



Science of Management in the Vedas

Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy

Director, Indian Heritage Academy, Koramangala,
Bangalore-560 095

Abstract

Concepts and principles of Management are applicable to all areas of human endeavour. The popular notion is that Management is concerned with achievement of goals through directing, motivating and controlling manpower in organizations and institutions. Usually it is associated with business and Industrial enterprises, where managers use manpower and other resources to make profits. Management is equally applicable to educational institutions, hospitals, churches, government organizations, NGOs, social service institutions and others, in which profit is not involved.

In fundamental terms, Management is concerned with directing and controlling entities, events, organisations, institutions, as well as values, thoughts, attitudes, behaviour, decisions, actions, relationships, etc.

From the dawn of civilization, man has been making use of nature's endowments for survival, sustenance, comfort, convenience, etc. Family is the primary unit of the society, which is being managed by the head of the family for ensuring good relationship and stability.

Spectacular developments during the last 100 years in science and technology as well as their application to all human endeavours, such as instant communication and fast travel have brought the whole world together.

Technology and resources are neutral and value free. Man uses them for good purposes and also for destruction. It is the Management component that determines whether an action is for the good of society or not.

Conventional Management concepts have grown on a secular materialistic basis, drawing inspiration and principles from traditional social science disciplines, such as politics, economics, psychology, sociology, logic, law, anthropology, history, mathematics, statistics, etc. Man's actions, either individually or collectively, can be beneficial to the society and environment or it would have adverse effects. In order to prevent adverse impacts on others, including society, animals and nature, Governments have been regulating with laws. Also, the assumption is that the humanism in man-



kind would make him behave properly towards fellowmen and environment. But this has not happened.

Such a materialistic approach of Management has led to unfortunate consequences in all aspects of life. He has exploited animals and nature to disastrous levels. Natural resources are depleting Environment, air, water and soil are polluted. Animals are being tortured. Thousands of animal and plant species have disappeared. Rate of deforestation and desertification is increasing. Scholars apprehend that, if this trend continues, man's very existence in the planet may be endangered. All these happen because the Management component of politicians, policy makers, corporations, organisations and others have no ethical basis for their action.

Similarly, man's relationship with fellow men also has deteriorated. Crime, violence, promiscuity, hatred, prejudices based on religion and nationality, racial hatred, etc have increased manifold. In the name of security, powerful nations have acquired thousands of hydrogen bombs, which can obliterate all life in the planet. Families are being fragmented. In many parts, man has become lonely and feels insecure and highly stressed. New diseases are emerging due to man's indulgence in illicit relationships. Some scholars apprehend that mankind is sick and rushing towards mass suicide.

All these undesirable tendencies can be traced to the fact that Management has no ethical or moral dimension. Government controls and self imposed humanism have not been able to check such trends in thinking, actions and relationships. In this context, it has become necessary to add new dimensions to Management concepts by inculcating ethical and moral values, philosophy, spirituality, art, literature, aesthetics, yoga, meditation, prayer and such other sacred concepts, drawn from India's ancient thought and wisdom. This means that materialism has to be tempered with spirituality, by inculcating values based on rational and scientific principles contained in the Vedas.

The profound teachings contained in the Vedas, propounded perhaps 8000 years ago, are highly relevant to today's deteriorating conditions. Through meditation and intuition, our sages and saints had anticipated these problems and proposed solutions based on ethics and spirituality. They have proposed duties and codes of conduct for all segments of society. Many scholars in the West, like Romain Rolland, Arnold Toynbee, Maxmueller, David Frawley and others have predicted that, in this century, India's ancient thought and wisdom would influence the thinking of lead-

ers and professionals, so that the present mad race towards suicide can be arrested or even reversed. Sri Aurobindo and Vivekananda had also predicted such a role for India.

As per the Vedas, nature is not our enemy to be confronted and exploited, but is a partner in progress. Animals have an equal right to share the planet, and therefore, they should not be exploited. Certain animals, plants and nature's endowments are worshipped. Their blessings are invoked for the welfare of all the entities inhabiting the planet. India's spiritual and philosophical concepts on universal consciousness pervade the whole universe, and therefore all lives deserve our respect.

Duty is given more importance than rights. Hinduism respects all different religions as different paths to the same godhood. Thoughts, words and actions are conceptualised as an offering to God. Contentment, renunciation, selfless service, sacrifice, detachment, desireless action, acceptance of outcomes as Prasada, submitting to the laws of nature and cause and effect, propriety in actions and relationships etc are values, which have been illustrated in the two Itihasas. Ideals and scientific concepts as well as yoga and meditation can help mankind to check negative tendencies and foster positive attitudes and values. These principles have been formulated, based on intuition and revelations of Rishis, who meditated and discovered the mysteries of nature, without any aid from instruments. Janaka was considered as a ruler-cum-sage. In the same way, all professionals should be manager cum sages. While wealth and desire are legitimate aspirations of mankind, they should be tempered by Dharma. Means are as important as ends. Actions should be governed by the universal goal of welfare of all, and not of the entity only. Character is as important as competence. Man should be inspired by worthy goals. Such values should be sustained by appropriate systems.

In the one million pages of spiritual literature, our Rishis had elaborated guiding principles for all phases of life from birth to death. The concept of law of cause and effect and incarnation not only explain the inequities and suffering in life, but also act as a restraint on man for ensuring proper behaviour in this birth.

The Bhagavad Githa is an excellent guide to management. The Shastras, Vedangas and other parts deal with problems of life, health and happiness. Thus integration of Vedic concepts would ensure that Management becomes an instrument for bringing about progress and happiness to Man, Animal and Nature.