

BOOK REVIEW

Managerial Effectiveness and Quality of Worklife: Indian Insights by S. K. Chakraborty, Tata McGraw Hill, 1987, Page 246, Price Rs. 120/-.

One of the important issues which Indian intellectuals (including Managers) face, as Alan Roland of National Association for Psycho-analysis, USA, writes in his Foreword to this book, is how to incorporate Western theories of society and human nature in Indian settings. Two centuries of British rule and its modernizing aftermath have denigrated everything which is Indian. In other words, Indians have come to believe that what is good is Western and what is inferior is Indian. Very few intellectuals have picked up courage to challenge the supremacy of fundamental psychological views of human nature and motivation which comprises the corpus of Western management theory. Chakraborty is indeed a rare exception to the general set of such Indian intellectuals and academicians because he challenges everything which is Western and proves that Indian psycho-philosophy is much more richer and resourceful for managing people and organisation.

Chakraborty points out that the Western model of managerial effectiveness places disproportionate emphasis on training, skills and knowledge. Indian psycho-philosophy on the other hand believes that human effectiveness lies in the path which starts from education for inculcating appropriate values and principles for attaining wisdom. For Chakraborty, a manager is a man first, and a manager later. Managerial effectiveness is primarily a function of energy processing. A manager processes energy by employing his mind and brain. But managerial effectiveness is rarely achieved because mind is often inert, dark, wild, turbulent, agitated and scattered. In other words, the mind oscillates between the *mudha* (inert, dark), *kshipta* (wild, turbulent), *vikshipta* (agitated, scattered), *ekagra* (one-pointed, concentrated) and *niruddha* (reaching a beyond-the mind state) mind states. The *ekagra* is a rare fleeting event and *niruddha* is beyond our

comprehension. To make things worse the modern managers have been trained to use and utilise only the left hemisphere of their brain which is basically rational, sequential, logical, segmented, inductive and analytical. The right hemisphere which is spatial, intuitive, deductive, synthetic and holistic is rarely used. If this partial utilisation of mind and brain breeds ineffectiveness, it should hardly surprise anyone. Chakraborty delves deep into the treasure of Indian psychology and brings out a set of mind stilling exercises which managers, and for that matter anybody professing any kind of vocation, can practice to invigorate the mind and the brain totally.

The concept of self

Chakraborty underscores the imperatives of education and training for developing pure mind. He believes that only a pure mind can become calm; only a calm mind can become a still mind; only a still mind can concentrate; and unless the mind is concentrated, managerial effectiveness cannot be achieved. One of the educational strategies suggested for acquiring a pure mind is to strive for a deeper understanding of the concept of self and reality. It is not surprising to note that behavioural scientists, who have been trained in Western psychological concepts, view the concept of self in terms of trivial desires, goals and ambitions. This comprehension of the concept of the self is very limited and narrow when we contrast it with the Indian perspective.

The Indian psychology looks at the self of the man as "sentient pure consciousness which is already perfect and whole (*poorna*). His body, mind, senses, intellect etc., are insentient, fickle, mutable and destructible instruments of this Self. But the Self is immutable and indestructible. It is this Self which constitutes the unvarying substratum of the body-mind-sense mutations. And this Self in each man originates from the one Universal Self. Therefore the Selves of the all men are identical." One of the boldest and most reassuring statements ever made

about man is this idea of Indian psycho-philosophy, that the true 'self' or Self is always intrinsically free from all conventional blemishes and shortcomings, aspirations and satisfactions, successes and failures.

The Western understanding of Self produces a wide variety of organisational conflicts, brittle team work, fleeting collaboration and co-operation. This is so because Western psychologists like Carl Rogers believe that "as a part of the process of development of the self, actualisation manifests itself through differentiation which gradually evolves into a concept of self, feeding itself on positive regard". In fact the practice of such theory leads to deterioration of organisational health. The distinction in Indian thought between *Rupah* and *Swarupah* is much more sound and helpful in achieving managerial effectiveness. *Rupah* denotes name and form while *Swarupah* is reality or substratum. The Indian theory of 'self' vs. Self says that whereas the self of each individual is different from that of others as *Rupahs*, the *Swarupah* or self in all is the same.

