

Preranashakti: Motivation from Ancient Management Thought

Introduction

Motivation is defined as the desire or willingness to make an effort in one's work. It is stated that motivation is a psychological process that causes the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions, that are goal oriented. There have been countless theories suggesting different factors affecting one's motivation/ creating a drive to fulfill the needs of one's life (Maslow), and so on.

The concept of motivation is key to one's functioning in life. Various psychological disorders such as Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) cause a person to have no zeal in life, no motivation to do anything, lack of energy and enthusiasm. A persistent low mood is factor and a result of low motivation. Without motivation, the drive to work and fulfill even one's basic needs would not be present, thereby hampering the entire functioning of the person. Motivation is important because it provides you with goals to work towards, helps you solve problems, helps you change old habits, helps you cope with challenges and opportunities ("Motivation: How to Get Started and Staying Motivated," n.d.).

Think about it yourself!

Does motivation affect your life? How?

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One of the major aspects of any organization's success and growth is the level of commitment, drive, and energy that employees bring to the role every day. Organizations without motivated and enthusiastic employees, either face low productivity rates or unable to achieve goals on time. A motivated employee is characterized as-

- Enthusiastic
- Driven
- Takes pride in their work
- Accomplishes tasks quickly,
- Takes action
- Wants to do a good job, both for themselves and for the company (Perkbox, 2020).

Therefore, motivation has finally been understood as one of the major factors that can affect the entire productivity of the company, and therefore should be taken into prime focus.

The ancient Indian theory of motivation suggests that the best motivation that does not bind people, even being busy in action, is when the action is dedicated to a Higher Power and does not remain

ego-centric. It is essential for one to have needs and fulfill them, however, removing ego-centricity and adding selflessness to the process, does not create aversions or attachments, thereby maintaining freedom even when indulged in action (Jayaram V., n.d.).

Objectives of the article –

1. Understanding techniques and strategies from the Arthashastra and the Vidura Niti on how to motivate employees at work and the character analysis of Sri Krishna as a motivator from the Mahabharata.

The first part of the article highlights the techniques, concepts, and learnings on how can employers motivate the employees from the ancient Indian texts of Kautilya's Arthashastra and Vidura Niti from the Udyogaparva in the Mahabharata. The concepts of Sama, Daana, Bheda and Danda from the Arthashastra have been taken into account in countless papers and articles as a means for motivating employees at work – the same has been analyzed here. Adding to that, a character analysis of Sri Krishna and the techniques and teachings used by Him to motivate Arjuna have been analyzed to understand what factors were involved in motivating a person who was shivering with a parched mouth and was reluctant to even pick up his weapon and fight. Likewise, the description of qualities and situations where one is happy, unhappy, satisfied, full of joy, etc. as mentioned by Vidura, gives insight into what would make an employee motivated in organizational settings.

2. Understanding concepts from the Bhagavad Gita on how to remain motivated at work.

The second part of this article consists of the teachings and values from the Bhagavad Gita. This part focuses on how employees can remain motivated to do their work, without any external reinforcement/factor. Considering core concepts of Nishkaama karma, selfless work, understanding one's role as a Nimmita (instrument), etc. where one is non-attached yet dedicated and involved with focus in the task in hand.

3. Understanding the implications of the Code of Conduct on the employees of the TATA group.

The article is concluded with a case study of the TATA group, citing examples of exemplary feats of dedication, commitment and motivation portrayed by the employees of the Taj Hotel during the 26/11 terrorist attack, which made them sacrifice their life and not leave the side of the customers even in life and death situations. An analysis of the techniques used by the Taj employers, that make the employees develop undying commitment to their organization and motivation for their work have been looked into.

PART 1

MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES AT WORK: TECHNIQUES AND CONCEPTS FROM THE ARTHASHASTRA AND VIDURA NITI.

The Four Upayas from the Arthashastra - Kautilya's Theory of Motivation

Ancient Bharatiya texts such as the Dharmashastra, Sukraniti, agnipurANA, MatsyapurANA and even NitivAkyamitra (written by a South Indian Jain scholar – Somadeva Suri in the 10th century) provide insight into the ways and means by which employees can be motivated in an organization. Rajaguru - Chanakya, also known as Kautilya, wrote the Arthashastra and enlisted the ways and functioning of a kingdom, handling wars, strategies to win them, and so on, being one of the most ancient and detailed manuscripts ever found that relates to the functioning of an organization with such detailed commentaries.

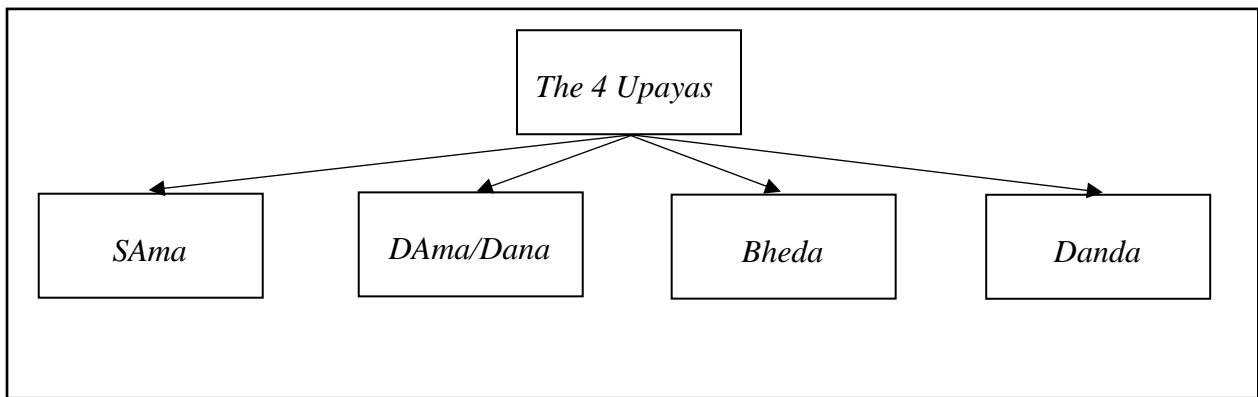


Fig. 1 – the Four Upayas of Kautilya

The following methods, according to Chanakya can be used by the manager to ensure the task is accomplished by the employees –

