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EXPLORING THE CONNECT BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

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Abstract

Latest studies are showing that Spirituality furthers excellence in business output. Objective is to understand if Spirituality can be methodically used for advancing excellence in the business world. This paper is a product of basic research. Spirituality, being the 4th dimension of health as per WHO definition, is proving itself to be beneficial for growing business results through self-development in individuals. Hence, we find that a momentum is gathering in the scientific communities for researching on Spirituality. The focus is to serve the best interests of business in - health, education, entrepreneurship and UN's vision of sustainable development. India too is reflecting this global trend. Yet, the challenge remains to unify definitions on Spirituality; distinguish it as a separate construct and integrate it scientifically for deployment as a universally acceptable training tool.

Keywords: *Spirituality, training, results, health, education, entrepreneurship, WHO, UNO, self development, business excellence, sustainable development.*

Introduction

In ancient times, spirituality knew no difference from religion since one led to the other. Only when religion started persecuting scientific temperament did science start alienating religion and its counterpart – Spirituality. Yet, effects of Spirituality could not stay ignored for long. In 1984, Spirituality was redefined officially by the health committee in California State with the objective of facilitating scientific investigations into Spirituality (Shafranske and Gorsuch, 1984). It held: "It has been said that spirituality is the 'courage to look within and to trust'. What is seen and what is trusted appears to be a deep sense of belonging, of wholeness, of connectedness, and of openness to the infinite."

Later, an analytical research to understand the impact of studies on Spirituality revealed that Spirituality was separated, identified or harmonised with construct of religion (Hill and Pargament, 2003). This hiatus in the identity of Spirituality continues even today. However, no matter how this conceptualization is moving, business interests in health, education and entrepreneurial sectors are zeroing in on Spirituality as a 'go-getter' for the world of results. This article is an attempt to explore this angle

of perception taking shape on Earth that - Spirituality is a driving force for holistic sustainable development.

Purpose and Methodology

Objective of this paper is to understand if Spirituality can be used methodically for advancing excellence in the business world. UN's declaration on "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" of 25th September, 2015 has gotten the highest majority ever in its history with 193 member states adopting it and was blessed by the Pope as the harbinger of hope for Earth (Khan, Oct 2015). It is not only an instrument of a global vision but an action plan replete with a goal system and targets set at national levels "for enabling human beings to overcome their confrontations with States and Conditions of inadequacy, competition, violence and strife" (Manohar DM and Shivani, 2016). Also, since Spirituality has been made a quintessential measure of Health as per WHO (Dhar, 2012), it is essential to take stock of how these 2 global events have shifted trends in the perception of Spirituality in the annals of scientific studies.

This paper is a product of basic research on studies conducted. It is based on secondary data captured in

published or unpublished, authenticated and original works of research investigators. The works of these researchers have been derived from a wide spectrum of methodologies including fundamental, empirical, descriptive, exploratory, longitudinal, scientific, phenomenological, quantitative or qualitative research methods. Hence, the findings on Spirituality are based on conclusions derived by experts from various fields.

Sample Studies: on Effect of Spirituality

In Self-development

In a reported qualitative study of "devout" individuals from various backgrounds (Kiesling and Sorell, 2009), findings revealed how the development of a Spiritual identity took shape within these individuals and developed their personality type to "Achieved" status. It revealed that these individuals were shaped by some extraordinary "Divine encounters" which, were not all reported. These encounters could happen at any stage of development and once referenced thus, they grew into self-willed personalities who were shaped by experiential learning and self-conviction. In becoming thus, rather than being egoistic or fragmented, they lived in surrender to a higher power that seemed to act as an integrating force on their personalities. They usually behaved as "path-finders" with a guidance system within. They pursued goals of internal sacred meanings by exercising a freedom of choice.

In Israel, the land of Judaism, another investigation was conducted through in-depth qualitative phenomenological research (Russo-Netzer and Mayseless, 2014). Objective was to know why some Israelis were deviating from Judaism and adopting Spirituality through alternatives like Buddhism, Channelling, Healing, Kabbalah, Shamanism, Tantra, Transcendental meditation or Vipassana. Findings were that these individuals were developing a personality that stood somewhat distant in communities. They demonstrated independent yet peaceful resourcefulness. They were defined by an ability of "knowing" from within; usually in charge of themselves by exercising free will

and directed their lives by Self-referenced life meanings and actions (although these abilities varied in each).

