



The Concept of Triguna and Management

Jayarama B.

Assistant Professor

Department of Sanskrit

Vijaya College, Mulki

Mangalore, Karnataka.

ABSTRACT:

A creative man starts his creativity by controlling his faculties, in order to handle life this is holds the key for success. The organizational excellence depends on innovative ideas of worker, who possesses divergent thinking, and harmony of mind and soul, and balance of temperament. Triguna theory of personality based on Samkhya philosophy of yoga (Kisor, 2001) describes that balance of gunas for exhibiting creativity. Based on the descriptive analysis, the following four types of personalities were identified: Sattvic, Rajasic, Sattvic-Rajasic, and Sattvic-Tamasic personalities. Kaur and Sinha (1992) identified that Sattvic personality performance is superior than other personalities, and correspondingly the results on creativity scale show that all personality groups have a urge to be creative, thus showing their balance and harmony of mind and soul.

Key Words: Organisation, Triguna, Samkhya, Gunas and Sattvic.

The encyclopedic knowledge available in Sanskrit is mindboggling. The specialty of Sanskrit lore is that it provides guidance to the life in its entirety as it covers all the spheres of human existence. Beginning with the prenatal status it extends to the post mortal condition in the life providing for an all-round development of the person. Right from the earliest texts, the Vedas , the emphasis has been to achieve excellence in this life in spiritual ,moral and empirical aspects. As such, it is no wonder that profound and ample writings that deal with every aspect of human life and actions are available in Sanskrit.

Even though Management developed as a discipline in recent times, the major Concepts related to it could be found in the ancient Sanskrit literature. Works like the Mahabharata , the Smriti texts, didactic literature etc., contain numerous passages that deal with management of human affairs. In fact the system of civil and military administration , judicature, the science of polity has been considered as one of the four Vidyas. आन्विक्षिकी त्रयी वार्ता दण्डनीतिश्च शाख्ती।

The way this knowledge has developed is really astonishing. Thus it would be beneficial to examine these texts to compare and contrast the principles laid down by them and the principles of the modern day science of Management.

It certainly is a tall order to consider each and every aspect of management, as the literature available is very vast and within the limitations of this paper I propose to examine the important concept of Triguna and relate it to a few principles of modern Management.

Even though there are different ideas concerning what Management is, a possibly comprehensive definition could be that Management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organising, actuating and controlling to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources. It is evident from this definition that Management represents the skills which plan, direct, relate and integrate human efforts in the discharge of all operations required for an enterprise. If is meant to accomplish pre-determined objectives by the effective use of human and other resources.

In recent years more and more stress is being laid on the human factor in the Management ,considering human resources as its vital component. The underlying principle has been that people give their best when they are developed rather than when they are ordered to do something. A close examination of the nature and function of Management indicates the following major components:

- 1.Organisation
- 2.people
- 3.Resources
- 4.Functions like production, buying, selling, financing etc.

It is the objective of an effective management to achieve excellence in all these four aspects.

This comprehensive view has parallel in the enunciation of the causes for the fulfilment of any work in the Bhagavad - Gita. Sri Krishna says,

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
साहये कृतानि प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ।

This enunciation is necessary for the cessation of the idea of a doer with respect to the self .the cause indicated above are:

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथम्बिधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ।

' The seat of action, the agent , the separate and manifold means, the distinct and diverse activities and the fifth, the presiding deities of all these functionaries'. Even though these causes are usually interpreted respectively as the physical body ; the agent of action, the five sense organs ,the mind and the intellect ; the activities made possible by prana and the presiding deities of all the organs , prana etc., these can equally be

adapted to the functions of this earthly world. When applied to the management, one can observe that the first four i.e. अधिष्ठानं ए कर्ता ए करणं and चेष्टा correspond respectively to the organisation. The fifth factor, the Daiva is the indeterminable factor in any course of action that manifests itself as the highly improbable or unexpected success or failure.

The analysis of the functioning of an organization in this light is interesting. Sri Krishna further says that these are the causes whether the action is proper or improper. Thus he specifies that the propriety and efficiency of an action depends on these causes and further elaborates on each, dividing and characterizing them on the basis of three Gunas or the qualities: The sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In fact, the Bhagavad -Gita attributes the existence of this entire universe to these three Gunas. Sri Krishna in the third chapter asserts the pervasiveness and inescapability of the Gunas,

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैगुण्येः ।

And again in the seventh chapter,

दैवी होश गुणमयी मम मया दुरत्यया ।

The subject of the 14th chapter is the detrained exposition of the Gunas and the characteristics of the one who has transcended them. The sixteenth and seventeenth chapters distinguish the divine and demonic and analyze several aspects of human life in this light. This division is apparently based on the three Gunas. Application of the concept of the three Gunas to several aspects could be found in the eighteenth chapter. The fact that makes this concepts of Gunas significant in management is that the Bhagavad-Gita describes the three qualities by their psychological action in man and incidentally in things such as food in accordance with the psychological or vital effect they have on human beings.

