

Empowering Ethical Leadership-SDG 14: The Influence Of Bhagavad Gita On Taylor's Scientific Management Principles

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Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita is that work of the Hindu literature often known to portray an enduring lesson on selflessness, duty, and leadership. Since the establishment of such profound principles, it has been resonant to leaders of all cultures and eras. This paper analyzes the effect that the Bhagavad Gita-the Hindu text-can have on the development in Frederick Winslow Taylor's ideas on the science of management. Even though the scientific management had its importance on efficiency and productivity, Gita highlighted the point of ethics and welfare of the employees. The paper analyzes the teachings of the Gita and will argue that the ideas this text present could have helped with assistance to Taylor's Scientific Management principles. It will explore how the ideas of the Gita may help in the implementation of the principles set by the Scientific Management-its ability to create a more compassionate workplace environment, promote moral decisions, enhance happiness among staff, and keep the eye on the future. This study concludes that Bhagavad Gita can be a source to aid modern leaders towards balancing efficiency, ethics, and human-centered approaches to doing things. This paper sustains an argument through contrasting Krishna's spiritually oriented leadership advice to Arjuna with Taylor's mechanical approach in managing people with a focus on efficiency to merge empowerment with scientific management with the aim of deriving a more holistic and human-centered paradigm in leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, empathy, ethics, ethical decision-making, employee well-being, and human-centered leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

Such olden Hindu scripture comprises the Bhagavad Gita, which has arisen as guiding philosophy for current management aside from religious evidence. It sheds light on decision making, conflict resolution, and ethical leadership for leaders and managers of contemporary times. Ethical leadership principles and values-based decision-making help the leaders to cruise through complex decisions and solve the problems related to agency issues. It aims at inner qualities like self-consciousness, developing emotional balance, and promoting the common good-only proper aptitudes that contemporary leaders need to perform well in team and organizational management.

According to Modern leaders, the Bhagavad Gita helps in the development of personal growth, ethical conduct, and inclusive leadership for sustainable success and organizational excellence. Great minds like Albert Einstein, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau attributed the Bhagavad Gita's eternally relevant wisdom as a reason behind its strength in leadership and management.

The Bhagavad Gita provides insights to the new leader on decision-making, conflict resolution, and principles of ethical leadership. Self-awareness, regulation of emotions, and focus on the common good are elements required to manage teams as well as organizations effectively. The introduction of these lessons by leaders can help in personal growth, ethical behavior, and inclusive leadership to enhance organizational performance and employee welfare. The Gita would be concentrating on "controlling self" and "overseeing the Human Reaction" by giving a clear perspective of Truth. An effort has been made to highlight the Gita's most notable contribution to modern management science.

The theoretical change from a scientific to a holistic perspective of life has been progressively occurring in Western countries as well.

In the middle of the 20th century, Frederick W. Winslow Taylor created scientific management, which altered the way companies viewed productivity, innovation, and executive labor. To increase the productivity of specialists, Taylor's logical administration promoted standardization, task division, and effective control. On the opposite side, the Bhagavad Gita frames a more human-focused hypothesis of initiative that underlines mindfulness, moral way of behaving, and empowering others to arrive at their maximum capacity. Despite these two ideas seem, by all accounts, to be entirely against, they might be perceived as free through the viewpoint of enabling administration. Present day authority might address both assignment productivity and individual strengthening by joining the Gita's emphasis on human development and obligation with Taylor's Logical administration ideas.

This paper explores how authority thoughts from the Bhagavad Gita could work on Taylor's standards of logical administration by featuring the significance of pioneers enabling, persuading, and ethically directing their labor force. The Purpose of this paper is to highlight the goal of comparing the leadership philosophies of the Bhagavad Gita with Taylor's Scientific Management principles. This paper makes a contribution to SDG-14.

Research Question: How can the leadership principles from the Bhagavad Gita complement or influence Taylor's Scientific Management?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhagavad Gita: Discuss the key leadership and ethical principles of the Gita, especially those related to duty (dharma), detachment, and moral responsibility.

