Abstract Title

CONCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

There is an overwhelming emphasis on materialistic development at global level without exception of any country. In this process of achieving the material progress which is considered as an index of economic development there is very little concern for man. Man is treated as one of the links in the total chain of production and distribution leaving behind the consciousness aspect of men, materials, machines etc. The fact that man is not a physical entity alone, but contains elements like mind, psychic and a spiritual component is now being realized (13), even in modern scientific and business world. The consciousness in human is the most crucial element to enrich happiness in one’s life and in society or organization. Making decisions based on conscience leads to long lasting impact.

Management primarily is to take a set of decisions for achieving for fulfilling objectives. Management is the process of developing decisions and taking actions to direct the activities of people within organizations toward common objectives (10). Therefore, management by conscience is now becoming predominant. Similarly, as Operations management (OM) is the process whereby resources, flowing within a defined system, are combined and transformed in a controlled manner to add value in accordance with
policies communicated by management, consciousness approach to OM is expected to bring greater success. Operation Managers lead the activities of an organization by working through other people to get things done, utility of conscious approach becomes obvious: as mutual understanding, cooperation, belongingness all improve in harmonious way.

Further, Operation management is the hub of the total business/origination/institution/system management irrespective of functional areas and hierarchical levels. The purpose of the paper is to create awareness of the concept of consciousness approach in operations management over larger enlightened group of persons from academic institutions, industries, business, government organizations and researchers aiming at humanizing the business organization and interiorizing management for achieving acknowledgeable results. Adaptation of consciousness approach to all endeavors of human life, whether personal or professional, societal or governmental ultimately leads to “Lokah Samsta Sukhinobhavantuh” (Universal happiness)

The paper proceeds with discussion on consciousness, its involvements and need in associating with each of the activities/tasks of the human interactions with particular reference to the Operation Management.

Some of the recent managerial concepts and processes such as ‘5S’ of Japan, ‘7S’ of USA (6,7,8), the process of blending adequately the analytical techniques and consciousness based behavioral systems as well as the process of combining both materialistic wealth
acquisition and spiritual advancement under consciousness approach to the Operation Management for meeting demands of the 21st century which is expected to be full of challenges consequent upon handling stress and strains.

**Consciousness**

The concept of “Consciousness” is quite old in India. Its application in management was also prevalent, but in recent years, with various leadership practices based on the concepts and philosophies, such as “Kaizen” and “Zen” of Japan, “Integral Yoga” and “Buddhism” of India, “Confucianism” and “Tao” of China and practices of Buddhism in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, all from the eastern countries, have brought consciousness approach in the forefront. The central idea in all is “Self” and “Self-management” as an essential step to the new management era (5). This change has already begun and making organizations to focus the attention on individuals.

The faculty of being aware of Self and of things begins through identification. Awareness is the first thing necessary, in the right way, seeing them in their inner truth, but awareness by itself is not enough. There must be Will and Force that makes the consciousness effect. Consciousness is not only power of awareness of Self and things but also has dynamic and creative energy. It can determine its own reaction or abstain from reactions. Consciousness is not only Chit but also Chit Shakthi (11). Chit as understood in Indian philosophy is the pure consciousness as in *Sat-Chita-Ananda* means
Existence Absolute-Pure Consciousness-Bliss Absolute and the attainment of this is the goal of the Advaita philosophy (14).

Consciousness is usually identified with mind. Physical things like materials, machines etc., also have consciousness within them which feel and respond to care and repel to careless and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress of consciousness.

There can be no clear division between the man’s personal and professional life. There is one reality which manifests itself as many; the concept of oneness, even the difference is a surface phenomenon. All beings/things are linked in interdependence. According to Advaita philosophy, the same divine nature is present in the lowest worm as well as in the highest human being. This is the basic Indian Vedantic Approach as said by Swami Vivekanada (14).

