

Indian Ethos And Management Principles

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The Oxford Dictionary defines ethos as “The characteristic Spirit and Beliefs of community/people” which distinguishes one culture from the other. Indian ethos is drawn from the Vedas, the Ramayana, Mahabharata, the Bhagwadgita, and Upanishads. Right from the Vedic age it has been discovered two basic universal truths of life.

The present globalised world is changing every other second. And now we should discuss those perspectives which will be always constant in the business world to move forward. These perspectives are taken from the various scriptures of Indian Culture. The essential ingredients for the management that can be learned from them are:

1. *Leadership*
2. *Strategy*
3. *Financial Management*
4. *Human Resource Management*
5. *Creating Competitive Advantage*
6. *Developing Core Competencies*

Leadership

Leadership doesn't mean giving instructions but leading and showing the path to the people who follow. A leader should dedicate his entire time for the achievement of the goals and live the purpose. The path of the leader should be exemplary. The chapters of the work should be compiled by the leader. The followers should read the chapters and assimilate the vision and mission of the leader. This cannot happen overnight. The leader should create trust in the minds of the followers that he will take them till they achieve the goal. **Leadership** has been described as “a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”. The key points and elements that keep occurring while understanding leadership is the character of the leader, the faith of the followers, the path taken to achieve the goal, the attainment of the goal. Leadership is the sum essence of personality, character,

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motivation and sacrifice. It is also the fine art of inspiring men even in the most trying circumstance. The art of leadership requires a lifetime of sacrifice, devotion and selfless deeds.

Ethos is a Greek word meaning “character” that is used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, nation or ideology. It can simply mean the disposition, character, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific person, people, culture or movement. Enjoy & strengthen life by sacrificing selfishness; by not coveting other’s wealth (Isha Upanishad). One should not covet even one’s own wealth (Shankaracharya). In the Bhagavad-Gita it is said, “There is nothing in all the three worlds for me to do. Nor there is anything worth attaining, unattained by me, yet I continue to work” [3.22]. Further it is mentioned that, An organization that is functioning in a particular line of activity should not be suddenly arrested in its flow but a leader should fall in line with followers & slowly & steadily guide & steer them to act in the right direction by his own example. A leader must himself diligently perform the ordinary actions & must make himself an example to the world so that lesser folk automatically imitate him to follow his unflinching footsteps. The leader should not only direct but should himself act as a team member with his followers setting an example for them to follow. It is said that “Atmano Mokshartham, Jagat hitaya cha:” - All work is an opportunity for doing good to the world and

thus gaining materially and spiritually in our lives

STRATEGY

It is the direction and scope of an organisation and helps it to compete with competitors. Kaurav — their chief mentor or Strategist Shakuni relied on unfair trade practices. Such things may work in short-term but a complete failure in long-term. A good strategist is one who knows the weakness of competitors and exploit them. Shakuni was wicked and believed in short-term profits. He was biased and used to think about the welfare of CEO i.e. Duryodhana only and not of Kaurav Ltd. as a whole. Pandav — They have got the best strategist in the form of Krishna which the world has ever seen. He believed in forming strong allies and was responsible for the merger of Pandava Ltd. with Dwarka (Remember Arjuna’s marriage with Subhadra when Duryodhana wanted to marry her), Rakshas (marriage of Bheem with Hidimba), Panchala (marriage of Arjun with Draupadi), Matsya (marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttara) etc.. He asked Yudhishthir to go to Bhishm on 1st day of war to know their weakness. He was responsible for forming the strategy of the death of Dronacharya, Karna and even Duryodhana. Without a strategy, an organization is like a ship without a rudder, going around in circles.

According to Kautilya there are four types of Information:

- a) Some information we get which may already be familiar to us

- b) On other cases we may get a half-bake resources, which would require another information source to understand clearly
- c) Some times we may get controversial news, first news which we received may be positive but next time we may get a negative one.
- d) Some times the information reached to our end may be overloaded, or may contain Gossips, rumors and personal view points etc.

Being an expert in the field of Administration, Kautilya could communicate exactly what a leader or an administrator is expected to do to ensure the growth of his kingdom. "There is no country without people, and no kingdom without a country" (13.4.5). Here the person stands for customers and clients, Country for Market and finally Kingdom is for The Company. So Kautilya strongly advocates that giving more importance towards the Customers and clients, Market and The Company will ensure the growth and stability of a business organization.

Many prominent industry leaders today opine that you need not necessarily have a vision; rather, taking one step at a time could be a much more practical way of going about, but I think that unless you have a vision, you will never be able to follow a trajectory.

In the words of the great Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, "The world steps aside to a person who knows where he or she is going." In that parlance, unless you know

where you are going, how will the world step aside and aid you in your pursuit?

