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## Viswaguru bharat: A beacon of ancient wisdom for modern corporate

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### Abstract

Vishwa Guru is a Sanskrit phrase which translates to world or global teacher. The role of India, from the very beginning had been that of the 'Vishwaguru' and the world has been learning the philosophy of life and finding the way to liberation with the help of the knowledge that liberates. The strength of India, as a Vishwaguru, has been its metaphysical, spiritual and anti-materialistic approach to life. India shows the way to knowledge instead of information, the eternal truth, the Aatmajyan, the Moksha. The role of India, in the history of world, has always been that of a teacher, a path shower, a torch bearer. It is time that corporate system and management look into the Ancient Indian scriptures and practises and incorporates its teachings to make the modern management more effective and restoring peace in the world. Vedic integration of modern management, new age management and transcendental management in the form Vedic management is essential to improve the material and spiritual conditions of humanity. This paper makes a fragile attempt to uncover some of these facts that may wash out these doubts.

**Keyword:** Vishwaguru, Ancient India, material, spiritual, wisdom, corporate

### Introduction

Vishwa Guru or vishwaguru is a Sanskrit phrase and idea which translates to world or global teacher, world guru, tutors of the world, world leader, or teacher to the world or universe. Guru is always said to be worshiped like Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh but very few people know who the first guru of this universe was. It is said that Mahadev was the first to propagate civilization and religion and he was called the first guru of the universe. Due to the same reason, he was also called Adidev and Adiguru. Not only this but Mahadev is also called as Adinath and Adiguru.

The original name of India is *Bharata* (*Bha* means light and *rata* means absorbed) which means the country where people have opportunity and privilege to be absorbed into the Light of Truth. The Indian Civilization is one of the oldest civilizations and it was enjoying its youth when many civilizations were just in their cradles.

The role of India, from the very beginning had been that of the 'Vishwaguru' and the world has been learning spirituality, the philosophy of life and finding the way to liberation with the help of the knowledge that liberates. This is not just a patriotic emotion but it has been proved by the great travellers of the world, the literature produced in India, the influence of Indian Culture on the countries around the world, the ancient Universities, the ancient and most perfect language- Sanskrit, the deep knowledge of the subjects like astrology and mathematics, and the capability to face fatal attacks and to survive and develop even in adverse conditions unlike many other civilizations that have become past.

The strength of India, as a Vishwaguru, has been its metaphysical, spiritual and anti-materialistic approach to life. India shows the way to knowledge instead of information, the eternal truth, the Aatmajyan, the Moksha. Materialism that actually leads us far from peace, happiness and eternal joy, had never been the centre of life in India. The world, which is shadowed by this materialistic fervour, will again need help of India to find the real way to eternity and liberation, and India will again help the world as she has been doing so from the beginning.

As mentioned before this may appear to be just a patriotic thought to claim India to be the Vishwaguru but it is not really so. If the facts from the history are explored, we can find many evidences that prove that the role of India, in the history of world, has always been that of a

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teacher, a path shower, a torch bearer. This paper makes a fragile attempt to uncover some of these facts that may wash out these doubts.

It would be appropriate to begin with what is said in the twentieth verse of second chapter of Manusmriti. One of the statements of Manusmriti is very famous which says, "All the men from the world may receive the knowledge of their own duties (charitram) or conduct or what they should do " from the people born in this country." This very verse signifies the self-evident greatness of India.

Why should man be called great or a Guru? Man becomes great not by the possession of wealth nor by holding degrees or diplomas nor by being the owner neither of big firms and factories nor by owning mansions or palaces nor by possession of physical beauty or charm.

Not by eloquence or even by becoming the President or the Prime Minister of a country. But a man becomes great by making others great. He who has power to see greatness even in the lowest man and he who has power to raise the lowest to the highest, is the 'Guru' in its truest sense.

From the very beginning of civilisation India has been the World Teacher. It's a land where Vedas and Upanishads were scripted. When the whole world was groping in darkness India was teaching about the identity of man with the Supreme. The man who declares himself great and his own country great really cannot be either great or a teacher. You will find many leaders who claim themselves to be great and their country great. In contrast, Vishva Guru Bharata (India the spiritual Teacher), proclaims the greatness of all within.

From the beginning of human history there were many golden eras in India. During such eras Mother India never tried to

dominate other men or nations nor did she try to create any form of imperialism or colonialism.

