

SWOT & SWOC: A Literature Review-based Evidence from Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The Mahabharata is a grand epic that poetically narrates a legendary war, deeply embedded in Indian mythology. While the sheer scale of this ancient war, believed to have taken place around 3000 B.C., continues to intrigue modern civilizations, it also serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of large-scale conflicts. The Kurukshetra War, involving nearly every major power of its time, left a lasting impact that resonates even today, offering invaluable lessons. This paper aims to analyze the strategic insights from the Mahabharata through SWOT and SWOC frameworks. The researchers explore these matrices by examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges faced by the two rival factions - the Pandavas and the Kauravas - while also drawing literary evidence to support these analyses.*

Objective: *The researchers have outlined the following key objectives, focusing on two broad research questions: (1) To examine SWOT through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War. (2) To evaluate SWOC through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *This study relies on secondary data and available evidence. Hypotheses were formulated for the selected variables and examined rigorously to validate or refute them with accuracy.*

Findings/Results: *The researchers extract key SWOT and SWOC insights from the epic Mahabharata, which is not only a legendary war narrative but also a rich source of strategic lessons. Throughout the conflict, the Kauravas often made hasty decisions during crises, failing to consider subtle yet crucial factors such as emotions, intuition, and spiritual discernment, demonstrating significant weaknesses and threats. In contrast, the Pandavas exemplified teamwork, strategic planning, and adaptability, showcasing strengths and opportunities essential for collective success. Ultimately, this study reflects on these factors to gain a deeper understanding of the Mahabharata's strategic dimensions through the SWOT and SWOC frameworks.*

Research Limitations/Implications: *Further the fact, the battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas was destined even before it began, as Shri Krishna revealed to Arjuna during his Visvarupa. The Kauravas' defeat can primarily be attributed to a single pivotal event, resulting from an act of deceptive misjudgment.*

Originality/New Knowledge/Interpretation/Value: *Thus, it can be concluded that applying the best practices from the Mahabharata War to the SWOT and SWOC Matrix in management can lead to a renewed perspective. This approach can enhance organizational and team performance, enabling them to function more effectively and achieve greater success in the future.*

Paper Type: *This study relies on secondary data and existing evidence.*

Keywords: Hindu Mythologies, Mahabharata, SWOT, SWOC, Kurukshetra War, Pandavas, Kauravas, Team Collaboration & Competition

1. INTRODUCTION :

The Kurukshetra War, also known as the Mahabharata War, is a pivotal conflict described in the Mahabharata epic. It stemmed from a dynastic struggle between two factions of cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, over the throne of Hastinapura. This war also served as the foundation for the Bhagavad Gita (Bhagavad Gita, Wikipedia [1]). The historical authenticity of the battle remains a topic of academic debate (Singh Upinder, 2006 [2]). Some scholars suggest that the Battle of the Ten Kings, mentioned in the Rigveda, may have contributed to the legend of the Kurukshetra War. However, the Mahabharata's depiction of the war is believed to have been extensively expanded and adapted over time, making its historicity uncertain (Murthy, S. S. N., 2016 [3]). Efforts to assign a historical date to the Kurukshetra War indicate a possible timeframe around 1000 BCE (Insoll Timothy [4]), although traditional beliefs associate it with the onset of the Kali Yuga, placing it at 3102 BCE (Penguin, U.K., 2015 [5]). The war took place in Kurukshetra (Ring et al., 1994 [6]) and, despite lasting only eighteen days, occupies a substantial portion of the Mahabharata. The narrative details individual battles, the deaths of numerous warriors on both sides, war strategies, diplomatic encounters, military formations, and the weapons used during the period. The chapters recounting the war are considered among the oldest sections of the Mahabharata.

Mahabharat War or Kurukshetra War was started on Mrugashirsha Shukla Ekadashi BCE 3138 (5153 years before A.D. 2015). God Shri Krishna narrated the Srimad Bhagavat Geeta on that day to Arjuna so it's also "Srimad Bhagavat Geeta" Jayanti. A total of 18 Aukshohini Warriors (38,57,142s Warriors) died within 18 days of completion. The number 18 appears recursively in the epic. For example, Mahabharat has 18 chapters, Bhagwad Geeta also has 18 chapters, the war lasted for 18 days, 18 armies fought in war (11 from Kauravas side and 7 from Pandavas side), etc. There could be one explanation for it. In the Bhagwad Geeta, Lord Krishna referred to the human body to be 'Nav-dwar-pur', i.e., a place with 9 doors. In the human body, the 9 doors are depicted in the form of two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, the genitals, and the anus. In a relationship, two human bodies are involved, making $9+9=18$ doors. As the Mahabharat talks about relationships, the number 18 appears several times throughout the epic. This could be a possible reason for the spell of the war (Adarsh Singh, 2015). [7].

Origin: The Mahabharata didn't just start when Duryodhan refused to give the Pandavas "even a land worth a needle's tip"; decades-old jealousy, hatred and family politics were masked behind it. Its beginning wasn't plain and simple; every verse of Mahabharat in itself describes what led to the war. So, the origin of the Mahabharata is actually quite more intriguing, a war woven by decades-long hatred and concealed behind so many reasons.

