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Bhagavadgita's model for human resource management in industries

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1. Introduction

Bhagavad Gita is a book of spirituality and industries are meant for making money. Some may feel that what the co-relation between the two. To answer the question, we should know the actual purpose of both. Human resource management is one of the most important part of industrial set up.

Human resources regarded as the linchpin around with every single activity of any organization is carried out. The reason is that while all other resources like technology, capital assets and even finance can be bought if one is willing to pay the right price, the only resource that cannot be bought is motivated and committed human resources^[1].

On the other hand, Gita is a book of practical wisdom which does not only preach how to attain 'Moksha' but it is a shastra which teaches one how to live a good, successful and happy life, B.G. Tilak regards it as Karmayogashastra. He said, "Karmayoga fused with spiritual knowledge and devotion is the true purpose of the Gita^[2]. Many scholars have written commentaries on Gita according to their beliefs and prevailing conditions of the time. according to Swami Chinmayanand, "From time to time an ancient philosophy needs an intelligent reinterpretation in the context of new time and men of wisdom, prophets and seers guide the common man on how to apply effectively the ancient laws in his present life."³ That is why the laws of Gita can apply for human resource management in industrial sector and it will prove beneficial to the growth of the industry. An industry can't prosper without committed employees.

Nowadays, companies are hiring the services of psychologists for the better management of their human resources. Psychologists play an important role in selecting the right person for the right job, reducing the absenteeism, motivating the employees to work better and effective manner. Bhagavad Gita is an ancient book of Indian psychology. In Gita, Arjuna is at start in dilemma regarding his dharma. The scene described symbolizes allegorically the situations which most human beings face some times in their lives, namely the challenges of decision making when one is not sure whether what one is about to do is right or wrong. What the author of the Gita had in mind was not just the one war which Arjuna was about to engage in but all the wars of effort and industry in which human beings may be engaged anytime anywhere. Gita's techniques though essentially meant to tackle a situations involving is spiritual dilemma, can be applied with profit to untangle lesser perplexities as well.

Human resource management has many aspects just as selection of employees, decision making, job satisfaction, to deal with absenteeism, to motivate their employees, leadership qualities to handle subordinates, to enhance the work efficiency of employees etc. The techniques of Gita prove helpful in better management of human resource in industrial sector. Gita's model for human resource management can be applied in following fields:

1.1 Selection of employees

Appropriate personal selection methods help to ensure that the most qualified applicants are hired. In the book 'Psychology and Work Today' Schultz and schultz is mentioned that a study dealing with white collar civil services job in the federal government compared employees hired on the basis of their scores on intelligence or cognitive ability test with those hired on the basis of their level of education and work experience.

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The tests were found to be far superior in selecting the better and more productive employees. Adding the tests to their overall selection programs is resulted in a 61% decrease in the number of poor employees hired ^[4].

Gita throughout continues the emphasis on individual natures. It classifies them. According to Gita, men are of three types – *Sattvik*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Gita clearly mentions their characteristics and natural karma in eighteenth chapter ^[5]. One should not leave his or her natural karma at any cost- '*sahajam karma kaunteya sadoshamapi na tyajet*' ^[6]. It probes into the conditions on which their distinctiveness rests. Companies can appoint right employees for the right job keeping in mind their natural behavior and innate qualities. It also provide a scheme of training by which every nature can rise higher. ⁷

It means that by controlling one's sense and purity of conduct, nutritious and light food, proper sleep, vigilant control of the motions of the mind and elimination of disturbing passions like lust, anger and greed etc., a person can become physically and mentally fit and prove beneficial for the employer and the company. In Japan, employer takes very much attention to the physical and mental fitness of their employees.

1.2 Job Satisfaction and problems of absenteeism and depression among employees

Job satisfaction refers to the positive and negative feelings and attitude we hold about our job. It depends on many work related factors. These factors include age, health, length of job experience, emotional stability, social status, leisure activities, family and other social relationship. ⁸ Unsatisfied and depressed workers may lead to absenteeism. Absenteeism is widespread and costly for organization. There may be many reasons for that. One of them is societal value. In Japan and Switzerland where job attendance is considered to be duty, absenteeism rates are low. In Italy where societal attitude toward work are more permissive, companies routinely hire 15% more workers than needed to make certain that enough people report to work each day to maintain operations. Absenteeism declined in the United States during World War 2 because it was considered unpatriotic to miss a day of work. ⁹ The Bhagavad-Gita as unfolded to us in the form of dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna does not want to perform his duty, the duty of warrior. He shows perfect symptoms of despair in the first chapter ^[10]. He refuses to perform his duty of kshatriya- '*na yotsya eti govindamuktva tooshneem babhoova ha.*' ^[11]. At this stage, Krishna preaches the philosophy of karmayoga to him. According to Gita, one should perform his duties at any cost or in any circumstances- '*Svadharmapi chaavekshya na vikampitumarhasi.*' ¹² So according to Gita's model, duty should be treated like worship. One should never try to escape from the duty.

