condemnatory and unattractive. The Church appeared to many as an archaic institution laden with trappings of an imperial and aristocratic past whose sympathies were with the ancient regime of a Church/State symbiosis and far removed from the concerns of the 'modern man'.

The Council chose to 'accentuate the positive' in its presentation of the Gospel, highlighting the great beauty of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the ineffable mercy and goodness of God, and the beauty of the Church as a Sacrament of Christ, showing forth his face to the world. Thus, the Vatican II has been the fundamental shaping factor in our experience of Catholicism. It was basically a call to service. "Jesus is not the only spiritual model, but his leadership style is often regarded as one of the most influential and effective the world has ever known. And he did it with twelve inexperienced people! And central to Jesus' philosophy was servant-leadership.

Jesus exemplified the fully committed and effective servant-leadership when James and John seemed to be vying for a special leadership role among the disciples: "*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant.*" (Mathew 20: 25-27). This Servitude flows from a pure heart set on the pursuit of Christ likeness (Phil. 2:5-11).



**Servant Leadership** is exercising real, godly leadership, as Christ did when He used a towel, and influencing, equipping, and empowering people to accomplish God's purpose and plan. Being a leader in the church, or in the home, is never a force of personality; it is earning that respect because you love and care (1 Kings 3:9; Luke 22:25-28; Matthew 25:21; Mark 9:33-37; John 5:19; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 13:17)

Servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work that has the potential for creating positive changes in society. (Focus on Leadership – Servant Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Edited by Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, John Wiley & Sons, INC.) Servant-leadership crosses all boundaries and is being applied by a wide variety of people working with for-profit businesses; not-for-profit corporations, and churches, universities, health care and foundations. In recent years, a growing number of leaders and readers have "rediscovered" Robert Greenleaf's own writings through books by DePree, Senge, Covey, Wheatley, Autry and many other popular writers.

### **Servant Leadership in our Time**

It is evident that Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Pope Francis are modern and relevant examples of servant leadership, whose characteristics and style can be studied and promoted as more diverse ideals of what a servant leader looks like. "I serve because I am the leader" seems particularly applicable to these individuals as they each brought stewardship, influence, encouragement and teaching to bear in their work. Serving others was not, for them, a means to an end but instead, the end itself. To comprehend such a position in leadership implies a deep structure of principles, which is unwavering in the face of challenge.

Pope Francis' leadership is entirely about serving others, and doing so with humility and mercy. The Pope says, "The





world tells us to seek success, power and money; God tells us to seek humility, service and love.” “To change the world we must be good to those who cannot repay us.” In his TED talk to his worldwide audience, he says, “Please, allow me to say it loud and clear: the more powerful you are, the more your actions will have an impact on people, the more responsible you are to act humbly...Through humility and concrete love power becomes a service, a force for good.” Not serving God first, the thirst for power and money, are all obstacles to true peace, Francis said, causing us to live in that “tension of worldly vanities.” In order to have peace and serenity, he said that we must ask God to make us into his free servants. Because as God's children, once the obstacles have been removed, that is when we can serve him freely, and not as slaves. “And when we serve the Lord in freedom, we feel that deeper peace yet, right?” he said. “The voice of the Lord: 'Oh, come, come, come, good and faithful servant.'”

His hallmark for effective, meaningful leadership includes a profound commitment to mission, empathic mercy, joy, dialogue, vision, accountability, and to communicate and inspire these attributes in others. The Pope's authenticity stems from his radical belief in God and commitment to be a Christ-like servant leader.

### Conclusion

Dr. Kathleen Patterson's recommendation towards building say that 'Servant Leadership' servant leaders demonstrate excellence in their lives, inspire it in their followers and unleash it in organizations they serve. Here is how servant leaders do it: **1.** Begin with love, **2.** Set the Example, **3.** Do the right things, **4.** Create the mind-set, **5.** Allow for failure and **6.** Do their best

It's a long way to achieve the goal of 'servant leadership' in the Catholic Church leadership. It is hardly the model of

leadership fostered in the church, especially in clerical circles. Although this model developed rapidly in the secular world during last six or seven decades the initiative to implement 'Servant leadership' came from Dr. Robert K. Greenleaf. In the Catholic Church, the lexicon used for leadership betrays it as monarchical and militaristic, a leadership style of feudal times, when the masses were illiterate peasants. Secrecy shrouds the Vatican and diocesan finances and the Byzantine method of selecting bishops. Our times invite church leaders to develop the ten characteristics of a Jesus-like servant leader described by Greenleaf: **listening, empathy, awareness, healing, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, commitment to the growth of people, building community and stewardship.** This list would be an excellent foundation for the formation of priests, bishops and lay leaders for the church.

