

# Employee Motivation : A powerful Model

## (Philosophies of Shrimad Bhagvad Gita and Valmiki Ramayana)

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### Abstract

*Saha Yajnah Praja Sarstva Puro Vacha Praja Patin  
Anena Prasavisya Dhvam Eso Vo Ast – Vista Kama Dhuk  
(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Three, Verse 10)*

*(The prajapati, the creator, having in the beginning of creation created mankind, together with sacrifice and mutual help they would grow, prosper and multiply)*

**Purpose** - This study seeks to focus on the teachings of Lord Krishna and Shri Ram which were simple yet so meaningful and could be implemented by contemporary managers and leaders for motivating their employees and followers.

**Design/methodology/approach** - Few Kands from Valmiki Ramayana, chapters from Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta and their relevance for the growth of modern management have been discussed. Also, the characteristics of Shri Ram and Lord Krishna are highlighted and compared with the contemporary Human Resource Practices. The study not only tries to highlight the ways that were used by Lord Krishna to motivate Arjuna but also explores Shri Ram's quality of motivating rishis, sages and small animals that later helped him in building the Sri Ram Sethu.

**Findings** - Ancient philosophies and literature, somewhere, hold strong meanings and solutions to the various modern problems, if understood and implemented properly.

**Originality/value** - This study could help not only the Indian leaders or managers but also universally, the people who are dealing with issues of lack of motivation in their employees or followers.

**Keywords** - Motivation, Human Resource Practices, Ancient Philosophies, Lord Krishna, Arjuna and Shri Ram.

### Introduction

What is Motivation? Is it just a term related to human behaviour? No, its not just a term but a power that gave courage to soldiers to fight on Siachen Glacier at a height of 6,400 m above sea level. A steady push that made a Harvard undergraduate, Bill Gates to write a version of programming language BASIC for the MITS Altair microcomputer. A spark that lead India towards freedom. A passion that made people like Chris Gardner excel.

But then, several question arises, Is motivating someone an easy task? If yes, then why today many Multinational Organizations are facing issues motivating their employees? And, If No, then what could be the ways that may be used to motivate people?

It is not that motivation has come into picture due to the globalization, MNCs and hence, work overload, late working hours, or competitive pay. Even in ancient times motivation had played a major role but somewhere we are overlooking it in haste. For example, Not only in India but all across the world, it is still a widespread practice that when a child is born or when a person dies, his or her family members and relatives memorize and pray to god for the child's growth and soul's peace as the case may be. It shows that people from all across the world are still following the customs defined by their predecessors. Then why are we not paying heed to the ways defined by our ancestors to get motivated?

Seeking new ways for motivation is a good practice but at the same time it is imperative that we should not overlook the methods and solutions which were defined in our religious mythologies.

*\*English Translation of Verse 10, Chapter 3 (Srimad Bhagvad-Gita).*

*Available at: [http://srilapurimaharaja.org/books/srimad\\_bhagavad\\_gita.pdf](http://srilapurimaharaja.org/books/srimad_bhagavad_gita.pdf)*

I start with a brief overview of Srimad Bhagvad-Gita followed by a similar overview of Valmiki Ramayana and the traits and characteristics of Lord Krishna and Sri Ram. This study tries to focus on different factors of demotivation and various solutions for motivation. In this paper I've tried to compare the verses given by Lord Krishna and Sri Ram to motivate Arjuna and Hanuman, respectively. And, how it can be used by modern generations for motivation.

## Srimad Bhagvad-Gita and Motivation

The Srimad Bhagvad-Gita is an ancient Indian spiritual and philosophical text and its more than 5000 years old. Lord Krishna dictated Srimad Bhagvad-Gita to his friend and disciple Arjuna at the battle field prior to the commencement of war between the Kauravas & Pandavas. The Holy Srimad Bhagvad-Gita is the essence of the Vedas and Upanishads. It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times.

Let us discuss, how Lord Krishna motivated and energized Arjuna to do his duty through verses.

When Arjuna, the great disciple of Lord Krishna, saw his family and relatives in the battle field he became demotivated and refused to fight for his empire. Then, Lord Krishna taught him about the ups and downs of life and said:

*matra-sparsas to kaun teyasitosna-sukha-dukha-dah  
Agamapayino 'nityas tams titiksasva bharata*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Two, Verse 14)**

(This means, it is the senses, and their contact with objects, which give rise to heat and cold, pleasure and pain, O son of Kunti, these appear and disappear temporarily like winter and summer seasons. Endure them, O Bharata.)

Predominately contemporary managers focus merely on motivation and usually, forget factors which lead to demotivation in their employees. For example, when an employee does his best he gets rewarded but at the same time no matter however much the employee had tried and ultimately fails to achieve a target, manager instead of encouraging shows his resentment. It ultimately leads

toward de-motivation. So, through the above mentioned verse, Lord Krishna tried to explain that a person should remain unperturbed even in worst situations.

