Karma Yoga: A Tool To Integrate Sprituality At Workplace

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to understand the meaning of spirituality and how it is implemented at workplace. It also focussed on karma yoga, also known as "karma marga" based on "yoga of action"which means to work unselfishly for others without expecting anything from anyone. This paper presents the framework of karma yoga which helps in enhancing the organisational success.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: This paper reviewed the literature on spirituality at workplace and the practice ofkarma yoga to understand how the practise of karma yoga incorporate the spirituality in workplace. **Findings:** The paper offers the insight on what is karma yoga and how it can be practised in our workplaces. It is further classified on various traits at three different levels: individual, team and organisational in order to increase organisational success.

Keywords--- Spirituality, Spirituality in Workplace, Workplace, Karma Yoga, Yoga, Karma, Framework.

I. Introduction to Spirituality

Indian spirituality is all about showing respect, living a positive and healthy life. It is believed that the supreme creator has put each one of us in this world for a purpose and that purpose is to be compassionate, caring and loving to one another. (Wikipedia, n.d.). Traditionally, spirituality is a process of reformation which "aims to recover the original shape of man". Modern spirituality includes a

belief in supernatural realm, personal growth; encounter the one's own inner dimension. After, Second World War spirituality and religion became disconnected. Spirituality became more oriented or subjective experience also known as "New Age Spirituality". Modern spirituality centred on the "deepest values and meanings by which people live". It envisions an "inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/ her being. Secular spirituality talks about humanistic ideas or moral character (qualities such as love, compassion, patience, responsibility, harmony and concern for others).

Spirituality began in early days. It started from Bhagvad Gita means "song of spirit". It is about the search for serenity, calmness and permanence in a world of rapid change (social change with kingdoms getting larger, increasing urbanisation more trade activity and social conflict) and how to integrate spiritual values into ordinary life. The Gita challenges that only ascetics and monks can live a perfect spiritual life.

Gita is based on competing for throne between "Pandavas" and "Kuaravs". Both meet on battlefield to settle the conflict which took place in Kurushetra. The leader of "Pandavas" was Arjun. He decided not to fight and quit from the battle as he does not want to kill his loved ones. But Krishna told him to stick to his duty as a warrior and engagethe enemy. Gita is about conversation between man (Arjun) and God (Krishna), a seeker and a knower. The 5 reasons Krishna gave for not quitting were:

1. Atman (the self), you do not die when body dies.
2. Dharma (duty)
3. Inaction is impossible. Withdrawing from society is always a deliberate act.
4. Sacred of evil is not in action, but in passion and desires, the intension behind the action.
5. These are ways to act where we can do what we have to do without getting bad karma. The three ways are:
6. Jnana Yoga (the way of knowledge) that is life and death are not real. Selfhood is illusion. Once we realize that the ones is behind all things, we can escape the bad karma from acting.
7. Bhakti Yoga (the way of devotion) it holds that our actions can be dedicated to Krishna by surrendering our will to him and he will take upon himself any bad karma.
8. Karma Yoga ("the way of actions" or 'the way of workers"). The idea behind this is acting without attachment that is to act without being so concerned about the outcome of our actions. Sometimes emotions like fear, embarrassment, and anxiety can interfere in the outcome of what we do.

9. Spirituality in the Workplace is a movement that began in the 1990s in which individuals seek to live their faith and spiritual values in the workplace. Employees find nourishment for both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of their spirituality at work. It is about individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to grow and to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It is about care, compassion and support of others; about integrity and people being true to them and others.

Workplace spirituality was a movement that started in US in early 1920s and now, Indian organisations are also implementing it so that employees are happy while working. This shift is also called as a "Spirituality Movement", (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). He explained it as a "major transformation".

Hurdles of Organisational Success

It is difficult to make changes till we don't change our own thinking's. It is very important that every organisation maintain an environment that hampers happiness which enhances their employee's performance and productivity. Work life is becoming so demanding and stressful that everyone is forced to find ways for achieving personal stability from within. Employees are spending more time at workplaces rather than with their family and friends. Working for 8-12 hours in a day in their workplace making employees more stressed due to increase in theirworkload. As the ways of working, working hours and technology is changing employees are unable to work properly resulting into fear of failure.

