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PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGEMENT OF MISS MARY PARKER FOLLETT

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Abstract: The present-paper entitled ‘Philosophy of Management of Miss Mary Parker Follett’ is an attempt to present the overall-thoughts and philosophy of Miss Follett in the matters of management. Miss Follett was an American-management-philosopher. This paper is divided into four-parts. First-part is introduction of Miss Mary Parker Follett. Second-part presents the concept of management of Miss Mary. Third-part presents the management-functions. Miss Follett speaks about twelve management-functions. These functions are, achieving the goals, planning, decision-making, leader/leadership, control, organizing, committee, motivation, communication, cooperation, manager & sub-ordinate relations and training-development. Last-part is conclusion.

Keywords: Management, Human-industry, Efficiency, Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION OF MISS MARY PARKER FOLLETT

She was born on September 03, 1868 and died on December 18, 1933. She was an American social-worker, management-consultant and management-philosopher. She is pioneer in the fields of organizational-theory and organizational-behavior. She is known as the "Mother of Modern-Management."¹

CONCEPT OF MANAGEMENT

Management is the fundamental-element within industry and industry is the most important-field of human-activity. It is the means for achieving an integrative-unity of the assorted-activities engaged in by a business-enterprise. Management is the best means of achieving control as opposed to having the individual trust to chance for the proper events to occur. It is fundamentally concerned with people and their relations.² Management is a very dynamic-process in which any event or action represents only a moment in a continuing-process of interrelated, sequential-occurrences. In the words of Follett, “management is a permanent-function of business and it is good-management that draws credit, workers and customers. Whether industry is owned by individual capitalists or by the state or by the workers, it will always have to be managed.”³ The maintenance of functional-unity is the chief-task of management and manager welds together the functions of critic, judge and participator. Integration of parts is dependent on clarity of purpose and manager should be able to provide this clarity for the organization at any given time. Manager is the person who performs managerial-function. He possesses a vision of the future in addition to being able to draw conclusions from facts from the past. For Follett, method of management is development and utilization of people. Their participation and relationship constitute the bulk of management.

She speaks about three-things regarding management. Firstly, all problems whenever they occur are fundamentally problems in human relations; secondly, every human-being is different and there is a sufficiently large common-factor in human-reactions to similar situations to permit the development of principles of administration; and thirdly, principles must be sought and applied wherever the organization of human-endeavors is required in the pursuit of a common-objective.⁴ Follett says, management should be performed with a style. She defines style as “adapting form to material, as calculation of means to end, as restraint, as that which is opposed to all that is sloppy and bungling, the performance of an act without waste. Others speak of style as broad design, noble proportion. A manager's job performed with style would have all these characteristics.”⁵

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Thus, Follett presents the primary-characteristics of management-style. It is related to the manner of execution of management-functions and infers a high-degree of efficiency and continuity of action. She emphasizes upon coordination as a major-method for managers to use in executing their functions.

According to Follett, management is a profession and like any other profession, it should be founded-upon science and service. First-objective of profession is that professionals have joined to better perform their function. "A function is the best word because it implies not only that you are responsible for serving your community, but that you are partly responsible for there being any community to serve."⁶ This establishes both science and service as broad objectives for managers. She puts greater emphasis on service because it is less obviously a necessity and science helps in the attainment of effective-management-practices. She speaks about the reciprocal-service. It means, "it is connotation of self-sacrifice, of the recognition of other aims than private-gain, makes it a high-motive for individual lives and a social-asset. If a man thinks of his business as a service, he will certainly not increase private-profits at the expense of public-good."⁷ According to Miss Follett, service to the community is the objective of business-organizations. In her words, "business is and should be considered truly a social-agency."⁸ For her, management is that activity of business which is responsible for the accomplishment of these objectives. Profit flows from efficient-operations and successful-satisfaction of human-needs. Objectives should be selected according to a higher-set of social-goals.⁹

According to Miss Follett, responsibility is the outgrowth of function. In her words, "each-man performs a function or part of a function. Both research and scientific-study determine function in scientifically managed plants. A man should have just as much, no more and no less, responsibility as goes with his function or his task."¹⁰ Further, she asserts, responsibility does not then follow the position in the organization but corresponds to the function the individual performs. Thus, the concept of a final-responsibility is something of an illusion. Responsibility is sometimes very hard to fix because it is the outcome of an interweaving of experiences. Coordination is an objective of management as well as a responsibility also. The drawing together of individual-responsibilities into a cumulative-responsibility becomes the task of management. Collective-responsibility results in a decentralization of responsibility. Integrative-unity results in management's-responsibility for very little by itself because responsibility resides in the workers who perform the functions.

