SPIRITUALITY AT WORKPLACE – A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW

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Abstract:

Spirituality in the workplace is gaining appreciation and importance among academicians, researchers and industry professionals. The purpose of this paper is to review spirituality in the workplace and identifying different perspectives of spirituality for the benefit of employees as well as the organization based on the extant literature. Organizations of the 21st century necessitates that their employees carry their entire selves to the workplace – along with their physical and intellectual charisma, nowadays they are required to get involved spiritually. An emerging number of employees are seeking more than mere economic gain in the workplace – the purpose is to achieve something in the form of significant and inspirational work. Satisfactory evidences are based on existing researches and literature that spirituality in the workplace is accountable for building a new organizational culture in which employees are happy, content, satisfied and better achieving. Also in addition, employee engagement, commitment and experience of job satisfaction are enhanced. The outcome is an aloft curve for the benefit of the working employee, workplace and the organization altogether. This paper presents a comprehensive view and definitions of spirituality in the work place and strategies for corporate leaders in nurturing the spiritual mindset for the employees of the organization.

Key Words: workplace spirituality, spiritual leaders, strategies & spiritual mind-set.

Introduction:

An evolving Indian culture and an unpredictable business environment are driving the revitalization of the place of work through a blend of and an infusion of spirituality. The requirement of a spiritual infusion and association of spirituality in the workplace has become significant to a large number of audiences, partly because of an ongoing turmoil in an organizational structure, which often leads to feeling of uncertainty and insecurity regarding one's workplace in the system (Giacalone, R. A., & Jurkiewicz, C. L. (2003).

Corporate disposition is being called into inquiry, not only with the economic and financial issues such as reserve and supply management, stock management and corporations ignoring normally acknowledged accounting procedures, but also with regard to human capital issues, human rights, corporate contributions, workplace stress, employee engagement issues, business ethics and community development. Workplace spirituality has augmented to the forefront since the late 1990's, moderately due to the massive cost of disrespecting human resource values as they are associated to business practices.

Spirituality in the workplace is regarding employees who recognize themselves as spirited beings, whose spirits yearn required to be energized through work and their job. It is all about understanding and experiencing the real and true purpose, significance and meaning at work ahead of paychecks and routine performance appraisals. Spirituality in the workplace is regarding employees understanding, experiencing and sharing some common connection, desirability, attachment and togetherness with each other within their department and organization as a whole (Marschke, E., Preziosi, R., & Harrington, W. (2009). It is an ongoing exploration for meaning and purpose in life; a gratitude for the strength in life, the spread of the universe, and the natural forces which control it; and, it is a individual belief system (Myers, J. E., & Williard, K. (2003).

Rising inquisitiveness in the workplace and corporate spirituality is leading towards the development of a narrative model in organizational behavior. The phenomenon of spirituality in the workplace is gaining attention gradually. However, the precise definition of "Workplace Spirituality" is still under question. This paper endeavors stipulation of a literature with a significant review on workplace spirituality by examining the elementary justification of the major developments pertaining to spirit at work. In this paper, diverse viewpoints and dimensions of workplace spirituality are conversed along with their implications describing the intellect, significance and special effects of spirituality from the perspective of work setting for the corporate leaders.

However workplace spirituality is considered as enormously subjective and rational model, almost all of the theoretical definitions identify that spirituality encompasses a sense of connectedness, completeness at work and profound ideology.

Workplace spirituality has been regarded as one of the exclusive ways of improving the performance of employees. Spirituality in the workplace is not about spiritual or religious beliefs at workplace. In fact, spirituality is regarding employees, who perceive their beings as spirited creatures towards their job and the organization. Corporate spirituality is unconditionally about the employees involved in mutual affection, charm, affinity and belongingness with each other at the workplace in an organization. Therefore, corporate spirituality can be well considered as the appreciating of employee's spirit and inner life.

Review of Literature:

Meaning of Work

Work is basically fundamental element of any individual's identity or personality (Brown & Lent 2013:3). Work is form of an effort associated with all aspects of human development. Rational, physiological, intellectual, social, emotional and psychological factors have an impact on work and similarly, work may have an impact on every other aspect of an individual's life. An individual's choice of profession determines what the society look forward from him or her in terms of professional behavior, their actions and activities. It determines their societal, communal and recreational lives as well as their personal morals, ethics, values and attitudes.