Allies Involved: The war encompassed nearly the entire region of ancient Bharat, with various kingdoms aligning on either side. The Pandavas secured alliances with kingdoms such as Dwarka, Kasi, Kekaya, Magadha, Cheri, Matsya, and the Yadus, with Krishna serving as their chief strategist. Meanwhile, the Kauravas received substantial support from Krishna's Narayani Sena, as well as from Pragjyotisha, Kalinga, Anga, Kekaya, Sindhudesa, Avanti, Gandhara, Balikas, Mahishmati, and Kambojas. The kingdom of Vidarbha, however, chose to remain neutral throughout the conflict. Kurukshetra, also known as Dharamkshetra, was selected as the battleground because it was believed that sins committed on this sacred land would be absolved due to its spiritual significance. Although the Mahabharata War was fought within a single nation, its scope involved numerous major kingdoms. Additionally, the war was not solely a military conflict but also involved significant diplomatic efforts to persuade different rulers to take sides (Li, D. et al., 2022 [8]).

Length and Scale of the War: Mahabharata – The war lasted for approximately 18 days as explained by Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra. The Pandavas had an army of 7 akshauhinis while the Kauravas retained an army of 11 akshauhinis. One akshauhini comprises of 21870 chariots, 21870 elephants, 65610 horses and 109350 infantries. And when the great war ended, there were only 8 survivors in Pandavas camps and 5 in Kauravas. While the great Indian war of Mahabharata was bound within a (small) moral conduct, there was no such constraint in world warfare.

Technology and Weaponries Involved: This war encompassed all sorts of divine and mystical

weapons which are way too far for us to envision today- Pashupatastra, Vasvi Shakti, Vajra, Nagpasha, Narayanastra, Brahmastra, Sudarshan chakra, Bhramashira, Devastra, Suryastra, Parvatastra, Trishul and the list will never end. The deceiving ways, paranormal entities, Chakravayahas, sages and their curses, perfect archers, and a man with the power of ten thousand elephants, vowed and disavowed this war had every strategy and super interesting weaponry involved. The divine, intriguing, mystical weapons of Mahabharata stand way beyond any weapon we possess today (Park, C. H. et al, (2013). [9]).

Consequences: The Mahabharata war was well-defined as the war between just and unjust, truth and deceit, and it would be fair to say that truth prevailed. Although the cost involved was quite huge. The number of casualties was unprecedented. In the end, Yudhishtira ascends to the throne, but all the Pandavas brothers and Draupadi later leave their kingdom for a pilgrimage. This war gave us lessons about the Bhagwat Gita and the epic Mahabharata. It is important to note that this epic was initially 8000 verses long one called Jaya, which was later modified to a 24000-verse-long Bharata and today as it stands a lakh verses-long Mahabharat. The lessons imparted through these epics are still revered in and around India and in Sanatan Dharma. So, the Mahabharata has some serious lessons for society today, but this war more or less affected the Indian subcontinent only. Shubhendu Abhishek Pathak, (2015). [10].

At the end of the Great War Mahabharata, only 13 people were survived (not 18). Shri Krishna, Satyiki, Yuddhishtira, Bheema, Arjuna, Shahadeva, Nakula, Yuyutsu, Bhishma, Kripacharya, Krutaverma, Ashwatthama & Vrishaketu.

Pandava Side Survivors: The great Vasudev Sri Krishna (age 89 years), Satyiki - Dharmaraja Yuddhishtira (age 91 years), Gadadhara - Bheema (age 90 years), Dhanurdhara - Arjuna (age 89 years), Intelligent - Shahadeva (age 88 years), Handsome - Nakula (age 88 years) & Yuyutsu (age 90 years). The Yuyutsu was the son of King Dhritarashtra by his other wife, but he fought on Pandava's side. Once Yuyutsu saved Bheema's life by informing Pandavas about Duryodhana's scheme to poison the water. Yuyutsu was born on the same day as Duryodhana. He was younger than Duryodhana but older than the rest of all 100 Kauravas brothers & and Dushila named sister.

Kauravas Side Survivors: They are the Pitamah-Bhishma (age 191 years), Kulguru-Kripacharya (age 150 years), Krutaverma, Ashwatthama and Vrishaketu (age 56 years, youngest son of Karna). Vrishaketu was the youngest son of Karna. Karna had ten sons with his wives Vrushali and Supriya. Karna's nine sons were participated in the Mahabharata War. Karna married Vrushali in BCE 3213 at the age of 32 years. Karna married Supriya when Duryodhana married Bhanumati, the princess of Kalinga. Karna's nine sons among ten participated in the Mahabharata War in BCE 3138. Karna went to Guru Parashurama to learn Archery at age 32 in BCE 3213. Karna learnt archery for 8 years and returned at age 40 in BCE 3205. Karna's eldest son Sudama was born when Karna was of age 41 years old (BCE 3204). Karna's youngest son Vrishaketu was born when Karna was of age 51 years old (BCE 3194).