**Consciousness Approach**

Both material wealth and spiritual efflorescence are essential to achieve sustained organizational, social and personal successful life and therefore should be concurrently pursued. While performing a task, conducting business, resulting in monitory benefits is necessary but underlying purpose, attitude and approach is more important and should justify our actions. Work performed without desire, without attachment to any
fruit/reward and egoistic attitude is ideal. This higher law inspires man to do in the right way and in the right spirit. The steps involved in the consciousness approach are:

- Formulating the business attitude
- Harmonizing the organization
- Interiorizing the management

The consciousness could be visualized and observed with careful watch and systematic training of mind of individuals in various organs/elements of the system whether business, institution, government or society. In a business important organizations like management, employee, machines, system, resources, environment all have consciousness and could yield in better improved performance or objectively with conscious approach of dealing which have already been well realized and adopted by some saintly persons and spiritual institution, yoga establishments in India and Japan.

Management:

Management begins with self, before we manage others. Management development cannot take place without self development. Without mastery of ego we will only end up with manipulation of mere tools and techniques. Business leaders should find ways for Self-realization & divine within to reach perfection at work place. Brain stilling is one of the suggested methods by ancient philosophers. Stillness/silence here means perfect calm in body, mind and heart. Concentrate on the problem, meditate and wait for ‘Inner
Guidance’ to reach the solution. While this process appears to be time consuming, with practice it will be instantaneous.

Management by consciousness is the concept of oneness and approach towards harmonizing the resources: Men, Material, Machines, Money and Systems towards fulfillment of goals leading to human development, social, national and global benefit. In the materialistic management, man is treated as a worker who is paid and rewarded as long as he serves and workforce, too, resorts to absenteeism, conflicts, strikes and violence. As a result there is a loss of production and ultimately society suffers. There is no sense of belonging, common approach and feeling of oneness. This approach of management system disregarding the human and erosion of human values neither helped the workmen, nor management and society. The materialistic management remains as ‘Soulless Management’ (4).

It is obvious that management thought process need to be redefined to emphasize the development of Man in contrast to wage earner. All needs physiological, safety & security, social esteem & status and self actualization are equally important and should go concurrently instead of hierarchically as per Maslow’s Theory. In the changing society management process need to be developmental and integrated both in efficiency and humanistic, growing consciousness.

Organizational performance is the resultant of resource efficiency and innovation. The primary resources are men, material, machines and money. For better productive
performance we need to focus on both resource efficiency and innovation. In any organization: Business or Institution the employee, equipment, management systems and resources require attention. Response will be better with increased concern without demand. Active concern to employees’ well being by management creates interest in workers to improve productivity, quality outputs in manufacturing as well as services and increased concern in case of equipment result in better service and longer life for example preventive and predictive maintenance.

This can be observed in various areas such as Employees, Machinery & tools and System.

**Employees**: The attitude and behavior of the employees towards work have direct relation to the management’s attitude towards them. The best way is to pay attention to men & take interest in the work they do and encourage in all spheres of human activity. Employee be given adequate work load, neither in excess of his capacity which creates tension nor less because the extra energy may be used in the area detrimental to the organization. Necessary attention only needs to be given – NO EXCESS - NO LESS (4).

The work has to be carried out by a team. The capacity for team work is a spiritual capacity. One needs to go beyond the tiny ego contained in and enslaved by the organic system. This expansion which is called ‘ATMA – VIKAS’ expansion of self beyond the ego. By contacting that point (quality) in oneself and relating it to the same point in others, one can bring qualities in others. This is the key to the communication.
Management has thus to rely on development of heart and soul and management by concern. Man is the hub – he should be developed, his soul should be enriched and activated. This approach to management will never fail which is universal truth.

**Machines:** Active concern and Reliability Centered Maintenance, a totally integrated preventive, predictive & proactive maintenance, leads to better service and longer life.

Spiritual personalities are known to treat objects around them and stories of how the objects have responded by performing larger than normal. Not only objects but areas of space, room and buildings respond to attention. Cleanliness, orderliness, presence of light music, positive thoughts when established in Business Enterprise/Institution, all contribute leading to increased productivity and higher levels of quality.

