

Beyond Competence - How the AVEP-RR Leadership Model Reshapes Organisational Excellence

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Abstract

This qualitative paper investigates how the AVEP RR leadership model, centred on Authenticity, Values, Emotional Intelligence, and Purpose, yielding Responsiveness and Resilience, transforms organisational excellence in the frameworks of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible), and RUPT (Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, Tangled). On the strength of a literature review of adaptive, responsible, and compassionate leadership, and empirical studies of Indian organisations, the paper presents detailed case narratives of Tata Group's post-26/11 resilience, Aravind Eye Care's transformative healthcare model, and Mahindra and Mahindra's "Rise" philosophy. Findings demonstrate the vital role of purpose-led, emotionally intelligent leadership, deeply grounded in authenticity and values, for sustainable human capital development, workforce skilling, and organisational resilience. Comparative analysis, practical trait-outcome mapping, and expanded policy takeaways show how AVEP RR equips leaders and organisations to thrive in an unpredictable world, allowing India to advance its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. The conclusion offers recommendations for policy, education, and practice.

Keywords: AVEP RR Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Organisational Resilience, Purpose, Values-driven,

1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Rationale

India's ambition for Viksit Bharat 2047 is not merely an economic goal. It encapsulates a call to foster human capital, livelihood resilience, and responsible leadership for a 21st-century global society. Conventional leadership models, focused on technical competence, hierarchical authority, and transactional effectiveness, have repeatedly fallen short in the face of frequent, high-impact disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist attacks, technological transformation, and stakeholder capitalism have exposed the need for integrative, human-centric leadership that can nurture both people and institutions.

Business icons such as Ratan Tata, Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy ("Dr. V") of Aravind, and Anand Mahindra exemplify how authentic, values-driven, emotionally intelligent, and purpose-led leadership can

generate organisational excellence and societal impact in the world's most challenging contexts (Bhat, 2022; Mehta & Shenoy, 2011; Anand, 2016).

1.2 Theoretical Framework: AVEP-RR Model

The AVEP-RR model, Authenticity, Values, Emotional Intelligence, Purpose, Responsiveness and Resilience integrates cutting-edge research and the best of Indian leadership practice.

- *Authenticity* centres on truthfulness, self-awareness, and being grounded in reality, especially during a crisis.
- *Values* demand ethical consistency and fairness.
- *Emotional Intelligence* (EI) provides the glue: empathy, relationship management, and adaptive communication.
- *Purpose* represents a unifying mission that energises and legitimises action.

- *Responsiveness* is the capacity for swift, thoughtful, context-sensitive action.
- *Resilience* enables perseverance and learning in adversity.

Distinct from fragmented trait or transactional models, AVEP-RR emphasises an integrated constellation of qualities, spanning self-mastery to community stewardship (Rayiramkandath, 2025; Trivedi, 2021).

1.3 Leadership Demands in VUCA/BANI/RUPT

Today's turbulence is captured by frameworks of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), the psychological dimension of BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible), and the wicked tangles of RUPT (Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, Tangled). Empirical and theoretical work (George & Sims, 2007; Goleman, 2013) shows that only leaders sophisticated in values, empathy, agility, and service orientation can inspire sustained innovation and trust across generations.

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence, ethical purpose, and authenticity have become foundational for leadership research and practice in complex environments (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman, 2013; George & Sims, 2007). Leadership models focusing on adaptability (Hamel & Breen, 2007), compassion (Mehta & Shenoy, 2011), and inclusive vision (Bass & Avolio, 1994) closely map to AVEP-RR.

Indian corporate cases increasingly evidence that such integrative models surpass trait or position-based paradigms for fostering both rapid adaptation and psychological safety (Trivedi, 2021; Bhat, 2022). In particular, responsible leadership during shocks (terror attacks, pandemics) marks the difference between institutional collapse and resilient regeneration.

3. Methodology

This interpretivist, qualitative inquiry draws on published interviews, primary leadership statements, annual and CSR reports (2018-2024), published business books, and research articles. Thematic and comparative analysis is used to code manifestations of each AVEP-RR pillar within three Indian organisations: Tata Group (crisis/civic leadership), Aravind Eye

Care (healthcare/social innovation), and Mahindra (business transformation and purpose). Tables distil the practical translation of AVEP-RR into behaviours and measurable outcomes.

