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Incorporating the Management Practices in Business Culture : A Study from the Perspective of Chanakya Neeti.

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Abstract

Extensive competition around the world especially in job sectors has made achieving goals and aims too difficult. Arranging, assembling and organising resources are still way manageable but directing the same to employees from varied cultures and backgrounds is not an easy task. Effective management practices include and define clear objectives to the employees so as to create and conserve time, money and efforts for a successful and mutual benefit of both employees and the organisation. At this expository point, it is thereby essential that employees too must adhere to healthy concepts and skills at work places to get rid of any negative circumstances and acquire success. This paper emphasizes on management principles at workplaces with reference to the 'Chanakya Neeti', that comprises a series of philosophies or lessons which have been descended, transmitted and expressed in every age and in every field of management and which add great value to management practices even today.

Key words

Management, Leadership, Business Culture, People Skills, Chanakya Neeti

The Concept of Management

Management is a skill and an ability to handle and administer number of people. Both people and resource management involve a thorough act of responsibility. It is an undeniable fact that when a group of people work under the same roof, managing and controlling them is not a cake walk rather a very complicated task. At one hand it is required that the efforts and skill sets of each and every person is utilised towards achieving one common goal and at the other hand it is also essential that coordination among all the employees of the organisation properly and very decisively organised for a successful running of the organisation. In most of the platforms management and leadership qualities are considered similar however Martin discusses “Management represents a formal role within an organisation. In that sense it is a job which contains particular responsibilities for an area of organisational activity and probably a number of subordinate employees. Leadership tends to be regarded as a set of personal characteristics that reflect the ability to get other people characteristics that reflect the ability to get other people to follow” (Martin 375).

Rudani in his book *Management and Organisational Behaviour* classifies management into five different functions after contrasting the functions with other writers. He summarizes that “management consists of five functions or steps, such as planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling” (Rudani 18). The book *Supervision: Concepts and Practices of Management* define management as “the process of getting things accomplished with and through people by guiding and motivating their efforts towards

common objectives” (Leonard, Trusty and Hilgert 48). Guidance, motivation and other aspects of managerial skills enable the administrators and managers to deliver high class performances. Successful managers today practice people skills while still being tactful.

People skills enable them to communicate effectively, plan and prioritize capably, and coordinate and organise very decisively. Efficient managers lead and influence large number of people under them, delegate and negotiate carefully and also give constructive performance feedback. Interestingly, the set of skills which are today considered as an essential strategy of management have been written and put into practice centuries ago. Much of the complexities of work place and management practices today are solved and resolved with the incorporation of Chanakya’s management lessons in business management. Garde in his book *Chanakya on Management* states “The Chanakya Philosophies have the unique distinction of being the principles which have been demonstrated to have been used successfully in practice to achieve good results on a sustainable basis” (Garde 3). Though the volume of the ‘philosophies’ of Chanakya are large in number this paper emphasizes on three of the most crucial ‘Neeti’ which managers must integrate in their management strategies and techniques in order to be efficient enough to run the organisation.

Mishra in his book *Better Management and Effective Leadership through the Indian Scriptures* appreciates the vision of Indian writers and authors in ancient times and how their works have established the benchmark of management and leadership. He supposes “Managers spend more time in communicating than in any other activity. They have to ensure that the messages pass on without distortion or misunderstanding. Their emphasis should be on making their

communication short and precise, yet clear, focused and to-the-point” (Mishra 114).

This paper deals with some of the important management lessons as prescribed by Chanakya which when incorporated in business management renders happiness, harmony and are result driven. Some of the ‘Neeti’ are collected in the book *Chanakya on Management* originally written in Sanskrit and translated into English by Ashok R Garde.

Incorporating Chanakya Neeti into Management Practices

Today the theories and concepts of management are well delivered through the use of power point slides. Interestingly, almost all the principles of management were unambiguously expressed by Chanakya in his much followed works. Chanakya also known as Kautilya was one of the rarest of the rare multitalented administrator, economist and management Guru who had achieved expertise in various genres of life like “management, leadership, risk assessment, financial planning, governance, law, accounting system and many others. The six hundred philosophies of Kautilya’s Arthashastra has been classified in 15 books, 50 chapters and 180 topics by Chanakya himself” (<http://moneyexcel.com/9030/chanakya-niti-financial-success>). Few of his teachings are as under.

1. Sukhasya Moolam Dharmah (Asti)

It says “Basis of happiness is ethics” (Garde 5). Ethics is the study of code of conduct that deals or governs our actions towards doing things. Ethics deal with our decisions to do something. They guide us and make us able to do things which are right or wrong, good or bad. The study of ethics put exclusive focus on our endeavour to being a human pr excellence. Subramaniam in his book *Professional Ethics*

believes that much of the ethical principles like honesty, gratitude, forgiveness and many more are a part of ancient Indian scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads and it is from there that our forefathers have learnt and inculcated ethics thereby transmitting the same to us.

