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## Management Practices in the Ancient Vedas

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# Management Practices in the Ancient Vedas

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**Abstract-** This paper presents an analysis of the concepts associated with the study and practice of Management in view of the changing world order while establishing their inter relatedness with the theories and practices developed in the West. Being followed by the leaders and entrepreneurs of the country right from the Vedic ages, the ancient Indians had developed their own management systems with the help of which they successfully carried out their business affairs. It is our hypothesis that the practices, thus cultured and the concepts thus evolved, are relevant across the boundaries of time and space, and shall be immensely helpful for the organizations of the west as well. The Vedas and Upanishads have been at the grass root of Indian Literature work on culture and wisdom of ancient time. This study focuses on enriching the modern management terminology by the implication of the Vedic management system.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

According to (Steingard, 2005), 'Spirituality, as a holistic infusion of experience and wisdom into the management disciplines, necessitates an inquiry into new ontological, epistemological, and teleological dimensions of research and practice.' The term Veda itself is derived from the root 'vid'. It means both to know and to obtain or to attain. The Vedas are the most ancient literature of mankind. Vedic stanzas are called mantras (Nigal, 2009). Vedic culture is the indigenous culture of India. It is not merely a code of religion, but a way of life with something of anyone, regardless of what level of consciousness or inquiry into spiritual truths that a person may have. Vedic culture is trillions of years old (Knapp, 2006). The Vedic management system as elaborated in the Vedas and Upanishads is a normative system. The normative system enunciated by the Vedas and Upanishads is a decentralized system integrated by Riti and Dharma (Saigal, 2000). In the first stage of the Vedic system the Indian culture was focussed outward and had its foundation in the views on the mind and the physical human being. During this period, there was a natural faith in objects which were physical, could be sensed, could be seen, had a concrete presence and represented the external pursuits and aims of a material

world. In mediating between the spirit and the human mentality the people of this early civilization focussed on external physical things such as symbols, rites and figures. Vedic religion recognized great living powers and godheads behind the manifestations of Nature. Though the inner truth of the godheads was not known, individuals offered to them and worshipped them. During this period, God was viewed as a divine force which sustains and directs life. Another central feature of the Vedic religion was the act and ritual of physical sacrifice, based on the notion of a constant interchange between the individual and the universal powers of the cosmos as the main driver of Nature's actions (Nandram, 2014).

## II. VEDIC LITERATURE

The age of the Vedas can at best be 4000 B.C. (Saraswathi, 2016). The primary thought in the Vedas is a mystical conception of the universe. The whole effort of the Veda is directed towards one goal – to achieve union of the individual Self (Atman) with the world Self (Brahma) (Bhattacharjee, 2011). 'Upa-nishada' means 'to sit by the side'. What was taught by making the disciple sit by the side of the teacher is the Upanishads. The main theme in the Upanishads is a philosophical inquiry and dealing with that state of mind with all shackles destroyed. The direct method of realizing the path of knowledge (Jnaanamaarga) the nonduality (Abhedha) of the Supreme Being and the soul are explained in the Upanishads (Saraswathi, 2016). The Vedic literature provides the spiritual knowledge and instructions for assisting all living beings in their material and spiritual development and understanding. The Vedic literature, including, among other texts, the Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva Vedas, the up Vedas, Vedangas, Shadarshanas, Upanishads, the Vedanta-Sutra, Yoga Sutras, Agmas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and Bhagwad-Gita (Knapp, 2006).

*According to Drucker:* While management is a discipline- that is an organized body of knowledge and as such applicable everywhere- It is also a culture. Management is a social function and embedded in a culture- a society- a tradition of values, customs, and beliefs, and in governmental and political system (Saigal, 2000). The Veda radiated that light that illuminated the world by teaching those universal, eternal truths and principles that help the mankind to realize the nature and correlation of god with the soul and the creation (Bhatia, 2016). Through Upanishads, the Vedanta seeks to know the ultimate reality (Brahman)

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and the cause behind everything. In this pursuit it seeks to detach from the “Maya” and the material world and unite with Brahman (God or supreme consciousness). Bhagwad Gita is a poem which depicts lessons on spirituality and ethics through a dialogue between Lord Krishna and the warrior Arjuna who was in a great crisis of his life. Ramayana depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal father, ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal wife and the ideal king. The founder of Buddhism school was GautamaSiddhartha who later became Lord Gautama Buddha. Buddha taught the eightfold path to liberation from all suffering. According to Patanjali, ‘Yoga is the control of the modifications of the mind. It is mind that leads to or to liberation; that most human problems are mental and that the only remedy to solve them is a mental discipline(Bhattacharjee, 2011).’