In another remarkable study (Juby and Rycraft, 2004), it has been clearly established that Spirituality is one of the most effective strategies to be employed for families in poverty since Spirituality nurtures resilience and hope for family preservation.

In Health Industry

"Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy" by Froma Walsh is a ground breaking book in the health industry. Its a breakthrough in the world of Allopathy medicine, instructing on how to deploy - available spiritual resources for best results. It compiles perceptions from various religions and practices on treatment methodology (Holleman, 2000). Additionally, with recognition of Ayurveda and Acupuncture, its foundational philosophies of 5 elements theory and concept of subtle bodies have become integrated through complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Since 1978, "health" has been viewed through the lens that it is "expanding consciousness" (Smith, 2011). In nurse trainings (Cumbie, 2001), "body-mind-spirit integration" has been introduced. Collaborations with Spiritual specialists are openly being encouraged in end-care palliative treatment facilities (Daaleman and VandeCreek, 2000). A latest report (Cornah, 2006) has reconfirmed that – worldwide, Spirituality is proving to be a nurturer of health and wellbeing in studies. But religion as such has been found to be counter-productive due to factors it instils such as fear, shame, guilt etcetera.

In Educational Institutions

Health industry has incorporated "Study of Spirituality" in its curricula and yet, is far from its ideal at compliance in both learning and practice (Vogel, 2013). Thus Spiritual sensitization is although marginalised at college and professional levels, there is a new trend of incorporating it in schools. It has been recognized that "Soul" must be fed in youngsters to fully develop their potential (Van Bockern, 2006). Building spiritual-quotient is gaining ground. A cross country longitudinal study on

13-15 year olds has revealed that Spirituality brought overall wellbeing and better performance in youngsters (Pandya, Mar 2017). Likewise, there is an impetus for training on work-place spirituality in business and management institutions (Vinithi, 2016). In latest trends, Spirituality is urged to become foundational in all management and leadership courses for producing business excellence (Nanduri, 2016).

In Business and Entrepreneurial Development

It has been aptly captured that "Spirituality is central to many of the daily decisions" in people's lives. It majorly influences choices made for self or community development. It is especially so where risks are involved even in the context of beneficial social action. Yet, Spirituality is avoided in development literature and practices (Ver Beek, 2000). This results in "inferior research and ineffective developmental programmes". Hence, it is of supreme importance to study influence of Spirituality in developmental matters to enable effective participation in designing future on personal and community levels.

In Nigeria, a research was conducted to find a "fast-track route" for entrepreneurship development in youth to redress national level problems of socioeconomic breakdown, rampant poverty and unemployment. Finding was that Spirituality contained all the resources to develop character, initiative and capacities through inspiration for effective entrepreneurship (Agbim and Oriarewo, 2012).

An international research (Grochmal, 2016) across continents to study effectiveness of applied Spirituality through paradigm of Unity in entrepreneurial enterprises covered 12 fields like art, architecture, ecology, economics, justice, law, media, medicine, politics, psychology, sociology and sports. Results show that enterprises using Spiritual principles of governance and management have not only made profits for all business interests but are pooling in and contributing millions of dollars for furthering sustainable development across the globe to herald a new culture of "Homo Spiritualis" on Earth. This means that businesses have joined the race

with UNO for achieving "Sustainable Development Goals" and are pioneering excellence through Spirituality.

In India

Historically speaking (Chattopadhyay, 2007), India has not only given birth to Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism but given refuge to other religions. Hence, although it has the identity of being a land of Spirituality, it has ever aped the trends of Western models since colonization. Yet, its history is etched with the values of Spirituality. Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore were the first to rejuvenate - Indian Spiritual Identity - across the globe. But the credit goes to Mahatma Gandhi who applied principles of spirituality to win freedom from the oppressive foreign rule and earn grudging respect in global politics. Internally, Dr. Ambedkar gave the cohesion India needed to survive against caste-based fragmentation.