The evidence of Indian Culture is still evident in the western world. The greatness of Sanskrit language is accepted all over the world. The similarity of (Bratar) and Brother,(Matar) and Mother, (Pitar) and Father, (Shatam) and Cent, and cow, and door, etc. are not just accidental. It is an accepted fact that Knowledge of Mathematics and particularly that of "Zero" has its roots in India. Many more disciplines of knowledge related to life be it is Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Medical Science, geography, oceanic science or many more life centric sciences are born in India and then speeded all around the world.

The first law maker, Lord Manu, wrote about his country several centuries ago: "The Vishva Guru Bharata. People from all over the world come here to educate themselves in economics, science, art, mathematics, psychology, philosophy, culture and civilisation".

Back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, India, a key player in the world economy, was a leading exporter of spices, sugar, textiles, handicrafts, and much more. It was also one of the first countries to adopt a money-based trade. For those surprised at the reassuring dominance India once had, it's worth noting that there was a time when India's share in world trade was about 24.5% – at par with the share of the entire European continent. Imagine the power India was! No wonder why many invaded us with the desire to rule the Vishwaguru.

According to economic historian Angus Maddison in Contours of the world economy, 1–2030 AD: an essay in macro-economic history, the Indian subcontinent was the world's most productive region, from 1 CE to 1600.

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Year	GDP (PPP) (1990 dollars)	GDP per capita (1990 dollars)	Average % GDP growth	% of world GDP (PPP)	Period
1	33,750,000,000	450	—	32.0	Classical era
1000	33,750,000,000	450	0.0	28.0	Early medieval era
1500	60,500,000,000	550	0.117	24.35	Late medieval era

India is fortunate to have an unimpeachable and exemplary legacy of mutual relationships with the East Asian region. What has sustained this mutuality for ages? It cannot just be trade and commerce alone; though they remain a very strong cementing factor. We have to only delineate the essence of mutually constructive partnerships both in the past and the present. Initiatives like the 'Act East' policy deserve appreciation and strengthening for keeping our country ahead towards the workings of peace and harmony.

Present international relationships require a very sensitive recall of the past and a realisation that these are the times of "equality of partnerships", which must be dexterously harmonised and sustained. There are unique features in every culture, region, religion and civilisation. When dealing with Asian countries, one is often tempted to recall how Indian influence has reached far and beyond the sea shores, without any bloodshed and coercion. It was not part of any conquest or converting people to one preferred religion or "salvaging the souls of the savages" but an organised, respectful and mutually beneficial interaction and exchange of ideas and knowledge among equals. Trade and commerce featured prominently and strengthened bonds with the international community. Knowledge exchange brought people together in rather close bonds that went beyond the mundane requirements of human existence.

This makes one understand how scholarship, knowledge and wisdom can be exchanged to benefit both the interacting parties, lead to better and higher comprehension of humanity, happiness and harnessing respectfully the bounties of nature. In knowledge exchange, one can benefit only when both sides are respectful to each other, none is obsessed with being the giver, but are ready to accept knowledge and wisdom from the other side as well. The wisdom of the East does not belong just to one country of the region i.e., India. One would be uncomfortable if in any reference to the glorious past of ours and its vast spread beyond the Indian borders, it is presented as everything flowing from "us" and being received by "them."

Our country has done astonishingly well in creating global goodwill during the last five years as was evident from the support we got for the genuine and effective response to the Pulwama massacre, which was a massive and unprecedented act in the history of post-independent India. The strategy of renewing and refreshing past relationships has proved its worth beyond doubt. There are several areas of cooperation like trade and commerce, investment and production, collaborations in technology, transfer and the like but there are also long-term strategic imperatives that remain unmatched in giving soft-power dividends.

For ages, India has gone through the experience from its Asian neighbours, particularly the Southeast Asian segment. Indeed, we are proud of our past glory and its acceptance beyond sea shores. To cultivate new international relationships even with old friendly nations, one must realise the importance of acquaintance with history, culture and heritage on both sides. These play a significant role in furthering mutual understanding and refreshing cultural and emotional bonds. This familiarity is an essential support to comprehend the current situation and visualise its import in the emerging context. Strategic readiness in current times requires comprehension of 'the pace of change' in pragmatic terms. Common wisdom will be to learn from history, draw inspiration from it, know the present, and reshape it for a better future for the generations to come.