1. SAma (Consultation) – Persuasion Method

This method involves directly talking to the employee and making the matter clear. If there is any issue faced by the employee, the manager must talk to the employee and get first-hand information about the problem to avoid misunderstanding. It is essential for the manager to actively listen to their employees' perspectives in order to proceed in finding out an optimum solution.

When the **employees feel heard**, a feeling of belongingness increases, which can induce trust in the manager and motivate the employees to work with dedication.

This method **also includes praising the merits of the employees** during a good performance, emphasizing each other's relationship and interdependence on one another – talking about mutual benefits. Awarding the internal enemy is another method to avoid chaos and maintain a diplomatic relationship for the betterment of the entire organization.

2. *Dama/ DAna* (Reward/Reinforcement) – Incentive Method

The most common method now used in organizations, was originally proposed by Chanakya in the Arthashastra, on similar lines recommends **giving incentives to the employees**, that they regard and have value for, to keep them motivated at their work. These incentives can include – promotions, bonuses on salary, awards, and so on. It is a human tendency to work towards things that feels rewarding. Therefore, by giving rewards and incentives, employees can be easily motivated.

3. *Bheda* (Split) – Healthy Competition Method

This method believes **in creating internal competition** among the employees so that each person gives their best and remains motivated to perform the task. **‘Healthy Competition’** at the organizational level is a way by which employees can be motivated to give their best. However, since this method can go astray and create conflicts within the organization, organizations can administer rewards and reinforcements for doing well in a task as a factor for creating healthy competition, rather than creating a drift between the employees. As the major objective of any company should be to achieve its goals with harmony and brotherhood, harsh and unmeasured steps should not be taken.

4. *Danda* (Punishment) – Warning/Demotion Method

Chanakya advises carrying out Danda, i.e., punishment with a view to improve and not to deteriorate. The punishment may not be severe and can be with warnings. However, if unnecessary behaviors are continued, a cut in salary or even a **demotion** may be applicable.

A **warning** is a technique to check the employee when they are not on the right track and check it at the right time to avoid unnecessary losses. However, a proper way of talking to the employee and understanding their perspective needs to be administered, to make the employee take responsibility for their actions as well as be a source of motivation for them to work harder. Thus, the fear of such punishment can be a factor that motivates employees to accomplish their tasks and be in the good books of their employers.

The Arthashastra acknowledges the strategies provided in the text by Kautilya , thereby comparing the needs of today’s organizational requirements for strategies of keeping the employees motivated. Motivation and commitment among the work force are shaped and injected through the dynamic leadership of managers. The importance of what we know as Emotional Intelligence is highlighted by portraying the difficulty of managers today to perceive and express emotions to motivate and mobilize their subordinates (Mohanty. A, Das. G, 2017).

Sri Krishna: The Motivator - A Character Analysis

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप॥ (2.3)

“Fall not from the virility of the fighter and the hero, O Partha! it is not fitting in thee. Shake off this paltry faintheartedness and arise, O scourge of thine enemy!”

Sri Krishna is popularly known for his mischief, dancing with the Gopikas, stealing butter, and so on. However, the character of Krishna as analyzed from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita portrays him as one of the most memorable and epitome of a motivation

Throughout the Gita, Krishna tries to motivate Arjuna, who has lost all motivation and zeal to fight in the Kurukshetra war, as he sees his close relatives and Guru on the other side of the enemy line. However, being one of the best warriors on the Pandava side, it is essential for him to fight. When Arjuna has lost all hope and strength to even begin the fight, Krishna takes the role of a motivator and enables him once again to get up and fight.

Motivating Traits of Krishna –

- **An Active Listener** - the entire first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is an account of what feelings and wary emotions are going through Arjuna. Krishna lets Arjuna express all that he is feeling, from the core of his heart, without any interruption.

It is essential for an Employer to be an active listener to his employees, as they are the only source where the employees can go and express their dilemmas. An employer must never jump to a conclusion without having heard the other side of the matter and give a chance to the employees to speak for themselves.

This develops a feeling of ‘**belongingness**’ and the employees feel ‘**heard**’ - that their opinions are also taken into consideration no matter what the situation is and are valued.

- **Giving Positive - Firm Affirmations** - the words used by Krishna while reminding Arjuna of his duty are never demeaning or attacking his character. He makes **Arjuna realize his potential by constantly calling him by the names** he has achieved through his greatness as a warrior such as - **Parantapa** (by listening to whose name, enemies shiver), **MahAbAho** (the mighty-armed), **Gudakesha** (one who has overcome sleep) and so on. He also continues reminding Arjuna what he is known for - the way he has always worked with the best of his potential, the way he has always been giving his best, the reason why people call him the greatest archer of his time - what kind of an attitude suits his role as a Warrior (Kshatriya).