Numerous academic fields have examined the Bhagavad Gita in depth, demonstrating its wide-ranging impact on leadership, the field of psychology, and philosophy. Jeste and Vahia (2008) relate the conception of wisdom in ancient Indian literature, especially the Bhagavad Gita, to current viewpoints, highlighting its significance in addressing everyday ethical issues.

It is a glorious discourse between the awakened instructor and the sincerest truth seeker that has successfully handled an essential circumstance throughout life with action. Vyasa masterfully employs a poetic approach to convey Krishna's global lesson on management brilliance in a straightforward and understandable manner. The verse is an original combination of philosophy, practical knowledge, and a desire for direct access to truth. Arjuna portrays a lionhearted manager who is stuck in a state of illusion and despair. Krishna stood strong as the infallible guide (sarthi), who with the sparkling strokes of his 'Yoga of knowledge in action' scattered the clouds of Arjuna's dejection and equipped him for the mission of battling against the bad forces for the wellbeing.

The Gita's lessons on emotional intelligence are explored in detail by Lamba, Jagadeesh, and Deshpande (2023), who also establish a connection between the Gita and contemporary psychology techniques. Shunmugam and Sukdaven (2024) investigate the Gita's effect on moral and ethical factors, arguing that its principles provide an exhaustive structure for making ethical decisions in modern contexts.

Essentially, the fact of being blended by the teachings of Bhagavad Gita is accountability and virtuous behavior or dharma. Chapter 3; Verse 35 from the Bhagavad Gita is where the importance of doing an innate responsibility over those that may be more convenient and pleasing will be found.

“श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विवर्ततेः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्।

वधर्मो न न धनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः॥”

(Bhagavad Gita 3.35)

It underscores the need to align one's acts with one's inherent duties in order to lead an ethical and peaceful life.

Likewise, in Chapter 2, Verses 47-48, it highlights a sense of accountability where one should not attach his results out of his deeds (Tripathi, S., & Sharma, K. 2024).

“कर्मण्येवाधकार्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भभा मा तिसङ्गोऽस्त्व कर्मणः॥”

(Bhagavad Gita 2.47)

Gita focuses very much on consistency with what contemporary notions of moral leadership and prudent judgment would be. The notion of nishkama karma, or action without any expectation of reward or results, demanded an attitude toward existence in which procedure takes precedence over results, a message in many ways quite in keeping with the latest trends in mindfulness and resilience techniques. In addition to the above lesson, the Bhagavad Gita discourse on perseverance in the face of adversity provides some practical teaching to the sufferer and creates an attitude of perseverance and steadiness (Tripathi, S., & Sharma, K. 2024).

According to Muniapan, B. (2015), business leaders should follow eternal values and moral principles; the Bhagavad Gita mentions this. This section is anticipated to give Western entrepreneurs insights into Indian business ethics, enabling them to work efficiently with Indian business leaders in India, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, and North America regions where there is a crucial Indian population.

Taylor's Scientific Management: Review Taylor's principles, such as task optimization, division of labor, and efficiency-focused management.

Scientific management, commonly known as Taylorism, is the implementation of Frederick Taylor's theory in job settings to increase efficiency in the economy. Taylor released "The Principles of Scientific Management" in 1911, that describes how he uses scientific investigations to examine, optimize, and standardize workflow. Managers frequently must decide on substantial operational decisions in order to boost productivity. Scientific management in the workplace may assist to optimize processes and boost productivity.

The four basic principles of scientific management are as follows:

1. Methodology based on science: One of the greatest ways to complete a task efficiently is to establish and regulate using scientific approaches.
2. Work division: When responsibilities and obligations are clearly delineated between management and staff, as well as within the team, work is completed more quickly and with greater quality.
3. Coordination and reciprocal cooperation between staff members and management provide a good work environment and higher output.

4. Monitoring Employees: A clear ladder of power and stringent personnel supervision assure that production occurs on time.

