Towards a new paradigm of management

B Mahadevan

It gives me great pleasure to be part of this seminar. First of all let me congratulate Yugayatri – Dr. Shamsundar and the army of people behind Yugayatri who have been very keen to organize this seminar on “Towards a New Paradigm of Business management – Alternative Perspectives from Ancient Indian Wisdom”. I am also happy to note that Bangalore Chamber of Industry & Commerce is actively collaborating. I am happy that on our part IIM Bangalore is also able to participate in this particular initiative. Over the several years I have been discussing at different levels and different platforms with Dr Shamsundar on some of the issues related to the seminar topic. It is quite heartening to see that we are able to organize this one-day program and what makes me even happier is the presence of a large number of young minds here. I think it is a positive sign and is representative of the reality and the urge to look for some changes in the manner we look at management, the central theme of today’s program.

Ancient Indian Wisdom – A sample

Dr. Shamsundar requested us to utter a mantra at the beginning of today’s events.

ॐ सह नाववतु  |  अश्व नौं भुनत्व  |  सह वीर्य करवावेः  |  तेजस्विनावपि तमस्तु  |
माविद्वियावेः  |  शान्तिः  |  शान्तिः  |  शान्तिः  |  शान्तिः  |

Many of you would have recognized this mantra to be one of the many shanti mantras that our vedic seers have uttered. This mantra is one of the Shanti mantras often uttered at the beginning and/or end of several Upanishads. If you look at the logo of IIM Bangalore you will find the same mantra. In this specific example, the mantra emphasizes the need for working together and assures how the benefits are likely to be good and shared by all those who collaborated. The shanti mantra unambiguously proclaims that the vitality, power, knowledge and the benefits that we strive for, we need to achieve together. The sense of togetherness is very important. It also cautions how this lack of collaboration and the negative energy could cancel out many of these efforts. While talking about this shanti mantra, I am reminded of another sloka which is perhaps very old (may be in excess of 1000 years). It reads as follows:

आचार्यां पादमादत्ते पादं शिष्यं स्वमेधया ।
पादं सत्रहमचारिभ्यो पादं कालकमेण च ॥

1 This is an edited version of the keynote address delivered by Professor B Mahadevan, Dean (Administration), Indian Institute of Management Bangalore in a seminar on “Towards a New Paradigm of Business management – Alternative Perspectives from Ancient Indian Wisdom”, held at IIM Bangalore on December 12, 2009.
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Through this sloka our ancestors have quantified the entire learning into four quarters (paadam). Paadam is a quarter in Samskrit (and most Indian languages). If you look at this sloka, it says the third quarter of learning happens on account of the students in a gurukula working together with others (पादं स्त्रब्रह्मचारिण्यों). So the idea that we need to work together is well entrenched in the minds of our ancestors.

Contrast this thought with the contemporary joke that we have heard several times - Indians don’t work together. We have gone to the extent of explaining this idea of our inability to work together with this joke that a can of Indian frogs may not need a lid as every jumping frog will be pulled down by another. I am tired of hearing it many times, as many of you in this auditorium would have. Such high levels of cynicism, negative perspective and vibrations characterize many things that we transact in the society. Our children grow up in the same environment. This pervades not only in our family life but also in our social, public and professional lives that we live today. What is bothersome to us is that the more we jokingly develop this world view the greater are the chances we believe in it. The question in our minds is what is the alternative thinking to this – what are the alternative ideas to look for and where are these ideas available.

Such shanti mantras, as we uttered at the beginning of today’s seminar are representative of the ancient Indian wisdom. They provide us an opportunity to understand the thought process of our ancestors and the perspectives that they held on various worldly matters. What is interesting to notice in these shanti mantras, and for that matter in most part of the vedic literature, is that there is very little religion. On the other hand it conveys some ideas about the way we live, the benefits we can get and the larger scheme of things in which many activities happen. There are several other mantras in the vedic lore that convey many other view points and perspectives2. I am sure the learned speakers for today will reveal to us more and more the ancient wisdom. I think it will be very useful to examine how the ideas of ancient thinking could provide us a slightly different perspective. I also believe that it is worth looking at the topic of today’s seminar with a clean slate and make an effort to understand whether there are some interesting ways of looking at what we currently do in the name of business management.

It is time to take a look at the Ancient Indian Wisdom?

