SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: A MODEL FOR INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Rekha Attri
Core Business School,
Indore, Madhya Pradesh
India

Abstract

"Spirituality" is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe." If a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role that it plays in people's lives, that word is "interconnectedness." Spirituality should not be treated as a jargon to find place in philosophical books but it encapsulates the very essence of practising life with simplicity. Spirituality in the workplace can be of great help in increasing the productivity of each individual and organization in totality. In contrast to religion that is organized and communal, spirituality is highly individual and intensely personal. One doesn't have to be religious in order to be spiritual. The values-based organization results when the founders or heads are guided by general philosophical principles or values that are not aligned or associated with a particular religion. In the changing business scenario there is a need to integrate spirituality into management. No organization can survive for long without spirituality and soul. Ways of managing spirituality without separating it from the other elements of management need to be understood and implemented for the holistic development of individuals and organization. This paper deals with the importance of practising spirituality at workplace to progress from cognitive intelligence to emotional intelligence and ultimately to spiritual intelligence which acts as a catalyst for inspirational leadership and management excellence.
Journey from IQ to EQ and SQ

Brilliant minds do not necessarily make brilliant managers and the difference is often due to a person’s emotional intelligence, the bit that dictates the way we deal with other people and understand our own emotions. In a constantly changing environment, businesses need to innovate and regenerate if they are to remain competitive.

It has become widely accepted that intelligence, or at least what is measured by traditional intelligence tests, is a major predictor of academic performance and work success (Drasgow, 2003; Furnham, 2005). In the early part of the last century, two different views regarding the structure of intelligence were proposed. On one hand, Spearman (1927) conceptualized intelligence as being a single factor ‘g’ or general intelligence which accounted for the differential performance between individuals in all areas of human ability. On the other hand, Thurstone (1938) argued that intelligence was best understood as being a set of seven loosely related primary mental abilities such as numerical reasoning, spatial abilities and verbal comprehension which explained various different aspects of performance.

Hence the content of intelligence tests has traditionally reflected what is regarded as being rational problem-solving abilities or ‘academic intelligence’ (Furnham, 2005). Theories of intelligence have traditionally emphasized that adult IQ is relatively fixed over time. The art of sustained leadership is getting others to produce superior work and high IQ alone is insufficient to that task. One needs to learn and practice emotional intelligence so that under stressed conditions he can still pull out people to perform to their optimum levels (Mayer J, 2004).

In 1996 Daniel Goleman published Emotional Intelligence which made the acronym EQ, emotional quotient, very talked about topic. Personality theorists consider that personality is composed of a set of stable traits. "Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships," says Daniel Goleman in his book "Working with Emotional Intelligence" (1999). It describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence -- the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ.

Both Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Goleman (1998) maintain that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is potentially incremental and can be developed through training and experience. In the book titled Change Management Excellence by Sarah Cook, Steve Macaulay and Hilary Coldicott, one can learn how to lead and navigate change by employing business, political, spiritual and emotional intelligence. Research shows that emotional intelligence may actually be significantly more important than cognitive ability and technical expertise combined. In fact, some studies indicate that EQ is more than twice as important as standard IQ abilities. Further, evidence increasingly shows that the higher one goes in an organization, the more important EQ can be. For those in leadership positions, emotional intelligence skills account for close to 90 percent of what distinguishes outstanding leaders from those judged as average. EQ is important for business leaders. If they don’t read the mood of their staff, team or employees correctly, they can create a sense of frustration and fail to get the best out of people (Beautiful minds, 2004).The link between emotional intelligence and increased performance is intuitively appealing to organizations, particularly to those in the service sector. It was stated that success is more dependent upon the way in which individuals handle their emotions and emotions of others than how smart they were in terms of cognitive intelligence (Cartwright and Pappas, 2008)
Zohar, an Oxford teacher and author, and Marshall, a psychiatrist and author introduced the concept of SQ, spiritual quotient. "Spirituality" is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe." If a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role that it plays in people's lives, that word is "interconnectedness" (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). The authors contend that while computers have IQ and animals can have EQ, it is SQ that sets humans apart. SQ isn't necessarily connected to religion, although it can be. It is about wholeness, flexibility, self-awareness, compassion, creativity, the ability to ask why, and the like.

Wolman Richard, a psychologist, psychotherapist and a faculty member at Harvard Medical School wrote a book titled—“Thinking with your Soul: Spiritual intelligence and Why it Matters” states that everyone has spiritual intelligence and that recognizing and working with it is important for a person’s total well-being. He devised PsychoMatrix Spirituality Inventory (PSI), which establishes a person’s spirituality profile by measuring seven spiritual factors: divinity, mindfulness, intellectuality, community, extrasensory perception, childhood spirituality and trauma (Moryl J., 2001)

Ways of Practicing Spirituality at Workplace

Workplace spirituality is a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy. Spirituality in the workplace is an experience of interconnectedness and trust among those involved in a work process, engendered by individual goodwill; leading to the collective creation of a motivational organizational culture, epitomized by reciprocity and solidarity; and resulting in enhanced overall performance, which is ultimately translated in lasting organizational excellence.