3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Bhagavad Gita and Frederick Winslow Taylor's Scientific Management illustrate two fundamentally different approaches to work, obligation, and human motivation. The Bhagavad Gita provides a spiritual and moral framework based on internal motivation, whereas scientific management emphasizes extrinsic incentive through efficiency, productivity, and economic benefit. A comparison of these two perspectives reveals their key differences as well as some shared ideas about the value of effort and performance.

3.1. Purpose of Work: Spiritual Fulfillment vs. Economic Efficiency

- **Bhagavad Gita:** The primary purpose of work in the Gita is to fulfill one's dharma (duty) and contribute to the cosmic order. Work is considered a spiritual practice, where the individual is encouraged to act selflessly, without attachment to the fruits of labor (nishkama karma) (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2013). This leads to inner peace, spiritual growth, and liberation (moksha). The act itself, rather than the outcome, is what holds moral value.
- **Scientific Management:** Taylor's scientific management focuses on optimizing work for maximum efficiency and productivity. The purpose of work is to contribute to economic success, both for the individual and the organization (Waring, 2016). Work is seen as a means to increase output and profitability, with a strong focus on measurable outcomes, rewards, and external incentives. Taylor believed that workers are primarily motivated by financial gain and that work should be designed to maximize output.

3.2. Motivation: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic

- **Bhagavad Gita:** The Gita emphasizes intrinsic motivation, where individuals act based on moral duty and self-discipline (Kunwar et al., 2024). Krishna advises Arjuna to act without desire for the fruits of his actions, and to perform his duty for its own sake, as an offering to the divine. The sense of self-empowerment comes from within, not from external rewards.
- **Scientific Management:** In Taylor's view, motivation is largely extrinsic, driven by financial incentives and the desire to earn more based on one's productivity. By tying wages and bonuses directly to output, Taylor's system motivates workers through external rewards, assuming that their main goal is economic benefit (Frey & Osterloh, 2001). The relationship between workers and management is transactional, focusing on how to increase material gains.

3.3. Approach to Work: Self-Leadership vs. Managerial Control

- **Bhagavad Gita:** The Gita advocates for self-leadership and self-management. Individuals are expected to take charge of their own actions by following their dharma with discipline and detachment (Sharma & Cooper, 2016). The emphasis is on inner strength and personal responsibility for one's actions, with minimal dependence on external control or guidance.
- **Scientific Management:** Taylor's system is characterized by a strict hierarchy and managerial control. Workers are expected to follow highly specialized tasks designed by management, and decisions are made from the top down. Taylor believed that workers needed close supervision and guidance to ensure maximum efficiency, with management defining the best way to perform each task (Harris, 2006). The role of managers is to plan, direct, and monitor workers, creating a clear division between thinking and doing.

3.4. Attachment to Results: Detachment vs. Result-Oriented

- **Bhagavad Gita:** One of the key teachings of the Gita is the concept of nishkama karma—acting without attachment to the results of one’s actions. Krishna teaches Arjuna that he should perform his duty, but not worry about the outcome (success or failure)(Michael, 2014). The focus is on the process of action and fulfilling one’s moral responsibility, rather than chasing success or avoiding failure. This leads to inner tranquility and freedom from anxiety.
- **Scientific Management:** Taylor’s approach is highly result-oriented. Efficiency, productivity, and measurable outcomes are the ultimate goals (Hassan, 2018). Workers are rewarded based on the results they produce, and their performance is measured quantitatively. Taylor’s entire system is based on maximizing results through optimization and specialization, ensuring that each worker contributes to the overall success of the organization in a measurable way.

3.5. Role of the Individual: Unique Dharma vs. Specialized Tasks

- **Bhagavad Gita:** Each person is believed to have a unique dharma based on their role in society, their nature (guna), and their life circumstances. This is a holistic view of the individual, where one’s purpose and responsibilities are tied to their intrinsic qualities (Muniapan & Satpathy, 2013). The emphasis is on acting in alignment with one’s true nature, contributing to both personal growth and the greater good.
- **Scientific Management:** Taylor’s system reduces the individual to a set of specialized tasks designed for maximum efficiency. Workers are seen as components in a machine, where each person performs a narrow, repetitive function to increase productivity (Margulies & Zemanek, 1983). The system does not consider individual differences in nature or personal fulfillment; instead, it focuses on assigning tasks based on what will increase efficiency.

