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Enhancing Spiritual Quotient: A Protean Strategy for Personal Competence in the Future

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ABSTRACT

Spiritual Intelligence indicates the level and quality of spiritual experience, which is sacred, and a deep sense of vitality and interconnection that has the strength to facilitate people to use their actions and existence in a wider, richer and more meaningful context in the organization. Surmising on the affirmations from studies that hypothesize the relationship between workplace spirituality and attitudinal variables in the workplace, we envisage reviewing the available literature for future empirical endorsements. More precisely we outline what is spiritual competence and spirituality in the workplace? Why is it essential to learn about the phenomenon in the workplace? The authors envisage demonstrating how by developing spiritual intelligence, one can develop the indispensable qualities of intrapersonal balance and interpersonal relations, problem-solving skills, goal attainment, motivation, commitment, self-awareness, team spirit, and leadership, all of which foster an individual's success at the workplace. Spiritual intelligence offers a number of strategies for developing spiritual competence, particularly with clients from commonly encountered religious traditions or cultures. Thus the study supports the proposition that spirituality within organizations is a contemporary personal competence enhancing tool.

I. BACKGROUND

In the era of globalization, the ability to analyze things beyond the given frame is of utmost importance not only for growth but for mere survival. In the 21st Century, in the world of computers bookish knowledge is of less use. No matter how intelligent a person is, he is less likely to be acknowledged if he is not competent to express things rightly. Organizations favor candidates who are versatile both physically and mentally. Mental intelligence can be divided into two components, namely Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence.

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Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence are distinct from each other. Emotional intelligence is all about intrapersonal awareness and its management, and interpersonal awareness and its management. An emotionally intelligent person knows his positives and negatives and as that of others. He knows to define emotions and to work on his negative aspects.

But in a spiritually intelligent person there is no place for negativity. He connects himself with the cosmos. He let goes of his ego and opens the gate for various walks of life. Spiritual intelligence completes a person. It distinguishes a human from a machine .It is the astuteness of the soul, which enables him to take the road which carries greater weight (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). The emerging body of literature on workplace spirituality and spiritual competence has certainly offered a number of insights, but it also has been criticized for lacking rigor or critical thinking (Gibbons, 2000). While personal spiritual experiences are essential and needs to be focused on , it is imperative that scientific investigation also helps us to understand and appreciate the inherent positive impact of spirituality, and its culmination – spiritual competence , on significant employee attitudes that can arise when management considers and supports individual needs in the workplace (King and Nicol, 1999). Furthermore , studies that have dealt with the effects of spirituality on employee attitudes often appear to assume that work place spirituality always has a positive impact (Gibbons, 2000),requiring a review of available literature for empirical support for these postulates.

II. SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: THE GENESIS

Spiritual Intelligence, also known as the ultimate intelligence or knowledge, is the key player in both personal and professional life. Spiritual intelligence is indispensable for one who aims to come to the spotlight. A grand meal with variety of dishes will be of no use if the food offered does not contain salt in it. Similarly a highly educated person who has only conceptual clarity but no spiritual intelligence is of no use to the organization. Thus there is an imperative need to understand what spiritual intelligence actually constitutes.

(A) Etymology

The term “Spiritual intelligence” was coined by Danah Zohar (Zohar, 1997) ,in the year 1997. The term spirit means something which is vital to a system (Zohar, 1997). According to Zohar and Marshall (2000), it is the aptitude which enables a person to face a problem of meaning and value. Zohar (2000), maintains that spiritual intelligence revolves around self- awareness, having spontaneity, having value and vision, having ‘we feeling’, empathizing, accepting multiplicity, having strong view point on a subject, being humble, capacity to question, ability

to think out of box, ability to take lessons from failures and a sense of vocation. McGuire (1993) characterizes it as the capacity to balance consciousness and empathy with health and peace, no matter what the condition is. Robert Emmons (2000), states that spiritual intelligence is when people acclimatize spiritual quotient with problem solving. He has associated five factors with spiritual intelligence. They are the ability to be righteous, to exercise spiritual intelligence when issue arises, to sanctify daily life, to have epitome of awareness, and to surpass the physical and materialistic way of life. It is a deep value of wholeness and connectedness at work (Gibbons, 2000), where one strives to find the ultimate purpose in life, and to find an alignment/ consistency between one's values and core beliefs and those of their organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999), by developing strong connections to coworkers and other people associated with work. Ashmos and Duchon (2000), define workplace spirituality as “. . . the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community”. Thus spiritual intelligence is a dynamic concept.