Financial Management

The Vedas repeatedly call upon everyone to earn and maximize wealth. The primary objective of financial management is maximization of the shareholders' wealth. The Vedas inspire all to be associated with increase in wealth. They advise one not to reject or condemn wealth. They urge upon one to be prosperous. The Vedas mention about two types of wealth, viz., prevalent wealth (Vittam) and potential wealth (Vedyam). One shall possess Vittam (wealth that is earned already) and Vedyam (wealth to be earned hereafter). The Vedas emphasize that one shall clear all debts. They restrain taking debts from one tainted with sins. Thus the Vedas advise the business organizations not to be debt-oriented in their capital structure planning. In case debts are contracted, these have to be duly discharged. Incurring of debt, settlement of debt, requital of loan are indicated in the Vedas. The Vedas stipulate that wealth has to be earned only through fair means and one should put in his best efforts to acquire wealth through ethical and moral practices. He has to adopt lawful means. Wealth has to be won by deeds of glory. Kautilya explains the importance of making a balance among the various uses of profit/income simply and beautifully. As translated by Chaturvedi (2001) in his book *Kautilya's Arthashastra* ".....*He may enjoy in equal degree the three pursuits of life, charity, wealth and desire, which are inter-dependent on each other. Any one of these*

when enjoyed to an excess, hurts not only the other two, but also itself.” This is applicable to the management of business finance as well. The way a business organization distributes and manages its profit determines its future financial well being. Kautilya holds that wealth and wealth alone, is important, in as much as charity and desire depend upon wealth for their realization.

Human Resource Management

In Hindu mythology and old Vedic ashram system, a man is supposed to enter vanaprasth ashram, i.e. retire, once his son has a son of his own, and enter sanyas ashram, i.e. renounce the world entirely, when his grandson has a son of his own. This is fundamentally a talent management policy that is meant to make certain that the old makes a way for the new. Bhisma essentially went against the system. He took advantage of the boon ‘Swiccha Mrityu’ (control over his own death) and refused to die even after his grand-nephews became old enough to take control and rule the kingdom. Basically he refuses to let go, thus lord Krishna pinned him to the ground and got him out of the way, so that life can move on and natural order is restored. So don’t be a Bishma at work. Yes, we are identified by the work we do and it is not easy to let go of our identity. But ultimately, you must learn to respect the natural order, let it go and allow the new breed to take control, when the time is right.

Like how Pandavas transformed their weaknesses to strengths during the years of exile, you need to have the urge to improve

on your weakness. Mahabarata gives many an examples to highlight the importance of utilizing time to overcoming your skills like how Arjuna went on a mission to attain the Divyastras or Yudhisthira mastered the Game of Dice. You need to have the passion to dedicate adequate time to learn those skills that can help you overcome your weakness only by which you can be a great manager.

Creating Competitive Advantage

It was not a common war for Kauravas as they never showed the unity. But the way Pandavas fought is a lesson for managers as it highlights the significance of sticking on to the common goal while meeting the individual targets. The great story teaches the golden lesson that only a combined effort can bring in success. Kautilya’s precepts foreshadowed current management philosophy on internal strengths of the organization for competitive advantage. Building VRIO—Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Organizationally-integrated organizations are implicit in the Arthasashtra.

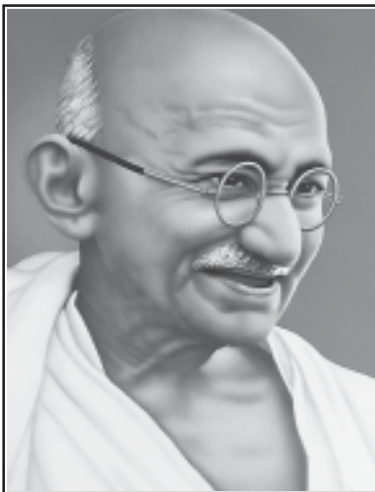
The epic Mahabharata has a suggestion for all organisations: Chart clear plans on how to advance in an uncertain future. This basic tenet can make an organization endure difficult times. The Kauravas did not have clear-cut plans and that is what resulted in their defeat. Competitive pressure forced the mission of the Kauravas and the only purpose of their lives was defeating the Pandavas. In Mahabharata, the Pandavas were quick to spot the competitor’s intentions. “Because of this ability, they were able to plan and make a tunnel below the lac palace, which was set ablaze with

an intention to kill them,” . In the new world order, where competition is cutthroat, playing Pandavas can help. “An organisation must be quick to observe its competitors’ strategic moves,” .

Developing Core Competencies

In Ramayana, Vishwamitra wished to harness Rama and Lakshmana’s core competencies of efficient risk management against demonic showstoppers. One of the most obvious incidences, in which use of management principles is very clearly visible is that of Hanuman going to Lanka. His mission was to locate Sita there and give her Lord Ram’s message. When it became clear

that Sita was in Lanka, Jamvant asked Hanuman to go there. He helped him in realising his true potential and motivated him to go in the enemy’s camp. Once mentally prepared for the job and reached there, first thing which Hanuman did was to completely analyse the situation in Lanka. He did a complete study about the Lankans, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, the various threats and opportunities which he had in the enemy’s camp. This is what management is all about ascertaining the goals, or job to be done and working on the core competencies to achieve the goal.



*A customer is the most important visitor
on our premises.*

*He is not dependent on us.
We are dependent on him.*

*He is not an interruption in our work.
He is the purpose of it.*

*He is not an outsider in our business.
He is part of it.*

*We are not doing him a favor
by serving him.*

*He is doing us a favor
by giving us an opportunity to do so.”*

Mahatma Gandhi