

Organizational Culture: The Indian Perspective

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Abstract: Over the past three decades' organization culture has been studied broadly by the researchers. Nowadays Key factors in human resource development are knowledge & skills, information and insight whereas values are being ignored. Just as unclean water cannot reflect the shining glory of moon, so is a contaminated mind incapable of producing clean & pure decision. As stated by Vivekananda that the Indian problem of organization is to found at the root level of personal dynamics, he believed that one of the major organizational block is jealousy this paper is an attempt to analyse the importance of values and consciousness of each individual /manager in an organization. What are the keynotes about work from Indian Psycho- philosophy? It also explores prevailing contaminations in our organizational culture & further intends to find answer to question that while creating the foundations of culture if values are being bypassed or overlooked then does it really impact performance? Is there any link between organizational culture and performance? This study is based on literature to understand the importance of organizational culture.

Keywords: Values, Work, Organizational culture, organizational performance

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I. Introduction

Organizational Culture:

Organizational culture as a term was first used in the management literature by Pettigrew (1979) in the "Administrative Science Quarterly" journal. Since 1980s, this concept has gained increasing levels of attention to the 'soft' side of organizational life from both managers and organizational researchers.

Organizational Culture is set of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs, the unwritten rules which manages how people behave in organizations. These shared values have a strong impact on the people in the organization and dictate how they, act, and perform their jobs. Correct understanding of organizational culture can help to enhance employee's performance.

Marcoulides & Heck, 1993; Schein, 1992 stated that Organizational culture helps the adequate solution to know the problems, in which members pick up, understand and set the principles, behavior, expectations, patterns, and norms that will help to achieve high level of performance.

As stated by Nelson & Quick (2011), there are four functions of organizational culture:

- i) gives members a sense of identity
- ii) increases their commitment
- iii) reinforces organizational values
- iv) and serves as a control mechanism for shaping behavior

Prasad and Jain (2011) studied organizational culture in the Indian context, with the variable of employee's commitment associated to the perception and value systems rooted in the organization.

Values

"Good cultures are characterized by norms and values supportive of excellence, teamwork, profitability, honesty, pride in one's work and commitment to the organization. Most of all, they are supportive of adaptability despite new competition, new regulations, new technologies, and the strain of growth". (Baker, 1980:10) According to this author good culture are that incorporate all good things in peaceful coexistence, the assumption for culture is only evaluated in terms of good or bad and right or wrong. But the problems include the premature use of moral judgement or values, in a way hidden behind technical understanding. "Truthfulness, honesty, Community or Service." They really are powerful words, look good & sound good. But they are all but meaningless if people within the organization fail to live them in their day-to-day interactions also what are the fundamental beliefs about what is the meaning of core values and what is "right".

As rightly stated by Prof. Chakraborty "Skills are hard precise, quantitative, objective so they are easier to impart. But they are at surface level and short lived too. Values on other hand, are concerned with the ineffable,

the subtle, the enduring”. The significance of embodying in practice the great cultural heritage of India is that “values can only blossom in minds that quiet and interiorize. Beyond developing managerial skills, it is important to develop deeper level of managerial values.

When Hanuman sees the captive Sita for the first time in her captivity in the private garden of Ravana, Valmiki makes him utter the following eternal words of truth: ‘rakshitam svena shilena’. That is, Hanuman perceives at first glance that by her own virtue or righteousness, Sita sits there protected, in the midst of that hostile and corrupt atmosphere, consistent faith that righteousness can never let her down. She was protected by invisible yet unconquerable protective armour. Like-wise individual’s quality of mind and quality circles can help to enhance organizational culture. The cultivation and purification of man’s inner field, the realms within which the subjective decisions are made, is central to effective management.

Tagore speaks about ‘surplus in man’ means by substituting deficit driven individual to surplus inspired person. Which is the core of Indian thought, accordingly we may have to learn that we are just not capable of attaining one’s own desire at any cost but beyond that there is deeper and more enduring satisfaction waiting for any work in the spirit of sacrifice.

Organizational Performance

Through Continuous performance any organization will be able to grow and sustain in competitive environment & measuring performance is an essential part of monitoring an organization's progress. It covers measuring the actual performance outcomes or results of an organization against its intended goals.

As research (Richard, 2002) says that performance is a bigger gauge that can include productivity, consistency, quality, and so forth. Whereas, performance measures can include results, behaviours (criterion-based) & for relative (normative) measures, & performance management & necessary skills and attitudes of performance management can be enhanced by creating awareness, education and training concepts and instruments, including leadership training and management development.

Certainly inculcation of strong culture into the organization’s systems will have impact on organization’s performance & able to provide potential return.

