

CORPORATE LESSONS FROM INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: LEARNING FROM THE GLORIOUS PAST FOR BUILDING A STRONG INDIA

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Abstract

Our ancient Indian Knowledge System holds a lot of significance in the contemporary scenario. It is a summary of all the elements having significant characteristics like logical, scientific-rational, openness, diversity, to its core. It is encapsulation of traditional and cultural values of different generations of different time periods. The spiritual ideology and corporate lessons given in different elements of Indian Knowledge System were highlighted in the whole world by efforts of many great Indian knowledgeable men. The Indian knowledge system was based on achieving higher self through holy spiritual knowledge. One of the biggest gifts of India to the world is Holy Bhagwad Geeta and it a comprehensive knowledge applicable in practical life.

The study attempts to determine the potential of India's ancient knowledge system in providing solutions to the organization's management problems. This study mainly discusses corporate lessons from Bhagawad Gita, Ramayan and Mahabharat. The study was based on secondary data. The study concluded that corporate teachings that are provided by Bhagawad Gita, Ramayan, and Mahabharat are very useful for corporate people as it provides them an aid in increasing their competency, skills and helps them in facing their fear of failure. The adoption of lessons taught in various Indian Knowledge system can escalate the company's effectiveness and efficiency.

Keywords: Ancient, Indian Knowledge System, traditional, corporate, lessons, scriptures

INTRODUCTION

India's Knowledge System started from Vedic culture. Vedic culture is comprised of four Vedas: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. Rig Veda contains 1028 hymns and came into existence earlier before other Vedas. In order to worship God, these hymns were sung.

The Yajur Veda specifies the rules to be considered at the moment of sacrifice. The Sama Veda cites chanting during the period of sacrifice. The Atharva Veda shows rituals. The Dharma Sastras cites the rules to be observed in the everyday life. Six Vedangas viz., *Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakarna, Nirukta, Chhanda, and Jyotisha*, also hold significant place in the Indian Knowledge System. Indian Knowledge System also involves knowledge obtained from *Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas, Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*.

The Upanishads contains philosophical text related with different areas like the creation of world, the absolute, the soul, and the mystery of nature.

Kautilya wrote *Arthashastra* and elucidated the knowledge of governance. The philosophical text contained in *Arthashastra* described numbers of aspects from lower-level management to foreign policy. It offers suggestions to governors and the kings.

Six system of Indian Philosophy viz., *Nyaya, Vaishshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Poorva, Mimansa, and Uttara Mimansa*, are mentioned generally in the domain of philosophical knowledge.

Basically, India's Knowledge System consists of intuition, experience and revelation.

"Rishi" and "Yogi", India's knowledgeable men build India's Knowledge System from the above-mentioned methods.

India's Knowledge system provides a lot of guidance in conducting certain activities in the organization more efficiently.

On 16th May, 2022, Hon'ble Union Minister of Education and Skill Development launched a book on "Introduction to Indian Knowledge System: Concepts and Application". He talked about the recognition of India's Knowledge System, spirituality, culture and philosophy globally. He also highlighted the positive impact of India's knowledge system on the world. He further talked about Indian texts *Vedas*, *Upanishads* etc. and stated that there is a need to safeguard, document and spread the wisdom our Indian Knowledge System which is full of treasure around the world. He also highlighted the importance of science-based knowledge contained in India's Knowledge System in the contemporary time. Further, he stated that there is a need to develop a collegiality between Indian Knowledge System and contemporary issues which is faced by society as our Indian Knowledge System has solution for world's problem.

Leadership is regarded as one of the chief factors responsible for the success of the organization as this factor will lead the organization to new heights, magnificent position and creating standards whereas the same organization will see failure if the leadership is specious. Globally, large number of organizations are facing this issue of managing organization culture. In order to create a sustainable organization culture, variety of management theories give an explanation of this concept from various aspects. Although, if we look at Indian ancient *Puranas* and *Scriptures* like *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Vedas*, *Bhagawad Geeta*, and *Arthashastra* etc., we come across a unique outlook of leadership and its consequence on the organization.

At present, a lot of managers even after taking training are facing a lot of issues in terms of management of stress, managing employees around them, how to increase their work productivity, making leaders in higher level management, managing work environment, creation of friendly relations, and building organization which will have a long productive life. They also face difficulty in managing their work life and personal life. Because of this situation, there is a need to find out the better alternatives for the management of the organization. The present study is an attempt to find out the potential of India's ancient knowledge system in providing solutions to the organization's management problems.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study corporate lessons from *Bhagawad Gita*
- To examine corporate lessons from *Ramayana*
- To analyze corporate lessons from *Mahabharat*

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals with the study of past articles related to corporate lessons from different ancient scriptures of Indian Knowledge System. *Satish, M., & et. al. (2020)* studied leadership lessons from Indian Knowledge System. The study was based on secondary data which was collected from published sources. The paper discussed leadership lessons from mainly Mahabharat, Ramayan and Bhagawad Geeta. The study also made an attempt to compare contemporary management approach with ancient Indian Knowledge System. The study concluded that ancient Indian Knowledge System holds prominent place in facing challenges of contemporary corporate world.

