ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN PROMOTING ETHICAL BUSINESS AT WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

Since the ancient civilizations spirituality has influenced the existence of human beings. Spirituality has significant effect on day to day life of people. Though modernization has brought in latest technology and techniques into human life, but in the middle of all these developments and transformation, spirituality has its own role to play. These days there's an emerging movement around the country to bring spiritual and ethical values into business. Many people no longer see profit alone as the bottom line. Instead they honor a "triple bottom line," a commitment to "people, planet, and profit." When the world economy has been globalized in the 21st century the organizations are being faced with more intricacies, competition and structural changes which elicit the introduction of spirituality within the workplace. Due to the growing number of corporate scandals, general environmental distrust leading to lack of faith in existing institutions, lack of harmony and happiness in daily living, increasing rates of depressions and sense of alienation when everything sacred has gone wrong and profane has overtaken the sacred suggests the need for radical changes to make the organizations a better place to work, for its stakeholders. Many of us today are believed that there's more to live, and business than to get profits alone. Therefore spirituality, not confined to institutionalized religion, and ethics at workplace and hence leaders who can practice spiritual and ethical values to transform the organization for better quality of life for its people, quality of service for customers and transparency of relations. The study signifies and analyzes the role of spirituality in promoting ethical business at work place. An ethical workplace is established through an organization's culture, values and leadership. To promote ethical Behavior institutions need to be knowledgeable about business ethics from leadership, codes of conduct and related legislation to compliance training, ethical decision-making, and cultural and generational differences around ethics. Transparency, fairness and communication are key for establishing and maintaining an ethical workplace.

KEY WORDS: Spirituality, Business, Workplace, Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Since the ancient civilizations spirituality has influenced the existence of human beings. Spirituality has significant effect on day to day life of people. Though modernization has brought in latest technology and techniques into human life, but in the middle of all these developments and transformation, spirituality has its own role to play.[1]

These days there's an emerging movement around the country to bring spiritual and ethical values into business. Many people no longer see profit alone as the bottom line. Instead they honor a "triple bottom line," a commitment to "people, planet, and profit."[2]

Giving due attention to spiritual values into the workplace which will build great sense of spirit in their work environment.

"Spirituality is the highest form of personal, political and social consciousness. When the world economy has been globalized in the 21st century the organizations are being faced with more intricacies, competition and structural changes which elicit the introduction of spirituality within the workplace. This is to enable human hearts, spirits and souls to grow and flush so that employers and employees and will become healthy, creative, innovate, compassionate and productive in all endeavors to the sustenance of the workplace. This is because due to the growing number of corporate scandals, general environmental distrust leading to lack of faith in existing institutions, lack of harmony and happiness in daily living, increasing rates of depressions and sense of alienation when everything sacred has gone wrong and profane has overtaken the sacred suggests the need for radical changes to make the organizations a better place to work, for its stakeholders. Many of us today are believed that there's more to live, and business than to get profits alone. Walter Earl Flucker, an expert in the theory and practice of ethical responsibility quoted in his work Spirituality, Ethics and Responsibility that "Spirituality demands that leaders cultivate and nourish a sense of self that recognizes the interrelatedness of life or a sense of community".[3]

Therefore spirituality, not confined to institutionalized religion, and ethics at workplace and hence leaders who can practice spiritual and ethical values to transform the organization for better quality of life for its people, quality of service for customers and transparency of relations.

A spiritually-friendly workplace will have greater staff-retention rates, so lowering recruitment costs. It will see an increase in creativity and innovation, improved morale, better cooperation and teamwork and superior interface between the organization and its customers.[4]

A general belief is that spirituality is tied to religion, but there is a lot more to it than just following religion and believes and thus, aiming to be "a good person". Others would say that it's simply embodying their personal values of honesty, integrity, and good quality work. Again others would say it's treating their co-workers and employees in a responsible, caring way. While, for some it means participating in spiritual study groups or using prayer, meditation, or intuitive guidance at work. Spirituality has been making their business socially responsible in how it impacts the environment, serves the community or helps to create a better world. Quite a few business people these days are comfortable to use the word "spirituality" in the work environment, as it's more generic and all-encompassing than "religion." Instead of emphasizing belief as religion, the word spirituality emphasizes on how the values can be applied and embodied. Key spiritual values embraced in a business context include integrity, honesty, accountability, quality, cooperation, service, intuition, trustworthiness, respect, justice, and service.[5]

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[1] Impact of Spirituality on Corporate Management,
https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/15885/12/12_chapter%203.pdf, dated 03.10.2020.

