

Doing Kaizen in Indian Way-A Review

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Abstract

Indians are very sophisticated in their approach and a lot more traditional. They are deeply influenced by their culture. So to acclimatize and succeed as an entrepreneur whether you are from India or outside, you have to deal with changes and at the same time rooted to the Indian culture. A very long but yet very efficient methodology called Kaizen, a Japanese concept of continuous improvement can be used for increasing the productivity of man, material and machine. In this research emphasis has been laid down to the amalgamation of Kaizen with Indian philosophies and creating ways to deal with Indian people and hence making progress simultaneously. The paper discusses the drawbacks of Kaizen and how it can be amend by the application of rich thoughts of Indian Scriptures and Indian legends. Thus the main goal is to traditionally and scientifically deal with the common man who does the job only for the purpose of doing it. Employee Satisfaction combined with his will to do something more than usual routine is the main aim of this research.

Keywords: Kaizen, Management, 5S, Waste, Gita, Productivity.

1. Introduction

1.1 Indian Concept

The Bhagavad Gita, written thousands of years ago, enlightens us on all managerial techniques leading us towards a harmonious and blissful state of affairs in place of the conflict, tensions, poor productivity, absence of motivation and so on, common in most of Indian enterprises today – and probably in enterprises in many other countries.

In today's world workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product. In such a state, it should come as no surprise to us that workers start using strikes (gheraos) sit-ins, (dharnas) go-slows, work to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organizational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence.

Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine prevailing management disciplines - their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development. (M.P. Bhattathiri)

1.2 Kaizen concept

Kaizen means improvement, continuous improvement involving everyone in the organization from top management, to managers then to supervisors, and to workers. Kaizen is a Japanese philosophy for process improvement that can be traced to the meaning of the Japanese words 'Kai' and 'Zen', which translate roughly into 'to break apart and investigate' and 'to improve upon the existing situation'. The Kaizen Institute defines Kaizen as the Japanese term for continuous improvement. It is using common sense and is both a rigorous, scientific method using statistical quality control and an adaptive framework of organizational values and beliefs that keeps workers and management focused on zero defects. It is a philosophy of never being satisfied with what was accomplished last week or last year. (Imran Ahmad Khan,2011)

2. Amalgamation of Kaizen and Indian Concept

Kaizen is a broad term and amalgamation of Kaizen with Indian scriptures and tradition will lead to formation of very efficient tool to counteract current Industrial scenario and recession. We have seen the current situation where countries which are developed are facing acute problems financially. On the contrary India is one of the few nations which succeed in maintaining the economic stability. For example *India is the fourth destination country for FDI in terms of projects. India remained very attractive for FDI in 2011. FDI projects increased by 20% in India in 2011, attracting 932 projects, which created an estimated 255,416 jobs. This is despite a global economic growth that had not fully recovered from the financial crisis of 2008-09 and has begun to slow again, from over 5% in 2010 down to a projected 3.3% through 2012.* (Ernst & Young,2012)

It doesn't mean that the Indian work system is best; it has got its drawbacks too. Drawbacks such as not giving importance to time, low confidence among the workers, less pride for their work and attitude of not changing with current world and technology. Thus it's necessary to unite both. Shown below are methodologies:

2.1 Work for change but not with respect to fruits

*"Karmanye Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana
Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurma tey Sangostva Akarmani"*

—(2.47, The Bhagavad Gītā)

It means that

*“we have only the right to work, right on our actions but not on the
consequences or fruits of that action. So we should be not be
attached to either fruits of the action or inaction.”*

Kaizen means a change to achieve something. While Bhagavad Gita suggests that one should not work for fruit. A popular verse of the Gita advises "detachment" from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Being dedicated work has to mean "working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake." If we are always calculating the date of promotion or the rate of commission before putting in our efforts, then such work is not detached. It is not "generating excellence for its own sake" but working only for the extrinsic reward that may (or may not) result.

Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world work means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. So, Gita tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future. (Subhash sharma,2006)

2.2 Work for self development rather than satisfying basic needs first as stated in Maslow's theory

It has been presumed for many years that satisfying lower order needs of workers - adequate food, clothing and shelter, etc. are key factors in motivation. However, it is a common experience that the dissatisfaction of the clerk and of the Director is identical - only their scales and composition vary. It should be true that once the lower-order needs are more than satisfied, the Director should have little problem in optimizing his contribution to the organization and society. But more often than not, it does not happen like that. ("The eagle soars high but keeps its eyes firmly fixed on the dead animal below.") On the contrary, a lowly paid schoolteacher, or a self-employed artisan, may well demonstrate higher levels of self-actualization despite poorer satisfaction of their lower-order needs. Self transcendence involves renouncing egoism, putting others before oneself, emphasizing team work, dignity, co-operation, harmony and trust – and, indeed potentially sacrificing lower needs for higher goals, the opposite of Maslow.

2.3 Hierarchy should be in profession and not in mentality

*“Atmaivedam agra asit purusavidhah, so'nuviksya nanyad atmano'pasyat, so'ham
asmityagre vyaharat; tato'ham namabhavat, tasmad apy etarhy amantritah; aham*

ayam ity evagra uktva, athanyan nama prabrute yad asya bhavati. Sa yat purvo'smat sarvasmat sarvan papmana ausat, tasmat purusah; osati ha vai sa tam, yo'smat purvo bubhusati, ya evam veda..."

—(1.4.1, Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad, Radhakrishnan, 1953)

This means that:

"In the beginning, this world was only self in the form of a person or individual. When he looked around himself he saw nothing else than the self. So he said, 'I am'. Therefore arose the name 'I'. Even to this day when one is addressed he says 'This is I' and then speaks whatever other name he may have...."

This 'I' should be discarded. Especially in Indian market where there is very little interaction between the employee and the employer. Employer should not see the employees as his slave but as part of the organization. Employees should be motivated to give suggestion. An employee is the one who remain in contact to the core work more as compare to the employer himself. So he knows the system better.

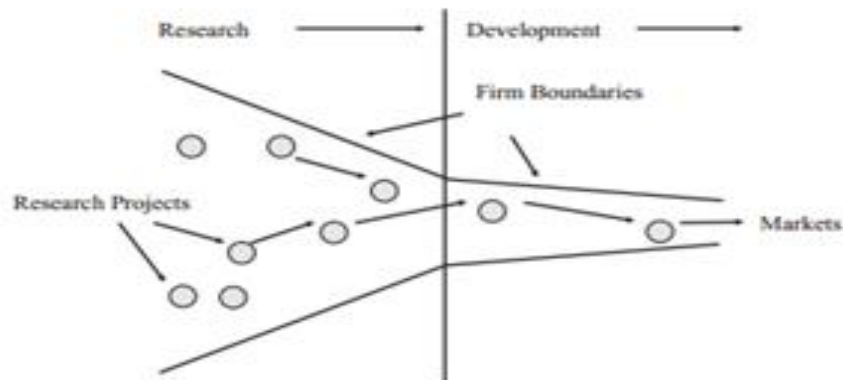


Fig. 1: Open-innovation model, Anindo Bhattacharjee,2011.

The Open Innovation paradigm treats R&D as an open system. Open Innovation suggests that valuable ideas can come from inside or outside the company and can go to market from inside or outside the company as well. This approach places external ideas and external paths to market on the same level of importance as that reserved for internal ideas and paths to market in the earlier era. The figure depicts the open-innovation model. This helps in generating more efficient working and overall development. (Anindo Bhattacharjee,2011)

SAMPLE EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION SCHEME	
Suggestion no. Employee name	Department Contact no.
Employee Idea Concern(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve Operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Save time, labor, materials, or reduce cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase efficiency or productivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve service to the public
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve safety conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve working conditions
Acknowledgement	
Received from:	Date:
Suggestion Accepted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Remarks(If any?)	

Fig. 2: Sample Employee Suggestion form.

A well planned employee suggestion form is enough to grant a much required pride in employees. They will feel that they are part of the system and not the slave. Thus they will contribute more. Incentive as said given without any effort to the employees will just satisfy their basic needs but if given for their efforts and suggestion it will create a sense of belongingness in them. During collection of suggestion care should be taken that there is acceptance of every suggestion and no suggestion should be laughed off or criticized.

2.4 Vaastu-Shastra & 5S

The aim of 5S is to create an atmosphere to keep a clean, organized, safe and efficient workplace for everyone. The foundation for the practice of 5S, comes from a Japanese program derived from these words, *seiri*, *seiton*, *seiso*, *seiketsu* and *shitsuke*. The 5S's are a conventional approach towards maintaining and improving the work place.

