

The Nine Realms of Holistic Management

Deriving Principles from the Sri Vidya Philosophy

Sai Venkatesh Balasubramanian^{[1][2]}, Gomathi Balasubramanian^[1] and Ganapathy Ramanathan^[2]

[1] Sai Vidya Mandir, Mallasandra, Bengaluru – 560062, Karnataka India.

[2] CeNSE, SASTRA University, Thanjavur-613401, TamilNadu, India.

Abstract

The current era of technology explosion and globalization has been witnessing steady transformations and transitions in Sciences and Arts towards an oriental philosophical basis. It is seen that management trends too necessitate such a shift, and the present work purports to the formulation of the principles for such a revolution - Holistic Management. Firstly, the traditional 6M model is extended to a more comprehensive 9M model. Following this, the nine enclosures and corresponding aspects and concepts depicted by the esoteric diagram of the Sri Yantra are explored and a mapping between its nine enclosures (Navavaranam) and the 9M model is done, yielding the Nine Realms of Holistic Management. Finally, various key philosophies underlying the Holistic Management paradigm are listed. While this model, like most others has to withstand the test of time, one derives hope from the success and continued application of the Sri Vidya philosophy at the individual and societal level for thousands of years.

Keywords

Holistic Management, The 6M Model, Sri Yantra, Business Strategy.

Introduction

The importance of management cannot be over-emphasized [1]. Technology explosion, globalization of workforce and international trade development have all improved the quality of lives of employers and employees alike - but it also comes with a price of its own [1,2]. The management policies that have to be framed for such worldwide enterprises are extremely complex [2,3]. At the principle level, management over the years has witnessed transitions and transformations of approaches – from scientific, to relational to total quality management [4-10]. **The current era of globalization and automation necessitate yet another transformation of such magnitude** [1-3]. The puzzle then concerns with where we could get inspiration for such a revolution [1,2].

At this juncture, a cursory glance into the transformations taking place in other major disciplines such as physical and life sciences and arts would indeed help. For instance, the trend in physical sciences has been to drift away from the clockwork precision of Newtonian Mechanics to the obscurities, extremities and uncertainties of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics [11-13]. Healthcare approaches are currently

witnessing a transformation from the reductionist systems of medicine and biochemistry to the more holistic medicine systems of TCM, Yoga and Ayurveda developed in China and India ages ago [14-16]. Even in the arts, one finds a transition from representative art to abstract art [17].

One then wonders if there is a philosophical basis to these transitions. Certain works in Literature such as those by Capra and Wheatley suggest the affirmative [18,19]. **The discussions presented clearly indicate that the transformations occurring in almost all disciplines seem to align more comfortably with oriental philosophies witnessed in Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism and the Shinto faiths**, of specific mention being the concepts of Advaita and Yin/Yang Duality and their correspondence to the quirks and dualities of Quantum Mechanics and Quantum Consciousness [18-20].

Based on these ideas, the present work is the result of the search for inspirations and basis for a new era of management. Specifically, the Tantric tradition of Sri Vidya is seen to contain the Sri Yantra – a model found to encompass the philosophy of the entire universe from which, after careful study, one could derive principles for forming a new era – not only for management, but also for science, technology and the arts [21-23].

The present paper starts with extending the familiar ‘6M’ model of management to a more comprehensive ‘9M’ model, outlining the connection with Hindu Philosophy in the process [8]. Following this, a brief study of the Sri Yantra and the connection between the 9 enclosures (Navavaranam) of Sri Yantra and the 9 elements of the 9M model are drawn and these then form the ‘Nine Realms of Holistic Management’ [23]. Finally, the key philosophies of the Nine Realm Model are presented.

The very fact that the oriental philosophies have an unbroken tradition influencing the lifestyles of people for ages unperturbed, coupled with the orientation of current trends in all disciplines of knowledge towards such oriental philosophy ensure that a model of management derived from such philosophy is here to stay, not for any brief period of time, but for a lasting duration. The mapping of Navavaranam to the 9M model clearly highlights the relevance of the Navavaranam concept even in the technologically advanced status of today.

