

S.K. Chakraborty, **MANAGEMENT BY VALUES**, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1991. pp. 332

When it has become a fashion to write books titling Management by Objectives, by results, by walking around, it is heartening to note that somebody has thought of writing a book on Management by Values — that too with a laudable objective of aiming towards cultural congruence. As a person who has gone through his earlier works and also had the opportunity of participating in some of his sessions on the above subject, I am quite convinced that with his erudition in Indian scriptures and his professional expertise in the modern behavioural concepts, Prof S.K. Chakraborty is one of the best qualified to attempt such a work. Moreover, he has been on this topic for the last two decades and is well established and accepted by both academicians and top professionals.

The major thrust of his work as indicated on the blurb gives a new approach to the organisational value system. While most of the empirical and practical work in this area move from organisational to individual, Prof Chakraborty advocates that it is the individual's values which influences organisational values in the final analysis.

The book contains 12 chapters. The first chapter clarifies values and skills. Values can mean both end-state values, as well as 'values-as-means'. In this chapter the main concern is with 'values-as-means'. According to the author, Values serve the process of becoming, in the sense of transformation of the level of consciousness to purer, higher levels. They help us to distinguish between the 'desired' and the 'desirable', between the 'short-term' and the 'long-term'. Skills are concerned with the method of 'doing', in the sense of speed, dexterity, efficiency, etc. Values are, therefore, essentially subjective, skills essentially objective. While education is more germane to values, training relates more closely to skills (p 1).

After examining values system of different countries like USA, Japan, China, the author enumerates values system which could be organically more valid and resonant for the Indian psyche in the Indian management context.

The values rooted in the deep structure of Indian culture and society are identified and explained by the author. Some of them are: The individual must be respected, jealousy is harmful. 'Chitta-Shuddhi' or purification of the Mind, Work is Worship, Containment of Greed etc. The author emphasises that it is these values which must be relieved by each generation.

The second chapter is highlighted the importance of ethics and morals in economic activity. According to the author, man is always much more than mere commerce and competition. He has the ineffable domain of ethics and morals also to manage—whether in business or politics (p 29). The author also examines the relationship between science and technology on the one hand, and ethics and morals on the other by quoting scientists and others like Einstein, Maurice Wilkins, Bertrand Russell, Joad, Swami Vivekananda and Satprakashananda. Further, the author hypothesises that the lack of concern for ethico-moral processes while managing business entities and individual selves has been positively correlated with growing insensitivity about the subjective consequences of the scientific-technological movement (p 38).

In the opinion of the author, the prevailing excessive cultivation of left-brained, intellect-sharpening human development processes must be moderated by careful attention to right-brained, mind-purifying efforts. While the search for international or global management principles at the level of the intellect may be correct, it would be unrealistic to deny culture-specificity when it comes to attempts at transforming the quality of emotions and feelings towards greater expansiveness and ethical purity (p 58).

The third chapter explains the significance of the concepts: lower self and higher self. According to the author brilliance of intellect has little to do with upholding universally the healthy values. It is the quality of the emotions and feeling which, independently of the intellect, so to say, determines the level of purity of mind or heart in man. In the realm of daily choices and decision-making, it is the quality of the subjective of the agent of choice or decision which ultimately determines its degree of objectivity (or fairness or equity). The principle is, 'The subjective is the cause, the objective the effect' (p 63).

Amongst the most cherished, yet wanting 'organisational' values in India today is team work. The real answer to this gap is to develop the inner conviction and feel about one's true identity to be the self and not self (p 84). To focus this point, the author quotes Tagore. According to Tagore, 'The finite aspect of the self is conscious of its separateness, and there it is ruthless in its attempt to have more distinction than all others. But in its infinite aspect its wish is to gain that harmony which leads to its perfection and not its mere aggrandizement' (p 85).

In the fourth chapter, the author says about three modules developed for value orientation programmes. The first module is a broad-spectrum one, explaining the basic, universal roots of 'performance effectiveness'. The

second module, for the same group of participants, is offered after three or fourth months. The third module works on 'Managing Stress, Communication and Counselling'. He has profusely quoted the data, notes and letters of participants who attended all the three modules to indicate the benefits derived by them.

The author opines that 'values-inspired culture-building' within the organisations demands both a clear, sound, coherent and trans-mundane philosophy as well as a firm dedication to details in its translation into thought and action. The trans-mundane base of value structure is emphasised because it is only from this raised platform of viewing one-self in relation to others in the Organisation, Society, Nature, the Universe that one can recognise one's pettiness of means, within given ends, and feel the urge to elevate them to dignity (p 117).