Anyway before talking about other related things, it will be useful for us to examine in some detail the need for a seminar on the role of ancient Indian wisdom for contemporary business management. Let me share some of the thoughts that are running in my mind. Today’s business management is going through a myriad of problems. For an audience of the kind I see here today, consisting of people from the business & industry it is neither Brahma Satya nor new information that I need to reveal. The very fact that this seminar is well attended bears testimony to this fact. Every day you get to know many facets of the problems through the newspaper, business dailies and the 24x7 business channels. If you do

a survey of the business community you will not be surprised to notice that the most frequently heard phrases will be melt down of the global economy, sub-prime crisis, perils of depression of not only of the economy but also of the people being sent out of companies. People talk about problems of supply crisis, price rise, salary cuts, layoffs and so on. It is apparently very clear today that our ideas of business management do not seem to work.

I have been a Professor of Management for the last 20 years. Nevertheless I do not hesitate to tell you this particular secret that I have had for myself. Modern business management (the current set of thoughts whichever may be the way you want to look at), in my opinion, has merely scratched the tip of iceberg in terms of how to do management. While saying this I do not mean to ridicule the useful work and research that we have been carrying out for the last 100 years. I merely want to highlight the inadequacy of the work. It is a work in progress and there is a need to cover lot more ground. It also provides some motivations for taking a fresh look at the cardinal principles of business management, which are largely driven by western thought processes. Since I am making a stronger suggestion here, it helps to dwell on this idea a little bit more.

I was reading a book “The Living Company” that was written in 1997\(^3\). This book was written by one Executive Director of Planning Shell Company, who had a basic question. How long is a company likely to live? After some research he came to a conclusion (on the basis of what he could gather), that there are some Chinese companies which are about 600 years old. There are perhaps a few more companies of that order of living. But he started with a significant observation that 1/3\(^{rd}\) of the fortune 500 companies in 1970 did not exist in 1980. He reported that these fortune 500 companies folded, merged with some other, changed the business, stepped elsewhere and eventually disappeared. This basically is an antithesis to the basic tenet of organization & management which revolves around the concept of a “going concern”. To me these companies appear to be unfortunate ones rather than one in the fortune list. This apparent conflict to me is a good indication of the difficulty in our understanding of the terms such as fortune, success and so on.

He further reported that 40% of the business start-ups, 40% of the new business did not see the light at the end of the day, in fact that they were extinct within 10 years. So I do not know whether you call it infant mortality or a still born baby in the world of business. While the life span of an individual today is in the range of 73 – 74 years I am amazed by such a high infant mortality of business enterprises. There are several examples of other problems that business enterprises face today. One of them to mention is that the businesses are at logger heads with laws of nature. A typical successful corporate executive will quickly educate you on how making profits (money) is not in tandem with protecting nature. I just wanted to bring to your attention the possibility of one thought. The current paradigm of management both in theory and practice seems to have its own set of limitations.

When we want to do something or solve a problem on hand is it not natural for us to find out whether we can do with whatever we already have? Why not we take a similar approach here also? This is one of the motivations for the seminar. It is much easier for us to look at some of the things that we already have than spending a lot of time searching for new ideas. If what we have does not offer anything useful then it is worthwhile to search for new ideas. May be it is an efficient way of solving problems because we have our own endowment of resources. Why can’t we say, since we have a large body of knowledge, why not we look at it? Therefore my suggestion is that we must specifically dip into some of the scriptures comprising the ancient Indian wisdom and look for a good study of what it offers to management and business.

In today’s seminar our idea must not be to give any prescriptions. It think it is a difficult and a unsustainable idea. I don’t think we should hastily develop a cook book of things and thrust it down every participant’s throat. That is not a great idea. But, what we may really want to do, I would be really happy if it happens today, is to churn our thinking and say why don’t we look at things from an alternate perspective? May be we discover interesting and new ideas in our own kitty. I personally find several interesting ideas of basic tenets of management in Bhagavad Gita. No wonder it has received considerable attention and several people from this country and elsewhere have written commentaries on Gita.

I have been reading in my own way for the last 10 years or so some of the ancient scriptures such as Bhagavad Gita, Ten Upanishads, and Ramayana and making some efforts to bring interesting thoughts into the classroom.