#### a) *Classification of the Vedas*

There are four Vedas viz. Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. (Bhattacharjee, 2011). The whole of the Rig Veda Samhita is in the form of verses. It is wholly in the form of hymns in praise of Devas. The word ‘Yajus’ is derived from the root ‘yaj’ which means worship. The chief purpose of Yajur Veda is to give the mantras in Rig Veda appearing in the form of hymns a practical shape in the form of Yajna or worship. ‘Saama’ means to bring shanty or peace to the minds or conquering the enemy by love and conciliatory words. Saama has set the mantras to music with lengthened notes. Atharva means purohit. This Veda contains many types of mantras designed to ward off evil and hardship and to destroy enemies (Saraswathi, 2016).

#### b) *Vedic learning*

Vedic wisdom pays a great deal of attention to the transformation of the inner self. The purpose of this is not so much external effectiveness as it is to connect with a higher self. It is about the awakening of a higher understanding of our human aspiration and in simple terms about an understanding of who we are, thus an explicit spiritual pursuit. The beauty of Vedic wisdom is that it has inspired the building of such institutions as ashramas and varnas. It acknowledges that everyone is unique; everyone has their own path to follow. Vedic wisdom describes four ashramas. The brahmacharya – student phase, the grihastha – householder phase, the vanaprastha – preparation for renunciation phase and sanyasa – renunciation phase. In all of these, a person pursues the prescribed activities with different emphasis on the outer and the inner. In essence, the process of transformation is a natural, spontaneous (Nandram, 2014). Vedic lore is one of the most stupendous manifestations of the spirit. Its deepest function is best served, as of other religious and cultural values of mankind, by sharing it in a spirit of fellowship with humanity at large(Saigal, 2000). India has the eternal

wealth of human values which were taught in the cosmic science of Bhagwad Gita and Upanishads(Bhatia, 2016).

#### c) *Vedangas*

The Vedic method of studying the Vedas as described by (Nigal, 2009) includes knowing the name of the sage and deity, and the metre of hymns, then the actual study begins. It must be studied in accordance with the principles of the vedangas(limbs of the Vedas).

1. Siksa- Phonetics
2. Kalpa- rule of religious practice and ritual
3. Vyakarna- Grimmer (linguistic, philosophical analysis)
4. Nirukta- Etymology and lexicography. History of words
5. Chanda- Prosody (Science of metres)
6. Jyotisha- Astronomy

#### d) *Bhagwad Gita*

The Bhagwad Gita (literally meaning “The Song of the God or of the Divine One”) is a Sanskrit text of the epic Mahabharata. Lord Krishna as the narrator of the BhagwadGita, is referred to as the God or the Divine One, and the verses themselves are written in a poetic form that is traditionally chanted(Jeste, 2008). Bhagwad Gita has got all the management tools to provide the mental equilibrium and to overcome any crisis situations through an inspirational message gleaned from it. It offers us the tools to connect with our deepest intangible essence, leading us to participate in the battle of with the right knowledge (Bhatia, 2016). Excellence means perfection. Excellence lies in the beauty of flowers. As one approaches perfection in one’s work, one approach to excellence. Man can attain excellence or perfection through his/her actions. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagwad Gita, “Yoga is excellence in action (Karma)”. Thus the simplest way to attain God is to bring excellence in all our actions. The dictionary meaning of excellence is “Quality of the highest order” (Sharma, 2007). ‘Bhagwad Gita’ is considered as a complete guide to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of employees to achieve the desired goals by disseminating the views like changing the weaknesses into strengths of the individual, sharing responsibilities, selecting right person in the team, aware about the challenges in the job environment, the need of charismatic leader who inspire, energize and counsel in dilemma and also initiate to know ground realities. Bhagwad Gita strikes social agreement in the Working–Equilibrium through the thoughts and conducts, goals and success, plans and accomplishment, products and markets (Mukherjee, 2017).

Bhagwad Gita deals with men at work. Work may be relatable to any profession or field. Bhagwad Gita prescribes that meditation, ritual workshop and prayer serve as a conduit for a man’s spiritual growth,

development on one hand and for improving his work efficiency resulting in social welfare on the other. Traditionally, Hindus believed that their spirituality lies in doing their work with utmost devotion, honesty and sincerity. This is embodied in the holy text of Bhagwad Gita (Chapter 2, Verse 47)

e) *Karmany Vadhiaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana*

i. *Karma Phaletur BhurmaTeSangostvakarmani*

There are four aspects of the definition of work that Lord Krishna articulates.

1. Doer has the right to work.
2. Doer has no control over the outcomes.
3. Doer has no control over the root cause of the fruits of action.
4. There is no choice to wallow in inaction.