The fifth chapter is devoted to socio-cultural changes which has become contemporary managerial milieu in India. Such as rights orientation displacing duty orientation, exteriorised orientation displacing interiorised orientation, secular orientation displacing spiritual orientation, skills orientation displacing value orientation, etc.

In the sixth chapter, the author has delineated the social values and individual attitudes. He has briefly scanned values which are in transition based on his experience after conducting management development programmes and organisational studies for about 15 years. For example, transitions are from Contentment to Avariciousness, Humility to Arrogance, Duties to Rights, Emotional Purity to Intellectual Sharpness, Selflessness to Selfishness, Discipline to Indulgence, etc. Emphasising the individual effort, the author says that, 'it is the revival of the illumined and serene dynamism of the Sattwic movement which is now the need of the hour to restore sanity and balance in our dealing with ourselves and our environment. This shift of emphasis is to be willed and executed by the individual first, and only then will society change for the better' (p 150).

The seventh chapter is a re-examination of the work-psychology of the Gita which is a primer of management-by-values (p 158). The author has brought out a clear distinction between work-ethics and ethics-in-work. 'Work-Ethics' is one of vigour and ardour for sustained hard labour in pursuit of a given or chosen task. It refers to skills. Whereas ethics-in-work refers to values (p 163-164).

Regarding essential strength of non-attachment in work, the author has quoted Swami Vivekananda. According to Vivekananda "we get caught. How? Not by what we give, but by what we expect... The great secret of success, of true happiness is this: the man who asks for no return... Ask

nothing, want nothing in return. Give what you have to give: it will come back to you— but do not think of that now”. So the author rightly asks the question: in the Indian arena of work today, should not this then be the perspective underlying all managerial roles undertaken by people among the fortunate top ten per cent of this poor country? (p 170).

The eighth chapter deals with Sacro-Secular Symbiosis. The author says that the purpose of this chapter is to share a few reflections on a major policy issue advocated by Singh: to keep the ‘sacred’ literature out and to usher the ‘secular’ in, while drawing upon the humanities (p 173).

The author says that ‘values-as-means to the attainment of any of the end-state-values—be it sacred or secular—must also be sacred. That is the essence of quality of work life in organisations (p 181). He pleads that, let all of us who care for India’s good with a sense of responsibility to posterity, clearly understand that India’s genius has always accorded priority to subjective purification and not to objective quantification. The latter must derive from the former, not over-rule it. World thinking is now realising the crisis the secularist-technocentric craze has been brewing for us (p 185).

Eccles, the Nobel laureate in neuroscience, avers: “Man has lost his way in this age. It is what has been called the predicament of man. I think that science has gone too far in breaking down man’s belief in spiritual greatness” (p 185–186).

The ninth chapter is devoted to hierarchism as an organisational value. The author says, the crux of hierarchism for the Indian scene is not structural power, but filial and fraternal affection. Hierarchism in Eastern cultures has ideally been a socio-psychological lubricant ensuring less friction-prone, more adjustment inclined interpersonal relationships (p 203). Based on his experience, the author opines that, it is the existence of authentic and warm hierarchical relationships which make for more genuine trust, empathy and so on. No matter how flat the structure is, filial/fraternal hierarchism will always remain indispensable (p 206).

The tenth chapter aims at ‘Rediscovering Indian Psychology for Managers’. The author says that this chapter has been motivated by some recent comments, heard and read from a few Indian academics, to the effect that there is no segment of Indian thought which could be called psychology. To disprove this point, the author has profusely quoted passages from the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, Brahmasutras, Yogavasishta, Vivekachudamani, Avadhuta - Gita and Atmabodha. In this connection, he has drawn the attention to a pamphlet by Aurobindo which contains some of his writings on an educational system for Indian as early as 1910.

The eleventh chapter delineates 'Metaphysical Empiricism in Leadership and Institution Building - the Role-Model of Swami Vivekananda. In this chapter, the author has brought out Vivekananda's insights into a Leader's qualities.

Among various qualities, Vivekananda stresses the impersonal orientation of a leader. The author rightly avers, the expectations of organisational members regarding fairness, objectivity, integrity, consistency and the like in the course of hundreds of daily decision-making issues - often trivial, at times momentous - can be ensured only by *impersonality* in the leader's mental domain. This does not mean disinterested apathy of indifference. (p 250).

