

Bhagavat-Gita and Knowledge Management

Bharat Kumar Bharadwaj

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management is a continuum. Core knowledge is eternal. The applied knowledge is what the world needs. Conceptual knowledge to be implemented practically needs skills. Knowledge management has two major responsibilities. One – creation of knowledge base and designing of process of converting conceptual knowledge to skills, competencies,

Bhagavad-Gita is one of the most significant part of the TRINITY OF ETERNAL KNOWLEDGE CONGLOMERATE (knowledge source) best known as PRASTHANA TRAYA.

1. BHRAHMA SUTRA
2. BHAGAVATGITHA
3. UPANISHADS.

(All other Puranas, including Ramayana and Mahabharata are case studies.)

- BRAHMA SUTRA - Introduces us to intellectual leadership
- BHAGAVAT-GITA - Provides logic, strategies to convert **knowledge to action with will.**
- UPANISHADS - Provide the guidelines or processes of converting Strategies to action with lots of case illustrations.

All the three are complimentary and has to be followed in unison to gain unprecedented knowledge. Bhagavad-Gita is the concise version of the Brahmasutra and Upanishad. Most of the verses are from Upanishads. To this end I would like to share what ever is relevant to quality management, from all the three scriptures. But most of it will be from Bhagavat-Gita.

BRAHMA SUTRA HAS 4 CHAPTERS:

- ◆ **SAMANVAYA** = Equal incidence, Iso - purpose, Iso-application, shared vision and the process applies to all and equally, participation by one and all.
- ◆ **AVIRODHA** = Non-contradictory, Non-resistant: decide collectively, and Do **as decided.**
- ◆ **SADHANA** = practice and implementation. Act to succeed and reach the goal as decided.
- ◆ **PHALA** = RESULTS ARE GURANTEED.

MANAGEMENT IS A CONVERTER OF KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION WILLINGLY DONE BY ALL THE CONCERNED.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT QUALIFIES THE CONVERSION PROCESS TO DO THE ACTION EXCELLENTLY.

Some facts: that we might have recognized in management. (tenets from our eternal literature)

- No failure approach in all the processes, all the time, leading to Zero-defect.
- *Nirvighnam kuru sarva karyeshu sarvada.*
- Manage with facts.
- *Satyam vada, asathoma sadgamaya.*
- Bottom up approach is superior to top-down approach.
- *Pravrithi margaha nivruthimargena vishishyathe.*
- Committed learning only leads to perfect knowledge. An organisation has to be learning continuously.
- *Shraddavaan labhathe gnaanam.*
- We are known by our deeds.
- *Yatha karma thathaa shrutaha.*
- Bench mark with the best: global leadership in global competition to become globally competitive.
- *Vishwajith yaga*
- Profession protects the professional
- *Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha.*

These are some typical quotes, which should sounds familiar in quality management system.

Though Bhagavad-Gita forms a part of Mahabharat, it stands out clearly as a stand alone document of knowledge. Mahabharat has been used only as a "**website**" to propagate the essential essence of the Upanishads. This is depicted as a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in the middle of the battlefield between the two factions of the same family of Kurus. Though at the macro level it has historical reverence, the entire Mahabharat has a larger than life content and connotation. It revels in sorting and solving many of the intricate problems of life of individuals and also society as a whole.

It is stated to be DARMA KSHETRA - DOMAIN OF PROFESSIONALISM.

It is stated to be KURUKSHETRA (WITH) SARVE YUDHA VISHARADAHA

- DOMAIN OF COMPETITION OF THE BEST OF COMPETENCIES AND COMPETITIORS, WHO WERE ALL EXPERTS IN THEIR FUNCTIONS.

The Bhagavat-Gita though designed to find a logical solution for the great warrior who was in a fix either to continue the war or not. It unfolds various strategies to overcome dependency and to excel.

