

Modern Management in the Biblical Context: An Exploration

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Abstract: All disciplines are rooted in their past. The conceptual framework of the discipline, theory and principles of the same has evolved historically from different social events and necessities. Our Great Epics like Bhagavat Gita, Vedas and Upanishats are treasures of knowledge; reflect the social organizations, events and social philosophies of that time and at the same time having multidimensional implications both in social and individual life and in different disciplines. The disciplinary relevance of such epics is one of the least explored research areas. The management as a separate discipline has evolved and developed only in the beginning of the 20th Century. But the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of the same are rooted from the time immemorial. This paper analyses and evaluates the Biblical events and narrations having modern managerial theoretical and practical implications. For this, the modern management principles suggested by Henry Fayol are subjected for evaluation in the light of Bible in order to explore the contributions made by the Biblical events and narrations in the construction of theoretical and conceptual foundations for modern management theory and practice.

I. Introduction

Management practice is as old as human civilization when people started living together in groups. Therefore the history of management is old as the history of mankind. Every human group requires management and the history of human beings is full of organizational activities. Management is not anything new to this land, which has a long history of culture, tradition, and ethos. Management is growing and developing discipline. Its principles have wide applications. A systematic study and appreciation of management as a discipline requires investigation into various aspects related to it. Even though, the systematic study of management was started close to 19th century, the contributions in the field have historical dimensions and which came from varieties of sources. The practice of management has existed since the earliest time. Evidence of the use of principles of management is to be found in the administration of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa cities of ancient Aryan in 2000 B.C., Egypt in 1300 B.C etc.. Confucius's parables included suggestions for proper public administrations, and admonitions to choose honest, unselfish and capable public officer's long before Christ. Kautilya has offered sound principles of state administration in 320 B.C., Roman Catholic Church introduced the concept of staff personnel in church management, which was further carried by military organizations. These evidences are proving the historical evolution of the discipline in the construction of a theoretical background for the modern management practices and giving some insights about resources from which the conceptual framework is built. Every key management principle that is being successfully used in the Business sectors has a scriptural basis of Kautilya's "Artha Sasthra", the "Bhagawat Gita". The Bible and other epics contain references to the fourteen principles of management given by Henry Fayol. Judeo-Christian accounts of Noaha, Abraham and his descendants indicate the "managing" of large number of people and resources to accomplish a variety of objectives from building arks to governing cities and winning wars. Many Management texts, cites Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, as the "first management consultant". He taught Moses, the concept of delegation, division of work, management by exception, and span of control. The bible stresses several important concepts and principles which have been used perhaps in a much diluted way, without comprehending the original saying in the Bible which not only stress this point, but explains several concepts with a wide range of examples that anyone can understand and they will have a powerful impact on activities. The Bible is like an operator's manual for anyone engaged in any kind of task or responsibility, to management or governs anything, small or big and also it is the greatest book of management and it is no wonder that it is referred to by many, as the Book of Books.

Statement of the Theme

The present study, "Modern Management in the Biblical context: An Exploration", tries to explore and relate the principles of management with the Biblical events and narrations.

II. Review of Literature

- Dr. John Williams conducted a study related to the topic “Every successful Management Principle is based on Biblical Truth or Principles” in 1987. This study discovered that every management principle which is being used in the business and other sectors has a scriptural basis or foundation
- Dr. Dan A Wren conducted a study in connection with “Historical Evolution of Management” in 1972. This study reveals that Bible has a reference to the Principle of Division of Work in Exodus 18. Jethro, the father - in - law of Moses has been consider as the management consultant.
- Dr. M. Thenmozi conducted a study in relation to the “Evolution of Management Theories and Practices” that discovered the reference of Principles of Management from the Epics such as Bhagawat Gita, Bible, Quran etc.
- A study was conducted by Dr. Daniel Franklin in Queen’s Theological College in 1991 which discovered that the “Principle of Unity of Command” is refers to the Bible (Mathew 6 : 24)

Significance and Relevance of the Study:

The principles of management have a tremendous impact upon the practice of management in increasing the efficiency of the organization. These principles can be defined as a fundamental statement or truth providing a guide to thought or action. By using them, managers can more easily achieve the objectives and avoid making fundamental mistakes in their activities. The use of management is intended to simplify the management works, keys to what actions should be taken are suggested by these principles. They provide the bench marks from which the comprehensive mastery of a subject may be started, and they can be viewed as capsules of what is believed to be major consideration in current management thought.

