

Buddhist principles of management of human resource: special reference on theravāda buddhism

H. J. R. Buddhika

Business administration is one of the scorching subjects in college curricula all over the world at present. In this area, Buddhism has its unique management theory and practice, which has evolved over a long period. As early as Sākyamuni Buddha's time, the Saṅgha community had a well-developed administration system. Over time, the system endured numerous changes and evolved sophisticated methods of management and leadership. In the Avataṃsaka Sutta commenting on the three refuges, Buddha said: "Taking refuges in the Saṅgha means one should make Saṅgha a well-administrated and harmonious community for all sentient beings. From this comment, it can be seen that Buddhist Saṅgha communities were organizations which excelled in managerial skills. The arguments are justified via Tipiṭaka; primary sources and the research articles; secondary sources.

Just to show how the principles of management have been followed in the organization of the saṅgha let us consider the following comparison between some aspects of the modern management system and the principles of saṅgha organization. Prof.G.D.Sumanapala observes those two aspects in the following manner. The themes of the process of management in the modern management process are as follows:

1. Planning
2. Organizing
3. Staffing
4. Direction/ leading
- I. Leadership
- II. Motivating
- III. Communication
- IV. Coordination

V. Control

The Buddha, as the head of the Saṅgha community, led by his teaching and by establishing the precepts for the group. He selected knowledgeable and virtuous Bikku and bhikkhunis to be the instructing monastic to teach the Dhamma and precepts. Among them, he further selected the elders to counsel advise and monitor the progress of the monastic under their supervision.

When the initial saṅgha of the five Bhikkus was formed immediately after the Buddha's enlightenment, the four principles of living were laid down to guide them towards virtuous living: depend on food from alms, cast-off clothing, under trees and Putimutta medicine. Further, the monastic was warned to shun evil possessions that were considered to be hindrances to their practices, i.e., houses and gardens, plants, grains and crops, servants and slaves, pets and animals, money and jewels, utensils and tools and decorated beds.

The saṅgha society was established on firm ground with minor objectives and a direct goal. The goal was to attain Nibbāna as a solution to the mass of suffering that human beings have to face their wonderings in the existence. The behavior of the monk who trends upon this path contributes to the development of morality and a peaceful environment in society. These are considered minor objectives of the saṅgha society. The path recommended for the achievement of these objectives and the goal is none other than the noble eight-fold path included within the threefold training system viz; morality, concentration and wisdom. It should be emphasized that this path is recommended not only for the monks but also for the laypeople who lead a worldly life.

Planning occupies an important place in management. It includes mainly identifying the objectives and goals of the institution and the determination of the means to achieve them. The above-mentioned objectives, the goal and the path leading to achieving them concerning the organization of the saṅgha can be compared with the aspect of planning.

The next aspect of management is termed organization. It includes activities such as depigmentation, authority, the delegation of authority etc. The activities of the saṅgha also have been divided into divisions and sub-divisions and the authority of those divisions is ascribed to suitable members of the order. Mainly the disciplinary rules are divided into two groups Ubhatovibanga and Khandaka. Ubhatovibanga consists of rules about the individual life of a monk. They are the great offences Pārājikā, and thirteen saṅghādisesa offences which can be decided only by a formal saṅgha- Kamma, two aniyatā uncertain rules etc. Khandaka included rules and regulations about the social life of a monk. They are related to activities such as ordination pabbajjā, higher ordination Upasampadā, ecclesiastical activities upōsatha, giving punishments dandakamma, observing

rainy season vassūpanāyika etc.

Further eminent monks had been appointed as authorities to put these rules and regulations into proper action. The *Etadaggapāli* includes several such appointments. Venerable Upāli as the authority on Vinaya and Venerable Ānanda as the treasurer of dhamma can be cited as examples. In addition, some monks have been appointed as advisors and the reciters of the rules and regulations at the regular meetings of the Sangha.

The fourth aspect of management namely, direction means to lead the authorities properly and to act successfully in the realization of their services. Several things should be completed to fulfil the purpose of direction. Leadership, motivation, communication and coordination are the most important among them. As to leadership, Buddhism emphasizes that the leader should speak what he performs and should perform what he speaks *yathāvādi tathākāri yathākāri tathāvādi*. There should not be any difference between his thoughts, speech and functions. The Vinaya Pitaka records many cases in which some Buddhist monks and nuns have transgressed the rules and regulations. There are a large number of supplementary rules and punishments recommended in the Vinaya for the rehabilitation of such monks and nuns

Thus it is clear that almost all the fundamental aspects of the modern concept of human resource management could be seen in the organization of the sangha society. The primary and secondary sources proved that the basic principles of management and their application in the organization of Sangha clarify how the Buddhist Vinaya is related to the principles of human resource management.

Key Words: Management, Human Resource, Vinaya, Planning

References

- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2014). *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource and Management Practice*. London: Paperback Publisher.
- Prof.G.D.Sumanapala. (2001). *Early Buddhist Philosophy and Social Concepts*. Singapore: Buddhist Libraray- Buddhist Research Society.
- Committee, T. (1974). *Majjhima Nikaya*. The Republic of Sri Lanka.
- Committee, T. T. (1962). *Anguttara Nikaya*. The Government of Ceylon.
- Committee, T. T. (1976). *Digha Nikaya*. Colombo: The Republic of Sri Lanka.
- Committee, T. T. (1960). *Khuddaka Nikaya*. Dehiwala: The Government of Ceylon