Management: Theory & Practice – A melting pot

According to me management theory and practice is a work in progress. Unlike Engineering, Management is one thing in which I think there is continuous learning on account of a lot of discussion and introspection. Let me explain this with an example. If I ask you to let me know when a stone of a particular weight, dropped from a certain height will reach the ground, you need not have a discussion to arrive at the answer. There is a Newtonian physics for answering this question. You can calculate the mass velocity movement – everything is there. It is an elementary kinematics and dynamics that we learnt in XII standard. Management is unfortunately not like that. If you ask how we should solve a management problem and what the solution is, a honest answer will be I don’t know. This is because there is no clear cut answer; there is no “one way” to look at the problem. Therefore there is merit in discussion.

According to me management is all about dealing with a multitude of people, situations, and entitles around. At the end of the day the quality of management has something to do with how well we connect these things together. That is what we do whether it is at home or at this place in terms of organizing this seminar and making sure it goes well or in our work place where we may be responsible for a product or a market or for a target performance. I am not uncomfortable in saying that management theory is imperfect. There is a lot of learning that has happened and there are a lot of new things that we understand and experience. Even while this is happening we keep adding more and more to grey matter.
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Our treading into management theory in a structured and a formal way was hardly about 110 years ago. The first Business School set up in the US was Tuck Business School (in the year 1900). In 110 years what we have gathered in our own way has its own limitations. Therefore one of the things that we were thinking is how do you find new ideas? Do we want to go through these processes of slowly trying to understand or do you want to try something else simultaneously? Is there something else we need to do? So one of the motivations for this seminar is to ask ourselves (it is not a question that I alone am asking, I am sure each one of us are asking) how do we accelerate our understanding of business organizations, their governance and management? Are there new things, are there alternative perspectives, and are there things that we can look around? It is much easier to look at what we already have as our own rather than to construct afresh. Moreover given the gravity of the problems and the inadequacy of the current knowledge, is it not worthwhile to take a clean slate and draw new contours from non-western thought processes?

An agenda for the seminar

I think one of the reasons why we should get together through this seminar is to put our thoughts together and find out what we need to really do about the problems of business management that we currently face. I think as a first step, what we may want to do is to understand the problems that we are going through in business management. This is not only a crucial step but also worthwhile spending more time. Without understanding the problems very well, how do we really find a solution? I would like to suggest that while we want to identify some broad problems, we should endeavour to develop a long list of problems that we all go through. Certainly some are much easier to relate to and address and some are little difficult.

Since management is all about dealing with multitude of people, entities and situations the key question related to management theory and practice is how do we put them together and for what? I think this is a big question which I would like to ask through this seminar. What for we want to put things together because, to me, it is central to answer issues such as performance, motivation, satisfaction, success & failure and a host of such things. I would also think that we must utilize this seminar to raise a few fundamental and serious questions about the basics of management. Let me articulate some of my thoughts in this direction.

Goal of an Organization

Ever since Eliahu Goldratt wrote the famous business novel, “The Goal”\(^4\), whenever I ask the business executives or my business management students as to what the goal of an organization is I promptly get the answer “to make money or profit”. I am beginning to wonder whether the goal of an organization is really to make money or profit. If I go by my little understanding of the ancient Indian wisdom, it appears to me that a much better goal

for an organization could be to live long. If an organization is not even surviving for long of what avail is profitability? Furthermore, it is logical to understand that profitability is subsumed into sustainability. I am reminded of a saying in Tamil – without a wall where is the scope for making a beautiful painting. If an organization is surviving for say 300 – 400 years, it will be possible only if it has been able to create wealth in excess of its cost on a long term basis. However, it is possible that the organization would not have created wealth on a year on year (or a quarter on quarter) basis continuously as modern day financial analysis seem to demand. There might have been intermittent periods of loss making.

Why is this an important question for us to ask? I believe it will shape our management strategies in many ways and help us address issues arising out of handling “so called” difficult situations that organizations go through. Let us understand how the American companies are addressing the issue during periods of recession. Since profit making is the goal, all decisions are taken with the single purpose of showing a better bottom line. It simply means indulging in drastic cost cutting measures, which more often than not results in massive layoffs. Contrast this with a similar problem that you may be going through at home. After all running a household is in many ways like running an enterprise with all its attendant problems of cost and revenue mismatch, albeit in a smaller magnitude. Suppose I have been laid off due to recession and I am currently without job. I have to adjust things and manage my household matters. Suppose I have two children, do I send one child out (equivalent of layoffs in organizations)? Do I stop my daughter from attending to school or scale down her schooling and educational expenses (similar to cut in R & D expenses) because I have to do cost cutting now?