While the current business scenario has become globally intriguing and intensifying, the rapid changes in technology, outsourcing and business as a whole have exempted it from using ethical means to achieve success. Today, in many workplaces the existence of ethics, values and morals have gone missing. It is an undeniable fact that much of an individual's life span is spent at work place. A work place becomes an individual's focal point of survival and livelihood. But even though people believe that success in life comes through efforts at times they fail to understand that success comes only to those who are virtuous in imparting their efforts not only in their workplaces but also in every aspect of their lives. Most of the times people get easily motivated to acquire the unethical or disruptive means to success. The path to vices like dishonesty, corruption, shortcuts may result in victory and the business may prosper but with every passing moment they fade away because they are temporary. After all the sole essence of existence of human being is nothing but the character. It plays an important role in being successful. An ethical attitude towards work, colleagues and organisation is defined to be the secret ingredient of a beautiful work culture. Maintaining a high set of ethics in business is benevolent not only to the leaders or subordinates but also to the organisation as a whole. "In business, this is critical, because how people see you and your company is the basis of building trust. If you're taking unethical actions, you lose credibility, and your business will suffer" (<https://blog.udemy.com/business-ethics-examples>). Researches claim that there are many companies around the

world do not practice or incorporate ethical or moral principles in their work. However, earning profit remains their ultimate aim no matter in whichever way that is procured. Examples of such companies are many as they understand that morality or values have no place in their company's profile but their actions must only earn them gross profit. "(...) many businesses act unethically not because of a desire to do evil, but simply because they want to make a profit and therefore disregard some of the consequences of their actions." (George 3). Richard George in his book *Business Ethics* manifests, "(...) business and people in business are not explicitly concerned with ethics. They are not unethical or immoral; rather, they are amoral insofar as they feel that ethical considerations are inappropriate in business" (3). In further section George writes about the decline and downfall of the organisations which never fore mostly centralized work ethics and which land up in making newspaper headlines as "accounts of executive fraud and malfeasance, bribery, misrepresentation, white-collar crime, kickbacks, unsafe products and insider manipulation of markets" (3). To suffice this point he exemplifies Enron Arthur Anderson and WorldCom who accessed every unethical means in their business and have laid low environments and towns, which did everything but considered ethics like corporate social responsibilities do exist.

With immeasurable business policies and only few companies practicing ethical principles, each day it becomes arduous for the leaders of the companies worldwide to encourage their employees to be ethical and earn profit for their organisation. As it is the vision, mission and purpose of the company that states and establishes the definition and identity of the company, it is required that the leaders and the managers take the charge of running a sustainable business with high ethical principles. Any authentically

powerful and reliable leaders must first acknowledge their employees about the commitment towards ethical guidelines and clearly communicate in a motivational approach to make the vision of the company a reality. The employees at the same time are required to champion the resolute needs of core ethical virtues and a sense of purpose which is the basic foundation of the company. As the employees get influenced and inspired by their virtuous leaders, a mutual agreement and commitment about the shared virtues flourishes throughout the organisation.

2. Na Ekam Chakram Bhramayati

The Neeti describes “one wheel cannot make a cart roll” (Garde 13). The saying acknowledges that it is impossible to run an organisation autonomously. For a successful running of an organisation working in teams is very important. A team consists of members of varied skill sets who work together for a common goal and that assists in achieving prosperity and success. However it is essential to know the importance of working in a team. West in his book *Effective Teamwork: Practical Lessons from Organizational Research* delivers “the only point of having a team is to get a job done, a set of objectives met” (West 290) and where it is also crucial to meet specifications like team task failing which the organisational structure and it functions gets disorderly and manipulative. Researchers, authors and management experts define team as a group of employees with clear and classified goals governed by an authority. It is generally experienced that a proper formation of team i.e. including people of appropriate skills sets with differing values and significances generate implausible outcomes. Again managing the perfectly formed team can also assist in achieving more complex goals. Conversely, building an effective and result driven team is not an easy task, it requires continuous attempts and commitment.