Karna's Ten Sons: Sudama, Chitrasena, Satyasena, Shushena, Vrishashena, Shatrunjaya, Dvipata, Banasena, Prasen, Vrishaketu (only survived after Mahabharata War).

Killed by Arjuna:

(1) **During Draupadi Swayamvara (BCE 3195):** Sudama (age 09 years)

(2) **During the Great War Mahabharata (BCE 3139):** Vrishasena, Shatrunjaya and Dvipata

Killed by Nakula: Chitrasena, Satyasena and Shushena

Killed by Bheema: Banasena

Killed by Satyiki: Prasena

Vrishaketu's Death: Only Vrishaketu survived after the Mahabharata War. Vrishaketu was killed by Babruvahana (son of Arjuna) in Ashwamedha Yagnya (Horse Sacrifice).

Bhishma's Death: Pitamah Mahamahimna Bhishma died after completion of the "Dhanurmasa". Dhanurmasa is when the Sun leaves the zodiac sign "Dhana" sign and enters in zodiac sign "Makara". Pitamah Mahamahimna Bhishma left his mortal body at the end of this "Dhanurmasa". So, Pitamah Bhishma was alive for somewhere between a week and a month after the end of the Mahabharata war Quora, [11].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION) :

Based on the figures presented in the epic, the Mahabharata is considered one of the most devastating wars in human history. A total of 18 Akshouhinis participated in the battle, with only 13 individuals surviving. This implies that approximately 4 million people perished in the war. According to estimates from HYDE's (History Database of the Global Environment), the global population 5,000 years ago was around 45 million. If accurate, the Mahabharata War would have wiped out nearly 10% of the world's population in just 18 days - an astonishingly high toll. For comparison, World War I resulted in around 14 million deaths over four years, while World War II claimed nearly 60 million lives over six years, accounting for about 1% and 3% of the total global population at those times, respectively. According to the epic, the war involved a staggering 3,936,600 people, 393,660 elephants, 1,180,980 horses, and 393,660 chariots (each pulled by 4-8 horses). However, the presence of 400,000 domesticated elephants and over 3 million domesticated horses in the Indian subcontinent 5,000 years ago remains a highly debated topic. While it is likely that the numbers in the epic were exaggerated, the detailed descriptions of military structures and army formations in the text make it difficult to completely dismiss them. Regardless of the accuracy of these figures, the war's scale and destruction highlight its immense impact of warfare academy, [12].

An Akshouhini is a battalion comprising 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horses, and 109,350 infantrymen, as mentioned in the epic Mahabharata. The prescribed ratio is 1 chariot: 1 elephant: 3 cavalry: 5 infantry soldiers. Interestingly, in these large numerical values (65,610; 109,350, etc.), the sum of the digits equals 18. An Akshouhini is further divided into smaller military units called Anikinis, which are subsequently broken down into even smaller divisions. The detailed structure of an Akshouhini is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Systematic Construction of an Akshouhini		
S/L	Akshauhini	No/Foot
1	Elephant-(Gaja)	01
2	Chariot-(Ratha)	01
3	Horses-(Ashwa)	03
4	Soldiers-(Padhata) form a Patti	05 foot
5	3 Patti's forms a Sena-Mukha	03
6	3 Sena-Mukha makes a Gulma	03
7	3 Gulmas forms a Gana	03
8	3 Ganas makes a Vahini	03
9	3 Vahinis creates a Pruthana	03
10	3 Pruthanas makes a Chamu	03
11	3 Chamus forms a Anikini	03
12	10 Anikinis form an Akshauhini	10
Source: Academy, mahabharata-research.com		

Thus, an Akshauhini, by calculation, encompasses a total of 21,870 elephants, 21,870 chariots, 65,610 horses, and 109,350-foot soldiers.

Army composition on each side during the Mahabharata War: An immeasurable array of kingdoms participated in the Great Mahabharata War. Countless kings and princes were slain during the course of the war. A total of 18 Akshouhini Soldiers fought the war, 11 on the Kauravas side and 7 on the Pandavas side, and the list of Kingdoms stretches all the way from Kashmir in the North to Tamil Nadu in the south, Assam in the east to Hindukush in the west. Of course, not all the existing kingdoms in the Indian Sub-continent have participated, but the war has included most of the prominent kingdoms of that

period.

Army of Kauravas: The Kuru Army of 11 Akshouhinis was framed by the kingdom of Hastinapura in coalition with races like the Samsaptakas, Trigartas, the Narayana army, the Sindhu army, and Shalya of Madra. The Commanders in Chief were Bhishma (10 days), Drona (5 days), Karna (2 days), Shalya (1 day), Ashwatthama (After Duryodhana loses the mace match with Bhima).