If in any discipline, certain fundamental theoretical frameworks and principles are developed. In the absence of these principles and theoretical framework, researches become difficult and future horizons of knowledge cannot be expanded. These principles of management are well established, accepted and used in many organizations. As more research is conducted, new principles will emerge, other management principles will be modified, and some will be discarded as not truly representative of modern management practices. The study is quite relevant and significant in this context.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore and relate the relationship between modern management principles and Biblical events and narrations.
2. To analyse and evaluate whether the management principles envisaged in the Bible, have contributed towards the evolutionary phases of the theoretical and conceptual development of the management science.

Scope of the Study:

The present study covers an explorative enquiry analysis of the relationship between the management principles and Biblical events and narrations.

Data mining and Methods

The secondary data necessary for the study have been collected from Textual analysis of Bible, Data from different related Websites, Books etc.

III. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Henry Fayol (1841-1925) was a French engineer began his career in a mining company and later became the Managing Director of the company. As an executive, he was fully conversant with the principles and techniques of the management. His workshop experience contributed a lot to his thoughts on management. Fayol published a number of papers and Books in French. ‘General and Industrial Management’ translated into English, is the most popular book written by him. fayol’s Management thoughts are acceptable even today. He has been rightly called the ‘Father of Modern Management’.

A brief description of Fayol’s fourteen Principles of Management is given below:

Division of Work

This principle states that a complex work should be divided into small tasks and each task should be assigned to a particular employee. This makes each task simpler and easier to perform and results in efficiency because by doing a small part of work repeatedly, the employee acquires speed and perfection. It promotes specialisation and avoids wastage of time and effort.

Authority and Responsibility

Authority is the right to give orders to the subordinates. Responsibility means obligation to perform the work in the manner desired and directed by the authority. This principle states that authority and Responsibility should co-exist. If authority is given to a person, he should also be made responsible. Similarly if a person is made responsible for a task, he should be given sufficient authority for getting the work done. Official authority is derived from the manager's position and personal authority is derived from the personal qualities such as intelligence, experience, moral worth, past services etc. Responsibility arises out of assignment of activity. In order to discharge the responsibility properly there should be parity of authority and responsibility.

Discipline

Discipline means obedience, respect for authority and observation of established rules. It is requisite for the smooth running of the enterprise. It required not only on the part of workers but also on the part of management. This principle states that good supervision, clear rules, and built in system of reward and punishment helps to maintain discipline. Outward marks of respect in accordance with formal or informal agreements between firm and its employees.

Unity of Command

The principle of unity of command states that each employee should receive orders from superior only. If there is more than one employer, there can be chaos in receipt of orders. The subordinates will be confused as to whose instruction he should follow. It unity of command provides the security against confusion. It is the safeguard against dualism of control. Each manager must be clear whom he should command and from whom he shall receive it.

Unity of Direction

This Principle states that the activities, which have a common objective must be grouped together and must be under one head. There is one plan for such activities. The crux of the principle is that all operations with the same objective must have one manager and one plan. It is a guarantee of well aimed progress. Uncertain shifting and ill defined aim is the surest killer of initiative.

Remuneration of Personnel

The remuneration for the work done must be fair and reasonable. It should be acts as a source of satisfaction and means of motivation for the employees. The remuneration must inspire employees to work hard so that the organization earns more profit and that in turn would give them a chance for higher remuneration. It secures a committed work force and sustains employee's interest and participation.