Employers should adopt this method of giving **Positive-Stern Affirmations** to their **employees** as it makes the employees feel more empowered and does not

offend them in any sense. Words can be a big source of motivation and the worst of all weapons. Vidura in the *ViduraNiti* advises King Dhritarashtra the following about being careful with the kind of language and words one uses to their PrajA (employees, in this case). The same words can be motivating, and the same words can cause distress -

अभ्यावहति कल्याणं विविधं वाक् सुभाषिता ।

सैव दुर्भाषिता राजन्ननर्थयोपपद्यते ॥ (2.77)

“A well-spoken word can be a source of immense joy and well-being. The same intent if conveyed in bitter words can cause a lot of damage.” (2.77)

वाक्सायका वदनाग्निष्पतन्ति यैराहतः शोचति राज्यहानि ।

परस्य नामर्मसु ते पतन्ति तान् पण्डितो नावसृजेत् परेभ्यः ॥ (2.80)

“Unpleasant words coming out of a mouth like arrows hurt the core of the listener. The aggrieved person suffers day and night. Hence the learned should avoid using any bitter and foul language.” (2.80)

- **Identify what is valuable and use that as a hinge to motivate-** Krishna uses phrases and incidents that matter to Arjuna while motivating him since those things matter to him. Being a warrior and a prince, the value of honour is held in high regard by Arjuna. In verses 2.34 and 2.35, Krishna speaks about those to shake Arjuna off his veil of fear and show him what is the right thing to do-

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ (2.34)

“Besides, men will recount thy perpetual disgrace, and to one in noble station, dishonour is worse than death.” (2.34)

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ (2.35)

“The mighty men will think thee fled from the battle through fear, and thou, that wast highly esteemed by them, wilt allow a smirch to fall on thy honour.” (2.35)

- **Giving direction-** In Chapter 2, when Arjuna asks for the characteristics of a person who is ‘Sthitaprajna’, Krishna provides a set of characteristics and warns him about the adversities of getting swayed away by the senses-

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ (2.63)

“Anger leads to bewilderment, from bewilderment comes loss of memory; and by that the intelligence is destroyed; from destruction of intelligence, he perishes.”

When one’s intelligence – the power of discrimination- is destroyed, the person perishes. Intelligence can only be hampered when one is intoxicated by the sensory pleasures (raaga) or aversions (dvesha). Being so involved in something that is temporary and changing, disrupts the mind and creates havoc, when that object of the senses is not found again. Therefore, Krishna advises to not let the buddhi (discerning faculty) be hampered by any means as that is the faculty which helps in decision making and taking & making the right choices.

*(Translations of the verses from the Bhagavad Gita in this character analysis have been taken from Sri Aurobindo’s interpretation; citation provided in *References*).

Motivation Theory from the *Vidura Niti*

The Vidura Niti is a dialogue between the wise Vidura and the deluded king Dhritarashtra. It constitutes of pieces of advice given by Vidura to soothe the king’s anxious state and to give him

a clear understanding of what has been going on under his watch, with timely mentions of how his actions, blinded by attachment for his sons has made him and his lineage follow the path of adharma.

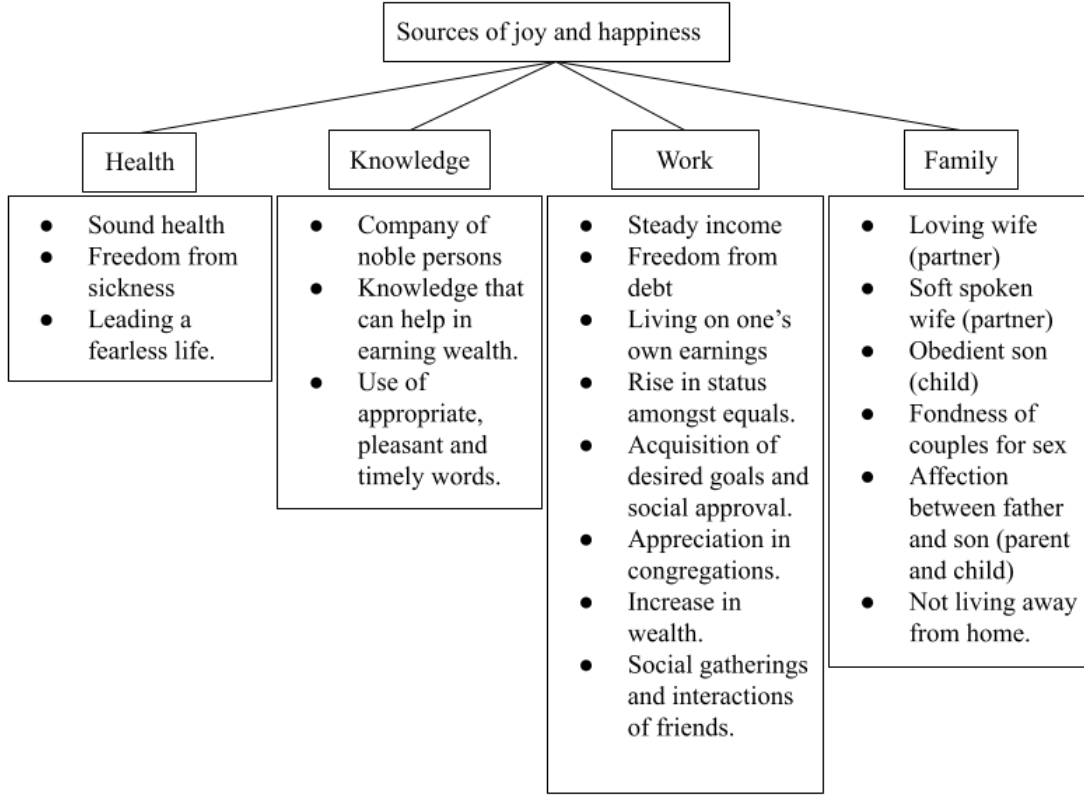


Fig. 2 – the categorization of the sources of joy and happiness from the Vidura Niti