Table 2: Army of Kauravas		
(King/Prince/Commander)	Kingdom	Size of the Army
The Bhagadatta	Pragiyotisha	1 Akshauhini
The Shalya	Madra	1 Akshauhini
The Nila	Mahishmati	1 Akshauhini
The Kritavarma	Yadavas (Krishna's Narayani sena)	1 Akshauhini
The Jayadratha	Saindhava	1 Akshauhini
The Sudakshina	Kambhoja	1 Akshauhini
The Vinda and Anuvinda	Avanti	1 Akshauhini
The Srutayudha	Kalinga	1 Akshauhini
The Shakuni	Gandhara	1 Akshauhini
The Susharma	Trigarta	1 Akshauhini
The Duryodhana	Kurus and Allies	1 Akshauhini
		11 Akshauhinis

Source:Academy, mahabharata-research.com

Army of Pandavas: The Pandavas Army was a confederation of 7 Akshouhinis, chiefly the Panchala and Matsya forces, the Rakshasa armies of Bhima's son, The Chedi and Magadha armies and Vrishni-Yadava heroes.

Table 3: Army of Pandavas		
King/Prince/Commander	Kingdom	Size of the Army
The Satyaki	Vrishini (Yadava clan)	1 Akshauhini
The Kuntibhoja	Bhoja (Yadava clan)	1 Akshauhini
The Dhrishaketu	Chedi	1 Akshauhini
The Sahadeva (s/o Jarasandha)	Magadha	1 Akshauhini
The Drupada	Panchala	1 Akshauhini
The Virata	Matsya	1 Akshauhini
	Panda, Chola, Rakshasas and other allies	1 Akshauhini
		7 Akshauhinis

Source:Academy, mahabharata-research.com

A voluminous list has been created to portray the influential and most powerful warriors in Mahabharata. These are the 10 most influential characters of the Mahabharata. Those 10 people's action or inaction has changed the narrative of the epic. All such lists are subjective. (K. Kumar, K. G. (2020). [13]). & (Deutsch, M. (1949). [14]). Table 4 clearly explains the Team Collaboration and Team Competition Characters from the Mahabharata War.

Table 4: Team Collaboration & Team Competition Characters from Mahabharata War	
Factors Considered	Outcome
Characters from Mahabharata War	From the findings and analysis from the obtained data, we can personify that both Pandavas and Kauravas have relations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Collaboration • Team Competition

1. Sri Krishna: The directing strategist of the Mahabharata War. He has planned and brilliantly executed each step of the war without getting involved himself in firing a single shot. He is the one who motivated Arjuna to fight when he gave up arms upon seeing the relatives and elders ranged on the opposite side in the warfare. Krishna is the giver of the immortal Gita. It says in Krishna's words that "Happens again and again - when adharma rises. In order to protect the just and to eliminate the evil". He did negotiate the peace on behalf of Pandavas but when the Kauravas declined, Krishna then strategized the war. He was neither on the right side nor the wrong side of morality. He wasn't beyond breaking rules in each case of the killing of Jarasandha, Drona, Bheeshma, Duryodhana, or Karna. The end justifies the means when adharma rises; he upholds dharma. He did protect Draupadi when all others had unsuccessfully in saving her dignity. This is one of the great facts of the epic (Kaipa, P. L. (2014). [15]).

2. Draupadi: who is also known as Krishna / Krsna or Panchali. She is the daughter of the king Drupada and the wife of the Pandavas. Draupadi is one most outstanding characters of the epic. Perhaps, she was the chief reason for the Mahabharata war to take place. Karna's failure to win her at the *suyamvara* might have disillusioned him forever. Draupadi's inhumane insult at the Kauravas court was a major key turning point of Mahabharata epic. Bhima's vengeance oath for this act, and all the elders refused to intervene, making them lose all moral standing forever.

3. Satyawati: The second wife of Shantanu. She vowed that her son must inherit the kingdom, in the place of Bhishma. This was a foremost spinning point in the Mahabharata. Otherwise, the dramatic personae of the epic would have been entirely different. She had intervened again when her son Vichitravirya died without children. She instigated Veda Vyasa to enter into a *niyoga* marriage with Vichitravirya's wives resulting in the birth of Dhritarashtra and Pandu by ensuring the continuity of the lineage and hence the epic had its place.

4. Kunthi: She is born Pritha, the aunt of Sri Krishna and the mother of the Pandavas. She wanted to test the boon she had due to which she gave birth to Karna before her marriage. So, she abandoned him. If Karna had not abandoned, the Mahabharata might have been a wholly different story. When the Arjuna won Draupadi's hand at her *swayamvara*, with no proper and complete information, Kunthi asked all her sons to share the Alms. If that had not occurred, Draupadi's inhumane insult at the Kauravasabha might not have happened.

5. Veda Vyasa: Veda Vyasa was Krishna's *Dwaipayana*, i.e., the codifier of the Vedas. The great Epic Mahabharata's author himself was a character in it. He was the first son of Satyawati. He entered into a *Niyoga* marriage with Amba and Ambika after the death of Vichitravirya. This safeguarded the continuity of the Kuru lineage, hence the Mahabharata itself. Veda Vyasa has empowered Sanjaya to testify the war to Dhritarashtra from afar. So, that ensures the immortal *Gitopadesha*.

