

ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Today, the objective of business is driven towards earning a profit at any cost. But, without following certain business ethics, the growth of the business can never be stable and steady for a long time. The whole idea of achieving profit at any cost is not a sustainable model for any business that wants to flourish and excel. Our ancient classic book “Bhagwad Gita” clearly states, “*Ati Sarvatra Varjate*” means the excess of anything is prohibited. Since the evolution, man has always been eager to experience and move forward towards newer and innovative paths. This reminds of a classic example from Ulysses written by Alfred Lord Tennyson:

“And this grey spirit yearning in desire, to follow knowledge like a sinking star, to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.”

Even Milton in his poem “Paradise Lost” talked about this eagerness and inquisitiveness of human beings

“OF Man’s First Disobedience, and the Fruit, of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste Brought Death into the World, and all our woe.”

It’s all about the man’s first disobedience or we can say the lack of control on his feelings/senses, which brought sorrows, miseries and pain after having been thrown out of Eden, where a man was happily placed. This is the prime reason of man’s fall from the paradise. This study is an attempt to study organizational practices for developing spiritual orientation in management systems and their impact on organizational society. The study is conceptual and qualitative in nature and to carry it out certain depth interviews were conducted to understand the role of spirituality in management. The study concludes that for any organization to run effectively, spirituality is the core to attain happiness, contentment and success at the same time.

Keywords: Business, Spirituality, Contentment, Happiness, Success

INTRODUCTION

Human beings have, since the beginning, valued the tangible assets more than the intangible assets which led to all the problems, woes, miseries and lack of satisfaction and happiness in life. It is highly important to want what we have rather than have what we want, in order to derive satisfaction and happiness in life. The same principle applies to management and organizations as well. In the field of management too, since the evolution of industries/ organizations, various styles of management practices have been adopted by managers/ entrepreneurs from time to

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time. Initially, when industries came into existence, the style practised by managers was autocratic and with the passing of time, the management style changed to welfare oriented, then situational. It is now being realized by management thinkers as well as practitioners that spiritual management style based on Indian psycho philosophic thought may be the most significant style in managing of any business organization not only today but forever. This is the reason that many researchers such as “ancient psycho philosophic thought” by Dr. Ipshita Bansal, “Bhagwad Gita for changing times” by Shri DM Sinha etc. have been conducted by researchers on our ancient psycho philosophic thought.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of researchers have worked on management by spirituality. The talk on the Role of Spirituality in Business Management delivered by Sister Poonam of Brahma Kumari as been organized and appreciated by many of the organizations such as NEI Ltd., Jaipur, Satna Cement Works, Satna, Jaipur, etc.

Panchmukhi (2000) states that each individual should aim at generating the maximum amount of income by positive means, not only for the fulfilment of his own minimum basic needs but for the fulfilment of the minimum basic needs of society too and not only by performing his duties at his level best but also in a value-based framework. To prove the role of spirituality in management, he has quoted the prescription of our Upanishads which are-

- May all beings remain happy
- May all beings remain free from any disease
- May all beings realize prosperity
- May not anybody experience misery

At last, he concludes that an organization, institution or even any business can best be managed by following our Indian Classical Thoughts which are described in our Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and like.

Bansal (2003) states that “Leadership has to be a combination of visioning with respect to both the outer world in the form of dreaming and the inner world or spirit in the form of awakening.....leaders to reach the full potential of leadership effectiveness have to free themselves from ego and develop their spirits. If this doesn’t happen, then the societies and organizations cannot attain happiness and prosperity”

Chakraborty Ajanta A.E (2006) quotes from Gita,

“Aparyaptam Tasmakam Balam Bhismabhiraksitam Paryaptam tridametesam Balam Bhismabhiraksitam”

This implies that in spite of the presence of great warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Karna, etc., in his army, Duryodhana was apprehensive of his victory in the battle of Mahabharat. It is because of his untrue and unjust character.

Similarly, a business enterprise is also like a kingdom, but with comparatively less populated. Managing an organization based on values, ethics and spirituality give a strong foundation to an organization. If an organization is managed according to spiritual values, the culture of that

organization will be so pleasant, peaceful that not only the organizational members but even an outsider will also feel happiness. The members of that organization will work in harmony and give their best. In an organization, where its members have vested interest, that organization will move towards its death very fast.

