

# Management Functions from “Sri Mad-Bhagavad Gita” for Excellence



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**Abstract:** “Sri Mad-Bhagavad Gita” is a universal message from Lord Krishna to this humanity. It is a part of Ancient Indian Samskrit epic “Mahabharata.” It is also considered as a religious document in the Hinduism. It is a sacred document. It gives a complete guideline for personnel and social excellence. In every kind of management, management functions play a vital role. Management functions include Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Decision making, Motivation, Leadership, Budgeting and Controlling. The present paper “Management functions from Sri Mad Bhagavad Gita for excellence” is an attempt to present the various management functions described in Gita. Gita presents a holistic approach towards management functions. Gita presents the concept of inspiration in comparison of motivation. The ethics of management in Gita is altruistic and based on co-operation. Every one has to perform these functions in life. It is only the degree which varies otherwise everyone is a manager in this world. When one follows these functions according to Gita, one can live happily, merrily and stress-free with Excellence.

**Keywords:** Inspiration, Transformational leadership, Co-Operation, Excellence

**Introduction of Gita:** Gita is an expression of Indian spirituality and one of the great religious classics of all time.<sup>1</sup> It presents a summary of Upanishadic teachings.<sup>2</sup> The Gita being inclusive in the Ancinet Samskrit Epic Mahabharata is ascribed to Veda Vyasa.<sup>3</sup> The date of the composition of Gita is a debatable one. According to the Professor Jeaneane Fowler, the date of composition of Gita is second century BCE.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, according to Kashi Naath Upadhaya, Gita was composed between fifth and fourth century BCE.<sup>5</sup> In this way, it can be said that Scholars do not arrive at a common date for the composition of Gita. Gita consists of 18 chapters, section 25 to 42)<sup>6</sup> in the *Bhishma Parva* of the epic Mahabharata and consists of 700 verses.<sup>7</sup> Due to` various recensions, the verses of the Gita vary in numbers. According to Adi Shankara, the prominent commentator on Gita, the number of verses is 700, but there is evidence to show that old manuscript had 745 verses.<sup>8</sup> The verses of Gita use the range and style of Sanskrit Anustup meter (chhanda) with similes and metaphors.<sup>9</sup> Gita is written in a poetic form that is traditionally chanted.<sup>10</sup>

So many commendatories have been written on Gita from the classical, medieval, contemporary and modern times by different scholars. As Singh says "The Gita is one of the hardest books to interpret, which accounts for the numerous commentaries on it – each differing from the rest in an essential point or the other."<sup>11</sup> The interpretation is based on the school of thought (ssampradaya). Classical and medieval commentator include Adi Shankara, Ramanujacharya, Madhava's, Abhinavagupta and Nimbarka,

Vidyadhiraja Tirtha, Vallabha, Madhusudan Saraswati, Raghavendra Tirtha, Vanamali Mishra, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu<sup>12</sup>

Contemporary commentators include Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tilak. Gandhi's referred Gita as "spiritual dictionary."<sup>13</sup> In the words of Gandhi, "I find a solace in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that I miss even in the sermon on the mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavadgītā*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies – and my life has been full of external tragedies – and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of *Bhagavadgītā*."<sup>14</sup> Modern commentators of Gita are Aurbindo, Radhakrishnan and Chinmayananda, these commentators took a syncretistic approach to the text.<sup>15</sup> In the commentary by Eknath Easwaran, he examines the applicability of the principles of Gita.<sup>16</sup> For Aurbindo, Gita is a scripture of the future religion.<sup>17</sup> For Sivananda, Gita is the most precious jewel of Hindu literature and suggested its introduction into the curriculum of Indian schools and colleges.<sup>18</sup> For Chinmayananda Gita is a universal scripture to turn a person from a state of agitation and confusion to a state of complete vision, inner contentment and dynamic action.<sup>19</sup>

### Management functions and Sri-mad Bhagaved Gita

According to Gita, management is a process. It is in search of excellence. It align people and get them committed to work for a common goal to the maximum social benefit.<sup>20</sup> It unfolds a philosophy of work; it takes its cues from ancient Yagna Practice. It gives valuable lessons for setting goals, motivation, work-culture, positive-thinking, group-dynamics and organizational behavior.<sup>21</sup> Management is a science with precise formulation. In practice it is an art because of cultural variance of societies.<sup>22</sup> Gita attempts to provide a coherent moral attitude towards management. Gita guides towards creative destruction.<sup>23</sup> It requires both positive thinking and a creative approach not only in one's personal life but at the work life also. Individual is the focus of management concern.<sup>24</sup> Victory, success and well-being are all necessary.<sup>25</sup> Gita speaks about these three management values. These three values lead to liberation and happiness. Aananda (Happiness) is a spiritual value. It is not a function of material conditions. Discipline, moderation, self-abidance, tolerance and self-less work makes one happy.<sup>26</sup> 2006 report suggests that the Gita is replacing the influence of *The Art of War* (ascendant in the 1980s and '90s) in the Western business community.<sup>27</sup>