The author also deals with Vivekananda's insights into Institution-Building. This was with particular reference to Ramakrishna Mission. The author says although the setting for managers, administrators, businessmen and others is qualitatively different, the lesson to ponder appears to be: if the missionaries are expected to move from the spiritual to the secular, the managers are equally expected to move (psychologically) from the secular to the spiritual. (p 253). While commending the work done by Ramakrishna Math and Mission (RKMM), the author says, the RKMM is an institutional model worthy of serious and urgent attention from economic enterprises of bureaucratic establishments even though it may belong dominantly to the sacred end of the spectrum. This is because it is an institution into which its leader had breathed a vitality unique in its creative synthesis of the *believing* mind and the *critical* mind; the assimilating, trusting mind and the excluding, rejecting mind, the Eastern mind and the Western mind, the spiritual mind and the secular mind, the loving mind and the disciplined mind (p 267).

The author concludes the book with a chapter on 'Mental Health'. According to the author, sound mental health is that state of the mind which can maintain a calm positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, for progressively longer duration or quickly, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work-life and social existence. For a healthy, stress-free mind, the author says internal constancy and peace must be the only valid response to external vagary and turmoil (p 270). He also mentions that sound values and mental health go together.

Further, the author says, every single in-depth organisational study conducted by him shows that its members are badly trapped in the quagmire of Greed, Jealousy, Envy, Egotism/Vanity, Impatience, Suspiciousness, Anger and Frustration. Considering such thorns in the human mind to be only 'natural', intellectual learning by-passes them. When the fabric of work-life

is then rolled on the carpet of such thorns, bleeding is only to be expected-‘naturally’. Two major outcomes of the combination of such unhealthy emotions within the organisational setting are: Competition and Ambition (p 271).

According to the author, both these motive forces essentially weaken most role players by making them dependent and vulnerable. This happens because the ‘Ambition-Competition’ drive is commonly grounded in a fantasy world of rewards, promotions and much else in the manager’s mind. This dream is, however, nearly always shattered for the majority. So the author rightly asks the question, Is this vast cost worth paying for just a few sparks which may fly-off the grinding wheel of competition? Are there no alternative routes to improvement and excellence than the competition-ambition drive which is prone to degeneration- particularly at the interpersonal level (p 271)?

As an alternative, the author has given the guidelines whose practice could restore personal command over mental health. They are: A Sound Philosophy of Life, Inner Core of Self-Sufficiency. ‘Nirdwandwic’ Mental Culture, Excellence through ‘Work-is- Workshop, Integration centering on a constant inner Focus, Ethico-Moral Rectitude, Cultivating Sattwa Guna, Disciplined Breathing, Radiating Goodwill and Harmony, and Supreme/Universal Consciousness and Surrender. Each of these concepts has been explained quoting the works of Tagore, Gandhiji, Aurobindo, Vivekananda and also Western Scholars (p 277–298).

The subject matter of the book definitely provides a new insight into the problem points of congruence between the Indian and Western management concepts in the area of individual and organisational values. However, the treatment aims at a very learned and erudite audience than the common stock of professionals and practitioners in the management fields. On this way, it cannot be a rudimentary learning process for the ordinary people as it presumes basic understanding of both the scriptures and modern management concepts. At best, it is a highly appreciable research endeavour. Practicality of it to convince the practitioners on the veracity of the author’s hypothesis need much more live examples and case studies. In fact, there is suitable difference between social ethics and business ethics. Some of the concepts which Prof. Chakraborty highlights, such as, to be devoid of greed, jealousy and egotism/vanity are the attributes which may not be fitting into the mundane business activities. This raises a very moot point, which the author also mentions in the book, whether competition and ambition are the only means to achieve excellence. He however, suggests alternatives such as developing a sound philosophy of life, excellence through work is worship, ethico-moral rectitude, etc. Our only apprehension is that Gandhian

economics also deals with such tenets which is appreciated in theory only and this should not be the fate of this work also. But Prof. Chakraborty tries to pre-empt this situation by suggesting practical training modules. We only wish that such training modules will be integrated increasingly by business organisations.

This is where the top management and echelons of the Indian business and industry should appreciate and cooperate in putting Prof. Chakraborty's ideas into practice. In this context, this book is an asset for chief executives and managers.

This book is also valuable to teachers who are expected to inculcate healthy values in the young minds, who are going to be future managers and leaders of organisations.

S. SAMPANGIRAMAIAH
Associate Professor
Organisational Behaviour
Industrial Relations and
Personnel Management Area
IIMB