

Deriving Leadership Interventions From Bhagavad Gita Issues And Challenges

Abhishek Mishra¹

Abstract

Bhagavad Gita is considered to be as a holy book for the Hindu religion. The essence of the book refers to the preaching of Lord Krishna to Arjuna to continue his battle for the sake of truth. And he ultimately proved that the truth prevails over the evil which was carried out by his own relatives. Even in the present scenario, the book is closely related to the extant management practices as it defines how a leader can motivate his subordinates in achieving organisational goals. In the entire war, Lord Krishna acted as philosopher guide to Arjun in the war. This shows how an effective leader can play an important role by paving the way for attaining organisations goals. This paper depicts how the ancient text of Bhagavad Gita is closely related to the management theories and practices which emerged in the early twentieth century. Apart from the management theories it also deals with individual and interpersonal behaviour like personality, attitude, communication, leadership, persuasion etc.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Leadership, Religion, Spirituality, Management.

Introduction

Bhagavad Gita is timeless and its relevance in terms of applicability is in all walks of life. Gita contains 18 Chapters on Timeless Leadership and Motivation. Gita provides inputs on all types of functional aspects of management including management of self-stress, time, strategies and crisis in the organisation etc. Today's corporates look to words religious and spiritual classics is also looking towards religious and spiritual, classics, epics and literary masterpieces for drawing cross-cultural ethnocentric approach towards leadership and management for enhancing performance and development of HR.

People Earn Profits And Not Organizations.

Items off the Balance Sheet are qualitative and more important than the items on the Balance Sheet which are quantitative. The quality of quantitative data or balance sheet data depends on the quality of items off the balance sheet. The main success factor of any organization is leadership and missions of the organization. Today various aggressive strategies are to be chalked and framed out to improve efficiency, effectiveness and effortlessness. Eminence, Expertise and Excellence (EEE).

People Are The Greatest Assets, So Invest In Your People.

¹ PhD scholar, School of Management, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow-226025

In the quest to boost performance today's corporates are organizing various training programmes, sessions and workshops for the benefits of its employees, on motivation, leadership, time management and stress management etc. However, corporates in the quest to ape up western prime pies of management are ignoring Gita which may throne solutions to many management, administrative and organizational problems.

Peter F. Drucker is acknowledged as the pioneer and father of modern management from the principles of mind control of carrot and stick we must proceed to values-based management as epitomised by Lord Krishna in Gita while imparting timeless wisdom to Arjuna. Lord Krishna persuaded and convinced Arjuna to lift weapons for the right and just cause and not to think of any relations, distractions and any other thing whatsoever. This brings us back to the present leadership maxim that focus must be on the right and just cause and nothing else.

Be The Change You Want To See In Your Life, Society And The World At Large

To stay ahead of times and others, go on updating yourself. Besides updating yourself, you can be a pioneer, champion and forerunner of change. Reaching climax and staying there for a long time is different. Ongoing and continuous intuition, innovation and invention (III), R&D are of paramount importance for staying ahead.

Arjuna the indecisiveness of Arjun in the battle of Kurukshetra was alleviated by Krishna by argumentative persuasion the perception of right and wrong is within self and self-determined change from within help in grasping decision-making process in a much better way.

Gita is beyond the annals of time cross-section and that is why acting as Bete Noire or alternative to simplistic problem solution approach of the western management principles. Today Gita's value is globally recognized and its lessons not only guide the corporate world but included in the premier B-Schools Curriculum across the globe.

The trilogy of Gita rests on knowledge, action and core. We must walk the talk and live the values. Ideals and values are to be lived and not preached. As only living and walking will make the difference. The spiritual insights of sacred text Gita provide contemporary management concepts and can provide substantial inputs to corporates in management principles and ethos. This potential of Gita as a benefactor to individual and interpersonal behaviour needs to be harnessed to the fullest by corporates to attain efficiency and performance.

Today we find many businesses saddled with mounting debts and losses. Internal cohesion and external resilience abilities are required to alleviate stress and help in attaining the goals of self and organisation. Kurukshetra (the battlefield) is not only the name of a place but it says that life is a Yudhshetra, Karamshetra and Dharamshetra and spirituality as envisaged in the Gita requires the man to be focused on business sessions and board meetings. Today board meetings are not less than a battlefield wherein we undergo various brain-storming sessions and victory is only bestowed to those who control self-better than others.

“कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्तेमाफलेषु कदाचन”

There is no salvation without Karma. We must overcome inaction, indecisiveness and state of paralysis, which are diseases more dangerous than cancer. And these can be overcome by Risk-Taking. Progress is directly linked to risk. Please note that to work (karma) alone you have the right, not the reward, in corporate or real life. Understand the spirit of karma. Krishna trained Arjuna to overcome depression /indecision /inaction which led to a significant performance from Arjuna.