6. Bhishma: Bhishma can also be referred to as the *Devavrata*, the son of Shantanu. He gave up the throne so that his father could marry Satyawati. That decision of Bhishma has changed the Kuru lineage. He was reluctant to intervene when Draupadi was being disrobed in open court. He refused to answer how she could be wagered by an already vanquished Yudhishtira. Thus, has to ensure that war becomes inevitable. Perhaps he had umpteen opportunities to stop the war. But why he didn't stop the war will always be debated. His procrastination has a huge say in how the Mahabharata develops.

7. Yudhishtira: He was indeed the moral lodestar of the epic. He was always getting down from his chariot, right at the commencement of war, so as to receive blessings of his Gurus and elders ranged on opposite side. Even Sri Krishna deferred to his moral authority and often consulted him. Yudhishtira's actions at various stages of the Mahabharata epic are critical to know how it evolves. Three of them stood out were, one was his decision to wager his brothers and wife in the game of dice. Two was his reply to Dronacharya while inquiring whether his son Ashwathama had indeed been killed. In that case, his response was not of the utmost moral standards. And it leads to the death of Dronacharya. And three, was his decision during *vanavas*, to liberate the Kauravas from Chitrasena.

8. Shakuni: He was the uncle to the Kauravas and adviser to Duryodhana. His conspiracies led to the war and to the slaughter of the Kurus. On an umpteenth occasion, he could have counselled his nephew differently. He represented Duryodhana to play dice with Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira's downfall and the ensuing humiliations ensured that the war happened.

9. Karna: How Sri Krishna related to Arjuna, the same way Karna (and Shakuni) were to Duryodhana. Unfortunately, his unchallenged loyalty had quite a negative effect. He ministered and even provoked Duryodhana in all his wrongs. The curses he received over and over made him to lose his proficiencies at a critical juncture of the war. Even his strengths - gallantry and large-heartedness - turned out to be hindrances. By keeping his promise to Kunti, he defeated but let go of every Pandava other than Arjuna. If the single of them were killed, it would have turned the tide of the war. Even with Arjuna, Karna, in his anger, misdirected the Nagashtra. This guaranteed that Sri Krishna could save Arjuna.

10. Dronacharya: Dronacharya, the revered guru of Pandavas and the Kauravas, remained silent alongside Bhishma and other elders of the court when Draupadi was disrobed. His strategic expertise led to the formation of the Chakravyuha, which ultimately resulted in Abhimanyu's tragic death, one of the most agonizing moments of the battle. His long-standing enmity with Drupada is a significant underlying theme in the Mahabharata, ultimately culminating in his demise by Dhrishtadyumna during the war.

11. Shalya: The maternal uncle of Nakula and Sahadeva. He was tricked by Duryodhana into joining the Kaurava side. He became a charioteer to Karna to demoralize him before his crucial battle with Arjuna. This made Karna direct his all-powerful Nagashtra at Arjuna's head instead of at his chest. And Sri Krishna was able to save Arjuna by lowering the chariot!

3. GAPS & AGENDA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH :

The great Epics Mahabharata and Ramayana are the two chief foundations from which the popular dogma of the Hindu religion has been acquired. As a student or youth, we were being instigated to read these epics during schooling and even at our homes by the elders. The main purpose was not just to get us familiarized with Indian Mythology but also to learn and inculcate the lessons encompassed in these epics, to seek help from those principles to become a better person. It doesn't matter if Ramayana and Mahabharata happened for real or are just meant to be a Mythical message for humans. Whichever way, the teachings and lessons they provide are second to none. It would be dreadful to even think of obliging the teachings of Mahabharata (Gaurav Dogra, (2016). [16]). & (Chakravarty, R. (2014). [17]).

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The researchers have outlined the following primary objectives, and the current study explores two broad research questions:

- (1) To examine SWOT through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War.
- (2) To evaluate SWOC through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War.

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY :

Based on the outlined objectives, hypotheses (Table 5) are formulated to validate or refute the statements.

Table 5: Hypothesis of the Study	
H01	Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War does not stimulate SWOT.
H02	Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War does not stimulate SWOC.

6. RESEARCH MODEL :

The research framework, drawn in Figures 1 & 2, explains a block diagram of Team Collaboration of Pandavas & Team Competition of Kauravas through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War & Table 6 explains the study variables. (I.V: Independent Variables & D.V: Dependent Variables).



