



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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**SPIRITUALITY AND MANAGEMENT**

**V. NITHYANANTHAN**  
**RESEARCH SCHOLAR**  
**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**  
**SRM UNIVERSITY**  
**SRM NAGAR**  
**KATTANKULATHUR – 603 203, TAMIL NADU**

**DR. B. KALPANA**  
**ASST. PROFESSOR**  
**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**SRM UNIVERSITY**  
**SRM NAGAR**  
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**ABSTRACT**

*One of the greatest contributions of India to the world is Holy Gita which is considered to be one of the first revelations from the Static State. The management lessons in this holy book were brought in to light of the world by Divine Power. The Bhagavad-Gita the essence of Vedic Literature and a complete guide to practical life. It provides "all that is needed to raise the consciousness of man to the highest possible level." The deep, universal truths of life that speak to the needs and aspirations of everyone. In Bhagavad Gita Arjuna got mentally depressed when he saw his relatives with whom he has to fight. (Mental health has become a major international public health concern now). To motivate him the Bhagavad-Gita is preached in the battle field Kurukshetra by Lord Krishna to Arjuna as counseling to do his duty while multitudes of men stood by waiting. It has got all the management tactics to achieve the mental equilibrium and to overcome any crisis situation. There is no theory to be internalized and applied in this psychology. Ancient practices spontaneously induce what each person needs as the individual and the universal coincide. The work proceeds through intellectual knowledge of the playing field (jnana yoga), emotional devotion to the ideal (bhakti yoga) and right action that includes both feeling and knowledge (karma yoga). With ongoing purification we approach wisdom. The Bhagavad-Gita is a message addressed to each and every human individual to help him or her to solve the vexing problem of overcoming the present and progressing towards a bright future.*

**KEYWORDS**

Leadership, Work Culture, Karma yoga, Mental health.

**INTRODUCTION**

In this modern world the art of Management has become a part and parcel of everyday life, be it at home, in the office or factory and in Government. In all organizations, where a group of human beings assemble for a common purpose irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, management principles come into play through the management of resources, finance and planning, priorities, policies and practice. Management is a systematic way of carrying out activities in any field of human effort. Management need to focus more on leadership skills, e.g., establishing vision and goals, communicating the vision and goals, and guiding others to accomplish them. It also asserts that leadership must be more facilitative, participative and empowering in how visions and goals are established and carried out. Some people assert that this really isn't a change in the management functions; rather it's re-emphasizing certain aspects of management.

Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their weaknesses irrelevant, says the Management Guru Peter Drucker. It creates harmony in working together - equilibrium in thoughts and actions, goals and achievements, plans and performance, products and markets. It resolves situations of scarcity, be they in the physical, technical or human fields, through maximum utilization with the minimum available processes to achieve the goal. Lack of management causes disorder, confusion, wastage, delay, destruction and even depression. Managing men, money and materials in the best possible way, according to circumstances and environment, is the most important and essential factor for a successful management.

**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA**

There is an important distinction between effectiveness and efficiency in managing.

- Effectiveness is doing the right things.
- Efficiency is doing things right.
- The general principles of effective management can be applied in every field, the differences being more in application than in principle. The Manager's functions can be summed up as:

Forming a vision

- Planning the strategy to realize the vision.
- Cultivating the art of leadership.
- Establishing institutional excellence.
- Building an innovative organization.
- Developing human resources.
- Building teams and teamwork.
- Delegation, motivation, and communication.

Reviewing performance and taking corrective steps when called for. Thus, management is a process of aligning people and getting them committed to work for a common goal to the maximum social benefit - in search of excellence. Major functions of a manager are planning, organizing, leading and coordinating activities; they put different emphasis and suggest different natures of activities in the following four major functions.

The critical question in all managers' minds is How to be effective in their job? The answer to this fundamental question is found in the Bhagavad-Gita, which repeatedly proclaims that "you must try to manage yourself." The reason is that unless a manager reaches a level of excellence and effectiveness, he or she will be merely a face in the crowd.

## OLD TRUTHS IN A NEW CONTEXT

The Bhagavad-Gita, written thousands of years ago, enlightens us on all managerial techniques leading us towards a harmonious and blissful state of affairs in place of the conflict, tensions, poor productivity, and absence of motivation and so on, common in most of Indian enterprises today – and probably in enterprises in many other countries.