There is a huge implication of these verses for managers in today's context. Too much reliance on result orientation engenders a sense of fear and discomfort. Managers may have an overarching desire to have control over the fruit of their action. In doing so, managers may focus on the ends and lose sight of the means. Results are concerned with the future and work is concerned with the present. In their frenetic bid to achieve the results, managers chase the future and conveniently forget the present (Krishnaveni, 2014). Modern day managers spend significant time to manage "performance reports" rather than "performance" itself (Rao, 2013).

*Further Explanation of this verse:* The soul undergoes its own karma, the law of cause and effect, by which each person creates his own destiny based on his thought, words and deeds. The soul undergoes this karma in the rounds of reincarnation (Knapp, 2006). Lord Krishna propels Arjuna to perform his duties, while staying selflessness to success or failure; not thinking of the fruit of action - once in the field of activity and relinquishing attachment. He who gives up all desires and moves free from attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment, attains peace which is the most essential thing in life. When the work perspective developed in our thought with antecedent mind sets passes through the pipeline of the karma principle the consequences would be different (Rao, 2013). Your Karma determines what you deserve and what you can assimilate. With regard to Karma Yoga, the Gita says that it is doing work with cleverness and as a science; by knowing how to work, one can obtain the greatest results. Man works with various motives. Some people want to get fame, and they work for fame, money, power, etc. You read in the Bhagwad Gita again and again that you must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. The Gita teaches about detachment from the result of work (Kumar, 2013).

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Sanskrit, Veda means, 'To Know'. The application of the Vedic wisdom is natural strength, which is the religion or the code of discipline for the humanity at large, without any exception of cast, creed and country (Prasad, 2004). In the Vedas a definite outlook towards life is given. There are prayers for worldly things. Besides, there are prayers for higher things. The Gayatri mantra is an example of this approach to life (Nigal, 2009). Vedic culture is very dynamic, living, breathing reality (Knapp, 2006). Indian ethos has a very rich and old tradition which is more than five thousand years old as against the modern management principles which are at a much more infant stage (Bhatia, 2016). Ethics may be defined as the critical examination of the standards of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice (Banerjee, 2005). The Bhagwad Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the spiritual thoughts ever to have been made (Knapp, 2006). Gita offers counterintuitive ideas on work issues. The axioms of work have been proposed in Gita is also relevant in modern management style (Rao, 2013). The Veda has a twofold interest: It belongs to the history of the world and to the history of India. In the history of the world the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill (Knapp, 2006). The Vedas contain injunctions for ensuring the well being in this world and the world to come. It guides the actions of a person from the moment of the birth to the moment he breathes his last and thereafter to ensure his salvation (Saraswathi, 2016).

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*Hypothesis H1:* Vedas has its influence in shaping the management techniques and solution for various various managerial and entrepreneurial issues.

*Data analysis:* For this study, data has been taken from almost 350 respondents. Almost all the respondents gave their response on time. Only few were not given due to their busy schedule. The questionnaires are given to the respondents and each questionnaire has 7 questions with two responses either yes or no. Data have been collected from persons belongs to different category, including, Doctors, Students, Teachers, Police Officers, Librarians, Industry employees and Bank Officials. The reason being of the collection of data from different fields is to enrich the quality of research and the work done can be best applied anywhere. There are total 338 responses.

Table 1: For Data Collected

Categories of Respondents	Response Yes	Response No	Total
Category 1	30	20	50
Category 2	26	22	47
Category 3	25	23	48
Category 4	25	21	46
Category 5	27	22	49
Category 6	26	24	50
7	26	22	48
Total	184	154	338

