

Review Article

## Work Life in Indian Philosophy

Mala Sharma

Assistant Professor,  
I.T.S. Mohan Nagar, Ghaziabad U.P.

### Abstract

*“Ethics” was once considered irrelevant by corporate loyalists, but now discussion of it is increasingly seen as not only important but also as critical to a company’s success. The paper is a theoretical review. The purpose and objective of the paper is to explore and understand the meaning of business ethics in the context of Indian philosophical thought. The study focuses mainly on the contribution of Hindu philosophical thought though makes reference to other philosophical thoughts namely Buddhism, Jainism and Arthashastra.*

**Keywords:** Indian philosophy and ethics, moral, ethics in business management.

Copyright©2019 Mala Sharma This is an open access article for the issue release and distributed under the NRJP Journals License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

### Introduction

As India is becoming a major global economic business partner, understanding its unique ethical business infrastructure is gaining in importance. This paper is concerned with answering the question: “How can business ethics be taught to students by our strong culture so that effective learning takes place?” The purpose of this paper is to finding relevancy and to further the understanding of Indian ethical culture for business. The contention of this paper to elaborates principles of different religions in business ethics and its implications on doing business in and with Indian companies.

While many argue that ethics cannot be taught the preponderance of theory and research suggest that teaching Indian ethical culture in business schools can be effective in developing students’ moral reasoning skills, ethical sensitivity and ethical behaviors .Despite these recent findings it is intriguing that many are still not convinced that ethics can be taught. Perhaps this tension, encountered when

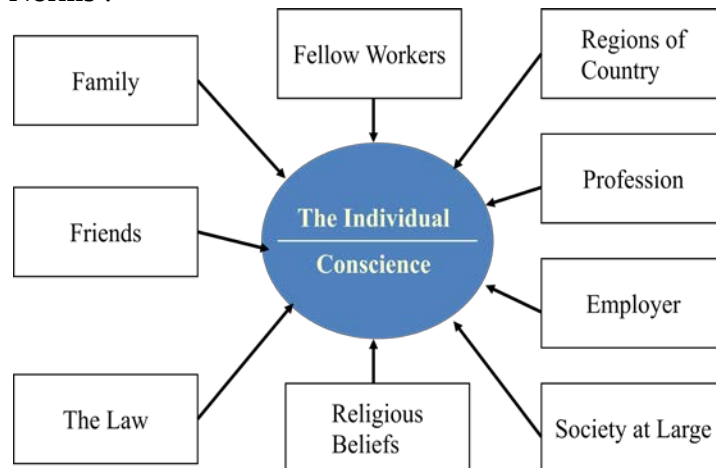
teaching of ethical culture like Bhagwad Gita, Kautilya, Mahatma Budh’s scriptures are incorporated into the business curriculum, can be reframed to open the way for constructive discussion if the question is rephrased as: “How can ethics be taught to business students so that effective learning takes place?”

**Characteristics of Indian Philosophy and Ethics:** True, ethical behavior and ethics as a science do not necessarily presuppose a religious-philosophical creed. However, not only does every activity presuppose some knowledge of pragmatic matters, it also involves ideas or beliefs regarding the nature of the objective world and the subject. In ethical behavior man has to be conscious of himself as a moral agent, and this presupposes some definite concepts of the human self, as also of the goal(s) or value(s) which man has to realize through his conduct. Hinduism as a religion is both a view of life and a way of life which are related as the theoretical and practical guides of the same spiritual life.

Any study of Hindu ethics ought to take into account innumerable discussion on ethical matters, scattered throughout ancient Indian literature. Jainism and Buddhism as two branches of larger Hindu philosophical thought gives detailed accounts of ethical and unethical behavior and also talks in great lengths about the duties of man

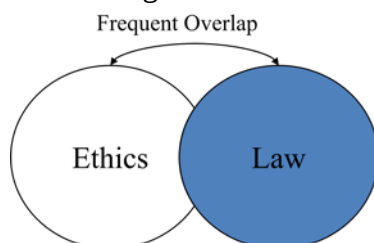
**Ethics:** Ethic is derived from a Greek word “Ethikos” which means character. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the principles of conduct of an individual or group. It works as a guiding principle as to decide what is good or bad. They are the standards which govern the life of a person. Ethics is also known as

Sources of Ethical Norms :