There is no gainsaying the fact that we are enslaved or dominated by that with which we identify ourselves. This reality stresses the need for disidentification from what one is not, and reidentification with what one really is. The mind stilling exercises, as prescribed in this book, become helpful here. One of the exercises (it is in fact one composite set of exercise) requires the practitioner to remind himself that he possesses a body, a mind, an intellect, a set of senses, but he himself is not body, mind, intellect and senses. All these statements are statements of disidentification, which is followed by a single statement of reidentification: "I am the eternal, self-luminous, pure consciousness which is *poorna*". Once this realization dawns, the person becomes composed, serene and equanimous.

Doctrine of Karma

Chakraborty's model also demonstrates that *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas* *gunas* interplay in different combinations to produce different sets of results. However, his focus is on systematic progression from *tamasik* state of mind to *rajasik* and ultimately *sattwik* mind state. He

comes out effectively in showing how our thoughts and even food habits play a vital role in acquiring and preserving *tamasik*, *rajasik* and *sattwic* qualities.

The model also takes into account the doctrine of karma (DOK) which is primarily a theory of cause and effect. DOK states that (a) every event is an effect with an antecedent cause, (b) every effect seen today must have a cause yesterday, (c) a cause today must be an effect tomorrow, (d) it is the doer/thinker who has to bear consequences tomorrow, (e) each cause has its own effects. A good deed will not cancel the effects of a bad deed, and (f) there are collective karmas affecting group, organizations and even nations as a whole. A large number of thinkers including the ones with Indian moorings, have derided the doctrine of karma as a fatalist philosophy. This criticism results from either ignorance or misunderstanding of subtle nuances of DOK. It is not surprising that large number of Western thinkers like Toynbee, Max Muller, Maugham have shown their faith in doctrine of karma which is as scientific as any principle of physical science.

Critics of the DOK assail it largely out of their ignorance. The DOK is fatalist only to this extent that past karma shall indeed produce a set of results—depending upon whether the karma was *sukla* (pure), *kṛsna* (impure, injurious to others), *sukla-kṛsna* (partly pure, partly impure) or *asukla-kṛsna* (neither white nor black—which produces effects of neither kind).

DOK has 'positive' elements as it affirms that the future is an effect of the causes initiated in the present. In other words, under DOK there is no such thing as chance or luck. The hypothesis and belief that all human actions shall be suitably rewarded and punished in times to come, can be significant determinants of present human behaviour. Thus DOK can hardly be called fatalistic; fate in fact denotes our inability to view the action—reaction chain in its totality. In fact, the most significant contribution of the DOK is to make us introspective. It restrains the most common habit of pointing our fingers at others for our failures. To us, DOK appears to be a potent re-inforcer of

positive and desirable behaviour. We find it a highly enriched doctrine of motivation, than many modern theories which are at best 'half theories' of motivation.

Quality of Worklife and Work Ethic

Recently, the quality of worklife and work ethic have been receiving greater attention from a wide variety of people. Much of this concern has been spurred by substantial decline in our work ethic and emergence of Japan as an economic superpower drawing its strength from sound work ethic of its working population.

The entire range of Indian thoughts from Rigveda through Bhagavadgeeta to Manu-smriti highlight that the most superordinate character of work ethic is sacrifice. Accordingly, work is performed for lokasamgraha (world-maintenance) and chitta-shuddhi (to cleanse our sullied mind and intellect so that perennial luminous true self shines forth from our lower nature in its full glory). In Western management literature work has been viewed only as a means for achieving personal goals. Very rarely it takes the form of group goals; even then the work is performed to strengthen interests of a group of individuals rather than the whole humanity. If this produces acrimony, back-biting, jealousy, power-mongering and politicking, should one be surprised? On the other hand in the Indian psycho-philosophy work has been viewed as sacrifice which is performed for world maintenance and chitta-shuddhi.

The Indian psycho-philosophy also provides detailed guidelines on how to work. They can be summarised in the following three imperatives which appear in the Geeta:

- Yogastha kuru karmani (perform your duties dwelling in yoga relinquishing attachment).
- Yogah karmasu kaushalam (skill in action lies in the practice of this yoga).
- Tasmāt sarveshu kaṣeṣu yogayukta bhavarjuna (at all times be established in yoga in the form of equanimity).

As Chakraborty observes, the climax of the Indian theory of work is this: for the higher or witness Self, or Atman in man, which by definition is poorna, work is irrelevant. But the clouds which keeps this essence out of his awareness pertain to his lower, or executive or empirical self. Hence work is an indispensable means to gradually cleanse the lower self of the dross clinging to it so that the self-existent pure consciousness or Atman or true Self shines forth like the sun from behind the clouds.