Coming to the next HR Practice defined in the Srimad Bhagvad-Gita is:

*yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya  
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Two, Verse 48)**

(This means, perform your duty equipoised, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga.)

This verse tries to explain that the managers should focus on encouraging their employees in taking up new assignments irrespective of the consequences. This will not only give the employees a feeling of belongingness but also enhance their capabilities and knowledge. Consequently, monotonous work will get reduced once the fear of taking up new challenges is out. And, eventually, employee will feel motivated.

Moving on towards the other demotivational factor and its solution defined in the Srimad Bhagvad-Gita. More often than not employees face situations wherein their superiors try to sneak into their work, which often leads to resentment in subordinates. Once a task or work has been assigned to the employees, managers should trust their subordinates that they will perform the activity to the best of their ability and if faced with any problem they would certainly ask. But nowadays, it has been seen that the faith which managers had in their employees previously is on a descend and thus, the dissatisfaction among the employees towards their work is on the ascend.

We can easily relate this problem with the Verse 35 mentioned in the Chapter Three named Karma-Yoga in which Lord Krishna said that:

*sreyan sva-dharmo vigunah para-dharmat sv-anusthitat  
Sva-dharme nidhanam sreyah para-dharmo  
bhagavahah*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Three, Verse 35)**

(This means, It is better to discharge one's prescribed

duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in others' duties, since to follow another's path is dangerous.)

This shows that we have solutions to many problems but we are failing to notice it. Globalization has led us to adopt several HR Practices, but more often than not these practices focus more on the extrinsic factors and mere imitation will not help. The situations for de-motivation could be the same but we should not forget that people are different and hence their traits and perception of embracing the situations are different. And, one can easily see that in every verse Lord Krishna focuses on the internal (intrinsic) motivation more than external (extrinsic) motivation.

### Traits of Lord Krishna and Contemporary Managers

Lord Krishna played a major role as a mentor, guide, trainer, developer to revive Arjuna's Motivation. He was a focused, intelligent, simple, modest, compassionate, motivator, leader, manager, forgiver, unalloyed in thoughts with a balanced mind, practical, immovable, rock steady in hard days, impartial for all living entities, good decision-maker, etc. But these days, people are only focused towards the target achievements.

Managers are neglecting the fact that they are those entities in an organization who could make an organization the best place to work for. No matter what targets are assigned, with what level of employees you are dealing in, according to Lord Krishna, a person shouldn't let his temperament tantrums anytime. He should be clear in his thoughts and should treat every person equally and fairly. It is clearly explained in the chapter five named Karma-Sannyasa-Yoga, Verse 18th, 27th and 28th.

*vidya-vinaya-sampanne brahmane gavi hastini  
suni caiva sva-pake ca panditah sama-darsinah*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Five, Verse 18)**

(This means, sages look upon all with an equal eye, whether it be a learned Brahmin endowed with humility or a cow or an elephant or a dog-eating outcaste.)

*sparsan krtva bahir bahyams caksus caivantare bhruvoh  
pranapanau samau krtva nasabhyantara-carinau  
yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir moksa-parayanah  
vigateccha-bhaya-krodho yah sada mukta eva sah*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad Gita, Chapter Five, Verse 27-28)**

(This means, avoiding all external sense objects, fixing his vision between the eyebrows, balancing the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils, controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendentalist becomes free from desire, fear and anger. One who always remains in this stage, is certainly liberated.)

Here external objects could be anything like, changes in economy, growing competitors, achieving high targets which can easily perturb a manager. Being focused and rock steady in these situations will eventually build a perfect manager and a great leader.

As discussed earlier, Lord Krishna was impartial for all living entities and a good decision maker. He explained in the verse 18 of chapter six named Dhyana-Yoga of Srimad Bhagvad-Gita that a person should not get influenced by the external or internal thoughts. So, when relating to the current scenario we can say that by being impartial and having control on thoughts a manager will not only be able to take good decisions but also, he could help his subordinates to work optimistically under different situations and pressure.

*yada viniyatam cittam atmany evavatisthate  
nisprah sarva-kamebhyo yukta ity ucyate tada*  
**(Srimad Bhavad-Gita, Chapter Six, Verse 18)**

(This means a yogi becomes situated in transcendence, when he is detached from all material desires and affinities and his thoughts are controlled and are fixed on the self and Godhead.)

Dissatisfaction of employees from their managers is one amongst the several challenges that are nowadays faced by contemporary managers. One of the main reasons for their dissatisfaction is more heed paid by managers on employees' work rather than on employees itself. On the other hand, if we look into the Lord Krishna traits, he always sought towards the betterment of his disciple Arjuna. This quality of Lord Krishna helped not only in

winning his disciple Arjuna's heart but also made Arjuna loyal towards his Guru Lord Krishna. This characteristic of Lord Krishna can be easily depicted through the following verse:

*sri-bhagavan uvaca*

*bhuya eva maha-baho sru me paramam vacah  
yat te 'ham priyamanaya vaks yami hita-kamyaya*  
**(Srimad Bhagvad-Gita, Chapter 10, Verse 1)**

(This means, the Supreme Lord said: O mighty armed Arjuna, hear my supreme words once again which I am now going to impart for your betterment, as you are very dear to me and it will give you immense pleasure.)

