The Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Employees' Productivity and their Wellbeing

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EDITORIAL BOARD EXCERPT

The submitted paper had 11% plagiarism and is accepted for publication. The editorial viewpoint is of an observation that article had a successive close watch by the blind reviewer's which at later stages had rectified and amended by author in various phases as and when requisite to do consequently. The reviewers had in a beginning stages mention with minor revision with a following statement which at a small duration streamlined by author (Sadhana Singh). The comments related to this manuscript are that although the objective of this paper is very apt as it is the need of the hour for the organizations to understand that in order to bring out the real productivity is something more than reward that matter and must be understood by all. This gives space for the organization to think and revive them. Objectives were very nicely put and were dealt also in the paper with clear justification. The connections between the employee productivity with organizational spirituality are put in such a way that it is giving a more broadness in bringing in the required change which organizations are looking for. The various sections were well synchronized.

All the comments had been shared as mixtures of dates by the authors in due course of time and same had been incorporated by the author in computation. By and large all the editorial and reviewer's comments had been incorporated in a paper at the end and further the manuscript had been earmarked and decided under "**Theme Based Paper**" category as its is based on a specific theme of.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: As the economies throughout the world globalizes, the business organizations faces cut throat competition to retain their viability. This has brought complexity in organizational functioning. In order to cope up with new challenges, organizations are undergoing changes in their structures, process and functions. To gain competitive advantage over others, one aspect where most of the organizations can work upon is to improve its human resource productivity which will help them to gain advantage over their competitors. The productivity of the employees depends not only upon motivation as it also demands ability on part of the employees to prioritize organizational goals over personal interests. It calls for Spirituality at workplace which means a virtuous workplace where employees draw their personal contentment by achieving the set objectives overlooking extrinsic rewards. It also requires the right combination of ethics in the workplace and work ethics. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the impact of Workplace Spirituality on employee productivity and their wellbeing. It will also try to explore how Spirituality at workplace influences the organizational culture in general which commands dedication and loyalty of the employees.

Findings: The study concludes that workplace spirituality plays a significant role in creating a strong and encouraging work culture which gives their employees a bigger purpose and motivate them for higher attainments in their lives. It helps our organizations to improve their employee's productivity and enhances their overall performance.

Originality/value: The study endeavors to study the workplace spirituality and its significance for an organization. It is an attempt to find out the its impact on employees' productivity and on organizational culture as whole

KEYWORDS Workplace Spirituality | Productivity | Organization Culture | Motivation

Introduction

This is the real secret of life — to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play. — Alan Watts

Today's organizations are witnessing a major transformation with an emerging concern of bringing spiritual and ethical practices into business. Issues related to workplace spirituality have started attracting the attention of business gurus, senior managers, and human resource personnel. We should keep one thing into our mind that this spiritual movement is not only concerned with abiding by rules and following orders. It also involves giving a meaning, reason and a strong sense of community within the organization.

In current scenario, profit is not only the criteria for companies to predict their long term sustainability. They all are trying to be equally committed to the planet, its people and their profit. Now organizations are looking inward in pursuit of inner peace and a desire to achieve more than money and are giving equal importance to their employees, working environments and society as a whole. And here comes the role of spirituality at workplace, which we usually misinterpret. Sometimes people equate spirituality with religion which is not true as a person can be spiritual without following any specific religion.

Workplace spirituality is more of an individual practice related to finding a sense of purpose and peace at work. It is quite every-one of us possess which cannot be measured quantitatively, but its presence cannot be ignored. It originates from a person's inner self, benefiting not only self but other people too. It tries to find out whether an employee's work, is his passion or merely a profession as it will predict his performance on the job. This backs the use of heart instead of mind alone in order to find out meaning and motivation for work which extends inner peace in one's self.It is quite vital that employees must have deeper sense of purpose in life as it enables them to perform better and to be more creative and productive and innovative (Karakas, 2010).

Spirituality has the capability of producing amazing, novel and creative ideas which can help an organization to look forward.Itcan also bring a natural desire to learn, grow, extending help to others and succeeding. With the increase in the number of people to feed with limited resources, organizations have no option but to look for productive employees which can utilize their resources efficiently and effectively.

