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An Attempt At Defining Management And Business Management

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ABSTRACT

Finding and constructing the meaning and definition of definition is itself a philosophical, semantic and intellectual problem of a hard nature. Defining a complex term such as management which has its genesis and derives its meaning from so many social sciences and even from sciences to an extent and which involves so many aspects, functions and process is truly a herculean task which is made even tougher by the fact that so many experts in the academic world have already attempted doing so and also because their meanings, understandings and conceptions may differ to a lessor to greater degree. In this paper an attempt has been made to construct a comprehensiveand synthetic definition (and a few other definitions as well) of both management and business management with the view that management is not only limited to businesses and its scope is vast, deep, many sided and there are advocates of the contingency theory of management according there may not be universal and general principles of management. Secondly, management cannot only be extended to any activity, process, situation (requiring it) and system, but also to the human self, consciousness and mind, ideas and emotions, to human groups, societies, governments and countries and to complex and dynamic interactions between one or more of these.

Attempts at definitions are fraught with danger, partly because they are very difficult and at times even bordering upon the impossible and also because almost all academic experts scrutinize and analyse definitions very deeply so as to find the minutest fault, anomaly and invalidity.The problem arises more with definitions in social sciences and we would want to make it clear at the onset that formal and logically rigorous definition of management will not be possible and the best definition that can be given will be a probable definition an approximate definition.

The starting point in trying to conceive of a definition of management would be to distinguish between management as a verb as denoting the act of managing and management as a noun which denotes the top group of leaders of an organization. The second would be to distinguish between three senses in which the word management is used – as a formal process employed in organizations to achieve results, as an academic discipline a field of study and as a day to day affair or even a part of human rationality, our attempt to systematize, organize and to solve problems of our lives. The third would be to differentiate between business management and management not for profit and management in public institutions and by governments, popularly and academically known a public administration. Fourth would be to claim and assert that both leadership and supervision are categories of management (leadership may, in addition to other conceptions be conceived as management by or at higher levels and supervision by or at lower levels, leadership as superior management and supervision as bare minimum according to others) and the fundamental activity or process is management. But a last distinction between business management in large corporations and business management in small businesses also needs to be made as there are clear differences in complexity, activities and processes of both. These distinctions do not put a pertinent question mark on the generality and universality of management, but point out the different degrees, shades and dimensions of management.

The next task would be to dissect the elements of management and business management.

1. Management is a process, activity or set of activities, operations,action(s) or a result of purposive goal directed interactions.

2. Management can range from (self-management) to a simple task to a whole organization to a country. Even in organizations management complexity can increase from managing simple activities and tasks to teams, to departments, to branches to units to regions to whole companies and in case of governments – managing societies, economies and nations. Management includes managements, i.e. managing a corporation or a country includes managing their sub-parts, which further includes managing their sub-sub-parts extending up to self-management. The management tree begins for example in case of an organization at the top and extends up to self- management, its deepest and lowest root.

3. Most management is more than simple and whether in government or for businesses its sub functions include forecasting, planning, decision making, organizing and staffing, directing, coordinating, motivating, dealing interacting &communicating, leading and controlling. Managing business organizations usually involve all of these. Management in non-profit organizations and public administration also involve many to all of themto a lessor or greater degree. The more complex management endeavours include more or all of these functions. Simpler functions may involve a few of them. The most fundamental management functions are deciding, organizing and controlling. It gets more complex when planning and leading are added and even more complex when the other functions are included too.

3. Its functional areas and areas of application are now too many ranging from musical events to military operations to scientific projects, the self, one's life, non-profit organizations, governments, small businessesto businesses in large corporations in which the main functional activities are production/operations, finance, marketing, information technology management, human resource management. In governments and non-profit organizations marketing may be lessor or of a different type. In service organizations there may only be operations and not production. In labour intensive businesses information technology may be replaced by simpler techniques.

4. The stakeholders of business management are many – shareholders, other investors including VCs and PEs, banks financial agencies, creditors, debtors, managers, employees, labour, labour unions, customers/consumers, potential customers/consumers, suppliers, distributers, communities, industry groups, society, government, academicians, students, competitors, environmentalists, media etc.

6. It is an attempt to systematize, coordinate, organize and regulate, it is bringing the uncontrolled and disorganized into organization and control to manage complexity, reach from chaos to harmony, from disorder and mess to order and control. Management can be seen as putting limits on forces and variables and also exceeding limits trying to discover, try out and take risk. Management can also be called rationalization of a sort, it brings reason and rationality where they lack, direction when there is directionlessness.

7. Management can also be thought as an attempt to solve problems, to find solutions, to find new, efficient and innovative solutions, to successfully face challenges, difficulties, to overcome barriers, removal of bottlenecks, making things easier, clarification, simplification, catering to issues, changes, and new problems. Management makes work done, makes something happen, creates results, is action based is energetic and it gives energy, power, responsibility and direction.

A very important aspect of management is to manage change and changes, to face new and unprecedented issues, troubles, questions and predicaments.