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# Servant leadership: an Ignatian Perspective

Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, SJ



## Introduction

Servant Leadership has become a favourite theme of communication both in the world of corporate management and in the world of academia across the globe, particularly after Robert K Greenleaf (1904-990) first introduced it in an essay titled 'The Servant as Leader' in 1970. Ever

since, 'Servant Leadership' has captured, challenged, enriched and transformed many an individual and institution entrusted with leadership positions in different walks of life.

While Greenleaf and many later patrons of the servant leadership school, such as Burns and Buchan, are rightly credited with introducing and making the model popular and beneficial, hardly has there been anything written about a sixteenth century pilgrim, Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) who challenged the then contemporary global platform with his radical ideas of being both a servant and a leader. He inspired young minds at universities in Europe to discard their dreams of a life of fame and wealth and honour and, instead, surrender themselves as servants for Christ's mission in this world, involving in loving and giving.

## From the path of pilgrimage to the path of service

For Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his early companions there was just one leader and one master. It was Jesus alone, whose mission they endeavoured to serve all their life. Thus we find Saint Ignatius and his nine companions, soon after being ordained priests at Venice, immerse themselves in serving the sick at hospices, preaching at piazzas and street corners, travelling on foot and begging alms door-to-door for their maintenance. Such was the radical way of priestly life that the former teachers of Paris University chose to adopt it as they began their life of service in 1537, even before they founded their 'Compania de Iesu' in 1540.

In the light of this backdrop, I would like to reflect on the following traits as the core

characteristics of the Ignatian perspectives on Servant Leadership, which has inspired thousands of Jesuits in their mission and also their students in their careers all over the world, over the past five hundred years or so.

## 1. At the service of the Creator (Principle and Foundation)

While studying in Paris, Ignatius of Loyola succeeded in drawing bright and talented university students like Francis Xavier, Diego Lainez, Peter Favre and Simon Rodrigues to join him in his newfound passion to serve Christ and his Gospel, primarily because Ignatius was able to open their eyes to a new vision of life. He called it as the 'First Principle and Foundation' and placed it at the beginning of his Spiritual Exercises, meant to inspire all generous youth to become servants for Christ's mission.

Thus the First Principle and Foundation reads, *'Human beings are created to praise, rever, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this, to save their souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created. From it follows that we ought to use these things to the extent that they help us towards our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it.'* (SE no.23)

## 2. At the service of the Eternal King

Hailing from a well-known noble family of Loyola, loyal to the Spanish Crown the knight-turned-pilgrim, Ignatius was determined to convert all his martial arts and military chivalry into missionary passion to do greater things for Christ, the Eternal King, and be at the service of His noble mission.

In order to do greater things and achieve greater feats for Christ the King, Ignatius of Loyola, through his Spiritual Exercises, offers a unique meditation to be made by those willing to serve Christ, the Eternal King. In it, the King says to all, *'My will is to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to come with me must labour with me, so that through following me in the pain he or she may follow me also in the glory.'* (SE no.95)





### 3. At the service of all things in God and God in all things

For St. Ignatius of Loyola and his followers, The Jesuits, the sole objective of their new found life and mission has been to do everything for the greater glory of God (AMDG - *ad maiorem dei gloriam*) and for the greater good to all. This two-fold objective would then become the driving force of the Jesuits' individual lives as well as of their apostolic mission.

