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## **WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

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### **Abstract**

In the contemporary business scenario majority of the individuals are in thirst to achieve their spiritual needs and on the other hand due to extreme competitive environment the leaders of the organisation require constructive and positive outcomes from the spiritually boosted employees. This makes it very clear that workplace spirituality is becoming an essential element for both job seekers and job providers. The organisational environment consists of people with diversified values, capabilities, cultures, age groups, nationalities, religions but at the same time it is observed that they have common goal to achieve organisational goals and spiritual needs. This paper deals with in workplace spirituality and corporate culture.

**Keywords:** Spiritual needs; workforce diversity; workplace spirituality.



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## **1. The Concept of Workplace Spirituality**

The concept of spirituality at work is based on a philosophical move from the work place being merely a place to get enough money to survive - from just earning our daily bread - to being a place of livelihood. By livelihood it is meant that a place where both superior and subordinate survive and are fully alive. And through one's contribution, allow other people's spirits to be nourished and to flourish. Livelihood has, at its core, three meanings for work: survival (you're alive), enlivening of the individual Self (you're aliveness), and enlivening of the collective Self (their aliveness).

When superior and subordinate develops an understanding between one another as spiritual beings having a sense of calling which provides a real meaning for their lives; that is the ultimate state/phase when spirituality at work steps in, it has nothing to do with religion or accepting a certain belief system. It provides a sense of connectedness towards each other and ultimately with immediate organisational objectives. Here the bottom line is that a company can easily gain three most important factors which are responsible for the growth and development of an organisation that is employee well-being, corporate responsibility and sustainability, as well as financial performance by understanding the inner side of employees. It should be noted that a nourished inner side provides fruitful results at the outer/physical side of an individual.

## **2. Why are the best in the business moving towards workplace spirituality?**

Several reasons are listed which show a high boost with respect to workforce spirituality to name a few: the highly competitive environment, dynamic economy, aging of the workforce, busy life styles, long working hours, increased distrust of upper management, reductions in employee benefit programmes and so on. Spirituality is considered to be superior to any individual's religion and is above all individual differences such as race, education, pay rolls, age, the time period of contract and so on. Surprisingly, spirituality can be another mechanism used to discriminate against those who do not share similar views about it.

It is accepted by all that spirituality goes beyond all the human beings, which concludes that only minor variations can be seen in the spirituality grounded upon the individual differences



such as, different values, belief systems, age, sex education, and various personality traits. In order to deal with these individual differences strong spiritual values should be adopted deeply. It can be said that spirituality is above humanity and above mentioned factors that the strong held values and beliefs should be similar.

Organisation consists of different people with different goals but as mentioned earlier that spirituality is beyond everything. Three main pillars that support spiritual workplace; self-work immersion, interconnectedness, and self-actualization.

As the name says itself, self-work immersion is the state of an individual where he himself is highly motivated to work and achieve the organisational objectives. This state is free from any forceful push from the superior. It is considered as a very healthy state for the overall functioning of the organisation as the work done by the employee is totally by his will and acceptance to get his spiritual fuels into action and work in most efficient and effective state. Self-work immersion is one of the most important organisational values to support the facets of spirituality.

Interconnectedness in spiritual context can be said as the spiritual component of interconnectedness can generally be defined as a sense of becoming share of something supreme than oneself and still dependent. In an organisation it is very important that the factor of interconnectedness must lie between two departments or individuals in order to achieve sustainable development. Interconnectedness is that thread which binds the concept of spirituality albeit. As the result interconnectedness bring healthy working environment and transmits positive feelings.

Maslow explains the state of self-actualisation as that it is that state where a person balances both mental and spiritual sides of oneself in order to reach the sustainable development, filled with creative ideas, positive mind frame, leadership qualities and motivating capabilities. In such a state a person is always ready to help others and tries it best to work for the best results selflessly.



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### **3. Characteristics of a Spiritual Workplace: Suggestions for a Model**

Regardless of this ongoing debate, identifying desired characteristics of spiritual workplaces can bring us closer to understanding the role that spirituality can play in organizations, the way it can function to positively impact the bottom line, and the value it might bring to members of the work community.

Here are some effects that can be seen at a workplace with spirituality.

- **Emphasizes Sustainability**

A systemic view of work and contribution in the world promotes links between sustainability and an awareness of limited resources. This approach to design, production, and commerce is being increasingly associated with spirituality because it seeks to contribute to the greater good in the world. It also has the potential to actually increase market value and attract investors.

An understanding of sustainable growth and development includes a well-thought-out strategy that identifies potential long-term impacts or implications of actions that could have an eventual negative impact on business. This systemic view of global business means that a company will constantly reassess the long view of risks and rewards associated with doing business in the long run, including a careful ongoing review of potentially negative and unintended consequences of business decisions on individuals, societies, or the environment.

