



# Application of Managerial Functions during Azadari by Shia Muslims

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## Abstract:

The Mourning of Muharram (also known as Azadari, Remembrance of Muharram or Muharram Observances) is a set of commemoration rituals observed primarily by Shia people. The commemoration falls in Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar. The practices of azadari has been followed since sixth century. Its been practiced all over the world in different forms. Managerial functions mainly include planning, organising, directing and controlling. The proceedings of azadari is based on various managerial functions and is completed properly due to the systematic application of these principles. In this paper, we shall evaluate the application of various managerial functions in azadari processions.

## Keywords :

Azadari, planning, organising, directing, controlling, muharram, shia muslims

## Introduction:

Managerial functions includes planning (the process of identifying and defining the goals and providing accurate measures and devices), organizing (order to work, people doing the work), Leadership (guidance and supervision of human resources), coordination (coordinating human and material resources and appropriate relationship with the organization) and controlling (individual and organizational performance evaluation process). These managerial functions are used in various religious practices of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Buddhism etc. In this paper , we shall evaluate the application of those managerial function during azadari by Shia Muslim in muharram.

Muharram is one of the most important months for Muslims and marks the start of the Islamic New Year. Historically, the month has lot of significance in Islam due to the occurrence of some important events in the month. For sunni muslims, this month symbolises peace and reflection.

The mourning of Muharram was started by the family members (especially women) of Imam Husayn (the Ahl-ul-Bayt) immediately after his death and death of his family members even before entering Damascus.

Following the Battle of Karbala, Muhammad's granddaughter Zaynab bint Ali and sister of Imam Husayn, began mourning for the fallen and making speeches against Imam Husayn ibn Ali's opponents: Ibn Ziyad, Yazid I, Umar Ibne Saad, Shimr ibn Dhil-jawshan and Hurmala. News of Imam Husayn ibn Ali's martyrdom was spread by Imam Zain-ul-Abideen, who succeeded Imam Husayn as the Shia Imam, via sermons and speeches throughout Iraq, Syria and Hejaz.

At present the azadari begins from first day of muharram and mainly performed on the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth of muharram. The procession of ninth muharram is the largest one where various anjuman and tanzeem prepare and present their taaziya(a replica of the tomb of Husain).

### Objectives:

- To identify the managerial functions.
- To understand the concept of azadari.
- To study the application of managerial functions during azadari.

### Review of Literature:

Ebrahim Fayyaz and Jabar Rahmani in their paper titled “Azadari Ritual and Karbala Discourse in Religiosity of Subordinate Citizen Strata” have focussed on the new methods used for azadari. The second half of the 1990s decade experienced the tremendous expanding of “new style” and their content in the urban space as well as acute youths attitude to them. In general, today this new discourse has dominated azadari in the urban space particularly the subordinate youths centers. The Karbala discourse is the most important religious discourse which provides them with the main religious framework to make sense Shiite and its ritual and action based on this sense.

Safi Haider in his paper titled “Ethnography of Lamentation: Azadari as It Exists in the Tri-State Shi'i Community and Its Future in the American Milieu” have evaluated the fundamental mourning ceremonies termed azadari in the tristate Shi'i community. This work seeks to analyze Azadari in the light of the Tri-State Shi'i community, which is a deeply diverse community, consisting of immigrants from various other countries, including Pakistan, India, Iran, and the Arab communities. At its heart, this work is an ethnography, it seeks to know the experience of those who are a part of the Muharram commemorations and it seek to see what the underlying psychological and the social foundations of Azadari are.

Timothy P.A.Cooper in his paper titled “*Live* has an atmosphere of its own’: *azadari*, ethical orientation, and tuned presence in Shi'i media praxis” have done ethnographic research into the relationship between Shi'i practices of *azadari* and their technological mediation, this article aims to provide greater insights into what atmosphere can do for anthropology, with the suggestion that it acts as a way of recognizing different thresholds of intensity and change.

## Concept of Management:

Management has been described as a social process involving responsibility for economical and effective planning & regulation of operation of an enterprise in the fulfillment of given purposes. It is a dynamic process consisting of various elements and activities. These activities are different from operative functions like marketing, finance, purchase etc. Rather these activities are common to each and every manager irrespective of his level or status.

Managerial process basically includes the following functions:

### Planning

Planning is the most important and the most prevalent of all management functions. This function bridges the gap between where we are and where we want to be in future. The tasks and functions that are required to bridge this gap is referred to as planning. If people working in groups have to perform effectually, they should know in advance what is to be done, what activities they have to perform in order to do what is to be done, and when it is to be done. Planning is concerned with what, how, and when of performance. It is determining in the present about the future objectives and the courses of action for their achievement. It involves determination of the long and short range objectives; development of strategies and courses of action to be followed for the achievement of these objectives and formulation of policies, plans and rules for the implementation of strategies and procedures.

### Organizing

Organizing involves identification of the activities, required for the achievement of the objectives of the enterprise and implementation of plans, grouping of activities into jobs, assignment of jobs and activities into the departments of the individuals, delegation of responsibility and authority for performance and provision of vertical and horizontal co-ordination of activities.

### Directing

Directing is a function of leading the employees to perform efficiently and productively. The main purpose of this function is to make sure the measures that are formulated to achieve the desired and goals and objectives are moving in the right direction. The workforce should have the main aim of dedicating their efforts towards the pursuance of goals and objectives. The subordinates that are recruited, may or may not have some experience, they need to be adequately explained about their job duties. It is the job duty of the supervisors to guide them, train them and solve their problems.