Gupta, K., & Garg, I. (2020) stated the relationship between lessons from Mahabharat & Bhagawad Geeta and the concept of contemporary strategic management. The study was based on secondary data collected from websites, articles, newsletters, etc. The study concluded that the present concept of strategic management has been already told by Lord Shri Krishna in Bhagwad Geeta and Mahabharat.

Rajpurohit, N. (2020) analyzed different leadership styles in ancient scripture Mahabharata and its relevance to motivate and demotivate employees. The study was based on secondary data which was gathered from authentic sources. The study also stated the leadership role of Lord Krishna which helped Pandavas in attaining triumph over Kaurvas. The study also stated an example of bad leadership, author take the case of Lord Dhritarashtra.

Gupta, P., & Singh, N. (2019) examined different management lessons from Ramayan and Mahabharat that can escalate the managerial efficiency. The study was based on secondary data which was collected from published authentic sources like websites, articles of prominent scholars in the field, books etc. The study also stated some managerial models which were based on the two great Indian epics Ramayan and Mahabharat. The study concluded that Lord Shri Ram in Ramayan and Pandavas in Mahabharat had used a combination of modern management strategies like Red Ocean, Blue Ocean, Green Ocean and sometimes black ocean too at right time.

Gupta, Priyanka. (2018) examined corporate lessons and motivational skills that were taught by Lord Shri Krishna in Bhagwad Gita and their significance in the contemporary corporate world. The study was based on secondary data which was collected from websites, books, articles, etc. The study concluded that teachings of Lord Shri Krishna is significant in present corporate world.

Nanda, S. (2016) analyzed the conceptual terms of management like mission, motivation, leadership, quality in work, vision, attaining purpose, dedication towards work, vision, planning and decision making, which were discussed in Bhagawad Gita. The study was based on

secondary data which was collected from articles, books, websites etc. The study also stated managerial lessons from Bhagwad Gita that can escalate managerial effectiveness.

Mehta, B. H., & Taylor, R. (2015) studied corporate lessons and spiritual concepts from Mahabharat that can provide an aid managing contemporary corporate world. The study was based on secondary data. The study throws light on important management and leadership lessons from epic tale of Mahabharata.

Priya, S. E., & Vivek, N. (2015) discussed various management concepts from Mahabharat which are significant in managing modern day corporate world. The study was based on secondary data. The study stated some narratives of Mahabharat which holds significance in management of company.

Thaker, K. (2011) examined management lessons from Mahabharat. The study was based on secondary data gathered from books, websites, articles etc. The study also stated the DMA framework viz., direction, motivation and ability which helped Pandavas to attain victory over Kaurvas. The paper also throws light on some chief effective management control techniques that can be drawn from the great Indian epic Mahabharat.

Mahadevan, B. (2008) stated management lessons from Bhagwad Gita. The study was based on secondary data collected from websites, books, articles, etc. The paper discussed alternative paradigms from Bhagwad Gita. The study also stated leadership and management lessons as major takeaways from Bhagwad Gita.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Indian Knowledge System is contemplated as one of the biggest sources of knowledge and motivation in the modern times as well around the world. Different aspects of Indian Knowledge System have been encouraged and welcomed by citizens all around the globe. It provides an aid to people in finding their purpose of life and provides a path in the direction to attain that purpose. With this objective, this study is an attempt to find corporate lessons from Indian Knowledge System mainly from Bhagwad Gita, Ramayan and Mahabharat. This study is descriptive in nature and secondary data has been used in the study. The secondary data has been collected through published sources only.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section deals with analysis and interpretation of the study.

CORPORATE LESSONS FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

5.1.1 BHAGAWAD GITA AND MANAGEMENT

Management is an important part of every person's life as they need to manage various things at home and workplace. When a group of individuals from different backgrounds come in the organization with a common goal, objective and purpose, there is need to manage various factors like materials, time, machinery, resource, funds and many more. Management is an art of getting things done through others and motivating employees to increase their productivity which will also help the organization to achieve their goals.