CAUSES OF UNCERTAINTY EFFECT IS UNCERTAINTY IN BEHAVIOR

- ◆ FEAR OF MORTALITY MEMORY OF PAST, LIVING AND LEGACIES.
- ◆ FEAR OF FAILURE ENGROSSED IN PRESENT HOWEVER IT IS.
- ◆ FEAR OF COMPETITION WITHDRAWAL SYNDROME
- ◆ FEAR IF ACTION DESPONDENCY.

Total quality is the essence of Bhagavad-Gita.

It spells out personal quality, quality of strategies, quality of action and quality of choice of the route one chooses to excel. Quality management accords maximum weightage to human resource and contemplates on transformation. KM believes - every activity if done as it should be done, the cumulative result will be excellent.

KM is a sort of digitization of knowledge into small activities designing optimum processes to accomplish the goal. If the process is perfect, the result is incidental and imminent. Continuous improvement and customer orientation, peoples' participation and prioritization is the basic agenda of KM. Bhagavat-Gita focus on all these issues.

This calls for synergising various strategies, activities to achieve excellence in all facets of Business and Personal Management.

Bhagavat-Gita contains 18 chapters but could be summarized into following:

- ◆ Saankhya yoga - synergy of core competence
- ◆ Karma yoga - synergy of actions / processes
- ◆ Gnaana yoga - synergy of knowledge
- ◆ Vignaana yoga - synergy of expertise – competence.
- ◆ Bhakthi yoga - synergy of dedication and involvement

Yet another significant factor emerge in Sri Krishna being the charioteer of Arjuna. This is the concept of **SERVANT LEADER**, which is being talked of, in elite management forums of scholars. The leader is a servant and all the customers, people, resources are his **MASTERS**. To serve such a vast domain **HE** must be a **PURUSHOTHAMA - A EXCELLENT HUMAN BEING**. If one reads considering **Krishna as the servant leader**, then all the concepts of KM will become apparent and much more relevant.

It enlightens about quality of leaders, various kinds of people and their fundamental nature which helps in organizing for skill mapping and QC circles, Team work, based on knowledge, skill and Swabhaava.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SHOULD CREATE LEADER SHIP.

LEADERSHIP THROUGH SYNERGY: SYNERGY IS AN EFFECT.

Synergy: the word is so romantic that even a guy with least of sentiment and emotion or passion dances to the tune of synergy. In addition, in the scriptures **Synergy is defined as "YOGA"**. That is intermingling or two different things irrespective of the level or datum. One has to reach out to the other. Or one has to come down and the other has to go up. We presume that the hierarchy establishes and ensures - synergy, it is a myth.

Synergy is like a closed circuit. It could have different voltages, at different points, it could have different instruments, equipment at different locations. Unless the system design addresses the Inter - dependence and inter-alia transfer of technology, process and skill, amongst the components, the synergy will still be a myth.

Synergy and harmony are not synonyms. At best they could be complimentary. Harmony is orchestrated. The tunes and tones are in a controlled mode and one cannot be out of tune. But, this could be of limited universality in management parlance. Harmony is like physical health of a person. It has to be maintained and if sick, improved upon. But, synergy is like the mental health or competence of a person. This requires a special note. At best we could accept the **orchestrated symphony as the basic pre-qualification for synergy.**

Just thinking of synergy will not suffice. Synergy should be planned. Synergy is a strategic option and opportunity. Questions should asked: why synergy? How do we define synergy? What are the attributes, pros and cons of synergy? And last but not least how do we go about it?

There are various options in business. Small is beautiful. But cluster of such small is the big business houses. Normal management practice is to draw parallels within the clusters and not parallel with best of the business house. "One fundamental issue is, open-mindedness to accept and accede to values and systems. -"Let noble thoughts come to us from every side". Once this ambiance is created, it is far easier to plan for synergy.

KNOWLEDGE, WILL AND ACTION ARE THE TRINITY TO SUCCESS:

Knowledge: we must know clearly what are we, how did we get there, inventories of lessons learnt from the past, where we intent to go, is the path open and wide enough, do we have the intrinsic strength to adopt and change, how is the environment, and at what rate it is changing? Most importance is to define clearly and cleverly what not to do?