Fig 1: Block Diagram of Team Collaboration of Pandavas

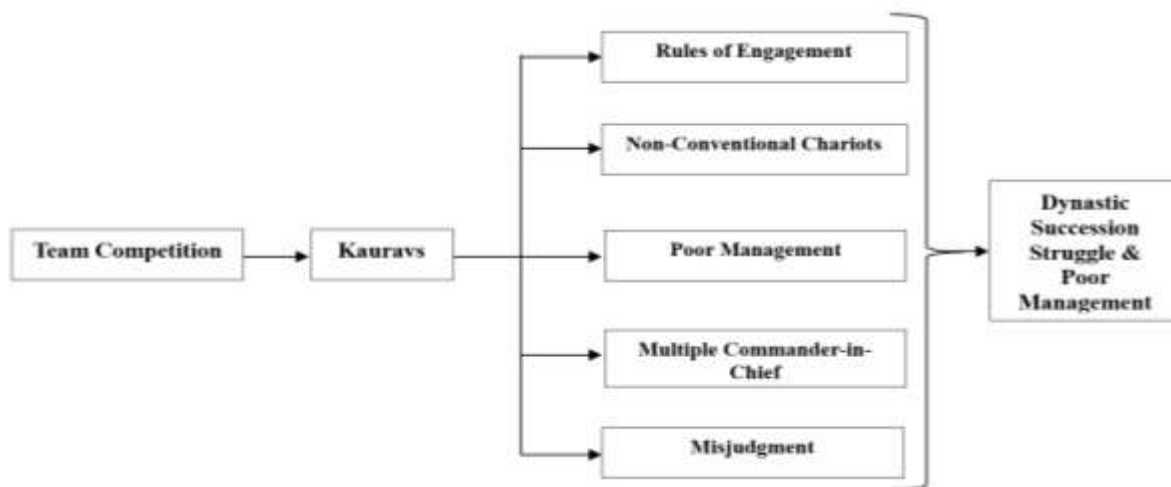


Fig 2: Block Diagram of Team Competition of Kauravas

Table 6: Study Variables	
Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT • SWOC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War

7. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS :

7.1 Epilogues to Prove SWOT & SWOC through Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War:

A. Dimensions of Strength:

1. The Rules of Engagement:

The Mahabharata war is renowned not only for its vast scale but also for the remarkable adherence to ethics and dignity observed during its initial phase. While the war descended into bloody madness from the thirteenth day onward, it still contrasted with Western world wars (and historical conflicts in India), as warriors maintained a strong commitment to principles, viewing victory as their ultimate goal. However, unlike other wars, the Mahabharata's soldiers adhered to a strict code of conduct until the very end, even when it put them at a disadvantage. Before the war commenced, the two supreme commanders convened to establish the "rules of ethical conduct," known as dharmayuddha, which governed the battle. These rules included:

- The battle must not begin before sunrise and should conclude precisely at sunset.
- A warrior may engage in combat with only one opponent at a time.
- Two warriors may engage in prolonged personal combat only if they are equipped with the same weapons and are mounted on the same type of transport, such as on foot, on horseback,

- on an elephant, or in a chariot.
- Before engaging in any duel or combat, warriors must be properly challenged and warned.
- A surrendered warrior must not be killed or injured.
- A warrior who surrenders becomes a prisoner of war and is entitled to protection.
- It is forbidden to kill or injure an unarmed warrior.
- A warrior must not harm an unconscious opponent.
- Non - combatants, including civilians and animals uninvolved in the war, must not be harmed.
- A warrior must not attack an opponent whose back is turned.
- Women must not be attacked in combat.
- Animals must not be harmed unless they pose a direct threat.
- Specific weaponry rules must be followed for each type of weapon. For example, in mace combat, striking below the waist is strictly prohibited.
- Warriors must not participate in any unjust warfare.

2. The Non-Conventional Chariots:

In the modern world (i.e., historic period), infantry and cavalry have been inevitable parts of any army. And in the Indian sub-continent the tradition of using elephants added to the list of basic constituents of an army. But in the modern world, usage of chariots for carrying archers was not a conventional way of fighting though Romans and Egyptians has battled many war using chariots. In all of the modern historic wars, archers were used for distant attacks mostly taking cover behind the fort walls or taking cover behind the infantry/cavalry to shower the arrows on their enemies who stayed unprotected within the range of their vicinity. But during the Mahabharata era, archers played a prominent role in wars, and they engaged in one-to-one combats. Archers were designated as being skilled enough to attack precise targets and lead from the front. Unlike the modern world warfare where the generals shall march ahead on their Horses, the leaders of ancient India commanded their army and lead the fight positioning themselves on a chariot. The usage of war chariots empowered chariot mounted archers to arrive fresh in the battle field. The Chariots were of huge help to carry large quantities of armaments (spears, arrows, javelins) enabling the archers to actually venture deep into the battle field and lead from the front. In add-on, the Chariots gave limited protection to the combatants and provided them a mounted platform for fighting/command & control. The Chariot of commanders and principal warriors were escorted by additional chariots that guarded all four sides, as well by the additional cavalry and infantry units that kept away attack with the support of nearby infantry and cavalry units. They, hence, are an inevitable part of the entire epic.

B. Dimensions of Weakness:

1. Poor Management:

The Mahabharata war teaches us a lot of management lessons. The poor management of Kauravas camp led to their loss. Let's go into detail about what all went wrong with Kauravas. The below Table 7 sums up why the Kauravas lost the war.