[2] Spirituality and Ethics in Business by Corinne McLaughlin
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/05db/19361b3cb08792498d207e8b2eab3a2e3bab.pdf,dated 03.10.2020.

[3] Jamta, Dimple & Mohd, Sharif. (2018). Role of Business Ethics and Spirituality at Work Place,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327427463_Role_of_Business_Ethics_and_Spirituality_at_Work_Place,   dated 03.10.2020.

[4] *Supra note* 1.

[5] *Supra note* 3.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Karakas, Fahri (2010),[6] expresses that by incorporating spirituality at workplace it increases employees' well-being by increasing their self-confidence, commitment, and productivity; and at the same time it decreases employees' stress, burnout, and work holism in the workplace.

McGhee Peter, Grant Patricia (2008),[7] states that in business, spirituality can be the basis for ethical conduct. If spirituality is absent, there is a lack of understanding that we are deeply connected.

Kumari Nilanjana (2014),[8] expresses that in the recent times spirituality has become the life-blood of business. Spirituality people are empowered to look beyond self-interest to make a difference in and a contribution to society as a whole. Virtue is also useful in recognizing and minimizing the potential problems of some inauthentic spirituality.

According to **Annemarie Gockel (2004),**[9] Spirituality is reflected in the feelings of peace, awe, calm, and connectedness. It is a source of inexhaustible faith and will power. Spirituality in the workplace covers a broad range of phenomena, experienced both within and outside of a formal religious tradition, which centers on a personal experience of the sacred and one's connection to it. Further the connection with others and to life itself in the context of workplace gets improved.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. Assessing the interdependence of spirituality and ethical business at workplace.
2. To study the emerging role of Spirituality and Business Ethics at workplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper makes an attempt to study based on the secondary data sources from journals, articles and reports, literature review and various working papers and various web sites. Looking into requirements of the objectives of the study the research design employed for the study of descriptive type. Available secondary data was extensively used for the study.

MEANING OF SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY AT WORKPLACE

The word Spirituality is derived from the Latin word 'spiritus' which means breath or the 'animating or vital principle of a person'.[10] Spirituality is therefore often understood as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in humans. According to Mitroff and Denton Spirituality is defined as "the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe".[11]

Spirituality at Workplace is commonly described in terms of an employee experiencing a sense of 'wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values'.[12] Spirituality at work is a movement began in the 1990's in which individuals seek to live their spiritual values in the workplace. Employees find calm and contented to some extent with this approach. Spirituality at Workplace means a working frame and

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[6] Karakas, Fahri: Spirituality and performance in organizations: a literature review. Journal of Business Ethics, 2010, 94(1), pp. 89–106.

[7] McGhee Peter, Grant Patricia (2008), "Spirituality and Ethical Behavior in the Workplace: Wishful thinking or Authentic Reality, EJBO electronic journal of business ethics and organization studies, vol. 13 No.2.

[8] Kumari Nilanjana (2014), "Spirituality at work place: A macroscopic shift from business to ethics", Volume 3, Issue 12 (December, 2014).

[9] Annemarie Gockel, "The trend toward spirituality in the workplace", Vol. 41, Journal of employment counseling, December 2004.

[10] Wessels, F. & Müller, J.C., 2013, 'Spirituality in narratives of meaning', HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 69(2), Art. #1187, 7 pages. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i2.1187, p. 3.

[11] *Supra note* 6.