1.3 Decision making

Decisions concern choices between more than one possible course of action. For many people, work involves frequent decisions. Arobb (1978) identified six decision making styles from her sample of managers and manual workers-

1. No thought
2. Complaint - with expectations from outside
3. Logical - careful objective evaluation of alternatives
4. Emotional – Decision made on the basis of wants or likes
5. Intuitive - the decision simply seemed right
6. Hesitant - slow and difficult to feel committed ^[13].

Gita has a novel technique of decision making that technique is based on the analysis of objective situation and nature of the decision taker. In Gita, Krishna shows the path of decision

making to Arjuna who gets confused what to do or not at a particular situation. Gita's decision making technique is as under:

1. Stand in the middle of the opposite possibilities
2. Look to your mentor
3. De ego yourself
4. Apply option under the test of rationality and practicability
5. Visualize yourself as having achieved the goal

1.4 Leadership

A leadership can be defined as the person who is giving responsibilities for monitoring and directing a group's activities or who takes principal responsibility for those tasks ^[14].

Leadership theories recognize that effective leadership depends on the interaction of three factors - the traits and behavior of the leaders, the characteristics of the followers and the nature of the situations in which leadership occurs ^[15]. In Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna plays the role of a perfect leader. Author of the book describes the perfect lakshna of a leader ^[16].

The characteristics of a leader as described in Gita are as follows:

1. Show full trust in subordinate
2. Know the inner qualities and strength of the subordinate staff
3. Clarity of mind
4. Bear complete responsibility of the task
5. Ability to convince and direct
6. Motivate the employees to do better and emphasize on high level of job performances
7. Ability to get fullest cooperation from subordinate staff

1.5 Motivation

One of the most pressing problems facing organization today is how to motivate employees to work most productively and to increase their feelings of satisfaction, involvement and commitment. No industry can succeed unless the workers have a sense of commitment towards their duty. There are motivational concepts elaborated in Gita through a great psychologist Krishna.

1.6 Gita's motivational technique include the following tractors

1. Motivational technique should be applied for employees considering three types of workers as mentioned in Gita i.e Sattvik, Rajas and Tamas.
2. Gita indicates three types of motivation. First one is external motivation in the form of material gains for which Arjuna refuses to fight for '*na kankshe vijayam Krishna na cha raajayam sukhani cha.*' ¹⁷

But definitely, Duryodhna fights for the money, land and power. This type of motivation is called external motivation.

When Arjuna feels a sort of despondency and Krishna motivates him by giving a sort of internal motivation by threat him that he may lose his respect in society if he does not perform his duty of warrior.

3. Gita mentions one more kind of motivation, the motivation for the soul or the self. Soul is a covert entity of a man that must be activated to motivate an individual. Self motivated individuals need no extrinsic motivators. They work for the larger interest interests of society. ¹⁸

Workers get self motivated when they see their boss in involving the work – ‘

*yad yadaacharati shresthah tattadevetaro janah’ or ‘Mama vartmaanuvartante manushyah paartha sarvashah.’*¹⁹

Srivastava, A.K. has rightly said in his books about achievement motivation, “What is more important and significant is that the concept as advocated in the Gita is not only more suitable from the cultural point of view, it is more human, comprehensive, scientific and can be applicable universally^[20].”

Management gurus can use Gita’s technique of human resource management in their organizations. They can motivate their staff to do work with perfection. In short, Gita gives equal importance to every individual whether he or she is of any *svabhava* or *varna*. In industrial terminology, we can say the employee or worker of any rank is equally important for the progress of an organization or industry. Gita gives equal opportunity to every individual to rise up to the higher level. One can rise higher through doing his assigned duty with perfection that person who does his job with perfection is a yogi. Krishna wants Arjuna to be a yogi – ‘*Tasmaadyogi bhava Arjuna.*’^[21]

And what is yoga, according to Gita is – ‘*yogah karmasu kaushalam.*’^[22]

K.M.Munshi defines the word ‘yogi’ in a beautiful manner. He says, “to be yogi is to be oneself. To develop the personality from within that is the goal of every Arjuna.”^[23]

In fact Gita spells out a code of conduct both for worker and the owners. Its techniques can prove useful in managing human resources in organizations.

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