When I grew up I was part of a large family of seven children. My father was an employee in a bank with moderate earnings. I was wondering if these ideas were translated into our house, some of us would have been driven out of the house given the current rise in prices of vegetables and food items. A quick calculation would have suggested to my father that two of us would have to be sent out – outsource or lay off and things like that. I am wondering how we should judge some of these actions and strategies that modern day business management practices have taught us. Machines and buildings can be bought and owned, depreciated and disposed off. On the other hand human resources have to be hired, motivated and retained for better performance. They do not depreciate over time. Often they appreciate. That is why I have this question in my mind. The problem is not so much with the action; the problem is with the paradigm perhaps.

I am not ridiculing this idea, all that I want to say is that there is an issue of paradigm. What are the basic parameters on which we want to organize various activities and judge our actions in the name of management? That is the question I think we may want to ask as a part of this seminar today. What is it that we must do and how do we judge ourselves as managing an organization well or not so well?

**Quality of Life**

There is another issue which keeps bothering me on matters of management. This pertains to individuals who make up an organization. I have already talked about how individuals are
different from a machine or any other asset than an organization possesses. You ask anybody who has about 20 or 30 years of work experience about their overall feeling. There are apparently good things such as huge salary, chauffeur driven company car, own house, building of assets for the future and so on. However, after some discussion you spot some nagging feeling of some kind of emptiness. Bangalore has a number of young people in the software industry. I am given to understand also that a number of these youngsters have already contracted either diabetes or hyper-tension. When you talk to cardiologists they inform us that Asians are prone for hypertension, genetically as a race. While we may be prone for hypertension I do not think we can extrapolate that thought to a level in which at the age of 30 – 35 we will become hypertensive and/or diabetic. What does this indicate?

I think we, on an average, are more stressed today than what it was perhaps 20 – 30 years ago. What is causing this and I would like to ask is there again basic paradigm which is creating this problem. The point I am trying to come to is while at the business level there are issues - issues of what is an appropriate management philosophy so that business succeed, one can ask a similar set of questions at an individual level too. But more importantly at a person level I think there are issues. Why is it that on an average we feel more stressed? We feel that a lot of work gets done, the nation and the society is “more developed”, yet what is happening? There is a lot of dissatisfaction at the end of the day. Youngsters do not hesitate to go to the top of a multi-storeyed building and fatally fall because they did not clear an exam or score high. It is a shame on us that we have not been able to understand that life is a roller coaster ride and not equipped ourselves and the younger minds to manage this fundamental aspect of living. You see several versions of such psychological complications in organizations also.

Ask a person who has retired about his personal and professional life. He may come up with several answers - I have worked very hard, I have travelled enough, I have done targets, I have run back forth, I have grown new business, I co-founded three companies and made significant contributions to myself from a financial standpoint as well as to the society and so on. The list may be long. However, did you become an evolved individual in life? Did you feel having grown from satisfaction to satisfaction and to high levels of harmony, peace and a life with greater degrees of freedom and joy? I do not know how many will be able to reply in the affirmative.

Do we need to address this issue or we don’t have to? Do you think all these are part of the game and therefore we will go ahead with our goals of the organization and the targets? I am not very sure. In today’s scheme of things, organizations and management philosophies will brush this idea into a personal agenda not worth getting into. The dominant thinking in management seems to be “you can keep aside all those individual issues and set your targets and make sure things work”. So why is it an issue to be addressed? Do you want to just leave it aside and say it is a problem for somebody else to solve? The reality is there are targets, we will have to run and let us keep running. According to me there is another aspect of the reality - there are a whole lot of individual issues which will cut into business and management. It is hard for me to imagine individual issues can be kept away and still there is something called Business Management.
There is something called *quality of life* and *quality of working life*. By taking the above approach fundamentally we create a difference between life, quality of life and quality of working life. An entire set of issues can crop up as I was pointing out. Is it worthwhile to open up this issue and revisit the notion of quality of life and its relationship with the quality of working life? Will it impact business management? If so, in which way?

**Alternative Paradigms in Ancient Indian Wisdom**

Is it again worthwhile to inquire if there is a problem arising out of the current paradigm and or there alternative paradigms in our ancestral wisdom that can help us develop alternative viewpoints on individual issues, job satisfaction, motivation etc. Just to push thing thinking a little bit, I would like to narrate an anecdote that my friend went through some time ago. While this story in itself does not drive this point very well, it nevertheless suggests the possibility of alternative paradigms providing alternative solutions and generating alternative behavioural patterns to the same problem.