In this, Vidura has spoken about the various qualities of-

- one who is happy
- one who can be happy
- what situations indicate happiness
- who are the ones who always remain unhappy
- the qualities a good king must possess
- what are the sources of joy, and so on.

The following verses from the Vidura Niti provide us a list of sutras for joy and happiness and they have been categorized broadly into four domains, namely – Health, Knowledge, Work and Family -

अर्थागमो नित्यमरोगिता च प्रिया च भार्या प्रियवादिनी च।
 वश्यश्च पुत्रोऽर्थकरी च विद्या षड् जीवलोकस्य सुखानि राजन् ॥ (1.87)

“In this world, the following 6 happenings are a source of joy-

- *Steady income*
- *Sound health*
- *Loving wife*
- *Soft spoken wife*
- *Obedient son*
- *Knowledge that can help in earning wealth”*

(Translation of the Vidura Ntiti, Gita Press Publications)

Keeping aside family dynamics, just by looking into the qualities mentioned in this shloka, what truly makes one joyful, **in terms of an organization** are-

1. Steady income (**salary**)
2. Sound health (**healthy working mindset**)
3. Love, good words, obedience (**inter-personal relationships and the feeling of belongingness**)
4. Knowledge that can help in earning wealth (**skill development**).

आरोग्यमानुष्यमविप्रवासः सद्भिर्मनुष्यैः सह सम्प्रयोगः ।

स्वप्रत्यया वृत्तिरभीतवासः षड् जीवलोकस्य सुखानि राजन् ॥ (1.94)

“Rajan! There are six situations in which one is happy-

- *Freedom from sickness*
- *Freedom from debt*
- *Not living away from home*
- *Company of noble persons*
- *Living on one’s own earnings*
- *Leading a fearless life.”*

(Translation of the Vidura Ntiti, Gita Press Publications)

Vidura again, reiterates by giving more examples of situations in which a person feels happy. Happiness is one of the most basic and most essential motivators. When the state of mind is positive, one tends to take up tasks and challenges with much more zeal and enthusiasm. If a company can tap into these sources and create situations where one can experience happiness, the employees of that company are bound to remain motivated and work their best.

Think about it yourself!

What makes you happy?

Does Motivation follow Happiness?

अष्टाविमानि हर्षस्य नवनीतानि भारत ।

वर्तमानानि दृश्यन्ते तान्येव स्वसुखान्यपि ॥ (1.101)

समागमश्च सखिभिर्महांश्चैव धनागमः ।

पुत्रेण च परिष्वंगः सन्निपातश्च मैथुने ॥ (1.102)

समये च प्रियालापः स्वयूथेषु समुन्नतिः ।

अभिप्रेतस्य लाभश्च पूजा च जनसंसदि ॥ (1.103)

“O Bharata! Look for these eight happenings which indicate that people are happy. The same are in themselves a source of joy in this world-

- *Social gathering and interaction of friends*
- *Increase in wealth*
- *Affection between sons and fathers*
- *Fondness of couples for sex*
- *Use of appropriate, pleasant, and timely words*
- *Rise in status amongst equals*
- *Acquisition of desired goals and social approval*
- *Appreciation in congregations.”*

(Translation of the Vidura Ntiti, Gita Press Publications)

Extracting the qualities and situations given by Vidura, the same can be applied in **workplace settings to keep the employees motivated** –

1. *Social gathering and interaction of friends* – giving enough time and opportunities for interpersonal interactions between fellow workers/employees.
2. *Increase in wealth* – giving bonus and incentives on a work well-done.

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3. *Use of appropriate, pleasant, and timely words and Appreciation in congregations – encouragement through praises and affirmations to the employees; to acknowledge their hard work.*

*samrohathi sarair viddham vanam parasunā hatam |
vācā duruktam bībhatsam na samrohathi vāk kṣatam || 124 ||*

A forest shredded by arrows, or cut down by axes may grow again, but one wounded by harsh words would never forget and recover.

Thiruvalluvar conveys the same in this thirukkural.

**தீயினாற் சுட்டபுண் உள்ளாறும் ஆறாதே
நாவினாற் சுட்ட வடு. Thirukkural 129**

Fire inflamed sore would heal in some time, but the wound created by harsh words would never heal.

4. *Rise in status amongst equals and Acquisition of desired goals and social approval – giving equal opportunity to compete for awards such as ‘the best employee award’, ‘the star employee award’, etc.*

Thus, the ‘need’ and ‘want’ for satisfaction and happiness is one of the core facets that motivates one to perform any action and undertake any task. In case of an organization, the employees work hard in order to achieve what they had in mind, that sense of achievement/ object of achievement brings them happiness, and that motivates them to act.

If an employer can identify what makes their employees happy and use them as incentives/ reinforcements, the employees are bound to be motivated and work harder to achieve what matter to them.