### Ethics and the Law :

- Law often represents an ethical minimum
- Ethics often represents a standard that exceeds the legal minimum



### Role of Ethics in work Life:

Ethical principles are dictated by the society and underlie broad social policies. These principles when known, understood and accepted, determine generally the

moral philosophy. Some ethical principles are:

1. Truthfulness
2. Honesty
3. Loyalty
4. Respect
5. Fairness
6. Integrity

**Morals :** Morals are the social, cultural and religious beliefs or values of an individual or group which tells us what is right or wrong. They are the rules and standards made by the society or culture which is to be followed by us while deciding what is right. Some moral principles are: 1) Do not cheat 2) Be loyal 3) Be patient 4) Always tell the truth 5) Be generous.

propriety or impropriety of business activities.

Business ethics also relates to the behavior of manager. It can be defined as an attempt to ascertain the responsibilities and ethical obligations of business professionals. Here the focus is in people, how individuals should conduct themselves in fulfilling the ethical requirements of business? In this contention Indian Ethics play an important role by discussion various scriptures of different religion & their guidelines & principles towards Business and work life. It also discuss the conduct of a Manager in an Organisation. There are three key reasons why ethics plays a key role in business. First, it is crucial that ethics have

a considerable influence if we want an efficient, smoothly operating economy.

Ethics helps the market to its best. Second, the government, laws and lawyers cannot resolve certain key problems of business and protect the society: ethics can. Ethics can only resolve futuristic issues such as technology races ahead much faster than the government. Regulations almost always lag behind. That company's social responsibility extends beyond what the law strictly requires. Third, ethical activity is valuable in itself, for its own sake, because it enhances the quality of lives and the work we do-business has an ethical responsibility for fairness for humanity, e.g. employee.

### **Indian Ethos For Work Life:**

Ethics of Gita and Upanishad :The Holy Gita is the essence of the Vedas, Upanishads It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times.

### **Management Guidelines from the Bhagavad Gita:**

There is an important distinction between effectiveness and efficiency in managing. Effectiveness is doing the right things and Efficiency is doing things right.

1. Forming a vision.
2. Planning the strategy to realize the vision
3. Cultivating the art of leadership
4. Establishing institutional excellence
5. Building an innovative organization
6. Developing human resources.
7. Building teams and team work
8. Delegation, motivation and communication
9. Reviewing performance and taking corrective steps when called for

Thus, management is a process of aligning people and getting them committed to work for a common goal to the maximum social benefit in search of excellence.

Principles of Bhagawat Gita and Upanishad for Business Ethics.

1. Every person has immense potential, energy and talent.
2. Perform without attachment I.e. do your task to the very best as the modus operandi of all business activities.
3. Emphasis on sacrifice and running the business for the over-all welfare of the mankind and charity for society as a whole.
4. Character is the real power and wealth. Manager with enriched quality of mind and heart can have effective management.
5. Work is worship. Do your work without ego and serve other without self interest.
6. Distribution of duties among employees according to their merit, aptitude and skills.
7. Creating best inter personal relations based on self-esteem, equality and team work. Control of emotions and feelings and abstention from both love and hate.
8. Self management, analysis and criticism help to locate areas of friction and disharmony.
9. Anger leads to confusion which cause failure of memory and consequent destruction of reason. Silent mind or brain stilling is an effective medium to get sound solutions to management problems
10. Avoid greed, not profit maximization but maintenance of the world order should be the objective of all sound business policy.
11. Be a patient listener and perform your duties with devotion, humility and sincerity.

### **Ethics in Business by Kautilya**

Kautilya is regarded as a great perception of State craft, whose teachings have a universal validity.

1. The main guiding principle of the management were that organization should be run actively, efficiently, prudently and profitably. He supported

strong bureaucracy with well trained and righteous officials.

2. Traders shall be prevented from oppressing the people. Their propensity to fix prices by forming cartels, make excessive profits or deal in stolen property are guarded against by making these offences punishable by heavy fines.
3. He advocated proper maintenance of accounts and their timely submission. High officials shall be responsible for rendering the accounts in full for their sphere of activity without any contradiction in them. Those who tell lie or make contradictory statements shall pay the highest level standard penalty.