According to Bodhananada, The secret behind Gita is four-fold. First is that it solves the problems. Second, it builds the foundation of cultural integration. Third, it stresses the acute and emerging problems more than objective and subjective problems and last one it suggests many paths to reach the goals.<sup>28</sup> Gita has eighteen chapters. Every chapter of Gita is a description of various types of Yoga. The whole of the Gita can be summed up in the four points. First, it advocates the law of infinite potentiality. Second, command thoughts and undertake activities which are commensurate with the dharma. Third, the attitude should be to give and lastly give and receive. Entertain desire and undertake activities according to your uniqueness, without losing sight of your own potentialities and the welfare of the world. Sivananda's commentary regards the

eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita as having a progressive order, by which Krishna leads "Arjuna up the ladder of Yoga from one rung to another."<sup>29</sup> Swami Chidbhavananda explains that each of the eighteen chapters is designated as a separate yoga because each chapter, like yoga, "trains the body and the mind".

Gita presents the various notions on the functions of management. A brief description of these functions is presented in the following section.

**1. Planning:** "Let Me tell you how the **goal is attained** by him who is intent on his duty."<sup>30</sup> "Perfection can be achieved only by following the Duty."<sup>31</sup> Men reaches proper fulfillment by each being intent on their own duty.<sup>32</sup> In this way, Gita emphasize on performing the duty.

**2. Decision making:** "When your intellect, that is confused by the conflicting opinions and the ritualistic doctrine of the Vedas, shall stay steady and firm on concentration of the Supreme Being, then you shall attain union with the Supreme in trance."<sup>33</sup> When one becomes unswerving and steady, then one attains Yoga.<sup>34</sup>

For the decision-making, Gita presents the ideal of stable intellect. When one becomes stable intellect, then one can take good decision without oscillation. The ideal of Sthitaprajna or (Stable intellect) gives up the desires of mind (sensual desire or base animal desires) and delighting in one's own Aatma (Self): Gita presents the three characteristics for the ideal of stable intellect.

**Tpasyaa (Forbearance):** "He who is undisturbed in misery and free from desires amidst pleasures, who is devoid of all attachment, fear and anger that sage is said to be steady wisdom."<sup>35</sup> It means courage to stand against all odds of life.

**Not attached:** "The mind and intellect of a person become steady who is not attached to anything, who is neither elated by getting desired results, nor perturbed by undesired results."<sup>36</sup>

**Self-Control:** Restless senses, O Arjuna, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection.<sup>37</sup> "When a person completely withdraws his senses from sense objects, even as tortoise its limbs, (then the wisdom is steady).<sup>38</sup> "When a person controls all his senses and concentrates his mind on God he is a person with stable intellect."<sup>39</sup> That which to all creature is night, is when the man of self-control is wide awake, and that in which (all) creatures are wide awake, is night to sage who sees.<sup>40</sup>

When one decisions with such outlook, he is full of peace and inner-happiness: "He attains peace into whom all sense objects enter, even as rivers enter into an ocean, which is unaffected though being over-filled, and not he who is desirous of enjoyments."<sup>41</sup>

**3. Motivation:** The whole of the Gita is a motivational scripture. The most important goal of the management is to motivate people. Krishna tries to motivate Arjuna by various methods –

**1. First method is to call names:**<sup>42</sup> Arjuna what is happening to you ! You are an Aryan; you belong to a grand race. You are highly qualified. You are the disciple of Drona. After this, Krishna tries to invoke Arjuna's valour, his sense of pride, his sense of belonging to a certain family and a certain country, to a certain tradition. But Arjuna did not respond to these

exhortations, He says, “This I have heard a lot, people praising me, telling me that I am the best in the country, therefore I must work hard, but I am not motivated by that.”

2. **Then Krishna uses another method (A bit of emotional Blackmailing):** “Arjuna this will call ill-fame, Ill-fame is worse than death.”<sup>43</sup> On this Arjuna said, “This does not interest me. I do not care what others say about me. He maintains he is not interested,”
3. **Krishna says, Arjuna look at your duty:** This is your duty. The nation needs you. So Arjuna, you have got an opportunity to serve your nation. Here Krishna trying to inspire Arjuna by mentioning national glory and appealing to his patriotism.

