

A Research Study on Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya with Specific Reference to the Principles and Practices of Management and Relevance in Modern Times with Lessons to be Learnt for Managers/ CEOs

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Abstract

Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya was born in 8th Century A.D. at village Kaladi situated on the banks of the Periyar River in Kerala, India. Many scholars of Sanskrit language, Indian history, Culture and ethos are of common opinion that Hindu religion would not have been in existence if Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya would not have been lived / taken birth. He has been widely known as an incarnation of Lord Shiva. This paper attempts to study and develop an insight from the life, events, teachings, lineage and practices of “Jagadguru Shankaracharya” and co-relating the same to the contemporary concepts, practices of management discipline and chart out lessons to be learnt for the managers / CEOs.

A. Rational behind topic

In this advanced world, the dexterity of Management has turned into a vital part of ordinary life spanning almost all functions of any arena of a living being. Management is all pervasive so that is a systematic and a precise way of carrying out activities in any field of human effort.

Indian civilization is the eldest on the planet earth and is the foundation of almost all civilizations existing on the planet earth. Going through the ancient history, scriptures one can easily reveal that in the 9th century - there was a time when there was a chaos in almost all the segments, parts of the society and the very existence of the Hindu religion, culture and traditions were in danger and were nearer to vanish and during that time a profound stalwart, greatest leader and the logician named Shankar, who died at a very early age of 32, with an honour of “*Bhagwadpad Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya*”, brought a revolutionary change in the entire society and established “*Sanatan Dharm*” / Immortal Religion by establishing five “*peeths*” / “*maths*” – monasteries with a rich and most respected lineage of “*Jagadguru Shankaracharya*” which is in existence till date and will also exist in future. He is the profounder of

“Advaita Philosophy” and many advanced level spiritual and *Tantra* practices.

Till date all the scholars of Sanskrit language, Indian history, Culture and ethos are of common opinion that Hindu religion would not have been in existence if “*Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya*” would not have been lived / taken birth. He has been widely known as an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

There are lots of ancient scriptures, empirical, literally evidences about above mentioned write up.

I feel Religion is secondary but, the way “*Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya*” even though lived a very short period of life but, the level to which he contributed to the Indian heritage, philosophy and a dynamic path of “*Sansyas*” / renunciation, could be the best source of inspiration, empirical study and a deep route to the ancient legacy which is still relevant and contemporary as it is the Ultimate Truth which is beyond the shortcomings of temporary things.

Religion, philosophy, science and management cannot be segregated and must be harmonized and

synchronized so as to live, feel and practice a balanced and high profile life and prove to be a responsible, trustworthy member of the society.

To sum up, rational behind the topic is to study and develop an insight from the life, events, teachings, lineage and practices of “*Jagadguru Shankaracharya*” and co-relating the same to the contemporary concepts, practices of management discipline and chart out lessons to be learnt for the managers / CEOs.

B. Specific objective of the Research Paper

- Keeping Management discipline at the centre to recall the most logical, scientific and advanced spiritual practices and path of Advaita [non duality]
- Establish a bridge between the teachings and lineage of “*Jagadguru Shankaracharya*” and contemporary management science, concepts and practices.
- Keeping and nurturing route to the basics and draw out lessons to be learnt and keep in mind for managers / CEOs.

C. Core area / portion of the Research Paper

I. Shankaracharya – his life span, incidences in his life and correlating the same with management and drawing out lessons for managers / CEOs

Pre-Birth Stage:

In a place called Kalady, today's city of Kochin, state of Kerala, in the southern part of India there once lived a pious and learned Nambudri brahmin couple Shivaguru and Aryamaba, urging for the child. They prayed Lord Shiva for showering the blessings by having a blessed child. Further, it is said that the Lord Shiva appeared in the dream of Shivaguru and asked his craving by giving two choices: a high profile soul but with a short duration of life or on the other hand one who would carry with a long life however with no exceptional

virtue or greatness. The childless man, rather than pronouncing his inclination, replied – “*Please do whatever is best for the mankind and the humanity at large.*”

In due course of time the pious wife became pregnant and the Nambudri brahmin couple blessed with a very high profile soul, initially named – “Shankara”, who later on became immortal with a name “Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya”.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

All such decisions to be taken by Managers / CEOs must be in the best interest of an organization and in the best alignment with the well being of society and stakeholders at large and not in narrow benefit of him / her or a specific department. All such decisions should be taken with a long term vision, keeping in mind the macro level parameters and must be sustainable in nature.

Child hood / Early life :

Shankara grew up as an exceptionally talented and bright child and exhibited indeed depth in the ancient Vedic texts.