Strategic perspective is meant to self-introspection self-analysis-core competence, self-SWOT, SWOT of environment, SWOT of competition and competitors' SWOT, positioning of business and products, people - mix, talent mix required to take on the future challenges, organization, structure, fiscal strength, systems and processes and **will** to convert strategic intent and vision into a working plan and implement activities as planned, which is the key to success.

Action: once the plan is ready, the action portion starts. This is the crucial stage. This is where the organizational culture matters. Culture is defined as, the intrinsic strength of a group of people called organization, to convert knowledge into action through an unflinching commitment, loyalty and professional grit.

- **Synergy may demand re-structuring.**

Re-grouping is not re-structuring. Restructuring involves mechanical and intellectual adjustments, intellectual honesty in understanding the critical impediments, and issues, and find and slot the people with drive and grit to take on the challenges. What I mean by intellectual honesty is the loyalty to profession and not always to an individual or individualism.

"PEOPLE (SKILL) VS JOB DEMAND FIT" is essential while thinking and inking of re-structuring. Identification on attributes of people we have and that of job demand is as critical as re-structuring.

"Tat viddhi pranipaatena, pariprshnena seveya "

knowledge could be attained by brain-storming, PDCA, and constant and consistent questioning.

"Yogasthah kuru karmani" this means, work with synergic approach. While saying so, we must define what is synergy?

Synergy is the integration of minds, with varied personal traits, uniqueness, and multitudes of knowledge bases, cultural and geographic environmental influences, with constancy of purpose. Post -event corrections are far inferior to pro-active preemptive diagnosis and immunization is better than drugging to cure.

Synergy is an effect: **Yogaha karmasu kowshalam**. The skill and competence to work in non-dualistic teams with determined minds, in-spite of all seeming odds, is synergy or yoga -meeting the different things and projecting as one. We need to look at what are compelling and competitive forces acting on an organization/business not have synergy? In other words. We need to write the cause and effect diagram of why there is not synergy. Then we can find options to achieve synergy. This at the outset, seem a negative approach. But let us not forget, that the best approach to achieve what is needed is to eliminate what is not needed or what are the causes which hamper the achievements as planned.

Even if synergetic forces do exist, recognize the intensities and direction of that force. Let me explain. The conductor of an orchestra and the music composer are two different identities. This clear demarcation has to be understood first.

The composer is conceptualist-the knowledge. The conductor is the one who translates the vision or the concept into notes. Once he does that he goes on to analyze the base competence of each of the instruments, their players' competence and the purpose of that tune end in mind. Then he chooses the instruments, their, direct participation or base notes, or just coming in the middle as effective middle supporter. Then he writes "notes" matching the involvement of various instruments, their position, when to respond, and this when played to the direction of the conductor, satisfies the composer. Then a different team takes over.

The composer, the director of the event where the tune is used. They discuss the application, pre and post linkages to the events, their bearing on the project etc.,

Hence , the need for synergy should be very clearly and explicitly defined. Once we define, we should also recognize the effectiveness of the synergy. Again adopt the elimination theory. Identify all the negatives first and then the positive effects. This could guide the team to recognize and evolve a plan of action to achieve synergy.

Synergy demands basic union of people - the rest will fall in line by the synergetic people.

Each and every individual is exposed to following circles while he is a part of a tem. They are: Bhagavat-Gita clearly identifies, describes the various circles of being to becoming.

Inner orbits confining to "I" (the individual)

(Family, percentage, family circle, relatives circle, neighbors circles, social environment, spiritual environment-including religions influence, family value, social values, national values)

Self or I-circle: conglomerate of the inner orbits and self - definition, self orientation, self - adaptation, vulnerability index to the inner orbits, and capability to live, sustain and change w.r.t environments of the kind described above).