[12] Van Tonder, C.L., & Ramdass, P. (2009). A spirited workplace: Employee perspectives on the meaning of workplace spirituality, SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menlikehulpbronbestuur 7(1), Art. #207, 12 pages. DOI: 10.4102/sajhrm.v7i1.207

cultural values of an organization to support transcendence experience for its employees through working process and to facilitate their connected and complete feeling and happiness. An institution that implements workplace spirituality will make people feel connected and meaningful at work.[13]

According to Karakas, Fahri, by incorporating spirituality at work, increases employees' well-being by increasing their morale, commitment, and productivity; and decreases employees' stress, burnout, and workaholism in the workplace.[14] As Father Tredget states, understanding the spiritual can become an important part of workplace human development. It will become part of management training and have great benefits, including creating more social stability and increased profitability and productivity.[15]

Three Perspectives of Spirituality and Performance

a) Human resources perspective: Spirituality enhances employee well-being and quality of life;
b) Philosophical perspective: Spirituality provides employees a sense of purpose and meaning at work;
c) Interpersonal perspective: Spirituality provides employees a sense of interconnectedness and community.[16]
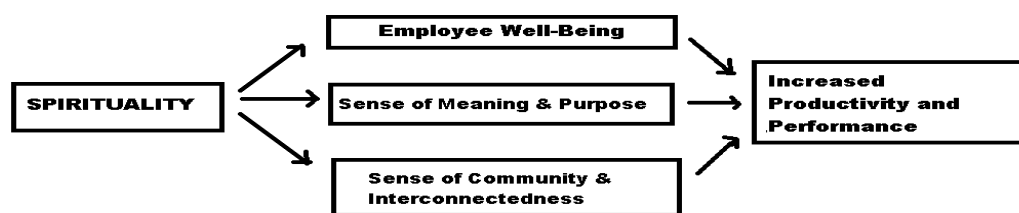
ADVANTAGES OF SPIRITUALITY AT WORKPLACE

Many institutions has practically proved that, work place spirituality is beneficial for institutions and employees. Institutions try to maximize their capacity to do better in their approach towards the clients, students or share-holders. Employees strive for the better output from their accord by putting their heart at work and create interest in their work to derive quality in their approach. In doing so both at institution level and employee's level there will be cordial relationship and good employer- employee relationship will produce that result which has to be fulfilled with the impact of workplace spirituality.[17]

INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND ETHICS IN BUSINESS

Nowadays there's an emerging movement around the country to bring spiritual and ethical values into business. Since the beginning of the 20th century, there has been an increasing focus on the spirit, spirituality, and spiritual phenomenon in Western society. Recently, this focus has shifted to the modern workplace influenced from numerous articles and books, which have been championing the role of spirituality in improving organizations, markets and economies, and subsequently all of society. Contained within this discourse is the notion that spiritual individuals are ethical in business, and consequently, are of significant benefit to an organization.

Spirituality is a broader concept which allows the individual to have a sense of sacred without the institutional practices and limitations that are associated with traditional religion.

When it comes to workplace setting, there are slightly different viewpoints to define spirituality. According to McLaughlin spirituality, for some simply means incorporating the personal values of integrity, morality,

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[13] Nafis, M., Zf, A., & Mujib, F. (2018). WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY TO INCREASE INSTITUTIONS' COMMITMENT AND MEANING OF LIFE. *Episteme: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman, 13*, 89-112.

[14] *Supra note* 6.

[15] *Supra note* 1.

[16] *Supra note* 6.