The modern management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, excellence in work, achieving goals, giving work meaning, decision making and planning, are all discussed in the Bhagavad-Gita. There is one major difference. While Western management thought too often deals with problems at material, external and peripheral levels, the Bhagavad-Gita tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results.

The management philosophy emanating from the West is based on the lure of materialism and on a perennial thirst for profit, irrespective of the quality of the means adopted to achieve that goal. This phenomenon has its source in the abundant wealth of the West and so 'management by materialism' has caught the fancy of all the countries the world over, India being no exception to this trend. India, has been in the forefront in importing these ideas mainly because of its centuries old indoctrination by colonial rulers, which has inculcated in us a feeling that anything Western is good and anything Indian is inferior. Gita does not prohibit seeking money, power, comforts, and health. It advocates active pursuit of one's goals without getting attached to the process and the results.

The result is that, while huge funds have been invested in building temples of modern management education, no perceptible changes are visible in the improvement of the general quality of life - although the standards of living of a few has gone up. The same old struggles in almost all sectors of the economy, criminalization of institutions, social violence, exploitation and other vices are seen deep in the body politic.

## THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM

The reasons for this sorry state of affairs are not far to seek. The Western idea of management centers on making the worker and the manager more efficient and more productive. Companies offer workers more to work more, produce more, sell more and to stick to the organization without looking for alternatives. The sole aim of extracting better and more work from the worker is to improve the bottom-line of the enterprise. The worker has become a hireable commodity, which can be used, replaced and discarded at will.

Thus, workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product. In such a state, it should come as no surprise to us that workers start using strikes (gheraos) sit-ins, (dharnas) go-slows, work-to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organizational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence.

Western management philosophy may have created prosperity for some people some of the time at least - but it has failed in the aim of ensuring betterment of individual life and social welfare. It has remained by and large a soulless edifice and an oasis of plenty for a few in the midst of poor quality of life for many.

Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine prevailing management disciplines in their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development.

Now let us re-examine some of the modern management concepts in the light of the Bhagavad-Gita which is a primer of management-by-values.

## UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The first lesson of management science is to choose wisely and utilize scarce resources optimally. During the curtain raiser before the Mahabharata War, Duryodhana chose Sri Krishna's large army for his help while Arjuna selected Sri Krishna's wisdom for his support. This episode gives us a clue as to the nature of the effective manager the former chose numbers, the latter, wisdom.

## WORK COMMITMENT

A popular verse of the Gita advises "detachment" from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Being dedicated work has to mean "working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake." If we are always calculating the date of promotion or the rate of commission before putting in our efforts, then such work is not detached. It is not "generating excellence for its own sake" but working only for the extrinsic reward that may or may not for result.

Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world works means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. So, the Gita tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future.

Some people might argue that not seeking the business result of work and actions, makes one unaccountable. In fact, the Bhagavad-Gita is full of advice on the theory of cause and effect, making the doer responsible for the consequences of his deeds. While advising detachment from the avarice of selfish gains in discharging one's accepted duty, the Gita does not absolve anybody of the consequences arising from discharge of his or her responsibilities. Attachment to perishable gives birth to fear, anger, greed, desire, feeling of "mine" and many other negative qualities. Renounce attachment by regarding objects for others and for serving others. Depend only on God (not body, nor intellect), and the dependency on the world will come to end. Renouncing attachment is the penance of knowledge, which leads to his being - truth, consciousness and bliss. (Bhagavad-Gita 4.10)

Thus the best means of effective performance management is the work itself. Attaining this state of mind (called "Nishkama Karma") is the right attitude to work because it prevents the ego, the mind, from dissipation of attention through speculation on future gains or losses.

## MOTIVATION – SELF AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

It has been presumed for many years that satisfying lower order needs of workers - adequate food, clothing and shelter, etc. are key factors in motivation. However, it is a common experience that the dissatisfaction of the clerk and of the Director is identical - only their scales and composition vary. It should be true that once the lower-order needs are more than satisfied, the Director should have little problem in optimizing his contribution to the organization and society. But more often than not, it does not happen like that. ("The eagle soars high but keeps its eyes firmly fixed on the dead animal below.") On the contrary, a lowly paid schoolteacher, or a self-employed artisan, may well demonstrate higher levels of self-actualization despite poorer satisfaction of their lower-order needs.