4. Case Narratives

4.1 Tata Group: AVEP-RR, Compassion, and the Spirit of Mumbai

The 2008 Mumbai terror attacks were a crucible test for the Tata Group and its revered Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. As the crisis unfolded, Authenticity was embodied by Ratan Tata's hands-on presence at the site, eschewing privileged access and instead prioritising every employee's and guest's safety, regardless of status. Tata personally visited all who were bereaved or affected; these actions were widely cited as fostering unprecedented trust, minimising attrition, and galvanising international media praise (Bhat, 2022; Economic Times, 2024).

Values were evident in the non-negotiable U-turn: not only were all affected, including contract workers and street vendors, compensated, but the Tata Group set up welfare trusts, mobilised trauma care, and transparently communicated every step of the recovery process (Bhat, 2022).

Emotional Intelligence shone in the post-crisis counselling provided to survivors, and the unbreakable "Tata family" spirit, which empowered staff to support guests at personal risk, was a hallmark of the group's deep relational capital.

Purpose came alive as Tata insisted the Taj would reopen within 21 days, turning the rebuilding into a restorative act for Mumbai itself. According to Ratan Tata: "It was about restoring hope, first for our staff and guests, then Mumbai, and finally India." This sense of civic stewardship catalysed public solidarity and economic recovery.

Responsiveness was operationalised at all levels: swift trauma care, logistical mobilisation, and bold public communication ensured that the organisation responded faster than state agencies or competitors.

Resilience is evidenced by the brand's subsequent growth; the Taj is not only a model of luxury but of crisis-tested corporate citizenship. Tata's broader international expansion, including the complex rescue of Jaguar Land Rover, echoed the same AVEP-RR principles.

Outcomes

- Harvard Business School and IIMs teach the Tata 26/11 case as a benchmark for crisis leadership.
- Tata's employer-of-choice ratings surged post-crisis; the Taj's post-crisis occupancy rebounded faster than peers.
- The Tata Trusts' role in social recovery sets a standard for responsible business in India and beyond (Bhat, 2022).

4.2 Aravind Eye Care: Infinite Vision, Unbounded Service

Founded in 1976 by Dr. V, Aravind Eye Care is a near-miraculous embodiment of values-based healthcare transformation. "Service to all, regardless of ability to pay" is not just a motto; it is operationalised at every touchpoint, from the boardroom to the field clinic (Mehta & Shenoy, 2011).

Authenticity traces back to Dr. V's own battle with arthritis, which prevented him from pursuing dreams of government service. Rather than retreat, he extended his personal experience of suffering and resourcefulness to build an institution defined by humility, transparency, and relentless focus on patient dignity.

Values are codified in daily rituals, physicians and nursing staff are trained to treat every patient with respect, creating an egalitarian ethos; cost-blindness is deliberately erased through cross-subsidisation (paying patients and donors support free care for the poor).

Emotional Intelligence is systematised, caregivers receive empathy training and support, boosting both patient satisfaction and staff loyalty. Aravind's HR model has been reverse-engineered by social enterprises worldwide.

Purpose is singularly clear: "to eliminate needless blindness," a mission deeply internalised through all ranks, driving both innovation and operational discipline (Mehta & Shenoy, 2011).

Responsiveness emerges in Aravind's high-throughput, assembly-line approach to surgery; daily process monitoring translates community need into immediate, pragmatic action, scaling to over 500,000 surgeries a year, with outreach in underserved villages across India.

Resilience is no less remarkable. Aravind survived regulatory, financial, and health-system crises by constantly reinventing itself, leveraging technology,

forming global alliances, and spreading its model to new geographies.

Outcomes

- Over 70% of patients receive free/reduced-fee care, yet the system is financially self-sustaining.
- Replication of Aravind's approach in Africa and Asia; features in *Infinite Vision* (Mehta & Shenoy, 2011) and Harvard case libraries validate its universal relevance.
- Patient satisfaction rates consistently above 97%; near eradication of avoidable blindness in several regions.

4.3 Mahindra & Mahindra: Rise for Good -Adaptability and Purpose in Action

Anand Mahindra's leadership of the Mahindra Group reflects one of Indian business's most successful transitions from family-run manufacture to a diversified global conglomerate. "Rise for Good" ingrains purpose, adaptability, and resilience into each venture (Anand, 2016).

Authenticity manifests in visible, empathetic, transparent engagement. Mahindra frequently communicates challenges and failures (as with failed international forays), turning them into group-wide lessons. This strengthens workforce trust, especially across India's diverse regions.