The Vidura Niti is a text that is not much popular in comparison to other ones from the Mahabharata, such as the Bhagavad Gita. However, numerous qualities can be derived from the advice given by Vidura and applied in management settings. ‘Inspiration from work itself is the most powerful form of motivation. He who strive having commenced anything till it is completed, who never waste his time and who his soul under control is regarded wise’ (Udyogaparva, section 33). The best form of motivation being the inspiration taken from the work itself (J S Capital and Recruitment Services (JAYA SRUTHI), 2019).

The next section of the article focuses on the development of intrinsic factors- self motivation, by which employees can remain motivated intrinsically at the workplace, using techniques mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita.

PART 2

HOW TO REMAIN MOTIVATED AT WORK? UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS FOR INTRINSIC MOTIVATION FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra wherein Sri Krishna is advising Arjuna to stand up and fight, when he seems to have lost all enthusiasm, hope and zeal to even pick his weapons and fight the war, as he sees his relatives and Guru standing on the other side of the battlefield.

The Bhagavad Gita is known for its motivating nature, wherein Sri Krishna not only provides solutions to overcome demotivation and fear to Arjuna, but also empowers Arjuna with knowledge to remain motivated on his own by being established in his own Self.

Following are few characteristics that can be adopted by employees at the workplace to stay motivated even amidst calamity and to be empowered enough to support themselves to stay motivated.

Action-oriented workplace motivation techniques from the Bhagavad Gita can be well understood from the following verses-

Act with responsibility –

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ (6.5)

By the self thou shouldst deliver the self, thou shouldst not depress and cast down the self (whether by self-indulgence or suppression); for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the enemy. (Sri Aurobindo's interpretation, n.d.)

In this shloka, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he alone is the key to either deliver himself or stay depressed and not fight. He makes Arjuna understand that he has the autonomy to take decisions and change the course of his actions.

Workplace context -

Similarly, in an organization, if the employees can understand that their actions matter, they would feel the need to work consistently as their work is a contribution and it does have value. One must assume responsibility of their duty and task at hand to stay motivated.

Act with no expectation of the outcome –

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥(2.47)

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty (Prabhupada, 1968).

In this verse from the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna throws light into the aspects of work, desire and expectancy. In later verses of the Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna that because of being in the modes of *Prakriti*, one is bound to work. It is impossible to stay stagnated when the mode of this world is based on *karma*. Therefore, to perform those actions diligently without falling prey to the uncertain results, one must stay committed to the work itself and not cling on to the expected results/outcome of the work.

Workplace context -

In an organization, setting deadlines and goals is bound to take place, however, constantly worrying, and thinking about the outcome hampers the work at hand and makes the quality of the work suffer. Secondly, if the goal seems difficult to achieve, the motivation of employees may decrease over a period if results are not visible. However, one must trust the process and continue working with commitment and motivation.

Act with the Shraddha for work –

*हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् |
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः || (2.37)*

O son of Kunti, either you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up with determination and fight (Prabhupada, 1968).

*सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ |
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि || (2.38)*

Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory, or defeat—and by so doing you shall never incur sin (Prabhupada, 1968).

Acknowledged again in the Bhagavad Gita is the importance of work. Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the futility of being attached to the outcome of the work and spending time thinking about it. Our mind is powerful enough to imagine things that would not even take place in the future, however, due to the nature of the human mind- which is to constantly grab something as an object, it can get distracted from the task to the imagination of a possible outcome. Therefore, Krishna tells Arjuna that it is pointless to think about the nature and quality of the outcome, when an outcome is bound to follow the action, whatsoever. Therefore, staying committed and giving the best in the assigned task, can allow the possibility for a preferable outcome as well.

Workplace context –

Likewise, in an organization, constantly thinking about the outcome/result of the task assigned can prove to be distracting and the quality of the work might get hampered. Such distractions cause the loss of time and effort put into the task since the output would not be up to the mark.

Act for the upliftment of humanity; the Essence of Contribution –

*तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ (3.19)*

Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme (Prabhupada, 1968).

*कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ (3.20)*

Kings such as Janaka attained perfection solely by performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work (Prabhupada, 1968).

*सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथाऽसक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ (3.25)*

As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the peoples. (Sri Aurobindo's interpretation, n.d.)

Sri Krishna gives Arjuna the example of Rajarshi Janaka, the King of Mithila, Father of Sita, popularly known from the Ramayana. Janaka is known as one of the most benevolent kings of all time. Due to his generosity and righteous way of dealing with his kingdom, he was loved by all his *Prajaa*. Sri Krishna cites his example to Arjuna while explaining the importance of *contribution, service, working for the greater good*. Earlier, Sri Krishna established the understanding of autonomy, thereby making it clear that people themselves are responsible for most parts of the outcome, and now He advises setting a greater intention behind the action – that is of ‘contribution’.

Workplace context –

Going beyond selfishness and acting only for oneself, when employees start assuming responsibility and work with a mindset of contribution, the task is bound to have a much enriching experience, keeping alive motivation. This would also determine the detachment from the outcome of the process, as all the energy is focused on the task and not on its outcome. Whenever the thought comes of the outcome, realizing that the action is done with a sense of contribution, the employees can remain motivated and dedicated to their task. One of the core examples of this concept is the functioning of the employees of Non-Government Organizations, Non-Profit Organizations, and volunteer work. Organizations such as ISKCON, The Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris, Isha Foundation, etc. are volunteer driven, however, due to the outlook of the employees aligning with the intention of service and contribution, undying motivation is what keeps them going.