Sharma (2006) classifies values as- spiritual value, social value and market value. He promulgates spiritually guided materialism for the development of any organization and this development should be eco-driven than ego- driven. Eco-driven implies a holistic approach and striking a balance between Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. He also focuses on being synergy generators than energy generators, which is quite popular in the western philosophy, and this change can happen by adopting our ancient Vedic mantras.

Auto ma sadgamaya----(Lead me from darkness to light)

Tamso ma jyotirgamaya----(Lead me from untruth to truth)

Mrityorma amritamgamaya----(Lead me from death to immortality)

These mantras can further be understood as following:

1. From blackholes to light holes
2. From energy to synergy
3. From ego to eco

Tripathi (2005) emphasizes on the holistic scheme of values for the good life. He has quoted our ancient Indian system of Purusharth, Dharma, Arth, Kama and Moksha as essentials for a happier and good life. These four values one should possess and utilize in a balanced and meaningful way because of Artha and Kama, if not controlled properly, becomes destructive for both the individual as well as society. So, Artha and Kama should be regulated by Dharma i.e, spirituality. The principle of Dharma ensures, “the pleasure of a person should never be the problem in the path of the pleasure of others. As we know happiness comes from the fulfilment of our expectations, needs and desires, but as per Bernard Shaw’s statement, “we have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.” No doubt, the goal of our life is to seek happiness- permanent, internal and absolute but it is also true that it can’t be achieved unless one gives happiness to others. Tripathi also quotes the view of Greek philosopher Plato, happiness is not the goal of human strivings, it is the consequence of the pursuit of goodness. He further quoted the statement of Bertrand Russel “a good life is that which is inspired by love and guided by knowledge”.

Watson (1976) has explained spiritual listening in the following way. “The mark of a great master is exactly his ability to say in simple words the most profound of wisdom, understood in some way and in varying depths, therefore, by everyone”. He has given three important steps of listening. The first is “a centring of inner energy to a particular end”. The second is that listening demands “quitting and negating as much as possible as much as possible, and so far as relevant, of all ego clamour” and the third is that “listening, because it is centering of one’s energies in simply waiting and so, subduing the tendency to ego expression- to do something other than merely waiting, oneself- because it is this- it is an attitude of dependence upon what’s being inwardly heard.

Shekhar (2002) quotes the report of Mitroff and Denton (1999:91) from their well- researched publication, the Sloan Management Review that no organization will survive long without spirituality. About one- third of the US Managers (in their sample) believe in religion. However, 92% of US Managers believed in spirituality and sacredness of everything.

Chakraborty (1991) considers pity as one of the basic values and fountainhead of good business ethics. There are several examples of these values in their organization, succeeded to manage effectively.

Hosmer 2 (1995- 394-95) has viewed that unless there is trust among partners in the operation of the business, highest level of efficiency and productivity cannot be achieved. These values are nothing, but spirituality. As it is an absolute truth that a leader can lead by example only. The same thing has been told in Bhagavad Gita, chapter 3, shlok 21 i.e., whatever a great man does others will do the same: what standards he sets that is followed by the world.

Modi, the former Director of Tata Group gave principles of management in five simple words i.e., a successful manager needs common sense, compassion, confidence, commitment and communication skills. Compassion is the concept of self -sacrifice. It has been advocated by Jains and Buddhists- Chakraborty (1986).

Chakraborty S.K. 3 (2006) believes that the Indian legacy of psycho philosophy, if can be taken into practice in our day to day life with our receptive and open mind, it will be most authentic and reliable method for managing self, jobs and interpersonal relationships. He has suggested for the adoption of the spiritual synthetic model beyond the spiritual technical model as suggested earlier. He further says it would be useful for us to know how the west is today experimentally re-confirming all the basic ideas which India has been proving since long. He described the importance of Bhawna in our quality of work meaning when we offer anything to our almighty, we try to offer quality in a neat and clean manner with a sacred heart and pious thoughts. Similarly, if we think so, whatever we are doing, eating, cooking, manufacturing, if dedicated to God, then no doubt, the quality of work will steadily improve in spite of any kind of technology, material and system at any point in time.