In 21st century everyone want to be successful in their life whether it is professional or personal. Organisations are having "I win you lose" or "you win I loose" mind set (Marques, 2008). Time has changed and so the priorities and aspirations. People are looking for success and to achieve it, they need to work harder day out. They are spending their most of the time in their workplaces in order to get fame, wealth and respect from everyone.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand how spirituality at workplace is implemented.
2. To propose framework of karma yoga to enhance organisational success.

II. Literature Review

In India, work is worshiped and considered as most important duty according to Bhagavad Gita. Our values, beliefs and action has a very big impact on the work we do, understanding ourselves and

respecting others in workplaces and society. The word Karma is originated from Sanskrit word 'Kri', which means doing or performing one's activities that includes our actions (i.e. Karma) and thoughts (i.e. vichaar) which leads to actions. The word yoga originated from Sanskrit word 'yuj' which means to join.

In Gita, Lord Krishna says:

"Karmanyeva Adhtkaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadhachana

Ma Karma- phala-heturbuhu Ma The' Sangab Asthu Akarmani"

   It means one has right to his action and not to the fruits of his actions. This does not mean he should do all actions in his/ her life but one should not indifferent in his actions. (Nadar, 2015), said there was a situation when HCL just started and want loan from bank. They contacted Syndicate bank when the company was too small and he was the only person to check the daily accounts and make visits to the bank. The point is that one should take up any work irrespective of the hierarchy in the organisation. Environment is another hurdle which HCL provided to their employees in early days of start up. The employees love to work as they were given opportunities to do actual designing which gave them chance to reinvent themselves. In workplaces, happiness is one of the major concerns due to increase working hours which is lacking and resulted into social and psychological disorders. Incidents including industrial violence in Maruti Suzuki's plant at Manesar (India), where the deputy general manager (Human Resource Management), Mr. Avnish Kumar Dev was murdered by group of workers (Teltumbde, 2012). Similarly, the number of deaths by "Karoshi" (death by overwork) has been increasing in Japan in recent years (Karunakaran, 2014). Hence, one should do his work according to ones dharma. (Tilak, 2000) focused the importance of karma in life. (Radhakrishnan's, 1976) stated "Work is the worship of the Supreme, the man's homage to God' clearly states that in Indian culture work is considered as worship, an offering to the

   Supreme." (Chatterjee, 1995) says karma yoga looks work as bliss and freedom as the only aim of work termed as worship. (Chakraborty, 1987) classifies karma yoga in five categories: reconciliation, belief in the law ofcausality, being non judgemental, self abnegation and calmness in work. (Narayanan & Krishnan, 2003) conceptualized it into two factors: doing one's work and not being attached to the outcomes. (Menon & Krishnan, 2004) discussed four factor model: significance of work, successful work, detachment from work and setting an example.

Where (Mulla & Krishnan, 2006) had two factor model which includes duty orientation and absence of desire forrewards. Later they revised the model and kept equanimity as the third factor. (Aurobindo, 1922) people who practise karma yoga do their work as a sacrifice keeping their ego at one side. He further added that training and controlling mind and senses is very essential. In other words karma yoga is expressing one's inner life by meaningful work and contributing to others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fox, 1994; Neal, 1998)

From the above discussion there are few traits that are further classified at individual, team and organisational level.

At Individual Level

- The first, training for attaining the state of karma yoga is control of senses by mind and focus on the infinity.The sense organs should be free from the external disturbances.
- Connectedness of the mind to one's soul and working beyond one's ego and limiting their thinking to one's self interest.
- Absence of ego. The desire for the results is moved out and goes for support and dies of inanition, know as detached attachment (Mahadevan, 2014). One who practises karma yoga is exposed to law of causality. It says one's action will determine his future. This is where will, self discipline and ethical disposition comes into play (Chakraborty, 1987).
- Work is worship and it is performed not for seeking anything in return. It is done unselflessly and for one's satisfaction. (Vivekanandan, 2000) said one who work without any motive has a power to change the entire world.
- One should think for doing his work with perfection and should not interfere other's path for achieving success.

At Team Level

- It also benefits at team level. The work or action done by person is only done if he/ she find that work beneficial for others too. It is said one can only achieve success if he thinks about the good for others. The Bhagavad Gita calls this attitude as ' Lokasamgrabha' means stability in society is a general welfare for human. It is also said that we share our rewards with others and one who does not share it is a thief as it helps in building the connection. (Maynard, 1992; Miller, 1992) says there should be relationship between one's inner self and inner self of others. It further helps in building respect towards each other and their families.