Before venturing into examining the structure of management with reference to the three Gunas, it is beneficial to summarize the characteristics of these Gunas as has been depicted in Sri Bhagavad-Gita. Tamas, a passive and inert nescience (aprakasha) is born of ignorance and inertia and its fruit too is inertia and ignorance. Its essence is andhakara , the absence of light, the darkness, which obscures knowledge and causes confusion and delusion. Tamas brings incapacity and negligence of action, of error, inattention, procrastination, misunderstanding and non-understanding . Indolence, languor and sleep belong to this Guna. Its overpowering characteristics are delusion and inertia. Therefore it suffers all shocks, disappointments, failures etc. without any resistance, as it is devoid of the required intelligence and drive. It only promotes wallowing in suffering, failure, death and decay. It lacks both the kinetics of the Rajas and the equilibrium of the Sattva. Tamas is the very manifestation of Moha, the delusion.

Rajas is the principal of Endeavour and motion and impulsion, pravrtti, i.e. kinesis. It is the passion of seeking, desire and action - the dominant characteristics of life. Its essence is the attraction of liking and longing, attachment to the objects of senses. Therefore it is full of unrest, greed, lust, excitement and has the impetus

towards action. Because it lacks the clear and right knowledge of the things, and is devoid of equilibrium, it has both the sensory pleasures and pains. All the ignorant and passionate seeking of life belongs to the Rajas.

The Sattva on the other hand is the very form of enlightenment, Prakasha. Sattva with its purity becomes the cause of light and illumination and is rid of all the characteristics, the darkness, inertia, delusion etc., of the Rajas. It is characterized by understanding, perception and knowledge and a harmonious contentment, knowledge are its results.

Organisation, the first of the four chief components, is characterised by the nature of its function, objective and the attitude of the people who work in it. According to Sri Bhagavad-Gita the impellors of every action or knowledge or the vritti corresponding to an object, the object of knowledge and knower. Even according to the principles of modern management the vital factors that govern an organisation is the knowledge base it has and its continuous updating. As a result more and more emphasis is being laid on research and development. The object of knowledge is verily the object of action in the organisation and the knower of course includes the one who conceives the formation of the organisation and who directs it. The Bhagavad-Gita further declares that the constituents of action are three: the means of the instrument of action, the object of action and the agent of action. The three are clearly defined in management. As is conceptualised by the theories of management the nature, direction and objectives of an organisation rest with its promoters, directors and the top executives. What is expected of them is proper and effective leadership. The effective leadership presupposes many qualities, chief among them being ability to take decisions, making plans, motivating and leading by example. Reason rather than emotion should rule their decision-making and they must not lose their heart or initiative when confronted with adverse situations. The presence and equanimity of mind, positive outlook and adhering to just practices are other qualities required of them. Their knowledge should be exemplary in their field of action. The predominance of the Sattwa can only possess such qualities. The Sattwik knowledge can perceive a universal has many among diverse divisions; can master the principle of its action and the relation of the action to the purpose existence. In this status the possessor of this knowledge becomes a fault less instrument of light and harmony. The Sattwik action is that which a man does calmly in the clear light of reason and knowledge and impersonal sense of the right and the wrong. The Sattwik doer is free from attachment, egoism and passion is not depressed by failures and sufferings; not elated by successes and possesses a calm rectitude of zeal and impassionate enthusiasm in the work that has to be done. His intellect remains endowed with discrimination (Viveka) and his resolve (Dhruti) remains a consistent and persistent force. The self exceeding Sattwik nature experiences the happiness of the form of satisfaction of the higher mind and spirit.

These qualities of a Sattwik doer thus establish the ideal for those who shoulder the responsibility of directing and leading an organisation. One is reminded of the great saying of the sage Vidyaranya at this juncture. ज्ञानिना चरितुं शक्य सम्यग्राज्यादिचिन्तम्. An enlightened sage is capable of excellently managing a kingdom and similar organizations. The next most vital aspect of management is "People" or the human resources. In the development of the principles of management we see a gradual realization of the importance of people in an organization. In

the classical, neoclassical and modern theories of organization, there is a shift from considering the human force as that of a cog in a machine to that as personalities and in recognizing the organization's totality as a complex of human interrelationships. While discussing the human resources in an organization, the middle level and lower level managements have been given due importance as like the top management. We have already observed that the knowledge, the action and the agent of action endowed with Sattra Guna form an ideal for the top management. As for the other two levels are concerned, the Rajasik and Tamasik knowledge, action and agent of action become relevant in guiding a preferable and profitable recruitment and deployment of the human resources.