This is clearly stated in the very foundational statement of the Jesuits - the Formula of the Institute - '*...he may also be usefully employed in peacefully resolving conflicts, in reaching out with sympathetic support to those who languish in jails and hospices, or by taking up any work that love inspires as being for God's glory and the good of all; everything being done quite free of charge with no thought of profit through such activities.*'

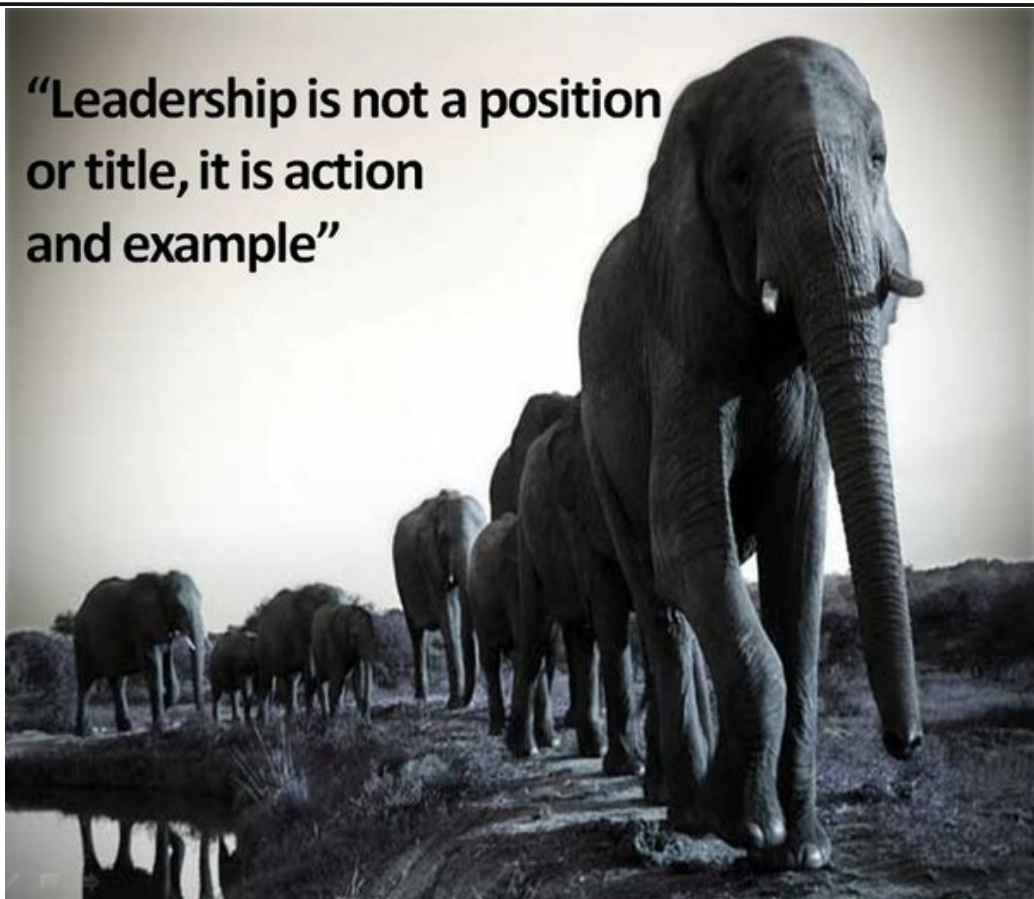
### 4. At the service of companions and mission

*Cura personalis* and *Cura apostolica* are the two inseparable complementary values enshrined to guide both the ordinary Jesuits toiling in far flung regions and those entrusted with management and leadership roles in renowned institutions of one type or another everywhere. *Cura personalis* in Latin means Care of Persons and *Cura apostolica* in Latin means Care of Apostolates (ministries). These two guiding principles serve as values as well as indicators, both to ensure and measure the quality of life and service in every Jesuit enterprise.

It is mandatory that every young man willing to enrol himself to work for the cause of God make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. These three vows have an inbuilt spiritual grace to help the vowed persons rid themselves of all disordered attachments such as riches, honour and pride, and instead enable them to grow in loving and serving Christ, their sole Master, and propagate His universal mission to reconcile all peoples.

