How fairness, trust give leaders honour

Wednesday, April 11, 2018 19:23

Good leaders inspire trust among the people they lead. FOTOSEARCH PHOTO | NMG

In today’s world, different whale species hold the record for the largest brains. Even in the ancient development of modern humans, other now extinct competing human species, such as Neanderthal, contained comparably sized brains to ours now.

We show remarkable similarities with other primates, such as chimpanzees, in how we choose leaders based on their mouth width, physical height, and body posture as well as how we manipulate interpersonal relationships to climb up in social standing.

Richard Wrangham out of Harvard University delineates that other primates are able to notice tiny differences in moods, advantages, or power dominance amongst others in one’s group and
utilise these cues to improve social mobility through coalitions and attacking or charming the friends of enemies.

While our brains nowadays do not win size awards, the way in which they are wired sets us apart from all other species.

The organisation of Homo sapien behaviour occurs with the individual nerve cells and their connections. We hold 100 billion nerve cells and over 100 trillion connections between these cells with unimaginable combinations.

What sets human mental ability apart is the more recent area of the brain: the prefrontal cortex. Here we think complicated rational thoughts of logic, reason, mathematics, planning, and moderate our emotional impulses coming from the ancient parts of our mind.

Our modern human brain’s wiring enables us to live complex social existences even more than other social species with elephants, gorillas, and dolphins as examples.

Uniquely, modern humans can exert social influence without the direct use or threat of physical force.

Andrew Whiten’s, at the University of St. Andrews, research shows that the human mind can make inferences about others’ thoughts, a sort of mind reading and prediction of other people, and notice deception by the age of five that no other primate can do.

So, we stand as smarter than any other species currently on the planet by five years old. Even compared to now extinct human varieties, modern people uniquely carry the ability to innovate and build on the creativity of past generations. No time in history has seen such rapid change.

Further, the human skill of building non-violent socially intricate communities enabled us to adapt and conquer every part of the world.

When people come together, innovate, and create together, truly phenomenal results occur and it changes societies and the wider world. Inasmuch, governments and donor agencies seek to measure the level of community members’ involvement in those around them.

A key cause for community involvement is the level at which community members feel empowered. Empowerment can be broken down into three constructs: psychological, social, and political.

New research from the United States International University of Africa in collaboration with Durham University in the UK, Global Communities in Kenya and in Washington, D.C., and USAID looks at ways to strengthen communities through co-operative organisations.

A key finding of the study uncovers that informational fairness in communications shared with members of co-operatives and the interpersonal fairness displayed by co-operative leaders
towards members relates positively with their levels of psychological and social empowerment in their communities.

Humans care deeply about fairness and strive to make their organisations and surrounding society fairer and more just.

Inasmuch, when a key social and economic entity in their lives, their agricultural co-operative, disseminates information fairly and they are treated fairly by their leaders, then they also feel more psychologically empowered, likely through self-esteem and self-efficacy, and more socially empowered to make more meaningful networks within their community.

READ: Treat staff like your customers

However, perceptions on fairness or the lack of fairness within co-operatives surprisingly did not make members feel more directly politically empowered.

Citizens who are members of co-operatives feel no more empowerment for political action within their communities if their organisation is fair or not fair.

An increase in political community empowerment only occurs in the study when members also trust their co-operative and its leaders.

Concepts of justice and fairness as well as the enabling power of trust facilitates even the most unique aspects of modern human life: stronger communities.

Unlike lesser species, human leaders should not revel in the trappings of their position of influence.

Such mentalities tend to cause leaders to display more power and decrease their regard for others within society. Instead, leaders can rely on modern logic and reason.

When leaders act fairly and justly and foster trust within organisations, whole communities can improve and benefit from increased empowerment that truly enriches our distinctively human experience.