Now let us recapitulate the contaminations which are present in our work culture and few highlight about work from Indian Psycho- philosophy

II. Contaminations In Work Culture

Contaminations which are mostly evident in our work place are mentioned below:

- Jealousy about one’s right, privileges, possessions;
- belittling comments, double standards, yelling at others;
- taking credit for the work of others
- Envy about others successes, rewards, acclaims;
- Arrogance born of competence, skills & knowledge
- Impatience and greed to achieve more money, power, fame
- The gossip mongers, the chicken littles & bully
- Scant sanctity of promises made
- The blamer – blaming accusing everyone and everything else but oneself for failures or lapses
- Little attention to means/ methods employed in achieving something
- The control freak & the flyer etc

List such as above can be extended ad infinitum. They are the typical contaminations in our work culture although lots of research papers and articles has been published & lots of steps is being carried out in development of human resource. In which management thinkers are emphasis more on skills, knowledge, information and insight whereas value is being bypassed.

III. Keynotes About Work From Indian Psycho- Philosophy

- Work is ‘sacrifice’
- Work is necessary for ‘chittashuddhi’
- Work is to be done as a homage to the indwelling Supreme

Let us try to understand or amplify the above mentioned perspective of work from Indian Psycho -Philosophy. In this section we will deal with basic questions of what is work? why to work and how to work?

Work is sacrifice: Sacrifice of what? As mentioned by prof S K Chakraborty it is sacrifice of one’s talents, energies, powers, abilities, emotions etc. now again question arise here is what is the need for such sacrifice?

As we look back in Mythology Sri Krishna works for the sake of world – maintenance, loksamgrahartham. If he were to stop from work, then the whole world would come to grinding halt. Similarly, in Ramanaya Rama too worked for the welfare of all, although he was himself a fully liberated soul. These are the example of self-less work. We may have to learn that we are not just capable of attaining our own desire. Thus, humble sacrifice can lead to positive emotional feeling & it is more fulfilling than the canine fulfilment of hungers and needs. Self-less work is extremely positive, strength giving and stress-free. Hence instead of arrogant right consciousness we must focus to work in correct frame of mind and try to implement the ‘giving model’ of motivation for work.

Work is necessary for ‘chittashuddhi’: ‘chittashuddhi’ and ‘values’ are intimately correlated. In the scheme of Indian thought we have learnt about ‘law of sacrifice’. It signifies a constant and sincere endeavour to renounce the insistent demands of our selfish egotism in the work situations. Important aspects of ‘chittashudhi’ is that work needs to be done with sense of calm and steady duty orientation, otherwise its mentioned in Gita that we are destined to work with ‘mental fever’. The more the person is calm the less he is in stress and therefore higher in productivity. Another aspect of ‘chittashudhi’ for our work culture is its thoughtful probable for strengthening ‘objectivity’ in decision making and behaviour. Just as unclean water cannot reflect the shiny glory of the moon so is a contaminated mind is incapable of producing clean and pure decision. One of the most managerial chittashudhi is evident at the time of annual performance appraisal. The decision maker has to be purified of the kind of work contaminations mentioned in previous section.

Work is to be done as a homage to the indwelling Supreme: The mode of original Indian thought, the foundation of work culture has been laid in terms of law of sacrifice & chittashudhi. Now how to deal with it or how to work? The principal ideas from various source – book of Indian psycho-philosophy are as follows:

- ✓ Work should be done with detached involvement;
- ✓ While Working a portion of our consciousness should strive to remain in silent inner touch with the supreme consciousness;
- ✓ Richness and quality of the job or work does not necessarily motivate or enrich the mind; rather it is a rich mind which enriches any work it takes up ;
- ✓ Any work done in the spirit of homage of offering to universal/ supreme consciousness exalts its worth.
- ✓ Work centrifugalizes, exteriorizes our beings; so a balancing centripetally process should become as integral part of our daily lives.

(source : SK Chakroborty, *Foundations of managerial work* ; p-93)

The fundamental message of the Indian theory of work seems to be that the inherent role of a man in his work-environment can be effective, on condition that it continues to be guided by the light of a supreme perception about work.

IV. Literature Review:

The Link between Organizational Culture and Performance

This section reviews the literature in regard to the link / relationship between the organizational culture and performance.

The link seems to exist across industries with similar trends regarding culture dimensions and culture types. There are different variables that mediate and moderate the relationships.

Strong cultures are prerequisites for high performance (e.g., Calori & Sarin, 1991; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Kotter Heskett, 1992; Peters & Waterman 1982-1995).

As per Celeste Wilderom et al (2000) after the study and review of 10 studies, he explored culture as a predictor of organizational performance, not surprisingly 9 out of 10 studies investigated a direct relationship between culture and performance. Further the authors argued that the direction and nature of this link are not unquestioned and went on to speculate on theoretical grounds that the relationship between two concepts may be recursive and/ or influenced by mediating variables.