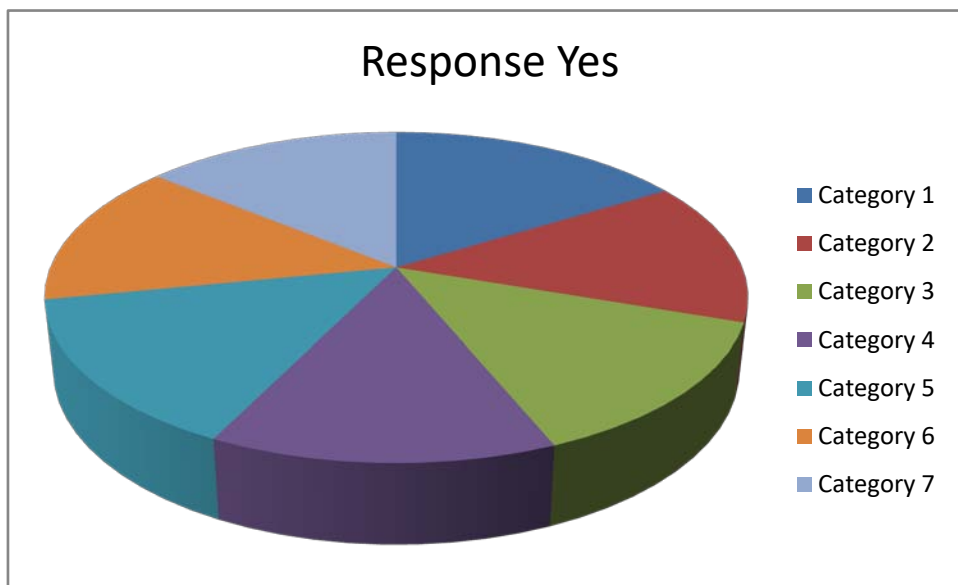


Figure 1

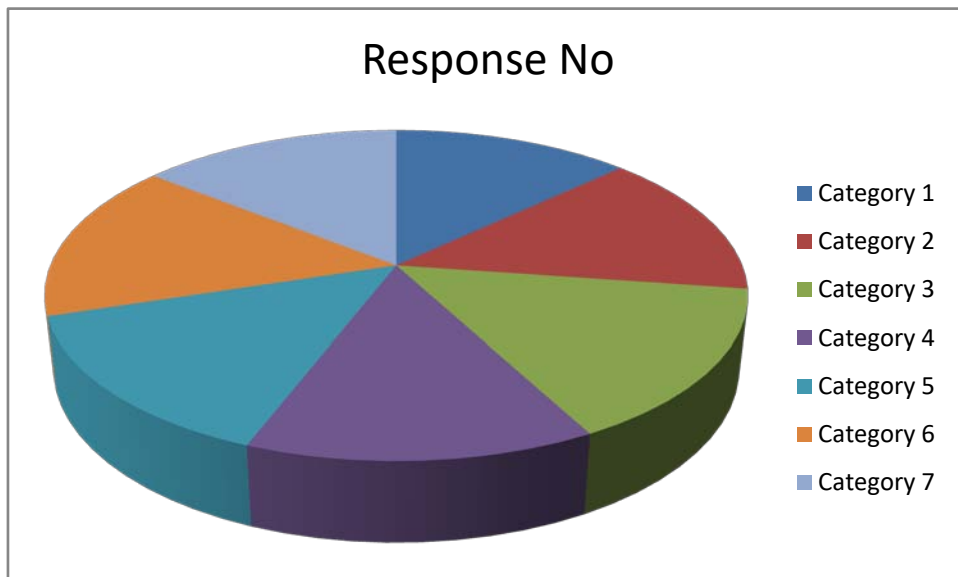


Figure 2

Table 2: Application of the Statistical Test

Observed Values (O <sub>i</sub> )	Expected Values (E <sub>j</sub> )	(O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>j</sub> )	(O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>j</sub> ) <sup>2</sup>	(O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>j</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> /E <sub>j</sub>
30	27.21	2.79	7.78	0.28
20	25.58	-5.58	31.13	1.21
25	26.13	-1.13	1.27	0.04
22	25.04	-3.04	9.24	0.36
25	26.67	-1.67	2.78	0.10
23	27.21	-4.21	17.72	0.65
25	26.13	-1.13	1.27	0.04
21	22.78	-1.78	3.16	0.13
27	21.41	5.59	31.24	1.45
22	21.86	0.14	0.01	0.00
26	20.95	2.05	25.50	1.21
24	22.32	1.22	1.48	0.06
26	22.78	3.22	10.36	0.45
22	21.86	0.14	0.01	0.00
$X^2 = 5.98$				

Here the value of  $\chi^2$  is 5.92 and the tabulated value is 12.59. So the calculated value is less than the tabulated value at 5% level of significance so we reject the null hypothesis and prove that the Vedas has its influence in shaping the management techniques and solution for various various managerial and entrepreneurial issues.

*Findings:* after the application of the statistical test on data collected, the calculated value comes out to be 5.98. the tabulated value is 12.59 at 6 degree of freedom and 5 % level of significance. Thus the calculated value is less than the tabulated value, and falls in the critical region, reject the null hypothesis. The hypothesis stated above has been proved that Vedas has its influence in shaping the management techniques and solution for various various managerial and entrepreneurial issues. As India had been moved to a very advanced civilization, the ancient Indians too grappled with various managerial and entrepreneurial issues of their time. one can find the influence of the Vedas in shaping the management techniques. The

verse in Bhagwad Gita Karmanyevadhikaraste is an example which is followed in ideals, at least by one and all in India.

