

# Spirituality in workplace- Benefits to employees and organization

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## ABSTRACT

*The success of an organization depends on many factors. The spiritual work environment is also one of them. The spiritual understanding and feeling of inter connectedness energise people to work towards their objectives. The spiritual experience helps people to find meaning in their work and lead to happiness and satisfaction. Thus the paper is about workplace spirituality and how it affects employee wellbeing, productivity and commitment.*

## 1. Introduction

Spirituality is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others and the entire universe (Mitroff and Denton, 1999). (Cavanaugh, 1999) defined spirituality as an energy, meaning, purpose and awareness of life. According to (B. Anupama and Dr.Y.v.v.s.s.s.Varaprasad, 2015) Spirituality is an experience which can provide people with direction, meaning, support, inner wholeness and also provide the feeling of understanding and connectedness. (S Krishnakumar and Christopher P Neck, 2002) stated there are multiple views about spirituality. The intrinsic origin view- which defines spirituality as something which originates from inside an individual, the religious view- spirituality is tied to one's religious affiliation, and existentialist view- about finding out the meaning of one's work are few popular viewpoints of spirituality.

Workplace spirituality is a framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture which promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, it also provide feelings of completeness and joy to people by facilitating their sense of being connected to others (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). Workplace spirituality is an experience of transcendence, interconnectedness, personal completeness and joy, analysed in different theoretical frameworks (Gotsisand and Kortezi, 2008).

## 2. Workplace spirituality in literature

According to (Harrington, 2004) workplace spirituality is about people perceiving themselves as spirited beings, and their spirits desire and need to be energized through work. It is about people feeling real purpose and meaning at work. People also share and experience some common attachment, attraction, and togetherness with each other within their work unit and the organization as a whole. (Dun chon and Plowman, 2005) defined workplace spirituality in terms of its following components;- A recognition that employees have an inner life, An assumption that employees desire to find work meaningful, A commitment by the company to serve as a context or community for spiritual growth. Gotsisand and Kortezi (2008) defined workplace spirituality as an experience of transcendence, interconnectedness, personal completeness

and joy. It is a state or experience which will provide individuals a direction or meaning, or provide feelings of understanding, support, inner wholeness or connectedness (Smith and Rayment, 2007). Workplace spirituality is the conditions for community, meaning at work, inner life, blocks to Spirituality, personal responsibility, positive connection with other individuals, contemplation, work unit community, positive work unit Values, organizational values, individual and organisation (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

Bella, Quelhas et.al (2018) analyzed three dimensions of spirituality: first, inner life or spiritual identity. The dimension of inner life is comprised of a necessity to organize existential issues such as values, self-image and belonging. The attendance to this need leads to a state of serenity generated by harmonization of these existential questions. Second, sense of purpose or meaningful work. The dimension of purpose comprises a necessity to recognize meaning in daily actions. The attendance to this need leads to a state of serenity generated by finding justification and motivation for daily actions. Third, sense of community or connection. This dimension is comprised of a necessity for reciprocity and respect for individuality. The attendance to this need leads to a state of serenity generated by sharing and acceptance of authenticity. According to (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006; Luis Daniel, 2010) the three dimensions of workplace spirituality are: engaging in work, community sense, and inner life connection. A person's inner self is oriented toward his work and interaction to the community in work environment is known as workplace spirituality.

## 3. Workplace spirituality- Benefits to employees and organization

Workplace spirituality has many benefits for the organization like enhanced trust among people, increased interconnectedness, and assist to create more motivated organizational culture which would lead the organizational performance completely and it will eventually lead the organization toward excellence (Marques, 2005). Spiritual vision binds an employee to the company and enhances job performance and organizational commitment (Marschke

Eleanor, Preziosi Robert et.al, 2009). Spirituality can shape individuals' behaviour in a productive way and Spiritual understanding makes people to accept the situations and act proactively (B. Anupama and Dr.Y.v.v.s.s.s.Varaprasad, 2015). A person moving toward spiritual direction will feel success in many ways in terms of his or her inner requirements and purpose of life. Spirituality at workplace would ultimately enhance the level of job satisfaction due to the satisfaction of internal needs and desires (Maginnis, 2001),

### 3.1. Workplace spirituality- How it affects employee wellbeing, productivity and commitment

Garcia-Zamor (2003), Fairholm (1998), Fry (2003), Fry *et al.* (2005), Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) and Millman *et al.* (2003), found that spirituality is associated with the positive work related attitudes, including productivity. Likewise, spiritual leadership fosters spiritual well-being, which then positively influences employee life satisfaction, corporate responsibility, organizational commitment and productivity, and financial performance (Fry & Slocum, 2008). (Fry (2003), Fry *et al.*, (2005), Malone and Fry (2003)) stated workplace spirituality lead to positive individual performance and also results in positive human health and psychological wellbeing, productivity. According to Reave (2005) the positive impact of spiritual values and practices lead to leadership effectiveness and subsequently to employee commitment, productivity, and customer satisfaction etc. Workplace spirituality exists in the culture and it increases peer knowledge and enables their feelings toward others (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). When people experience a sense of community in their work teams, they feel that their values are aligned with the values of the organization and consider that they do meaningful and useful work. People will also experience joy at work and consider that the organization gives them opportunities for their inner life. With a sense of community, they will also show higher affective

and normative commitment and lower continuance commitment. (Arme'nio Rego and Miguel Pinae Cunha ,2007).

(Neck & Milliman, 1994) stated that USA executives who prefer more individualistic culture are now moving toward spiritual values, which in return enhance worker's commitment toward the organization. (Gangaram Biswakarma, 2018) conducted a study In Nepalese hospitality organizations to find out the impact of workplace spirituality on employee productivity. It was found out that workplace spirituality dimensions positively predict employee productivity. It was also found that employees have positive perception about the meaningfulness of their work, they enjoy their job and feel joy to come to work. They also feel that they are the part of the organization as a family, they have team spirit, supports & caring environment among them, and the employees are linked with a common purpose. Employees have their work harmonious with their personal life values. They have resemblance of organizational values, their individual value and their inner life. They feel slightly positive about the values prevailing in their organization and about their future with the organization. Among all the dimensions, sense of community/team is the major predictor of workplace spirituality, followed by sense of contribution to the community, alignment between organizational and individual values, and sense of meaningful work.

### 4. Conclusion

This paper was an attempt to interpret the concepts of spirituality and workplace spirituality. It was also an attempt to find out its importance and how it affects the employee wellbeing, productivity and commitment. The conclusion from this study is that Workplace spirituality energises the health of the employees and enhances their wellbeing. It also leads to increased productivity and commitment from the part of employees which in turn help an organization to achieve excellence.

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