

# Building World-class Organisations through the AVEPRR Framework - Evidence from India's Greatest Warrior-kings

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## Abstract

Management scholarship has long been dominated by Western-centric leadership frameworks, leaving a vast reservoir of organisational wisdom embedded in non-Western civilizational history largely untapped. This paper introduces the AVEPRR Model - a six-pillar leadership framework comprising Authenticity (A), Values (V), Emotional Intelligence (E), Purpose (P), Resilience (R1), and Responsiveness (R2) and validates it historically, through the governance systems of nine iconic Indian warrior-kings: Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka the Great, Raja Raja Chola I, Rajendra Chola I, Prithviraj Chauhan, Rana Sanga, Krishna Devaraya, Maharana Pratap, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Employing a qualitative historical-comparative methodology drawn from Ashokan edicts, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Tamil Sangam literature, Chola copper-plate inscriptions, and peer-reviewed scholarship, the paper demonstrates how each AVEPRR pillar manifested in documented governance behaviour spanning two and a half millennia. The study maps these historical insights to contemporary management theory and practice, arguing that India's warrior-kings were, in essence, world-class organisational architects whose governance instincts and systems prefigure modern constructs in authentic leadership, values-based governance, emotional intelligence, purposeful enterprise, resilient institutions, and agile responsiveness. Shivaji Maharaj emerges as the most complete AVEPRR exemplar. The framework offers a culturally rooted, empirically grounded alternative to Western-centric leadership paradigms.

**Keywords:** Authentic Leadership, AVEPRR Model, Indian Leadership, Resilience, World-Class Organisations.

## 1. Introduction

The architecture of world-class organisations has been extensively examined through frameworks such as Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, and the Balanced Scorecard. These constructs, however, emerge almost exclusively from post-industrial Western contexts, overlooking an extraordinary reservoir of organisational wisdom encoded in India's ancient and medieval governance history. India's warrior-kings governed empires of remarkable complexity, managing diverse populations, vast geographies, sophisticated revenue systems, professional militaries, and trans-continental diplomatic networks for centuries preceding the emergence of modern management theory.

This paper proposes the AVEPRR Model as a six-dimensional framework for world-class organisational leadership. The six pillars - Authenticity (A), Values

(V), Emotional Intelligence (E), Purpose (P), Resilience (R1), and Responsiveness (R2) - are individually distinct yet mutually reinforcing. Each pillar is grounded in the documented governance record of nine iconic Indian rulers and mapped to contemporary management theory. This study extends the conceptual foundations of the A.V.E.P-RR leadership model proposed by Rayiramkandath (2025) by applying the framework across nine historical leaders, developing a comparative leadership analysis, and deriving contemporary organisational implications.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

This study pursues four objectives: (i) To define and conceptually ground the AVEPRR Model as an integrated organisational leadership framework; (ii) To analyse nine Indian warrior-kings through the six AVEPRR

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dimensions; (iii) To demonstrate, through structured comparative analysis, how each pillar manifested in historical governance and institution-building; and (iv) To translate historical insights into actionable principles for contemporary world-class organisational development.

## 1.2 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, multi-case, historical-comparative research design to examine leadership practices across nine influential Indian rulers through the lens of the AVEPRR framework. The AVEPRR model itself is grounded in Indian civilisational experience and seeks to derive leadership insights from indigenous governance traditions rather than merely applying contemporary leadership theories to historical figures.

Evidence was drawn from primary historical sources, including Ashokan rock and pillar edicts, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Tamil Sangam literature, Chola copper-plate inscriptions, and historical chronicles relating to the selected rulers. These sources were supplemented by peer-reviewed secondary scholarship in history, leadership, governance, and management studies.

The historical evidence was interpreted through the six dimensions of the AVEPRR framework Authenticity,

Values, Emotional Intelligence, Purpose, Resilience, and Responsiveness. Contemporary leadership literature, including Authentic Leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985), Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995), Organisational Resilience (ISO 22316, 2017; Taleb, 2012), Purpose-Driven Leadership (EY Beacon Institute & Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2016), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece *et al.*, 1997), was used not as the basis of the framework but as a comparative lens to demonstrate the continuing relevance of these indigenous leadership principles in modern organisations.