Values are reinforced through policies welcoming diversity, inclusion, and open dialogue. The Mahindra Code of Conduct is exactly monitored by senior leaders.

Emotional Intelligence is evident in talent development programs (Next Leaders program, leadership boot camps) and in Mahindra's fast, supportive crisis response, e.g., during COVID-19, plants were converted to ventilator manufacturing, and employee support hotlines were made available groupwide (Anand, 2016; Mahindra Group Sustainability Reports, 2021-23).

Purpose aligns all business verticals: electric vehicles for urban sustainability, "Mahindra Pride Schools" for rural skilling, and agri-tech innovations; all under the guiding aim of enabling progress for stakeholders.

Responsiveness: Mahindra's COVID-19 response, repurposing supply chains, launching virtual customer interfaces, and providing curated medical/food kits, demonstrated extraordinary speed and flexibility.

Resilience: Multiple downturns (2020, 2008) saw Mahindra emerge stronger, leveraging a culture of learning and cross-sectoral collaboration to outpace industry recovery rates.

Outcomes

- Rapid growth in electric vehicles; post-pandemic earnings rebounded ahead of sector peers.
- Group recognised as a top employer, especially for young and rural talent.
- Mahindra “Rise” is now a business-school case staple; praised for blending profit, planet, and purpose (Anand, 2016).

5. Synthesis: Thematic and Practical Implications

5.1 Skilling and Empowerment

Both Tata and Mahindra invest in skilling (Tata STRIVE, Mahindra Pride Schools), illustrating that authentic,

values-led upskilling is the core of Indian organisational resilience needed for Viksit Bharat 2047.

5.2 Psychological Safety and Engagement

AVEP-RR enables psychological safety, critical for open innovation and feedback, shown by employee narratives in all three cases.

5.3 Stakeholder Capitalism

AVEP-RR's deep embedding in the Indian context demonstrates uniquely Indian leadership that is globally respected, forging a model of capitalism that values not just profit, but inclusion, community, and well-being.

5.4 Policy Recommendations

- Integrate AVEP-RR Leadership in NEP, Skill India, and New Management Curriculum
- *CSR and ESG Policy:* Incentivise AVEP-RR practices and reporting, especially where purpose, empathy, and responsiveness drive impact.

Table 1. Organisations, AVEP-RR pillars, manifested and outcomes

Organization	AVEP-RR Pillars Manifested	Key Outcomes
Tata Group	Authenticity, Values, EI, Purpose, Responsiveness, Resilience	Crisis, trust, global reputation, employee loyalty, benchmark recovery, enduring civic and market legitimacy
Aravind Eye Care	Authenticity, Values, EI, Purpose, Responsiveness, Resilience	Scalable, affordable care, >97% satisfaction, global replication, sustainable social entrepreneurship
Mahindra Group	Authenticity, Values, EI, Purpose, Responsiveness, Resilience	Fast pivots, post-crisis growth, innovation leadership, youth/rural trust, global brand respect

Table 2. AVEP-RR Pillar -Trait, Case, Impact

AVEP-RR Pillar	Practical Trait/Behavior	Example (Case)	Measured Impact
Authenticity	On-ground, transparent leadership	Ratan Tata during 26/11; Anand Mahindra's engagement with COVID-19	Brand trust, retention, open knowledge sharing
Values	Inclusive, ethical compensation	Tata's vendor aid; Aravind's no-cost patients	Low attrition, external awards, public trust
Emotional Intelligence	Empathy in trauma, resilience in times of adverse calamities	Taj survivor care; Aravind empathy training	Recovery speed, patient/staff satisfaction
Purpose	Clear, unifying mission	Aravind's blindness eradication; Mahindra's Rise	Consistent growth, societal legitimacy, employee buy-in
Responsiveness	Fast, adaptive crisis action	Ventilator pivots, Taj reopening	Market resilience, sector benchmarks
Resilience	Learning from adversity, innovation	Tata's recovery/JLR purchase; Mahindra EVs	Overcoming crisis, new market leadership

- *Champion AVEP-RR Globally*: Offer this as a strategic leadership narrative from India to world forums (G20, BRICS, UN SDGs).

6. Conclusion

The AVEP-RR model is not just a checklist, but an operational philosophy that transcends cultures, sectors, and crises. As demonstrated by Tata Group, Aravind Eye Hospital, and Mahindra Group, organisations that truly live authenticity, values, emotional intelligence, and purpose while remaining responsive and resilient will shape not just their future, but that of their nation and the world.

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