

# IS HUMAN A RESOURCE: NATURE OF MAN 'INSIGHTS FROM ANCIENT INDIAN-THOUGHT'

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## ABSTRACT

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In the present global-management scenario, man (MAANAV) is referred as human-being. In the organizations, he is narrated and depicted as asset, capital, power and force. Such notions present the biological (materialistic) nature of man which is based on the limited-area of investigation namely science especially the pseudo-science that is the result of Darwinian and Spencerian concept of man. These scientists say: 'man is an animal;' and 'survival of the fittest;' and 'bigger fish swallows the smaller one'. In the present-time, management is accepting these theories of man in their practices which is the root-cause of the problem. When any organization accepts such ideas and notions, it harms and blocks the path of development of both man and organization. At the root-level of man, it leads towards unethical-behaviour (competition, jealousy, greed and envy) that ultimately leads towards stress, sorrow and pain; and at organization-level, its results are dangerous and awesome. The present paper entitled *Is Human A Resource: Nature of Man 'Insights from Ancient Indian-Thought'* is an attempt to highlight the real-nature of man which is based on the wisdom of Indian-Sages and Seers (Drishtaa). In ancient Indian-thought, man was placed at very high-place and that was of divinity. For highlighting the nature of man, Vedic-literature (Vedas and Upanishads) and Epics (Ramayana & Mahabharata) will be used so that everyman can live happily, merrily and stress-free with divinity with the development of all.

**Keywords:** Veda, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Karma, Atman, Science, Spirituality, Adam Smith, Maslow, Freud, Darwin, Spencer

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## MEANING OF RESOURCE

Etymologically, the term resource is derived from the Latin word 'Resurgere' which means to rise-again and spring up anew. Later, this term is being used in Old-French, Middle-French and English as Ressource. Resourdre and Resoource having the meaning: a source, spring and rise-again respectively.<sup>1</sup> According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, the term resource is used in two-senses, firstly, it is a supply or something that a nation/country, an organization/institution or a man/person has and can use; secondly, something that can be used to achieve an aim/objective/goal.<sup>2</sup> The alternative-terms used in place of resource are – supply, ingenuity and means.<sup>3</sup> The term resource is generally used for the material or thing that has a materialistic-nature. Generally, every-resource always satisfies and fulfils the needs, wants and desires. It is either used and/or consumed in its original-way or transformed to produce benefit or utility. Every resource has three-characteristics namely: firstly, utility; secondly, limited-availability; and thirdly, potential for depletion/consumption. When a resource is used or consumed in extreme-manner then that resource may become unavailable. Some thinkers

maintain that resources are in abundance and they will not be completely consumed by man but this view is not completely true. Resources may end if they are not properly used. When a resource is used in a proper-manner then it results into high economic-growth, greater-prosperity, increases wealth, promotes ethical-consumerism, enhances sustainability and raises the quality of life of man. On the contrary, it leads towards over-consumption, resource-depletion and resource-curse. On the basis of ownership, a resource can be personal, social, national and international. So, it is the one of the foremost duty of man to use and sustain the resources (with the permission of owner) in a proper-manner but always remember not to exploit them in any manner. Here, it is important to note down that man must preserve and sustain the every type of resources so that the forthcoming generations of man will also be able to use them in a good manner.

Every resource can be grouped-into four-ways on the basis of origin, stage of development, renewability and distribution. These are further classified into two-divisions separately namely, biotic/abiotic; potential/actual; renewable/non-renewable; and

ubiquitous/localized. The natural-resources, social-resources and human-resources are the three major derivative-terms from the term resource. In the present-time, these three-derivatives of term resource are studied in the major-branches of knowledge namely Science (Biology and Ecology), Social-Science (Economics, Psychology and Management (Human-Resource-Management)).