The qualitative scoring presented in Table 1 is ordinal and interpretive rather than statistical. Ratings were assigned on the basis of the consistency, strength, and historical significance of documented evidence, where \*\*\* denotes Exceptional manifestation, \*\* denotes Strong manifestation, and \* denotes Present manifestation of a given AVEPRR dimension.

## 2. The AVEPRR Model: Conceptual Framework

The AVEPRR Model is a six-dimensional framework for building and sustaining world-class organisations.

**Table 1.** Indian Warrior-Kings — AVEPRR dimension scores and defining outcomes

| Leader              | Era          | A   | V   | E   | P   | R <sub>1</sub> | R <sub>2</sub> | Defining outcome                                                                    |
|---------------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chandragupta Maurya | 340-298 BCE  | *** | *** | **  | *** | ***            | ***            | Founded the Maurya Empire; institutionalised statecraft <i>via</i> the Arthashastra |
| Ashoka the Great    | 304-232 BCE  | **  | *** | *** | *** | **             | ***            | World's first welfare state; Dhamma governance; pan-Asian diplomacy                 |
| Raja Raja Chola I   | 985-1014 CE  | *** | *** | **  | *** | ***            | ***            | Maritime supremacy; Brihadeeswarar; first Indian land survey                        |
| Rajendra Chola I    | 1014-1044 CE | *** | *** | **  | *** | ***            | ***            | Bay of Bengal Chola dominance; SE Asia trade; Gangaikonda Cholapuram                |
| Prithviraj Chauhan  | 1166-1192 CE | **  | **  | *** | *** | ***            | **             | Last Rajput overlord of Delhi; chivalric governance tradition                       |
| Rana Sanga          | 1482-1528 CE | *** | *** | **  | *** | ***            | ***            | Largest Rajput confederacy; supreme battlefield command                             |
| KrishnaDevaraya     | 1471-1529 CE | *** | *** | *** | *** | **             | ***            | Vijayanagara golden age; Ashtadiggajas; decentralised Nayaka governance             |
| Maharana Pratap     | 1540-1597 CE | *** | *** | **  | *** | ***            | ***            | 25-year guerrilla campaign; reclaimed Mewar; symbol of purposeful sovereignty       |
| Shivaji Maharaj     | 1630-1680 CE | *** | *** | *** | *** | ***            | ***            | Maratha Empire; first Indian navy; Ashtapradhan council, complete AVEPRR exemplar   |

(\*\*\* = Exceptional | \*\* = Strong | \* = Present — qualitative-ordinal based on documented historical evidence)

Source: Author's analysis based on primary historical records, epigraphic evidence, and peer-reviewed scholarship.

The framework is neither sequential nor hierarchical; all six dimensions must be simultaneously active for an organisation to achieve and sustain world-class status. Table 2 presents the complete framework with historical exemplars and modern organisational parallels.

In the Table 2, AVEPRR framework is informed by contemporary leadership and management scholarship, including Authentic Leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), stakeholder governance (Business Roundtable, 2019), Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995), purpose-driven organisations (EY Beacon Institute & Harvard Business

Review Analytic Services, 2016), organisational resilience (ISO 22316:2017; Taleb, 2012), and Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Historical exemplars are derived from primary and secondary historical sources discussed in the manuscript.