Due to dynamic changes in the society, technology, economy, organization of the workforce and social climate, the role of the worker has been portray as stagnant (Papalia et al. 2007:278; Whitbourne 2007:246; Biorklund& Bee 2008:202; Schreuder& Coetzee 2011:1; Brown & Lent 2013: 2-5).

In 1960, the expression *'different strokes for different folks'* was used to describe that individuals vary from each other in regard of motives, needs and purpose (Fourie, M. (2014). Stud Terkel, the creator of the most enthralling book '*Working'*(1974), wrote that work is:

… a hunt for daily meaning as well as everyday bread, for gratitude as well as money, for surpriset rather than indolence; in short, for a kind of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. (p.xiii).

For the number of people the significance of work is not only found in the economic gains it generates, but also by providing a structure of life that distinguish the days, weeks and months of the year. It establishes the supreme part of their communication and interrelationships with other people. Work is a foundation of any person's identity, position, self-esteem, communal recognition, appearance of personal well being and potentialities (Brown & Lent 2013:2-5). Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to people to provide something amazing of themselves to others so as to experience meaningfulness. To most of the people the major reason for work is certainly to earn a regular income and an economic gain. Since history the meaning and significance of work is associated to earning money in return for vital provisions (as well as luxuries), and also to the likelihood of personal development.

These professional priorities imitate cultural values and are subject to modify with time and importance of skills (Louw& Edwards 2005:505; Raddon 2005:5-6; Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields 2006:428; Whitbourne 2007:246). The understanding of work may be spoken in a network of relationships: in the interaction of people and objects and in a better perspective that makes it more or less meaningful (Mirvis 1997:199)

Meaning of Spirituality

Cacioppe(2000) explained the perception of spirituality is finding the meaning, importance, rationale and value for one's work and life. Mayes (2001) identifies spirituality as psychological or psychotherapy concerned that provides as the ontological ground for an ethic of empathy and tune up to the service of the people.

Ellison (1983) believes spirituality as a component of people's undergoing search for the significance and purpose personified in a super analytical being or a power superior than the self.

Spirituality is a broader concept and may be defined by different people in a divergent ways. Every area engrossed by spirituality interprets the phenomenon in a unique way. The divergent views enrich the understanding of the phenomenon, but also lead to lot of confusion and disturbance as stated by Carette and King (2005).

The below table shows some of the interpretation of the phenomenon spirituality:

Table – 1.1 Definitions of the term Spirituality

Definitions	Source
An individual and personal expression of ultimate concern	Emmons (2000)
The one which includes ultimate and personal truths	Wong (1998), p. 364
How a person lives significantly with intimacy in his or her response to the deepest and sincere truths of the universe.	Bregman and Thierman (1995), p. 149
Our response to the deep and mysterious human yearning for self transcendence and surrender, a yearning to find our place.	Benner (1989), p. 20
A subjective experience of the sacred	Vaughn (1991), p. 105
An individual's personal life principle which makes a transcendent quality of relationship with God alive.	Emblen (1992), p. 45
A vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with Life, with compassion and with purpose.	Tart (1975), p. 4
That human striving for the transforming power present in life; it is that attraction and movement of the human being towards the divine	Dale (1991), p. 5
Pertaining to the innate capacityto, and tendency to seek to, transcend one's current focus of centricity, which with transcendence involves increased knowledge and love.	Chandler and Holden (1992)
The animating force that inspires one toward purposes that are beyond one's self and that give one's life meaning and direction.	McKnight (1984), p. 142

Source: Giacalone R. and Jurkiewicz C. (2003), 'Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance, Public Administration Review, 29, 3, pp.355-363.

After an extensive research, Beazley (1997) carves that "spirituality includes assured and faith association with inspirational power that stays beyond and is not dependent on the materialistic universe". The association with the inspirational and immaterial idea and a pledge to an idea that is beyond the universe or purpose that is bigger than the self is explained in the term spirituality

Mitroff and Denton (1999) examined spirituality as an individual's attempt to survive in a coordinated way rather than distinguishing it in to different categories of survival. Fullan (2002) thinks that spirituality engages recognizing a moral and ethical purpose for our lives that will associate rational behaviour to something that is far superior than we are.