#### a) Vedas and Modern Management

Organization and management system have been there since the beginning of human society. As globalization takes place and the problems of management whether in government system or commercial undertaking have, not to be multinational but also multicultural, the need to study other cultural arises. Besides the roots of human motivation lay in cultural values so a study of management principles that flow therefrom being a necessary prerequisite for globalized management system (Saigal, 2000). Management is about making these exchanges efficient and effective. When there are decent exchange, relationships thrive and society prospers. That is the direction in which the first hymn of the Veda takes us (Pattanaik, 2015). Fredrick Winslow Taylor (1856-1925) and Henri Fayol (1841-1925) are two personalities who've shaped management as a subject taught in

most business schools. Taylor focused on task while Fayol was more concerned about managing people. But the Vedic view of life is based on the idea that man is an integral part of the global family - Vasudha- evakutumbakam. Also, the law of Karma (causation) is heralded as a law of nature. It suggests that every action of an individual, leads to set consequences. Therefore, it also offers a path for peaceful coexistence. This path is called Karma Yoga (Udupi, 2016). Vedic wisdom fosters the idea of integrating ethics, awareness, responsible behavior and good governance in management education through experiential learning, mentoring, dialogues, spiritual discipline, cognitive learning, observation and reflection (Nandram, 2014).

#### b) *Yamas and Niyamas*

The Vedic path consists of ten general rules of moral conduct. There are five for inner purity, called the yamas – satyas or truthfulness, ahimsa or non-injury to others and treating all beings with respect, asteya or no cheating or stealing, brahmcharya or celibacy and, aparighara or no selfish accumulation of resources for one's own purpose.

The five rules of conduct for external purification are the niyamas– shaucha or cleanliness and purity of mind and body, tapas or austerity and preservice, swadhyay or study of the Vedas, and santosh or contentment, as well as ishvara- pranidhana, acceptance of the Supreme.

There are also ten qualities that are the basis of dharmic (righteous) life. These are dhriti (firmness or fortitude, kshma (forgiveness), dama (self – control), asteya (refraining from stealing or dishonesty), shauch (purity), indriyanigraha (control over the senses), dhiih (intellect), vidya (knowledge), satyam (truth) and akrodhah (absence of anger) (Knapp, 2006).

*Dharma*: Dharma is in fact is a comprehension of those eternal principles which govern nature and humanity, those immutable laws which in one sphere are called science and in other true philosophy. It concerns itself, not with things true under certain condition or at certain times; its precepts are ever true, true in the past, true in present, true in the future (Bhatia, 2016). The word Dharmaindicates the importance of developing the natural propensities of each child in line with the principles of spirituality, the beginning of which is a basic understanding of the difference between life and matter: that matter comes from life, not life from matter (Laxman, 2011).

*Artha*: Artha is meant riches, might skill, family, health, fame and enjoyable objects. Artha is subservient to Dharma. It is the principle value because it is the aid to the karma, to the pursuits of life like farming, trade dairy and industry, etc. With Artha one can achieve enjoyable objects in life and can perform the prescriptions of Dharma in a better way (Saigal, 2000). Vedic hymns

emphasize earning more and more money and distributing it with much more vigor; for example, Atharva Veda (3-24-5) says: "O man! Earn money with hundred hands and distribute it with thousand hands". It further lays down governing principles for the purity of earning money (Talwar, 2009). According to the Gita, a wise person works in order to discharge his/her responsibilities to the society, and not for the sake of its material rewards. Different types of work are described in terms of caste- appropriate roles; however, these descriptions need to be viewed within the socio-historical context of the period. The Gita stresses that no work done in order to keep a person appropriately productive should be considered "bad." (Jeste, 2008).

*Kama*: It means to fulfil the noble desires. Kama is enjoying itself; it is the desire for pleasure (Saigal, 2000).

*Moksha*: The ultimate purpose of human life is to shed all the attachments to matter and to attain Moksha (liberation from material existence) and return to the transcendental realm, this is not only our true nature but also our true home (Knapp, 2006). Moksha is the highest value for man. It has always been held, unanimously and unambiguously, to the highest ideal to which the human being can aspire (Saigal, 2000).

## V. CONCLUSION

The Vedic texts contain a wealth of meaning. Besides its poetic grandeur they contain detailed injunctions for a well ordered society and social life, great philosophical truth and even scientific laws. The Vedic Management concepts cultured in ancient time are relevant in the present world and organizations can have the best business model based on the regulation of Ethos. The knowledge and wisdom in the ancient Vedas definitely show the righteous path to the entrepreneurs of the modern world.

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