Spiritually Oriented Education:
A Foundation for Sustainable Development

Kalpana Sahoo

AssociateProfessor, XIM University, Bhubaneswar,Odisha,India

Email : kalapana@xim.edu.in

Abstract

The trademark of sustainability is that it results in enduring rational capability. The key doctrine of sustainability is maximization of optimistic benefits of an organization for all shareholders and specifically it must commence by means of usage of domestic humanassets.Theaccomplishmentofaninstituteismainlydependentonitseffective human capital and in execution of strategic sustainable HR functions. Currently, employeesareundermassive stresstoestablish its worth,confronting hurdlestogenerate an innovative, result-oriented workforce. Sustainability practices reduce costs through responsiveness and communication while dipping environmental dilemmas. Personal orprofessionalcommitmentoffolkswillhavealong-lastingeffectontheenvironment. Innovation coupled with commercial practices can alter the mindsets of people leading to cost-reduction. Instruction depictsacrucialpart asitaltorstheworkingclassmindset and their angle of thinking. Spirituality can be thought as an effective tool in molding the human resources as it creates a deep sense of interconnectedness, collectivism, which may be either physical in nature or not physical. Modern establishments are in quest of loyal work for cease motional inclination to one's work profile is a vital business concern. This current study has attempted to point out the prospective benefits of inculcating workplace spirituality and giving recommendations to HR practitioners to implement the same in their organizations.

Keywords- Sustainability, Education, Workplace spirituality, Human resource practitioner

Introduction

The trademark of sustainability is that it brings about enduring rational capability. The key doctrine of sustainability is maximization of optimistic benefits of an organization for all shareholders and specifically it must commence by means of usage of domestic human assets.Human resources occupy the pivotal position in an organization for effectively coordinating with other factors of production. The accomplishment of an institute is mainly dependent on its effective human capital and in execution of strategic sustainable HR functions. In this era of globalization and fierce competition, human beings and their performances at workplaces can assist in augmenting organizational effectiveness that will help them to sustain in this ambiguous and uncertain work environment. At present, the prime concern of any organization is empowering this resource to reap the benefits in the long-run. The urge for trustworthy employees for realizing the organizational goals is found as a major researchable domain in the field of management education and behavioral science. Education is the most dynamic tool that can be used to ensure sustainability in organizations. Innovation coupled with corporate developments can transform the mindsets of individuals thereby helping in cutting the expenses. Instruction depicts a crucial part as it alters the working class mindset and their angle of thinking. Modern establishments encouraging workplace spirituality such as clubbing together employees' emotional want, impetus to work and inspiring them to find meaning in work, often boosts organizational commitment (Jena &Pradhan, 2014). Modern establishments are in quest of loyal workforce as emotional inclination to one's work profile is a vital business concern. Thus, workplace spirituality (WS) can be considered a major construct in creating sustainable business organizations. Spirituality might be considered as a potential pathway to realize a sustainable HR practice through the creation of a positive psychological contract between the worker and the supervisor resulting in improved conviction, assurance, organizational citizenship, engagement and a sense of equality (Guest & Conway 1997; Stajkovic&Luthans, 1998). HR effectiveness can be best seen as a dependent variable linked to sustainable practice as previous models on sustainability literature focusing on development of sound strategies. In regard to this, the current paper has made an attempt to concentrate on the literature by probing the theoretical and practical functionality of WS and explicitly defining the relationships between spirituality and sustainability leading to "HR effectiveness".