Houston and Sokolow (2006) believes that spirituality needs an individual to create an intensive effort to go to the outer self and identify that component of an individual that is far superior and additional than any material and that once found offers a bond to the infinite.

There are various definitions and view points on spirituality, butnone the views defines the phenomenon absolutely and has the consent of all. Diverse view point challenges and mystery occurs because of the subjectivity of the phenomenon (Gull and Doh, 2004), dearth of experimental and empirical studies and researches in this field (McCormick, 1994), overlying with the field of religion (Zinnbauer et al., 1999) and delicate (Freshman, 1999) and complex (Coyle, 2002) nature of the subject.

Spirituality in the Workspace

Spirituality in the workplace is an understanding of the connection and relationship shared by the entire workforce who are involved in a work processes with you, primarily generated by the consciousness that each and everyone is personally driven by a central power which builds and sustain his or her sense of creative talent, compassion, proactive moves, reliability, self-confidence and courage; as a result leading to the collective foundation of beautifully motivational atmosphere characterized by a ray of hope, purpose, high values and ethics, peace, involvement, accomplishment, care, recognition, encouragement and thus leading to the atmosphere of increased team work and overall harmony and eventually directing the business organizations to develop into a leader in its industry and community through its exhibition of fairness, vision, outlook, clarity, creativity, efficient

working, cooperativeness and achievement. The experience of being connectedness and impact of spirituality in the workplace consequently reward each and every employee with the accomplishment of enhanced self esteem and job satisfaction.

With the augmentation of human psychology (exclusively the work of Maslow) and the growing interest in specialized counseling and hallucinatory culture, Spirituality has put on popularity in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1980s, spirituality gained another major shift with the self-development progress as its focus (Carette& King, 2005). Ever since the commencement of the 1990s, the curiosity and significance in spirituality has shown a rapidly rising effect. Journals, magazines, books, visual materials and websites on spirituality at the workplace appear to be exceptionally beneficial business for the publishers.

The outgrowing increase of organizational curiosity in spirituality is not only considered as a trend but an organized movement. It is not a onetime movement but a genuine effort with a change in importance to the idea of work as being significant and having sense and meaning to it. (Hicks 2003, Marques 2005, Smith 2006).

Mitroff and Denton (1999) have lodged on a research to determine the meaning of spirituality at workplace. 100 comprehensive interviews were conducted by them with senior and executive managers. Questions were asked about the significance and meaningfulness of spirituality at workplace. An important outcome was that when people were questioned, they came out with their own definition of spirituality rather than that presented to them by the interviewers. And the astonishing fact that was found was most people encompassed the same key elements in their definitions. The key elements of a definition of spirituality as given by the respondents may briefly be termed by the following words and phrases:

- Not official, controlled or organized

- No quantities or values

- Largely comprehensive, embracing every individual

- Worldwide and eternal

- Significance and purposive in life

- Admiration that is mutual for the upliftment

- The sublimity of everything, the commonness of everything

- The interconnectedness of everything

- Inner peace and calm

- The infinite source of faith and determination

- The 'ultimate end within'

Though the researchers (Mitroff & Denton 1999) highlighted that not all the respondents agree with all the elements of spirituality, but majority of them recognized the presence of supreme controlling force and interconnectedness as the significant and fundamental component of spirituality.

Gupta, M., Kumar, V., & Singh, M. (2014) studied the impact of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction of employees in private insurance companies in Punjab (India) by assessing four aspects of spirituality in the workplace: organisational values, sense of community, meaningful work and compassion. A correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between all the aspects of spirituality at workplace and job satisfaction. A regression analysis revealed that though all the aspects of spirituality in the workplace are important but organisational values and sense of community are the most significant in terms of job satisfaction of employees.