Table 7: Commander-in-Chief		
Day	Pandavas Camp	Kauravas Camp
Day 1	Dhrishtadyumna	Bhishma
Day 11	Dhrishtadyumna	Drona
Day 16	Dhrishtadyumna	Karna
Day 18	Dhrishtadyumna	Shalya
Source: T. M. Gautham, (2017). www.quora.com		

Strike the Biggest Coin: Pandavas clearly targeted the leader of the Kauravas camp. They did not target the other warriors. They wanted to take the chief down rather than killing others.

- So that the opposition gets demoralized (as the biggest guy is gone)
- They get confused and
- Get pressured to choose a new leader
- The new leader will be pressurized to deliver great results (Rajoura, C. & Rajoura, N. (2022).

[18]

Bhishma is the most powerful warrior and the strategist of Kauravas camp. Pandavas spent the first 10 days figuring out how to take Bhishma down. In the first ten days, Kauravas lost only 2 Akshouhini of army, and Pandavas were left with only 2 Akshouhunis. This worked well for Pandavas (Marker, A. M., & Staiano, A. E. (2015). [19]). See the graph below.

We can infer a lot from the graph below:

- The longer the Kauravas camp had the same leader, the lower their mortality rate.
- Every succeeding commander-in-chief delivered poorer results when compared to their predecessors.
- Bhishma was better than Drona.
- Drona was better than Karna.
- Karna was better than Shalya.

When the leaders change, the strategies change. Not every leader thinks the same way. Ballmer didn't think like Gates. Nadella doesn't think like Ballmer. The army gets tired and loses energy, seeing their leaders lose and die. Also note this: While Pandavas targeted the biggest fish, Kauravas was targeting the youngest warrior Abhimanyu (T. M. Gautham, (2017). [20]). & (Puurtinen, M. & Mappes, T. (2009). [21]).

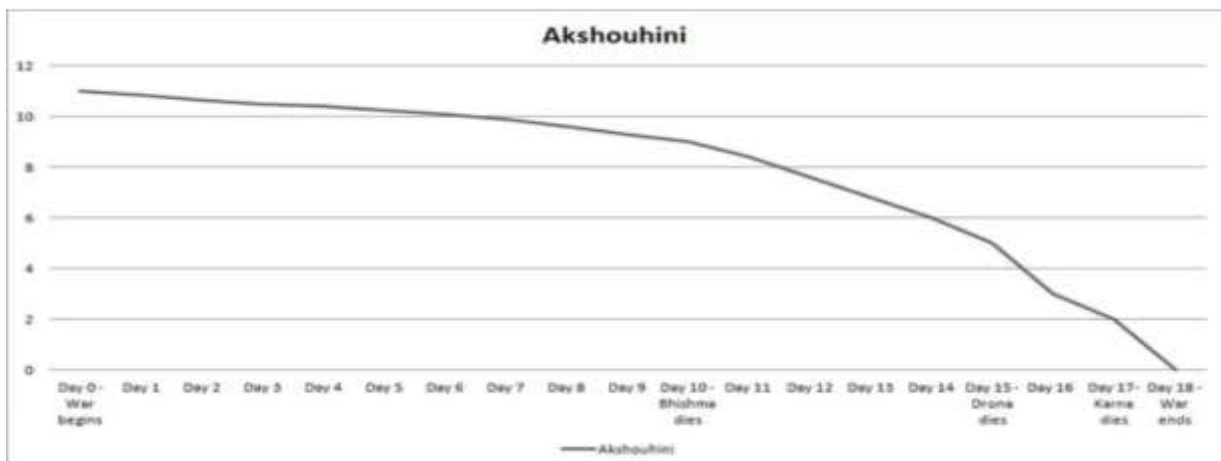


Fig 3: Block Diagram of Akshouhini: Source: T. M. Gautham, (2017). www.quora.com

C. Dimensions of Opportunities:

Below Table 8 sums up the Team Effectiveness Model to Stimulate Collaboration and Competition.

Table 8: Team Effectiveness Model Stimulates Collaboration & Competition	
Factors Considered	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Collaboration • Team Competition 	From the findings and analysis of the obtained data, we can personify that both Pandavas and Kauravas were having relations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hackman Model of Team Effectiveness

The conditions of a successful team effort were a compelling direction, an enabling team structure, a supportive organizational context, and expert team coaching. Dr. Hackman (2013). His model encompasses five factors as follows:

- (1) **Being a Real Team:** Everybody has a well-defined role with a set of tasks to complete.
- (2) **The Compelling Direction:** There will be a clear direction or specific end goal to work towards.
- (3) **The Enabling Structure:** Workflows and processes encourage the team to achieve their goals.

- (4) **The Supportive Context:** Tools, resources, and training aid the team in reaching their goal.
 (5) **Expert Coaching:** A coach or mentor accessibility when looked for would help the teams to perform more effectively.

Thus, the Hackman model is of utmost help to managers who desire to know how to structure their team in the best possible way and provide them with the tools they need to eventually be self-sustaining. Thus, from the analysis, we can interpret that by having a compelling focus that everyone works towards, which means setting goals that are clear, challenging, and of ample consequence to motivate team members to strive jointly & this has been witnessed by Pandavas in the Mahabharata War. The elements that required by the Pandavas to ensure that the team is a real team are: the members had a distributed task, the team boundaries were clearly stated, who is inside or outside of the group, and the group membership was stable. This was not done and reflected in the Kauravas team (Beersma, B. et al, (2003). [22]).