Role of spiritual education in endorsing sustainability

"*Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know.*"- Daniel J. Boorstin

Teaching is an indispensable instrument for creating sustainability in organizations. One who has a firm hold over knowledge reins the power. Thus, it becomes a necessity to consider education as top priority while implementing sustainability programs in organizations. In this era of globalization, learning is the sole means to succeed at any workplace be it a corporate organization or an academic institution. In spite of this a major section adult learners in the emerging economies are uneducated and meagre chance of endorsing sustainability. Currently, employees are under colossal pressure to determine its worth, facing hurdles to create an innovative, result-oriented workforce. Sustainability methods protect cash through consciousness and communication while decreasing environmental dilemmas. Personal or professional engagement of individuals will have a long-lasting effect on the environment. In order to face these daunting challenges quite easily, it is crucial for students of higher learning to be alert of our ecological and communal sustainability challenges and be equipped with learning prospects that involve them in finding solutions to such challenges. Globally, the quality of our life is greatly affected by our power of logical decision making capability. Spirituality is thus perceived as an approach of individual transformation that includes a wide assortment of faith-related traditions, rituals, beliefs, and various forms of worship. Spirituality has been studied from materialistic perspective for sharing economic growth.

Zajonc (2000) suggests a constructivist opinion of authenticity where knowledge is regarded as an occurrence, not an entity. According to him, education is the only means for personal makeover. Sustainable relationships are initiated by flirting, gradually proceeding towards drawing one's attention towards oneself. Once they have achieved it, they can concentrate on things that brings happiness in people's life. When one has attained the impetus for meeting each other's needs, the bonding becomes more secure. But sometimes things may not work out as planned. These relationships at times may be superficial. But such relationships are destined to fall apart sooner or later. Attraction is imperative, but it must be supported by one's capacity to unswervingly keep another individual person's best curiosity in their soul.

Therefore many questions remain unanswered to building a strong rapport within a relationship. The 3R are the pillars of spiritualism that is REFLECTION->REALIZATION->RECOGNITION

Human Resources as a discipline towards Sustainability

The pertinent question that comes to our mind these days as to why organizations are opting for sustainability programs and what kind of job description is expected out of HR

professionals to be a part of this sustainability journey? The primary cause of growth of a formal organization is due to market imperfectness and won't occupy a place if they functioned properly. The perfection is in terms of '*internalizing*' frequent monetary interactions, enhancing the effectiveness for resource sharing and decreasing the cost of discrete business dealings through standardized rules and regulations (Coarse, 1937). Therefore, the strategic intent of organizations' is '*to harness private interests for serving the public interests*' and to involve a variety of shareholders in judgment making and recognition (Zappala, 2010). Adding with the term "sustainability" in this context is to keep a composed view recognizing that organizational values are incorporated in its conceptualization through balancing the competing interests, values and priorities of stake holders (Robbin and Hariadi, 2010). This is through realizing effective internal and external stakeholder management which entails specific competences, such as discourse, deep thinking, crucial consideration, conflict management and cooperative abilities (Gao& Zhang, 2006). The incessant requirements for collaborative skills and systemic management amongst its stakeholders induce organization to have the discipline of human resource as its biological off spring.

Earlier scholars have elucidated about a paradigm shift in managerial sciences, administration theory and practice. It is given in a diagram the evolution of spiritualism in management science. It seems the paradigm shift is multifarious and comprises of manifold proportions such as moving from a foreseeable viewpoint to confusion (Gleick, 1987), from grasp over fear-based methods to conviction and liberation (Conger and Kanungo, 1988), from easiness to difficulty (Lewin, 1992), from transactional leadership to transformational leadership (House and Shamir, 1993), and from sealed systems to multifaceted adaptive systems (Dooley, 1997). These variations in management contain a transferal from an financial focus to a balance of profits, quality of life, spirituality, and social responsibility concerns (Walsh, Weber, and Margolis, 2003; DeFoore and Renesch, 1995), a move from selfishness to interconnectedness (Capra, 1993), a change from egotism to stewardship (Block, 1993; Neck and Milliman, 1994), and a conversion from worldly gains to a spiritual orientation.