3.6. End Goal: Spiritual Liberation vs. Economic Prosperity

- **Bhagavad Gita:** The ultimate goal in the Gita is spiritual liberation (moksha). By performing one’s duty selflessly and without attachment, the individual transcends the cycle of karma and attains unity with the divine (Behera & Behura, 2023). The purpose of life and work is to achieve inner peace, wisdom, and spiritual growth, aligning oneself with the cosmic order.
- **Scientific Management:** The end goal in Taylor’s system is economic prosperity—both for the worker (through higher wages) and for the organization (through greater profitability) (Wood and Kelly, 1982). The success of the system is measured by output, productivity, and financial gain, with little concern for the personal or spiritual development of the individual.

Table 1: Comparative analysis of Bhagat Geeta and Scientific Management

Aspect	Bhagavad Gita	Scientific Management
Purpose of Work	Fulfillment of moral duty (dharma) and spiritual growth	Maximizing productivity and profitability
Motivation	Intrinsic: based on duty, morality, and spiritual growth	Extrinsic: based on financial incentives and rewards
Leadership	Self-leadership and empowerment	Managerial control and oversight
Attachment to Results	Detachment from results, focus on duty and process	Focus on results, success measured by productivity

Role of the Individual	Unique dharma, alignment with one's true nature	Specialized tasks, narrow focus on efficiency
End Goal	Spiritual liberation, inner peace, moral growth	Economic prosperity, increased productivity

4. SYNTHESIS: THE HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

The Holistic Leadership Model, by combining the spiritual insights found in the Bhagavad Gita and the practical efficiency of Taylor's Scientific Management, brings out a leadership approach that emphasizes individual growth in addition to organizational success. The leaders would balance moral accountability with the need for effective systems; they would inspire people to perform their duties with integrity, while also assuring that the task ensures the overall productivity.

The sources of motivation for this framework are both intrinsic and extrinsic. In this respect, leaders encourage a sense of purpose but also recognize the role of external rewards such as recognition or compensation in driving performance. This allows developing fulfillment and tangible results within employees.

While the model encourages self-leadership in that it empowers people to act in accordance with ethical values, it also has a systematized framework in place so that it can act consistently and efficiently within the organization. Leaders nudge others toward reliance on themselves but hold the processes that support collective goals.

The core point of the model is concerned about striking a balance between a process focus and performance outcome. While the Gita speaks of the non-focusing on the outcome, Taylorite principles argue with measurable success. The holistic leader balances both travel and destination so that ethical action goes hand in hand with productive outcomes.

Such a model also focuses the strengths of the individual on the specialized task. Leaders encourage and enable personal growth and fulfillment while ensuring that what each person is contributing is in line with the needs of the organization concerning efficiency. Personal development and specialist skills become mutually reinforcing.

The ultimate goal of the Holistic Leadership Model is the attainment of both personal fulfillment and organizational prosperity. Adding to that the historical framework, the incisional blueprint of productivity married by Taylor with the spiritual wisdom of the Gita brings inspiration into an environment of meaning that follows the attainment of material success, therefore furthering individual wellbeing and collective success.

5. DISCUSSION

Empowering Leadership: The Influence of Bhagavad Gita on Taylor's Scientific Management Principles is an interesting synthesis of two approaches that seem divergent in nature; born from the spiritual philosophy and the other from industrial efficiency. The Bhagavad Gita imparts timeless lessons for selfless leadership, intrinsic motivation, and moral duty along with self-realization (Mallik, 2024); whereas Taylor's Scientific Management rest on pillars of task optimization, productivity, and extrinsic motivation (Onday, 2016). Together, they form an empowering leadership model that overcomes the myopia of each, generally offering a more diverse perspective to leadership. It acknowledges the human spirit as well as the need for efficiency.