D. Dimensions of Threat:

1. Commander-in-Chief doesn't get Full Freedom:

Just like a few Governments, Duryodhan never let any of his commanders-in-chief be completely independent. He influenced all his chiefs. So, they couldn't deliver the best. Even Duryodhan accuses Bhishma of not being sincere in the war at the end of the 8th day. In Pandavas' case, although Drishtadyumna was the chief, he was only a figurehead. Krishna took care of the strategies completely. Neither Dhristadhyumna nor Yudhishtra tried to influence Krishna. They took Krishna's words as final.

2. Duryodhan Misjudged Pandavas:

Duryodhan totally miscalculated the power of Pandavas. Check Duryodhan's words in the First Chapter of Gita at the very beginning of the war. *Duryodhan says:* The power of our army is infinite, and we are safely marshalled by **Grandsire Bheeshma**, while the power of the Pandava army, **carefully marshalled by Bheem**, is limited (Chapter 1, Verse 10 – Bhagavad Gita, [23]). In the first part of the above sentence, Duryodhan says that the Kaurava army was protected by Bhishma. Yes, that was true, because Bhishma was the proclaimed commander-in-chief, and also, he was the most destructive warrior in their camp. So, this makes sense. But look at the second half. It reads the Pandava army was protected by Bheema. It would have made sense if Duryodhan had said that the Pandava army was protected by Dhristadhyumna or Krishna. Since Dhristadhyumna was the Commander-in-chief Krishna was the strategist and he's the Paramathma himself. But Duryodhan, who was obsessed with his Arch-Rival Bheema, mentions that Bheema was protecting the camp. How misjudged that was. How could Duryodhan forget Krishna was the guy to note. The force of the strife demands, the force he owns, the force of foes, and the force of friends; should be weighed to the war he goes - (Thirukkural [24]). Another proof of the Kauravas army's foolishness is that Jayadrath wasted his 'one-day invincibility power' just to kill the youngest Abhimanyu. These are some practical reasons why Kauravas were defeated. Pandavas also had flaws from their side, but cumulatively, Pandavas' side acted more proactively (Domberg, A. et al, (2021). [25]).

E. Dimensions of Challenges:

Table 9: Team Collaboration from Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War	
Factors Considered	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Collaboration 	The findings and analysis from the obtained data, we can personify that Pandavas have relations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynastic Succession Planning Good Management

Table 10: Team Competition from Kurukshetra (Mahabharata) War	
Factors Considered	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Competition 	The findings and analysis from the obtained data, we can personify that Kauravas have relations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynastic Succession Struggle Poor Management

8. CONCLUSION :

This study aims to trace and explore the aspects of SWOT & SWOC (team collaboration and team competition) as depicted in the Mahabharata War, analysing the reasons behind the Kauravas' defeat and evaluating the most effective team model for collaboration and competition (Thaker, K., 2011) [26]. The research, based on secondary evidence, establishes a significant relationship between SWOT & SWOC (team collaboration and competition) as characters seen in the Mahabharata War (Pandavas vs. Kauravas). Despite possessing highly skilled warriors and a numerically superior army, the Kauravas lost the war due to several factors (Vugt, M. V. et al., 2007) [27]. One of the primary reasons was their lack of unity. Internal divisions within their ranks weakened their strategic cohesion. Additionally, the Kauravas fought for an unjust and immoral cause, whereas the Pandavas stood for righteousness, which further influenced the war's outcome. The Pandavas also had the advantage of powerful allies, notably Lord Krishna, who was not only a formidable warrior but also a wise strategist and counsellor, which provided them with a significant edge in battle (Qin, Z. et al., 1995) [28]. Thus, the Kauravas' defeat resulted from a combination of these factors. Researchers have identified the Hackman model as the most beneficial framework for managers seeking to optimize team structure and provide their teams with the necessary tools to evolve into a self-sustaining model of team effectiveness for collaboration and competition [29-30]. Thus, it can be concluded that applying the best practices from the Mahabharata War to the SWOT and SWOC Matrix in management can lead to a renewed perspective. This approach can enhance organizational and team performance, enabling them to function more effectively and achieve greater success in the future. The researchers extract key SWOT and SWOC insights from the epic Mahabharata, which is not only a legendary war narrative but also a rich source of strategic lessons [31]. Throughout the conflict, the Kauravas often made hasty decisions during crises, failing to consider subtle yet crucial factors such as emotions, intuition, and spiritual discernment - demonstrating significant weaknesses and threats. In contrast, the Pandavas exemplified teamwork, strategic planning, and adaptability, showcasing strengths and opportunities essential for collective success. Ultimately, this study reflects on these factors to gain a deeper understanding of the Mahabharata's strategic dimensions through the SWOT and SWOC frameworks [32].

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