The corporate world can find the answers to its problems in GITA. The highly placed executives and professionals must increase their spirituality quotient (SQ). The corporate leaders and honchos must understand the importance of spirituality in business. Timeless leadership must be self-incorporated. The perfect blending is required of management science and the science of spirituality.

Gita is a precursor of present-day Hindu Culture and contains universal principles which can very well be applied to the corporate setting. Keep an open mind and enlarge the circle of excellence. The relevance of GITA in today's fast-paced world is undeniable considering the wisdom propounded by GITA which is relevant even after centuries. The real test of knowledge and wisdom is to remain unmoved, definite and certain in uncertain, troubled, volatile, violent and turbulent times. Be active, decisive and risk-taking for development and better governance. First self-governance must be there like self-realization. Everything starts from SELF. GITA can transform your life. It can bring a sea change in our life, even if little is followed. We are slowly and gradually being controlled, consumed and swallowed by our senses, as we become a victim of these. We must control our senses and mind and direct these to move on the right and just path. Whether it is a corporate world or an individual's world, Gita's lessons are applicable to one and all in all walks of life, in all times across the globe.

In today's scenario management is an essential part of everyone's life. Management is an art of managing things through self and others ensure efficiency and efficacy. Management involves functional areas of planning, organising, staffing and controlling the human endeavour. Bhagavad Gita is not only a religious text but majorly a philosophical canon of knowledge which years for effectiveness in all managerial functions. The Bhagavad Gita acted as a motivator to Arjuna who was unable to cope up with the angst of the idea of killing family, kith and kin. The 18 chapter instructions by Krishna are nothing but the management principles pertaining to leadership and controlling self.

Managerial Functions and Bhagavad Gita

The planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling function of management can directly be equated with Bhagavad Gita eulogies and their finer distinction is given below to elaborate the same:

Planning

Planning is the first function in every organization. Formulate strategies to achieve them. Bhagavad Gita guide forecasting managerial efficiency for effective results.

Organising

The process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise. Bhagavad Gita turns human beings weaknesses into strengths and shares the responsibilities among the people.

Staffing

The selection and training of the individual for specific job functions bringing them into a cohesive team is a basic function of management. In Bhagavad Gita selecting the right individuals with desired

skill-sets are the basis for selecting a team. Selecting the right managers who motivate group members.

Directing

Directing includes preparing a framework for effective work climate by sustained motivation and supervision. Discipline is the key and clear distinction only and will yield to the maximum performance. The same is present in Bhagavad Gita and Krishna's teaching and nothing but a direction to be focussed in life to be right and Goal orientated approach.

Controlling

Controlling is a management function that illustrates the power of getting things done by sustained unbridled supervision. Gita also concurs to these functions albeit in military parlance where millions of people fought in a most ethical manner.

Lessons from Bhagavad Gita

1. Stick On A Goal

Fix a goal and achieve them.

2. Utilization Of Available Resources

Proper utilization of scarce resources effectively.

3. Attitudes towards the Work

The idea to work by keeping purpose insight is the key to success.

4. Work Commitment

A popular verse of the Gita advises detachment from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Detach yourself from the end rewards and concentrate on the work itself. Being dedicated work must mean working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake.

5. Work Results

The Gita explains the theory of "detachment" from the extrinsic rewards of work: If the result of sincere effort is a success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the man of action alone. If the result of sincere effort is a failure, then the entire blame does not accrue to the man of action.

6. Motivation

Motivation plays a critical role in achieving goals and business objectives. Lord Krishna said: you have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty. After listening and followed by leaders order Arjun recovered and decided to fight in the war against his enemies. This is the outcome of Krishna's motivation to Arjun.

ning and followed by leaders order Arjun recovered and decided to fight in the war against his enemies. This is the outcome of Krishna's motivation to Arjun.

7. Work Culture

Effective work culture is about active and rigorous efforts in pursuit of given or chosen tasks. Sri Krishna elaborates on two types of work culture Daiv Sampat or divine work culture and Aasuri Sampat or demonic work culture.

Daiv work culture- Daiv work culture involves fearlessness, self-control, sacrifice, and straight forward approach in life.

Aasuri work culture- Aasuri work culture is nothing but the ego-driven approach and attitude of keeping self-interest over social interest or well-being.

Create DaivSampat work culture to become a performance driven and goal-oriented

8. **Surrender to the Supreme**

Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to surrender himself to supreme spirituality and should desist from doubting the existence of the supreme. He cajoled Arjun to look for the bigger and harmonious picture, by putting yourself-ego aside. Spirituality leads to social harmony and realizes the self-assessment/ self-determination driven the ultimate destiny of human beings.

