

The Relevance of Gita for Business Management Sector

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Abstract

Management skill is an academic discipline. In this modern world the art of Management has become a part and parcel of everyday life. It has gained application in other areas; governances, political leadership development issues and even ethics. The Holy Bhagavad Gita is essence of the Vedas and Upanisads. Gita is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times. Bhagavad Gita is one of the most popular and accessible of all Indian scriptures, which is to be studied by anyone interested in Indian philosophy. Management principles come into play through the management of resources, finance and planning, priorities, policies and practice. The *Gita* teaches us that how one's aim in life can be achieved; howsoever it may be difficult, by doing his duty with devotion, and meditation, integrating many different threads of Indian philosophy. It gives correct solution to all the problems in human life. Bhagavad Gita contains the essential ideas and basic principles of business management. Five priority areas described in the Gita we must concentrate for better business management sector. These are followings; ethics, energy, efficiency, effectiveness and excellence. If we do follow this properly, we will win.

This paper aims at introducing the holistic vision of management sector enunciated in the Gita which is more comprehensive than the 'Holistic View' of the modern management sector's theories and practice. The concept of Gita used in modern management field and also try to looks at how the Bhagavad Gita plays the important and significant role in the organisation to accomplish various modern business management practices.

Key Words: Bhagavad Gita, Business Management, Leadership, Policy and Decision making.

1. Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita, as mentioned earlier is a complete tractate on management, on managing one's life with sound ethical principles, on managing the external environment and interpersonal relationships with wide ranging implications in the socio-economic context. It provides a new and an alternative paradigm and is worthwhile trying. In this paper, an attempt has been made to lift certain aspects of management sector from the Bhagavad Gita, that are relevant as much to the Business world as to the individual.

2. Paradigm of Management in Gita

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 assert that leadership must be more facilitative, participative and empowering in how visions and goals are established and carried out. Bhagavad Gita describes the paradigm of Management in all area of business and other sectors. The notion of Karma Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita is to perform duties with a selfless attitude. The fundamental basis of Karma Yoga is that one is entitled to perform actions but not necessarily be attached to the fruits of those actions. The Bhagavad Gita offers the true spirit of work for doing work in different areas of life. Management is creative problem solving. This creative problem solving

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is accomplished through four functions of management: planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

Lord Krishna addresses to Arjun to provide guidelines regarding the science of work; that do your duty, but do not expect outcomes and do not think yourself as the cause of the results of your actions. While performing the actions, we must remember that the fruits of our actions are not meant for personal enjoyment. Even while working, give up the pride of doership. Do not be attached to inaction.

The main theme in the Bhagavad Gita is man's bounden duties and their efficient accomplishment to attain the goal. The philosophy of management in the Gita propound that all human actions are directed towards a goal and that man will not concede unless he attains the goal. Management is all about getting things done by others. It is only through direction, coordination, motivation and leadership that one can lead others to attainment of the goal. Modern management is more concerned about productive potentials and spiritual efficiency. According to the Bhagavad Gita, Karma Yoga is efficiency in action.

***Yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya /
Siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate //***

(Bhagavad Gita – 2/48)

Krishna explains to Arjun that how to get the Skill in action. Lord Krishna explains that Arjun ! Endowed with equanimity, one sheds in this life both good and

***Buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛita-duṣhkṛite /
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśhalam //***

(Bhagavad Gita – 2/48)

Whether being the head of the multinational company, than we must know how to utilize our energies to accomplish our objectives. The *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes the importance of managing oneself whereas most of the modern management theories and practices deal with the problems of managing the raw materials, manpower, finances, infrastructure and other external factors. The *Gita* clearly points out the strategic role which managing oneself plays in the well

3. Management and the Law of Karma

Karma means action. We all everyday have various duties determined by our family situation, education, social position, occupation etc. The theory of Karma, Lord Krishna explains to Arjun that your right only is to work only and never to the fruit thereof. Do not consider yourself to be the cause of the fruit of action; nor let your attachment be to inaction. We have the right to do our duty, but the results depend on many factors, for example, our efforts, our destiny (based on our past actions), the will of God, the efforts of others, the cumulative karmas of the people involved, the place and the situation etc. Sometimes if we are anxious about the results, anxiety develops if they do not meet our expectations. The fact is that when we are no concerned about the results oriented, we can focus entirely on our efforts, and then the result automatically comes into place. (*Bhagavad Gita-2/47*)

Lord Krishna explains to Arjun in other way that your established in yoga, renouncing attachment, and be even-minded in success and failure; evenness of mind is called 'Yoga'

evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this Yoga of equanimity. Skill in action lies in the practice of this Yoga.

being of the individual and the society.

