

Newspaper	New Startits Times
Date	1/8/2014

Goals for next generation leaders

(NST-1/8/2014)

RIGHT LEADERSHIP:

The nation needs those with vision and virtues at the helm to ensure betterment for all

GO to any low-cost flats in any town or city, and you will see a complete and dismal failure of management and leadership.

Talk to people who live there and they will tell you stories of endless blatant and deliberate acts of vandalism, broken lift button panels, damaged cars in car parks, motorcycles parked in car lots deliberately, tangentially.

Clogged drains, with bottles and cans and other rubbish; litter is everywhere and rubbish dumps are not regularly maintained.

And there are drug addicts and gangsters or would-be gangsters. They will also tell you that even the authorities have given up in attempting to remedy matters.

Amidst the distress and depress-

ing environment, parents care for their children and eke out those little happiness moments of sending children to school or tuition classes and teaching and watching over their children who learn, disregarding the din, the foul smell and threat of disruption by anti-social elements.

Despite the hopelessness and helplessness, the hopes and dreams of parents survive and even thrive with greater determination against the odds; in spite of failed leadership by those who are expected to support those in need of help.

As we refer to urban poverty, the story of rural poverty in various enclaves continues to exist despite reports of impressive development else where. Somehow, leaders who are expected to be leaders fail to do the jobs they are entrusted to do.

It is sheer irresponsible leadership when elected representatives do not know of abject poverty in their constituencies.

People do not accept the token hampers and pretensions of care and concern when elected representatives turn up for the cameras

to gain political mileage, only after the media has reported on the neglected citizens, whether single mothers, handicapped children or aged elders.

Leadership is a complex phenomenon. There are many different kinds of leaders with different scopes of influence and different focus of responsibility.



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Many elected and appointed leaders are not ready for the responsibilities of leadership. The lack of readiness has to do with lack of knowledge, experience and effective training.

The nation has observed the succession of so-called leaders as depicted in movies and as observed in real life. Many had created gross injustices against the people blatantly and in subtle but unjust ways. People have seen fake charisma, insincere charm, lying leaders, the master of deceptions, et cetera, ad nauseam.

As there must be genuine transformation of society there must be genuine transformation of the circle and succession of leaders who are really able to lead the people in

all domains of activities and national existence. The cultural system must support virtues-centred leadership in the making of the future society. Leaders must possess knowledge, acquire competencies and uphold and practise the application of virtues in their decision-making and leadership acts.

Among the network of reinforcing virtues are truthfulness, piety, justice, integrity, compassion and caring, honour, justness, kindness, and generosity, deep honesty, moral courage, moral vision, fairness, intellectual excellence, creativeness, aesthetics sensitivity, deep selflessness, fortitude, prudence and temperance.

In order to develop the next generation of leaders with genuine accountability, there is a myth which must be removed in society. The myth is that leaders in all domains and at all levels are people who understand the nature of virtues and practise virtuous-based leadership.

Virtues-based leadership is learned by emulating exemplary role models. If there is a dearth of role models or if people emulate wrong role models, then society has a group of leaders who systematically think and act to the

detriment of a society which aims for excellence. The people deserve better. The virtues-based leaders will typically lead with deep conscience, with moral compass and strength, reflecting the attributes of divine grace. Throughout society, leaders must not lose their moral bearings and there will not be the taking over of selfishness, greed, malice, sloth, pride, lust, envy, wrath and avarice.

The fundamental qualities of justice seeking, temperance, prudence and fortitude will mark the purpose of their leadership in politics, in non-governmental organisations, in civic and community life.

Into the sixth decade of independence and the coming to an end of the first phase of vision 2020, society needs a different kind of leadership paradigm, not just for those in state assemblies, Parliament, public service or business, but in all domains of the lives of citizens.

These new paradigm leaders are to ensure that the development initiatives implemented are not just piecemeal solutions but must be effective, deep solutions for the betterment of lives for all, across the generations.