

Project Planning Excerpts from Tamil Classical Literature Thirukkural

K Saravanan,
Research Scholar,
Shri Jagdish Prasad Jhabarmal Tibrewala University,
Rajasthan, India

MP Hrishikesh,
Director,
CMR Center for Business Studies,
Karnataka, India

Abstract:

The contemporary world walks on the principles and theories which have been nurtured and rendered in the past. In this reference, it can be said that the contemporary ethical management theories, concepts and principles are very uniquely correlated with that of the oldest ethical literature of Thirukkural written by Thiruvalluvar about 2000 years ago. This paper attempts to rediscover management wisdom, particularly in project management – project planning, it attempts to highlight various nuances of project planning and its linkages to Thirukkural which is the original work of Thiruvalluvar.

Keywords: *Thirukkural, Thiruvalluvar, Ethical Literature, Project management, Project Planning*

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades project and program management has become very important in every organization to bring more efficiency and effectiveness. There are lot of tools for project management in the current era the objective of this paper to go to the basic and to try create a linkage about the project planning from what Thiruvalluvar has said in Thirukkural about ages ago. This examines of structure of systems thinking for the modern scientific approach. The economy continues to grow and regardless of the various cultures in the world still Thirukkural is able to offer meaningful advices on the project management for the modern day managers.

Tamil language has its root associated with that of the Dravidian family of languages spoken in India (Samuel (Eds.), 1990). In lieu of the above, Hart (2000) claims that Tamil is one of the enriched languages blended with the rich classical literatures and traditions. The richness of the language has still kept it alive among the list of dead classical languages. The language embarks the status of a classical language the essence of which can be noted in its many literary works. The “Tamil” language depicts the literary works of different nature i.e. devotional, societal, philosophical, and ethical. One such oldest literature was Thirukkural (here after referred as Kural).

Kural – ethical literature

Thirukkural, which received world class accolades, is the most famous literature among the various ethical literatures that were identified and were still in practice till date in Tamil language. The distinctive meaning and the simplest form drew attention of the worldly scholars and philosophers across continents and nations. **This is called as Kural because of its shortest meter which is not more than 1 ¾ in size.** Mahatma Gandhi, Father of Indian nation, a freedom fighter, once commented that Thirukkural as “text books full of indispensable authority on moral life”. “Kural is one of the greatest works on ethics on Tamil tradition and it has explored everything under human being moral living” claims and eminent scholar Hart (2000) and Dr.E.W.Hopkins said it is a “Mandatory ethics for Tamil society”. Contemporary literature works compared with Kural lacks ideal perception and ethical vision said by Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Kural is not just for the life its goes beyond the paradigm of life and explains a lot more for real time use for people at any time for any situation and today is more suited for organizations’ as well. Lot of researchers including M.Ariel & Rev.Dr.J.Lazarus French translator for Thirukkural made the same remarks on Kural.

2. Literature Review

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Part 2 Literature reviews, followed in research methodology in part 3, and a discussion about Thirukkural way of project management in part 4, and conclusion in part 5.

A. Critically evaluate the definitions of Project Management

To define project management various attempts were made, first best example is quotations given by Oisen, 3, in 1950’s. According to him Project management is process of gathering tools and techniques like a matrix arrangement which is used to direct the diverse resources for achieving complex, unique, cost, quality and one time task in a given time. So, every single task is a combination of different tools and techniques used for successful completion of life cycle task from conception to completion stage. Using Iron Triangle definition one can carefully observe the successful criteria and these attainment principles are further elaborated by Osien3 to give brief explanation about project management presently used.

As per British BS60794, 1996 Standards Project Management is defined as:

Planning, controlling and monitoring all the attributes involved in a project and directed them to accomplish the goals of a project within a given time along with satisfying the cost, quality and performance. The London Association of Project Management (APM) also has given the definition for project management in the UK Body of Knowledge.

APM Definition:

Planning, organising, monitoring and controlling all the attributes of a project and directed for successful accomplishment of a safe project in a given time satisfying all the cost, quality and performance criteria. Project manager is completing responsible for successful achievement of project. Depending upon various authors point of view a project definition is completely human's own interest of managing the clear goals in a given time limit. It cannot be explained with a single line of statement, as a result project management is defined as a mixture of planning, man agreement and the change of management.

According to Lock's7 project management is developed in order to plan, control, coordinate the difficult issues and divert them towards commercial and modern projects. At the same time Buker believed that project management is a special technique used to control and plan a project based upon a single point that strongly accepted.