The Rajasik knowledge sees the multiplicity of things only in their separateness and the variety of actions and fails, unlike the Sattwik knowledge to discover the harmony and unity among them. Because it is beset with ego and desire, there is no proper coordination of the will and action and is often a sum of jumble of sections of knowledge often incomplete and inconsistent. Egoism and desire are dominant in a Rajasik doer and the action is undertaken by him to fulfill a desire with high expectation of result. Inordinate effort, passionate labours are other characteristics of Rajasik action. The Rajasik doer is driven by attachment to actions, passion for the fruits of action, greed and is impure of mind and often violent and brutal. He cares little for others while securing his end. He is easily moved to ecstasy and depression by successes is keen, kinetic, but misunderstands the proper from the improper, what is to be done from what is not to be done. The Rajasik resolve sustains, however, the actions seeking Dharma, desires and prosperity and is guided by the desire for fruition of actions. The pleasure sought by a Rajasik doer is limited by disappointment, satiety, fatigue, disgust, sin, transience, etc.

The Tamasik knowledge is marked by ignorance; is small and narrow, and the Tamasik doer has the disposition of a lazy, dull obstinate deluded way of comprehending things. The Tamasik mind is never rational and as such attaches itself to things obstinately. It never looks beyond the sensory perceptions and allows blindly the impulses to predominate. It lacks proper comprehension of the reality and foresight. The chief instrumental force of Tamasik doer is ignorant instinct or the crude vital nature. The Tamasik action is done with a confused deluded ignorant mind with mechanical obedience to the instincts without any consideration for the consequences of an action. The Tamasik agent of action does not put himself really into work, follows blindly the common routine, is stupid, stubborn in error and avoids work cunningly. Laziness, slowness, procrastination, wants of initiative and sincerely marks his actions. His reasoning is false and ignorant leading only to darkness. It has the propensity to consider Dharma as Adharma and Adharma as Dharma and to justify wrong acts. Disharmony and disorder are characteristics of a Tamasik doer who always seeks happiness founded in laziness, sleep, delusion, inertia and ignorance.

A proper assessment of prospective managers and workers in the light of the above details helps the organisation in the middle and lower levels of a number of parts or systems as is held by the modern theorists, its success depends solely on the success of each component. The modern management talks of several soft skills to achieve this end. It is very much evident that these systems have to be continuously subjected to regular

and periodic assessment and evaluation as it is natural for the systems to undergo changes. Because these systems are human institutions and are influenced by the vagaries of human nature, even the systems of management evolved as the best would suffer decline and distortion. The Triguna concept sets an excellent standard for this assessment and evaluation as also provides guidelines for the changes to be affected.

When once the human resources are properly evolved and nourished the other two aspects viz. The 'resources' and 'various functions' are automatically taken care of as both of them are solely dependent on and controlled by persons.

Thus the concept of the three Gunas corresponds to and in many ways excels the existing principles of management and of only a proper knowledge system is developed based on it much could be achieved in the field of management. There are various other resources in Sanskrit literature that provide many insights into the ways and means of management and a comprehensive study would certainly yield much useful and advanced theories to evolve management system.

Bibliography:

1. Puta, M., & Sedlmeier, P. (2014). The concept of tri-guna: A working model. In S. Schmidt & H. Walach (Eds.), *Studies in neuroscience, consciousness and spirituality: Vol. 2. Meditation Neuroscientific approaches and philosophical implications* (p. 317–364).
2. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01634-4_18
3. Krishnan B. Typological conceptions in ancient Indian thought. In: Mishra G, Mohanty AK, editors. *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; 2002.
4. Kumar SK. Indian Indigenous Concepts and Perspectives: Developments and Future Possibilities. In: Mishra G, Mohanty AK, editors. *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company; 2002.
5. Safaya R. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd; 1975. Indian psychology: A critical and historical analysis of the psychological speculations in Indian philosophical literature
6. Aurobindo S. Vol. 13. Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, College Street; 1942. Essays on the Gita
7. Aurobindo S. Vol. 18. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram; 1990. The Life Divine, SABCL;
8. Das RC. The Gita typology of personality-An inventory. *J Indian Psychol.* 1987.
9. Sebastian KA, Mathew VG. Personality correlates of PSI experience. *J Indian Psychol.* 2001.
10. Kapur M, Hirisave U, Reddy MV, Barnabas I, Singhal D. Study of infant temperament: An Indian perspective. *Indian J Clin Psychol.* 1997.