This emerging paradigm shift has been termed as "the spirituality movement". Ashmos and Duchon (2000) have laid emphasis on this spirituality movement by giving importance to the spiritual dimension in organizations. It symbolizes employees' search for meaning and purpose in work, an inner self and also arousing the sense of community which has been illustrated in **Fig.1** below:
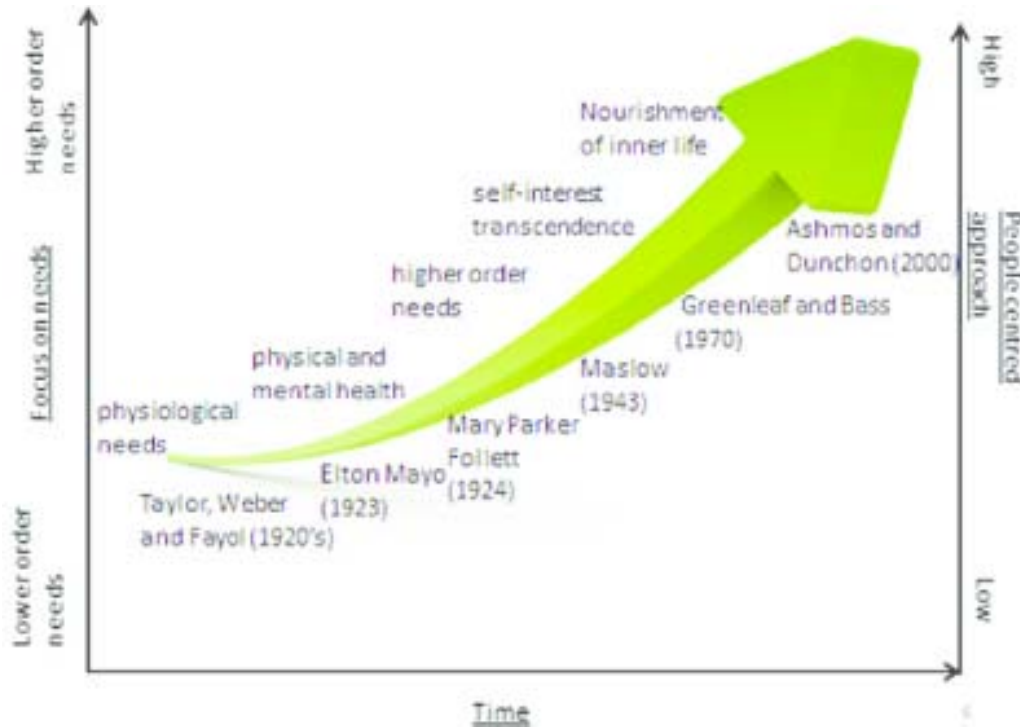
From a macro-perspective, HR practices such as a person's expertise, thrill-seeking capabilities, results in sustainable development and acts as a key intermediary between sustainability purposes and business performance. These norms contribute to business success through employee retention, employee commitment, refining employee perception of the organization leading to self-esteem and job satisfaction (Brammer et al 2007; Kuvaas&Dysvik, 2009).In this connection, though many scholars and practitioners have hypothesized that there is a relationship between organizational sustainability and HR effectiveness, only a few studies have been conducted to simultaneously investigate the factors of HR outcome and sustainability initiatives for bringing out a single entity. Thus, human capital is a crucial factor in sustainable development. Companies are inspiring spirituality in the workplace to boost employee self-esteem, commitment and productivity. Previous studies have shown that inculcating spirituality at work empowers workers to experience inner self, feel complete and authentic at work (Burack, 1999); which results in individual satisfaction and uplifts the morale.
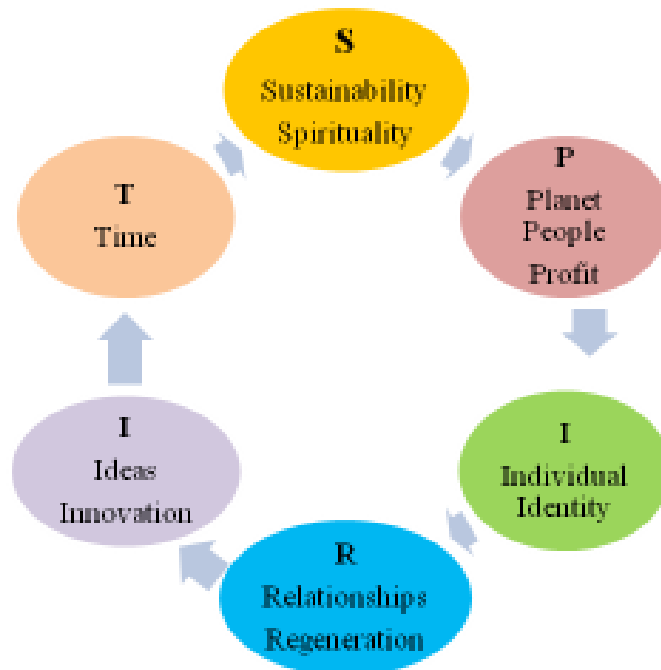
Spirituality–at the heart of Sustainability