Arjun was fighting because it was his duty to God, and Shree Krishna would be pleased by it. He was still a warrior; however, his internal motivation had changed. The fact that he did his duty without attachment did not make him any less competent than before. In fact, he fought with greater inspiration because his work was directly in service of God.

Mind can be one's friend or enemy. Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation. 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.

4. The Challenging Task

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna urges Arjun to fight his own cousins, not for personal gain, but as God's work, as his duty or darma, without getting distracted with the possible outcome. Once he understood this, Arjuna's work became worship and he was free from the consequences of his actions. Modern Manager is expected to be more creative and innovative. But his creativity depends on the stimulus of reward in cash or kind.

It is more or less a 'conditioned response' promoted by Stimulus Response (SR) bond. Several corporate sectors are now willing to create an atmosphere where creativity and innovation is encouraged. Conceptually, it means a situation where in a company uses the talents and dynamic abilities of its manager to develop innovative in-house project services. Such conditioned response has its limitations too. Though it helps creating 'surplus' for himself and for his company, it hardly makes any substantial contribution in the larger context of social equity and justice. In the Western world also this paradigm shift from mechanistic view of life to the systems view has been gradually taking place.

**"Work is worship"
"Karmanyevadhikaraste"**

(Bhagavad Gita – 2/47)

Krishna advises Arjuna to perform every action in a spirit of devotion, for common welfare, without being attached to the fruits of action. You can experience oneness with the Supreme Being if you perform noble deeds with a spirit of total detachment, without any expectations in return.

5. Control of Mind for Business Management

Mind makes the personality of a person. We observe that the mind runs towards the objects of its attachment, towards the direction it has been habituated to in the past. The elimination of attachment eradicates the unnecessary wanderings of the mind, but the Mind is indecisive. The Bhagavad Gita first of all puts a great emphasis on the control of the mind. Arjun in Chapter 6 of Gita says to Lord Krishna, *"Mind is very restless, forceful and strong, O Krishna, it is more difficult to control the mind than to control the wind through practice of Yoga; because the mind is indeed very difficult to restrain. I consider it as difficult to control as the wind. But by practice and detachment, it can be controlled"*

(Bhagavad Gita- 6/34)

Lord Krishna to explains to Arjun that the controlling of mind; mind is restless no doubt, and difficult to curb, Arjun; but it can be brought under control by repeated practice (of meditation) and by the exercise of dispassion.

(Bhagavad Gita- 6/35)

What makes the Holy Gita a practical psychology of transformation is that it offers us the tools to connect with our deepest intangible essence, and we must learn to participate in the battle of life with right knowledge. "Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in me and taking refuge in me, purified by the penance of knowledge, many have attained union with My Being."

(Bhagavad Gita – 4/10)

The controlling of mind gives strength to people for doing their duties in the world. Swami Vivekananda said that –

"Strength is Life, Weakness is Death"

Working skill depends on a level of excellence of doer. Excellence comes through strength of Mind. In the management sector first of all doer must be Healthy. Because *"Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body"* is a proverb we have known since our early days. But we realize its importance and the deeper meaning attached to it only when we are old enough to think it over and give it

some thought. A healthy body refers not only to your physical state but also to your mental and emotional stability. It has now been scientifically proven that your mind governs and controls your body temple. An another famous proverb is that:

“Health is wealth”

It means that there is nothing in our life that is more valuable than good health. Without health there is no happiness, no peace and no success. A person with bad health cannot enjoy the pleasure of being wealthy. Health is more valuable than money. Money cannot buy health and happiness. Without health, we can be done nothing. Doing something is better than doing nothing. In the issue of Health Mahatma Gandhi said:

“Your Health is your real wealth”