This situation is explained by the theory of self-transcendence propounded in the Gita. Self-transcendence involves renouncing egoism, putting others before oneself, emphasizing team work, dignity, co-operation, harmony and trust – and, indeed potentially sacrificing lower needs for higher goals, the opposite of Maslow.

"Work must be done with detachment." It is the ego that spoils work and the ego is the centerpiece of most theories of motivation. We need not merely a theory of motivation but a theory of inspiration.

The Great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941, known as "Gurudev") says working for love is freedom in action. A concept which is described as "disinterested work" in the Gita where Sri Krishna says,

"He who shares the wealth generated only after serving the people, through work done as a sacrifice for them, is freed from all sins. On the contrary those who earn wealth only for themselves, eat sins that lead to frustration and failure."

Disinterested work finds expression in devotion, surrender and equipoise. The former two are psychological while the third is determination to keep the mind free of the dualistic (usually taken to mean "materialistic") pulls of daily experiences. Detached involvement in work is the key to mental equanimity or the state

of "nirdwanda." This attitude leads to a stage where the worker begins to feel the presence of the Supreme Intelligence guiding the embodied individual intelligence. Such de-personified intelligence is best suited for those who sincerely believe in the supremacy of organizational goals as compared to narrow personal success and achievement.

## WORK CULTURE

An effective work culture is about vigorous and arduous efforts in pursuit of given or chosen tasks. Sri Krishna elaborates on two types of work culture – "daivi sampat" or divine work culture and "asuri sampat" or demonic work culture.

Daivi work culture - involves fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, absence of fault-finding, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of envy and pride.

Asuri work culture - involves egoism, delusion, personal desires, improper performance, work not oriented towards service.

Mere work ethic is not enough. The hardened criminal exhibits an excellent work ethic. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work.

It is in this light that the counsel, "yogah karmasu kausalam" should be understood. "Kausalam" means skill or technique of work which is an indispensable component of a work ethic. "Yogah" is defined in the Gita itself as "samatvam yogah uchayate" meaning an unchanging equipoise of mind (detachment.) Tilak tells us that acting with an equable mind is Yoga.

By making the equable mind the bed-rock of all actions, the Gita evolved the goal of unification of work ethic with ethics in work, for without ethical process no mind can attain an equipoise. The spiritual guru, Adi Sankara says that the skill necessary in the performance of one's duty is that of maintaining an evenness of mind in face of success and failure. The calm mind in the face of failure will lead to deeper introspection and see clearly where the process went wrong so that corrective steps could be taken to avoid shortcomings in future.

The principle of reducing our attachment to personal gains from the work done is the Gita's prescription for attaining equanimity. It has been held that this principle leads to lack of incentive for effort, striking at the very root of work ethic. To the contrary, concentration on the task for its own sake leads to the achievement of excellence and indeed to the true mental happiness of the worker. Thus, while commonplace theories of motivation may be said to lead us to the bondage or extrinsic rewards, the Gita's principle leads us to the intrinsic rewards of mental, and indeed moral, satisfaction.

## WORK RESULTS

The Gita further explains the theory of "detachment" from the extrinsic rewards of work in saying:

- If the result of sincere effort is a success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the doer alone.
- If the result of sincere effort is a failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer.
- The former attitude mollifies arrogance and conceit while the latter prevents excessive despondency, de-motivation and self-pity. Thus both these dispositions safeguard the doer against psychological vulnerability, the cause of the modern managers' companions of diabetes, high blood pressure and ulcers.
- Assimilation of the ideas of the Gita leads us to the wider spectrum of "lokasamgraha" (general welfare) but there is also another dimension to the work ethic - if the "karmayoga" (service) is blended with "bhaktiyoga" (devotion), then the work itself becomes worship, a "sevayoga" (service for its own sake.)
- Along with bhakti yoga as a means of liberation, the Gita espouses the doctrine of nishkamya karma or pure action untainted by hankering after the fruits resulting from that action. Modern scientists have now understood the intuitive wisdom of that action in a new light.