Directing includes three sub-functions of :

- Leading
- Motivating
- Communicating

### **Co-ordinating**

Co-ordinating is the function of instituting such relationships among various parts of the organization that they all together pull in the direction of the organizational objectives. It is referred to an act of synchronizing and unifying the actions of a group of people. It is thus the process of binding together all the organizational decisions, operations, tasks, activities and efforts so as to achieve the unity of action for the achievement of organizational objectives.

### **Controlling**

Controlling is the function of ensuring that the divisional, departmental, sectional and individual performances are reliable and in accordance with the determined objectives and goals. Deviations from the objectives and plans have to be recognized and scrutinized, and corrective action should be taken. Deviations from plans and objectives provide feedback to the managers, and all other management processes including planning, organizing, staffing, directing and co-ordinating. These need to be continuously revised and modified, where necessary.

### **Azadari:**

Azadari, to hold a commemoration of the dead, by extension, mourning, a word deriving from Arabic 'aza', which means commemorating the dead. This is also the basic meaning of the cognate tazia, which came to designate in addition the passion plays mounted in Moḥarram. Details of the commemoration of the dead as regulated by *feqh* are to be found in the chapters headed ai-janaez(funerals) in the handbooks of all the legal schools.

Expression of grief with thumping of the chest by Shia Muslims is known as latmya, latmaya or latmia in Arabic-Persian countries. In India and Pakistan it is called matam or matam-dari/sina aannee (chest beating).

In recent years there has been a rise in English eulogies with added chest beating across the western world expressing sorrow and grief, predominantly in London, UK. Whilst matam being recited in English is still relatively new, the works of renowned reciter Sayed Ali Radhawi and respected published poet Nouri Sardar have helped push mourning to an English audience.

Muharram rituals was often called by European observers "the Feast of Hasan and Hussain ," as the participants shout "Hasan! Hussain! The term majalis has both a grammatical meaning and a meaning which relates to Aza-e-Hussain. In its technical sense, a majalis is a meeting, a session or a gathering.

## Application of managerial functions during azadari :

Managerial functions are applicable in all spheres of life be it personal or professional or religious. The azadari proceedings are mainly performed from between first muharram and tenth muharram and more specifically on seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth of muharram. The azadari procession on ninth and tenth muharram represent largest gatherings of the shia population of cities.

Taaziya is a replica of any events associated with the martyrdom story of Imam Hussain at Karbala. Its been prepared with cardboard, clothes, Therma coal and other similar materials. White horse is also used in the procession as 'Zulzala' which was the horse of Imam Hussain.

Various anjuman and social groups prepares their taaziya on different themes. They plan for the idea well in advance, accordingly they arrange for material other necessities for preparation of taaziya. At times the preparation begins from first of Moharram. The work is divided among various members of group. Over the years, some people become specialist in their respective work due to repetition of work. Proper planning helps them to keep the taaziya ready on ninth of muharram. Every year these anjuman tries to make different design of taaziya.

Nowadays, some anjuman makes techno-savvy taaziya. Certain mechanical process for depicting the presentations are also used. Some basic ingredients for making taaziya are used over the years like the 'punjas' (metal palm with the name of Prophet Mohammed and his family engraved on it) , metal rod and some other stuff also. They preserve these things for the entire year with their anjuman reserve. This shows a proper organising function of raising and maintain resources properly.

During the azadari process, one can witness the best example of coordination. The hand movements while doing chest beating or with the various instruments like zanjeer or knife is always with the same space and in the same direction. Even the 'Noha' recited by the azadars are in proper sync. One can also see great amount of coordination during taaziya preparations. Small elements of taaziya is prepared by different individual which are put together to form a full fledged taaziya. The size, colour theme, design of various aspects of taaziya are in tune to make sure it looks wholesome.

There is a need of good communication during the entire procession for taaziya making, performing azadari and final visit to qabarastan on the tenth of muharram. The messages are passed to the entire community through the hoardings, whatsapp message, facebook/Instagram post, telephonic conversation etc.

The senior and experienced members of anjuman gives the guidance and training to the younger members for taaziya making and for participation in azadari process. Youngsters are encouraged to take up azadari involving blood or walking on fire. The importance of azadari is explained by Imaam as well as family members which motivates the youngsters to participate in the azadari process.

Any difficulty or problem while taaziya procession or azadari process is taken care and in the subsequent year they try to avoid the same difficulty. This facilitates the last managerial function i.e control.

The major concern during azadari procession is with respect to usage of sharp objects like knife, sword, chain(zanjeer). People performing azadari with the sharp object end up resulting in bleeding. There should be an efficient first aid system(some antiseptic, bandage, ambulance) following the procession to provide immediate medical care. Sometimes when the bleeding increases, the person has to be rushed to hospital. Anjumans makes proper arrangement for such medical facilities also during the planning stage itself.

### **Scope for Further Research:**

Managerial principles have application in all spheres of life, religions are no exception there. A through analysis of various religious practices will reveal application of managerial practices in those religions. The research can further be extended to application of managerial principles in other religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism etc.

### **Conclusion:**

Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun and he was right. Methods may change, but thousands of years ago people were still people dealing with same business issues. Most of the western management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, decision making and planning, are all discussed in The Bible, Holy Quran and The Bhagavad Gita. The age old practices of Azadari are based on managerial practices. Over a period, technological advancement and modernisation has brought about some changes in the procession. The large gathering and procession (for more than ten days) is managed properly mainly due to excellent management. Good managerial practices always leads to successful completion of work.

Azadari procession not only involve large gathering but due to the usage of knife and sharp objects, there has been a lot of bleeding of the people involved. Arranging the immediate first aid and making sure that there will not be a major issue with respect to the health of a person is a troublesome task. Excellent management on the part of anjumans is facilitating smooth conduct of procession without any major health issue.

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