Act with one's own Svadharma –

*श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ (3.35)*

*Better is one's own law of works, svadharma, though in itself faulty, than an alien law well wrought out; death in one's own law of being is better, perilous is it to follow an alien law.
(Sri Aurobindo's interpretation, n.d.)*

Sri Krishna explains Arjuna the value and importance of being in your own nature. When one is acting as per one's own nature, everything comes in a natural flow. There is very less struggle and cope up with (personally), as one feels comfortable within themselves. This is the reason why Sri Krishna emphasizes on the importance of identifying and establishing in one's own nature to be content within oneself.

Workplace context –

In organizations, working for appreciation and fitting into groups is a common feeling that employees go through. In fact, everyone in their own circle goes through the need to belong. However, when a person is not acting as per their own capacity and nature, it can be mentally draining, thereby hampering physical output as well. As an employee, if one has identified their uniqueness and what makes them feel content, stay committed and motivated just follows naturally.

Act by knowing the true nature of things –

*मात्रास्पर्शस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ (2.14)*

O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

*नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ (2.23)*

The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind (Prabhupada, 1968).

The two concepts focused in these verses are directed towards knowing the true nature of things around and things within. In the fourteenth verse of the second chapter, Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the impermanent nature of what is known as the 'world'. The emotions and feelings that beings go through are as impermanent as the advent and passing of seasons throughout the year. Anything that is bound by time is impermanent in nature. So is the workload, the stress, the lack of clarity, the appreciation, the praises, the bonus, the awards. Therefore, Sri Krishna advice not

to become attached to any of these impermanent things and realize one's True Self. The True Self is beyond the hold of temporary activities or situations. It can neither be affected by any of the *Panchamahabhootas* or is affected by any of the *trigunas* or *tridoshas*. Such is the nature of the core of one's being.

Workplace context –

One of the most major concerns of the employees is having to undergo workload and cope with work-life balance. However, by understanding the impenetrable nature of the Self and the temporary nature of everything around, one can remain unaffected by the hardships and have hope that *this too shall pass*.

Act with the understanding of being a Nimitta and Surrender –

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्॥(11.33)

Therefore, get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O Savyasāci, can be but an instrument in the fight.

Nearing the end of the Gita, Sri Krishna makes Arjuna realize his work as an instrument of a Higher Power- the knowledge and bliss of surrender. Sri Krishna, showing his *Vishwaroopam* declares to Arjuna that he is merely an instrument of His actions. This kind of surrender allow one to stay humble and not be worried about the outcome as the feeling of doer ship exits in one's mind.

Workplace context –

Usually, when one is assigned a higher post, is made an in-charge, or is appreciated for their hard work, one takes pride in themselves. In moderation, that can be a source for encouragement, however, if stuck to that can lead to the development of arrogance. Therefore, if an employee or any member of an organization, irrespective of the position understands and acts as an instrument, the expectation of a rigid outcome as well as the arrogance of being supposedly well would be balanced, and the best outcome would be achieved.

The Bhagavad Gita has been commented upon by numerous experts regarding its application and set of core values that -if applied- would motivate the employees as effectively, as Krishna motivated Arjuna to fight.

Weerawardena and others in 2018 emphasize the importance of ‘detached involvement in work’ indicating that it is the key to mental equanimity or the state of 'nirdwanda'. People being more result oriented get lost in work resulting in low motivation and low innovation of the business. They say that the primary focus is on intrinsic motivation and detachment from the result. The focus in the text has been on empowering Arjuna to stand on his own as well as surrender. This makes him get over fear and fight the war. They also explain that this kind of “*‘de-personified intelligence’ is best suited for those who sincerely believe in the supremacy of organizational goals as compared to narrow personal success and achievement*” (Weerawardena, et al., 2018). They also emphasize that the Bhagavad Gita can be considered as a powerful catalyst for transformation.

When looked at from the management perspective, if the organization serves the employees well in material and in immaterial means, it will result in employee motivation. This will enhance the retention of the employees within the organization (Mahadevan 2009). Here the immaterial means may involve psychologically satisfying and appropriate actions, words, maintaining psychological contract and so on, wherein there are no material gains, however, feelings of belongingness, compassion, teamwork, harmony, etc grow stronger.

PART 3

THE TATA GROUP – A CASE STUDY

“We do not claim to be more unselfish, more generous, or more philanthropic than other people. But we think we started on sound and straightforward business principles, considering the interests of the shareholders our own, and the health and welfare of the employees, the sure foundation of our success.”

-Jamsetji Tata Founder of the Tata group Chairman (1868 – 1904), (n.a., TATA Code of Conduct, 2015).

The Tata Group was founded as a private trading firm in 1868 by entrepreneur and philanthropist Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. In 1902 the group incorporated the Indian Hotels Company to commission the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, the first luxury hotel in India, which opened the following year (Nolen, 2010).

The TATA group is known for its dedicated and motivated employees throughout the world. The 26/11 attack on the Taj Hotel in Mumbai showed exemplary feats of dedication, commitment, and sacrifice by the employees of The Taj, who did not hesitate to even give their lives for the protection of their customers. It is essential to take note of the motivating strategies used by the TATA group that has produced and retained such dedicated employees.