Authenticity denotes the congruence between a leader's stated principles and observable behaviour across all contexts. Avolio and Gardner (2005) define authentic leaders as self-aware, transparent, morally consistent, and balanced in information processing. Values constitute the non-negotiable ethical principles

**Table 2.** The AVEPRR framework - Pillars, definitions, historical exemplars and management parallels

| Code           | Pillar                 | Core Definition                                                                                     | Historical Exemplar                                                                                            | Management Parallel                                                          | Key Supporting Reference(s)                        |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| A              | Authenticity           | Congruence between stated values and observable behaviour across all contexts                       | Shivaji Maharaj – uniform governance code in victory and defeat; protection of enemies' sanctities             | Authentic Leadership; Psychological Safety; Trust-Based Cultures             | Avolio & Gardner (2005)                            |
| V              | Values                 | Non-negotiable ethical principles governing organisational decisions and stakeholder relationships  | Maharana Pratap – refused vassalage despite destitution; Krishnadevaraya – dharmic justice over political gain | ESG Governance; Corporate Purpose; Stakeholder Capitalism                    | Business Roundtable (2019)                         |
| E              | Emotional Intelligence | Capacity to perceive, regulate, and leverage emotion in oneself and others for effective leadership | Ashoka – empathic governance transformation post-Kalinga; Prithviraj Chauhan – chivalric EI in defeat          | Emotional Intelligence Model; Servant Leadership; Employee Experience Design | Goleman (1995)                                     |
| P              | Purpose                | Transcendent institutional cause that elevates the organisation beyond commercial interest          | Maharana Pratap – resistance for sovereignty; Shivaji Maharaj – Swarajya as a civilisational vision            | Purpose-Led Enterprise; Meaning at Work; Stakeholder Value Creation          | EY Beacon Institute & HBR Analytic Services (2016) |
| R <sub>1</sub> | Resilience             | Capacity to absorb adversity, maintain institutional coherence, and emerge strategically stronger   | Rana Sanga; Maharana Pratap; Shivaji Maharaj                                                                   | Organisational Resilience; Anti-Fragility; BCM                               | ISO 22316:2017; Taleb (2012)                       |
| R <sub>2</sub> | Responsiveness         | Speed and precision with which an organisation senses, decides, and acts on environmental change    | Raja Raja Chola I; Rajendra Chola I                                                                            | Agile Governance; Dynamic Capabilities; VUCA Leadership                      | Teece <i>et al.</i> (1997)                         |

Source: Author's conceptual construct, validated through historical analysis and management literature.

governing organisational decisions and stakeholder relationships - the moral load-bearing structure that holds the organisational architecture together under external pressure. Emotional Intelligence (EI), as defined by Goleman (1995), is the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and leverage emotions in oneself and others; it is the pillar most closely associated with human-centred governance. Purpose is the transcendent cause that elevates an organisation beyond commercial interest, the north star that sustains collective commitment when every other coordinate is shifting. Resilience, as defined in ISO 22316:2017, is the capacity to absorb adversity, maintain institutional coherence, and emerge strategically stronger - what Taleb (2012) terms anti-fragility. Responsiveness is the speed and precision with which an organization senses environmental change, decides at the appropriate authority level, and acts with coordination - the pillar most directly addressed by Dynamic Capabilities theory and Agile methodology.

### 3. Nine Warrior-Kings through the AVEPRR Lens

#### 3.1 Chandragupta Maurya (c. 340-298 BCE): Responsiveness and Resilience

Chandragupta's ascent from obscurity to the founder of India's first pan-subcontinental empire constitutes one of history's most extraordinary organisational transformations. The Arthashastra, attributed to his chief minister Kautilya, represents the earliest systematic work on organisational governance, economic management, intelligence systems, and military strategy in any civilisation, structurally analogous to modern corporate governance frameworks. Chandragupta's career-spanning pattern of strategic pivot- from guerrilla commander to imperial administrator to Jain ascetic- exemplifies Responsiveness of the highest order, while his recovery from early defeats to build an empire spanning modern Afghanistan to Bengal demonstrates organisational Resilience.

#### 3.2 Ashoka the Great (c. 304-232 BCE): Emotional Intelligence and Purpose

No leader in Indian or arguably world history demonstrates a more consequential application of Emotional Intelligence than Ashoka. His personal anguish

following the Kalinga War (261 BCE), documented in his rock edicts, produced one of history's most significant leadership transformations: the conversion of an imperial war machine into a welfare state governed by Dhamma (righteous compassion). Ashoka created Dhamma Mahamattas (welfare officers), built hospitals for humans and animals, mandated tree-lined roads with rest houses, and disseminated governance principles in local languages across his empire, the world's first systematic attempt to design governance around the emotional and material needs of subjects rather than the extractive interests of the ruler.