Spirituality plays a vital role in transforming our lives and helping us to succeed in every sphere of our lives. Our lives have been fragmented in pieces due to the challenges we face in

our everyday life. Spirituality helps us to integrate life as a whole and the resolution to face every hurdle with ease. Modern organizations are facing troubles like stress, absenteeism and workplace bullying due to lack of spirituality at workplace. According to Ashmos&Duchon (2000) spirituality is basically comprised of: inner Life, meaningful work, sense of community, and orientation with organizational values. In the context of modern development, the term 'development' implies an action undertaken by a group of influential human beings to develop powerless others. If they are not spiritually matured, the question most likely to arise in their self-centered mind are: What are the strategies that need to be developed so that others can equally benefitted from them? It promotes exploitation and accrual of wealth that leads to in equality. It gives preference to worldly possessions than relationships whereas spirituality promotes sharing of wisdom, knowledge and inner spirit much greater than material wealth, which ultimately results in equality. In this manner it craves the way for sustainable development.

Sustainability is the capability to withstand obstacles and keep moving on. In ecology, 'sustainability' designates how biological systems remain diverse and fertile over time. For mankind, sustainability is the ability to maintain long term acquaintance with one another that ultimately contribute to their psychological and spiritual well-being of individuals. This has been elucidated in the SPIRIT Cycle mentioned below as shown in **Fig.2**

Fig.2 SPIRIT Cycle

Source: Spirituality: At the heart of Sustainability, Julian Crawford, Director ECO STEPS, ISSP Conference, Chicago, 10 May, 2013

Technology dominates modern workplaces to upsurge the incomes of the investors without any chief control disturbing the incomes, generating a loss of spirituality at many workplaces (Khan, Khan, &Chaudhry, 2015).

Spirituality can help in sustainable development. Spirituality is that mental condition of mind that realizes the fact that truth is beyond the boundaries of materialistic world, status, doctrine, race or geographical margins. It is widespread globally and having positive spiritual thoughts in mind is a matter of celebration for our humanity. It links us to collective mindfulness and gives a certain outlook in life. Spirituality keeps our lust for material things in life on hold and sustainable progress is bound to happen only when we can control our greed for such materialistic things. Spirituality is realizing that all meaningful people begin with one own self and facilitating the growth, learning and well-being of others. Mahatma Gandhi has rightly said in this context, "*Be the change you want to see in the world*". Spirituality inculcates within us a sense of compassion which changes our mindset to view nature and prevent us from exploiting it. Spirituality transforms our mind and soul, we become accustomed to the Mother Nature, we start relishing and appreciating the splendor of nature that facilitates us in protecting our natural surroundings. Thus, we take the first step towards sustainable living. All religions worldwide preach the respect for our natural environment and in the process the age old adage of simple living and high thinking is ingrained. As one individual strides on the trail of spirituality, he/she shuns all worldly things and their priorities change. The focus of life deviates from materialistic needs and desires and shift towards inner peace and happiness. Practicing meditation and other spiritual practices help us to achieve that tranquility of mind. This marks the beginning of our journey towards sustainability. There are numerous instances of such great saints like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Einstein who believed in the doctrine of '*simple living and high thinking*'. With the gradual technological advancement, we make the optimal use of resources and do things more efficiently and effectively. This assists in conservation of our natural and technical resources which ultimately lead to sustainable development. Therefore, fewer resources help us to maintain the equilibrium for a longer period of time. Sustainability is thus defined as the process by which resources can be utilized and recycled in an effective manner that is eco-friendly and helps us to preserve nature. This entire process is supported by advanced technology and active participation of mankind is necessary to conquer sustainability. Spirituality assists us to gain tranquility of mind and develop interconnectedness with one another