Life flowed in a dynamic mode, one day when Shankara went to bathe in the stream of river a crocodile caught hold of his leg and started to drag him into more and more deeper waters. Shankara yelled to his mother on the bank: "Mother, this alligator is pulling me to impending death. If I die with a discontented desire in my heart, my soul will not liberate. Thus do give your consent to my becoming a sanyasi so that I can at least fulfill my wish in its true spirit and can leave this world peacefully with an eternal satisfaction." The nostalgic mother consented to Shankara's appeal. Just then some nearby fishermen threw the nets on the alligator who then freed Shankara's leg.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Main goal of Shankara was to initiate for Sanyas but, if he would have directly conveyed his decision to his mother then it would have proved disastrous OR there could be disagreement or a sort of clash due to obvious affection of motherhood. But, Shankara diplomatically arranged the play.

CEO instead of directly conveying decision to staff should be diplomatic and in a very cautious manner and after creating an atmosphere conducive to the overall culture of an organization should, taking all together, form a consensus which will lead to absence of resistance to change and achievement of goals.

Shankara was then led to the cave where the sage named Guru Govindapada resided. He respectfully urged to make him his disciple. Guru Govindapada coming out of samadhi (super conscious state), asked him the question: "Who are you?" Shankara instantaneously composed a ten verses – "Shivoham ... Shivoham ... Shivay Swarupam..", the essence of which is as follows: "I am neither the earth, nor the water, fire, air or sky (the five subtle elements), nor composed of their any properties. I am not the sense organs nor the mind. I am but the Supreme Consciousness underlying all, known as Shiva." These verses laid the guru Guru Govindapada into the realms of ecstasy and recognizing Shankara's talent, initiated him into sanyas (Kumar, 2005).

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers / CEOs must be recalling their inner most potentials and once they are in unity with the vision of an organization. During the working hours there should not be any conflict between personal goals and organizational goals.

Confrontation with an Untouchable :

One incidence happened wherein an untouchable person raised the point and Shankara accepted view of the untouchable person that "the body which originates from the same source and performs the same functions in the case of both a brahmin (the highest caste) and an outcaste? Or to the atman (soul), which too is the same in all, unaffected by anything material like the body? How do such contrasts as 'this is a brahmin, or this is an outcaste, emerge in the essentially non-dual world, which is the philosophy you preach (Kumar, 2005).

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers must keep mind open and learn to "listen" instead of "hear" and if at all views / feedback is contradictory then must accept, digest and be flexible so as to welcome such contradictory view if they are in the interest of organization. Managers must not be abdomen / conservative but, showing sportsmen spirit at the time of confronting with such diverse views.

Debate with Mandana Mishra :

Shankara initiated a long debate with Mandana Mishra and was declared winner.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

CEOs must encourage brain storming sessions and must keep himself and his team updated with the latest trends and stream of knowledge. The above incidence teaches / convey a very important lesson for a Manager / CEO – to manage conflict / debatable matter – issues in a diplomatic manner and must be cordial, keeping balanced mind even with opponents. The debate should throw a light on the innovativeness and knowledge potentials

and should encourage a healthy competition in an organization paying respect to individualities.

With reference to aforesaid incidence in the life of Shankaracharya, now important thing to kept in mind is – if one try to destroy / suppress one's belief / thought then that person will other become offensive or will go away from you but, if you accept that persons belief / thought prima facie / tentatively and then convey the truth by justifying, explaining the person with logic, reason then that person will accept you as well as the new thought / belief and both will progress.

So, the central thought / message is to synergize by brain storming and not by debating with a mindset to make one's idea only to be true.

In case of debate / differences of opinions essentially both parties are travelling towards the same unknown destination, accordingly, parties to debate should keep an open mind and immense courage to test their faith, to question their beliefs, and to change their philosophy / ideologies if reason demanded the change. Similar to how different paths could still take one to the top of the same mountain, so to do all philosophies / ideologies lead to the same goal of self realization. When one meets obstacles, one should remain accepting towards new concepts, experiments or questionings because these can potentially unlock some deep doors in our mind (Vasanth, 2012).

Shankaracharya then unrelenting continued his journey engaging the spiritual heads of different sects, winning them over with scholarly discussions and debates. He also restored the physical and spiritual dynamism of many important temples on his way of journey. The places he graced with his lotus feet include

Shrishaila, Mukambika, Rameshwaram, Shribali, Shringeri, Gokarna, amongst many others (Kumar, 2005).

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers must be mobile, must be in continuous touch with the latest marketing trends and must be attached to the ground level operations. CEOs must visit all locations, branches spread at the various places across the nation / globe so as to develop an insight over the operations and continuously doing SWOT Analysis. Dynamic subject “Total Quality Management” carry concept of “GEMBA” which says Managers must visit the exact and real location instead of relying only on reports submitted on a piece of paper.