[17] *Supra note* 1.

good quality work. For others, it means treating colleagues in an affectionate and responsible way. For another, it is about taking part in spiritual practices like prayer, meditation etc. And for some, it's conducting ethically right business in socially responsible way to impact the environment, serve the community for a better world.[18]

Spirituality in the workplace entails focus on quality of life, personal and spiritual connectedness between organization and employees' goals, shifting paradigm in all sectors of endeavor from top-down hierarchy to lateral organization characterized by mentoring-trusting teaming, from simple bottom line outcomes to exploring sustainable horizons, tolerance for risk taking and ambiguity, seeking meaning of our lives, evaluating and seeking to understand ourselves both as individuals and as part of the web of interconnected relations.[19]

ETHICS

Ethics is the study of what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, what is just and unjust. Ethics as the study of morality and immorality, as discipline dealing with that which is good and bad, and with moral duty and obligation. Owing to the fact that human beings are the key resource in any business, the dynamic nature of human behavior and the unethical practices within and involving business organization, business organizations establish "Code of ethics", "code of practice" and "code of conduct" to guide the behavior of employee and organizational activities.[20]

Ethics in the workplace is defined as the moral code that guides the behavior of employees with respect to what is right and wrong in regard to conduct and decision making. Ethical decision making in the workplace takes into account the individual employee's best interest and also takes into account the best interest of those impacted. The latter of the definition is often where individual employees struggle to act ethically. Furthermore, ethical behavior doesn't only apply to individual employees, the organization itself should exemplify standards of ethical conduct.[21]

In the light of major corporate failures and economic scandals all over the world, business ethics have attracted a paramount importance in managerial competence and responsibility because ethics prescribe what is considered appropriate behavior and what is not seen right to do in living one's life. Only in keeping the ethics in the center explicitly can welfare economics be enriched. Also having spiritual principles and values can provide an understanding of the many ethical problems which can be seen in business.[22]

The decision to behave ethically is a moral one; employees must decide what they need to think for the right course of action, as well as simultaneously attract customers. Thereby improving sales and profits as the employees want to stay with the business, reduce the labour turnover and therefore increased productivity shall attract more employees wanting to work for the business, reduce recruitment costs and enable the company to get the most talented employees attract investors and keep the company's share price high.[23]

Ethics and spiritual values into the workplace led to increase productivity and profitability as well as employee retention, customer loyalty, and brand reputation. In addition spirituality has become a direct way to boost loyalty and enhance morale at workplace. On the other hand, growing number of business people want their spirituality to be more than just faith and belief – they want it to be practical and applied. Therefore, the employers are seeing spirituality as a medium to bring the whole selves to work - body, mind

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[18] Göçen, Ahmet & Özgan, Habib. (2018). Spirituality and Ethics: A Literature Review. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences. 17. 58-65. 10.21547/jss.452152, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/606033

[19] Kumar, Varinder & Vij, Sandeep. (2014). The Role of Spirituality and Ethics in Transformational Leadership, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299394968_The_Role_of_Spirituality_and_Ethics_in_Transformational_Leadership.

[20] *Supra note* 3.

[21] William Mahan, "How to Define Ethical Behavior & Why It's Important in the Workplace", https://workinstitute.com/how-to-define-ethical-behavior-why-its-important-in-the-workplace-2/ , dated 20.11.2020

[22] *Supra note* 18.

[23] *Supra note* 3.

and spirit. They have bottom line the business on the tagline of "do well by doing well." When employees are encouraged to express their creativity, the result is a more fulfilled and sustained workforce. Happy people work harder and are more likely to stay at their jobs. [24]

ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN PROMOTING ETHICAL BUSINESS AT WORKPLACE

The role of spiritual values at the workplace have given rise to a list of values; honesty, compassion, avoiding harm, respect, peace, justice, forgiveness, service, trustworthiness, thankfulness, optimism, hope, humility, gratitude, love, altruism, empathy, toughness, meaningfulness, integrity, responsibility, awareness, humanism, inner peace, truth, sense of community, kindness, patience, courage, benevolence, mutuality, receptivity and being a good citizen. These values are the manifestation of the four behavioral characteristics of a spiritual person.