Spirituality at workplace is an experience and practice of interconnectedness, shared by all individuals involved in the work processes, primarily generated by the mindfulness that everyone is individually driven by an inner power, which nurtures and maintains his or her wisdom of knowledge, kindness, creativity, honesty, courage and confidence, ultimately leading to the collective creation of appealing inspirational environment leading to a sense of trust, respect, high ethical standards, understanding, acceptance, care, appreciation, engagement, encouragement, achievement, helpfulness and peace, thus leading a climate of improved team building and overall harmony, and aesthetically directing the organisation to become a leader I its industry and community through its exposition of cooperativeness, vision, responsibility, charity, fairness, accomplishment and high productivity (Marques et al., 2005, p. 87).

Benefits of Spirituality at Workplace for Individuals and Corporates

Researches have proved that development of spirituality at the workplace can results in to benefits in the aspect of trust, honesty, care, peace, personal fulfilment and commitment, and which will collectively leads to increase in organisational performance.

Researches have proved that introducing spirituality at workplace among employees have changed the perception of workplace stressors leading to organisational wellbeing (Csiernik& Adams, 2002, p.4). The emerging squirt of intellectual articles along with various authors presently in scripting on the spirituality at the workplace (Benefiel, 2003; Milliman, Czaplewski& Ferguson, 2003) demonstrates the concern in the relationship of spirituality in the workplace, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Connolly & Myers, 2003; Milliman, Czaplewski& Ferguson, 2003).

The urge for spirituality in the workplace and its connection has become significant to larger people, fairly because of continuing changes in organisational structure, which consequently results in feelings of insecurity regarding one's position in the system (Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk& Travis, 2004). The fundamental of spirituality is about individuals sharing, understanding and experiencing collectively some belongingness, attachment, attraction and togetherness within their work, department and organisation as a whole (Harrinton, 2004; Mitroff& Denton, 1999).

Researches in these areas indicated the requirement of integrating spirituality into the workplace in order to enrich employee motivation, job performance and satisfaction (Krishnakumar& Neck, 2002). On the basis of previous researches it seems that working in a climate with leaders that support spirituality; employees are more satisfied and enjoy work more than those who don't support spiritual sense.

Various studies have demonstrated a strong relation between values & workplace behaviour. Employees bring their values that determine their behaviour, code of conduct and performance at the workplace (Roe & Ester, 1999). These values are fairly unwavering over a period of time and have a bearing on their attitudes, behaviour and performance. Values have an impact on one's perception towards a situation, how one communicates to others, and acts as a determinant for their choices and actions (Hitlin&Piliavin, 2004).

Spirituality in people have internalised a certain conception of authentic excellence. This actually means that such people not only mentally adhere to specific values but also are devoted to follow them.

Researches have proved that the growth and manifestation of the spirituality at workplace may certainly provide the solution to problems like stress and burnout at the workplace, as well as have constructive impact for the well-being of employees. Reave (2005) indicates the review of Emmons (1999, p. 876) that abridges seven studies that have proved a substantial and significant correlation between spirituality and mental health indices of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, hope & optimism and meaning in life.

There is increasing researches that prove spirituality at the workplace that it leads to constructive individual results such as improved joy, job satisfaction and commitment (Paloutzian, Emmons, and Keortge, 2003; Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Burack, 1999; Reave, 2005; Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, (2003)Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002; Fry, 2003, 2005.

There are lot many evidences that spirituality at workplace enhances organisational efficiency and reduces absenteeism and employee turnover (Fry, 2003, 2005; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003a).Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) found a constructive and positive correlation between spirituality at workplace and employee commitment to the organisation, job satisfaction and engagement.

Neck &Milliman (1994) proved spirituality values have constructive effects on both personal development and professional well-being. Employers are today indoctrinating workplace spirituality to increase employee motivation, commitment and efficiency. Research proposes developing spirituality at work empowers employees to feel a sense of completeness and belongingness at the workplace (Burack, 1999); which leads to a high degree of personal accomplishment, high morale which consequently leads to increased organisational efficiency (Turner, 1999). Bento (1994) reviewed lot many researches and claims that spiritually vested employees are found to be more authentic, audacious and empathetic individuals and they retain these characteristic at the workplace.