India has been described as land of wisdom by Hensang. Al-Baruni recounted India as 'land of knowledge and prosperity'. India's great knowledge centres like Nalanda, Takshashila, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, Vidisha, Kashi and Vatapitrained the scholars round the globe in different disciplines such as Yoga, Ayurveda, mathematics, economy, agriculture, politics astrophysics, surgery, military, music dance, art and literature. The magnanimous scholars like Adi-Shankaracharya, Aryabhata, Abhinavgupta, Apala, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Charak, Gargi, Kanad, Kalidas, Lilawati, Lopamudra, Maitreyi, Madalsa, Patanjali, Panini, Sankardev, Thiruvalluvar, Ubhaybharti, Varahmihir and Yagyavalk were the leading figures of this great intellectual legacy. The ideas and practices sprawling from Indian culture and philosophy had defining influence on the world that is why India was the one and only "Viswa Guru" to ever exist.

Wisdom and knowledge in the form of written text first appeared as Vedas which cover subjects like astronomy, philosophy, metaphysics, mathematics, art of warfare, medicine, archaeology, architecture, physiology and many others. Our ancestors even calculated the diameter of Sun and earth including the distance between the two. This knowledge then spread to Europe through Arabs. Mathematics in Arabic is known as "Ilm e Hindsa" which means knowledge gained from India. Above facts have been acknowledged by many famous western scholars like Max Muller.

India wasn't like any other nation. We never invaded anyone. In fact, despite of so many invasions and blows to our country, our glory didn't die. Our great nation strictly followed the spiritual doctrine of "Ahimsa". It means non-injury and non-killing implying total avoidance of harming of any kind of living creatures not only by deeds, but also by words and thoughts.

India had a well-developed education system, centuries before the westerners arrived. In ancient times, the country was known to have been home to the oldest higher education and formal universities in the world. As early as 700 BC, there existed a giant university at Takshashila, located in the northwest region of Bharat. The panel of masters in the university included legendary scholars like Kautilya, Panini and Vishnu Sharama. Thus, the concept of a full-fledged university was developed in India.

Ayurveda which was a medical concept and lifestyle originated in Bharat has contributed to the healthy bodies and minds of many in the world. Charaka was one of the principal contributors to Ayurveda who is also known as an editor of the medical treatise entitle Charaka Samhita, one of the foundational texts of classical Indian Medicine and Ayurveda. The word "Yoga" was first mentioned in the ancient sacred texts called the Rigveda. Yoga's origin can be traced to India

over 5000 years ago. Though Yoga was being practised in the pre-vedic period the great Sage Maharshi Patanjali systemized and codified the then existing practices of Yoga, its meaning and its related knowledge through its Yoga Sutras. The earliest documented records that mentioned meditation involved Vedantism which is a tradition in India since as early as 1500 BC.

Sushruta Samhita one of the oldest texts in the world on plastic surgery which even now forms the base for modern plastic surgery techniques was the work of Sushruta an ancient Indian physician and world's first surgeon who is known as "Father of Surgery".

The basis of modern mathematical science ZERO and Calculus is a gift of India to the world. Modern Computer Scientists are of the opinion that most suitable language for future computer programming is Sanskrit which originated and developed in India.

In the field of literature Sanskrit has no equal. The grammar of Sanskrit as propounded by Panini is most compact yet most comprehensive even today. Mahabharat, the great Sanskrit epic of more than 100,000 slokas is the biggest literary work containing numerous topics bewilders the literary scholars who venture to the depth and ambit of this great work.

India has many sources of ancient knowledge such as Vedas a collection of ancient scriptures (Rig, Yajur, Sama, & Atharva), the Upanishads, Puranas and Itihas, Bhagavad Gita, the epic Mahabharat and Ramayana, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Manusmriti and Buddhism; they contain all ideas and facts of management principles and practices. Wisdom found in this bank can be applied and extended to Indian management problems. Ancient Indian ethics can help Modern Management to create more sustainable model of management. Our traditional Indian knowledge and wisdom can help us in addressing the problems of modern management. One cannot deny the fact that India had a glorious past with its wisdom literature. It is a way of life or a philosophy to motivate us on to the direction of enrichment.