But Arjuna was not motivated. These three methods of motivation fail. In this way, these three clarion calls failed, sense of pride, prospect of glory and duty. At last, Krishna says, ‘Change the whole attitude of Arjuna.’ Krishna discusses the ways and means of changing Arjuna’s mind, to shift his consciousness, from one focus to another focus. Arjuna was taught to **self-motivate**. There is no other technique of motivation discussed in Gita. Motivation is to change the attitude.

4. **Staffing:** Let no men who has the advantage of knowledge unsettle the mind of ignorant people who are moved by attachment to the result of action.<sup>44</sup> But himself following the path of Yoga, let him work rendering all action attractive.<sup>45</sup> Those on whom the qualities of matter have wrought their spell are propelled to action by the attachment so generated. The man who has realized the truth should not unsettle the imperfect understanding of the weak-minded.<sup>46</sup>

**Tapa:** The one who neither hates a disagreeable work, nor is attached to an agreeable work, is considered a renunciant (Tyagi), imbued with the mode of goodness, intelligent, and free from all doubts about the Supreme Being.<sup>47</sup>

5. **Leadership:** The manager should not blame the followers. A Leader is responsible for the problems.<sup>48</sup> Change should begin from the leader and percolate downward.<sup>49</sup> **Wisdom** means striking a balance. It is matter for sagacious leadership. The sagacity of leader (an Individual) lies in defining goals and attaining them, in working together.<sup>50</sup>
6. **Goal:** Goal realization is Self-realization. When we set a goal and strive towards its fulfillment; the energies that unfolds and the beauty that manifests in that pursuit is a manifestation of the infinite self.<sup>51</sup>
7. **Creativity / Innovativeness:** According to Gita, creative impulse arises in the individual human mind and not in a collection of minds. Group can not be a scale or discover the peak of human intelligence. The answer in Gita, is that remain close to yourself, go deep into your self, mediate and think in an unstructured fluid manner. In this way, one becomes a creative person. Mind is the individual phenomenon; it is the focal point of creativity. Through meditation, you will be able to invoke the recesses of your inner-being and one becomes a creative and productive person. Creativity can not be a collective product. **How do we distinguish between the capacity of the**

**individual mind and that of a collective mind?** In the creation of ideas, vision and innovation it is the individual mind which plays the decisive role. It is only an individual who can think unstructured, bold, chaotic new thoughts. The group can work on a hint, or on a specific project. A team can help an individual in making the idea or vision and also hereafter in converting the idea into a product and marketing it. Team should never discourage the individual initiative.

**8. Competition:** Competition is not dominance; it is give and take. It means making one's contribution, taking something and in exchange, creates a common wealth. Samskrit words for competitiveness used in the Gita are

- Efficiency (Dakshatva)
- Competition for Excellence (Kaushala)
- Faultless Efficiency (Apramadatava)

**9. Effectiveness:** The capacity to realize the goal is called effectiveness. Right side of the brain, is the seat of emotion and ancient fears. If you are not an emotional person; you will not get the drive. If you are not rational you will not get a direction. We need both, the drive and direction. Emotions and passion give a certain drive, a certain extra impetus. Without it, one can not reach the goal. Emotion without direction is blind and direction without passion is lame. When there is harmonious development of your passion and reason, the right and left side of brain then you becomes a balanced person. In Gita, this is known as state of Yoga; it is the balance of passion and reason. Give passion to your reason and give reason to your passion. According to Bodhananada, Effectiveness is expressed as the capacity of getting work done by a team of knowledge workers. Personnel efficiency is not sufficient for effectiveness, though personnel efficiency is an important input in effectiveness. For effectiveness, one must have the mental agility, clarity of goals, confidence, humility to communicate, to understand and get along with others. For that one should have control over the ego and egoistic weaknesses such as anger, jealousy, complexes, fear of failure and sudden outbursts. Effectiveness is an organizational property. It is the capacity to deliver in a given situation.

**10. Efficiency:** It is the quality of the individual depending upon his skills, knowledge and attitude.

### **Conclusion:**

In this way, it can be said that Gita presents a holistic approach towards management. Management functions described are of universal importance. It gives importance to excellence. As excellence is defined "Excellence is a talent or quality which is unusually good and so surpasses ordinary standards. It is also used as a standard of performance as measured. It is a continuously moving target that can be pursued through actions of integrity, being frontrunner in terms of products / services provided that are reliable and safe for the intended users, meeting all obligations and continuously learning and improving in all spheres to pursue the moving target." In this way, principles and functions mentioned in Gita are of very important for excellence.

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