#### 3.3 The Chola Kings (985-1044 CE): Organisational Responsiveness at Scale

The Chola dynasty under Raja Raja I and Rajendra I represents the apex of responsive organisational leadership in ancient India. Raja Raja I executed the first comprehensive land survey in Indian history, created the temple as simultaneously a spiritual, economic, administrative, and cultural hub, and established the first organised Indian naval force. Rajendra I extended this maritime vision with one of the most logistically complex campaigns in pre-modern history: the 1025 CE trans-oceanic expedition that defeated the Srivijaya Empire in Sumatra, establishing Chola commercial and strategic dominance of Southeast Asian trade routes. The logistical complexity of assembling, provisioning, and commanding a trans-oceanic fleet exemplifies Dynamic Capabilities, the ability to sense opportunity, decide boldly, and execute at scale, at a calibre rarely matched in any era.

#### 3.4 Prithviraj Chauhan (1166-1192 CE), Rana Sanga (1482-1528 CE) and Krishna Devaraya (1471-1529 CE)

Prithviraj Chauhan illustrates how Values-anchored leadership simultaneously constitutes an organisation's greatest strength and its most significant strategic vulnerability. His victory at the First Battle of Tarain (1191 CE) and subsequent pardon of the defeated Muhammad Ghori, an act of dharmic chivalry, demonstrates EI and Values in governance while encoding a vital organisational lesson: Values must be paired with Responsiveness to be fully effective. Rana Sanga achieved what few leaders in any era accomplish- unifying fiercely

independent, competing sovereign entities into a single military confederacy. His personal resilience across eighty documented battle wounds became the living embodiment of the AVEPRR Resilience dimension, while his meritocratic battlefield promotion system - rewarding demonstrated competence regardless of clan origin- directly parallels modern talent meritocracies. Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara represents the Values-Authenticity synthesis: simultaneously a conqueror, jurist, diplomat, and poet, his decentralised Nayaka governance system is structurally identical to the modern Business Unit model, while his Ashtadiggajas literary council was a deliberate Values statement that a great civilisation measures itself by cultural and intellectual achievement.

### 3.5 Maharana Pratap (1540-1597 CE) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630-1680 CE)

Maharana Pratap's 25-year guerrilla campaign, conducted from the Aravalli forests after Haldighati (1576) against the most powerful empire of his era, is among the most extraordinary demonstrations of Purpose and Resilience in world political history. His alliance with the Bhil tribal communities across caste hierarchies represents stakeholder inclusion and EI. His personal oath to forgo palace comforts until Chittor's liberation was a Values covenant that converted political commitment into a moral contract. By his death in 1597, Pratap had reclaimed virtually all of Mewar through Purpose, Resilience, and Authenticity alone.

Shivaji Maharaj represents the fullest instantiation of all six AVEPRR dimensions. From a modest foundation of Mavala infantry and a network of strategically located hill forts, Shivaji constructed within his lifetime a resilient territorial state across the Deccan. His achievements included the establishment of one of the earliest organised indigenous naval forces in early modern India, the creation of the *Ashtapradhan* council with clearly defined administrative portfolios, the implementation of a revenue system designed to protect agrarian interests, the codification of military conduct safeguarding non-combatants, women, and places of worship, and the adoption of an inclusive governance approach that transcended religious and social divisions. From a transformational leadership perspective, Shivaji's leadership reflects the core dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individualized consideration as conceptualized by Bass (1985). The AVEPRR framework further extends this interpretation by demonstrating how Shivaji simultaneously integrated Authenticity, Values, Emotional Intelligence, Purpose, Resilience, and Responsiveness into a coherent system of governance. His *ganimi kava* guerrilla doctrine—characterized by agility, intelligence gathering, mobility, adaptability, and strategic surprise—bears notable similarities to contemporary concepts of agile leadership, dynamic capabilities, and asymmetric competitive strategy (Teece *et al.*, 1997).