Close associates or we - circle: one to one relation ship established: father, mother, grand parents, sisters, brothers, relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbors, movies, events in life, TV etc.,

Acquaintance due to being part of a group or cluster of companies or our circle: close circle of few socially, professionally, culturally, religiously, emotionally, sentimentally bound set of people.

Totally alien or their-circle: unknown set of people : the rest of it all who have not direct contact with us. The entire universe who are just a part of the system of which we are also one.

Non-business related or outer orbits: special competence developed by the individual in terms of hobbies, creative arts, which complement the individuals personality.

The synergy also could be explained and understood with respect to functioning of human body and the human system.

Hierarchy: body-structure, sustaining systems - heart, lungs, liver, digestive systems, the conceptors- the it-masters: eyes, ears, tongue, skin, nose, the creator and

Control system in the form of brain and nervous systems. Intelligence, mind, conscience, super-conscience. The brain, the nervous systems, have a different role, the eyes and ears have theirs; the limbs, the muscles, the bone structure, the nose, the lungs, have their own.

Yogstan kuru kartavyam : work in synergy to achieve what needs to be done. Activity is not the end - actions. We need to recognize the analogy of human body management with the organization's functioning and identify people who could do what? Then communicate, integrate, inter-net the functions and get the best out of individuals and thus the team. This may be applied to group synergy also.

Synergy of a cluster of groups may seem difficult to achieve, but not impossible. The vision, mission and guiding principles should be common. The product synergy, policies, methodology of conducting business as perceived should be kept in mind before attempting to announce that we are a synergetic group.

(Refer to the matrix in the box.)

- ◆ Once this matrix is filled for all the individual group of companies, try and integrate the various attributes in vertical and horizontal attributes, find the similarities, gaps, diversities, and decide the synergetic possibilities and wherever uniqueness has to be maintained within the framework of a group policy, then retain them so.
- ◆ Uniqueness, is not a weakness. When synergy is possible, uniqueness could be defined clearly. There should be no ambiguity in reaching out for a conclusion.

◆ Hence synergy is a hierarchical structure spread in the form of matrix structure. The duality is limited to very few issues, hence the entire group could be projected as one force of talent, strength, competence and thus achieve optimum ROI in terms of business, and last but not he least the spiritual satisfaction of having achieved the unity in diversity, **vishwaroopa darshan with seemingly diverse groups as**

one gigantic form, the sun with million rays, and accomplishing the global presence

How all these inter are - connected? Physical inter-dependence is least. It is all through the master computer and its communication system through nerves.If this could be adopted and applied to cluster of groups, then synergy could be designed and achieved.

MATRIX OF SYNERGY Leadership through synergy

	PRODUCT	MARKET	TECHNOLOGY	SYSTEMS	PEOPLE / PROCESS
BUSINESS POLICY	Existing extended new	Existing extended new	Best in the competition	Management	Quality mix
VISION	Futuristic	Growth	Change	IT & commn.	Orgn.culture & dev,
FUNCTIONAL POLICY	Market driven dev.	Development	Market driven innovation growth & profit	Ease of operation	Right ones in right slot.
ORGANISM CULTURE	Customer driven	Public/customer opinion	Change with good of the past recorded and used as ref.	Own the systems delegate, and not abdicate	Professional loyalty commitment
COMPETENCE	Engg. R & D strengths.	Image-creation & sustenance process.	Adaptation speed and accuracy	Commn. Delegation monitoring	Innovator sustainer change agent.
INFO.TECH	History of development	Competition info - on-line	Network of application and process Eng. Inflow flow.	Ease of updation and retrieval & exchange	Awareness accepted will to change as required.
HRM/HRD	Good internal faculty	Customer feed back on the people	Exposure to changing environment	Process orientation driven people	Create: tomorrow's people today.

◆ Bharat Kumar Bharadwaj
(a learning teacher of management and an honest student of life.)
e-mail: bharatkbwj@gmail.com