(B) Spirituality as an ingredient for success

The formula for success is the most wanted mantra. Ricardo Semler in his book “The Seven-Day Weekend” (2004) has stated that success is attainable when Intellectual quotient, Emotional quotient and Spiritual quotient come together by eliminating ego.

$$IQ+EQ+SQ-EGO = \text{Success}$$

Individuals with IQ and EQ, for the most part, fail to succeed. Spiritual Quotient is an indispensable component for success. A spiritually intelligent person pierces the veil of ego and looks at the true picture of an object. When a person transforms to be a spiritually intelligent, his vision, values and perception undergoes a paradigm shift thereby paving way for success.

(C) Spiritual quotient in the indian canon

“If I were asked, ‘Under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them, which well deserve the attention, even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India’. And if I were to ask myself, ‘From what literature, we who have been nurtured, almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of the Semitic race, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human a life... again I should point to India” were the words of **Max Muller**. India is the cradle of civilization. She is the mother of spirituality. Some of the Indian philosophers are the

pioneers of spirituality. Spirituality is the backbone of Indian culture. Various Indian texts have thrown light on spirituality. Bhagavad Gita is one of the texts on Indian Mythology, which give bundles of lessons on leading life⁴. According to Zohar (2000), one should have the capacity to question to become spiritually intelligent. In Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, raises a series of questions to his Parthasarathy (charioteer), Lord Krishna. Later when the grandsire of Kuru dynasty, Bhishma Pithamaha was in the bed of arrows, the eldest of Pandavas, Yudishtra raised a series of questions to him to gain insight on Dharma. Krishna in Bhagavad Gita says that, "For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy" (Bhagavad Gita 6.6). Zohar (2000) says that one should have self awareness. Further lord Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that "From wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self" (Bhagavad Gita 6.26), which is nothing but spiritual intelligence. "India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of mature mind, understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all human beings" (Will Durant, 1930). Thus it would be safer to say that India and spirituality are complementary to each other.

(D) Spiritual quotient: the game- decider at the workplace

An organization with spiritually intelligent employees becomes the designated-hitter in the global market. Spiritual intelligence fosters an organization in multitudinous ways. Therefore every organization should focus on developing the same. The same shall be scrutinized in this section of the paper.

The Knowledge Institute of Perodio (2005) has arranged types of intelligence in a hierarchical form. In the structure physical intelligence takes the lower most position, intellectual capacity takes the third position, emotional intelligence (i.e.) the ability to handle interpersonal relations takes the second position, and spiritual Intelligence tops the list. An employee who has intellectual intelligence but lacks in spiritual intelligence can be compared to a seed which has the ability to germinate but doesn't have fertile soil. Thus no matter how good the seed is, it won't germinate since it lacks the very base. Spirituality is seen as an increasingly important constituent in the workplace (Neal, 1997; Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse, 2002; Krahnke, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Its examination is particularly applicable to the field of HRD, because it goes beyond traditional cognitive and behavioral perspectives, at a deeper level of human experience, work, and career

⁴ Mahabharata – The great Indian Epic in Second Century B.C, chapters 23–40 of Bhishma Parva.

development , by addressing integrated learning and personal growth (Fenwick and Lange, 1998; Elliot and Turnbull, 2005).