Subordination of Individual Interest to General Interest

Fayol says that the business enterprises is superior to individuals, the interest of the business organization must prevail over personal Interest of the individuals. The management should direct its effort in convincing every individual in the organization, that the interest of the enterprise is supreme. When individuals work in a group, group interest should prevail over that of each Individual. Superiority and priority of the general interest leads to cohesion and elimination of fractionalism and group interests within a concern.

Centralization and Decentralization

Centralization refers to concentration of authority at one place or one level in the organization; for instance, the top management. On the other hand, decentralization means dispersal of authority to the lower levels in the organization. Fayol is of the opinion that an organization should strive to achieve a balance between centralization and decentralization. The extend of centralization and decentralization would depends upon the nature of the job, competence of the individual at different levels, responsibilities involved and accuracy in result expected.

Espirit De Crops

"Unity is Strength" is a well acceptable principle. The contribution of a team is far more significant than that of individuals. The need for team work can never be under estimated. The teamwork requires an efficient communication system. Managers must take steps to develop a sense of belongingness among the members of a work group. Team spirit helps in developing an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding. It is also minimize the need to use penalties for defaulting persons. It is the cohesive force in the organization in which everybody helps everybody else in a close spirit of team work.

Initiative

Initiative implies the creativity in an individual. The power to think, develop and execute a plan is collectively referred to as initiative. Fayol calls for creating opportunities within an organization where employee's initiative is developed. It refers to freedom to propose a plan and execute it. Management should permit subordinates to take some initiative in thinking out plans and executing them. This will help in increasing zeal and energy on the part of the employees.

Stability of tenure of the personnel

Fayol opined that managers and workers should not be shifted from their positions frequently. A person needs time to adjust himself to new work environment. Labour turnover (employees leaving the organization due to some reason or other) also leads to instability of tenure of personnel. Labour turnover involves cost to the enterprise in terms of training the new recruits.

Equity

Equity implies being justice and loyal to all concerns. According to Fayol, employees put in their best when they are treated in a fair manner, doing justice in all aspects of their jobs. It implies that superiors should be impartial while dealing with their subordinates. Favoritism and nepotism should be avoided. Equity is essential to maintain cordial relationship between managers and employees.

Order:

This principle is based on the general saying "Have a place for everything and keep everything in its place". Order according Fayol has two components:

1. Material Order
2. Social Order

Material Order means having place for all materials and keeping them in their right place. It is an arrangement of material objects and things.

Social Order implies a similar arrangement for people. Right person is assigned to the right job. Right material in the right place and right man on the right job ensure efficiency in the utilization of resources.

Scalar Chain

Scalar chain refers to the line of authority or the chain of superiors starting from the highest and moving towards the lowest rank. Subordinates can approach their superiors through this line of authority which is desirable for ensuring unity of command and effective communication. It is must that communication should pass through this chain of command. The main drawback of this system is that, it is time consuming. Where urgent decisions have to be taken, a long chain of command makes the decision a delayed one. However Fayol is not in favour of very rigid scalar chain. He has suggested short circuiting the chain of command where emergency decision is to be taken. This process of short circuiting is called Gang plank.

Principles of Management in the Biblical context: an Evaluation

Principles of Management	Biblical Context
Division of work	The Appointment of Judges Exodus 18 : 13 - 26
Authority And Responsibility	Jesus sends out the twelve Disciples Luke 9 : 1 - 6
Discipline	Ten Commandments Deuteronomy 5 : 6 - 22 10 : 12 -13
Unity of Command	God And possessions Mathew 6 : 24
Unity of Direction	Joseph is made Governor over Egypt Genesis 41 : 17 - 27, 25, 26 - 27, 29 - 31, 39 - 42, 47 - 49
Remuneration of Personnel	The Workers in the Vineyard Mathew 20 : 1 - 16
Subordination of Individual Interest to General Interest	Events after the Battle I Samuel 14 : 24 - 30, 37

