

Indian Management Wisdom

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Corporate India is setting new trends through expansion and extension of their corporate boundaries as seen through new acquisitions and mergers. Moreover, Indian Business is breaking a new ground facilitating the arrival of the idea of Indian Management. Yoga, Ayurveda and Indian Management Wisdom (IMW) are the three rivers of knowledge from India that are drawing a new attention at the global level.

When we look at the emergence of Indian Management Wisdom (IMW) as a new thought current, we find its roots in the following seven 'streams of consciousness' of 'Indian Wisdom' represented by crystallization of experiences in the form insights, imaginations and visions :

1. Ancient Wisdom Foundations: The essence of ancient wisdom is captured by 3 Vs viz. Valmiki, Vyasa and Vivekanand. It may be indicated that the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Complete Works of Vivekananda capture the essence of Indian mythology and philosophy. Impact of Valmiki, Vyasa and Vivekananda on Indian consciousness is immeasurable. From the viewpoint of the impact on Indian consciousness, three periods of mythology and history could as well be viewed as Rama period, Krishna period and Ramkrishna/ Vivekananda period. Implications of such a perspective for management thought are interesting as Rama represents good governance, Krishna represents leadership and strategy and Ram-Krishna combination represents spiritual approach to management.

2. Arthasastra Foundations: Written in the context of the Kingdom, Arthasastra is a well known book dealing with management of Kingdom. It has many useful lessons for leadership and management that can be applied to 'Corporate Kingdoms'. Its secular character is very appealing and its pro-people orientation has interesting lessons for management of organizations.

3. Freedom Movement Foundations: India's freedom struggle also provided a backdrop for the emergence of the idea of Indian Management and Indian Management Wisdom. Freedom movement was also a social movement, which led to the liberation of the nation. Indian Business played a significant role during freedom struggle. The concept of trusteeship was the product of the freedom movement as Gandhi was searching for an alternative to Capitalism and Communism. It represented a holistic approach to building business organizations. The linkage of Indian Management with freedom movement led to a broadening the concept of management. It implied that the idea of management should not be merely restricted to Corporate Management but should also include marginal sections of society. In essence management should be 'development oriented' in nature. This is an important lesson from the freedom movement foundations of Indian Management.

4. Indian Business Foundations: Indian business' acumen is known from ancient times. Later it found its expression in community entrepreneurship e.g Marwari entrepreneurship, Gujarati entrepreneurship, Chettiar entrepreneurship. 'Vyapar Sastra' provided the conceptual foundations for many trading practices. As the medium size businesses developed in to corporate structures, new lessons were learnt. Such experiences of the development of organizations led to development of a corpus of knowledge and wisdom in the form of case studies of 'Business Maharajas' and 'Corporate Rishis'.

5. Cultural Foundations: It is now recognized that cultural dimension is also important for development of management philosophies, theories and concepts. This has been the concern of many Indian scholars such as Prof. S K Chakraborty, Prof. J B P Sinha, Prof M .B. Athreya, Prof Virmani and Prof Rajen Gupta. Japan developed Japanese Management rooted in its culture. Similarly, Indian Management as an idea has been emerging from the influence of the civilizational and cultural experiences. Further, 'integrative indigenization' of modern management theories and practices led to development of many new Indian Management concepts. In fact, Indian managers learn about American and Japanese management concepts, tools and techniques in classrooms and in Management Development Programs, however in practice they intuitively integrate this learning with ground realities and thereby evolve their own 'Indian blends' that integrate American and Japanese theories of management with indigenous cultural context. This has been a reason for their success and it has led to development of new Indian Management Wisdom through 'India Blend' approach to management.

6. Subaltern/Social Movements Foundations: Indian Management Wisdom has also been influenced by subaltern forces as manifested in several social movements. This led to demands of involvement and empowerment. Empowerment of the weakest is equally important in contrast to the survival of the fittest. Subaltern and social movements led to the idea of 'Duty of the Fittest'. This implies that Corporations have a duty towards the society and the corporate model should incorporate this idea in its operating philosophy.

7. Capillary Action Foundations: Many grassroots institutions driven by the philosophy of 'loksangraha' (well being of members) have made an impact on the social consciousness. SEWA, Lizzat Papad, Dabbawalla, AMUL and many other organizations are shining examples of the capillary action approach to development. AMUL model suggests the need for a linkage between the capillary action and corporate action. During recent years e-chaupal of ITC has also created a new linkage model wherein grass root action is combined with corporate action.

8. New Age Spiritual Movements: New age spiritual movements originating from India, such as Transcendental Meditation (TM) of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Vipasana meditation, Brahma Kumaries spiritual university, Art of Living movement etc, have emerged from Indian spiritual traditions. These movements are influencing the corporate world leading to emergence of a new integration of Yoga and Management. In fact, Yoga, Meditation and Spirituality (YMS) are emerging as new areas of research in the field of management. In due course, this may be acknowledged as distinctive contribution of 'Indian Management' to the world of management. With this acknowledgment, 'Indian Management' would acquire its distinctive identity.

9. New Institutional Initiatives: Application of Indian Management Wisdom has found institutional support in the form of several initiatives e.g. Management Centre for Human Values (MCHV) at IIM Calcutta, Women's Institute for Studies in Development Oriented Management (WISDOM) at Banasthali University in Rajasthan, Indian Business Academy (IBA) at Bangalore and Greater Noida, Yoga and Management Division at Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhan Samsthana (SVYASA) University at Bangalore. These Centres (Knowledge Dhams) are making significant contributions to further development of Indian Management Wisdom. Their work is receiving attention and acknowledgement.

Invitation to Explore Indian Management Research Matrix

The above stated streams of influences can be combined with three visions of management thought viz. vision of human values in management, vision of development oriented management and vision of expansion of Indian Business. This combination leads us to a research matrix for opening new frontiers in Indian Management research. Various research tracks represented by this matrix can lead us to future development of Indian Management Wisdom (IMW).

We invite researcher, scholars and practitioners to explore these tracks as well as their own insights that can expand this research matrix and show the application of various Indian Wisdom thought currents to management, leadership and holistic development. Short articles for this section should be e-mail to Dr. Subhash Sharma (re_see@rediffmail.com). General guidelines for published in The Management Faculty are applicable.