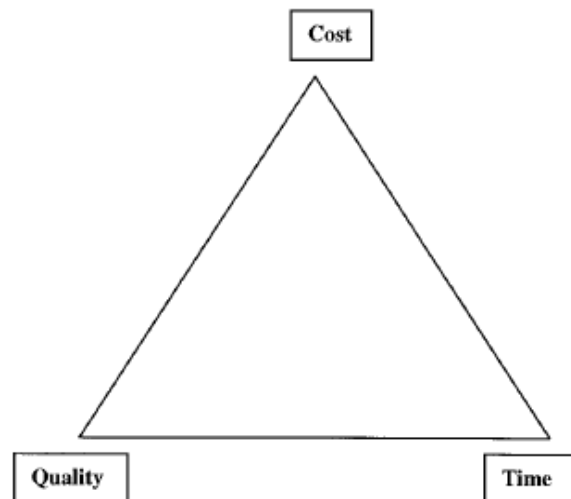


Figure 1 The Iron Triangle

Though various suggestions are made to know what project management is but still some useful criteria like cost, quality and time were added to the original description? Brief explanation is given by an example listed below:

As per Oisen3 from past 50 years project management not successfully developed the measurement criteria Project management is learning business because the UK Body of Knowledge and BS 60794 standards in the earlier stages given best and some worst situations. As a result it is still continued to be developed. According to Wirth, 9 defining the project management is complicated task due to the content difference present in the own versions of BOK in various countries. For easy way of reference Tuner associated various series of definitions and explained the modern approach of project management along with its criteria examples. After some days he gave complete definition:

Tuners10 definition:

Project management is a science and art of converting vision into reality.

Note: The criterion is not mentioned in the definition.

To define project management is there any contradictions?

Before Oisen3 attempts to define project management is there any subject dealing with the one to one and unique complex task?

Present working trend is based on project management, though it contain extra attribute but still not accurately defined. The most interesting point is it adopted, developed but the success criteria aspects cannot be changed.

B. Critically evaluate the theories and Model of Project Management.

Here it presents the application of complexity theory in project management. The main terms that are concerned in complexity theory are Emergent Behavior, Self Organization, Agents, Adaptive and diversity, Flexibility, Agile Development, Last Responsible Moment, Chaos and Complexity. From the last few decades complexity theory has been achieving its significance to handle complex projects and an excess of literature exists on project management and Complexity theory. The writers in this present work try to collect the literature and research done on the application of complexity theory on project management. It has been observed that it gives a prepared reference on project management and complexity theory act as a useful data source for the investigators and practitioners for their upcoming jobs.

It also handles with the literature about managing complex projects and the application of complexity theory in project management. A projects chief business is in construction, or gives latest goods, as in most business-related product organizations. Whether for continued existence or to maintain market leadership, projects are the key to succeed in world competition. Complexity Theory is one such upcoming area which is widely applied in solving business projects.

Evolution of Project Management

Williams (1999) considered the four decades of project management by an evolution of models appropriate to altering leading project features. After this Williams (1999) claimed that up to date project management practices are considered by:

- Reduced Functionality
- Late Delivery
- Exceeded Budgets

Thus modern management methods should be adapted to the modern environment as the project complexity heads to a raise in internal clashes and to handle with such clashes modern techniques and equipments should be incorporated.

Approaches to Project Management

The four approaches to project management are explained by Smyth and Morris (2007). In conventional project management theory applied is system theory and focused on control methods and equipments. In Information processing theory applied is social theory and focused on technocratic input or output mode. In functional management theory applied is organizational design social and concentrated on holistic approach with focus on effectiveness and efficiency. In relationship approach theory applied is social theory and concentrated on managing social relationships.

Evolution of Complexity Theory

Complexity theory can be defined broadly as the study of how order, structure, pattern, and novelty arise from extremely complicated, apparently chaotic systems and conversely, how complex behavior and structure emerges from simple underlying rules (Davis et al 2007). Since the 1960s author described the origins of Complexity Theory as a theory emerged from the fields of Life Science, Physical Science and Mathematics.

According to Davis et al. (2007) the project managers must be conscious of patterns of communication and relating on the project and must hold themselves in these. Secondly project members require to study to bear anxiety and to manage with not having rule over the project. Thirdly the company must wish to be a task driven, allowing company instead of a control determined management. Davis et al (2007) advised that the application of complexity theory on project management in the below:

- Constancy and fractals like manipulate the pattern and being influenced by it at the same time
- Radical changeability
- Complex approachable processes of relating contact patterns
- Non Linearity like sensitive reliance, strange and multiple actors and self conversion
- Emergence of organization
- States of stability

Thus it explains how theory applies in Project management.

C. Discuss briefly on project planning

The core of project management: planning the project one of the basic assumptions about projects is that the project task is clearly defined and unambiguous (Lock, 1992, ch. 3; PMI Standards Committee, 1987). By viewing the task as something externally given, the efforts of the project manager can be directed towards the efficient use of resources and techniques in accordance with the project management definition quoted above.