## 4. Comparative Analysis: AVEPRR Scores and Organisational Impact

Table 1 presents the comparative AVEPRR dimensional analysis across all nine leaders. The scoring is qualitative-ordinal based on documented historical evidence.

Shivaji Maharaj is the only leader in the study to achieve exceptional (\*\*\*) ratings across all six AVEPRR dimensions, confirming his status as the most complete organisational leadership archetype in recorded Indian history. The Chola kings demonstrate that exceptional Responsiveness, when combined with strong Authenticity and Purpose, produces measurable organisational outcomes in a maritime empire of extraordinary scale and durability. Maharana Pratap's triple-exceptional rating in Purpose, Resilience, and Authenticity against a background of military disadvantage illustrates that these three pillars, when aligned, can generate organisational outcomes that outlast conventional power differentials.

## 5. From Ancient Courts to Modern Boardrooms: Applying AVEPRR

Table 3 synthesises the translation of each AVEPRR pillar from historical evidence to contemporary organisational application.

The six translations share a common structural logic: each AVEPRR pillar that was demonstrated in ancient Indian governance can be operationalized through identifiable practices in contemporary organisations. Authenticity drives trust - Edelman's (2023) finding that congruence between stated values and observable behaviour is the primary driver of organisational trust maps precisely



**Table 3.** AVEPRR — From historical evidence to organisational application

| AVEPRR pillar                    | Historical evidence                                                                       | Contemporary research support                                                                 | Organisational application                                                                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Authenticity (A)                 | Shivaji's uniform governance code, the same conduct in triumph and adversity              | Edelman Trust Barometer (2023): congruence as primary trust driver                            | Transparent communication; behavioural consistency; psychological safety culture             |
| Values (V)                       | Maharana Pratap's refusal of Mughal vassalage; Krishnadevaraya's judicial equity          | Business Roundtable (2019): stakeholder purpose above shareholder primacy                     | Ethics frameworks; ESG governance; values-embedded hiring and performance systems            |
| Emotional Intelligence (E)       | Ashoka's post-Kalinga welfare redesign; Prithviraj's chivalric EI in defeat               | Goleman (1995): Emotional intelligence is a critical determinant of leadership effectiveness. | Empathic leadership development; psychologically safe teams; trauma-informed HR practice     |
| Purpose (P)                      | Swarajya as civilisational vision; Pratap's 25-year covenant with Mewar sovereignty       | EY Beacon (2016): purpose-led firms outperform on transformation, talent, loyalty             | Articulated institutional purpose; role-to-mission alignment; long-term stakeholder value    |
| Resilience (R <sub>1</sub> )     | Rana Sanga's anti-fragile leadership; Pratap's guerrilla governance without fixed capital | ISO 22316 (2017); Taleb (2012): Anti-fragility, systems strengthened by disorder              | Business continuity planning; crisis leadership protocols; distributed organisational design |
| Responsiveness (R <sub>2</sub> ) | Chola trans-oceanic campaigns; Chandragupta's career-spanning strategic pivots            | Teece <i>et al.</i> (1997): Dynamic Capabilities - sense, seize, reconfigure                  | Agile governance; real-time analytics; distributed decision authority; DevOps culture        |

**Source:** Contemporary research support is drawn from established leadership, governance, resilience, and organisational capability literature, including Edelman (2023), Business Roundtable (2019), Goleman (1995), EY Beacon Institute and Harvard Business Review Analytic Services (2016), International Organization for Standardization (2017), Taleb (2012), and Teece *et al.* (1997).

