

## Management Leadership and Bhagwat Gita

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*Management Leadership is concerned to initiate innovation and to administer risk in Business. But management leadership is lacking the proper pattern of leadership. Basically, actions dictate outcome while in present scenario outcome is dictating actions. The management leadership is also lacking an effective understanding of emotions and vision. Understanding of other's emotions and vision is highly necessary to achieve success. If it is not done, a contradiction between matter and mind will arise. Indian organizations have well followed and adopt the theories and practices of Western Management. But the results as was expected while adopting western management theories and practices cannot be assured. The reason of such failure is not from the side of organisational framework*

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*and not in the application of western management theories and practices. It is to note here that India never tried to evolve its own culture specific management leadership as Japan did. It primarily based upon American thoughts. India is rich in culture, heritage, ethics and values. These distinct culture, heritage, ethics and values create basic philosophy of Indian industrial environment. Therefore, Indian organizations failed to establish that height of success as was thought upon earlier. Here, one should not forget the "Song of the Lord Krishna" - Bhagwat Gita. It is the pure universally applicable essence of Management leadership without violating values and ethics. Thus, this paper gives a brief interactive enumeration and connection between American Management Leadership Model and Indian value-based Bhagwat Gita based Management Leadership Model.*

**[Keywords :** Bhagwat Gita, Krishna, Values, Ethics, Management Leadership, Culture, American Management Leadership Model]

## **1. Introduction**

Management leadership is concerned exactly to initiate innovation and to administer risk in business. But management leadership is get lost in its actions and outcomes. The actions should dictate outcomes, now outcomes are dictating the actions. It seems that management leadership is deviate or in dilemma. There are polar & that are not in a good correlation such as man vs. machine, human emotion vs. technology, social responsibility vs. profit maximization, personal goals vs. organizational goals and social-well-being vs. diversification of organization. This may be elaborated as a divide between matter and mind.

Organization is concerned in the achievement of its various targets like performance, optimization, STP, planning, innovation, management of change, zero defect control, MIS, organization behaviour and other work-related issues. But the employee has its own distinct targets to achieve such as comfort, transparency, discipline, autonomy, delegation, decentralization, morale boosting, training and development, conflict management, grievances and welfare management, social upliftment, children education and family medical aid.

Mary Parker Follett (Clegg, 2004) says that "Management is the art of getting things done through and with other people". Peter D. Anthony (Anthony, 1986) observes that "Management is concerned for the wide ... direction of affairs at board level to specific, narrow and specialized responsibility (in the smallest sub unit) where action through other people takes place".

If the analysis of the pioneer definition of management laid down by Mary Parker Follett is made, the main stress is on the words 'through' and 'with'. Here, the management will get the things done 'through' other people and 'with' other people. There are two parties in the definition-one, the management and two, other people. The object is "getting the things done". Again, stress comes upon two less discussed and explained items i.e., 'through' and 'with'. Here, 'through' means motivation and strategy. And, 'with' means Coordination and cooperation.

The main crux of management leadership lies in these two words only. Motivation, strategy, coordination and cooperation are such thoughts of management leadership that need high level of understanding of emotions and vision. No Leader without understanding of emotions and vision can handle the management of change and equilibrium between matter and mind. These are the only traits that help in the effective administration of motivation, strategy, coordination and cooperation.

Bhagwat Gita tells the righteous theory to develop unfurled understanding of emotions and vision to achieve goals in a true and transparent manner. Without the righteous understanding of 'doing' an 'doing not'. No one will "get the things done through and with other people".

## **2. Reason to adopt the Bhagwad Gita Ideology**

The management leadership model advocated and exercised in India is an American model. With the numerous invasions in the times left apart, the Indian education and models of learning and knowing became weak and shattered. Unlikely, Japan has never bore the external effects to its education system. Japan has its own culture specific management leadership model. But India never tried to think over this issue. India is rich enough in its culture but it always tried to be western. The performance level of any organizational efforts is standardized ever in terms of Western management leadership styles. Indian organizations touched the strategic pinnacle of theory and practice of management as enumerated by Taylor and Fayol.

But Indian organizations become a victim of labour unrest, closures, lockdowns and political interferences even after applying fine strategic planning and decision making of Western Management theories.

The problem exists neither in the organizational framework nor in the application of Western management theories and practices. The problem broadly lies in the mismatch of nature of organizations that are established on Western management patterns and Indian ethics. Manager has to deal with the material environment and humans that are cultivated in the Indian philosophy, sociology, culture, heritage, ethics and values.

### **3. Spiritual Cognitive Paradigm of Management Leadership**

It is well trusted and established fact that the motivation for the righteous doing is perfectly exercised by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The Indian living standards have its own self developing patterns of ethos and values. These values and ethos guide all human beings in all walks of life (Agarwal, 2010). These ethics and values are present due to spiritual cognitive paradigm initiated by Bhagwat Gita itself and by many other Indian spiritual literatures.