## MANAGER'S MENTAL HEALTH

Sound mental health is the very goal of any human activity - more in management. Sound mental health is that state of mind which can maintain a calm, positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work life and social existence. Internal constancy and peace are the pre-requisites for a healthy stress-free mind. At the initial stages when engaging in a relationship, the mind may wander and go to different places. But we must have a clear aim, a clear focus, a single pointed direction. Thereafter the mind will not wander in different places. The mind will remain on only one.

- Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:
- Greed - for power, position, prestige and money.
- Envy - regarding others' achievements, success, rewards.
- Egotism - about one's own accomplishments.
- Suspicion, anger and frustration.
- Anguish through comparisons.

The driving forces in today's businesses are speed and competition. There is a distinct danger that these forces cause erosion of the moral fiber, that in seeking the end, one permits oneself immoral means - tax evasion, illegitimate financial holdings, being "economical with the truth", deliberate oversight in the audit, too-clever financial reporting and so on. This phenomenon may be called as "yayati syndrome".

In the book, the Mahabharata, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, he found the pursuit of sensual enjoyments ultimately unsatisfying and came back to his son pleading him to take back his youth. This "yayati syndrome" shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions (extrinsic motivation) and inner value and conscience (intrinsic motivation.)

Our mind is like a Computer, continuously programmed since our childhood along with some vasanas from our previous birth. This programming is both good and bad for ourselves; a healthier programming makes us a productive and happy individual, while a bad program may turn us into an unproductive. If we choose to surrender our Mind, Ego and operate from that realm, it is like asking a person to live with his brain defunct!! It will be a futile exercise. Mental peace can be achieved by effective delegation. Delegation is when supervisors give responsibility and authority to subordinates to complete a task, and let the subordinates figure out how the task can be accomplished. Effective delegation develops people who are ultimately more fulfilled and productive. Managers become more fulfilled and productive themselves as they learn to count on their staffs and are freed up to attend to more strategic issues.

Delegation is often very difficult for new supervisors, particularly if they have had to scramble to start the organization or start a major new product or service themselves. Many managers want to remain comfortable, making the same decisions they have always made. They believe they can do a better job themselves. They don't want to risk losing any of their power and stature (ironically, they do lose these if they don't learn to delegate effectively). Often, they don't want to risk giving authority to subordinates in case they fail and impair the organization.

This is one reason why such an exercise of surrendering mind, ego etc fails in the real world. Man is a biological machine, and he cannot operate without those necessary components of his software.

## MANAGEMENT NEEDS THOSE WHO PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH

"Whatever the excellent and best ones do, the commoners follow," says Sri Krishna in the Gita. The visionary leader must be a missionary, extremely practical, intensively dynamic and capable of translating dreams into reality. This dynamism and strength of a true leader flows from an inspired and spontaneous motivation to help others. "I am the strength of those who are devoid of personal desire and attachment. O Arjuna, I am the legitimate desire in those, who are not opposed to righteousness," says Sri Krishna in the 10th Chapter of the Gita.



**CONCLUSION**

The despondency of Arjuna in the first chapter of the Gita is typically human. Sri Krishna, by sheer power of his inspiring words, changes Arjuna's mind from a state of inertia to one of righteous action, from the state of what the French philosophers call "anomie" or even alienation, to a state of self-confidence in the ultimate victory of "dharma" (ethical action).

When Arjuna got over his despondency and stood ready to fight, Sri Krishna reminded him of the purpose of his new-found spirit of intense action - not for his own benefit, not for satisfying his own greed and desire, but for the good of many, with faith in the ultimate victory of ethics over unethical actions and of truth over untruth.

Sri Krishna's advice with regard to temporary failures is, "No doer of good ever ends in misery." Every action should produce results. Good action produces good results and evil begets nothing but evil. Therefore, always act well and be rewarded.

My purport is not to suggest discarding of the Western model of efficiency, dynamism and striving for excellence but to tune these ideals to India's holistic attitude of "lokasangraha" - for the welfare of many, for the good of many. There is indeed a moral dimension to business life. What we do in business is no different, in this regard, to what we do in our personal lives. The means do not justify the ends. Pursuit of results for their own sake, is ultimately self-defeating. ("Profit," said Matsushita-san in another tradition, "is the reward of correct behavior")



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