- **Natural-Resource:** Natural-resources are those resources which are gained and received from nature/environment, it comprises of fruits, wood, air, water, minerals (gold, silver). In Biology and Ecology, resource is defined as a substance/thing/ object required by a living-entity (living-being) for maintenance, growth and reproduction. In the viewpoint of Biological and Ecological thinkers; resource always fulfils (satisfies) the desires, needs and wants of a living-being.
- **Social-Resources:** These are those resources which have social-utility/use/benefit like water-hut, hand-pump, lake and garden etc.
- **Human Resource:** Economics is that branch of knowledge which studies how scarce-resources are managed in the society. It is referred as demand and supply. In the economics, resource is defined as commodity. According to the Classical Economic Thinkers; land, labour and capital were the three-categories of resource. In Later thought, entrepreneurship was added to this group. Now, this group is of four namely, land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. In the branch of management, labour (Owners, Employees and Workers) is referred as human-resource. It refers to the human-effort made in the production/manufacturing of goods/services and their rendering. He can be differentiated from each other in terms of skills, energy, abilities and knowledge. These four can be enhanced by man through practice.

Now, a comparison of these two thought (Scientific (Biological and Ecological) and Social-Scientific (Economical and Management) is presented. This comparison is based on their definition, needs and system of resource. (i) Definition of Resource: For Scientists (Biologists and Ecologists) the definition of resources is nature-centered on the other hand, for Social-Scientists (Economists and Management Thinkers) it is human-centered. (ii) Needs: Scientists (Biologists/Ecologists) present man in terms of mere biological-needs while Social-Scientists (Economists and Management

Thinkers) discuss desire of man with necessity. (iii) Systems: Scientific (Biological/Ecological) systems are grounded on the natural-processes of growth, maintenance and reproduction while the economic-systems are based on the field of revenue (currency) used in exchange of goods/services.

After discussing the concept of resource thoroughly including its etymology, meaning, synonym (alternative-terms), major characteristics, pros and cons of resource-utilization, types/groupings of resources and branches that study the term resource. About the man, several theories are proposed by various scientists and thinkers. Now these theories and models are presented.

## A GLIMPSE AT VARIOUS THEORIES/MODELS OF MAN

Several theories/models regarding the nature of man are being presented by the various Scientists and Social-Scientists in the contemporary-time and present-day western-world. Here, all the theories/models are categorised into five-theories/models namely: Psychological, Economical Machine, Sexual and Sociological. Now a brief-introduction of these models is presented in the following-section –

- i. **Psychological-Theory of Man:** This model is also known as the Hierarchy of Needs/Needs-Model of man. It is basically based on the assumption that man has needs and he does whatever he can for the satiation and fulfilment of his needs. This models treats man as a bundle of needs. Main supporter of this model are Maslow, MacGregor and Alderfer. These Psychologists present a series of needs and wants of man. In this model, man is no more than a victim of fulfilling his own desires and needs; does anything for the satiation/satisfaction of his needs. referred as a slave of needs; depicted as extremely selfish, highly self-interested, completely self-centered; and he only wants to fulfil his needs only.
- ii. **Economic-Theory of Man:** This model is commonly known as Money-Enhancing-Model and Money-Maximizing-Model of man. According to this model, first-preference of man is the money and he does anything to obtain it by any means, process and method. This model is primarily supported by Adam Smith. Man desires only for money. Here, it is important to note-down that man wants money without doing work and wants to raise his earned-money and wants to consume all by himself. He is shown as the maximizer as well as consumer of

money. For achieving money, he does not even care about the universal-values viz. Honesty, Love and Respect. He is depicted as non-caring and uncaring for others in matters of achieving the money. Most of the times, his behaviour is inclined towards earning-money, earning-profit and maximizing-profit in any way and manner whether that is right/wrong, good/bad, proper/improper and boon/sin. He is shown as very greedy and ambitious for acquiring and storing of money.