In this respect we see that Ignatius of Loyola, his early companions and generations of Jesuits later were not concerned about becoming leaders themselves. Rather, they went about quietly moulding leaders of all types and

**“Leadership is not a position or title, it is action and example”**



for all seasons. Therefore, Jesuits the world over can count a large number of outstanding leaders among their alumni and alumnae. Just to mention a few such leaders in India, Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Jyoti Basu, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, APJ Abdul Kalam, Julius Rebeiro and Hamid Ansari. But these are only a few of the luminaries the Jesuits can be proud of. Their greater service lies in spreading the same ideals of service, compassion and humility amongst all those who are part of their institutions. Their aim is NIHIL ULTRA - Men and Women for others, big or small, rich or poor without bias and prejudice. There is a certain stellar quality instilled in each and every person emerging from a Jesuit institution, which defines them - a sense of humility, service, integrity and pride.

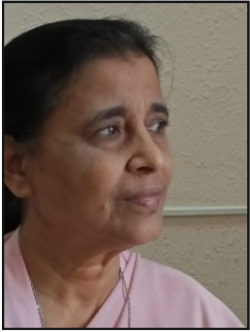
### Conclusion

In contrast to the founders of other religious Orders, Ignatius of Loyola would not allow his followers to be called after him as Ignatians or 'Ignatiani'. He was clear that Jesus, and Jesus alone, was to be their leader and master and, therefore, they were to be called as Jesuits/Gesuiti. So, even today the 16,000 odd Jesuits, their communities and institutions look up to Jesus as their model and architect of servant leadership and share the same vision and inspiration with their staff, students and alumni and alumnae to follow in their lives.



# Servant Leadership – A Feminist Perspective-Authority to Serve

Sr. Inigo, SSAM



One of the topics much discussed these days in society, in Church and in religious circles is “Leadership”. Though the cry for authentic leaders has been heard in every age, today it has become louder than ever in every field. We can list the different characteristics of a good leader: S/He is innovative, authentic, integrated, inspiring, charismatic,

transformational, credible, dynamic, a servant, a steward, a shepherd and a prophet. We cannot afford to have incapable and unauthentic leaders since the leaders can make or unmake, build or destroy individuals and communities.

The Bible is one of the greatest collections of stories of various types of leaders. From the beginning God chose leaders to lead His people. We find very inspiring stories of kings and warriors, strategists and visionaries and men and women leaders. Some led people to God successfully, and some of them fell short of expectations.

We have to learn some concrete lessons for leadership in the Church and Religious Congregations because even in the modern secularized world, many people look up to the Church and religious leadership for inspiration and guidance.

The positive and revolutionary leadership of Pope Francis has been drawing the attention of the people of God around the world. However, it seems that not many church and religious leaders seem to be convinced of what the Pope has been saying regarding the pastoral care of the people, or accepting his ideas of 'smelling like sheep', or on de-centralization of power, and participatory decision making in the Church etc.

Many a time we misunderstand a manager as a leader. Stephen Covey clarifies the difference: “*Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things. Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.*” There is a difference between a transactional leader and a transformational leader: “*A transactional leader is one who is concerned with the smooth day-to-day running of the organization or institution. But a transformational leader is one who brings about*

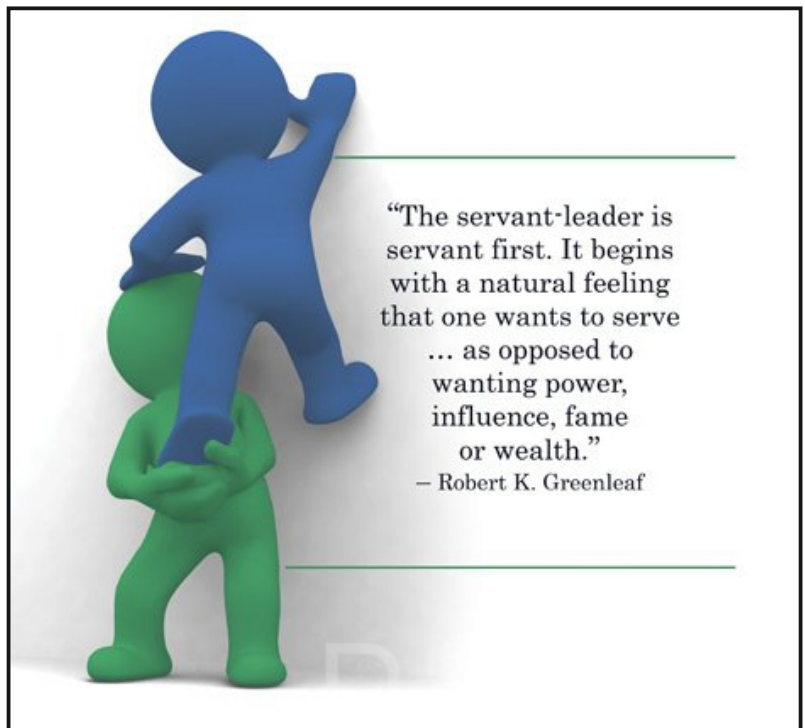
*change and transformation in the organization.*” Today there is a cry for transformational leaders.