8. It processes input output, raw material to finished product, it gives vision, shape and direction, guidance and beauty. It not only makes things happen it makes them happen beautifully. Management can be compared to sculpturing, where a raw stone is cast into a beautiful piece. Management can also be compared to a processing system which takes diverse, different and heterogeneous elements and forces into its fold and integrates and unites them into a harmonious whole, related connected and systematic.

9. A Manager or management of a business organization (or even a non-business organization to some extant) can be compared to an entrepreneur – taking risks

innovating configuring collecting resources, creating relations, networks, balancing stakeholders, creating and maintaining an organization, managers and management needs to position themselves in environmental and organizational contexts with their strengths and weaknesses facing challenges and exploring opportunities, i.e. doing SWOT. Management of business can be both entrepreneurial management which is usually the role of the entrepreneur and business management in general which is management by employees (ranging from a lowest level supervisor to a CEO).

10. A very important aspect of management is optimizing, or as Herbert A Simon (1916-2001) put it - satisficing in constraints (and working with what he called" Bounded Rationality"), constraints of time, energy, effort, knowledge, information, processing ability, resources, constraints of environmental forces – social, cultural economic, political, technological, individual - dealing with power, powerful forces, with individual and group forces, wills, desires, different pulls, struggle, greed, emotions, thoughts, ideas, conceptions, differences, cultural peculiarities. Management is, many a times of dynamic things, unstable things. It may operate in a dynamic and unstable environment. But management aims at (in many cases if not all) at finding the best or the most optimal (in the available context) course of action.

11. Managers and management attempt to create a system of rules, regulations, polices, ideas, or a culture of shared meanings, beliefs and values, a climate, and environment of efficiency, quality, results, relations, a framework and we can go to the extant of saying a collective consciousness, collective culture. But it does no stop here as they not only create and design these systems, cultures, climates and frameworks but and maintaining, better and improve them.

12. One of the deepest aim of management is betterment, progress, perfection quality improvement. Business management at its broadest (purest and most essential)tries to make the lives of all stakeholders lives better through efficiency, effectiveness, speed, effort energy aiming at outcomes, objectives, goals, also deciding these. It is a mechanism of fulfilling of interests. In spite of operating in constraints managers many a times (or mostly) try to win over, improve, better and challenge at least the inner organizational and personal constraints. The best of managers are known for getting the best out of their followers, or employees. But at times management is also the maintaining of status quo or balancing and maintaining one's position.

13. Management is guided by objectives, stated objectives, unstated objectives, contextual objectives, short term and long term objectives and is therefore result oriented. Goals and objectives, shared goals, collective goals, tangible and intangible goas, behavioural goals, goals of values, goals of emotions, others' goals and others' aspirations. There can be long term and short term view of management and it can have long term and short term goals and strategies.

14. Management is a social process (except in the case of self-management, but self-management may also be in a social context and may be strongly influenced by societal forces) and an integrating process. It involves teams, groups, collectivities, cooperation, combinations and co-existence.

15. Management plays a very important part in our day to day lives and that includes self-management. As an aspect of daily lives, it is essential, and natural and can be termed as a part of our rational behaviour or even rationality. Being systematic, organized, in control, the power to deal with difficulties and problems and the ability to self-motivate characterized the modern rational man. Management or its need is both natural and contrived or forced upon us by our fellow beings and the society. Management leads to Civilization and development of cultures. Humans have the tendency to be chaotic and disorganized but also to be organized and both in control and to be controlled Self-management is a category of management. The importance of self-management cannot be overemphasized. It is the ability to observe the self, to understand it in its complexity and dynamic nature, to discipline, control and motivate it, to deal with problems successfully, to grow and develop. maintaining one's calm and health and is not only important but critical. Self-management is an important part of emotional intelligence. In the current times management is not only for singular results but preferably inclusive, greater and higher results over time. The natural tendency of evolution, growth and betterment is also seen in the aspiration for better management.

16. Management is also subject (a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary one)a discipline, a unique discipline, a practical and pragmatic one. It can also be called an art because it does not have totally rigid principles, can be contextual and deals with the most difficult and unpredictable forces especially humans individuals, groups and organizations, and also as it also requires mastery, intuition, emotional understanding and intelligence, the ability to abduct (find the most probable explanation), imagination and creativity. There is some merit to the claim that managers and leaders are born, but also that they can be trained (to a significant extant). The subject area of management is constantly growing and evolving. Management can also be called a science as it derives from the sciences and has science like characteristics to an extant but more importantly a social science. It is a distinct discipline of sorts but is also heavily influenced by other disciplines – economics, psychology, political science, sociology, sciences, engineering, information technology, public administration, mathematics, statistics etc.

17. In management there is the assumption of human rationality but emotions and behavioural factors which are not totally rational also must be incorporated in its ambit and sometimes become very important as well.