There is empirical evidence to believe that spirituality at workplace benefits both employees and organization. More often than not, researchers postulate that workplace spirituality has positive effects on workers and organizations. However, workplace spirituality may also have negative effects especially when it is adopted as an imposition of some religion in the workplace. In other words, if an organizations attempts to manipulate or use the concept of spirituality at work as a tool to simply increase productivity, it may be counterproductive. As such, there is a need to have a favorable organizational culture to effectively implement spirituality at workplace.[25]

A spiritual person understands the need to bring the whole person to work. They want to integrate their lives and in doing so connect with themselves and with others in their workplace community. Spiritual individuals endeavor to "express inner life needs by seeking meaningful work".   They confer their work and the workplace with the quality of connection to something greater than the material world. Work becomes part of a bigger picture; it is a calling, a vocation and not merely a means to an end.[26]

There are three dynamics which have contributed to the lack of integration between strategic leadership and spirituality, viz. lack of clarity regarding the level of analysis, a focus on the interpersonal aspects of spirituality, and the dangers inherent in examining spirituality and leadership. Spirituality in the workplace is communicated and reinforced through the institution's leaders, organizational culture, policies and work design among other factors. Sensitivity and interest in the person (employee) must be common to all approaches. It may be noted that all of a sudden spirituality has caught popularity and profits.[27]

Ethical behavior in the workplace can stimulate positive employee behaviors that lead to organizational growth, just as unethical behavior in the workplace can inspire damaging headlines that lead to organizational demise. A decision to act unethically, by the organization or a stakeholder, can strain the relationship and damage the reputation of the organization. The increased risk of reputational damage and harm from negative headlines is often the catalyst for organizations to promote and encourage ethical behavior and prevent and report unethical behavior.

The benefit of ethical behavior in the workplace is, an organization that is perceived to act ethically by employees can realize positive benefits and improved business outcomes. The perception of ethical behavior can increase employee performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust and organizational citizenship behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors include altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship and courtesy.[28]

Ethics is based on a broad principle of integrity, transparency, accuracy, accountability, responsibility and fairness, and focus on internal stakeholder issues such as product quality, customer satisfaction, employee wages and benefits, and community and environmental responsibilities. Spirituality

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[24] *Ibid*

[25] Dandona, Anu. (2013). "Spirituality at Workplace", National Conference on Paradigm for Sustainable Business: People, Planet and Profit,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317066061_Spirituality_at_Workplace, dated 20.11.2020.

[26] *Supra note* 3.

[27] *Ibid*

[28] *Supra note* 21.

can be the basis for ethical conduct in business and ethical business since spiritual individual show higher purpose, personal meaning and transcendent values, commitment, job motivation, increased productivity and job satisfaction in their workplace.[29]

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that business is more than just business. We need to consider workers' need for meaning and spirituality in order to unleash their full potential. It is refreshing that more and more companies and corporations are embracing spiritual values. Being in touch with spiritual principles and values helps to stimulate the moral imaginations of individuals and can provide depth of understanding of the many ethical problems that arise in business. It appears to be a grassroots movement, as more and more people entertain the notion that work can be meaningful and fulfilling. The spirituality in business movement is one of the hopeful signs that business, as the most powerful institution in world today, may be transforming from within. What is emerging is a new attitude towards the workplace as a place to fulfil one's deeper purpose.

In the wake of the Enron Debacle, management is also more willing to take spiritual and moral values seriously. This trend will endure, simply because it speaks to the deeper needs of the human heart, and provides a promising remedy to declining job satisfaction. Even if research fails to establish a direct link between spirituality and profitability, an enlightened business attitude may still have the benefit of creating a more compassionate, caring and ethical workplace. This alone would be good news for people, who spend most of their adult lives at work.

Each day, more and more business people are helping to create a better world by being more socially responsible in how they treat people and the environment. They are proving that spirituality helps, rather than harms, as "Work is love made visible." Finally the study concludes that spirituality has become the life-blood of business in the recent times. Spiritual people are empowered and empower others to look beyond self-interest to make a difference in and a contribution to society as a whole. Thus, spirituality forms an internalized general regulative idea, based on four common aspects of spirituality: self-transcendence, interconnectedness, meaning and one's ultimate concern, that governs what individuals perceive and value and how they act. These moral values practiced over time become virtues. Spiritually virtuous individuals contribute significant benefits to organizations.

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[29] *Supra note* 3.

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