Spiritual intelligence is of great magnitude to the employees in the workplace for the following reasons:

Job Performance and Satisfaction: Zohar and Marshall (2000), confirm the correlation between performance and spiritual intelligence. In a study it was observed that job satisfaction is directly proportional to spiritual intelligence (Cherati, Mahdavi & Rezacian, 2013; Khorshidi & Ebadi, 2012). Studies show that for having a productive and happy environment in the workplace there is a need for spiritual intelligence (Tischler, Biberman, & and Mckeage, 2002). A study by Kaur, Sukhwinder; Singh, Sukhdev and Bhatia (2017), found that spirituality influences duty by 11% to 39%. This further increases job satisfaction by 20% to 43 % .The study says that workplace spirituality is a kind of organizational wisdom. The employees with spiritual intelligence would be able to handle their job rightly, would be able to suck out their potential till the last drop. So they will be satisfied with their jobs, thus the absenteeism rate would be low. Job satisfaction would enable them to be happy at their work place. They will be able to climb Maslow's hierarchy easily. Thus they will be able to contribute their best and hence will have a sense of gratification.

Ability to accept failure: With the flourish in Information Technology and increasing unemployment , job security is in question. It is also ordinary, that people who do not deserve climb up the ladder easily and the deserving people ,be left behind. Developing one's spiritual self means expanding one's consciousness, such that one might see the world free of typical constraints (Howard 2002). They would be able to perceive their emotions and would channelize it (Abdullah Zadeh , Bagher-Pour , Bvzhmhrany, and Lotfi , 2008). They accept failures gracefully and move forward fortuitously .

Career growth: Spiritual intelligence would aid an employee to solve problems(Emmons , 2000). Spiritually intelligent employees would be able to see things beyond the obvious since there is no room for ego. Their clarity will aid them in taking stable decisions. The employee would be able to hone his skills further which would help him in his career growth. It can steer employee's recognition and understanding of meaning in their lives, and as a consequence favor their career development (Lips-Wiersma 2002).

Interpersonal relationships: Since the ego factor is curtailed, they would move freely with their fellow colleagues, would develop a sense of belonging, and work in a synergy to achieve their targets. They have a "we feeling" , and retain harmony in the workplace.

Team work: A team consisting of spiritually empowered employees would work with greater synchronization between them, since they have the ability to adjust and accommodate ideas, leading to synergy and enhanced productivity. The organization would grow at a faster rate.

Transformational leadership: Transformational leaders are those who understand the personal needs of the employees and aid them in their development (Riggio & Ronald, 2009). As per Morgan (1997), “Transformational leadership ultimately involves an ability to define the reality of others. Understanding and accepting others is not possible when a person does not know about oneself”. A project head who lacks spiritual intelligence is merely a boss and not a leader. Transformational leaders respect spirituality in the organization (Glazer, 1994; Amram, 2009). Spiritual intelligence will enable a leader to create peace in the organization, the environment will be happy; he will lead the team rather than control.

Stress buster: Spiritual intelligence is also claimed to improve communication at the workplace and reduces stress (Zaidman and Gidoni, 2011).

Value System: Spirituality is capable of shaping individuals’ behavior in a more productive way from the inside out (Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, and Travis 2004). Therefore, enhancing spirituality in workplace can be seen as a means to organizational development (Petchsawang and Morris 2006), by enabling the articulation of values in workplace.

(E) Strategies for developing spiritual intelligence in the work place

A study observed that Workers’ participation in management, both, through formal and informal means minimize conflict, improves communication and encourage staff retention (Stone, 2005). Involving employees in decision making process motivates them further (Ladd & Marshall, 2004) and make them feel that their perspective is valuable to the organization and also develop a clarity about their roles. Studies show that involving employees in discussions on current issues, enables them to be aware of the decision making (Wang and Noe, 2010).

Less rigid organizational structures that allows low cadre employees to approach the top management easily, reduces hinderances to innovation (Claycomb et al., 2005). The study by Walt, (2018), holds that, spiritual quotient brings the lower management closer to the upper management. The capacity to question, and room for innovation will develop spiritual quotient in the organization which is aided by simple, less complex organizational structures.