Many research and studies are conducted to find out reasons behind increased productivity in an organization and it has been found out that strong leadership, company's culture and motivation of employees play a significant role in it. It has also been concluded in some researches too that increased attrition rates, dissatisfaction among employees, stress, and burnouts, low morale of employees and absenteeism are some of the symptoms as well as the repercussion of deteriorated productivity of employees. A company whose culture consists of elements like compassion, respect, trust, integrity, and harmony etc will sure going to have edge over its competitors.

Along with above-mentioned reasons, personal factors like values, emotions, perceptions, personality, beliefs etc of employees also play a crucial role in determining the performance, productivity and overall culture of an organization and all such things are deep-rooted in spiritual intelligence a person possesses. Moreover, a workplace where employees find sufficient time to involve themselves in some spiritual practices brings out transformational changes.

Thus, it becomes quite important to uncover the relationship between workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence of employees, employee productivity and culture of the organization.

Review of Literature

An intensive review of the literature has revealed there are different facets of workplace spirituality but the two i.e. individual spirituality and organizational spirituality are the most talked about. The review of literature is highlighting distinguish aspects of both perspectives.

Workplace Spirituality

Spirituality makes a person a better human being with integrity and respect for others. (Thomson, 2001). According to (Beheshtifar&Zare, 2013) spirituality is a way of expressing our desires to find out meaning and purpose in our lives. (Kinjerski&Skrypnek, 2004) defines workplace spirituality as a subjective concept which can view as individual experiences of same at work. Even the organization's efforts for facilitating employees experience of spirituality at the workplace through the company's value system and its overall culture. (Jurkiewicz, 2003) mentioned that workplace spirituality is a framework of organizational values which are reflected in the organization's employees experience at work which facilitates their sense of being connected to others. (Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, 2003)

(Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) defines it as a mutually nurturing relationship between individual employees' spiritual experiences and characteristics of a workplace. Workplace spirituality is an effort to unleash one's final purpose in life and to develop a strong bonding with co-workers and other people associated with work (Beheshtifar&Zare, 2013). It has been also been concluded that finding out a deeper sense of meaning and purpose is quite significant for employees as it enables them to perform efficiently and to be more productive. (Karakas, 2010).

The facet of Workplace Spirituality

The Workplace Spirituality can be manifested in two ways, first one is individual spirituality in which the employees of the organizations show faith in their organization and feel that they are trustworthy and have a harmonious relationship with their coworkers. The second approach is organizational spirituality which includes an aspiration for achieving excellence. These organizations are committed in creating a culture in which an employee loves their jobs and their personal values are linked with organizations vision and mission. In a study conducted by Claude and Zamor, (2003) at Harward Business School on 10 companies with a strong culture and 10 with a weak culture taken out from 207 leading organizations. It was found that there is a strong relationship between the sound cultures of an organization with its profitability.

Dimensions of Individual Spirituality

There are three dimensions of Individual Spirituality at work (Kinjerski&Skrypnek, 2006) which includes meaningful work, spiritual connection and sense of community. (Karakas, 2010) mentioned that spirituality gives employees a sense of connection in the community, which, in turn, makes him loyal, committed and effective. (Beheshtifar&Zare, 2013) found out that employees derived a sense of interconnectedness and community through Spirituality.(Aravamudhan, 2014) pointed out that the substantial failures of corporate giants like World Com, Enron, and Satyam Computers have shifted the focus on the need to strive to maintain a balance between profitability with ethical conduct. Most of the companies have realized and accepted the fact that profile alone will not give assurance for profits. It will never ever define the success of a firm. In order to maintain ethical behavior, job satisfaction, productivity, and employee commitment and competitive advantage, Spirituality is the need of the hour.

Dimensions of Organizational Spirituality

(Fernando, 2005) had mentioned that spirituality at workplace raises its concerns about its use for achieving economic goals of organizations, and thus it can become a trend in management in future. (Rutte, 1996) argued that an employer should

try to create an atmosphere in which employee creativity can be flourished. He also discussed that workplace spirituality promotes the better expression of talent which will further produce genius employees. (Badrinarayanan&Madhavaram, 2008) mentioned that all those organizations which encourage workplace spirituality have capabilities to rejuvenate the employees emotionally and motivate them to be more productive.