Hence, unlike most countries which have a national religion, India has a neutral stance. This has engineered Indian polity and irreversibly made it the leader of Spirituality in the world. Its foreign policy is built on the foundation of Panchsheela policy (meaning, mutual respect comprising of non-aggression, non-interference, equality, cooperation and peaceful co-existence) in international relations. As extension of this, it has led the Non-aligned movement during the cold war period. Yet, it has failed to gain permanent membership in UN Security Council till date.

However, no matter which way the global positioning is working out, the distinct feature to note is the way Spiritual Movements are arising from the Spiritual organizations of Indian Spiritual leaders. It is gaining the character of being multinational organizations operating in several continents with not only committed human resources but having international networking and territorial assets (Manohar DM and Shivani, 2017). Hence, study of Spirituality is incomplete without the study of its base. To fully grasp the influence of Spirituality and its impact on human affairs, it becomes pertinent to focus on the "Yogis and Gurus" who hold the reins of these multinational movements spanning human

consciousness. It remains a question if these beings can at all be understood scientifically when Science itself is a limitation in Spirituality.

Discussion and Interpretation

To summarise, personality changes in people due to some extraordinary occurrences - like a contact established with God - has been brought to light in some studies. Most significant feature observed in such individuals touched by "The Divine" seemed to be that these human beings developed an inner centre of "knowing" and operated from being guided from this source in all life matters whether personal or business. In addition to this dimension, a research study on poverty has revealed that Spirituality benefits not just individuals but helps in family preservation by nurturing resilience and hope, especially in impoverished families.

In medical world, human is no more being seen as a mere physical body with mind but rather viewed as a composition of Spirit with various levels of subtle bodies. Hence, it is acknowledged that treatment of this complex being needs training to connect to this "Spirit" to yield appropriate results in its body and mind. Thus, in educational industry, the move is to harness right results with soulful training and spiritual quotient. In the business world, the trend is to nurture workplace spirituality for right performance and output maximization. Research studies have also revealed that not only Spirituality is capable of shaping entrepreneurial capabilities but is the solution for fast paced development of both enterprises and economies. These findings culminate in one interpretation - that Spirituality upgrades business excellence in individuals and organizations.

Conclusion

Scientific studies are increasingly establishing that Spirituality as a distinct domain not only has the key potency to develop individuals inside out by building an internal guidance system in them but can also bring necessary sustainability for overall development of a family as a unit, especially when faced with challenging issues of poverty. Also, what is distinct to note is that

although health and education industry have started reinstating - Spirituality - as a result oriented force, it is the vested interests of the shrewd business world that is inspiring the positioning of Spirituality in the world of affairs. This goes a long way in proving that Spirituality is a game of skills and power in the market place. An Indian Yogi has said, "Spirituality is a science concerning the power which flows from the original repository and has the capacity, in the form of knots, both of creating and destroying. The sages of India have used the power of creation for the reformation of humanity" (Ram Chandra, 2014).

This is being witnessed in the emerging scientific culture worldwide that is consciously tapping into the field of Spirituality for results. "India - considered as the home of Spirituality - has an important role to play. This is even more so because in the age of 'Sustainable Development' nothing can be more sustainable than the business units of the world working out their visions of money, power and market-share matrix through Spirituality" (Manohar DM and Shivani, July 2017). For this to transpire, Spirituality needs to overcome 3 challenges: 1) To unify definitions on Spirituality; 2) distinguish it as a separate construct and 3) integrate itself scientifically for deployment as a universally acceptable training tool.

India being the hub of spiritual movements has additional issues to overcome. The challenges ahead are to build a prototype model of a Spiritual training methodology that can be absorbed in scientific curricula by everyone. This mandates that - Spirituality - must ever remain separate from religion in its identity since religion is a choice of free human will. Likewise, Spirituality needs to transcend even the identity constraints of its own Spiritual Organizations. Therefore the most critical challenge in the new era of Spirituality is one facing Religious and Spiritual Leaders - to renounce plans for supremacy and help to transcend even the organizational identities to unify humanity through anonymity.

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