An unforgettable feat of commitment was shown by the General Manager of the Taj Hotel - Karambir Singh Kang. He stated that he would be the last man to leave the hotel whatever happened (Deshpande & Raina, 2011), and this did not change even when he got the news that his family was threatened and later confirmed that they were no more. Such exemplary sights of commitment and dedication, where the employees of the Taj Hotel during the 26/11 attack gave live examples of the values of the organization and the specialty of the organization's ways of keeping their employees dedicated to their job, irrespective of the circumstances.

N. Chandrasekharan in 2017 dedicates the stellar reputation and success achieved by TATA as a business entity to the qualities of powerful commitment and adherence to the core values and the principles of the code of conduct.

The five core values in the TATA Code of Conduct –

- Integrity – to be fair, honest, and transparent.
- Responsibility – involves environmental and social responsibility taking and the ideology of ‘what comes from the people, goes back to the people, many times’.
- Unity – investing in people and partners, enable continuous learning, building caring and collaborative relationships based on trust and mutual respect.
- Pioneering – being bold and agile; courageously taking on challenges.
- Excellence – being passionate about achieving the highest standards of quality; pioneering meritocracy.

N Chandrasekharan also emphasizes on the fact that building new standards of ethical conduct will generate deep respect and inspire emulation by others.

The core values of TATA prominently involve building **greater ethical standards** therefore, giving much emphasis on **core human values** in their employees as well as the leaders who would lead them. They also believe in **empowering their employees** and giving them the **freedom to do their job** (*Bhakti, Yukti and Mukti*) and that welcomes new ideas and the **freedom to customize and do the work more efficiently**.

Authors have emphasized on the application of *Bhakti, Yukti* and *Mukti* in organizational settings, through which employees can be motivated. The first step would be that of *Bhakti* – wherein the employers would form unbreakable and strong bonds with their employees and would not give them up at all costs. This would establish trust and faith towards the employer. The second step would be using *Yukti*, i.e., to develop the intellect of the employees to empower them. And finally giving them *Mukti* wherein the employers would not put too many constraints over the employees and give them freedom in work. This would give them space to breathe and welcome new ideas and accomplish their tasks better (Swami, 2008).

Assuming responsibility (as mention in Part 2 of this article), is also one of the core values of the group that has led them to success. Trust and Mutual respect have been given much emphasis in the Code of Conduct and it is assured to be instilled in the employees and practiced by the employers as well (*Bhakti*). The values of pioneering and excellence come very close to the qualities identified in Part 2 of this article suggesting *Shrddha for work*, i.e., dedication and commitment to the assigned task and to give the best.

The TATA group is also well known for providing incentives and healthy working conditions to their employees that make a good environment for the employees to work in and grow personally as well. The Code of Conduct also mentions the following, that give insight into the provisions given to the employees –

- Not to compromise on safety of the employees in pursuit of commercial advantages.
- Provide safe, healthy, and clean working conditions.
- Respect human rights and dignity of all stakeholders.
- Promote good corporate citizenship.
- Providing an environment that is free from the fear of retribution.
- Ensuring that the leaders also perform and practice what is preached by them about being truthful, honest, etc.
- The representation of the company must be done with –
 - (1) Honesty
 - (2) Professionalism
 - (3) Integrity
 - (4) Conformity to the highest morals and ethical standards
 - (5) Exhibition of culturally appropriate behaviour
 - (6) Fair and transparent conduct.

Much like extracted from the Bhagavad Gita, the importance of inner core values is adhered to in the TATA group, thereby churning out dedicated and motivated employees. Like Sri Krishna empowers Arjuna, to stand up again and fight with his own might, the company leaders also schedule training programmes that ensure empowering the employees for giving their best and working under pressure as well.

There is a separate section dedicated to the employees of the company in the Code of Conduct that emphasize on the value of their employees and the respect they deserve and will be given in the company.

*“Once you got the best people, the people who shared our values and ideals, we left them free to act on their own. We do not fetter them. We **encourage** them and **give them opportunities for leadership**”.*

-Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (1868 – 1904), (n.a., TATA Code of Conduct, 2015).

- Equal opportunities to employees.
- Dignity and respect.
- Respect for individual privacy.
- Zero tolerance for any kind of harassment, including psychological harassment.
- Freedom to form associations and more.

The employees in the TATA group are encouraged to freely work and not to fear retribution of any kind. Similar qualities have been seen in the management of employees in the Taj hotels, where the employees give their best as they are assured of having the support of their company when it comes to doing anything to ensure the comfort and retention of their customers with honesty and integrity (Kechagias, 2013). Ensuring that the employees know and understand the significance of the given task is another factor that keeps them motivated. It is essential for employees to understand why and for what reason are they putting in their efforts; whether their job has an impact on other people’s lives (Steers & Porter, 1983). The concept of *contribution* outlined in Part 2 of this article, where it describes of the learnings from the Gita that would help in Self- Motivation is also put into practice at the Taj Hotels, where the employees are made to understand the worth of their work and how their actions are contributing to other lives.

Another interesting finding from the Taj management is the concept of leading by example. It is found that the managers stand with their employees who are allotted the task of welcoming guests at the entrance. This gives a sense of worth to the job of the employees and allows them to feel that their work is of equal value.

Similarly, when the employees are given freedom to work on their own, it enhances creativity and promotes teamwork, where there is no pressure of a fixed structure and employees are allowed to follow their *Svadharna* and tap into their own unique capabilities to come up with the best results.