Today teamwork is considered as the sole essence of a successful organisation. However it is important to understand that the behaviour and performance of the team members determine the overall effectiveness of the team. Mullins his book *Management and Organisational Behaviour* asserts that “Harmonious working relationships and good teamwork help make for a high level of staff morale and work performance” (Mullins 521). Managers are required to inculcate the very fact in their mind that a team must be developed and encouraged through an appropriate process of decision making. Taking decision to set up a team is a complex task because putting the right individual recognising the ability and personality with the right mind set of people can sometimes be arduous. Not only this building up a team and assigning them duties and responsibilities is yet another important job. A thorough planning of important documents and development of the scheduled plan of action including a proper review and follow up is always essential to manage a team. So also in a team the members must adhere to be more accountable about individual goals and objectives and always ready to confront and communicate with apt language and communication skills, share information and support other members and believe in responding and constructive feedbacks, paying gratitude and accepting that every member of the team is as important as the team itself. When a group of people work together for a common goal, it is obvious that the question of trust issue is most likely to arise. Ego clashes, differences in opinions, emotional outburst and other forms of conflicts are some of the most common forms of misalignment in a team. It is the responsibility of the manager to incorporate virtues of trust, cooperation and support among the members. Ghosh believes that “when there is a high level of trust within a team, people will feel that they are working in a supportive environment, which enhances

mutual learning and the achievement of team goals and objectives” (Ghosh 122).

Today a large number of companies believe working in a team based structure. Team based organisational structure fulfils the agenda of team building at every level of an organisation. This structure induces more confidence in each and every member as they understand that they are an important part of the organisation and that their contribution and participation in decision making process or any other important issues is redefined and considered worthy. Achieving goals becomes more facile. Problem solving, conflict resolution and management become not so difficult to carry out. This leads to better customer satisfaction and brings effectiveness towards any creation or innovation and even changes introduced within the team or organisation is clearly sorted and accepted.

**3. *Gunavadagunavadwa Kurwata Karyamadou.
Parinatirwadharya Yatnatat Panditen
Atirbhasakritanaam Karmanamavipatte.
Bharwati Hridayadahi Shalyatulyo
Vipaakaha.***

Thus implies “Before taking any action, whether virtuous or otherwise, the wise must make efforts to anticipate its consequences. Those who act in great haste beget a heart turning consequence like an arrow in the body after the result of action turn out to be adverse.” (Garde 19). Haste makes waste and it goes so well matching to every aspect of life especially in business scenario. Likewise making haste in decision making can result in adverse effects. Decision making is an essential process in any business organisation and it is undoubtedly a process made by leaders and managers with wide range of knowledge, experience and skill sets to deliver high class performances. Any doubt or ambiguity in the minds

of the managers can create unresolved matters and unsettling situations. Diwan in his book *Management Principles and Practices* defines it “as a process of selecting of a one best alternative for doing a work. Thus it is a particular course of action chosen by a decision-maker as the most effective alternative for achieving his goals” (Diwan 252). Hence, decision making is an activity dealing with the intellect or thinking process and which requires lot of planning. It must be kept in mind that any decision made must be effectual and result oriented and for better results must be taken at the right time. Although decision making requires performing necessary action but researchers believe for productive and influential organisational function timing is a very significant factor. Many authors and researchers believe that managers must not take lot of time and involve in slow decision making as that process can never be right and are ineffectual because the managers tend to get biased and arrive at failed outcomes. Many studies still believe that managers must incorporate faster ways and act rapidly and decisions must be taken right at the moment so as to save time and efforts of the companies. However Finkestein et al., study “it should be clear that if you don’t have appropriate relevant experience, you are highly likely to use some less relevant experience to help you think through an important uncertainty that must be resolved to make the decision. And when you do so, there is a significant probability that you will be misled by these less relevant experiences. By identifying these experiences and particularly the ones that might influence your choice, you can identify the particular experiences that are the most worrying red flags. You can then turn your attention to strengthening the decision process in a way that will counterbalance this potentially distorting influence” (Finkelstein, Whitehead, & Campbell 86-87). When decisions are taken slowly they are often accompanied with past experiences. This process assists in doing a comparative

analysis of the results driven then and at present. The careful and meticulous examination impels relevance to the experience drawn and hence encourages taking slow and better decisions in the future. Daniel Kahneman the writer of *Thinking, Fast and Slow* asserts that slow decision making are more “effortful, infrequent, logical, calculating and conscious”(Tropman 159). This excerpt has been claimed by Tropman in his book *Effective Meetings*. Hence, no studies state whether decisions must be taken slow or fast. It depends on varying contexts and interpretations. However, decisions must be taken at the right time and must always be guided by the consequences. The managers ought to think and analyze the consequences of the decisions and then take positive steps ahead.

Conclusion

This paper studied the selected ‘neetis’ or philosophies as prescribed by Chanakya. In ancient times the philosophies assisted in forming and managing government. The philosophies proved very beneficial in running a successful regime. Today, however the same philosophies determine the concept of management as practiced by the managers in business scenario. Management practices which include many responsibilities like team work, ethical guidelines and effective decision making outline a broader spectrum of present business culture. At present when the effect of globalization is unconvincing and business cultures are rapidly evolving, it is important to extract the substantial contexts from ancient preaching and address the contributions to the dynamic components of the workplaces.

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