18. All managers, situations, environments, organizations, cultures and subordinates are not alike. The differences can be huge. The contingency theory of management stresses on these differences and calls for, if not full partial abandonment of the universality of management. His highlights the point that subjectivity, distinct, contexts, environments, cultures an situations contingency theory and differences in management

19. Management is of all sorts of resources and forces but the main asset resource or better the main element and power of management is humans. The stress on humans, human resources human capital, human potential, human creativity, intelligence, will power and brilliance is an essence of management. The emphasis is on individuals, teams, groups and individuals working in groups. It may however be remembered that management is getting things done out of others, making others achieve, guiding and leading not participating and even if participating, them it is more for setting examples. Management is getting things done by, through and often for others, making others achieve, guiding and leading not participating, management is creating maintaining, running, bettering organizations teams and groups. Successful Management is not just the result of efforts organizational leaders, it is the result of combined efforts by all persons in a group to achieve objectives in a systematic and efficient manner. Therefore management is not a one way or two way process it is a multi-way process. It can be mutual or a result of group interaction.

20. Goals of business management are many and multiple– maximization of wealth of owners, name, fame reputation, market share, sales, satisfaction of interests of stakeholders, balancing stakeholders' interests, quality products, customer satisfaction - Management aims at balancing multiple aims, goals and objectives. Goals of social welfare organizations are different ways and means of social betterment, welfare and development. Goals of governments are many and varied.

21. The resources that business managers handle and manage are many - human, material, financial, technical, technological, skills, intellects, methods, procedures, tactics, strategies, techniques, systems, innovations, ideas, effort, hardwork, attitudes, emotions, combinations of all these and more.

22. Management can be done by individuals, groups, can be mutual or a result of group interaction, can be done by self-managed teams or teams with individual leaders or can be done through machines only or machines and humans.

23. Management is done by present actions or past actions or communication verbal, written, through a MIS or non-verbal (decisions, culture, systems, methods, rules, guidelines, policies, strategies, techniques, physical arrangements, set ups), management in the mind by ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions,

26. Managers use, guide, influence, facilitate, motivate, control, force and even coerce.Others cooperate help, contribute, share, combine, and collaborate.

27. Managers in businesses (and also governments in context of international relations) can be looked upon as strategizers.They find and implement strategies, tactics, innovations, ways out. Management starts with SWOT analysis and a very important aim of it is getting competitive advantage (or strategic advantage).

28. Management and leadership is at times taken to be synonymous, but different as well, For our purposes leadership would both be an aspect and a degree (or level or an expression of high quality management) of management. Management and leadership can be understood as human faculties, skills and talents both inborn and cultivable. Managers need to have many qualities and traits and there are important leadership aspects of management and qualities of managers. Both of these can be combined as listed out as follows:

Risk taking, innovativeness, taking and fulfilling responsibilities, burden bearing and taking care of others' aspirations and goals, making others rise, growing developing, achieving, requiring dedication will power, intelligence, vision, emotional intelligence, motivational skills, communication, ability to handle complexity, mental balance, strength, energy, ability to not budge under pressure, information processing, optimizing, command, courage, knowledge of various types ranging from technical to conceptual, honesty. It may here be remembered that in organizations management is both formal and informal.

FIRST COMPREHENSIVE AND SYNTHETIC DEFINITION OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Business Management is a simple to complex formal (and at times informal)social and integrating process and combinations of activities, interactions and functionsranging from planning, strategizing, organizing, leading and controlling of resources, systems, production, marketing financing, information and especially humans and their abilities and potentials, of environmental forces and variables through visions, policies, rules, actionscommunication, systems, strategies, cultures, environments climates and frameworksto order, organize, systematize, strategize, harmonize, optimize, balance, grow and develop and to successfully face challenges, difficulties and changesensuring efficiency of time, cost, effort other resources, effectiveness and success for achievement of multiple goals and objectives and for multiple stakeholders in different contexts (and especially an organizational context) requiring many managerial and leadership qualities (or expression of qualities) in managers.

SECOND DEFINITION OF THE DISCIPLINE OF MANAGEMENT

The second definition of management as a disciplineand art and in some limited ways and senses a science and a part of the social sciences which studies management as defined above in organizations both business and non-business and below as an essential (or important) part of human lives, nature and behaviour.

THIRD DEFINITION OF MANAGEMENT AS PART OF OUR LIVES

In this sense management would be an informal, natural and essential part of our being rational being or rationality lives, our evolution including self management, managing our lives, relations, resources, our natures, emotions, thoughts, opportunities, problems, difficulties, and challenges and it would include self-observation, self-understanding, self-discipline, self-motivation and self-growth.

SOME OTHER DEFINITIONS OF MANAGEMENT

To manage is to process inputs – humans and others efficiently and/or optimally to solve problems and produce value.

Managers work in constraints – personal organizational and relational with resources and in context of environmental variables to optimize or produce optimal to best results.

Management is planning and organizing of resources, leading and controlling of inputs and efficiency in results.

Management is deciding, planning, organizing, leading and controlling organizational resources more efficiently and optimally to balance and achieve multiple goals in a dynamic and constrained environment.

Decision making ,planning, organizing, leading and controlling of humans, relations, information, finances, technological and material resources for balancing of stakeholders' interests and maximization of interests of the owners.

Management is strategizing (making and implementing strategies) for optimal results.

Management is an attempt at coordinating and harmonizing organizational and environmental forces, variables and resources to obtain beneficial organizational results

Management is creating and maintaining of systems, climate and culture for organizational success.

The easiest, fastest and most efficient means and process of achieving ends.

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