One of my friends uttered a very interesting episode – something that he experienced while he was sitting in Kalka station in Simlā. He was waiting for a train. Since he had to wait for 3 – 4 hours and he knew nobody in the town he decided to come and sit in the station. Obviously he has been at the station for long sitting on a bench in one of the waiting space in the platform. There was a beggar and since that person was approaching him a few times, he gave home some money. The beggar collected his money and moved away. Perhaps that was his daily routine as it could be his source for a livelihood. Around lunch time, this beggar went to the vegetarian light refreshment stall and bought some food. He came to this gentleman and offered the food before he had. If you analyze this behavior clearly he is not playing the role of a beggar although he took alms from my friend a short while ago.

My friend said that for a split second, he was shocked. However he could see a larger connection to what this beggar was doing. He said that it was the *samskriti* which the beggar had that could explain his behaviour. He indulged in begging because he found no other gainful way of making a livelihood in that town. But the moment he bought the food, he looked around if there is anyone to share the food. He found my friend with whom he could share.

Whereas when I visited a Business School in the US in 1999 I had a different experience. The first day I went to the cafeteria with two of my Indian friends and a couple of foreign friends. We were standing in the queue waiting for our turn to order the food, pay and pick up the items. I was standing second or third with my friends. Generally, in India if four of us go, one of us will pay for the food. I am very much used to this idea. However what I noticed was that the first person bought for him and went away, the second person did the same thing and when my turn came I realized I have to take my money and ask for my food. The basic issue here is not about comparing and contrasting the Indian practice with the American practice. It is also not to suggest that they were wrong and I was right or vice versa. We will reserve that discussion for another day. I am only reflecting on this anecdote to suggest that there may be a set of issues which come from different paradigms.
The question that we may want to ask is should we have to look at ancient Indian wisdom which may pose a different paradigm? Is there something interesting, some relevant thoughts for us to solve several problems? So, the second reason I think we should start this processes today through this seminar is to explore benefits of alternative paradigms. We have to understand the structural elements in the current paradigm creating today’s problems. Are we starting with wrong metrics or wrong set of basic building blocks of business management and then keep complaining that things are not going the way we want. Why not we can ask that question today through the sessions?

Some areas worth looking at

I think in many things we do whether managing our personal life, managing our social life, managing our professional life and so on there is an inevitable component of management. Managing these well requires a common non-conflicting view of life.

Deeper understanding of self

If we contemplate a little deeper we will notice that there is a fundamental search that all of us go through. We cannot escape this. This pertains to understanding the relationship between three fundamental things – man, universe and the God or the all encompassing principle known as Sanaatana Dharma. What is the linkage between these three? I believe trying to find a connection between these three can offer some ideas for managing many things in life, including managing our own personal life, our agenda, our success, our failures, happiness and a host of such things in the world of dualities. I would like to suggest that we take up this question for some discussion in the seminar today.

Inspiration Vs Satisfaction

The second area that needs some research is the notion of inspiration and satisfaction. I think we need some basic thinking on the differences between these two. What is the basic paradigm on which we need to organize ourselves? Modern management theories have spent disproportionally more time on the issue of satisfaction and motivation. On the other hand, if we look at the ancient Indian literature, the emphasis seems to be more on inspiration.

Talking about the notion of inspiration, I see lot of inspiring things in ancient Indian Upanishads. The Mundako Upanishad starts with the basic question from Shaunaka - what is to be known, by knowing that one is known of everything else (कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वामिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति). Shaunaka is portrayed to be a person with a lot of material benefits and prosperity (शौनकः महाशालः). Yet there is a greater level inspiration as exhibited by this question. In today’s terms, once you have a bungalow in a prime locality in
Bangalore city and a couple of farmhouses in hill stations, I doubt if you will have an inspiration to go after higher forms of knowledge as Shaunaka is trying. Our ancestors have on an average had a greater level of inquisitiveness as evident from such passages. Do we need this for better management? How do we bring this variable into the equation of “better management”? I want to leave it as a question to you.

Similarly if you look at Chandogya Upanishad, the seers impress on the need for going after big things in life as they suggest that simple things are mortal.