	41 - 45
Centralization And Decentralization	The Levites are appointed to serve the priests Numbers 3 : 5 – 11 Moses chooses Seventy Leaders Numbers 11 : 16 - 17
Initiative	David in Saul's Camp I Samuel 17 : 3 – 7, 16, 20, 24 – 25, 30 – 32, 40, 48 - 51
Stability of Tenure of Personnel	Jesus And Peter John 21 : 15 – 17 Mathew 16 : 18
Equity	The parable of the Gold Coins Luke 19 : 12 – 13, 15 – 20, 24 – 26 Colossians 3 : 22, 4: 1
Espirit De Corps Union is strength	Soloman prepares to Build the temple I Kings 5 : 3, 5 – 6, 13 – 16, 38
Order	Consecration of the priest Exodus 28 : 1, 29 : 8, 30 : 31 - 33
Scalar chain	One body, different parts Corinthians 12 : 28

Management is the key to business success. Along with the study of management it is necessary to study the historical evolution of management. The present study is intended to have an explorative analysis of principles of management in the Biblical context. In this study, a wide range or assortments of examples have been given from the Bible to illustrate the fact that, principles of management can be related to the Biblical events and truth.

IV. Descriptive Analysis

- **Division of Work:**

The principle of Division of Work can be related to the Biblical Event “The Appointment of Judges” in Exodus 18 :(13 – 26). In the Biblical event, Moses was the only leader who leads the Israelis. Jethro, father- in -Law of Moses advises him about the advantages of division of work, Management by exception and delegation of authority. In order to implement the advice, Moses chooses some capable men who were god fearing and trusted. Appoint them as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fitees and tens. They serve as judges and decide all the smaller disputes and bring all the difficult cases to Moses. So these help Moses to reduce his work load and help judges to makes each task simpler and easier by doing a small part of work repeatedly.

- **Authority and Responsibility**

The Biblical event Jesus sends out the twelve disciples” in Luke 9: (1 – 6) depicts the principles of Authority and Responsibility. In the Biblical context, Jesus called the twelve Disciples together and gave them authority which he possessed, to teach and preach good news every where. When they received authority was made responsible to fulfill it. The following context also explain how perfectly fulfilled their responsibility given to them by Jesus.

- **Discipline**

Bible contains reference to the principle of Discipline from the context ‘Ten Commandments’ in Deuteronomy 5: (6 – 22) this principle refers to the obedience, respect for authority, and observation of established rules. The intention behind the Ten Commandments given by lord through Moses was obedience, respect for authority and for smooth running of the country. This principle also states about the reward system. On those who obey and on who neglect the laws? This Biblical context explains about the punishment and reward system.

- **Unity of Command**

Mathew 6: 24 [God and Possessions] is an apt example of the principle of Unity of Command. This principle says that each employee should receive order from one superior only, order from more than one superior will leads to confusion as to whose instruction should follow. The Biblical event also express the same opinion that no one can be a slave of two masters, cannot serve both Masters at the same time. Thus, the principle of Unity of Command can be related to God and possessions in Mathew 6: 24.

- **Unity of Direction**

The Bible describes the principle of Unity of Direction through the Biblical event 'Joseph is made Governor over Egypt' in Genesis 41: 17 – 49. This principle states that every activity, which has common objectives, must be grouped together under one head. The Biblical narration says that, The King of Egypt appoint Joseph as Governor over the country. The intention behind the appointment was to overcome the seven years of famine. In order to overcome famine, they worked together under the supervision of Joseph, and produced abundant crops during the seven years of plenty and stored in the cities. Thus the Egyptian was safe during the seven years of famine. So they achieved their objective under the control of Joseph. Thus it can be related to principle of Unity of Direction.