Having defined the task and the various goals restricting the work of the project organization, conventional project management wisdom is then to construct a work breakdown structure (WBS). The aim of the WBS is to identify the activities (or work-packages) that have to be performed in order to fulfill the project task. The WBS serves the same purpose as specialization and division of labor in mass production planning: to assign different tasks to different people by identifying controllable action sequences. Most methods for project planning and control are in fact different ways of finding the optimal sequence of activities and of allocating resources to them accordingly. Following the leading metaphor in the project management discipline, the general systems theory (cf. Cleland and King, 1983; Nathan, 1991, 33f; Roman, 1986), the project is seen as a whole, constructed from its parts and the interdependencies between them.

Apart from the planning models stemming from operations research during the 1960s, the field of project planning has been mainly preoccupied with concepts such as life-cycle planning, risk analysis and project valuation. The implementation of the planning models -- i.e. how to make them useful to project managers -- has also been a subject of interest. It has been suggested that they will be more user friendly if they are presented in the shape of computer software, a development that might cause the role of the project manager to change from practitioner to administrator (Thamhain, 1987).

Research on project planning today is nowadays a highly sophisticated discipline, and further efforts will therefore have a limited impact on high threshold costs. Furthermore, it can be questioned whether the results of this research are really put into practice; it appears that only the most basic models are actually used (Liberatore and Titus, 1983; Link and Zmud, 1986), and that they are not always used as intended (Sapolsky, 1972).

Recently a new line of research has evolved on the borderline between project planning and project control, dealing with the implementation of project plans; the plan is not evaluated for its logical elegance, but for its part in the success of the

project. This research has been concerned with different implementation environments -- a kind of contingency theory of project planning procedures (Nutt, 1983; Turner and Cochrane, 1993), with the evaluation of the planning work itself (Woodward, 1982), and with the way the importance of planning procedures changes over the life-cycle of the project (Pinto and Prescott, 1990).

3. Research Methodology

The managers of the early centuries have deep rooted qualitative traits thus the researcher aims to use the qualitative research method in this study. With that perspective in mind, the researcher also projects a unique correlation of the thoughts laid out by Thiruvalluvar with that of the contemporary management practices in project planning. Researcher applies Hermeneutics methodology in this research paper. This methodology is the study of the interpretation and understanding of the ancient literature and religious text (Muniapan., et al, 2008). This methodology is predominantly used in the modern philosophical study which aims to decipher the scripts and meanings of all systems. This territory has now expanded into social science, humanities and management research also. Thirukkural is also considered as the ancient script which will be interpreted using popular writer's annotations. These annotations when put together will give the comprehensive portrait of the Kural. Contrastingly the ethics management theories, principles, context, including definitions will be taken as latest records to compare with the ancient literature. The result of this comparison will be the contemporary thoughts of the Kural. This is called as comparative study method using Hermeneutics principles. This is claimed as a scientific method in qualitative research.

4. Thirukkural way of Project Planning

Need have project planning is understood in recent years by many organizations for being able to sustain and succeed in their respective field. This very concept Thiruvalluvar has thrown light some ancient years back. Thiruvalluvar has given considerable importance to Moral living. In acknowledgement of that the primary category (adhikaram) built by Thiruvalluvar is moral living (Aram). This particular nomenclature reveals Thiruvalluvar's prime objective. First category is named as domestic virtue (Aram) which includes 1-38 division out of 133 and 39-78 division subscribes to wealth category (Moral earning – Porul). The balance 25 devoted to moral love life category. This nomenclature is itself an imprint for Thiruvalluvar's thinking about ethics and ethical living. With this classification one can easily understand the motto of Thiruvalluvar.

Project Planning is discussed mainly in Chapter 47 of Thirukkural and all the couplets of this chapter can be headed under a title "Acting after due Consideration". These chapters represents composite of project planning skills..

குறள் 461

அழிவதூஉம் ஆவதூஉம் ஆகி வழிபயக்கும்
ஊதியமுஞ் சூழ்ந்து செயல்

Transliteration

Azhivadhooom Aavadhooom Aaki Vazhipayakkum
Oodhiyamum Soozhndhu Seyal

Couplet 461

Expenditure, return, and profit of the deed
In time to come; weigh these- than to the act proceed

Explanation

A successful manager is one who has a clear understanding of the risks as well as the profit involved in the endeavour of a project. Successful management in decision making lies in right judgement and evaluation.

A successful individual is one who, before initiating a project has evaluated the pros as well as the cons and the risks as well as the advantages.