- **Values Contribution**

More than providing excellent service for customers, global service indicates a larger sense of responsibility to contribute to the betterment of the world. While the local family business may not provide products and services that will improve the quality of life, but businesses today have fundamentally understood that part of their role is to make the world a better place through the products or services that they sell. Today's spiritual organization is deliberate in implementing a vision that is built around contributions to the betterment of mankind. It promotes work outside of the organization that contributes to and "gives back" to society through community and volunteer service. Spiritually aware managers and businesses consider themselves servants of employees, customers, and the community.



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- **Prizes Creativity**

Creativity is a necessary part of the business cycle. When technology, markets shifts, and demographic changes force organizations to rethink products and services, creativity is the key to successfully navigating those changes. The artistic industries have long recognized the spiritual nature of individual and group creative processes, and many educators understand the importance of seamless, daily incorporation of creativity in helping their students learn. The spiritual workplace recognizes that being creative is not necessarily reserved for a special few, but that all people have creative capacities. A spiritual workplace provides resources to help people to uncover their creative potential and to practice creativity within the organization.

- **Cultivates Inclusion**

Businesses are increasingly becoming core sources of community for people in societies. The spiritual organization respects and values individuals' life experiences and the lessons learned from them. Such an organization is intentional in its efforts to include individuals who bring appropriate skill sets to a particular job, but who may have been excluded historically from participating in a professional community of practice due to circumstances they did not choose. Such historic exclusion from the workplace has included people with physical disabilities, people whose skin color or ethnic origin differs from those of the majority population, and those who have been discriminated against due to gender or sexual orientation. Increasingly, corporations are seeing the value of their employees working together in community toward a commonly held vision. They have a sense that the concepts of love and acceptance within a cultural context of care builds a sense of community that supports the work of the company and that has a direct impact on the bottom line.

- **Develops Principles**

Organizations have begun to realize the benefits of treating the whole person by actively supporting the formulation of ethical principles that promote personal growth, long-term character development, and personal connections of faith and work development. Assisting employees in integrating personal growth, learning, and faith with job performance benefits the organization. This type of principled emphasis includes providing resources that help



employees better understand themselves, develop successful professional and personal relationships, and enhance personal management skills. Employees are encouraged to develop an accurate and realistic sense of the impact that other people have on them and the impact that they have on others.

- **Promotes Vocation**

Organizations have long been aware of the benefits of shared ownership of corporate values by every member of the organization. By acknowledging that one's general search for spiritual growth and fulfillment need not be separate from one's work, organizations lay the groundwork for spiritual development to assist in engendering understanding among employees. Companies that understand workplace spirituality go beyond being supportive of learning and development by helping employees develop a sense of "calling" or identification of passion about their lives and their work. Such companies emphasize the discovery and appropriate utilization of individual giftedness and encourage employees to use their unique skills within the organization. Grounded religious faith development is recognized as an important and deeply personal part of growth for many people, one that can help them more easily recognize their vocations.

#### **4. Overall effect of a spiritual workplace environment**

- **Enhances creativity and leads to innovation**

Today completion levels are very high and new ideas and innovations are important ingredients for the expansion of any organisation. Creativity allows us to more within limited resources and leads to well organised outcomes. It is one of the major benefits of spiritual workforce that it boosts creativity and leads to innovation. When talking about the technological and service industries creativity is very essential, it can never be forced from people, it comes out naturally and it only will if the atmosphere is healthy and encourages new ideas.



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- **Transparency in communication**

To talk truly without any fear is the power that spiritual workplace provides. It brings authenticity in communication as all the members speak truth and are respectful towards each other. This enhances the entire system and leads to very transparent working.

- **Ethical and moral behaviour**

People only trust ethical companies with strong morals and spiritual workplace lays stress upon being honest, ethical, and being morally strong. This ultimately develops trust between the employees and customers.

- **Recognises hidden talent**

Spirituality boosts all the aspects of innovation, talent. Everyone is talented in their own ways and spiritual workplace polishes such talent and which benefits the organisation. It gives a sense of belongingness to employees and connects the company with the genius.

## **5. Conclusion**

Spirituality is beyond all the individual differences. If spirituality is adopted in the workplace then it will benefit the organisation from all the directions and will finally lead to sustained developments. Three main pillars that support spiritual workplace; self-work immersion, interconnectedness, and self-actualization. It is accepted by all that spirituality goes beyond all the human beings, which concludes that only minor variations can be seen in the spirituality grounded upon the individual differences. The main objective of spiritual workplace is improving employee well-being and the overall performance of the organisation.

The components presented here as building blocks toward considering a model of workplace spirituality serve as a partial framework for engaging in a broader conversation of spirituality's place and influence in Western business culture. The recent trend in businesses to reclaim and recognize the spiritual nature of people and the importance of incorporating the "whole person" at work will continue to change the face of how business is done for the foreseeable future.



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