onto Shivaji's governance consistency. Values underpin stakeholder relationships - the Business Roundtable's (2019) redefinition of corporate purpose away from shareholder primacy toward stakeholder accountability echoes what Maharana Pratap and Krishnadevaraya practiced intuitively. EI transforms authority into leadership - Goleman's (1995) finding that EI accounts for up to 90% of the performance differential between outstanding and average senior leaders is mirrored in Ashoka's welfare state design. Purpose sustains commitment - EY Beacon's (2016) research demonstrating that purpose-led companies outperform in transformation, talent retention, and customer loyalty reflects the same dynamic that sustained Pratap's 25-year campaign. Resilience and anti-fragility - ISO 22316 (2017) and Taleb (2012) identify the same five properties observable in Rana Sanga and Pratap's organisations: shared purpose, leadership coherence under stress, adaptive capacity, experiential learning, and resource diversity. Responsiveness through dynamic capabilities - Teece *et al.*'s (1997) framework of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring resources finds its historical archetype in the Chola kings' trans-oceanic organisational capability.

## 6. AVEPRR Integration: The Architecture of Organisational Sovereignty

The six AVEPRR dimensions are not sequential stages or independent variables; they are simultaneously active, mutually reinforcing pillars. A world-class organisation that maximises all six achieves what this paper terms Organisational Sovereignty: the capacity to define, defend, and continuously renew its strategic identity in a volatile, competitive environment. The integrated AVEPRR architecture produces five observable organisational properties documented across all nine leaders: (i) Distributed Intelligence - Shivaji's intelligence networks and Chandragupta's espionage apparatus parallel modern enterprise business intelligence; (ii) Meritocratic Talent Systems - Krishnadevaraya's Ashtadiggajas and Shivaji's Ashtapradhan were merit-selected high-performance councils; (iii) Federated Governance - the Nayaka and Ryotwari systems decentralized execution while centralizing values and strategy; (iv) Stakeholder Inclusivity - Ashoka's welfare state, Shivaji's multi-denominational

policy, and Pratap's Bhil alliances reflect stakeholder capitalism centuries before its naming; and (v) Ethical Governance Codes - Shivaji's military code, Prithviraj's chivalric conventions, and Ashoka's Dhamma edicts are ancient Corporate Governance frameworks enforcing behavioural accountability across the organisation.

Shivaji's Maratha state - constructed from minimal resources, sustained against vastly superior adversaries, and enduring as a political force for over a century after his death- is the clearest historical proof-of-concept for AVEPRR integration. Conversely, Rana Sanga's defeat at Khanwa (1527) illustrates the cost of dimensional asymmetry: exceptional Resilience and Values could not compensate for the absence of Responsiveness in adapting to gunpowder-equipped Mughal forces - a cautionary lesson for organisations that mistake endurance for agility, or Values strength for competitive advantage.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has introduced and elaborated the AVEPRR Model - Authenticity, Values, Emotional Intelligence, Purpose, Resilience, and Responsiveness, as an integrated framework for world-class organisational leadership, grounded in and validated by the documented governance experience of nine iconic Indian warrior-kings spanning two and a half millennia. The central finding is that world-class organisations, whether territorial empires, maritime trading states, or purposeful resistance movements, share six invariant leadership properties encoded in AVEPRR. These properties are not culturally parochial; they describe universal organisational performance dimensions illustrated with exceptional clarity in the Indian historical record.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj emerges as the most complete AVEPRR practitioner - the leader whose governance simultaneously maximised all six dimensions and produced the most institutionally durable results relative to starting resources. Chandragupta Maurya represents the Responsiveness and Resilience archetype; Ashoka, the transformative power of EI and Purpose combined; the Chola kings, systematic results-orientation through Responsiveness; Krishnadevaraya, the Values-Authenticity synthesis in cultural governance; Prithviraj Chauhan and Rana Sanga, the defining tests of Values and Resilience under civilizational pressure; and Maharana Pratap, the supreme demonstration that Purpose and Resilience, when authentic, can outlast the world's most powerful adversary.

For organisational leaders navigating today's VUCA environment, the AVEPRR framework offers not nostalgia but navigation: a map drawn from the most demanding leadership crucibles human history has produced, pointing toward the qualities that convert organisations from commercial entities into enduring institutions. As India's academic, business, and policy communities aspire toward global leadership, the wisdom encoded in these warrior-kings provides both civilizational inspiration and rigorous organisational instruction.

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