9. **Wisdom over Science**

According to Gita “Science can be understood by our senses i.e. mouth speaks and understands various issues through eyes, ears and other senses. Wisdom will create an inner feeling (intuition), it will make the power of your intentions very strong, which can be transformed into introspection, after series of inner understanding if your mind says yes it becomes intentions”. The intent is driven by inner self which leads to intentions and the ably supported wisdom becomes the vehicle to become the based action plan and when tempered with Science leads to the recipe of success.

10. **Steady Mind**

According to Krishna, “Even in the battlefield success only elope those with the steadiness of mind which can be attained through the understanding of Yoga”. Life itself is a realm of war where virtues clash with the vices in the mind itself. This brings us to an understanding that calm mind can quell the emotions and increase wisdom.

11. **No Action to Action**

Arjuna’s despondency in the war was adequately addressed by Krishna when he told Arjuna that “This is not the behaviour of a great warrior” individual and their organisation's struggle because they want to harvest fruits without the effort put in the way. In the nutshell when there is a goal congruency of self and society then only true achievements can be made.

12. **Express your intent**

According to Gita “your intentions should be clear, practical and achievable and should differentiate you from others. Power of intention is the success mantra for attaining any desired task.

13. **Anger Management**

Lord Krishna said, desire for objects comes from attachment to them, and anger comes from unfulfilled desires” in fact psychoanalysis in modern times reverberate the same conclusion that anger is nothing but a manifestation of unfulfilled latent desires. In fact, the purpose of peaceful coexistence with other human beings animals and plants is the prime requirement for attaining self and organisational goals which is the basic essence of Gita.

14. **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational Leadership exuberates charisma and nurture followers. Followers need to be treated differently but equitably based on follower needs. Leaders can benefit immensely from the philosophy of Gita which can serve as a guide to the present-day leaders. A mere reflection and adoption of contemporary management principles of the west are unsuitable for the Indian context. It is incumbent to understand that new theories and concepts in leadership precincts will emerge continuously but the teaching of Gita will remain relevant and contribute to the leadership and times to come.

Conclusion

The wisdom of Bhagavat Gita inspired many generations of political and business leaders including Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation. This paper gives a birds-eye view of the oceanic knowledge

of Gita which is relevant for self-improvement performance enhancement and leadership development. The paper further helps in increasing Self Quotient (SQ) and throwing up a benchmark which remains the epitome of the virtuous way of life and deeds.

However, the paper's biggest limitation is that it is prescriptive while discussing the virtue being a good leader but lacks the practical approach towards the development of the aforesaid virtues. Further, the original text of Gita is written in Sanskrit and author has observed that translation in English is not very precise due to lack of words in English that can give appropriate expression to the Sanskrit text of Gita.

References:

1. Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba (2005), 'Man Management – A Values-based Management Perspective, Sai Publications, Andhra Pradesh, December.
2. Bhaktivedanta. A.C. and Prabhupada Swami, 'Bhagavad—Gita As It Is', Thomas Press (India) Limited, 2013.
3. Balachandran S., Raja K.C.R. and Nair B.K. (2008). 'Ethics, Indian Ethos and Management', 2nd Edition, Shroff Publishers and Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
4. Dharmaratnam, K. (1987). Bhagavad-Gita in Action, Nathan Publishing, Klang, Malaysia.
5. Dasgupta, S., 1991. A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol 1. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas. Published 1922.
6. Muniapan, B. (2007). "Managerial Effectiveness from the Perspectives of the Bhagavad-Gita", Punjab Journal of Business Studies, Volume 2 (2), October – March 2006 – 2007, 30 – 38.
7. Mahadevan, C.S. (2001). The Glories of the Gita: Stories from the Padma Purana, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, India, p. 1.
8. Mulla, Z. R., and Krishnan, V. R., 2007. Karma-Yoga: Construct validation using value systems and emotional intelligence. South Asian Journal of Management, 14(4): 116-136.
9. Mahadevan, B. (Dec, 2009). "Bhagwat Gita: Ideas for Modern Management". Talk delivered at seminar on "Towards a New Paradigm of Business management – Alternative Perspectives from Ancient Indian Wisdom", held at IIM Bangalore.
10. Subramaniam, K. (2001). Mahabharata (11th Edition), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai.
11. Swami Ranganthananda. (2000). "The Universal Message of Gita", Advaita Ashrama, Kolkatta, Vol. 1, 430 – 437.
12. Mahapatra. Tania Gita for Contemporary Management Holy Text with Secular Advice, International journal of science Research. 2014, 3(2).
13. Bharadwaj Bharat. Bhagavat-Gita and Knowledge Management, International Journal of Science and Research Publication. 2013, 3(2).
14. Rao Dr. Meda Srinivas, Bhagavad Gita. A Key Source for Management Thoughts-An Analysis, Acme Intellectuals International Journal of Research in Management. 2014, 6(6).
15. www.Swamiji Shradhananda.Com
16. www.google.com
17. Bhagavad Gita.