- iii. **Machine-Theory of Man:** This theory is supported by the inventors, makers, brokers, dealers and buyers of heavy-machinery. With the Industrial-Revolution, uses of heavy-machine became popular all over the world. When the utilization of very high machinery came into practice then man became only an operator of these machines. In the present scenario, utilization of computer/mobile/laptop also falls into this category. Man is no more than an operator/handler of machines. According to this model, man is a user as well as a handler of these machines and gadgets.
- iv. **Sexual-Theory of Man:** This Theory or model maintains man is no more than a sexual-creature who chases and clings towards sex. This theory is based on the assumption that man is a completely sexual-being. This view is supported by the World famous Psychologist Sigmund Freud and his contemporary Carl Gustav Jung. This theory maintains that all the actions of man are directed towards achievement and satisfaction of sex.
- v. **The Sociological Theory of Man:** This theory is based on the assumption that man is the consequence of his environment, society and culture. Society is the group of various-type of people and culture can be defined as the mental-programming of an individual (Man). Morality, values, customs and tradition (social and cultural-factors) of a particular-society are the mile-stone for shaping and building the personality and character of Man in a particular time-line. In this theory, Man is shown as evaluator muck like ants, bees and termites. This theory is mainly supported by the Max Weber. According to him, every man is the product of his social and cultural-environment. These two (Society and Culture) are vital for the complete-development of Man in a particular-society. They shape his attitude and actions in the upcoming-future. It also builds his personality. Man develops those beliefs and values

according to the society in which he is born or raised. Here, it is important to note-down that when a man does not follow the social-norms then society imposes cost on man. Not following the social-norms is one of the causes of criticism of Man in a society. When a man follows the custom and tradition then he gets respect and honour in the society. Nonetheless, it is not always mandatory for man to follow the social and cultural-norms and values. Man must depart from such values and norms in the society only when they are against the development of Man. This notion presents the concept of social-change in a particular society.

After describing the various theories/models of man, it can be said that in the contemporary-time, various theories and models are being presented by the Scientists, Economists, Psychologist and Social-Scientist/Thinkers about the nature of man. These all theories and models exhibit only one dimension of man. These theories are not completely true but they are partly true. It means these all theories represents the truth but in a very little manner. Every theory/model presents the one dimension of man while other presents another dimension of man. These theories do not present the real-nature of man. Man is very-higher than these theories present. When any above mentioned theory of man is practiced in management in terms of: planning, motivation, leadership, promotion, appraisal, hiring, firing, and division of labour then the out-coming results will not be of favour. So, to have the universal-favourable results nature of man is being presented from the ancient Indian-Thought.

## NATURE OF MAN IN ANCIENT INDIAN-THOUGHT

Documents of Ancient Indian-Thought: Vedas (Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Atharva-Veda, Sama-Veda) collectively known as Vedic-Literature; and Upanishads (Nine Primary Upanishads, Commonly one hundred and eight Upanishads are considered) generally known as Upanishadic-Literature; Ramayana & Mahabharata (these two form the Epic-Literature of India). These three literature represent the ancient Indian-thought. Vedas, and Upanishads are highly-spiritualistic and they are being treated as the sacred-documents and literature of Hindu-creed especially in India. Ramayana is considered as a sacred document and narrates the life story of Ram. On the other hand, Mahabharata is considered as a science of ethics of man (MAANAV-DHARMA-SHAASTRA) and presents the life-story of Bharata-dynasty/

In the ancient Indian-thought Man is being treated as of divine-origin having all the potentialities in him. He has direct relationship with Supreme-Intelligence (Brahman). This relationship becomes more and more powerful with the practice of YOGA. It is maintained in the Vedic and Upanishadic-literature that man is the son of immortality and bliss (product of eternal-bliss). He has infinite-power and infinite-bliss in him but there is need to realize them. He has direct connection with Brahman (Universal-Atman). Defining the Brahman, Taitriya-Upanishad<sup>4</sup> says that “Brahman is not the Matter, Brahman is not the life-energy, Brahman is not the Mind, Brahman is not the Knowledge, Brahman is the bliss.” Thus, the real-nature of Brahman is bliss. As, it is said in the Vedic-Literature that Man has unlimited-power in himself but there is need to awaken them. Man is free to choose his action according to his nature in accordance with Rta (Universal-order). Rta is the Vedic-notion of cosmic and universal order. Further, Vedic-literature asserts that, at the root-level, everyone is full of bliss and that is not transitory but is eternal and infinite. It is not like materialistic and sensual-pleasure but it is very higher than this and that. Realizing the Brahman is equals to realizing the identity. In this context Brihadaraanyaka-Upanishad<sup>5</sup> says that “man's all sorrows passes away, when he realizes his identity with the divine. Then, he can control all beings from within.”