The only leadership that Jesus practiced in His life and ministry is servant leadership. He spoke of it many times and demonstrated it at the Last Supper. The ‘*foot washing*’ is the norm of leadership for the disciples of Jesus. At the Second Vatican Council, from a pyramidal, hierarchical society the Church became a community at whose service there are leaders. Good Leaders believe that power and authority are for helping others grow and not to command and control.

## Essential Traits of a Servant Leader

**1. Integrity:** A good definition of servant leadership is integrity or credibility or being a person of principles, able to influence others. When we match our words, feelings, thoughts and actions with congruence and without duplicity, we are exercising personal power. This is what we call *integrity*, which means that we are authentic and we live without duplicity. This stems from both character (who we are) and competence (what we do).

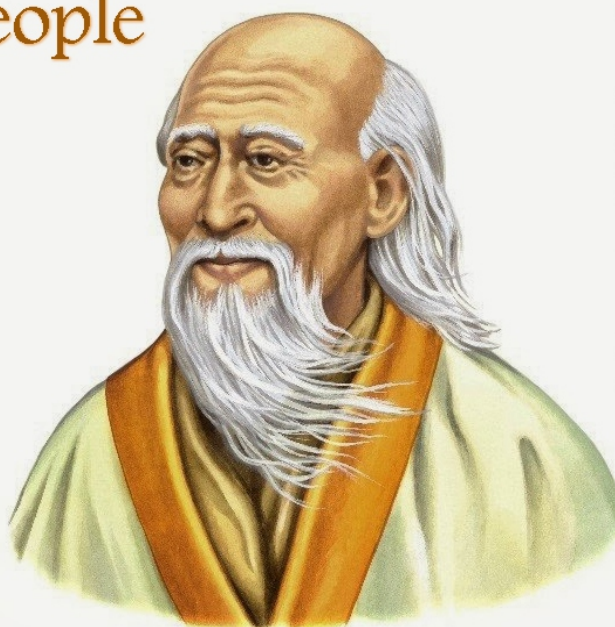
Who we are communicates more eloquently and more frequently than anything we can say. Mother Theresa and Pope Francis are contemporary examples for us. Their actions speak louder than their words. Many are disappointed with the modern leaders and shocked by the





A leader is best when people  
barely know he exists,  
when his work is done,  
his aim fulfilled,  
they will say:  
we did it ourselves.

~Lao Tzu



scandals of those in high positions: seeking comfort zones, dishonest money handling, connection with relatives, lack of accountability and integrity, taking undue advantage of freedom and abuse of power and money and lack of availability.

**2. A God-experienced person:** The Leader we follow is **Jesus**. The eyes of the leaders of the secular world are on power and profit. *Our Founders were mystics who became missionaries and prophets.* Mother Theresa's favorite message was: "I am not a social worker; I see Jesus in the poor." Prayer brings self-awareness in the leaders. Probably we all have witnessed the destructive consequences of leaders who are not in touch with their inner self. Community members pay a heavy price for leaders who project their unresolved hurts and unfulfilled intimacy needs on to others. Enlightened leaders will be aware of their own need for interiority, silence, prayer and introspection, because, over-scheduling shrivels the umbilical chord of connectedness.