According to Miss Follett, there are two fundamental-problems for business-management. First, to define the essential-nature of the total-situation; and second, how to pass from one total-situation to another.¹¹ Out of these two, the first one is easily sorted out. To manage the second, management must control or coordinate a group endeavor that should take the form of an integrative-unity in order to deal with the two basic-problems.

MANAGEMENT-FUNCTIONS

Miss Follett presents notions upon twelve management-functions, achieving the goals, planning, decision-making, leader/leadership, control, organizing, committee, motivation, communication, cooperation, manager & sub-ordinate relations and training-development. Now, a brief description of these management-functions is being presented.

[1] Achieving the Goal: According to Miss Follett, a leader should encourage endeavor towards a goal. She suggests, encouragement towards a goal that is not understood and accepted is likely to be futile. Leader should emphasize that subordinates are working toward a common-purpose which is the result of the desires of the group. Thus, Miss Follett emphasizes on leadership for achieving the goals and emphasizes upon common-purpose.

[2] Planning: Planning is an organizational-activity and involves many people and many types of information, all of which aid manager in making the decision demanded by the situation.¹² Planning deals with the achievement of economic-efficiency through better-communications and human-relations. It is a group-activity that must be provided for in the organization-structure and closely related to decision-making. For Follett, "participation must involve the interpenetration of ideas of the parties concerned."¹³ She focuses upon the participation of subordinates and specifically mentions the participation of workers also in the planning-process. For her, it is not adequate to present policy to workers in such a way as to get their consent, "the most progressive view of employment representation today, as of democracy, is not consent of the governed, but participation."¹⁴ Thus, planning is a group-activity and Miss Follett focuses upon the participation of managers, subordinates and workers in planning and policy-formulation.

[3] Decision-Making: According to Miss Follett, a decision is a result of accumulation of events or facts from the situation involved and an executive decision is a moment in a process.¹⁵ Person who makes the decision performs the task of latitude needed to examine the situation, to decide what needs to be done and to do that. It is a form of self-direction for workers as well as managers. She emphasizes upon development of new, constructive-alternatives and believes that better decisions can be made by doing so. For her, scientific-approach is the best way to accomplish the improvement of communications and human-relations necessary to the achievement of economic-efficiency. Her idea of the scientific-method consists of two-parts. Firstly, research; and second, the organization of the knowledge obtained through research.¹⁶ She applies scientific-methods to the analysis of executive experience. By classification and interpretation of experiences, it would be possible to draw many useful conclusions about events that are either related or repetitious. Thus, Miss Follett emphasizes upon scientific-method for decision-making.

[4] Leader/Leadership: A leader performs three-functions namely, coordination, definition of purpose and anticipation.¹⁷ His efforts ought to be directed towards completion of these functions. He does not order his men, but serves his men and is always influenced by his group.¹⁸ Follett believes that leaders can be made. In her words, "it is not necessary that leaders be born ready to take charge of

group. Leaders can be made. He must learn his place in the organization and his relation to all the other parts."¹⁹ Leader's task is pre-eminently to understand the moment of passing. This is why the leader's task is so difficult, why it requires great qualities, the most delicate and sensitive-perceptions, imagination, insight and at the same time courage and faith.²⁰ Thus, Miss Follett presents five-qualities of a leader and emphasizes upon personal-qualities for leadership.

Regarding leadership-technique, Follett emphasizes on standard-practices, sincerity and orders that are integral to the situation. About first-technique, Miss Follett says, "standard-practices ought to be used in place of orders because they arise out of the work situation and subordinates easily contribute to them."²¹ This is the best-way of doing things and is method until a better way is found. If order has to make then, a leader should follow order because of two-reasons. First, because men do really want to do things in the right-way and he can show them that way; and secondly, because he too is obeying, men obeys without any question. Thus, Follett speaks about three-techniques of leadership.

For Follett, unity and energy are the objectives of leadership. Leader energizes group, encourages initiative and builds unity among the group. Uniting the followers is the most important-function of a leader. In her words, one of the greatest aids to leadership consists of uniting followers in a common-purpose by making others, or allowing them to, participate in the leadership as well as She suggests two-things, first, aggressiveness is not a quality of leader; and second, leader should not dominate or arbitrate, but integrate."²² He unites and releases energies. Thus, unity and energy are the major-objectives of leadership and Miss Follett speaks about transformational-leadership.