The 9M Model

Most textbooks on management begin with the traditional 6M Model comprising of the six elements that make up an organization – Men, Money, Machines, Materials, Methods and Marketing [8]. However, the current development of management into a complex phenomenon ensures that many key components, some of them ‘intangible’ are not given due coverage in this model [1-3]. For instance, the development of compensation management orients with the perspective of compensation as an incentive for employees, and the development of the organization is closely linked with the level of motivation and empowerment [7-9]. Furthermore, in view of various threats as envisioned by Porter’s Five Forces model, it is important to view management itself as a resource, with advanced specializations and qualifications becoming a necessity for managers and administrators [1].

In view of all these factors, the present work proposes an extension of the 6M model to a 9M model, illustrated in Fig. 1.



Figure 1 The 9M model of Management

It is noteworthy that the 9M's of managements can be grouped broadly into three groups, each of which find a connection with one of the three main Mothers of Hinduism [21-22]. The mapping is as follows:

1. The elements of Management, Man and Machines are related to the execution aspect of an organization, mapped with Kriya Shakti or the 'Force of Work'.
2. Motivation, Money and Materials are associated with the wealth and capacity to fulfill objectives and are associated with Iccha Shakti, the 'Force of Will'.
3. Methods, Measurement and Market, all three associated with proper positioning and projection of objectives and concepts, map to Jnana Shakti or the 'Force of Wisdom'.

Thus, it is seen that the 9M's arise from the principles of the 3W's of Will, Work and Wisdom.

The first main premise of the Holistic Management proposed in this work is that the 9M's must work hand in hand for sustained success of an organization. Building on that premise, **the objectives of the organization are the four elements of the Purusharthas – Dharma (Ethics), Artha (Strategy), Kama (Fulfillment) and Moksha (Upliftment)** [21-22]. It should be emphasized that for the holistic management model to work, and for the organization to reap the benefits of such a model for a lasting duration, equal importance should be given to all the four objectives.

The Sri Yantra

Possessing one of the most ornate and intricate geometries in the broad field of sacred geometry, the Sri Yantra represents the pinnacle of the non-dualistic Advaita concept [21-23]. Four upward facing triangles, representing the masculine Shiva and five downward facing triangles representing the feminine Shakti interlace to provide a complex pattern of 43 small triangles, a singularity (Bindu), concentric rings of eight and sixteen petals, all bounded within a three walled square enclosure [21-23]. This esoteric pattern is believed to symbolize the various aspects of creation, mechanism and dissolution of the entire cosmos [21-23]. The Sri Yantra is illustrated in Fig. 2.



Figure 2 The Sri Yantra

In the tradition of Sri Vidya, the various geometrical components of the Sri Yantra can be viewed as a set of nine enclosures, collectively called the Navavaranam, from the outermost square wall to the innermost singularity [21-23]. Each enclosure represents a fundamental 'aspect' of cosmos, and each element (triangle, petal, singularity etc) of that enclosure represents a concept, deified in spirituality by a form of the Mother Goddess [21-23]. The nine aspects, one each of the nine enclosures form the basis for the Nine Realms model discussed in the following section.

The Nine Realms of Holistic Management

The 9M model arising from the three Forces of Will, Wisdom and Work discussed in the earlier section are mapped to the Nine Enclosures (Navavaranam) of the Sri Yantra, and the results yield the Nine Realms (Chakras) of Holistic Management [21-23]. Each Chakra represents one of the 9M's of the organization and the concepts encompassed by the Chakra yield the key focus areas of that aspect.

1. Trailokya Mohana Chakra

This Chakra, represented by the three layered square walled boundary of the Sri Yantra literally translates to 'Enchantress of the Three Worlds (Heaven, Earth and Nether)'. In management terms, this Chakra corresponds to the long term retention of customers, suppliers and employees by building and maintaining long term relations with them. This Chakra is then mapped onto the 'Market' element of the 9M model.