Our Indian Knowledge System element "*Bhagawad Gita*" is regarded as a comprehensive guide to increase the productivity of employees in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness in performing a job by spreading wisdom in terms of "Converting weakness into strength", dividing responsibilities, choosing the appropriate individuals in the team, the requirement of charismatic leader in the organization that will inspire, motivate and will help the employees of the organization in solving certain dilemmas they face every day.

CORPORATE LESSONS FROM BHAGAWAD GITA

- **Commitment with regard to work:** A famous verse of Bhagawad Gita provided guidance with regard to detachment of expectations of desired results from finishing any work commitments. Likewise, a person must concentrate on finishing the work within the stipulated time period without focusing on desired outcomes.
- **Altruistic Work Commitments:** Lord Krishna enlightened Arjuna to brawl a fight with the aim to improve the universe. Lord Krishna advices Arjuna that the main objective of war is to improve the universe in the direction of correct way of living (Dharma), not for fulfilling their own avarice, benefit and wish. Consequently, each and every single individual of the organization should give first preference to organization objective rather than individual's objective.
- **Identity with Work:** According to Bhagawad Gita, an individual's identity is not decided by his caste, colour and family he is member of but a individual's personality must be related to his ability to fulfill his work commitment effectively and efficiently. Therefore, in the light of management, it means that a person's identity must be decided and related with his skills, capabilities, work etiquette and way of acting towards superior and subordinates.

- **Emotional Intellectual Capacity:** Bhagawad Gita advices that one should not get cocksure of one's little triumph and not to get dishearten of small failures but one should constantly take efforts in the direction of our purpose. Consequently, in the context of management, individuals of the organization should work in the direction of organization's objective without giving regard to all odd.
- **Support to change:** Lord Krishna said that an individual afraid of change divert his own mind towards doing wrong course of action (Dharma) and unethical practices. Similarly, people working in the management should not be afraid of any fear and should be ready to accept any change in working conditions.
- **Purpose:** Lord Krishna advised that any work done with favorable intentions will definitely give desired results. Similarly, the objective of organization's manager should be clear, conscience and attainable.
- **Sound Cognitive Ability:** During the war, Lord Krishna said that life of a human is a war between the body and the mind, one must strike to keep a balance between mind and body in order to examine a situation and take right decision at the right time. Consequently, an organization's manager should keep his mind stable in order to take effective decisions in importance situations.

5.1.2 RAMAYANA AND MANAGEMENT

In simple words, management means motivating people to work together to attain some desired goal and it involves mainly five functions; Planning, organizing, directing, controlling and coordinating.

One popular event in Ramayana clearly shows the application of management principle is that of Hanuman goes to Srilanka in search of Mata Sita. The main objective of Hanuman was to search Sita in Srilanka and convey her the message sent by Lord Ram. When Jamvat was confident that Sita is in Srilanka, he advised Hanuman to go there to find her. He motivated Hanuman to become cognizant of his own potential and encouraged him to go to Srilanka. Then, Hanuman went to enemy's camp and examine all the situation there by understanding strength weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) in Srilanka. In the same way, management also involves setting up of the goal, be determinant and conducting a SWOT analysis to attain desired outcomes of a business. Conducting a SWOT analysis is a very significant aspect of management. Furthermore, Jamvat act as a motivating force as he encourages Hanuman to go to enemy's place is the perfect example of a business manager who motivates his employees to work in direction to attain organization's goals. Ramayana also gave us examples of a good and bad manager. In Ramayana, Sughriv displayed some of the finest features of a good manager as he formed a strategic alliance with Ram to get his kingdom back from his brother. On the other hand, Ravana showed the characteristics of bad manager and as a result, he lost his kingdom. From the beginning, he did not pay attention on the advice provided by his managers. Whereas in company, a manager has to take suggestions from his subordinates in order to face a crisis situation in a company. But Ravana owing his ego never listened to his wisest manager Vibhishan and as a result, Vibhishan left him during the crisis situation.

A business survives by making relation with every stakeholder of the company. Lord Ram was best in nurturing relations and as a result he won.

All the instances mentioned above showed a great deal about management.

