Title: Ethics (business ethics) from the Thirukkural and its relevance for contemporary business leadership in the Indian context

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Abstract: This paper explores the dimension of business ethics from ancient Indian times and its contemporary relevance for business leadership. In the Indian context, during the past one decade we have witnessed an increase in number of literatures on applying ancient wisdoms especially from the Bhagavad-Gita (Mahabharata), Valmiki Ramayana and the Arthashastra in the business leadership context. However, very few works are found on business ethics from the Thirukkural and its relevance for contemporary business leadership. The Thirukkural is a well-known treatise on ethics which was authored by Thiruvallava in the second century BC. It is considered to be the first work which covers ethics in Indian (Tamil) literature. In presenting the business ethics from the Thirukkural, the authors employed hermeneutics, a qualitative methodology which is the interpretation of ancient or classical literatures. The findings reveal that Thirukkural advocates a consciousness and a spirit-centered approach to the subject of business ethics based on eternal values and moral principles that should govern the conduct of business leaders. The prospect of highlighting the Thirukkural in other areas like leadership can be considered for the near future.

Keywords: business ethics; leadership; ancient wisdom; Thirukkural, Tamil literature; Bhagavad-Gita; Mahabharata; Valmiki Ramayana; Arthashastra; Thiruvallava; hermeneutics; qualitative methodologies; ancient literature; classical literature; consciousness; spirit-centered approaches; eternal values; moral principles; business leaders; India; Indian culture; business management.

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