The concept of 5-S (Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shitsuke) process brought out by Japanese is a structured programme to systematically achieve cleanliness, throwing unwanted, unrelated material and arranging in assigned place for easy access, retrieval; self discipline, maintaining standard, monitoring results; Elimination of bad habits and constant practice of good habits. Standardization in the work place and Standardize the above mentioned processes to be more effective. The 5-S process of Japanese is an extension of consciousness approach with regard to material, machines and work environment in bringing safer, more efficient, more productive operations leading to enhanced morale of the employees and sense of belonging to the organization. (8)
**Systems:** Management Systems are like ‘DHARMA’ meaning ‘Right way of doing’ and dealing with problems with fair consciousness. Not only system design, periodic reviews of the working system examine the basic principles of their functioning (may be named as system discipline) results in continuous improvement and perfection. Systems maintain equilibrium which is capable of sustaining and improving performance ultimately leading to possibilities of innovation for greater efficiency. If regular attention and system discipline is not maintained, it leads to break down. For example, systematically designed quality management system with built in procedure for checking inward raw material, in process inspection and process control, final inspection, if ignored or violated frequently breaks down. This can be the case with simple filing, accounting systems to sophisticated planning and inventory control systems, communication system, distribution system. Regular check lists, formats, procedures, control charts, performance appraisal systems, customer feedback etc. are desirable, even essential (4).

**Resources:** Concept of lean manufacturing (minimization of MUDA - Japanese word meaning reduce waste or eliminate non value added activities) discovered by Japanese is an extension of consciousness approach to resource management. Rejects in production / wastage, hording / over production, backlog, and loss, unnecessary movements of materials and people, gossip are contrary to consciousness approach. Similarly, AGILE Manufacturing, meaning removing delays, quick response to suppliers and customers,
decisiveness to act result in measurable benefits like reduced cyclic times, reduce inventory, reduce backlog, added value client and increase throughput.

**Environment:** The extension of ourselves into general or universal nature; surrounding atmosphere which we carry about with us and by which we communicate with universal forces.

Harmony of thought, speech, and deed must prevail. Senior managers in the hierarchy need to be exemplary and demonstrate to people below them in the ladder. Harmony is not limited to cooperative relations between employees and management. There must be harmony between the idea, actual expression and the system for execution. Harmony practiced in any situation yields greater results than authority and force. The spiritual effectiveness of work depends on inner attitude. Nothing is small. What one does is not important, but how one does is important. Any work done with proper care not only becomes interesting but leads to perfection. Transparency, openness and enlightened climate for conducting an affair progress more rapidly than secrecy and false hood.

**Blending Analytical techniques and Conscious based Human behavioral system:**

In recent time, there is shift from traditional intuitive decision making to more objective and rational basis. Decisions like resource allocation, scheduling and sequencing, make or buy decision etc. of operation planning, capacity planning, and optimization of equipments uses require quantitative techniques. Moreover decision making processes in
modern industry have to be quick. West in particular USA has pioneered in use of analytical techniques in production/operations management.

The 7- S Frame work (McKinsey model) is presented by Richard Pascal and Anthony Ethos combines rational (Hard elements – strategy, structure, system) with emotional/human elements (Soft elements – staff, style, skills) (6,7). The Interconnecting center of McKinsey model is shared values/super ordinate goals i.e. what the organization strongly believes and stands for, links the above mentioned hard & soft elements. The shared values/spiritual value of human group is referred as DHARMA in Indian context.

The Quantitative Techniques developed and used during the last four decades have contributed a lot in the formulation of strategies, organization development/structures: decentralized/ product organizations, matrix organizations; Systems: recruitment, incentives, performance appraisal, information systems. Whereas the 7-S frame work blend Quantitative Techniques and Human behavioral system with super ordinate goals/shared values into an interdependent reinforcing network. The art of operations management lies in how well we reinforce, balance and integrate these elements.