CORPORATE LESSONS FROM RAMAYANA

- **Put forth a concrete vision to followers:** Lord Ram provided a concrete vision to its followers. The main objective of Ram and his army was to destroy the rakshasas and get Sita out of Srilanka. To attain this objective, Ram and his army undertook various activities like construction of an overseas bridge, conducting search operations for Sita and confrontation with Ravana. These activities were undertaken under the concrete vision provided by Ram to its followers. The unambiguous and concrete vision motivated Ram's army to undertake certain operations to rescue Sita from enemy's camp.
- Furnished a clear and concrete objective together with the strategy to attain that desired outcome.
- **Behave with all individuals equally:** Lord Ram was a King and he behaved with all the individuals equally. Rama unlike other kings maintained a very healthy and equal relationship with people of both upper and lower caste. This also helps him to win war against Ravana as he received loyalty of its army. Maintaining healthy relationships and treating all people with respect and kindness regardless of their caste.
- **Stand fearlessly in spite of challenging situation:** After the kidnap of Sita, Ram curiously look around in the forest in search of Sita. Ramayana showed very poignant details of Ram's sorrow when Sita was kidnapped by Ravana. But still, he never ger disheartened and his sorrow did not let him stop the search of Sita even when he doesn't know about the kidnapper of Sita. Lord Ram searched for Sita courageously and even encouraged his army to find Sita and as a result, he won the battle against Ravana.
- Face crisis situation with courage and take necessary steps at that time to attain desired goals.
- **Seek suggestions from subordinates on important affairs and take their suggestions in a positive way:** Ram safeguarded Vibhishan when he was abandoned by his own brother Ravana. Though some members of the Ram's army did not want to protect enemy's brother but still Ram convinced them to agree to his decision by relieving their suspicious attitude towards Vibhishan without any conflict. Ram took suggestions and understood the suspicious attitude of his army towards Vibhishan but he listened, and resolved

all their doubt against him and made them accept his decision. As a result, Ram's army feels very motivated that Ram's listened to their suggestions and their complaints had been elucidated.

- Emancipate subordinates and seek suggestions from them freely
- **Act in accordance with ethical code of conduct:** Rama took moral decisions in each and every aspect of his life.

5.1.3 MAHABHARAT AND MANAGEMENT

Mahabharat is one of the biggest, oldest and great epic of Hindu mythology which was written during the ancient period. Generally, it is considered that knowledge and wisdom given in Mahabharat cannot be found everywhere. This fabled mythological tale holds eminence in the modern world as well around the world. It is one of the greatest gifts in terms of life skills, knowledge and wisdom which India has offered to the world.

The ethics of epic Mahabharat are useful in the management of corporate world.

CORPORATE LESSONS FROM MAHABHARAT

- **Unerring Leadership and Mentorship:** Kauravas were directed by one man command and they were receiving decision from one man only as they were following on one man hierarchy of leadership whereas Pandavas were under the guidance of different generals and they were receiving different commands from different generals. The Pandava's were following the guidance from Lord Shri Krishna while Kaurava's were receiving orders from Karna.
- The guidance received from Lord Shri Krishna lead towards victory of Pandavas.
- The selection of right leader and mentor is the beginning step in the way to enter into corporate world. As Arjun was receiving guidance from his mentor, it is also important for employees of the corporate world to learn skills from their leader.
- **Goal and Smart Approach:** War was the aim of both Pandavas and Kauravas ultimately. Karna proceeds in the direction to overpower other kings with the intention that Kauravas may acquire wealth. On the contrary, Arjuna, Bheem and Yudhishtira were ready to obtain Divyastras, strategic wisdom and strength. If Pandavas had not received the wisdom, guidance and master plan of Lord Shri Krishna, they would not be able to defeat Kauravas. Lord Shri Krishna provided the correct strategy and skills to Pandvas before entering into battlefield.
- **Learning and Growth:** Arjuna learned everything that came in his way. He acquired the knowledge of the finest of military science from Drona. He was also eager to gain understanding about divine weapons from Indra. Besides, he also considered Yudhishter and Krishna as his mentors also.
- **Dedication and Common Goal:** Everyone in the Kauravas army had personal prejudice. On the contrary, the army of Pandavas had not under any circumstances ceases to fight for their own rights. Pandavas had common goal in their mind and they work in the direction to attain that objective of victory over Kauravas. The audacity and perseverance quality of Pandavas led them to attain victory.
- One of the principles of Henry Fayol's states that maintaining team coordination and following one common goal of the organization.
- **Involvement of Women:** Pandavas used to respect every woman and their decision at all times. Draupadi, Kunti and Subhadra are some of few prominent female personalities of Mahabharat. On the contrary, the Kaurvas were having patriarchal mindset and they never allowed the involvement of women in any decision making.

CONCLUSION

The study discussed some corporate lessons from different aspects of Indian Knowledge System. This study stated corporate lessons that can be acquired mainly from Bhagawad Gita, Ramayan, and Mahabharat. The learnings from these Indian ancient creatures provides useful solutions to face contemporary challenging situations of corporate world. The study concluded that corporate teachings that are provided by Bhagawad Gita, Ramayan, and Mahabharat are very useful for corporate people as it provides them an aid in increasing their competency, skills and helps them in facing their fear of failure. The adoption of lessons taught in various Indian Knowledge system can escalate the company's effectiveness and efficiency.

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