Modern corporate management system involves three aspects such as maximum utilization of resources, achieving organizational goals with efficiency and effectiveness, value addition to the world suggesting social responsibility. All these aspects of management can be achieved in a healthy environment consist of ethics and ethical behaviour. Essence of Indian management is about society, it requires that people should develop with purity, ethics and morale, karma-yoga (Work action), knowledge, evenness of mind, objectivity of work, faith and that each and every person need to work efficiently without expecting any result in order to keep moving the wheels of universe. Ancient knowledge give prime importance to certain values and qualities like humanity, pride less, non-violence, tolerance, simplicity, self-control, absence of ego, non-attachment etc.

Indian wisdom can be applied effectively in any managerial area and is able to answer many of the management relates issues. Integration with the Ancient Indian wisdom with modern corporate system will be helpful in achieving effective result. Indian wisdom is full of some great works by great leaders such as Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on "Work and its Secret", "Karma Yoga" teach us the importance of work and the purification of mind and soul that can be achieved by selfless work and devotion.

Good Governance in corporate management is a buzz in today's corporate scenario; it is a combination of two aspects such as effective functioning and high values. For good governance two views can be adopted by corporate i.e.

Business and Spiritual view, the spiritual view which is backed by authoritative statements of the ancient Indian texts. Dharma (Righteousness), Lok Sangrha (Public good), Vividhta (Innovation), Kausalam (Efficiency) and Jigyasa (Learning) were some ancient Indian wisdom that can be applied for effective corporate governance Vedas consist of ancient value systems that emphasize on 1) Satyam or truth, 2) Tapah or Austerity, 3) Damah or Sense control, 4) Samah or Peace of mind, 5) Dharma or Righteousness, 6) Danamor Charity, 7) Daya or Mercy and 8) Nyasah or Renunciation all virtues that need to be judiciously followed in the corporate system.

Upanishad suggests that by using the business knowledge (Jnana), the organization will be able to get success through leadership (Karma) with devotion (Bhakti) towards the organization. Ancient Indian scriptures revealed ideas and thoughts of Indian ethos in management (Himadri Barman) such as:

- Atmano Mokshartham, Jagat hitya cha: Each and every works is an opportunity for doing everything good in the world and thus gaining materiality and spirituality in our lives.
- Archet Dana Manabhyam: Worship people not only with material things but also by showing respect to their enterprising divinity within.
- Atmana vindyate viryam: Strength, motivation and inspiration for doing work in an excellent and effective way comes from the divine. God within, through prayer, spiritual readings and unselfish work.
- Yogah Karmashu Kaushalam, Samatvam Yoga Uchyate: He who works with calm and even mind achieve the most.
- Yadishi Bhavana Yasya Siddhi Bhavati Tadrishi: What we think, we become, and accordingly we succeed. Attention to mean ensures the end.
- Parasparam bhavayantha shreyah param bhavapsyathah: Through mutual cooperation, respect and feelings for others, everyone can enjoy the highest good on both ends i.e. material and spiritual.
- Tesham Sukham Tesham Shanti Shaswati: Infinite peace and happiness come to them who see divine in everyone.
- Paraspar Devo Bhav: Every person has divine power, we should regard all person as a divine being.

All of us have same consciousness with different packages and containers. Indian thoughts and ideas can help in developing an effective and holistic pattern of management which will ensure overall growth in productivity, marketing and profitability. Basic principles of Indian ethos (which are based on upanishad, vedas, bhagvad gita, mahabharat, ramayana and arthshastra) for management is Karma yoga i.e. selfless work, it offers dual benefits, personal benefit in the form of self-purification and public benefit in the form of Co-Operation, it is a powerful instrument for team work and success in an organization involving collective work.

The wisdom of Kautilya's Arthashastra teaches us how to promote more ethical and responsible leadership in an individual and organizational level but also help in achieving harmony in organizations to set up a sustainable business environment through spiritual congruence. Mahabharata teaches us how we can transform our weakness into strength. Lord Rama followed the path of ethics and set an example for Kings that duty comes before his personal comfort. The Bhagavad-Gita teaches us the importance of work without expecting results and self-management.

What it takes to be a guru was described by Swami Vivekananda, the man who first gave India this aspiration. In his 1901 essay My Master he wrote: "If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary. The first is to feel. Do you really feel for your brothers? Are you full of that idea of sympathy? You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition, but in and around these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done that one more thing is necessary. What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame or power? Then you are a real reformer, you are a teacher, a Master, a blessing to mankind."