- **Remuneration of personnel**

The principle of Remuneration of Personnel can be related to the Biblical parable "The workers in the vineyard" in Mathew 20: 1 – 16. This principle emphasis the fact that remuneration for the work done must be fair and reasonable. It must inspire employees to work hard. This parable says that the man who went out in the early morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. In the morning he hired one man and entered into an agreement to pay the regular wage, a silver coin a day. At nine 'O' Clock, he went out and hired some men from the market place and agreed to pay a fair wages. Then at the twelve 'O' Clock and three 'O' Clock he did the same thing. When evening came, the owner called the workers and paid those wages, starting with those who hired last and ending with those who hired first. The men who had begun to work at five 'O' Clock and those who had worked from the early morning were got the same wages, a silver coin. Here, from the point of view of the men who were hired at twelve 'O' Clock and three 'O' Clock were inspired to work hard because they got fair wages? The men who began to work at the early morning also got the reasonable wages, on the basis of the agreement, a silver coin a day. Thus the Biblical parable can related the principle of Remuneration of Personnel.

- **Subordination of Individual Interest to General Interest**

The Biblical event 'The events after the battle' in Samuel 14: 24- 45 depicts the principle of subordination of individual interest to general interest. The principle says that the interest of the business must prevail over personnel interest of the individual. When individuals works in a group, group interest should prevail over that of each individual. The Biblical event also expressing the same fact. The Biblical event shows the event after the battle between The Israel and Philistines. The leader of Israel, Saul was made an oath that nobody should not eat food before winning the war. But Jonathan, son of Saul had not heard about Saul's threatening and people were not agreeing to the promise because they were tired and hungry. When he heard about his father's promise he could not agree to it because when he ate honey he felt much better and he said that if they had eaten the food they could defeat the enemy. Here the group interest is prevailed over the individual interest.

- **Centralization and Decentralization**

The principle of centralization and decentralization can be identified from the Biblical context 'Appointment of levy to assist the priests' in Numbers 3 : 5 – 11 and 'Appointment of Seventy Leaders' in Numbers 11 : 16 – 17. The centralization refers to the concentration of authority at one place or one level and decentralization means dispersal of authority to the lower levels. The extent of centralization and decentralization would depend upon the nature of the job, competence of the individual and accuracy in result expected. The authority to assist the priests in Israel was only concentrated the tribes of levy. That was an important task, no other tribes can do that, and at the same time no other responsibility vested with them. In order to attain smooth functioning, Moses appoints seventy leaders from Israel and delegates his power to lead people. The Appointment of levy was made on the basis of nature of the job and competence of the levy. The appointment of seventy leaders was for attain the result expected. There was a balance between centralization and decentralization throughout the functioning of Israel.

- **Espirit De Corps**

The principle of Espirit De Corps focus on the truth that, contribution of team is more significant than that of the Individuals. Team spirit helps in developing an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding among the employees. Team spirit inspires them to achieve their objective. This principle can be related to The Biblical event 'Solomon prepares to build the temple' in I King 5: 3: 38. Soloman, the King of Israel wants to build temple for his father. In order to construct the temple, King Solomon appoint 30000 men as forced labour, 80000 men in the hill country for quarrying stone, 70000 men to carry it and 3300 men as foremen to supervise their work. This context also explains the principle of Division of Work by dividing the whole workers into different group, assigning their job and appointing foremen for supervising the group. The temple was

completely finished exactly as it had been planned. They took only 7 years to complete the temple. Thus this principle can be related to the principle of Union is Strength.

- **Initiative**

The principle of initiative can be related to the Biblical event “David in Saul’s camp” in 1 Samuel 17: 3 – 51. This principle implies the creativity of an individual, power to think, develop and execute the plan. In the Biblical context, during the time of war, soldiers were chosen usual way when were taken to war. But that didn’t help anybody to win the fight against Goliath. But David thought entirely different from the soldiers. From his past experience, he opted different way to kill Goliath. Which was not such an easy task because he was nearly three meter tall and wore bronze armour and a bronze helmet? His legs were also protected by bronze armour and he carried a bronze javelin slung over his shoulder. Later David took five stones from the stream with his catapult; he hit on the forehead of Goliath and broke his skull. Goliath fell face downwards on the ground then David defeated and kill Goliath with a catapult and a stone. He ran to him and took Goliath’s sword out of its sheath, and cut off his head and kills him. Here the way taken by David is referred to as creativity inherent in him.