that enable us to achieve our purpose. By creating some magic we can foresee the future of a rural based sustainable society driven forward by technological innovation and instilling the benefits of education among mankind. People will be at ease to lead a carefree, pleasant, divine and content life. With the advancement of technologies that day won't be far away when the world will have the capability to produce manifold goods and that vision and dream of a better place can be realized.

More than any other human institution or activity, education serves as a key social organization connecting individual and collective actions and their impact on the environment. The learning of Spirituality must be imparted to children during school life by introducing spiritual books in their school curriculum and also by reading out ancient scriptures havingspiritual relevance. Then only the seeds of this wonder ideas can blossom in their lives in the near future. Although, people have altered the drapery of natural environment through our spiritual mediation but still it all depends upon us how we utilize our innate ability to take logical decisions when the data becomes available to us. The rise of movements globally in the domain of renewable energy and eco-friendly fields along with the formation of world forum on sustainability attest to this fact. Hence it is our sole responsibility especially the mass media to educate the masses about the noble cause and take these issues on a serious note. There is a tendency to equate education with the formal curriculum, but even more significant is its hidden curriculum in which patterns of thought, knowledge, action and association are propagated, normalized, and made uniform across a large population. This hidden curriculum may or may not be intentionally impacted by a society, policy makers, or curriculum specialists depending on their meta-awareness or commitment to social engineering or design. At the same time, there are rich human educational activities that transpire in the margins or beyond state-structures sanctioning "formal" schooling, and these educational alternatives are critical to consider in deciphering the enigma of education and   sustainability. Whether we believe it or not, education is the key institution of evolution, where we form clusters to decide upon our future directions. That we differ on what the future direction should be is what makes education diverse and produces the tapestry of visions that constitute the collective vision of humanity.

Recommendations

Spiritually oriented education, which integrates spiritual values and principles into the learning process, can significantly contribute to sustainable development. The following are some key policy outcomes:

Increased Environmental Awareness and Stewardship **:** Intrinsic Value of Nature: Spiritual perspectives often emphasize the inherent worth and sacredness of nature, fostering a deep connection and respect for the environment. This leads individuals to become active stewards and protectors of natural resources.

Compassion and Empathy **:** Spiritual teachings often emphasize compassion, empathy, and service to others. These values cultivate a sense of social responsibility and inspire a commitment to promoting justice and equity.

Community Building **:** Spiritually oriented education fosters a sense of community and belonging, encouraging individuals to work together to address social and environmental challenges.

Conclusion

Spirituality plays a vital role in molding people's personal'ity and devising strategies to overcome stress of everyday life. Spirituality can be thought as an effective tool in molding the human resources as it creates a deep sense of interconnectedness, to collectivism, which may be either physical in nature (e.g. group of people) or not physical (e.g. belief). Modern corporate organizations are embracing spirituality as they have a vision to work for the betterment of society. They display their corporate social responsibility through their establishment of many foundation that assist people in need. Nowadays organizations are pursuing a dedicated workforce that draws significant meaning from their job profile to perform well at workplace. Ethical and spiritual practices at workplace lead to increased productivity and profitability thereby strengthening the emotional bonding among employees.