Objectives of the Study

The study has been undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the concept of workplace spirituality and its significance for an organization.

2. To study the spiritual practices of some Indian organizations.

3. To find out the impact of workplace spirituality on employees productivity and on organizational culture as whole.

4. To give recommendations to organizations to make their workplace spiritually inclined.

Research Methodology

This study is conceptual in nature. Hence, the secondary source of data has been used which consist of journals, research publications, newspaper, and internet. An effort has been made to collect, organize synthesis and analysis of various pre and post-print literature.

Concept of Workplace Spirituality

The concept of Spirituality is not new for India as spirituality, spirit and spiritual phenomenon are significant since the start of civilization. But now western societies have also started giving attention to spirituality. It was a grassroots movement that started in the early 1920s and was aimed at helping individuals seeking faith and spiritual values in the workplace.

Spirituality in the workplace is about individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to growand to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It is a concept which is aimed at individuals and recognition both seeing work as a spiritual path, providing them the opportunity to grow and to contribute to society in a more meaningful way. There is no doubt that every individual seeks for something bigger and meaningful in life than just acquiring wealth.

Most of the organizations are in continuous search of finding out ways to help their employees to maintain work-life balance. They are trying their best to create an environment where each individual can realize his/her potential. According to James AutryiIf, our work is not able to provide us the opportunity for personal and spiritual, as well as financial growth then we simply wasting too much of our lives on it. We will be only able to lead others if we know how to manage ourselves well.

Characteristics of a Spiritual Workplace

There are certain characteristics of a spiritual workplace. Some of them are mentioned below.

i). Emphasizes on Sustainability: There is a link between sustainability and scarcity of limited resources. This approach has helped the companies to design and produce more sustainable products and services because it seeks to contribute to the good in the world.

ii) The **contribution of Values:** It has been always emphasized that a company should have a sense of responsibility to contribute to the betterment of the world apart from providing excellent services for customers. It is their responsibility to provide improved quality of products and services to customers adding quality in their life too. It demands to work with the organization which will contribute to society through community and volunteers service. Spirituality at the workplace makes managers and

business aware of their role as servants of employees, customers, and community.

iii. Encouraging Creativity: In this competitive world, there is a constant change in technology, market, and demographic conditions. Only those companies are able to survive who encourages creativity and innovation at their workplace. Many companies have realized this fact that individual and group creativity have some spiritual component too as creativity requires a peaceful mind and a balanced personality. The spiritual workplace has realized that every individual is creative in its own way so everyone should get enough opportunities to unleash their creativity.

iv. Promotes Development: Companies giving emphasis to workplace spirituality are helping employees by providing them platforms for learning and development. They are asking their people to develop a sense of identification or passion about their lives and their work. They are continuously encouraging their employees to explore their potential and use their unique skills for the betterment of the organization as well as for themselves.

v. Developing Principles: Organizations are very well aware of this fact, if they want to sustain for the long term, they should support their employees who are the key component in goal attainment and profit maximization. They know that maximization of profits can surely excite investors but it will never make their employees happy until and unless they don'tget a real purpose in their lives. With the increasing competition and raising management expectations, workplaces are becoming stressful day by day. Hence organizations can try to reduce it by introducing spirituality in the work lives of employees.

Ways of Introducing Spirituality at Workplace

A company can show spiritually at workplace in following ways.

- Provision of wellness programmes for the employees like meditation, therapeutic sessions, recreational activities etc. in order to give rest to their minds and souls from daily hustles of life.

- Helping employees to maintain work-life balance by introducing employee assistance programme.

- Promoting a system which encourages personal and spiritual transformation.

- Providing servant leadership which emphasizes on desire to serve others first in preference to self.

- Creating a culture which encourages the well being of employees and supports their growth.

- Introducing programmeswhich encounters the challenges of workplace diversity and create inclusive cultures.

- Aligning vision, core values, core business definition and practices of company.