The concepts covered by this realm are grouped into three families of deities:

1. The first group consists of the ten Siddhis (powers) corresponding to reduction, leverage, intensity, control, charisma, achievement, pleasure, willpower, attainment and realization. These are the ten factors key to achieving sustained growth and success of an organization, enabling it to achieve competitive advantage, leading to increased trust on the part of stakeholders.
2. The second group, the Matrukas (mothers), represent the eight detrimental forces that need to be overcome by an organization to ensure sustained relationship with customers, suppliers and employees. These detrimental forces are Greed, Impatience, Possessiveness, Obsessiveness, Pride, Envy, Egotism and Hedonism.
3. The third group, consisting of the ten Mudras (signs) are essentially a collection of ten valuable tools the management could use at the appropriate time to strengthen relationships. These tools are Agitation, Liquidation, Charm, Control, Enticement, Directives, Ubiquity, Seed Capital, Unionism and Differentiation.

Thus, the first realm of 'Market' is directed towards building long term relationships with customers, suppliers and employees, and outlines various key factors, detrimental forces to overcome and tools utilized for the same.

2. Sarva Asha Paripooraka Chakra

Translated as 'Fulfillment of all Desires', this Chakra is the yellow ring of sixteen petals in Fig. 2. This Chakra is mapped to the 'Methods' element in the 9M model and corresponds to the various 'attractors' that enable fulfillment of objectives. In other words, these 'attractors' should be the key driving forces behind the methodologies framed by the organization to achieve various goals and objectives.

The attractors are Creativity, Decision Making, Identity, Communication through Sound, Ergonomics, Physical Appearance, Sensitivity, Appeal, Thought processes, Valor, Memory, Appellation, Sourcing, Sustenance and Structure.

The second realm of 'Methods' emphasizes fulfilling of objectives and lists various 'attractors' that form the basis for successful framing of methodologies and procedures.

3. Sarva Samkshobhana Chakra

This Chakra comprising of the eight ring of red petals in Fig. 2 translates to the 'Realm of Agitation'. Mapped to 'Motivation' among the 9M's, this Chakra's primary forte is the control and enhancement of employee productivity by appropriate motivating factors.

Specifically, the Chakra consists of eight 'sentiments' that can be controlled to enhance motivation. These sentiments are Creativity, Empowerment, Arousal, Desire, Traversing, Speed, Persistence and Pleasure.

Thus, the third realm of 'Motivation' lists various 'sentiments' that can be controlled to enhance motivation among employees.

4. Sarva Saubhagya Dayaka Chakra

Seen as the collection of fourteen blue triangles in Fig. 2, this Chakra translated as the 'Giver of all Fortunes' purports to the aspect of 'Money' in the 9M's. Specifically, the fourteen forces of this enclosure represent the fourteen activities available to a management to firmly secure its position in an otherwise changing, uncertain world.

The fourteen 'activities' are Motivation, Liquidity, Savings, Pleasure, Delusion, Obstruction, Explosion, Control, Ecstasy, Enticement, Prosperity, Accumulation, Encryption and Alignment of Objectives.

Summarily, the fourth realm of 'Money' aims to secure a firm's financial position in an uncertain world and lists fourteen activities available to the management to achieve the same.

5. Sarva Artha Sadhaka Chakra

Translated as 'Achievement of Objectives', this Chakra is the collection of ten red triangles in Fig. 2. This Chakra maps to the element of 'Machines' in the 9M model. The Chakra contains of ten qualities desirable as outcomes on the purchase and use of machinery, such that it contributes productively to the welfare and growth of the organization.

The ten qualities are Performance, Wealth Enhancement, Appeal, Welfare Enhancement, Fulfillment of Objectives, Elimination of Misery, Longevity, Clarity Improvement, Ergonomics and Profit Enhancement.

Thus, the fifth realm of 'Machines' describes the various qualities desirable of machinery to enhance productivity and enhance welfare of the organization.

6. Sarva Rakshakara Chakra

Represented by the collection of ten black triangles in Fig. 2, this Chakra maps to the 'Measurement' element of the 9M model. Translated as 'Realm of Complete Protection', the central theme of this realm is the elimination of detrimental forces and underperforming elements of an organization, and the necessary qualities to be assessed and measured for ensuring the same.

The ten aspects of assessment are knowledge, level of empowerment, individual contribution, presence of mind, troubleshooting capability, collaborative capacities, adherence to ethics, level of motivation, integrity and achievement of objectives.