References

Ashmos, D. P., &Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 9*, 134–145.

Block, P.: 1993, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Brammer, S., Millington, A., &Rayton, B.(2007). The contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility to Organizational Commitment.*International Journal of Human Resource Management, 18(10):1701-1719.*

Burack, E.: 1999, Spirituality in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* 12(4), 280–291.

Capra, F: 1993, A systems approach to the emerging paradigm. In M. Ray and A. Rinzler (Eds.), *The new paradigm in business* (pp. 230-237). New York: Tarcher Books.

Coarse, R. (1937). The nature of the firm.*Economica, new series, 386-405.*

Conger, J and Kanungo, R. (1988). The empowerment process: integrating theory and practice. *The Academy of Management Review,* 13 (3), 471-482.

Coyle-Shapiro, J. A-M., (2002).A psychological contract perspective on organizational citizenship behavior.*Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23,927-946.*

DeFoore, B., and Renesch, I.,(1995).*Rediscovering the soul of business*. San Francisco:New Leaders Press.

Dooley, K. (1997). A complex adaptive systems model of organization change.*Nonlinear*

Dynamics, Psychology and the Life Sciences, Vol. 3, 230-249.

Gao, S. & Zhang, J. (2006). Stakeholder Engagement, Social Auditing and Corporate Sustainability.*Business Process Management Journal, 12(6), 722-740.*

Gleick, J.(1987). *Chaos: Making a new science*. New York: Viking.

Guest, D. and Conway, N. (1997).Employee motivation and the psychological contract.Issues in People Management, *21, Institute of Personnel and Development, London.*

House, R. J., and B. Shamir.,(1993). Toward the Integration of Transformational, Charismatic, and Visionary Theories. In Leadership Theory and Research: Perspectives and Directions, M. Chemers& R. Ayman,(Eds)(pp. 81-107). New York: Academic Press.

Jena, L.K and Pradhan, R.K. (2014).Deliverables towards HR Sustainability: a conceptual review. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(23),95-102.

Khan, K. E., Khan, S. E., &Chaudhry, A. G. (2015). Impact of servant leadership on workplace spirituality: Moderating role of involvement culture. *Pakistan Journal of Science, 67*, 109–113.

Kuvaas, B. &Dysvik, A. (2009).Perceived investment in employee development, intrinsic motivation and work performance.*Human Resource Management Journal, 19(3),217 -236.*

Lewin, R.(1992). *Complexity: Life at the edge of chaos*. Macmillan Pub. Co. ; Maxwell

Macmillan Canada: Maxwell Macmillan International, (x, 208), New York Toronto, New York.

Neck, C.P. &Milliman, J.F., (1994).Thought self-leadership: finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 9(6), 9-16.

Robbin&Hariadi, M.(2010), Human Resource Management, Performance and Organisational Sustainability: A new paradigm, Social Responsibility, *Professional Ethics, and Management Proceedings of the 11th International Conference, Ankara, Turkey, 24–27 November 2010*

Stajkovic, A. D., &Luthans, F. (1998). Self-efficacy and work-related performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 124 (2), 240-261.*

Walsh, J. P. Weber, K. & Margolis, J. D.,(2003). *Social Issues and Management: Our Lost*

Cause Found. University of Michigan Business School.

Zappala, G (2010). Beyond Corporate Responsibility: The Spiritual 'Turn' and the rise of conscious business. *CSI Background Paper, no. 6, February. Centre for Social Impact.*

Zajonc, Arthur G. (2000). Molding the self and the common cognitive sources of science and religion. In V. Kazanjian and P. Laurence (Eds.), *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality, and a New Vision for Higher Education in Americ*a. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 58-68.

❖