नाल्ये सुखमवित्त भूमावे सुखम।
यो वै भूमा तदमृत्तमथ वद्वल्य तन्त्तर्यम्॥

“In the Little there lies no happiness; The vast alone is the happiness
The vast is the immortality; The little is the mortality”

Looking at big things in life will give a different perspective to the problems and solutions. To me this appears to be a cardinal principle of better management. I believe this may provide a better perspective to management rather than looking at lower level things.

If you read the Katho Upanishad, you will notice that the young boy Nachiketas asks certain questions to Yama on very important things in life – issues of death, its meaning, conquering death etc. Such questions do not come out of ordinary minds looking for an increment or two or a promotion, but from an inspired individual. Is there something beyond the world of satisfaction and dissatisfaction? Is satisfaction a sub-set of inspiration?

The notion of sustainability

The other thing that will bother all of us is the notion of sustainability. The western world seems to be waking up to the issue of sustainability after running the consumption engine to its maximum capacity. I am reminded of a paper that I read in 1999, which suggested that in the US it takes 12.2 acres to supply the average person’s basic needs, eight acres in the Netherlands and less than an acre in India. Most strikingly, another estimate is that if the entire world lived like those in North America do, it would take three planet Earths to support the present population, leave alone the future generations. It appears we, as a society, are aspiring hard to achieve this objective at the earliest.

What is the western approach to this problem? One is a thought that perhaps we can create and/or tame nature. A 1999 paper showed how futile and fancy this idea could be. An experimental setup known as Biosphere II was created in Arizona. Despite $200 million

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worth of elaborate equipment, Biosphere II had failed to generate breathable air, drinkable water, and adequate food for just eight people. Contrast this with Biosphere I (our mother earth), which is doing this job day in and day out for more than 6 billion people ceaselessly and with perfection. The other possible solution that the west is toying with is the idea of “carbon credit”. The idea of “carbon credit” to me is one of license to consume beyond what is reasonable because we “give back” in some way. Will the western approach to this problem of buying carbon credits solve the problem? Sustainability cannot be achieved using market economy.

On the other hand, if you read the ancient Indian wisdom, you come often across the idea of sustainability. Human kind is assumed to be closely inter-related with the other living and non-living things that comprise nature and is expected to work in tandem. A sense of mutual dependence pervaded in most of the actions taken and the manner in which problems were addressed. To quote from Bhagavad Gita,

\begin{quote}
\textit{देवान्भावतामेते देवा भावयन्तु \ वः।}
\textit{परर्वपरं भावयन्ति: श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ।।}
\end{quote}

Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that in order to get lasting prosperity and success we need to honour this principle of mutual dependence (परर्वपरं भावयन्ति: श्रेयः परः अवाप्स्यथ).

In contrast to this thinking look at a big city like Bangalore and walk through the residential areas. The amount of garbage that we throw “out of our compound walls” is mind boggling; leave alone the issue of not separating the bio-degradable waste from the bio-non-degradable. Is it a way of sustainably managing the social infrastructure? Bangalore is collapsing. The ease with which we are able to toss the cup and the plastic bag out of the running train after we are done has resulted in piles of garbage across the vast expanse of the railway network in this country.

Today, sustainability does not seem to be an issue in our minds when it comes to organizing social life. Otherwise how can we explain the extent to which we have gone to pollute the “holy” river Ganga? I do not know how long the rivers in this country that our ancestors worshipped as God will survive? I am wondering if sustainability will be one of the cardinal principles for management. What is the notion of sustainability? What is sustainability all about? I would leave that question also for us to think about for the day.

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Conclusion

Many of the things that I discussed so far require response from the education and research. May be we need to look at the paradigms of the educational system as well. Currently we follow dominantly the western paradigm to education as well. If we go back to 2000 years back and attempted a ranking system of universities similar to what The Wall Street Journal or Financial Times, London do, I would like to believe some Indian Universities such as Nalanda and Takshashila will find a place. The question in my mind is, are we interested in regaining the lost pride? If we want to do it, do we have to look at some of the paradigms of our education?

I would like to leave some of these thoughts in my mind for the seminar participants. I hope that we would through the seminar and later continue to think about these and many other issues. This seminar I believe would just be a starting point of churning our minds. I want to emphasize this again - the agenda for the seminar should be not trying to give prescriptions but to churn enough of our minds. We have to unshackle ourselves from the strong roots of the current paradigms. The situation is similar to what you see in Bhagavad Gita chapter 1. There is a strong set of conditions in which Arjuna was mentally conditioned and it required Lord Krishna to get Arjuna out of this way of thinking. Perhaps we need a very similar approach.