**3. The Poor are the center:** The focus on "*the poorest, the weakest and the least important*" has dominated Pope Francis' ministry. Almost on a weekly basis, he is urging us to leave our comfort zones and reach out to those who live on the margins of society. At the time when I am writing this text I have received the sad news of the death of Swami Agnivesh with the title: "A Prophet for all seasons dies". Be it Swamiji, Graham Steins, Mother Theresa, Rani Maria – they all died but cannot be buried as they can be called "leaders" whose focus and mission was the Poor! They will for ever be remembered for their passion and zeal for this focused leadership. We should avoid habits and ways of acting typical of a court, characterized by intrigue, gossip, cliques, favoritism and preferences. As a bishop,

Pope Francis would dress as a plain priest and go out at night to talk with people.

**4. Listening:** Just because we are leaders, it does not mean that we are the prime talkers. "Everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak" (James: 1: 19). The first letter 'L' in the word "leader" stands for listening. A very important quality of a leader is listening. *There are three kinds of listening:* a. We must listen to what the other person is saying. b. We also have to listen to what s/he is not saying. This may be even more important. c. Then we have to listen to what s/he cannot say without your help. If you create an encouraging atmosphere, then the other may be able to say what could not be said otherwise. Listen to yourself: *What is happening to you and in you? Do you notice that you are preparing yourself for a defense or a counter-attack that is building up within you, since what s/he says appears to be an attack on you?*

**5. De-centralization:** As a leader, you realize that you are not Omni-competent. There are other people who can do certain things better than you can. Your duty is to find the right people for the right work. Trust them. Keep in mind the following while delegating the work:

- (a) Tell them clearly, what you want them to do.
- (b) Be very precise as to when or by which date you want the work finished.
- (c) Inform them that they can get back to you if they face any difficulty.
- (d) Do not tell them how they are to do the work. Remember, they may be more creative than you.
- (e) Ask them to report to you about the progress within a certain time frame.



**6. A Visionary:** “Without a vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). Without a leader each one will do what they want (Jud. 21: 24). The Vision Statement of Jesus (Lk. 4:18-19) is a good example for us. Institutions function better when the vision, the dream is clear. Vision is the energizing principle, futuristic and is always other-oriented. It is filled with passion and compassion for others. Leaders have a very important role in the formulation of a Vision. In this Province, community, Parish, institution etc., what do we really want to achieve and how we will achieve? Avoid the language, “In our days and when we were...”

**7. Team Leadership:** Pope Francis says, “The problem of today's leaders isn't a simple stubbornness but hardness of heart.” They refuse to dialogue with or listen to others. The tragedy of the leaders is that they do not know how to dialogue with others and even with God. Hence the biggest risks our organizations face today are individuality and superficiality. We need a good team and constant evaluation. Jesus could have established the Kingdom by Himself. But He had 3 councilors, a 12 member community and 70 extended council. He consulted them and got feedback from them.

A community of members (young and old) is a team. We need to bring different talents and qualities together so that there will be a unified approach in pursuing collective goals. Basically all should know everything. You should not exclude anybody from getting information. All should participate, at different levels, actively and enthusiastically for the achievement of the common goal. The members share happily all successes and failures.

**8. A Joyful Leader:** A sense of humour is very essential for a leader. It keeps everyone healthy, young and fresh. Relaxation in occasional community get-togethers may dissolve stereotypes and remove personal blocks of friendship. As the Pope says, “Long faces cannot proclaim

Jesus!” Leaders must be joyful not because of absence of problems but because of the presence of Jesus in their responsible mission.

### Conclusion

A servant leader has to be a

**Samadarshi**, one who sees everyone as being equal,

**Satyadarshi**, one who sees the truth,

**Paradarshi**, one who is transparent in action,

**Doordarshi**, being broad-minded and a visionary and

**Priyadarshi**, one who is embodying joy, love and compassion.

It is like an examination of conscience for a Leader. Sometimes, the Leader must walk in front of the people, to be there to show the way. Sometimes, walk behind them, empowering them, allowing them to go forward. But most of the time, should be among the people – their guide, friend, companion, inspiration and their father / mother.

May Jesus, the servant leader, enlighten us to follow Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life!