Henry Fayol emphasized management as an operational process and can best be studied through analysis of managerial functions. The process can be divided into five functions namely planning, organizing, staffing, motivating and control. Although exponents of different school of thought stress importance of their own view, the management process approach laid down by Henry Fayol provides a frame work of analysis and enables
managers/educationalist to draw on the contribution of other school of thinking as indicated in the figure below: (1)

Integration of contribution of different schools of management thought

The planning and control aspects of management process places greater emphasis on Quantitative/Mathematical measurement and systems school of management thought and organizing, staffing and motivating aspects emphasize on human behavior and social systems school of thought. Thus management process approach enables systematic use of contribution of other schools of management thought. The present concept of 7-S model is also in line with the theory enunciated by Henry Fayol.
However, the 7-S frame work model do not speak about analytical methodologies/techniques which have contributed to enterprise/business development during the last 3-4 decades

**Universal Applicability of Consciousness Approaches**

Presently, the economically and technologically developed nations like USA and Japan are understood to be highly specialized in the field of management. The basic principles underlining the approaches are same, while the degree to which USA tend towards relying more on quantitative techniques rather than application of techniques in broader perspective. Oriental India has its own approach basing on great Karma Yoga Philosophy of Bhagavad-Gita and Yoga Approach to all management field i.e. Yoga Karmasu Kausalam means Yoga is proficiency in action (2).

The Management of approach in USA is characterized by emphasis on analytical approach and relying on techniques, reward/punishment for performance. Japanese Management emphasize on application in broader prospective, focus on human items, long term employment/relations with suppliers etc. While the focus on structure, strategy, systems are same in case of USA and Japan, the focus on skills, staff, and style is more in case of Japan. Blend of quantitative techniques and human values which super ordinate goals leads to manufacturing/ operational excellence.
The practices of combining organization’s goals, such as foster progress with society, welfare of society, development of oneness/world culture, are essential. What is required is interdependence – preserve both dependence and independence. (4)

The ultimate aim should be balancing, rationalism with spiritualism in operations management. One needs to assimilate the dynamic philosophy of Karma Yoga of Bhagavad-Gita; managing the ‘Self’, the Advaitic vision; feeling of oneness and self discipline at all levels of employees, organizations, nations.

**Oneness:** ‘Tatvamasi’ (you are that) as said by the sages of India. This is the truth that was emphasized in Ancient India. Though the concept of dualism also prevalent in India. ‘My Father and I are one’ said Christ. This is the truth that all liberated men discover irrespective of their nation or belief and this is the *Eternal Fact* that one need to discover.

It is required that one strengthens the force of spirituality that is relatively dormant today through inspiring ideas and ideals through spiritual personalities. Attempt to synthesize/balance the spirituality and materialism in operations management can be done by the following:

- Diffusion of spiritual human values;
- Reach hearts & minds of other nations for International peace, co-operation and welfare;
• Sharing knowledge (Paraspara Bodha Yantha as told in Bhagavad-Gita means exchange of divine/ spiritual knowledge);

• Impetus so that spiritual outlook becomes normal in daily life including operational process.

• Mobilization of inherent possibilities of East-West spectrum (4,9)

In the present international scenario of business and developments taking place in the area of business management/operations management like combining knowledge, resources, capacity and capabilities of more than one countries and companies hands together in decentralized set of activities taking place at a number of locations to harness benefits of synergy in best possible manner to achieve faster rate of growth.

This will result to excellence in Operations Management and enhanced healthy global competitiveness and this ultimately leads to “Loka Samasta Sukhinobhavantu” (Universal Happiness)

**Conclusions**

Management Gurus/ Scientists across the world have been experimenting with various kinds of management philosophies. Blending is the universal requirement for enhancing growth in society and provides impetus in operations management. India has been the grand workshop of spiritual experiments and laboratory of the soul. The great work done
by the Indian Sages should be pursued and accomplish “spiritualization of the human race” and perfecting operations management becomes a part of this.

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