Bhagwad Gita has always established such ideals that have universal applications from the ages. The philosophical and spiritual theories that Bhagwat Gita has imbibed in the society is unique and everlasting. And, another important factor, that is worth considering while adopting Bhagwat Gita's songs, it can be understood even by listening to it. No American, German or Japanese management leadership theory and practice can match the ideal theories established by Bhagwad Gita, thousands of years before Christ. Be it an employee, a shopkeeper, a social worker, a service provider or a house keeper, everyone and each one can practice the principles of Bhagwat Gita that are in the form of 'shlokas'.

### **4. Bhagwad Gita's Model of Management Leadership**

Above discussion leads to a clear understanding towards the Bhagwad Gita model of management leadership. No other management leadership model can match this model.

1. The leader is Sthita Prajna (individual), established in Sattav Guna (pious traits), self- controlled and an unattached Karam Yogin (one who performs action without attachment to the fruits of action). In inter-personal relationships, a leader follows giving model, practicing leadership through renunciation rather than appropriation.

2. A leader's decisions are based on values rather than on other considerations. Nishkama Karma is spontaneous to him, in the sense of performance rather than result orientation. A manager enjoys Mentor-protégé relationship with his employees/subordinates. He acts as an interpreter, teacher, counsellor, integrator and exemplar to them. This is a paternalistic model of leadership. He enjoys managerial effectiveness through Nishkama Karma. He is a good team builder through personal virtues, human qualities, moral and spiritual values.
3. Business leaders' philosophy is based on Atman-Brahman (soul-god) nexus, Varnashram (social order based on one's duty in society) system, purusharthas, Rinas, and Rebirth. A business leader performs Nishkama Karma for Lok Sangraha, as different from Karma Vada (action with personal motives).
4. Self is the criteria of decision making. The self is Supreme Existence, Supreme Intelligence and Supreme Happiness. A manager develops better decision making through spiritual sanskaras (basic traits of an individual), Yogas, De-Egoisation and Depersonification and enjoys perfect mental health. Work is a sacrament; fulfilment of Swadharam is the ultimate duty. As against demoniacal traits, the leader shows divine traits. He follows law of sacrifice and service, enjoys bliss with Nishkama Karma as centre motive. He practices effective inspirational communication through Swadharma.
5. A manager improves quality of work life by practicing Lok Sangraha as Business Policy.

In employer-employee relationship a manager pursues spiritual direction, coordination and control. Artha (wealth) and Karma (action) are based on Dharma (truth or what is right) with the Moksha (liberation from circle of life and death) as the Summum bonum, in personal, corporate and social life of a manager.

## **5. Outlook for Future**

It is clear from the ongoing thoughts that any education must be culture specific. The same rule is followed in the management leadership model. The culture specific management leadership model influences the behaviour of subordinates and build a strong hierarchy in the organization. Culture specific management leadership more clearly define the identity of individuals and the patterns of their economic, social, political and psychological activities. Such

individuals ruled under culture specific management leadership model can better understand the vision and mission of organization, can better integrate them with individual goals. This is the main quality of Bhagwat Gita. It gives an individual the power of 'to rule' and 'to be ruled'. It gives the basic thought where ruler and follower are in the same cart. They both are in the work-arena simultaneously and together. This is the work centric model of 'action' and 'outcome'. This is neither governing and nor exploiting. American Management model is based on Managerialism-Managerialism gave managers the right to hire, fire, give orders, control and evaluate the performance of others in the interest of efficiency, productivity, profit or providing a service for a common good (Drucker, 1973). German model is based on co-determination is a system of industrial management in which workers share responsibility for the operation of a company, as through elected representation on a corporate supervisory board (Collins Online Dictionary, n.d.). Japanese model is based on paternalism-paternalism leadership is a managerial approach that involves a dominant authority figure who acts as a patriarch or matriarch and treats employees and partners as though they are members of a large, extended family. In exchange, the leader expects loyalty and trust from employees, as well as obedience. Sometimes it is gender-neutral rather than patriarch or matriarch.

The Indian model of management may be based on Nishkama Karma, the central teaching of Bhagawad Gita. While the American model is based on ego-centred consciousness of individualism and Japanese system is based on group consciousness. Indian model may be based on Atman-Brahman nexus. While ego is dominant in Western model, in Japanese model it disappears in the group consciousness. The proposed Indian model, De-egoisation and De-personification leads to the realization of the higher self (Atman) which is identical with universal self (Brahman). While American system is governed by laws and rules, the Japanese behaviour is characterized by role playing and tolerance, Indian model will be governed by Dharma, Moksha, Rinas, Lok Sangraha and Nishkama Karma. Cooperation, Coordination and control will be motivated by the objective of consolidation of corporation within itself, with other corporations and with the society at large. Understood in this sense, Loka Sangraha will be acceptable to Indian corporate personnel as precedence of duty over rights, sacrificing the individual self for the family, community and society is an inherent part of Indian ethics. While American view point is binocular, Indian view point, like that

of her Asian brother Japan, is multi-cultural which means that different people has different legitimate views. In Japanese culture, the notion of objectivity dose not exists. Objective only means 'the guest point of view' which is neither superior nor inferior but different from subjective, the host's point of view. This attitude may be helpful in understanding the Gita model, most of which is subjective from the American objective view point.