Seiri: Examine everything at the workplace & identify what is needed and what can be discarded

Seiton: Organizing the way things are put away with efficiency, quality, and safety in mind.

Seiso: Sweeping, scrubbing and cleaning of the building, machines, fixtures & tools so that all areas of the workplace are neat & tidy.

Seiketsu: Insuring that each workplace is properly designed for safety. This is to protect every member from the dangers during the performance of their assigned tasks.

Shitsuke: Establishing routines and procedures for maintaining and improving on the first four (S's), is incorporating visual management tools. (Steve karr)

Similarly Vaastu-Shastra preaches that the World comprises of 5 basic elements also called Panch-Mahabhut i.e. Earth, Air, Water, Space & Fire. If we can make optimum use of these resources we can get best results out of it. It also suggests that we should always discard waste from our working our residing place. According to it waste carries with it negativity which stops person to contribute positively either mentally or physically.

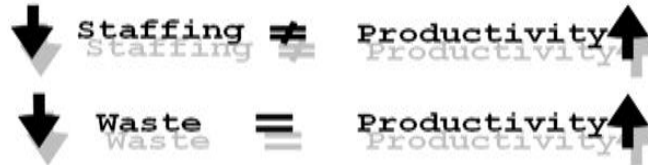


Fig. 3: Relationship between staffing, productivity and waste.

The Fig. 3) shows how we can improve the productivity without decreasing the staff. Also with well organized work place it only adds to the efficiency. It can also be seen during day to day eating habits of ours where we place our food items and water well organized so that we don't find any hindrance while having it.

2.5 Training

For implementation of Kaizen one has to be well trained about the concept and it's working.

शुनः पुच्छमिव व्यर्थं
जीवितं विद्यया विना ॥
न गुह्यगोपने शक्तं
न च दंशनिवारणे ॥

This verse from Chanakya Niti gives us the glimpse of importance of training. It means that: An uneducated person's life is as useless as the tail of a dog, neither capable of covering its private parts nor in warding off the flies and mosquitoes

Before application of Kaizen each and every member of the company should be well trained about Kaizen. Random and haphazard way of application will only lead to more trouble and confusion among the members. This should not only be limited to the Kaizen but also with skilling. Workers and employees should be sent for further enhancement of their skill. If not at some premier institutes they should be given a chance to see the work culture of other industries. A senior employee must take care that his younger counterpart gets enough knowledge and see it as an overall growth without thinking of the competition he will receive from him.

2.6 Multi-Skilling and love for job

Every member of the Industry should have the knowledge of executing the others job not perfectly but optimally so that there's no stoppage. Idleness not only occurs at machine or material level. It also occurs at employee level. Some employee will be

skilled in particular field so at some point when there's no work he will remain idle. To counteract this he should be trained in other field too. This will minimize bottleneck in production process and workload of all employees will be balanced. This will create a sense of equality and employees will work for their own development and in a way will also help the organization to achieve its goals.

येषां न विद्या न तपो न दानं

न चापि शीलं न गुणो न धर्मः ।

ते मर्त्यलोके भुवि भारभूता

मनुष्यरूपेण मृगाश्चरन्ति ॥ (856)

The verse from Chanakya Niti means that "Those who have no education or knowledge, no determination, no charitable disposition, no manners, no virtuous qualities and no firm faith is born as a man but moves like an animal".

3. Future Plan

Effort is to further enhance the research and create a unique-model combining Kaizen-Indian philosophy and use it to gain maximum efficiency and effectiveness in management, productivity and process improvement. Presently I am going to try to apply this concept "Doing Kaizen in Indian Way-A Review" in a boiler parts manufacturing Industry and henceforth to other bigger players.

4. Conclusion

Thus we saw that Kaizen merged with Indian scriptures is really very efficient and effective. No doubt the work culture of west and east are quite different but combination of both Indian mythologies, western thinking and Japanese methodology of kaizen we can achieve the desired goals. A multinational company "Toyota" was following Kaizen and also succeeded a great deal. But in the process of making materialistic productivity it lost its way and bear loss due to labor shortage and less motivated employees. It later on realized this and brought a new concept "Humanization in organization". After which it excelled tremendously. To end with, a pledge concerning to Kaizen.

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