Merging into the Infinite - The Death of a legendary Philosopher and a greatest logician:

Quem di diligunt, adolescens moratur (Whom the divine love, die young).

Notwithstanding forming various compositions, messages and verses depicting the crucial standards of non-dualistic Vedic rationality, a critical commitment of Shankara is his editorial on the primary Upanishad writings and the Bhagavad Gita as likewise the Brahma sutras specified Advaita philosophy. His genuine exchanges on the focal issues of logic conceived in these writings continues without the utilization of arcane wording, unexplained references or convoluted contentions. Shankara's motivation is not to scare the peruser with unique specialized language; yet rather give him/her with profound knowledge. It is to be sure a gift that these three critiques have made due down the ages and are accessible for the examination of contemporary man. He built up four/five peethas over the broadness of India. His life reason finished, the Acharya then resigned to Kedaranath (specialists contrast on the definite

spot of his end), and surrendered his physical body. He was only thirty-two years old.

A secret encompasses his passing. The spot of his passing is debated. He was constantly trailed by his pupils, followers. A few records guarantee that he released his body in Kedarnath in the Himalayan heaps of Uttaranchal State. Others assert that he had passed on in the southern Indian city of Kanchi. What had added to his untimely death is not known. His pictures constantly portrayed him in great and positive wellbeing.

For men like Shankara, there can however be no absolute end in the genuine sense. As per Advaita, he lives as the ever-show non-material Brahman in each of us.

It can be said that *“Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya never born - never died but, just visited this planet earth with a noble vision and mission”*

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers / CEOs must be utilizing their time to one's fullest and greatest potentials so as to fetch desired results / goals for an organization for a period of stay in an organization. Before leaving an organization one must think / answer following :

- Have I achieved the goals for which I joined an organization ?

- On leaving current organization and joining new one, will I achieve the level where I want to ultimately reach or will changing job be helping to reach nearer what I want to achieve?

II. Shankaracharya's Advhait philosophy and management science and lessons for managers / CEOs

Maybe the most essential school of Indian profound logic, Advaita Vedanta starts from the compositions of Gaudapada and Shankaracharya, who thusly were reporters on prior sacred writings, for example, the Brahma Sutra, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads. Likewise with every single Indian arrangement of thought, Advaita Vedanta is in the meantime a school of logic, a religion, a religious philosophy and a precept of salvation

Shankaracharya's philosophical standpoint can be summed up in single word "Advaita"- Non-Duality, "Dvaita" which means duality and the prefix "A" nullifying it. The objective of Advaita is to make an individual understand his or her fundamental (profound) character with the preeminent reality "Nirakar Brahm" and reality that there is no "two" yet one and only. What criticalness does it have for the regular life of a standard person? Advaita shows us to see the substance of oneself in each one and that nobody is separate from the Supreme Power/Authority – The God – The Nature – The Divine Power.

It's essential reason is all that all that at last exists is the Absolute Reality, Nirguna ("Brahman without qualities"). The extraordinary world has experimental legitimacy. Be that as it may, it has no outright reality. It is at last maya - a mysterious show - and mithya - false (neither genuine nor unbelievable). All that exists is only Brahman. One's individual self is at last the same as Brahman, consequently the significance given to the Upanishad expressions "I am Brahman" and "that thou workmanship". It is just a kind of powerful lack of awareness (avidya) that keeps us from understanding our actual nature as one with the Absolute - as in truth The Absolute Itself. When avidya is evacuated there emerges the experience of the Atman's character with Brahman. One gets to be jivanmukti - freed while in the body - and after death accomplishes Moksha, personality with the Absolute.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers / CEOs can practice the teachings of “Advaita” – Non Duality in a real life in an organization by considering an organization and himself as one and same and not two different entities – meaning thereby considering the goals / objects / vision of an organization in alignment with oneself and avoiding discrimination between any two persons.

Secondly, “Advaita” – Non Duality teaches Managers to have a behavior and treatment with subordinates that they do not feel as a subordinate and find no difference between the vision / goal of an organization and himself / herself. There must be a unique synchronization between all the elements of organizational dynamics and a personnel working.

III. “Sanyas” [Renunciation], “Sanatan Dharm” / Immortal Religion and management science and lessons for managers / CEOs

Shankara had revoked the solaces connected with materialistic presence and had turned into a “Sanyasi” (Hindu plain) at an extremely youthful age and had strolled over the length and broadness of India by walking. He had lived by tolerating the offerings (‘bhiksha’) given by the group which regularly included strolling along the boulevards in spots where he had lived.