(e.g., Chan et al., 2004; Fey & Denison, 2003; Flamholtz & Kannan-Narsimhan, 2005; Lee & Yu, 2004; Nazir & Lone, 2008; Tsui et al., 2006; van Bentum & Stone, 2005; Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008) the majority of the 55 studies reviewed and investigated by above mentioned have found direct effects between culture and performance.

As per research J.W. Barnes, D.W. Jackson, M.D. Hutt, and A. Kumar (2006) found that the culture strength measure showed a significant direct positive effect on value congruity, organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Communication & Leadership turned out to be the prominent variable that mediated the relationship between culture and measured performance (Garnett et al; 2008, Chen 2004)

Organizational culture has the potential to enhance organizational performance, employee job satisfaction, and the sense of certainty about problem solving (Kotter, 2012).

Also many other author eager to appeal to manager or an employee to focus on highly positive-sounding virtues, attitudes, behaviour that is claimed to be very useful to achieve organizational performance or corporate goals (e.g.Hartel and Ashkanasy,2011; Trice and beyer,1985)

The assumption of evaluating culture only in terms of right or wrong & good and bad . Kilman et al (1985 :4) argue that culture has a positive impact when it points in right behaviour in the right directions and vice versa.

The problems include when premature use of core values and moral judgement, is hidden behind the technical understanding and where culture is viewed in terms of its goodness only. But few things cannot be simply good or bad it can be different and seen as less positive or less negative from other angle. Thus cultural themes should be based on careful considerations where normative judgement should be applied with great caution, in which core values, commitment, behaviour, leadership, communication, integrity, attitude play an important role. Still another version says that “adaptive culture” are key to high performance. It is culture that are able to respond to the changes in the environment in which people are willing to take risk, trust each other, work as a team work to identify opportunities and problems, be proactive. Whereas Brown (1995) remarks that risk taking innovations are not necessarily successful.

The review research suggests that the link between culture and performance can be direct, mediated, moderated, reciprocal or even nonlinear. However, as stated by (e.g. Wilderom, Glink & Maslowki,2000) the link between organizational culture and performance still needs further systematic investigation.

We can summarize the effects of organizational culture on employee behavior and performance based on four key ideas (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2012; Hellriegel & Slocum, 2011).

- i) Understanding the culture of an organization allows employees to know both the organization’s history and current systems and set of rules / outline of operation.
This understanding provides guidance about expected future behaviors.
- ii) Organizational culture can adoptive commitment to the organization’s philosophy and values & commitment generates mutual feelings of working toward collective goals. That is, organizations can achieve effectiveness only when employees share values. Values are prominent to have a strong culture.
- iii) Organizational culture, through its norms, supports as a control mechanism to channel behaviors toward desired behaviors and away from undesired behaviors. This can also be accomplished by recruiting, selecting, and retaining employees whose values best apt the values of the organization.
- iv) Positive types of organizational cultures can be related directly to greater efficiency and productivity than others organization and help to attain greater performance.

V. Research Methodology:

The study is based on the secondary source in form of various books, research papers, websites and eBooks. The argument in this paper is based on the literature of prior research. Researchers have placed their own observations regarding the Same.

VI. Conclusion

As cited by Vivekananda analysis the Indian problem of organization is to be found at root level of personal dynamics, due to thousand years of slavery and political imprisonment has generated in Indian people. The cure is stated at even deeper level in which to address a fundamental problem an elemental solution is necessary. The solution lies in surrender to love and discipline throughout management and the workforce through strong organizational culture. Indian psycho- spiritual philosophy is eminently practical as suggested by Prof Chakraborty, some of the most precious ideas of Indian psycho- philosophy for the revival of work culture.

Indian Managers should return to their spiritual practices & raise their consciousness to develop themselves. As rightly said by prof. Chakraborty is that, the cultivation and purification of man’s inner field, the realm within which subjective decisions are made, is central to effective management. Changing the work environment toward a less producing form of organization is critically important, beyond developing managerial skills, it is important to develop managerial values. As values drive behaviour, in which we can work as a team work and supporting the growth of managers which increases the organizational performance.

As per prior literature, companies that know how to develop & make their cultures strong in an effective way will have the benefit of advancement in performance & productivity and it also helps the quality of work life among the employees.

Certainly, to attain more results the learning of organizational culture and performance is important, However, Management should provide a precise guidelines and motivate the employees to achieve higher goals and subsequently employee must also absorb the organizational culture at maximum strength. Research already

shows that if employee is committed and having strong core values and norms as per organization can increase the organizational performance. It is important for an organization to have a strong belief system and vision of what the organization stands for and what it values. The development of organizational culture should start with an honest look at values and it should be aligned with organizational goals. This study is based on the literature i.e secondary data further research can be done empirically to recognize the nature and importance of the organizational culture in influencing organization performance.

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