Working in an environment that functions in a monotonous way drains out energy. Man is a social being. One cannot be expected to carry out his work all the time. Studies show that “the existence of informal social networks within organizations has long been recognized as important” (Allen, James, & Gamlin, 2007). Space should be given to the employees to get

along with each other in the form of informal get-to-togethers like parties, lunch etc. This will help the employees to get in touch with their fellow mates. Social acceptance in the workplace nurtures comfortable feeling in the work environment.

Employees should not be made to work under restricted system of beliefs and ideas. Studies show that generation of novel ideas by the employees depends on the support extended by the work environment (Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin, 1993). Functions should not be restricted to the existing way of doing things. They should be encouraged to be creative. Lateral thinking should be appreciated. This will not only develop spiritual quotient among employees but would lead to innovation, as well. Innovation will give a competitive edge to the organization (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004).

There is a saying “As the ruler, so the ruled”. Studies show that humble leadership strengthens employee’s innovation (Fei, Zhou & Wu, Yenchun, 2018). When humbleness comes in, ego goes out which is nothing but spiritual quotient.

III. CONCLUSION

Stephen Covey in his book “Seven Habits of Highly Effective people” says that spiritual intelligence is an extension of emotional and intellectual intelligence. He says that spiritual intelligence is more important than any other kind of intelligence (Covey Stephen, 2004). It enables a person to look out of box, to rationalize, to adapt changes, and saves one from subjective bias. A spiritually intelligent person would see the inner core of any matter and won’t judge a book by its cover. When ego dissolves, heart opens the gateway for accommodating ideas. False screens would not block his eyes. Thus, he will be a versatile, dynamic person and cross any storm with ease. Therefore the authors suggest that, just as technical training is given before joining in work, spiritual training should also be imparted to the employees. The significant aspect of this research is that it not only highlights the significance of spirituality at the workplace but it attempts to underline simple strategies to develop spirituality in the workplace. This paves way for gaining a competitive edge in the global market. The review concurs with the view that India has been the underpinning for spirituality which is of crucial importance in today’s competitive world.

(A) Directions for future research

The significance of Spirituality and Spiritual competence in the present times having been detected, the ultimate gesticulation of behavior scientists and social scientists should be towards identifying positive psychology strands in the organizational setup that, if exploited with appropriate nurturance, would ignite the quiescent Spiritual fortitude in the present day

workforce.

Second, identifying the theoretical understructures for the components of spirituality discovered in the Indian organizational context, through validated constructions of constituent variables will be a valid starting point for studies that could predict desired performance / behavioral outcomes in futuristic organizations.

Third, based on historical observations and empirical studies a comprehensive panoptic framework holding an all-inclusive list of organizational factors, identified with positive spirituality can be developed .

Fourth, research needs to also believe in the potential negative aspects of workplace spirituality. Empirical research to examine the potential direct and indirect negative consequences of workplace spirituality needs to be navigated, to trace the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the negative effects .

(B) Implications for practice

Nurturing cultural diversity at the workplace would aid the employees to get to know about different perspectives. Cultural diversity aids “to overcome cultural differences through shared experiences when working within a team” (Al- Jenaibi, 2011). When they mingle with people of other culture they would try to adapt to that. Thus a sense of acceptance develops and the ego that one’s culture is superior would vanish.

Gone are the days when employees were expected to complete only their routine office work. Now employees are bound to carry out research in many institutions. Work life balance is becoming a major problem for employees now. Imbalance in work-life would hamper the individual’s potential, and it leads to stress (Kofodimos, 1993). Marks and Mac Dermid (1996) found that employees who have work life balance worked at ease. The employees should be periodically motivated, counseled so that the employees would be able to cope up with stress, and would be able to contribute better.

(C) Summary

The success of the Spiritual Competence project is largely contingent upon pertinent further research that would identify measurable organization-based spirituality constructs, that can be deployed by practitioners , for desired net results.

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