The pinnacle of work ethic is attained when work becomes worship. Initially work and worship are viewed distinctly different from each other by the worker. Then the intermediate stage arrives when worker offers his work as a prayer to the supreme power, universal energy. The final stage when work becomes worship is attained when all distinction between sitting down for prayers and working on a machine gradually obliterates.

The Giving Model of Motivation

The giving model of motivation is the last component of managerial effectiveness theorem developed by Chakraborty. Various theories propounded by Maslow, McGregor, Herzberg, Likert, many of us must have observed, look at the concept of motivation from the perspective of organisational members only. In other words all these theories talk about how the needs of organisational members should be satisfied in order to make them motivated for giving better performance. This view takes people as an amalgam of desires and needs. No wonder Chakraborty calls it 'rodent psychology' because it views human beings as if they were rodents or pavlovian dogs. The Indian psycho-philosophy takes organisational members on more serious and higher plane. In Indian psycho-philosophy the motivation lies in giving, not in needing. The life itself has been divided into four stages namely Brahmacharya, Grhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. Each stage entails a set of responsibilities towards self and society. Geeta as a matter of fact differentiates with different kinds of giving also. It does elaborate the manner in which sattwic, rajasic, tamasic giving is performed. Moreover, Brihadarnyaka lays down five kinds of debts: (1) Deva Rin (duties towards various

presiding deities), (2) Rishi Rin (duties towards teachers and enlightened ones), (3) Pitri Rin (duties towards parents), (4) Nri Rin (duties towards human kind as a whole), and (5) Bhutta Rin (duties towards all sub-human species).

The giving model of motivation is as scientific and rational as any other modern theory of motivation. The only difference is that giving model is much more profounder, for it does not take human beings as a bundle of desires and needs only. Chakraborty has also tried to examine whether Indian employees prefer giving model as a source of motivation. The empirical study conducted by him shows a positive result. This points out the fact that Indian employees can be motivated by giving model.

The book also gives an account of implementation of Chakraborty's model in one of the leading private sector companies of North India. This account is not only a very interesting reading but it also gives a glimpse of progress of a project from idea stage to the final implementation and fruit bearing stage. This account would give confidence to those who are intellectually comfortable with the model, but finds themselves apprehensive about its practicability.

The last chapter of the book contains an account of experiments and experiences in the area of transpersonal (Fourth Force) psychology being carried out in the West. The commonalities between Indian psycho-philosophy and transpersonal psychology, which is concerned with "individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experience, B-values, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualization, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species-wide synergy..." are distinctly discernible. Transpersonal psychology underscores the need for outgrowing Freudian ego or Eriksonian ego-identity. It also recognises the importance of intuitive mode of choice, planning and creativity; at the same time it supports the idea of surrender of the little mind to the super mind or the supreme energy.

Summing up

This work is definitely a landmark in management literature. Various researchers and scholars have been writing on kindred themes. But this work for the first time succeeds in bringing forth a composite management model from the sea-bed of Indian psycho-philosophy, which was hitherto thought relevant to monks, mystics and ascetics only. Chakraborty boldly states and demonstrates otherwise.

One of numerous dilemmas which was initially faced by the head of business group practising the model and philosophy prescribed in the book, was this apprehension: Am I heading towards a business ashrama? This question would, we are sure, find echoes in many minds reading this book. We feel that answer to this query has to be in affirmative. Business and management because of their deep-rooted links with society have to incorporate elements of purity in their dealings. Deviation from righteousness has brought about decline and degeneration for numerous business groups. We can cite a good number of examples. On the other hand, anyone scanning the Indian corporate horizon would note the steady growth of some organisations managed largely on principles of purity and righteousness. While at the same time a number of organisations following dubious means have been rising and falling like meteors.

The philosophy of Indian psycho-philosophy as deftly enumerated in the present work needs universal attention. If we overlook or pooh-pooh it for no sound reasons, we would be foregoing a potent opportunity for managerial and organizational growth and excellence.

When a good number of ashramas could be run on the business lines, why business can not be run like ashrama? In fact if business houses can absorb the qualities of an ashram, the zenith of QWL would be attained. Sooner that day comes, better for Indian management and Indian society at large.

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