Rabindranath Tagore had mentioned in one of his lectures that "it was often alleged that Asia will never progress as it has turned its face backward." This acquisition has been proved wrong by Japan, China and India. Equally, if not more effectively, the South-East Asia region has proved it wrong. All nations have moved ahead without either disregard for their past or ignoring new knowledge. People of this region are not perpetually lost in the sweet slumber of the glory of the past; oblivious to the need to move ahead in times and with times. India's claim to world guru status is based upon noble idea: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world is one family. We argue that since we were the first to say so, and the only people who follow the precepts, we are uniquely qualified to be the world's guru.

Shri Janak wrote that India is the land of spiritual fruits and the Land of Gold. And if people of India do not remain in their spirituality then this Gold will be stolen by foreign rulers. Further, he writes that the power of spiritual teachers is such that they can bring dead persons back to life and living persons into enlightenment.

Naturally the question arises that if such was the glory of India then why should present India have to suffer more privation than most other parts of the world. The answer is that Indians are Indian only in colour and flesh and that they are not Indian in spirit. In spirit they are dependent on foreign culture, foreign civilisations, philosophy, science and psychology.

The world today is materialistic. The downfall of human values and ethics is being increased with desire for material gains. The stormy winds of the rush for physical gains keep blowing the values away from us. The youth of India today appear to be eagerly waiting for an opportunity to go abroad. Ideals and idols are gradually changing. Role models are being altered nowadays. It reminds us of the words of Lord Krishna told to Arjuna when he presented with rational arguments from him – "Arjuna, you are creating Pragyavada in your mind and so you are not able to think what you ought to, and keep thinking what you ought not to." Such 'Pragyavada' i.e. pseudo rationalism is being established in today's world.

A strife-torn world today must be looking towards India, conscious of its unique historical standing as a nation that had learnt to live together with every aspect of conceivable diversity, like that of ethnicity, language, religion and culture. The West is now facing problems arising out of a necessity to learn to live together with diversities. These have reached their doorsteps because of globalisation, ease of mobility in seeking greener pastures and have also forced migrations in search of security and livelihood. If India was still high on its record of social cohesion and religious amity, on adherence to joint family systems and social security, on basing its

democracy on values defined by Gandhi and the spirit of freedom struggle, these nations would have flocked to India to learn more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to look back into our past health practices and learn from them in order to adapt to our modern lifestyle challenges. In fact, the world overlooked Indian knowledge of antiquity as a source of ideas for maintenance of health equilibrium for the individuals as well as society at large.

Deeply satisfied, they declare India as their guru without the latter itself making a claim. If we were a learning hub and had ancient higher learning institutions like Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramshila among others, the continuity of our gurudom would have been unchallenged. Swami Vivekananda presented India's past glory to the world, the values it had adhered to in the past and the concern it had shown towards the welfare of all without any discrimination. Vivekananda received global acclaim and admiration. He knew that this alone was not sufficient. He established the Ramakrishna Mission worldwide. One has to create institutions that prepare the people and give them true education. Let them comprehend that "education is the perfection already in man." Ancient Indian Scriptures provides an opportunity to integrate the wisdom with current management practices like TQM, Sustainable development, Environment protection, CSR, etc. for achieving a higher purpose, and for creation of an ethical environment and can help us to live in peace, co-operation, and harmony. It also gives ethical direction to the modern managers and helps them to become extra ordinary leaders who can guide us towards a new horizon.

It is time that corporate system and management look into the Ancient Indian scriptures and practises and incorporates its teachings to make the modern management more effective and restoring peace in the world. Vedic integration of modern management, new age management and transcendental management in the form Vedic management is essential to improve the material and spiritual conditions of humanity. In addition it also ensures proper balance between prosperity, equity and spirituality which was conceived in the Vedas given by Vedic intellectuals.

The land of India is spiritually energized over ages in such a way that it has the potential to produce Sages and Saints even today and in future too, who can guide the world with the right path to live a life which is total not only in the material manner but in a spiritual manner. The Bharatiya civilization offers everything humanity needs in terms of sustainable progress in the most inclusive and peaceful manner and if every citizen is conscious of this, he or she will place Bharat on the high throne as Vishwaguru. The world will be a much better place once the Bharatiya citizens incorporate the wisdom from their civilization in the modern corporate system.

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