Here, one thing ought to be remembered that requesting offerings (‘bhiksha’) is not a demonstration of asking but rather, by tolerating offerings (‘bhiksha’) from the general population one remind and recollect the commitment he owed to the general public everywhere which ought to persuade one to do such things for the advancement of the general public everywhere and consequently binding together the commitment he owed to the general public.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers / CEOs must renounce the negativity, negative emotions and should develop “*sam bhav*” i.e. equal attitude for all and implement a mind set of doing welfare for all, nurture all, prepare all for the future challenges. Gandhiji established the principle of Trusteeship which is perhaps the most relevant in modern times. CEO / Manager must perceive himself as Trustee and not an owner and being a Trustee must take all decisions and put actions which ensures sustainable development and welfare to all.

IV. Spiritual practices revived by Shankaracharya and correlating with the innovations management

Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya revived many spiritual practices when the anti vedic thoughts and practices were at paramount stage. The greatest contribution of Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya is the establishment of Sanatan Dharma and he drastically streamlined vanishing spiritual practices. He reintroduced Tantra practices. Those Tantra practices should not be mislead with black magic. There is a vast and enormous difference between Tantra practices and black magic. Tantra practices is a very pious path for the realization of oneself and the God whereas black magic carries six actions with a negative intention to cause harm to someone, those six negative actions are *Maran* [to kill], *Mohan* [to infatuate], *Uchhatan* [to drive away], *Vashikaran* [to attract], *Vidhveshan* [to destroy] and *Stambhan* [to make stand still].

The greatest contribution of Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya is that he revived “Shri Vidhya” the most pious, complicated and the most rewarding both in terms of *bhog* and *moksha* i.e. materialistic enjoyment and salvation from the circle of birth and death called *Nirvana*.

Ten incarnations of Goddess Parvati is known as Dasmahavidhya and those Dasmahavidhya are compiled in three Vidhyas – Hadi Vidhya, Kadi Vidhya and Sadi Vidhya and those three Vidhyas are further compiled to a one – called “Shri Vidhya”.

“Shri Vidhya” carries total 14 layers / stages and there are total 14 mantras for each stage to be mastered by a disciple.

It is said there is no difference between Lord Shiva and a person completing the entire “Shri Vidhya” practice.

Shri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya bifurcated “Shri Vidhya” practice into two main sects one *karma kand* i.e. outer world performance and second *Adhwait* [Non dualism] i.e. inner world performance.

It is said that those occupying the august position of Shankaracharya are supposed to be the master in “Shri Vidhya”.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

Managers / CEOs must be visionary to revive all such management practices, policies and principles vanishing or forgotten due to one or other reason and should introduce them back to the organization with a goal to make radical and beneficial transformation in the overall functioning of personnel and an organization in totality.

In context of innovations management main inventions in the realm of spiritualism Shankaracharya did was :-

- **Propounded Yatra / travelling** - it worth to note that presiding Shankaracharyas are required to travel across the respective territory of the peeth / math as well as across

the country as well as across the globe as and when required to spread the “*Sanatan Dharma*”.

Here important practice introduced by Shankaracharya is “Chaturmas” under which Sanyasis are required to stay for four months at one place only and that other than the Peeth / Math to which he belongs. Object is to keep knowledge in circulation i.e. he should spread the knowledge / experience gathered by travelling for remaining four months by sitting at one place for the remaining four months and thereby storing knowledge so as to make useful for the second generation.

Management lesson

It will be worth repeating this lesson from the first section : Managers must be mobile, must be in continuous touch with the latest marketing trends and must be attached to the ground level operations. CEOs must visit all locations, branches spread at the various places across the nation / globe so as to develop an insight over the operations and continuously doing SWOT Analysis. Dynamic subject “Total Quality Management” carry concept of “GEMBA” which says Managers must visit the exact and real location instead of relying only on reports submitted on a piece of paper.

- **Shankaracharya started the “Kumbh Mela”** - the world's greatest ever meeting of all hindu spiritual masters and followers / disciples. It has been said that “*Kumbh Mela*” is the biggest gathering on this planet earth.

Management lesson

"Kumbh Mela" inspires for Management conference and brain storming activities by meeting diversified professionals and thereby doing value addition. Recently "Kumbh Mela" has been over at Haridwar and all aware how corporate exploited the opportunity of doing marketing and image management through this holy "Kumbh Mela". Media has extensively covered in news reporting about the "Kumbh Mela" and corporate presence and marketing.

Shankaracharya has been titled as "Jagadguru" mean The master of the world. He reintroduced the Master – Disciple Lineage – i.e. Guru Shishya Parampara and interestingly it is the "**Genetic science of intelligence**". Just like a child is born from the genetics of parents in the same way a Disciple [Shishya] is born / nurtured by Master [Guru] by transferring / inculcating a genes of intelligence. He activate the genes of knowledge.

Management teachings and Lessons for Managers and CEOs

A CEO must prepare a second generation so as to create a rich legacy of knowledge and vision for the glorious future of an organization so as to create a history.

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