குறள் 462

தெரிந்த இனத்தொடு தேர்ந்தெண்ணிச் செய்வார்க்
கரும்பொருள் யாதொன்று மில்

Transliteration

Anjaamai Eekai Arivookkam Innaankum
Enjaamai Vendhark Kiyalpu

Couplet 462

With chosen friends deliberate; next use the private thought;
Then act By those who thus proceed all works with ease are wrought

குறள் 466

செய்தக்க அல்ல செயக்கெடுஞ் செய்தக்க
செய்யாமை யானுங் கெடும்

Transliteration

Seydhakka Alla Seyak Ketum Seydhakka
Seyyaamai Yaanung Ketum

Couplet 466

'Tis ruin if man do an unbecfitting thing;
Fit things to leave undone will equal ruin bring

Explanation

Planning without execution is day dreaming; execution without planning is nightmare.

Failure in working or planning a project within the stipulated guidelines and limits of the lifecycle, as well the presumption of working on certain deliverables outside of the permitters of the objectives and plan will both result in ambiguity and undesired project outcomes.

குறள் 467

எண்ணித் துணிக கருமந் துணிந்தபின்
எண்ணுவ மென்ப திழுக்கு

Transliteration

Ennith Thunika Karumam Thunindhapin
Ennuvam Enpadhu Izhukku

Couplet 467

Think, and then dare the deed! Who cry,
'Deed dared, we'll think,' disgraced shall be

குறள் 470

எள்ளாத எண்ணிச் செயல்வேண்டுந் தம்மொடு
கொள்ளாத கொள்ளா துலகு

Transliteration

Ellaadha Ennich Cheyalventum Thammotu
Kollaadha Kollaadhu Ulaku

Couplet 470

Plan and perform no work that others may despise;
What misbeseems a king the world will not approve as wise

Explanation.

Compliance to policies is a mutual mandate between the employee and the employer. Every policy has an equal and opposite action for candidates who violate or breach the rule.

No leader will appreciate or commend a person who goes against the guiding principles; therefore, one must follow the guiding principles of the leader.

5. Conclusion

Thirukkural is one of the ancient Indian literature which had provided some insights to management. There are many management concepts from Thirukkural which are still applicable in today's organizational management. A deeper study of the Kural will open many new areas of management concepts, which is yet to be known and practiced in the modern management. The author hopes that more studies in the areas of organizational management such as strategic management, financial management and human resource management from Kural can be undertaken for future research.

References

Journal Article

- Andersen E. S. (2010). "The X model – a tool for describing and assessing individual projects",. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, , Vol. 3, No 3, pp.369 - 386.
- Aritua B., S. N. (2009). "Construction client multi-projects – A complex adaptive systems perspective",. *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol 27, pp. 72 - 79.
- Atkinson R., C. L. (2006). "Fundamental uncertainties in projects and the scope of project management",. *International Journal Project Management*, Vol 24, pp. 687–698.
- Ballantine, J. B. (1996). The 3-D model of information systems successes: the search for the dependent variable continues. *Information Resources Management Journal*, , 9(4), 5±14.
- Frishammar, J. (2003). "Information use in strategic decision making",. *Management Decision*, , Vol, 41, No 4.
- Hendry, J. (2000). "Strategic decision making, discourse, and strategy as social practice",. *Journal of Management Studies*, , Vol 37, No. 7, pp. 955-977.
- Jasimuddin, S. K. (2005). "The paradox of using tacit and explicit knowledge - Strategies to face dilemmas",. *Management Decision*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 102-112.
- Koskela, L. a. (2006). "Should project management be based on theories of economics or production?",. *Building Research and Information*, Vol. 34, No. 2, March/April, pp. 154-163.
- Lehmann V. (2010). "Connecting changes to projects using a historical perspective: Towards some new canvases for researchers",. *International Journal of Project Management*, , Vol 28, No 2, pp 328- 338.
- Pinto, J. a. (1988,). Critical success factors across the project lifecycle. *Project Management Journal*, , XIX, 67±75.
- Sauer, C. a. (2007). "What do we want from a theory of project management? response to Rodney Turner", Guest editorial,. *International Journal of Project Management*, , Vol.25,pp 1-2.
- Turner, J. (2006). "Towards a theory of project management: The nature of the project",. *International Journal of Project Management*, , Vol 24, p.1-3.
- Turner, J. (1996,). Editorial: International Project Management Association global quali@cation, certi@cation and accreditation. *International Journal of Project Management*, , 14(1), 1±6.
- Wateridge, J. (1998,). How can IS/IT projects be measured for success? *International Journal of project Management*, , 16(1), 59± 63.
- Wright, J. (1997,). Time and budget: the twin imperatives of a project sponsor. *International Journal of Project Management*, , 15(3), 181±186.

Reference taken from Website

<http://www.gokulnath.com/thirukural/thirukurals.aspx?chapter=1>