Importance of Workplace Spirituality

An organization can derive several benefits by incorporating spiritual components at the workplace. Some of them are given below:

- Workplace spirituality makes work more interesting as there is no role ambiguity and role conflicts.

- It improves learning and development of their people which make them competent.

- People will be able to derive some meaning from their work and get a sense of purpose.

- A sense of belongingness and connection with fellow workers also come.

• It develops an ability in worker to have an integrated life by maintaining a balance between their work responsibilities and a desire to live as a human being.

There are four advantages of having a spiritual mindset according to (M.S. Dhiman and K Richard-2008) for employees.

1. The tolerance level of employee towards work failure is directly related to the spiritual component of his personality. The stronger the spiritual component, the more will be his tolerance level and he will be less susceptible to work stress.

2. A spiritual person always favours the democratic style of leadership.

3. A person having a spiritual personality will be more trusting of others and so higher will be his tolerance level of human diversity too.

4. A spiritual person displays altruistic behaviour and citizenship. He will be more committed to his work and organisation. An organization which nurtures the spiritual mindsets of employees becomes more ethical with time. Such organisations will have enlightened employees who work for some higher goals in their lives rather than competing with each other for temporary gains.

Prerequisites For A Spiritual Workplace

There are two types of factors including external and internal which are essential for inculcating spirituality in employees and at workplaces.

External factors:

• An appealing and aesthetic atmosphere (Plants, Memorabilia, books).

• Displaying inspirational quotes for motivational affirmations.

• Integrated elements like mental peace, physical comfort, participation in decision making, accessibility of information, some level of casualness (lack of protocol), fair rewards and compensation and organization involvement in community projects and charity.

Internal factors

• Role of top leaders who are sensible, kind and aware of human values which can be observed through the type of caring environment they create in their organizations.

• Existence of a spiritual leader in a company can be felt with the presence of motivated people, better communication, good team performance and strong bonding among employees.

• A company can become more spiritual by eliminating negativity, egocentric behaviour, mistrust, dishonesty, and backstabbing.

Indian Organisations Practicing Workplace Spirituality

Indian companies are trying their best to promote spirituality at the workplace in order to have a long-lasting presence in the market.

i. **IOCL, Vardhaman group, Eicher**: They are working in the direction of making their employees sensible, self motivated and responsible citizens.

ii. **TCS, Wipro, and Infosys:** These companies are working round the clock and are using their own ways of promoting ethical principles in management. They have introduced yoga and

meditation sessions to burn out stress and relief employees from their inner troubles and help them attain a peaceful mental state.

iii. **Videocon, HDFC Bank, ICICI, UBS, Pearson's and Tata Global Beverages**: Leaders of these companies have come together along the government of India and the Art of Living renowned spiritual Guru, Shri ShriRavishankar to introduce spirituality at workplace. They are conducting spiritual talks, art of living sessions for their employees.

iv. **Indian Petrochemicals Corporation, the OBC Bank andTata Tea:** These companies are availing the transcendental meditation by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and helping their people to find peace in their lives.

v. **Future Group:** Thisorganisation is having a practice of appointing a chief belief officer who sets the behavioural standards for the organization. This officer will be held responsible for leading the behaviours and sustain a positive culture in the workplace.

vi. **Godrej and Boyce:** They have designed training programmes whose main focus is to bring on human values to practice at the workplace.

Workplace Spirituality, Employees Productivity and Organisation Culture

The culture of an organization consists of knowledge, beliefs, values, morals, and experiences in general. It can be defined as "the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by individuals and groups in an organization which is responsible for controlling the patterns of interactions among them and with their stakeholders.

A company with strong culture operates like well-lubricated machines with minor tweaking of established procedures whereas companies with weak culture are hardly able to find any alignment with organizational values and control. Such companies operate through the bureaucratic procedure. There are various parameters for assessing the culture of an organization such as participation of employees and their involvements, their empowerment, team orientation, development of capability, coordination and integrations, adaptability to change, customer focus, strategic intent etc. Workplace spirituality has interconnection with almost all of the above-mentioned factors.