At Organisational Level

- The aligning of personal and professional goals is the main aim

of Gita. It explains that one should move out from his depressed state in order to work with interest for him and for society. Workplace spirituality has a positive relationship on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) which helps in achieving a state of excellence and self realization. High OCB leads to job satisfaction resulting in lower absenteeism and turnover intension and less negative behaviour (Bolino & Turnley, 2005) which will result into improve organisational commitment (Jung & Yoon, 2012). Spirituality grounded employee's lead to mature and happy organisation which make employees more intuitive and ability to learn new things resulting in creativity (Freshman, 1999).

We can suggest that positive behaviour and personal values with a sense of duty and service. And providing ethical climate for enhancing individual dignity and personal growth where personal values contribute to society will result in high karma orientation thereby enhancing spiritual well being.
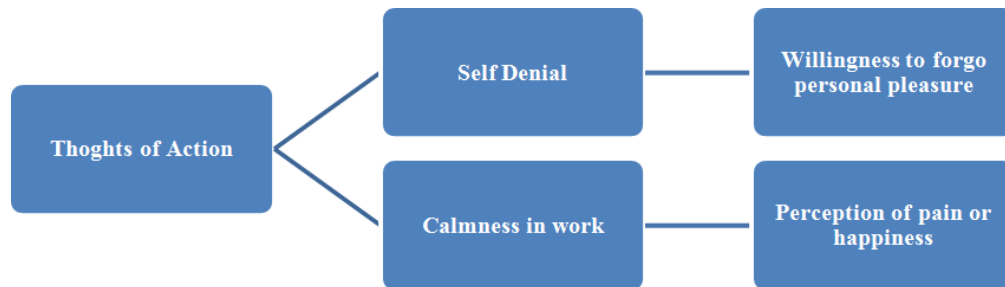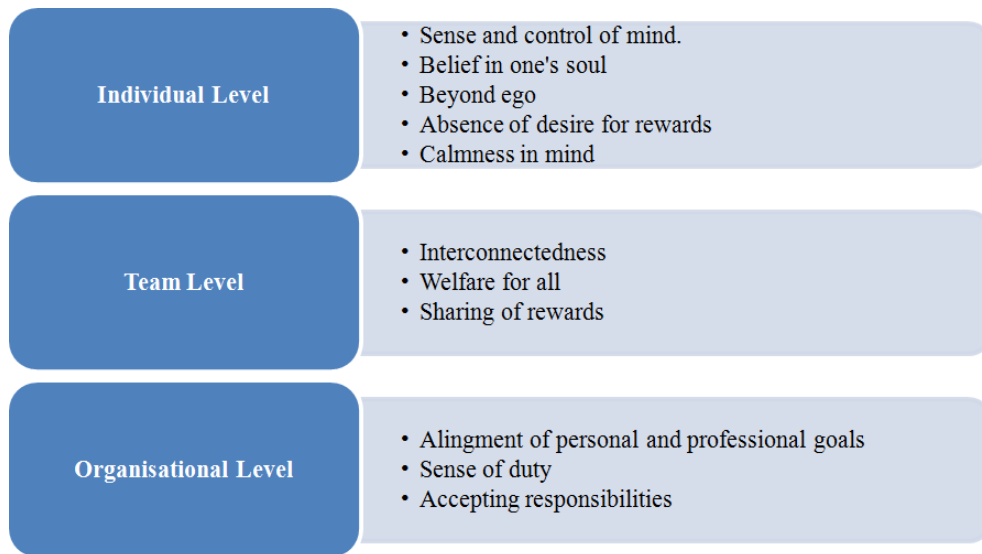

Fig. 1: (Explanation of Karma Yoga)

Figure 2: (Conceptual model of Karma yoga for Workplace spirituality)

III. Conclusion and Future Direction

Nowadays, organisations find it difficult to make their employees happy and involve them in meaningful way to make them satisfied and loyal to their workplaces. The study further explained that one who practises karma yoga focus their work rather than the outcome and think for the entire society in both adverse and favourable conditions.

Hence, future research should focus on conceptual model and validating the framework which is presented in this paper by cross verifying other interpretations. And should give stronger theoretical base, to construct and validate an instrument to implement karma yoga. An instrument to assess Karma Yoga could be constructed to verify this conceptualization. This would significantly contribute to the understanding of Karma Yoga among organizations and result in better understandings for future researchers and practitioners.

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