# Servant Leadership in Higher Education

Dr. Bernard D' Sami



Is it possible to have Servant Leadership in Higher Education? Honestly, it is becoming impractical, but once the values of Servant Leadership (SL) are restored, its qualities will greatly enhance higher education in India to move forward. Presented here is the definition of Robert K Greenleaf's on Servant Leadership:

*A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.*

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:

*The servant-leader is a 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 the one who is a 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 shades and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.*

The following features may be considered as outcomes of adopting 'Servant Leadership' in Higher Education.

## **1. Growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong:**

This is one of the features of SL. Higher Education (HE) in India has to expand/grow, which means this leadership style would open the portals of higher education to the excluded. Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, the former Chairperson, of the UGC, points out to a major challenge that confronts India, which pertains to the disparities in access to education, especially in terms of economic class, gender, caste, ethnicity and religious belonging.

In 2008, as against an all-India enrolment rate of 17 per cent, the break-up for these categories was 7 per cent for Scheduled Tribes (ST), 11 per cent for Scheduled Castes (SC), 28 per cent for Other Backward Classes (OBC), and 47 per cent for higher castes. Besides, it was 9 per cent for

Muslims, 18 per cent for Hindus, and 30 per cent for Christians. Only an SL model can address this gross inequality in access to education when it comes to different communities.

## **2. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform to their optimal best:**

Moving to another aspect of SL is that the tangible elements of power in HE are the name and fame of the institution, its numbers in terms of intake into the institution, pass-percentage, research output, teachers' performances and their contribution to research. Therefore, 'power' is measured more in the tangible elements of higher education. A Servant Leader gives his/her best in the intangible elements of power in HE such as 'outcome' not 'output.' In Leadership, they believe in the principle called 'incremental' which requires a person to act in a cautious, probing and experimental fashion, following the trial and error model.

This style is called 'incremental' in the decision-making literature. This model is an element in power-sharing. In decision-making literature, 'synoptic' refers to practices that include introduction of new practices, policies and discontinuation of what does not serve the interests of the institution. However, a Servant – Leader, unlike a synoptic, assumes the responsibility of identifying needs of others and meeting those needs. Another intangible element of power is the 'societal cohesiveness' in the context the 'cohesiveness' of an HE institution. A SL realises that the strong foundations are formed with internally unified institutions. A SL spends his/her time and energy towards this goal of achieving 'cohesiveness' in the institution with various stakeholders involved in HE.

## **3. Steering Rather than Rowing:**

Some perspective on this issue can be gained from looking at the word 'education'. Craft (1984) noted that there are two different Latin roots to the English word 'education'. They are *educare*, which means to train or to mould and *educere*, meaning to lead out. A SL in HE is convinced of his/her role to steer and not to row the boat. SLs are aware of their duty to train and mould students and are committed to bringing out the best in them.

Their goal of being a leader in HE institutions is to provide 'a formation for transformation'. The project is much larger than imparting higher education to the relevant age group of 18-25 in colleges and universities. A SL leads from behind and not from the front. Steering an institution means investing more time in training and orienting the faculty and students for desired results.



#### 4. Empowering Rather than Serving:

It may sound dichotomous, but SL goes beyond serving to empower. Empowerment is much larger than serving or service rendered in the field of HE. Education is empowerment. HE in India is a great equaliser; it has to be a project for empowering. The caste and class discrimination that exists in society has largely been eliminated only through education, which empowers the marginalised sections of the society. Education has the empowerment potential in terms of providing skills, jobs, and mobility. Only with education people move up the social and economic ladder, which serve as an indicator of empowerment.

Servant leadership would broaden the base of HE in terms of access, inclusion and quality. When HE is an equaliser and empowers, it is on these a SL invests in terms of finance, time, energy and expertise. Countries like India have a poor Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and to raise this, a SL, is expected to play a vital role in opening the portals of higher education in the backward areas and regions. Servant Leaders launch creative ideas such as 'Holiday University', 'Flying University' and 'Barefoot University' to promote inclusivity in higher education. When learners have no access to higher education and higher educational institutions, the HEIs must reach out to the learners. A University or a college need not necessarily be conceived in physical terms (land, buildings, labs or grounds) it can also become *movemental* (moving from one place to another based on the needs) besides being virtual.