Highlighting the origin and existence of bliss in Man Swetasvatara-Upanishad<sup>6</sup> asserts that “Hear O! All Man of the world, Thou art the progeny of the immortal bliss.” According to both Vedic and Upanishadic-Literature, everyone can get this bliss because everyone has it in himself. In this context, Mahanarayan-Upanishad<sup>7</sup> mentions these seven as mandatory for attaining the Brahman/Liberation. Their names are viz., firstly, practice of truthfulness; secondly, austerity; thirdly, withdrawals of senses from forbidden-objects; fourthly, giving of selfless-gift leads to highest-good; fifthly, inward-worship; sixthly, renunciation; and lastly, dispassion is needed for attaining the Brahman. Thus, origin of man from the divinity is highlighted in Vedic and Upanishadic-literature. It means everyone belongs to the divinity. As it is said in the Ramayana<sup>8</sup> written by Valmiki that life of man is not easily achievable and every man is unique by his very nature. This view is also supported by Mahabharata.

Everyman has an Atman (Consciousness) which is a part of the Brahman. At the concrete-level, everyone has a Soul/Spirit/Atman which is termed as Atman in the ancient Indian-thought. Every Man has an Atman. About

the Atman, Mundaka Upanishad<sup>9</sup> asserts that “He is the entire-universe, earth and sky, the mind and life – breaths are all woven into him.” The equality of Brahman and Atman is highlighted in the Upanishadic-Literature. Atman in its essence is no different from the Brahman. It is the Brahman which has entered the body of Man and as the Inner-Self and the Internal-Ruler, presides over and guides all action. Highlighting the importance of Atman, Aiteriya-Upanishad<sup>10</sup> says that, “Atman in the body is the essence of the consciousness;” further it asserts “that indeed is the Atman by which a living-being sees form, hears sounds, smells scents, articulate speech, and discriminates what is the sweet and what is not. That which is the heart and mind is the same, as that all these are but names of consciousness”<sup>11</sup> Power of man is so infinite that even Gods are not able to understand and comprehend the nature of Man who is basically a Brahman. Brahman is described as the chief of Gods, Vayu, Agni, Indra are unable to understand and comprehend the Brahman.<sup>12</sup>

Out of this, it can be said that man is of divine-origin by his very nature. Both Vedic and Upanishadic-literature present the notion that both Atman and Brahman are Identical. This can be easily achieved by the true-practice of Yoga. Man can realize this by practice of truthfulness; austerity; withdrawals of senses from forbidden-objects; giving of selfless-gift leads to highest-good; inward-worship; renunciation and dispassion. These are essential to realize the Brahman. Further, it can be said that the Vedic and Upanishadic concept of Atman/Brahman establishes the equality of men in every paradigm.

## CONCLUSION

In this way, it can be concluded from the ancient Indian thought that Man is of Divine-origin. He has infinite-creativity and powers in him. He can do and achieve what he desires for as well as is also responsible for his action. Concentration, self-control and good actions are the essential for realize the Brahman. When one follows these three-characteristics of 'MAN' then man can transform himself into 'Good MAN' that is (SU...MAN). From the above made discussion the following conclusions can be drawn for the nature of MAN

1. MAN is divine in its origin.
2. MAN has ATMAN (Consciousness) that is Brahman.
3. MAN has unlimited-power
4. Whatever a MAN does in accordance with Rta (Dharma) is always right.

The modern theories of management treat Man as a resource evolve around the ideal of exploiting something or someone else for one's own ends. This doesn't match with the ancient theory of man. Now there is time to understand the teachings of the Seers and Rishis who propounded such a theory of MAN who has infinite-bliss and unlimited-creativity. As Smith has said,

“The wave of the future will be a return to the past.”

If we want to have and give a better happier and healthier, stress-free world for us and our forthcoming- generations then we must not treat man as a resource in a exploiting manner but in a co-operative, sustaining and developing way because he can give his response in both positive (GOOD) and negative (BAD) way because he has freedom of will (Freedom of Will).

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