Adding to that, numerous incentives are given to the employees which are in lines with the concept of *Daana* from the Arthashastra as mentioned in Part 1 of this article. Tata Steel pioneered several labour-welfare benefits. These include an eight-hour working day, free medical aid, establishment of a welfare department, leave with pay, workers' provident fund scheme, workmen's accident compensation scheme, maternity benefits, profit sharing bonus and retiring gratuity (People First | Tata Group, n.d.) . Employees are also provided with Tata Employee discount and more.

Conclusion

Motivation is one of the core aspects that is involved in the completion of any task, irrespective of the field of work. In an organization, it is found that employees are prone to feel demotivated and feel that their work is monotonous and does not have enough value. However, taking concepts and strategies provided in the ancient Indian texts have given insight into the reasons why one feels demotivated, what to do as a motivator and how to remain motivated even without the presence of extrinsic factors. The Bhagavad Gita, Arthashastra and the Vidura Niti throw light on the importance of motivation, with underlying depth of finding one's True Self and thereby maintaining poise and equanimity even in times of hardship.

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Comprehensive overview of the literature that is referred and cited in the study

Article 1: Preranashakti: Motivation from Ancient Management Thought

- J S Capital and Recruitment Services (JAYA SRUTHI). (2019, November 21). *vidur niti and management*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/vidur-niti-management-jaya-sruthi>
About: this site cites the vidura niti and its shlokas to explain how different aspects of management can be learnt through this text – one of the core aspects being motivation as the whole of vidura niti begins with the demotivated and disturbed Dhritarashtra wanting advice from his younger and wiser brother Vidura.
- Kechagias, D. (2013). *Motivating Employees in Times of Recession: Recommendations for the Hellenic Navy. Thesis.*
About: This study attempts to identify effective ways to motivate employees specifically under the current economic crisis. In so doing, the effects of economic decline on employees and organizations are examined, and prominent motivation theories and applications are referenced. Furthermore, analysis of four specific case studies illuminates issues related to motivation in crisis situations. The thesis concludes with a set of motivational techniques that may minimize the effects of the recession and its consequences on employees and organizations. Finally, specific recommendations that the Hellenic Navy might consider are proposed.
- Lulla. (n.d.). *Essence of Bhagavad Gita in Management Studies*. ISME. <https://www.isme.in/essence-of-bhagavad-gita-in-management-studies/>
About: [this site talks about the essence of the Bhagavad Gita and how the extraction of various methods and ways from the text can be applied into core aspects of management such as motivation, decision-making, and leadership.](https://www.isme.in/essence-of-bhagavad-gita-in-management-studies/)
- Mahadevan, B 2009, *Bhagwat Gita: Ideas for Modern Management, Towards a New Paradigm of Business management – Alternative Perspectives from Ancient Indian Wisdom*, Bangalore, IIM.
About: this paper talks about the Gita being one of the most prominent ancient Indian texts that is essential in the field of motivation and also allows the reader to have multi-perspective taking qualities. In the authors words, it is important to illuminate to the audience the multi-faceted nature of the ancient Indian texts. We need to get this aspect abundantly clear so that the real value of the ancient Indian texts is fully understood. Further it also informs us that only if we approach the ancient Indian texts with such a perspective, we will be able to gainfully understand its usefulness to solve today's problems.

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About: The paper explored the lessons in emotional intelligence from *Arthashastra* and interpreted its relevance in the present-day business context. The relevance of *Arthashastra* in the perspective of emotional intelligence was analysed in this paper.
 - Motivation: How to get started and staying motivated. (n.d.). *Healthdirect*. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/motivation-how-to-get-started-and-staying-motivated#:~:text=Motivation%20is%20important%20because%20it,helps%20you%20chan ge%20old%20habits>
About: this site provides an in-depth understanding of what the term motivation means, its factors and methods to remain motivated. It gives answers to questions posed on motivation and the need for self-motivation by giving examples and strategies by which one can be motivated when feeling the lack of motivation, the reasons why one might be feeling the lack of motivation and so on. It also provides details as to when and how someone should/can seek professional help.
 - Nolen, J. L. (2010, January 7). *Tata Group | History, Companies, Subsidiaries, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tata-Group>
About: Britannica's page on the TATA group gives a brief idea about the origin, history, companies owned, subsidiaries, etc of the group with other additional details.
 - *People First | Tata group*. (n.d.). <https://www.tata.com/newsroom/people-first-labour-welfare>
About: this site of the TATA group contains information regarding the welfare work done by the Tata group for their employees and the kinds of provisions and safety measures provided and used by the group to their employees to promote healthy conditions under which the employees work.
 - Prabhupada, S. B. A. C. (1968). *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* (Complete Edition: with original Sanskrit text, Roman transliteration, English equivalents, translation and elaborate purports). Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.
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- *Vidura Niti (Mahabharata Udyogaparva)* (2nd ed.). (2017). [English]. Gita Press, Gorakhpur
About: A conversation between Dhritarashtra and Vidura, where Vidura is summoned by Dhritarashtra to speak to him and advise him regarding the actions that he is performing, as he is unable to get sleep because of the disturbances taking place.
 - Weerawardena, S. D., Priyasad, K. P. M., & Weerasinghe, T. D. (2018). *Managing lives at work: Lessons from Bhagavad Gita*. *N.a.*
About: This review of literature critiques the insights manifested in Bhagavad Gita to be applied in modern organizations to effectively manage people at work. A narrative review of relevant articles known to the authors on Bhagavad Gita was conducted. Among the lessons of the Bhagavad Gita, it is found that empowering employees through 'Bakthi', 'Yukthi' and 'Mukthi' lays the foundation stone of effective Human Resource Management (HRM).