- **Stability of Tenure of Personnel**

The principle of stability of tenure of personnel can be related to the Biblical narration “Jesus and Peter” in John 21: 15 – 17 and Mathew 16: 18. This principle states about the stability of person and opined that the managers and workers should not be shifted from their position frequently. In Mathew 16: 18, Jesus decided to appoint Peter as head of the church. In many situations, Peter was continuously examined to know whether he had been fit as a leader. In John 21: 15 – 17, there is a reference to Jesus who appointed Peter to take care of His sheep after he had stressed it thrice. The stability of Peter is being maintained through his management ability which was handed over by him. This is indicated through the existence of church in the present day.

- **Equity**

The principle of equity can be identified from the Biblical parable ‘The parable of the Gold Coins’ in Luke 19: 12 – 26. This principle implies of being justice and loyal to all concerns. The superiors should be impartial while dealing with their subordinates and put employees in their best and fair manner according to all aspects of their jobs. Biblical parable shows how the superior should treat his servants on the basis of their responsibility fulfill by them. This parable was about a superior who gave ten gold coins to ten servants and told them to convert and multiply it during his absence, and to give an account on his return. On this return, the first servant doubled one gold coin into 10 gold coins; the second one doubled one gold coin into 5 gold coins. The superior put them in charge of ten and five cities respectively. The last one kept it hidden in hand kerchief, and just brought the same coins back to him. The master took away the gold coin from the lazy servant and gave it to the one who had 10 gold coins. Thus the master put the servants in a best and fair manner according to their work done. So it can be related to the principle of equity.

- **Order**

The principle is based on the saying “Have a place for every thing and everything in its place”. This principle also deals with two aspects, material order and social order. Material order means having place for all materials and keeping them, in their right place. Social order implies right man is assigned to the right job. In the Old Testament, there was an appointment of Aaron as Priest by the Lord through the agent of Moses which can be related to the principle of social order. The Biblical event states that, he was a most suitable person for the Priesthood. There was anointing oil which used to put on the person who served as a priest. It must not be poured on the ordinary man who is not a priest, as he will no longer be considered as one of the people. Another aspect, material order can be related to the material arrangement made in the tent in Israel. There should be an appropriate place for each and every material in the tent; no alteration can be made. Thus the principle of order can be related to the Biblical event.

- **Scalar chain**

The principle of scalar chain can be related to the Biblical context “one body, different parts” in 1Corinthians 12 : 28. The principle refers to the line of authority or chain of superiors starting from the highest and moving towards the lowest rank. The subordinates can approach their superiors only through this line of authority. The Biblical event also shows the line of authority in the church. From the earlier time onwards the church has been following the strict scalar chain principle even now.

Suggestions:

- Management has a wide application. Its applicability can be seen throughout the life of the human being so; it is more advisable to provide awareness about the management.
- Bible is an epic which contain reference to the fourteen principles of management more research in other epics will helps to understand the historical evolution of management principles and practices deeply.
- More research in the Bible and other epics will leads to the emergence of new management principles and other existing management principles will be modified.
- The result of the research which will be found useful not only for the practicing managers and organization by emulate and initiate the behavior of manager in the past, because the study emphasis the past experience of managers' success and failures.

V. Conclusion

From this study, it has been observed that the Bible contains references to the fourteen principles of management. In addition to this, the study pushes thinking about alternative explanations for phenomena, helps to identify more or less stable concepts and expands research horizons by suggesting new ways of studying old Questions. The reviewing of the evolution of management from the earliest days of civilization to the present should help us to understand and the managerial world of today and the future better. Knowledge about management today is the result of continuing innovative ideas, and practices over a long period of time in the pages of management history. Historical perspectives help managers to better understand current developments. The past experiences also help managers to avoid repeating mistakes. The objective of historical perspective is to sharpen one's vision of the present, not the past. So, this study is expected to reveal that by understanding the past, one can hope to cope successfully with the present and hope to continue to survive in the future.

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