

# Dilemmas of Present Management Leadership

A constructive study on Bhagwad Gita

## ABSTRACT

Increased productivity, the goal of management leadership, is required to awaken the enthusiastic cooperation of employees. A manager has to learn to recognize the psychological needs of his workers. The author in the present study emphasis upon the EQ. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to handle people skilfully that is far more necessary management trait than I.Q.

The author further suggests to develop India's own cultural specific system of management leadership as Japan has done. Till now, modern Indian management is generally following the American Model.

The author's recommendations regarding the adoption of Bhagwad Gita's model of management leadership is worth considerable philosophy. The Gita's philosophy is also compared with The Japanesse culture. It is further analysed and proved that Bhagwad Gita's model is the supreme and collective in nature. It must be adopted as a syllabi in all management education.

The dilemmas of the present management leadership are concerned with the dualism of man and machine, human relationships and technology, social solidarity and profit maximization, personal life and corporate career, progress of the society as well as the progress of the corporation .The seeming dualism, between the two elements, is however, a product of Cartesian dualism of matter and mind.

While , on the one hand , the management leadership is concerned with the problems of performance emphasis , role optimization , goal setting , planning , innovation , managing change, work related problems , and information dissemination ,on the other hand, an employee is more concerned with inter-personal problems concerning

discipline , autonomy, delegation , interaction, facilitation , conflict management and constructive criticism. Peter D. Anthony observes that "management is concerned , from 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 ."

While increased productivity is the goal of management, leadership is required to awaken the enthusiastic cooperation of employees. The manager has to acquire human relation skill as well as technical and professional qualifications. He has to learn to recognize the psychological needs of his worker *i.e.*, management through integration and self control and understanding of human aspirations. Presenting the changed situation and

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Condemning disorder in state, society, family and business firm, five hundred years before Christ, Confucius advised people consciously to reinforce the belief system that cements the moral order.

the dilemmas of present management leadership, says Robert R. Locke (1996), *“They found themselves delving into depth psychology in order to help people overcome inhibitions, neutralize defences, free blockages, and stimulate insights and feedback. Managers got involved in group psychology, embracing such social orthopaedics as role playing, brainstorming, creativity stimulation and T group activities in order to modify behaviour by teaching people to know themselves in relationship to others, thereby fostering the emotional and moral being essential to group cohesion.”*

Emotional intelligence (EQ), the ability to handle people skilfully is a far more necessary management trait than I.Q. After examining studies from hundred of companies, mostly multinationals, which identified the qualities that mark out the best from the rest, Daniel Goleman reached this conclusion in his book entitled Emotional Intelligence, *“These emotional intelligent can lead, adapt to change, give feedback on performance, empathize, motivate themselves and others and have integrity.”* Emotional intelligence, says Goleman, *“is to do how well we manage our own inner lives and get along with people.”* It encompasses self awareness, the ability to manage one’s own and other people’s emotions. However, the practical advises, which Goleman offers to attain emotional intelligence, touch only the fringe and not the bottom of the problem. It is here that Gita’s model of management leadership may be useful to the managers.

## 1. NEED OF AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

Modern Indian management is generally following the American model as, unlikely Japan, India has not yet developed her own cultural specific system. The study of management progressed rapidly in the early 50s in India and has now thoroughly matured to western standards and levels of performance. Western management system made a beginning with Taylor and his typical scientific management for the shop floor. It has now touched the strategic pinnacle of decision making and policy planning. Several elements of different branches of knowledge have become an intrinsic part of the study of management. Indian management institutions have made all out efforts to assimilate these developments. India today may be legitimately proud of the standard it has attained in the theory and practice of management.

However, the Indian organizational scenario is highly complex. To achieve its mission, Indian management system requires a fine tuning. The strategy to make Indian management more effective in their role, irrespective of the nature of the organization, lies in Indian value system. However, very few Indian managers know or implement Indian philosophy, culture, heritage, and above all the Indian value system in their corporate strategies. The Western value system and ideologies have totally eroded the Indian influence on management education. Thus, without losing the gains of the Western developments in the field of management, Indian management leaders must adopt an

integrative approach. As Jagdish Pathak rightly concludes his essay The Magic Mantra for Managers, “While our modern managers ridicule our mythology and legends, western scholars have evinced interest in Indian philosophy vis-à-vis the working of modern corporate strategy. This sets the stage for a manager who can integrate the Indian value system in the day to day running of organization.”