Japanese concept of 'On' is akin to Indian concept of 'Rina' (the debt). 'On' is received from parents, superiors and society and Nature in general. Repayment of the on, is sense of indebtedness, which forms the basis of moral action as in the case of Gita's concept of Rina's (the debt). Like Indian, Japanese are driven by a sense of indebtedness that is never completely repayable while Americans are driven by 'entrepreneurialism'. As against American individual decision making, the Japanese have group decision making which leads to participatory decision making. Whereas in Gita model, de-egoisation and de-personification as necessary to make the higher self the source of decision making is given. In Japanese system, as against the system in an American corporation, no formal hierarchical structure held the organization together but the members cannot tend to embrace and support the group completely. While in American corporation's formal communication has to be explicitly in writing, trait communication prevails in Japanese high-density environment which leads to tactic communication due to commitment and loyalty.

Unlike Americans, Japanese like Indians, never separated secular from personal and spiritual matters. As in India so is Japan, moral codes and religion blended together in ways that made public and private inseparable. Against Taylor's par excellence, the Japanese corporate leadership espoused group - oriented consensus making, controlled by quality, sharing of values and information, the cultivation of relational skill and broad consultation before acting become important. This may serve as guideline for future Indian manager trying to be effective. Pointing out the difference between an American and Japanese corporate, write Abegglen & Stalk (1985), "Japanese companies differ significantly from the western pattern. The essence of the Japanese company is the people who compose it. It does not as the American firm, belong to the stock holders and the manager's they employ to control it, but it is under the control of people who work in it, who pay limited attention to stockholders wishes. The company personnel, including directors who are

themselves life time employee and executives of the company, are very much part of the company...Personnel have a real control over company decision". Japanese enterprise unions are work councils not trade unions, the employee representatives in the vertically structured firm. Both the management and the employees submit to the needs of the enterprise as a whole. The inferior - superior social legacy persists. Static differences operate inter firm relations up the economic order from the smaller to the greater concern.

As against the American concept of equality and freedom, Bhagawad Gita suggests hierarchism as an organic principle based on inherent differences in temperament and capacities. Understood from the Japanese viewpoint of tolerance and acceptance of differences it is not against equality and freedom. It rather insists on the organic relationship in spite of division of labour. The Gita doctrine of Swadharma (one's duty) supports dignity of labour, however lowly it may be. As against the American principle of collective bargaining, very much prevalent in India today, in Japan the management resolves conflicts through consultation with unions or a majority of workers.

Our occasional reference to Japanese practices as against the American corporate behaviour, intends to throw suggestions how the Gita model may be successfully adopted in India. However, mere theoretical consensus over this issue cannot lead to desired changes. Like Indian Japanese also adopted American system of management in post war period. But they gradually developed their own management model on the basis of their own culture. India can also do the same. Management is a science as well as an art. While scientific theories and techniques of management may be somewhat universal, the art of management has to be practiced only in tune with indigenous culture and value system. Thus, a successful manager in one culture may not succeed in other culture. The Indian value system, as against the American profit maximization, advises control of avarice, lust and greed. Managers must reduce their levels of indulgence if they wish to enjoy trust and esteem of the employees. The typical western attitude of 'I did it' is not in keeping with the Indian value system. In managerial situation, the result or action cannot be predicted. Therefore, Bhagawad Gita suggested Nishkama Karma as an alternative. Unpleasant managerial experiences may be considerably reduced if the Indian managers learn to internalize the principle of Karma, Rina, Swadharma and Rebirth.



This adoption of Gita model of effective management leadership however requires a change of attitudes, beliefs and values, right from the grass root, through change in management education. Managers brought up through Western management education cannot understand, still less practice, the Gita model. Alien domination and British rule changed our entire education system. It has made Indian value system and culture irrelevant to management.

The existing model of management education only creates Western attitudes, beliefs and values among the management personnel. Japanese teach moderation right from the primary school education. In his study of Japanese primary education Joseph Adams relates that against the Western 'aggrandizement' the Japanese children are taught not asserting yourself too much in group relations. The Japanese classroom stresses process modes of collective learning, which emphasize the process not the individual abilities. Japanese educator and businessmen realize that cooperation essential to an integrated organization is not learned spontaneously. This serves the needs of Japanese enterprises much better than American management leadership education.

## **6. Conclusion**

Therefore, in order to practice Gita model of management leaders in Indian business corporations, our management education must include Gita philosophy, attitudes, beliefs and values in its syllabi at different stages. Nay, we would go a step further and suggest that now it is time that Indian education system, right from the primary to university and management stage, inculcate Gita philosophy, attitudes, values and beliefs, among Indians so that through the process of 'Sanskaras' so much emphasized by Gita, a new generation of management leaders and corporate personnel may develop in due course of time, for whom following of Gita model of management may ultimately become spontaneous. Thus, through the synthesis of Gita philosophy, beliefs, attitudes and values with modern Western thought and technique, India will give birth to management leaders who may be able fulfil their culture specific roles not only in Indian corporate scene but contribute in world of business management.

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