#### **The Budha's Ethics:**

The philosophy of the Budha has a special place and significance in Indian thought. He preferred to explain human life and its problems on positivistic basis. According to him, the basic problem of life is to find out the ways and means of eliminating human suffering. He says:

- May all beings be happy and secure, may they be happy minded.
- Let no one deceive another, let him not desprise another in any place.
- Let a man overcome anger by love, let him conquer evil by good.
- Returning good for good is very noble, but returning good for evil is nobler still.
- If a man offends a harmless, pure and innocent person, evil falls back upon him.
- Wrongs should he endured patiently rather than crushed with violence.
- Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy. He who has given up
- Victory and defeat, he is contended and happy.
- We should be guided by justice and equality and the law of righteousness.
- Give up ill-will malice and hated. Suffuse the word with love and goodwill.

#### **Importance of Values in Indian Management**

1. **Help in Achieving Success:** Values not only help in achieving success but also make success more enduring and lasting. Values can help establish business or career purpose. Values combined with a powerful vision can turbo-charge us to scale new heights and make us succeed beyond our wildest expectations.
2. **Serve as a strong anchor:** values can serve as a strong anchor in a turbulent sea of changes. Values will help us to weather those storms. Values give faith in a time when it seems we are surrounded by darkness, because they prompt right actions. They build resilience and keep us going.
3. **Provide Courage :** Values provides us with courage to stand up to any way. The strong desire to move ahead can at times tempt business to cut corners or bend the rules. This has a tendency to catch up, as we have seen in the recent months. Values provide the necessary brakes or limits to keep leadership from going astray. Values essentially provide us with an internal discipline.
4. **Values transmit trust :** Trust is not only at the heart of leadership but forms the essence of all relationships. Values can be a powerful cementing force between people who think alike.

#### **Values for Indian Managers**

1. Honesty.
2. Hard work
3. Self-confidence
4. Humility
5. Persistence
6. Passion in whatever do

#### **Indian Values in Management:**

The salient ideas and thoughts of Indian Values in Management revealed by our ancient scriptures are :

1. **Atmamo Mokshartham, Jagat hitaya cha :** All work is an opportunity for doing good to the world and thus

- gaining materially and spiritually in our lives.
2. Archetma manabhyam Worship people not only with material things but also by showing respect to their enterprising divinity within.
  3. **Atmana Vundyate Viryam** : Strength and inspiration for excelling in work comes from the Divine, God within, through prayer, spiritual readings and unselfish work.
  4. **Yogah Karmashu kaushalam, Samatyam Yoga uchyate**: He who works with calm and even minds achieves the most.
  5. **Yadishi bhavana yasya siddhi bhavati tadrishi**: As we think, so we succeed, so we become. Attention to means ensures the end.
  6. **Parasparam bhavyanth shreyah param bhavapsyathah**: By mutual cooperation, respect and fellow feeling, all of us enjoy the highest good both material and spiritual.
  7. **Tesham sukhum teshom shanty shaswati**: Infinite happiness and infinite peace come to them who see the Divine in all beings.
  8. **Paraspar Devo Bhav**: Regard the other person as a divine being. All of us have the same consciousness though our packages and containers are different

#### Conclusion:

There is a growing realization all over the world that ethics is virtually important for any business and for the progress of any society. Ethics makes for the efficient economy; ethics alone, not government or laws, can protect society; ethics is good in itself; ethics and profits go together in the long-run.

An ethically responsible company is one which has developed a culture of caring for people and for the environment; a culture which flows downwards from the top managers and leaders. The most elementary and fundamental means laid down by Bhagwad Gita, Kautilya & Budha's for checking Karmas, Ahimsa, Law and justice, manage yourself, attainment of goals of life etc. which every manager is supposed to observe.

The study of ancient ethics for the modern life today's business cultivates the virtues like forgiveness, humanity, straight forwardness, purity, truthfulness, restraint and indifference, regards perfection or self realization on the highest goods that play an important role for achieving success in overall objectives of business and managers.

#### References:

1. The evolution of business ethics in India,  
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/IJSE-05-2013-0129?>
2. Business Ethics and Corporate Governance, B.N. Ghosh
3. Indian Values system and Ethics, file:///C:/Users/friends/Downloads/2-11-1375187658-10.%20Humanities-Indian%20Value-Ayyagari%20Nageswara%20Rao.pdf
4. Business Ethics, R.K.Sharma