## 2. SPIRITUAL SYNTHETIC PARADIGM

Writing almost five hundred years ago, Niccolo Machiavelli astutely observed, “There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more difficult of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who profit by the new order. This lukewarmness arises, partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the law in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it.”

Condemning disorder in state, society, family and business firm, five hundred years before Christ, Confucius advised people consciously to reinforce the belief system that cements the moral order. He called this consciously reinforced tradition a deliberate tradition, whose aim had to be consciously formulated within a community and carefully taught in public education. In India, Krishna, in Bhagwad Gita, presented a spiritual synthetic paradigm to guide human begins in all walks of life. When the external control of managerialism is

removed, this spiritual order within each employee prevents a corporation from degeneration. Its practice brings fluid management – employee’s relations that would be in sharp contrast to the present stressed employee – management relations.

The most important elements of Gita’s spiritual synthetic paradigm are the ideal of *Stitha Prajana* (one who is steadfast in knowledge) for the management leader, the giving model of *Nishkama Karma* (action without attachment to desire), the Mentor protégé relationship, spiritual synthetic philosophy of life, concept of *swadharma* (ones duty), distinction between demonical and divine traits, the concept of *Gunas* (traits) and *Guna* mix, the concept of *purusharthas* ( doing ones duty), the ideal of *Lok Sangraha* (Social Solidarity), the concept of sacrifice, service and *Rinas* (debts), and the psychology of Bliss. The paradigm may be very favourably compared with the Japanese management model as India and Japan share Asian philosophy based on ethos, attitudes and beliefs. Duty in Japanese system is regardless of preferences (*Nishkama*) and depends only on the importance of the job. The business organization is governed by people oriented, organic management. In the post war 1945-60 Japan united herself in economic reconstruction on the basis of Western American Management model. In 1960-85 Japan developed her own cultural specific management model, which has favourably challenged the Western model. India at the door step of economic transformation may also do the same today.

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### 3. BHAGWAD GITA'S MODEL OF MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP

It is a model of management leadership and is culled from wisdom and philosophy of Bhagwad Gita :

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).
2. In inter-personal relationships, a leader follows giving model (GM), practicing leadership through renunciation rather than appropriation.
3. A leader's decisions are based on values rather than other considerations. *Nishkama Karma* is spontaneous to him, in the sense of performance rather than result orientation.
4. 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.
5. He enjoys managerial effectiveness through *Nishkama Karma*. He is a good team builder through personal virtues, human qualities, moral and spiritual values.
6. Business manager's philosophy is based on *Atman- Brahman* (soul-god) nexus, *Varnashram* (social order based on ones duty in society) system, *purusharthas*, *Rinas*, and Rebirth.
7. A business leader performs *Nishkama Karma* for *Lok*

*Sangraha*, as different from *Karma Vada* (action with personal motives).

8. Work is a sacrament; fulfilment of *Swadharam* is the ultimate duty.
9. 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.
10. As against demoniacal traits, the leader shows divine traits. He follows law of sacrifice and service, enjoys bliss with *Nishkama Karma* as centre motive.
11. He practices effective inspirational communication through *Swadharna*.
12. Knowing dynamics of quality improvement, a manager improves quality of work life by practicing *Lok Sangraha* as Business Policy.
13. In employer- employee relationship a manager pursues spiritual direction, coordination and control.
14. *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.

### 4. OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE

Not only for India but the whole world, a successful management model must be culture specific. As Robert R. Locke (1996) has rightly pointed out,



“Cultural rules, therefore, do not just influence people’s behaviour, they define the meaning and identity of individuals and the pattern of appropriate economic, political and cultural activity engaged in by those individuals. They similarly state the purposes and legitimacy of organizations, professions, interest groups and states, while delineating activity appropriate to those entities. Institutions objectify cultural rules giving collective meaning and value to particular entities and activities, integrating them into large schemes.”

While American management model is based on managerialism and German model was based on co-determination, Japanese model is based on paternalism .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 govern by laws and rules , the Japanese behaviour is characterized by role playing and tolerance , Indian model will be governed by *Dharma, Moksha, Rinase, 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-cular 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 are given. In Japanese system, as against the system in an American corporation, no formal

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hierarchical structure held the organization together but the members cannot tend to embrace and support the group completely. While in American corporations 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 James Abegglen and George 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 'aggrandisement' the Japanese children are taught not asserting yourself too much in group relations. The Japanese classroom stresses process modes of collective learning, which emphasise 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.

## 5. 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 cultural specific roles not only in Indian corporate scene but contribute in world of business management.

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