While it's important to not confuse spirituality with religion, there is something to say about the general mutuality in teaching acceptance, understanding, and goodwill among both spiritual and religious streams. For instance, Buddhist literature reveals an interesting similarity with spiritual behaviour. The Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, illustrates this in his statement, "When we practice mindfulness in our daily life, we cultivate the foundation of peace, sowing seeds of understanding in ourselves and others." Nhat Hanh further asserts, "If we transform our individual consciousness, we begin the process of changing the collective consciousness. Transforming the world's consciousness is not possible without personal change."(T.Nhat Hanh, 2003).These teachings, although stemming from a religious leader, are independent of any particular religious cluster. They are based on purely spiritual practices, regardless of one's affiliation with any religious congregation. It is generally known, however, that all major religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and others, teach similar values as the ones that Nhat Hanh described above.

According to Swami Vivekananda, “The search for purpose of human existence has two aspects — external and internal. While the external aspect keeps changing, the internal aspect is constant. Rituals and methods of worship, as external aspects, keep changing, but spirituality is the inner core. It is constant, it does not change.” According to Barton Mante Truth can be classified into broadly 3 types as follows:
Truth one: Temporary truth

Temporary truth is what we call truth today that proves itself not to be true tomorrow or in the next moment. Temporary truth is nothing more than the ephemeral way we colour each changing moment or each changing moment colours us. We balance one material reality with another. Temporary truth is the domain of the fixed intelligent identity that imprisons our SQ core. To adhere rigidly to temporary truth is the identity of the lost, the avoider, the shallow, and the superficial. As long as we are in the grip of the temporary truth we will never see from the new intelligence at our core.

The more fixed and intolerant we are in ourselves, the fewer the range of choices we perceive. To put it in biological terms, the more we use ourselves up in altering the temporary truth, the more we diminish the resources of our immune system, the less we can tolerate any flux that allows real change. Good and strong immunity provides the basis for broad-based elective behaviour.

Truth two: Semi-permanent truth

Semi-permanent truth encompasses the daily rules and parameters that life defines. The rules of a football match, social conventions, agreements to be on time, politeness, courtesy, decency, the rules of engagement between the collective of society and the individual—these are the domains of semi-permanent truth, without which life would be disordered and intolerable. They are laws of convention, albeit ones that can be stretched this way and that. They are socially evolved from our history—they make sense even if they are at times interpreted to the advantage of the self-centred.

Semi-permanent truth is the domain of character, what is decent and legitimate, what observes the 'rules of engagement that maintain fair standards and decency. It suggests an individual who has reached their own views and is reliable, trustworthy, and sincere. Character must always have recourse to a higher domain of self-questioning, otherwise it is nothing more than an outward act. This domain is the consideration of permanent truth.

Truth three: Permanent truth

Permanent truth is always the greater truth, the higher truth, the level of truth that we cannot escape, manipulate, cheat, or get away from.

The SQ path is a life that examines the truth of the situation that leaves nothing to chance, that wishes to join the truth of the situation at the highest level and is a level of self, based in permanent truth. It is more than character: it is the core of meaning based on core principles. It cannot be approached as a secondary element—it is the first principle of every adult life.

Continuum of Truth

Temporary truth  Semi-Permanent Truth  Permanent Truth
Developing Inspirational Leadership and achieving organizational excellence

Management comprises of planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing, and controlling an organization (a group of one or more people or entities) for the purpose of accomplishing a goal. Decision making forms an integral part in each of the management activities and a manager often has to tread on a thin wire while choosing various alternatives and while making a decision to act in a particular manner as the impact of these decisions shape the outcome (success or failure) and the culture of the organization. Needless to emphasise that if decisions are based on Semi-Permanent truth or Permanent Truth rather than Temporary Truth, the chances of success are better because the chances of prevailing semi-permanent and permanent truth in future are very high compared to temporary truth. It is one of the ways of managing spirituality without separating it from the other elements of management need to be understood and implemented for the holistic development of individuals and organization. For implementing this concept of spirituality it is necessary that leaders should not only have values supporting permanent truth but also should be able to inspire their team members to adopt those values by demonstrating the same by themselves.

Human beings have a strong and fundamental need to belong and be accepted by others (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). For the majority of people, a work group forms an important part of their social relationship. People bring their values into the work setting and these work-related values are considered to be ‘the evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is ‘right’ or assess the importance of preferences’ (Dose, 1997). They are important in people’s working life by fundamentally shaping their attitudes towards job, colleagues and their workplace performance.