6. The Gita's Theory of Management

The *Gita* develops and presents a profound theory of this *Purushottama Yoga* in the last five Slokas of Chapter XV. The *Gita* finds the Absolute reality in the vision of the *Purushottama*. He is both *Kshara* and *Akshara*, Mutable and Immutable, and, yet he is other because he is more and greater than either of these opposites. *Purushottama*, The Supreme Self, is capable of being both at once. This *Purushottama* consciousness is the highest peak of enlightenment where the individual perceives himself as the ‘Whole Unified Universe’. Whosoever is awakened in this Supreme consciousness is no longer bewildered by the world of *dvandha* (dualities) and *moha* (delusion); and stands firm in the performance of selfless action for the welfare of the world. The technique applied for attainment of this Yoga as mentioned in the XI Chapter is *divyachakshu* which means imparting the direct vision of Truth to the aspirant. The *Gita* calls it *jnanaviijnanasamhitam* (wisdom fused with vision). These concepts are integrated in the modern Management field.

7. Management guidelines from the Bhagavad Gita

- Performance
- Motivation

- Decision-making
- Realistic self-confidence
- Self-awareness
- Perseverance
- Balance
- Personal integrity
- Self-regulation skills
- Self-care skills
- Clarity and focus
- Physical and mental health etc.

If one does one's duty efficiently and with single minded devotion, without any fear of success or failure in his/her endeavour, then certainly that person shall succeed in his/her work. His/her mind shall be at peace & ease while doing such work without any fear of success or failure. Any person, whose mind is at peace, certainly works effectively.

7.1 Planning with Vision

Planning is the basic process by which we decide our goals and objectives, and the ways and means to achieve them. Planning involves what is to be done, when it is to be done, where it is to be done, how it is to be done and who is to do it. Hence it is the beginning of the process of management. It identifies the purpose or mission of the organization, strategies, policies and procedures to be adopted, programmes and activities to be undertaken for fulfilment of the mission. Along with information and knowledge planning requires wisdom and vision. The moving force behind every master plan and strategy is vision.

In any management planning cannot be done in isolation. Every management is the inseparable part of bigger organizations that is society, nation, world, natural environment and ultimately of the universe. So the *Gita* advises us to make our short-term and long term planning in harmony with the divine traits which develop awareness of belonging to the universe. It is holistic planning which should be done in a spirit of sacrifice. The *Gita* advises us not to disregard this vision of Truth.

7.2 Vision and Leadership

Visionary leadership is the need of the day that can be developed by acquiring holistic vision of the *Gita*. This

holistic vision enables managers to delve deep into human consciousness, to understand, guide, motivate, innovate and inspire their people by practicing the following profound management principles himself, which set forth the eternal value system. Whatever the leader (manager) does, others also do the same. Whatever standards he sets forth, the values he embodies are hailed as the model by his subordinates, staff members. So he must ever be vigilant in performance of his duties. (*Bhagavad Gita- 3/21*)

The leader must be impartial. He can develop impartial views by practicing the behavioural patterns laid down for the *Sthitaprajna*, *Yogarudha* and *Gunatita*. Business Management is the process of designing and maintaining a suitable environment in which individuals.

7.3 Decision Making

Modern manager faces many dilemmas as Arjuna faced before the commencement of the battle of Mahabharata. The holistic vision of the *Gita* develops an ability to analyze as well as synthesize all aspects of a particular situation to arrive at a particular decision. The man of steadfast wisdom can hardly commit blunders. That is why the *Gita* gives full freedom to a leader and a manager for decision-making.

7.4 Utilization of available resources

An important lesson of business management 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. How the manpower management and recruitment is an integral and so also is the capital generation and utilization.

8. Conclusion

The *Gita's* holistic vision of the *Purushottama Yoga* ushers in the dawn of a new Business Management Era which will ensure (a) economic and social justice to all people in the world, (b) healthy social and political order in the individual nations and in the world, and (c) ecological harmony and a sense of belonging to the universe. If this vision is introduced in our Management Schools, we can produce enlightened managers and leaders. One generation of enlightened managers and leaders can transform this world by bringing into it a generation of fearless and selfless individuals having noble character. Thus, as the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* is of universal significance, to study it is to study man himself, to study life. It should be understood that all these teachings are for each and every one in the world of human being.

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