[5] Control: Control is a power that is exercised as means toward a specific-end. She speaks about psychology of control rather than its mechanic. Control is necessary, but is offensive to the man supervised. It should be based on the thorough knowledge and understanding of the whole organization.²³ In her words, "the aim of organization-engineering is control through effective-unity. If, therefore, we wish to understand control, we should begin by trying to understand the nature of unities."²⁴ She mentions two-notions regarding control. First is, it ought to be fact-control rather than man-control; and secondly, central-control ought to be mean the correlation of many controls rather than a superimposed-control."²⁵ Control should be based according to the problem. She says, "when we think we have solved a problem well, by the very process of solving, new elements or forces come into the situation and you have a new problem on your hands to be solved."²⁶ Thus, Miss Follett focuses upon the need of continuous-control activity for solving the problems. Further, Follett says, the total-organization is more than the sum of its parts. For her, unity is unit plus unit, but it is also the interrelation of units and their effect on each-other. The result of this interaction is that, if one unit is changed, other units are also changed whether intended or not. For her, nature of reciprocal-relationship is the most important consideration of control.²⁷ Thus, Follett emphasizes upon the necessity of control but as well as speaks about the reciprocal-relationship among the various-units.

[6] Organizing: According to Miss Follett, fundamental-principles of organization are evoking, interacting, integrating and emerging.²⁸ Evoking consists of drawing-out the fullest-possibilities from each employee or group of employees; interacting is the creation of appropriate reciprocal-relations and the skillful relating of them so they function effectively as a whole; integrating is relating the experience of all and using it for a common-purpose and emerging is the evolution of one situation into the next and is a creative-moment in the business-process; it entails an element of control in determining what develops in the new situation. To perform these four-functions, a manager needs to exercise considerable leadership and be able to provide expert-advice. According to Follett, there are four-fundamental-principles of organizing. Firstly, coordination by direct contact of responsible people concerned; secondly, coordination in the early stages; thirdly, coordination as the reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation; and lastly, coordination as a continuing-process.²⁹ She points-out the importance of relationships of parts toward each-other in determining the character of the whole. In her words, "they all together make a certain situation, but they constitute that situation through their relation to one another. If you change one, usually some, if not all, of the others are changed."³⁰ This is a reality that needs consideration in all attempts to group-work and people.

In the words of Follett, "the best-method of organization is not that which works out most meticulously or most logically the place for finals, but that which provides possibilities for a cumulative-responsibility, which provides for gathering together all the responsibility which there actually is in the plant, which provides for making the various individual and group responsibilities more effective by the working-out of a system of cross-relations."³¹ She speaks about the integrative-unity. In her words, "first-test of organization should be whether you have a business with all its parts so coordinated, so moving together in their closely knit and adjusting activities, so linking, interlocking, interrelating, that they make a working-unit that is, what I have called a functional-whole or integrative-unity."³² For Miss Follett, integrative-unity is clearly an organizational-concept in which everyone in a group does what he can to facilitate attaining the objective of the group. Follett emphasizes upon pluralistic-responsibility and says, "task of organization is to join managerial-capacity of worker with managerial-capacity of executive. Functional authority, pluralistic-responsibility requires conference as its method."³³ She speaks about collective-responsibility. In her words, "I know no one who believes more strongly in decentralization than I do, but I believe that collective-responsibility and decentralized-responsibility must go hand in hand; more than that, I think they are parts of the same thing."³⁴ It should be the point of focus for managers rather than trying to decide between centralization and decentralization. Thus, Miss Follett speaks about the responsibility in the matters of organizing.

[7] Committee: It is a general coordinating-force. For Miss Follett, committee is very important for coordinating pluralistic-authority. These can be utilized to build an interlocking-structure to solve many problems that are of a cross-functional nature. Where pluralistic-authority is the dominant force in business-organization, the organizational-problem is how to bring these responsibilities together and the committee is one of the best mechanisms for this.

[8] Motivation: About motivation, Miss Follett says, "when you have made your employees feel that they are in some sense partners in the business, they do improve the quality of their work, save waste in time and material, because of the Golden Rule, but because their interests are same as yours."³⁵ Thus, motivation of employees is best achieved by the use of principle of integrative-unity whereby joint-responsibility can be developed that gives greater-satisfaction to employees.

[9] Communication: Miss Follett favors and suggests, employee-representation plans serve as a double-tract channel of communications. In her words, "the managers have not known and have had no way of knowing enough of the desires, conditions, aspirations of the workers and the workers have known very little, if anything, either of the purposes of the company or of its problems."³⁶ Thus, Follett believes that some way certainly needs to be provided whereby each party can get the view-point of the other. Regarding communication, Follett presents notion upon issuing orders.