Modh 1 (2005) has referred the data figured by Madsen, P. and Shafritz, Z.M, in his book Essentials of Business Ethics, Penguin, NewYork, 1990 that out of 500 fortune companies, 90% have written code of conduct and 70% have statements of vision and values, but these statements of vision and values as well as code of conduct are pasted, printed on the wall or filed as Companies' policy only by many of them just to impress their employees, customers, suppliers and the public. Many of these companies do not think seriously about their statements and codes of conduct. This is the reason these companies lose their credibility by proclaiming their values.

Smith (1996) emphasized on the need for ethical values in organizations as essential part of the market economy.

Snoeyenvos & Jewell (1989) have suggested three elements in a successful strategy to institutionalize practical behaviour:

“Adoption of a corporate ethical code; Establishment of an ethics committee; and a management training program which includes ethics training”

Chakraborty (2003) S.K., emphasizes the importance of emotional purity for intellectual sharpness.

PURPOSE

To study Organizational practices for developing spiritual orientation in management systems and their impact on organizational effectiveness and society.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper is a conceptual and qualitative study of the importance of spirituality in management. Depth Interviews were conducted 3-5 times, each lasting for 1.5 to 2 hours. The nature of the study is exploratory and the profile of speakers includes:

Mr R. P Sharma: Former VP HR, Birla Cement, Raebarelli, speaker on spirituality in management

Mr Shyamji Mehrotra: Spirituality Expert

Mahant Divyagiri, Mankameshwar, Lucknow

Prof. Mirza Saiyadain, Former Prof. IIMA, Member of Royal Society of Lucknow, speaker on spirituality at various forums

Based on depth interviews and Deductive and Inductive method, conclusions were drawn to understand the importance of spirituality in management.

DISCUSSION

Spirituality means following the path shown by God through the messengers and other great souls. It can also be defined as “to work as per rules, regulations, guidelines, and principles laid down by the supreme power”

Sri Aurobindo 1 (1972) defined spirituality in relation to ego states, “it is spirituality when you begin to become aware of another consciousness than the ego and begin to live in it or under its influence more and more. It is that consciousness wide, infinite, self-existent, pure of ego which is called spirit.....all that we internally are is not ego, but.....spirit”

Sharma 2 (1995) explained the concept of ‘S’ in OSHA Model as “S” level indicates the spiritual aspect of indicative of supreme goodness in human nature, represented by values of love, amity, mercy and so on. These arise as a result of seeing self in others and seeing self in everyone”

Bruce E Winston 3 (2007) in his paper presented at International Conference, New Delhi on “Spirituality at Workplace: Changing Management Paradigm” quoted the assumption of Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) that “There is a connection between spirituality in the workplace and enhanced creativity, honesty, trust, enhanced fulfilment and increased commitment to organizational goals. They also state that the plurality of definitions of spirituality occurs because of the intensely personal nature of the concept. Their concept of spirituality as an inner- personal experience implies that people are also connected to other people. In addition, spirituality means a sense of personal wholeness and meaningfulness in work.”

Hence, Spirituality can be defined as an emotional connection with the supreme to understand the deeper meaning and purpose of life for attaining peace, happiness, contentment and purpose

in life. According to Dr Maya Spencer, spirituality deals with the belief that there is something greater than the self and we are all a part of that greater whole which is truly divine in nature. It also means being aware of the fact that our lives have a deeper purpose/ significance/meaning beyond the regular mundane affairs driving selfishness and aggression. It calls for exploring deeper aspects of life like Love, Compassion, Altruism, and Life after Death, Wisdom and Truth, etc. Spirituality and Religion are two different things and cannot be compared. Religion is practising certain guidelines/ rules/ by having a belief or offering prayers to the divine power and it is more self- oriented whereas Spirituality is much more beyond and deeper and it calls for knowing and understanding self and others and further exploring purpose and meaning in order to derive internal peace and happiness. However, this emotional connection is possible only when we detach ourselves from the physical world. This detachment is possible only through Spirituality. To understand spirituality, we need to understand first the human makeup. Human beings are made up of three important components:

- Physical body (Sookshma Sharir)
- Subtle body (Sookshma sharing)
- Soul (Karan Sharir)

Physical body comprises of the skeletal framework, muscles, tissues, organs, blood, 5 sense organs, etc., materialistic components, knowledge, wealth, power etc. The physical body takes too long to evolve and its evolution starts from Animal Human Being to Human Being to Divine Human Being. We have a physical body, made of flesh and blood that is the most solid part of us. While it changes a little bit, according to how we live our lives, it doesn't change much. Physical evolution happens over longer periods than one lifetime, so we don't expect our physical body to evolve in this life. The physical body is associated with matter.

The subtle body comprises of Consciousness (Chitt), Mind (Man), Intellect (Buddhi) and Ego (Ahankar). Spirituality deals with the components of the subtle body. Being spiritually evolved signifies the evolvement of the aforesaid 4 components. Consciousness evolves from wherever we are to divine consciousness. The mind is evolved to Thinking is evolved to Feeling is evolved to Being is evolved to Non- Being. Intellect evolves to intuition to wisdom. Ego evolves to Humility and Love/ Compassion. Hence it is our subtle body which can be evolved to attain joy, happiness and contentment in life.

Soul: The soul is immutable. It is pure, absolute and unchangeable, and so the causal body does not evolve. It is immortal. As said in Bhagwad Gita,

Verse: “नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः। न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः॥“

In Roman script: “Nainan Chindanti shastraani naina.n dahati paavakah. Na chaina.n kledayantyaapo na shoshhayati maarutah”. Bhagwad Gita. II-23 Soul does not need to be evolved as it comes directly from the divine source.

Subtle body, since it is directly connected with spirituality, plays a crucial role in Management. Generally, when we walk through the door of an organization, whether it is big/ small firm, an NGO, a fortune 500 global giant, etc., we notice that people work under so much pressure and stress that results into various physical ailments. As a result of this, human beings

- Lack work-life balance

- Lack purpose/ meaning in life
- Lack Happiness, one of the major components of spiritual well- being

These consequences arise because of working from the physical level. The general approach of human beings at this level is autocratic and self-centred and ignores important concepts of humility and compassion. Human beings try to attain happiness externally but through evolving their subtle body, they can find real happiness and contentment and this calls for the following qualities/ traits in human beings:

- The sense of sacrifice without expectation. In Bhagwad Gita also it is said that one should focus on the deeds and not the results. To quote the verse:

“कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥“

In Roman scripts—

Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana,
Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te Sangostvakarmani

- Forgiveness which implies forgiving other people for their follies and mistakes
- Forget implies forgetting what one cannot forgive and forgiving what one cannot forget.
- Contentment implies being happy with what one has

The above-mentioned traits together lay the foundation of Humility which leads to internal happiness. Effective business leaders ought to have these traits in order to manage the business efficiently. It is said that being born as a human among all species is a bliss and being spiritually evolved human being is the rarest of the rare bliss. Business leaders who have the above mentioned four qualities in them tend to keep stress at bay, create an improved/ better quality of life, are not sleep deprived(able to sleep better and peacefully), develop greater concentration and a strong immune system. The business leaders who are spiritually evolved stay away from problems/ vices like Anger, Anxiety, Insecurity, Fear of Uncertainty and Fear of Death. This reminds of a few lines from Prospice by Robert Browning,

“I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more, The best and the last!

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore, And bade me creep past.”

Prof. Mirza Saiyadain, Former Prof. IIMA and an Active member of Royal Society, Lucknow explains that Spirituality basically comprises of three principles:

- Quanaah- which implies wanting what you have and be content with what one has
- Masawat- implies equality among mankind
- Zakat- implies a distribution of 140th part of one’s movable and immovable wealth among the needy and poor.