It has been found in many studies that strong leadership plays a significant role in ensuring the effectiveness of organizations. A leader who has spiritual orientation will establish procedures and systems which empower his employees. Moreover, a spiritual leader much has team orientation, adaptability, and the tendency of knowledge sharing and cooperation with others. He will able to lay down a path for his employees taking into consideration the company's vision and mission. It will make employees to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Such kind of culture will definitely foster learning in the organization and reduces grievances of employees which in turn reduces the labor turnover over a year. So it can be conferred that spiritual leadership acts a facilitating factor in improving the spiritual intelligence of employees too.

In a competitive environment where organizations are working day and night to gain an edge over their competitors, there is a constant need for high performing, highly productive and self-motivated employee. There is a need for an organizational culture which integrates humanistic core values with the business policies, decisions, and behavior; a culture which supports the mental, physical and spiritual well being of its employees. An organization having spiritually intelligent is going to have any day better performance than its competitors. Employees

improved performance will boost their morale and make them self motivated souls. It shifts their focus from reward to work which enhances their performance, productivity, and performance of the organization as a whole.

Although workplace spirituality has no direct link with the reduction in wastages but it definitely contributes to reducing role ambiguity, role conflicts, grievances, conflicts, stress which in turn make an organization stable. This stability helps the organizations to accomplish their missions. These things are giving a clear indication that the establishment of a spiritual workplace leads to higher productivity and it enriches organizational culture.

Recommendations

Spirituality is not a one-shot affair; it's not an end but an ongoing process. It is more concerned with the ways by which a goal is achieved rather what has been achieved. There is a need for spirituality in order to develop employee and build on creativity to achieve organizational goals. But the rate at which an organization grows is not fixed and same for everyone. Every individual has its own pace and more of self-determination. The following recommendations should help employers and employees to establish workplace spirituality and harvest the advantages of increased employee productivity which ultimately leads to a flourishing organizational culture.

i.   There should be a clear strategic intent and strategic plans with spirituality as its core component.

ii. The organization should frame policies that facilitate and promote diversity in culture, ideas, and thoughts.

iii. Appointing a committee and making it responsible for determining the role played by spirituality in organization. It should provide a clear understanding of spirituality in the workplace.

iv. There should be a regular survey in the organization in order to check the present level of spiritual intelligence of workers which will provide inputs for further improvement.

v.   The organization should commit themselves for creating an atmosphere of trust where employees comfortable to raise questions, learn and contribute effectively.

vi. Development programmes, seminars, and workshops for inculcating desired behavior in employees with humanistic touch should be frequently organized.

vii. There should be clearly defined personal values likes family, personal time, person's creativity, religious practices, health, etc. As it will bring a positive change in the workplace which satisfies an individual's spiritual urge and give him inner peace.

viii. There should be provisions of brainstorming sessions, discussion, and exposure to ethical practices in business for workers.

ix. Every organization should try to create an environment where workers are encouraged to learn new things without any fear of committing mistakes. As it has been observed that fear of losing job, reduction in salary etc. usually demoralizes a worker which hampers his productivity and spiritual growth as a whole.

x.   The organization should encourage a healthy competition by disseminating information to all, giving every employee an equal platform to perform, and equal opportunity to learn and grow.

Conclusion

Most of the people believe that there is no spirituality about work and workplaces as such in real life. But there are many areas of work life where the fundamentals of spirituality can be used to reap several benefits.

It can be concluded with this study that workplace spirituality plays a significant role in creating a strong and encouraging work culture which gives their employees a bigger purpose and motivate them for higher attainments in their lives. It has also been found out that spiritual leadership also plays a key role in sowing the seeds of spirituality in the workplace.

The workplace spirituality helps our organizations to improve their employee's productivity and enhances their overall performance. It also brings to notice that there is an association among workplace spirituality, employee's productivity and organization culture as a whole. Thus, workplace spirituality is very important for discovering and making use of the deepest inner resources which gives everyone's capacity to care and power to bear and accommodate other employees at the workplace.

It enables people to have a clear and stable sense of identity, to find out their real purpose of life, to identify and align their personal values with clear sense of purpose and to live those values without any compromise.

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Annexure 1

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