The sixth realm of 'Measurement' lists various aspects of assessment necessary to eliminate detrimental forces and underachieving elements of an organization.

7. Sarva Roga Hara Chakra

The collection of eight green triangles in Fig. 2 represent this seventh realm, translated as 'Remover of Ailments'. Representing the 'Materials' element of the 9M model, the eight objectives comprising this Chakra provide guidelines for the purchase and handling of materials.

The eight objectives to be fulfilled are Longevity, Appeal, Performance, Purity, Reusability, Achievement of Purpose, Government Regulations and Organizational Capacity.

The eight objectives to be fulfilled during purchase and handling of materials form the central theme of this seventh realm of 'Materials'.

8. Sarva Siddhi Prada Chakra

Represented by the central yellow triangle in Fig. 2, this realm translates to 'Yielder of all Accomplishments'. This translates to the element of 'Man' among the 9M's.

The three sides of the central triangle represent the three W's of Will, Wisdom and Work, discussed earlier, and are the three primary forces driving the entire organization. Also, on an internal level, the functioning of the tripartite entity of body, mind and soul is also expressed by the 3W model.

Thus, the eighth realm of 'Man' represents the three W's of Will, Wisdom and Work driving the entire organization.

9. Sarva Anandamaya Chakra

Translated as the 'Ever Blissful' realm, this Chakra is the singularity (Bindu) in the centre of the Sri Yantra.

The ninth realm represents the convergence of the four objectives (Ethics, Strategy, Fulfillment and Upliftment), the 3 W's (Will, Wisdom and Work) and the 9M's. This singularity is the Management itself, the core center around which the organization evolves and revolves.

Philosophies of Holistic Management

Based on the Nine Realms of Holistic Management elucidated earlier, the principles arising from implementing this model are formulated. These core principles are summarized as core ‘Philosophies’ of the Holistic Management, as much as Deming’s fourteen points form the backbone of Total Quality Management [10]. The philosophies of holistic management are illustrated in Fig. 3.

Adhere to Ethics. No Ethics, No Success.	Every penny spent on training will pay back manifold.
Maximize Harmony with Nature. Be Adaptive.	Knowledge and knowledge alone can sustain competitive advantage.
Let Strategy be dominated by information and innovation.	Employ Transformational Leadership with adherence to Dharma.
Enhancements and beautifications also pay.	Assign teams and groups based on personality type.
Enable Spiritual Upliftment. Strengthen Collective Consciousness.	Reduce reliability on materials.
Self Motivation is the most effective Motivation.	Emphasize simplicity in design and complexity in methods.
Employees are the primary resource.	Prefer Automation - Create a "Smart" Network.
Strengthen the three W's - Will, Wisdom and Work.	Prefer Equity based Financing.
Adapt to the chaotic nature of environment.	Use measurement windows. Use Fuzzy Logic.
Chaos based analysis is vital and crucial.	Emphasize a Balanced Measurement Approach.
Design egalitarian pay models.	Maintain good relations with customers.
Ensure Lifetime Employment. Loyalty pays.	Personal Management before Personnel Management.

Figure 3 Philosophies of Holistic Management

Conclusion

Taking cue from the oriental philosophical basis for the trend in transformation and transition of various disciplines of study such as physical and life sciences and arts, the concepts of Sri Yantra are used to frame a Holistic Management Model. Firstly the traditional 6M model is extended to a more comprehensive 9M model, inspired by the 3W’s of Will, Work and Wisdom. Following this, the nine enclosures (Navavaranam) of the Sri Yantra are mapped to the 9M model and Nine Realms are formed. The aspects and concepts encompassed by each of the nine realms are found to offer valuable guidelines as to the tools, actions, activities and qualities regarding various aspects of management. Finally, the core philosophies underlying holistic management are listed.

As with any major theory, this formulation of the Nine Realms of Holistic Management has to withstand the test of time. However, one derives strength and hope from the fact that the basis of this model is the millennia-old continuing tradition of Advaitic philosophy that has successfully guided civilization at the cultural and societal level for ages. The universality and applicability of this philosophy can easily be witnessed in the relevance of the concepts and aspects to modern day life.

|Om Sri Matre Namah|

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