#### 5. Hierarchy to Participation and Teamwork:

One of the fundamental drawbacks of Higher Education is its top-down approach and structure. Whether it is a university or college, there is a well laid-down structure/hierarchy and communication channel. This hierarchy/structure itself is a 'power structure', which prevents many from approaching the authorities who wield enormous power. One of the features of SL is its structure,

which does not function vertically but horizontally, implying they treat everyone with dignity and respect and do not exert their power, office and position. HE hierarchical structure has prevented many from entering the campuses and maintained a social distance from a vast majority.

Academics, for ages, have worked, and continue to work in isolation and as individuals. Doctors form teams to treat patients with complicated ailments. They all form teams and collaborate in the best interests of restoring a human being back to good health. Academics have to learn from other fraternities (hardware and software companies whose success mantra is 'team-work') to work as a team. When a student repeatedly fails in a subject or subjects (usually such students come from dysfunctional families, rural areas, or from marginalised sections of the society) have academics ever formed a team (concerned teacher, other teachers teaching courses from other departments and with a counsellor) to study the problem? Unlike how medical emergencies are handled, we refuse to see 'educational emergencies' of our students and fail to help them to obtain a degree, which is the 'gateway' and 'passport' to get employed. Personal growth and achievements have to reflect the growth and achievements of an institution of higher learning. A SL has a role to play in this scenario. It is a challenge, but the landscape of Higher Education institutions has to change for the better to become student-oriented and student centred. Students being the main stakeholder in HEI, it is their welfare and growth, which matters rather than the individual educator's.

A Servant Leader and leadership will definitely go a long way in revolutionising higher education and Higher Educational Institutions.







'Every child comes with the message that God is not yet disappointed with humans. The birth of Jesus, the holy Child of Christmas, brought a special message of hope to humankind. He was born to be the saviour of all sinners. ... Today, Christmas is for the people, by the people and of the people. Christmas is an opportunity to apply the message of Christ in each person's life. It should not turn into a meaningless annual ritual,' wrote Rabindranath Tagore.

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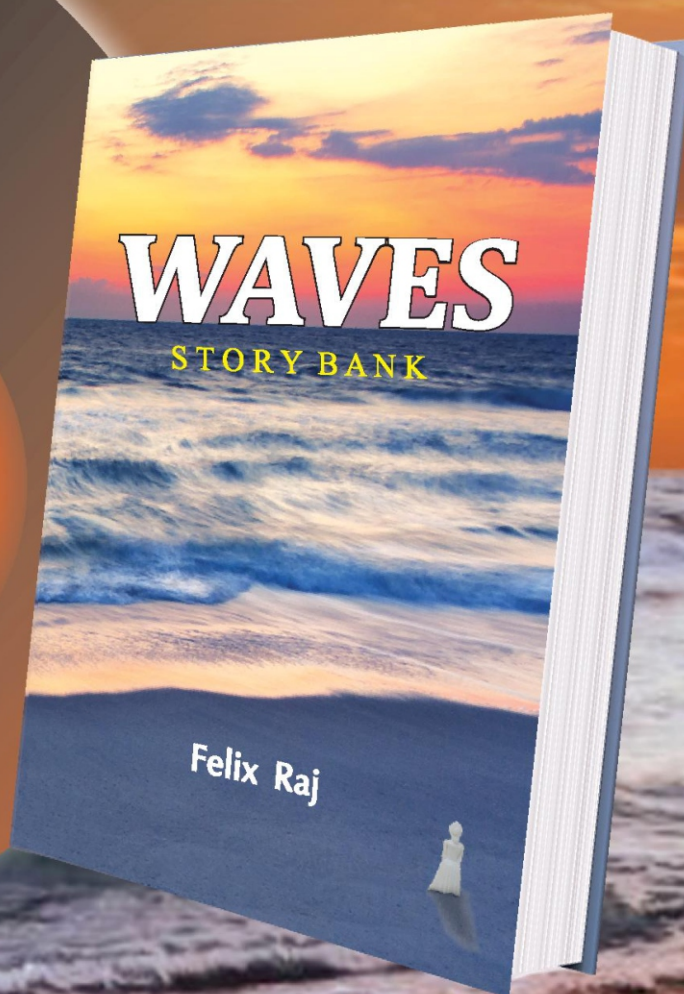
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