Today we have been following western management system which is not only a materialistic management system but doesn’t suit our culture. We are predominantly a collective cultural

group where intangible assets like joy, peace, harmony, compassion and well-being of self and others. This can be well understood from the following:

Management Thinker Peter Drucker has laid emphasis on three main objectives of management:

- Survival
- Growth
- Profit

But none of the western management thinkers emphasized on human values such as integrity, compassion, and brotherhood in their management principles. Our spiritual saints had emphasized beyond these three i.e., human values-based management system, or a system with honesty, integrity, cooperation, the friendly relation among team members, mutual trust and the principle of Live and Let Live.

Even Tom Peter, Author and Management Thinker also has yet not recognized the role of human values in the management system. Western philosophy deals more with materialism whereas ours is more of a spiritual management style. Because of this materialistic style of management, the western people have been suffering from various problems such as lack of mental peace, distrust, violence, unhappiness, etc. West believes in occupying the territory of others by force, but we do not. The famous historian Bil Durant in his book “the story of civilization” has written what the modern world can expect from India i.e., spiritual knowledge means tolerance, the gentleness of matured mind, the calm of understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all human beings.

Our spiritual Saint Gurunanak says, “whoever conquers self, would conquer the whole world”. Mahatma Gandhi says, “nobody in this world can snatch your atman power” The above-quoted message of our spiritual saints makes it very clear that for successful management, spirituality could be a pertinent factor. Even some of the companies in India such as Trident Group (Varinder Agro Chemical Ltd.), a loss-making company in Punjab has now become profit-making after striving to cultivate spiritualistic values in their management style. With about 3000 employees in the company, there is no card punching system. Employees’ salary, O.T. and other benefits are given based on employees’ own statement pertaining to their attendance and other benefits. This is the best example of self-motivated positive working resulting from a spiritual mindset.

The spiritual aspect of management can be best understood from the Japanese style of management. The growth of Japan in a very short span of time is the result of following the spiritual way of management style based on their culture and religion. If we ask any of the Japanese, the story of Japan’s success, the response is Lord Buddha. The quality circle and other management concepts practised by them in their day to day managerial activities have been taken from their spiritual knowledge, particularly from Lord Buddha.

Misu. M., the former advisor of Hitachi Limited, Japan, in his lecture during the conference on “Factors behind Japan’s success” organized and published by Centre for Organizational Development, Hyderabad gave some useful information about the Japanese Management System as follows:

“Japanese are fond of working. Japanese workers do not necessarily work only for money and it is customary for them not to raise complaints about money matters. The Japanese workers have a

strong loyalty to the company and the company follows the practice of life term employment, contrary to the western society, a tendency is observed that workers sell their ability to the company on per hour basis, whereas in Japan, workers devote all that they have to the company. The Japanese are world famous for their diligence. During the last world war, Japanese had a slogan, “No food, if no labour” and the labour has been regarded sacred. Coupled with this, a wide spread public education campaign has emphasized the necessity of labour. There was no alternative to hard work for men and women who lived in a narrow space of land, and this tradition is still important in the Japanese mind. Their hard working ethos is characteristic of the Japanese nation and is common in all companies, larger or small.

Generally, it is believed that business cannot be managed following ethics and human values and spirituality do not hold any importance in the sphere of running a business. Whenever we talk about Spirituality, we talk about the execution of our acts following religions, ethics and human values. In fact, Spirituality is nothing but doing our acts as per the rules and regulations made by the Divine Supreme power of which we are all a part and spread through his messengers like Krishna, Prophet Mohammad, Jesus Christ, Gautam Buddha, Guru Nanak Dev, etc. We all know that for managing any organization, although the role of every member is important, the role of a leader is the most important because the leader is the person who shows the right path to his team members/ subordinates/ colleagues. The role of leadership could easily be understood from the survey done by MDI Gurgaon on Leadership in various organizations/ industries. The major conclusions which emerged from this survey are:

- Productivity will improve by 30 to 40% without any extra finance or make any technological development by improving leadership ability of our students.
- Leadership styles taught in schools are not very useful, but the practical approach to leadership should be the basis for any training. This shows that leadership plays a very important role in the management of any organization.