An organisation without spirituality can consequently results in high absenteeism, employee turnover, low commitment, high level of stress associated to work deadlines and depression (Thompson, 2000).Contrastingly, development of spirituality in the workplace leads to enhanced employee motivation, job commitment, creativity, honesty and trust hope and optimism, personal accomplishment, which will consequently, leads to increased organisational efficiency. However due to varied views on

spirituality by different people at the workplace, managers and leaders should encourage employees to follow their own path of spirituality and relate this path to the achievement of goals of the organisation.

Major Findings

- Development of spirituality in the workplace should never be underestimated for future global developments. If people are treated in a positive manner and feel that they truly matter, ultimately their morale will be high and their efforts will me more, consequently more output which leads to improved national, regional and global situation of their workplace. And once this position or situation of nurturing spirituality at workplace is established, the advancement of the society as a whole in which these organisations operate will follow.

- Spirituality is not exactly a religion, but instead association with one's deepest inner self. Spirituality at work place has nothing to do with implementation & administration of religion at work among employees.

- It gets stimulated and inspiring when people at workplace take good care of themselves in every aspect – mentally, physically and spiritually.

- Spirituality at workplace belief in one self and on positive outcomes even times is grim.

- Spirituality begins with acknowledging the fact that every living being, be it individual or group entity has a spirit. It not only leads to development of one self and organisational growth but also betterment of the society.

- Spirituality in the workplace is deep interconnection with one self. This climate should be encouraged within the organisation where all the employees are motivated to talk about and learn from it.

Strategies for Corporate Leaders in Nurturing the Spiritual Mind-set for the Employees at Workplace.

Many organisations are increasingly using prayers for guidance as an effective decision making for challenging situations or to express gratefulness for something good. Krishankalra, Chairman and CEO of BioGenex practice the Hindu holy text, The Bhagwat Gita, to steer his business from difficult and challenging situation. On-line prayer service is used by Microsoft.

Many successful companies also practice meditation as an active strategy for stimulating workplace spirituality. Some of the popular meditation techniques in the corporate are deep breathing exercises to reduce stress, deep and effective listening, building shared values, visioning exercises and using intuition and inner guidance in effective decision making. Many successful corporates now days practice meditation classes such as Medtronic, Apple, Google, Yahoo, McKinsey, Hughes Aircraft and Raytheon.

Meditation helps in boosting emotional intelligence, will serene the stressed and agitated mind and help to retain inner calmness which ultimately increases efficiency. Meditation programme and happiness programme for not only employees and managers but also for workers and their union leaders are introduced by many corporates like Wipro, Dabur, Tata Tea and Petro-chemicals and many other successful companies to bring calmness in the mind thereby enabling effective decisions.

Yoga is another physical technique practiced by many successful corporate leaders. It helps in improving spiritual wellness of employees and managers at workplace by reducing emotional and physical strains from their mind and body.

Spiritual leaders, their tasks and processes mediate the care of one's body, mind, heart and spirit by the followers.They even foster trust, cooperation, mutual care and commitment by developing inspiring vision and mission statements for the organisation. Only spiritual leaders can bring about transformation among employees and managers in their own workgroup, in their organisational culture, in situations and perceiving things from a spiritual way in any crises. Spiritual leaders may establish and sustain interconnectedness among employees in the organisation

Inspiring spirituality at the workplace by corporate leaders in the organisational setup leads to building creativity, environment of openness, trust and honesty, personal contentment, organisational efficiency and interconnectedness among employees within the organisation. Spiritual conduct within the organisation may lead to organisational welfare and excellence in attaining mission and vision of the organisation since it increase employee commitment and engagement and develops an holistic approach to the working individual (Dhiman& Marques 2011:818, 830-831).

There are enough researches to prove that spirituality in the workplace is accountable for creating a new culture with content, satisfied and happier workforce who brings better innovation and deliver better achievements.

Conclusion

Spirituality is more of an on-going process than an end in itself. It comprises of how the thins are performed in the organisation rather than mere achievement of goals. It altogether turns out the business in a different perspective towards holistic development.It is quite interesting that more and more companies today are following spiritual practices to enhance employee creativity and development to achieve excellence in achievements. Employment of a committee or a board to define the role played by spiritual practices at the workplace is the first step towards establishing workplace spirituality. Spirituality at workplace identifies that people have a deep inner life that nourishes and is nurtured by work that takes place in the context of community.

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