According to Miss Follett, an order consists of three-things. First, it should be the law of situation; second, situation is always evolving; and third, it should involve circular not linear-behavior.³⁷ According to her, orders must fit the habit-pattern of people. If order does not suit the habit-pattern then that must be changed to fit the order. For her, people can obey an order only if previous habit-patterns are appealed to or new ones created. So, employer should consider about the forming of habit-patterns.³⁸ For forming habit-patterns, Follett emphasizes upon training. Giving orders is not a simple-act of giving an order and being obeyed without question. She says, "psychology as well as our own observation, shows us not only that you cannot get people to do things most satisfactorily by ordering them or exhorting them; but also that even reasoning with them, even convincing them intellectually, may not be enough."³⁹ To sort-out these two-problems related to giving orders are the extremes of being too harsh or too close to the workers, in this context Miss Follett says, "my solution is to depersonalize the giving of orders, to unite all concerned in a study of the situation, to discover the law of the situation and obey that."⁴⁰

It means one person does not give orders to another but both take orders from the situation that affects them; it is the situation that demands certain-actions, not just the whim of another person. About long-distance order, Follett says, it should be replaced with the face to face suggestion. Thus, Miss Follett stresses upon the relationship of habit-patterns to orders; emphasizes upon the need to make orders consistent with them, de-personalizing orders and mentions need to follow the law of the situation as important to proper-issuance of orders. Giving and receiving orders should then be a matter of integration of desires through circular-behavior. Thus, Follett speaks about the communication.

[10] Cooperation: Miss Follett emphasizes upon cooperation than obedience. In her words, "we want to arouse not the attitudes of obedience, but the attitudes of cooperation, and we cannot do that effectively unless we are working for a common-purpose understood and defined as such."⁴¹ Thus, Miss Follett emphasizes upon more on cooperation than obedience and it can be achieved when all are working for a common-purpose.

[11] Manager and Sub-ordinate Relations: For Follett, management and laborers should be present with their respective points of view toward the welfare of the firm, but they should not exert pressure in the exclusive interest of the different-groups. They should be on a par with each-other and share responsibility and solve problems together. She speaks about cooperation and integration as the means to manage the relation between manager and sub-ordinates. Thus, both sharing of responsibility and problem-solving are the nature of manager-subordinate-relationship.

[12] Training and Development: Miss Follett speaks about the training and development of first-line-managers, middle-level-managers and top-level-managers. Regarding the training and development of first-line-managers, emphasis is made upon educating workers including managers. She says, "the parts of modern-business are so intricately interwoven that the worker, in order to have an intelligent-opinion in regard to even his own problems, has not only to know something of processes, of equipment, has not only to consider the effect of the introduction of new-machinery and the training of the worker; he should also understand the connection between the production and the commercial-side, should know something of the effectiveness of the sales organization."⁴² She is in favor of giving them knowledge of the matters of business and trade-policy. About training and development of middle and top-level managers, Miss Follett mentions experience as a necessary-part of learning-process. After learning a technique, it includes the acquiring of skill in its application. Manager must develop certain habits and attitudes. Follett mentions three-conditions as important for this. "Firstly, detailed information in regard to a new-method; secondly, stimulus to adopt this method; and thirdly, opportunity to practice it so that it may become a habit."⁴³ Thus, Follett speaks about the training and its usefulness to line, middle and top-managers.

CONCLUSION

Her philosophy of management is based on the grounds that any enduring society, any productive society must be founded-upon a recognition of the motivating-desires of the individual and the group. She realizes two-things on which her philosophy is stood. First, a man on the job is motivated by the same-forces that motivate his duties and pleasures away from the job; second, basic-problem of any business, organization and management is harmonizing and coordinating of group-efforts to achieve the most efficient-effort. She is not in favor of authority as a means of sub-ordination. It is a means offensive to man's emotion that's why it can't be a foundation for cooperation. She proposes an authority of function. In it, an individual has authority over his own job area.

For Follett, coordination is the central-core of management. It has four facets. First, coordination by direct-contact with the people concerned; second, it is a continuous-process; third, it is found in the initial-stages of endeavour; and lastly, it is a reciprocal-relation of all aspects of a situation. She points out when the uses of physical-force pass beyond a certain-point, energies lessen and self-respect is lost, thus no community could long stand unless it was founded upon the consent of the governed. She maintains that a new-principle of association is needed under because men had not yet learned how to live together in harmony with. This new principle she

calls it group-concept. It is a new-approach to management and foundation of international-order. She speaks about the togetherness and group-thinking.

Miss Follett emphasizes that both professional-development and conduct are important to managers as well as advocates the humanization of industry and it is a social-service. She emphasizes upon scientific-method and social-awareness and recognizes the holistic-nature of community and advances the idea of reciprocal-relationships in understanding the dynamic-aspects of the individual in relationship to others. She presents a win-win philosophy to each-group. She speaks about transformational-leadership, the interrelationship of leadership and followership, and the power of collective-goals of leaders and followers.

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