Shri Sathya Sai University has defined Leadership Process in only 4 words

“To Tell....To See.....To do.....To be”

The message of this definition is “it is perfectly possible to improve myself and I can hope to improve others only by personal examples”. It implies potential and effectiveness of a leader is directly proportional to the strength of his personality implying that the soil on which leadership grows has to be carefully prepared and weeded. It can be understood in the following way “the weeds that a leader has to completely uproot from his personality are: Anger, Greed, Attachment, Egotism and Jealousy. A leader is required to have a strong willpower. If we study and analyze the leadership qualities of outstanding leaders in history, we find that there is something universal in their make-up. These are:

- They are honest.
- They have sense of duty and obligations of their positions
- They give others their due
- They are considerate towards the weak
- They value principles
- They are neither too elated by good fortune nor too depressed by bad
- They are loyal and credible

This implies that every outstanding leader has an inner core in him which is composed of certain universal virtues.

If we look at the history of various organizations/ families, we can see that no organization/ family survived for a long time that violated the principles of nature. Even Management Thinkers are realizing today that only those organizations can survive and compete in the 21st century that will follow business ethics, human values and are sincerely responsible for society and environment. From this, it can be deduced that the best and stable way of Management is the Spiritual way instead of a Materialistic way. Earlier, there was a general belief that people to be successful needed to have higher Intelligence Quotient. Gradually this concept gave way to the thinking that presence of high emotional quotient is required to be successful. But now it is understood that real success and happiness can be achieved only when a person is spiritually intelligent, and a good human being, that is, a person who sees himself in others and others in himself and is guided by larger good. On many occasions, when we are in a difficult situation, we start remembering/ chanting the verses/ mantras told by our various religious books like Vedas, Gita, Ramayan, Quran, Bible etc., and slowly we realize a sort of improvement in our fear and increase in mental strength to face that difficult and critical situation. To cite an incident, it so happened that once a group of officers of a well- known firm were kidnapped by some ULFA activists. They were left with no hope and just out of their fear they started chanting the mantras of Hanuman Chalisa and they managed to escape that critical and fearful situation.

Similarly in UPDPL, Lucknow, it was observed that the construction of a temple and religious chanting of Sundar Kand every day reduced the number of accidents taking place in the organization. On average 4-5 accident every year was reduced to almost zero. So, it is remarkable that after the execution of Rudrabhishek, the establishment of a temple and chanting of Sundar kand, no serious accident has taken place. Even today, a number of devotees in India as well as abroad have been experiencing and benefitting from Yog Guru Baba Ramdev's spiritual lessons like Pranayam, Yoga, Meditation. These methods can help one control his/her negative thoughts and convert his thoughts into spiritual thoughts and transform himself/ herself as a divine human being. Usually, in organizations, people perform different roles. To be more specific, these roles could be defined as the role of a producer who creates great ideas and high resolves and they are responsible for getting the work done. In case the producer is missing in an organization, the work simply doesn't get done. The second role is a manager who is responsible for clarifying ambiguities and resolving conflicts. The absence of manager from an organization could result into unstructured systems and procedures with people working independently. The final role is of leader who is responsible for giving direction and vision to people. Hence, each of these three roles is uniquely important to an organization's growth and development in its own ways, however, the role of a leader is of utmost importance. It is so because strategic leadership is very important for any organization to make its people climb the right wall and reach its summit. Swami Vivekananda counselled that intellectual education alone takes no care of the heart; it only makes men ten times more selfish.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that managerial effectiveness is the crux of any successful organization. Based on the literature review and discussion, the importance of spirituality cannot be ignored and it is highly crucial in today's times as the stress level and other negative feelings among people have soared which in turn has given rise to too many challenges at the workplace. Spirituality is one thing which can guide people towards being more empathetic and compassionate towards each other while attaining organizational goals with happiness and contentment. However, this is just an initial level study in Indian context, hence

- It can further be empirically tested and validated.
- The sample size could be increased to understand and validate the findings.
- Western context (Examples from other countries) could also be added to have a broader understanding and more integrated understanding

The discussions generated as the outcome of this study may be helpful in boosting the moral fences of the organizational members as well as creating positive attitudinal change. This study can pave a way for developing effective models and techniques for development of spiritualistic management styles to manage the organizational affairs for achieving goals of the organization through better happiness and contentment.

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