Since teams are typically formed by heterogeneous and autonomous entities, it is natural that each member holds its own set of values, and thus conflicts among partners might emerge due to misalignment of values. On the other hand, it is often stated that the alignment between values systems of members involved in a team is a prerequisite for successful co-working. When the core-values of one member are incompatible with the core-values of another, there is a misalignment and the potential for conflicts is high. Reciprocally, when the core-values of a member are compatible with the core-values of another member, there is an alignment and the potential for emergence of conflicts is lower. In the areas of psychology and sociology values have classically been conceptualised as shared beliefs about desired behaviour and end-states (Rokeach 1973). These shared beliefs concern the processes of goal pursuit and the outcomes.

Based on the various values observed in different organizations like Tata Steel, Telco, Godrej, HUL etc, it has been observed that the most commonly stated values are the 6 values of Open, Empathetic, Ethical, Sincere, Inspiring and Smart.

If these values are practised by each individual in an organization, then the culture of the organization would be spiritual as each individual would try to practice these values which are higher on the continuum of truth and more towards the permanent truth.

With the evolving business environment the only thing that is constant is change and businesses keep adopting and evolving with change. It is a well-established fact that by being aware of the global standards and benchmarking with the best in the industry one can learn
the best practices and incorporate the same in the organization so that with the changing business dynamics the organization is ready to evolve and become better. For instance if the leader of an organization imbibes the value of being open in an organization, then he would observe transparency in his work, would be open to learn from the best, adopt a global outlook and thus would be a perennial learner. The organization culture developed would be such that no member of the organization would shy away from accepting weaknesses, the work culture would be that of a learning organization and people would not put on pretence of knowing everything. Thus by following the semi-permanent truth of changing with time and learning from the best as they are established way of doing business in the changing times an organization can bring spirituality at work.

Often during this transition from previous ways of working to the adoption of newer techniques and practices, the ethics might be compromised for momentary gains. A leader needs to be very cautious in observing the ethical values. Although it may sound easy but working with a clear conscious and practising honesty, being principled and righteous is difficult where every now and then there are instances of people cheating on another for momentary gains. If the people in an organization are geared towards practising an ethical behaviour without being allured by fast track momentary gains they would help creating a very ethically sound organization culture where decisions are not made with just profit in mind but profit with an ethical behaviour. In such an organizational culture there is an element of certainty which prevails as people can predict the behaviour of others being very ethical.

By adopting an empathetic value system the members of an organization would be responsive and considerate towards the needs of other individuals. Besides having a sympathetic behaviour, the members of the organization would also be able to have a perceptive outlook to a situation and thus practice decision making based more on semi-permanent truth or permanent truth. Decisions which are based on established rules and regulations or practices are more likely to yield better results than those decisions where a person is not empathetic and makes decisions based on temporary truth.

When each individual in an organization works with an end result in mind and is able to accept responsibilities, accomplishes tasks in a disciplined manner and feels accountable for the outcome of the efforts then he would be observing and depicting sincerity in his work. Such a work culture enhances the output of the organization. No individual in such an organization passes on the blame of non-accomplishment of targets to another person. The scenario where blame game becomes a part of organizational working where people are ready to accept responsibilities but shirk when the question of accountability arises does not occur in such organizations. Such individuals inspire others not to shirk from responsibilities. The results may not be in the hands of individuals but the fact that all the tasks were accomplished with full dedication, sincerity and honesty is what ultimately matters. Such individuals who follow a work culture where there is positive thinking and team work involved become source of inspiration for others to follow. Their self-starting and motivating behaviour prompts others to follow him because such individuals are working more on principles of semi-permanent or permanent truth and would definitely succeed by following such principles. One can classify such individuals as smart individuals as they are proactive in their thinking, speedy in their work, innovative in their approach and effective in whatever tasks are given to them.
One may not expect such a change in the organizational culture to be immediate and sudden but to foster spirituality at work place an organization needs change agents to follow these principles based on semi-permanent and permanent truth. These change agents are leaders having group of followers to adopt as per the leader’s work behaviour. If the values discussed above are to be developed among followers, the leader has to demonstrate the same and therefore only these leaders who have such values can inspire others to follow them. Therefore this set of values based on semi-permanent truth or permanent truth becomes imperative for inspirational leaders. The success factor of such individuals would interest others in the organization to follow the same principles. Thus developing spirituality at work place would require a group of individuals to practice the management functions based on established principles and values for success and motivate others to adopt the same route.

Model for Developing Inspirational Leadership
Conclusion

There is a ripple effect within the spiritual worker that starts with these internal changes and expands through "connection with empathizing colleagues" to "team performance, which is expressed in increased support, elevated trust, and enhanced understanding," ultimately leading to "a greater degree of responsibility and ownership, as well as awareness of the bigger picture." The outcomes to this sequence include greater output, better organizational performance, and increased job satisfaction.

Reference List