Similarly, contemporary managers should also focus on the betterment of employees' knowledge which will help them from overcoming the issues of employee dissatisfaction.

Just like the Shrimad Bhagvad-Gita, Valmiki Ramayana also narrates various ways to motivate people. So let us now move towards the Valmiki Ramayana.

## **Valmiki Ramayana and Management**

Valmiki Ramayana is an epic poem of India which narrates the journey of Sri Ram. Ram is the Hero and aayana his journey. It is believed that Sri Rama lived in Treta Yug, millennia BC. This religious mythology tells us about the characteristics of Sri Rama. Like, Lord Krishna, Sri Rama also used to motivate his disciple Hanuman on his good deeds.

It is believed that Hanuman was a very powerful man but he himself was unaware about the hidden powers and strengths he had. One day he was asked to find goddess Sita, the wife of Sri Ram, who was captured by Ravana. Hanuman lost his moral when he was asked to jump across the sea to find Goddess Sita. It was Jambwant and Sri Ram who motivated Hanuman to cross the sea, which is a true example of motivation.

When a seemingly powerful person was required to be motivated then why not normal human beings require motivation?

Jambwant and Sri Ram made Hanuman aware regarding his hidden powers. Similarly, it is managers' responsibility to explore the hidden abilities of their employees and motivate them towards the work that could use best of those abilities.

It is clearly explained in Yuddha Kanda that Sri Ram always recognized the efforts of people. For example, when Hanuman came back from Lanka and told Sri Ram regarding Sita, Sri Ram appreciated and embraced Hanuman for his work.

*kritam hanumataa kaaryam sumahadbhuvhi durlabham  
manasaapi yadanyena na shakya dharaNiitale*  
**(Valmiki Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda, Chapter 1, Verse 2)**

(This means, Sri Ram Said: outstanding work, the most arduous in the world has been done by Hanuman, which could not be carried out even in thought by any other on the surface of this earth.)

Another example of motivation that described in Valmiki Ramayana was when Nala, who was a glorious person and the son of Vishvakarma motivated by ocean. Ocean told Nala that "Nala was given a boon by his father and is equal to Visvakarma." Then Nala, the more distinguished among monkeys stood up and motivated all monkeys to build the bridge. Sri Ram in turn thanked all monkeys for helping him in crossing the ocean and bringing his wife back who was captured by Ravana.

So, managers should always recognize the efforts of their employees no matter however small or big it is. It will definitely make their subordinates feel motivated.

Valmiki Ramayana has indeed thrown lights on the several characteristics of Ram which would definitely help contemporary managers to adapt themselves in certain situations and also as to how to perform in certain circumstances.

*avalepam samudrasya na darshayati yat svayam  
prashamaH ca kSamaa caiva aarjavam priya vaaditaa  
asaamarthyam phalanti ete nirguNeSu sataamguNaaH*  
**(Valmiki Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda, Chapter 21, Verse 14)**

(This means, O, what arrogance of the ocean, who does not appear himself personally before me! Indeed

calmness, forbearance, kind spokenness and straight-forwardness these qualities of noble men give weak results, when directed towards those having no virtues.)

This describes that managers should always try to deal with a situation very calmly, but if someone is taking privilege of their serenity than they should not sit silently. It was only when Rama is about to release a missile presided over by Brahma from his bow, the sea-god appears in person before him with joined palms and advises him to get a bridge constructed by Nala across the ocean. This tells that even though managers should focus on employee motivation but sometimes they have to maintain control over their employees as well.

Having discussed various ways of motivation and factors of de-motivation, it is still suggested that a deep research is required to explore the hidden solutions given in our religious mythologies. Furthermore, a manager ought to focus more on those factors which could lead an employee towards demotivation. Since demotivational factors are less and could be controlled easily.

## Conclusions

Ancient philosophies and literature definitely hold strong meanings and solutions to various problems. But nowadays everyone is just in the pursuit of imitation. Given such useful motivational ways, these religious mythologies have yet not received much scholarly attention as required. I am sure there must be several other solutions hidden into these mythologies. Had I done more in-depth analysis, I would have certainly got more solutions to the various other contemporary issues faced

by today's managers. But due to time constraint, I was unable to do more analysis but these mythologies would certainly require in-depth analysis for the exploration of old yet so simple solutions of the challenges faced by today's people and might be faced by people of tomorrow, if researchers and contemporary managers keep on ignoring the simple solutions hidden in these mythologies.

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