In the concept of Scientific Management by Taylor, the role of the leader should be to allow each worker to work best. That is through close supervision, specialization, and a reward or promotion according to productivity. Even though these approaches have greatly revolutionized the increased industrial

productions, they were classified together as approaches that reduce workers into machines with no emotional and spiritual needs (Waring, 2016). Workers under the Taylor model, by convention, do not have autonomy, and these are usually the reasons they get demotivated and alienated from the work they are performing.

On the other hand, the Bhagavad Gita is grounded on leadership by enabling man in his duty and responsibility towards self-mastery. In Gita, Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna to do according to his sense of dharma or duty but should not be taken out of apprehension or attachment to fruits of an action (Ravindra, 2017). This and more comprise the main thematic differences in the intrinsic motivation as opposed to Taylor's extrinsic incentives. True leadership comes from within, and the Gita suggests that people should be led in search of meaningfulness and purpose in their work rather than empowerment. This develops organically into empowerment wherein people assume control of actions and accountability for growth.

The empowering approach of the two perspectives above converge into a balanced model. Contrary to the managerial control by Taylor, the leadership according to Gita empowers self-leadership where people are encouraged to perform their duties according to their own values and inner purposes (Dhiman, 2015). This model is much more potential in the way that it recognizes the employees rather than just relying on external rewards—they get motivated more attached to a purpose and higher motive of real value in contributions to them beyond acquisitions of money.

Also, detachment from the results as offered by Gita is more feasible to manage stress and expectation pressure in the working environment. Taylorism offers a constant pressure to produce results which eventually leads to burnout and dissatisfaction (Bornfelt, 2023). The Gita encourages doing your duties diligently but not being attached to their fruits—all this is liberating both for leaders and workers (Simpson, 2024) because the anxiety of failure is diminished, and a stronger workforce is built. By focusing on the process and the integrity of actions, employees grow personally and professionally without being paralyzed by the fear of unmet expectations.

As such, incorporating the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita with Taylor's management principles would encourage leaders not to view their role as merely organizing tasks, making their performance optimal. In Gita, one views the leadership as guidance, molding others, and bringing them to their full actualization (Teitsworth, 2014). This understanding of leadership as service is mostly absent in Taylor's model whereby the leader serves the objectives of the organization (Tayler et al., 2007). The principles of the Gita are, therefore, made more inclusive in leadership about nurturing and developing the spirits and emotions of employees as much as it takes to increase productivity.

Furthermore, self-leadership in the very sense of the Gita can complement the task specialization of Taylor's system (Bodhananda et al., 2019). Because of task specialization, the efficiency will increase; however, an individual may fall into monotony if their professional lives are not balanced with opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment. With empowering leadership modeling, one is being motivated to take full ownership of tasks that not only improved his output but his job satisfaction also. That enhances engagement as well as creativity, and thereby increases innovation even in really very specialized roles.

Thus, the impact of Gita gives concentration from the transactional leaderships-worker relationships to the transactional and further transformational dynamics (Roka, 2018). While Taylor's system makes for motivation and drive through outer incentives (Locke, 1968), Gita teaches that "leaders must energize workers to tap intrinsically to align personal values with organizational values". This change from transactional to transformational leadership may lead to employees who are even more committed to the organization: they are driven not only for extrinsic rewards but also for a sense of duty and purpose.

6. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, taking the essence of the Bhagavad Gita's spirituality principles and placing them in the context of Taylor's Scientific Management helps create a more holistic and empowering model for leadership. What Taylor did was to think of doing things efficiently, optimize tasks, and bring in extrinsic rewards as incentives for producing. The emotional and psychological aspects of working were mostly ignored. The lessons of the Bhagavad Gita on self-leadership, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of higher purpose in duties can be brought to make an approach to management more balanced and human-oriented.

This synthesis shows how self-development and effectiveness mutually complement each other. Leaders are interested in achieving maximal outputs but also in developing the well-being of their subordinates to influence them in bringing their work to their inner values. This shifting from strictly transactional to a more transformational style of leadership helps develop more engagement, creativity, and long-term commitment with their employees. In the end, it enables leaders to engineer work environments that achieve balance between productivity and a sense of fulfillment sustainably.

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