

Unfolding of a Holistic Vision of the World: Towards New Directions for Development of Management Thought¹

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Management thought has been largely rooted in the capitalistic vision of society. A correction in the capitalistic vision was introduced through the notion of 'sustainable development'. Now the need to move towards a holistic development paradigm is being felt. In the holistic vision, spiritual and ethical concerns are given due considerations in addition to efficiency and equity. This vision could be referred to as the MS (Material–Spiritual) vision wherein an integral and integrative view of life is taken through an unfolding of the material and spiritual dimension of life. While the two views have been unfolding as independent paths, the need for their convergence is being felt to achieve a balance between 'per capita income' and 'per capita happiness'. In the capitalistic vision, business organizations are viewed as 'economic entities'. In contrast, the holistic vision considers business as 'sacro-economic activity' and organizations as 'sacro-economic entities'. Thus, the holistic vision takes us in the direction of sacro-civic society and an ecoterian view of the world. The paper explores the historical unfolding of this vision through MS matrix. It also explores the implications of the holistic vision for the future development of management thought and suggests three fundamental equations of holistic development to convert this vision into reality.

The global village needs a global vision. There are three competing visions of the world: socialistic, capitalistic and holistic. The socialistic vision aims at distribution of wealth without focusing much on the wealth generation. With intellectual roots in Marxism, it has the utopic vision of an equitable society where communitarianism prevails as an ideology.

Capitalism focuses on wealth generation. However, wealth generation is primarily for selfish purposes. It converts 'capital' into a belief system and relegates all other values subservient to capital. The limitations of capitalism have been becoming obvious and during recent years, the emphasis is on 'wealth generation with values'. While capitalism's organizational model is shareholder

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oriented, the holistic vision takes us towards organizational models that are closer to trusteeship concepts. Thus, there are essential conceptual differences between the three visions. In addition, their intellectual heritage also differs.

Proponents of socialism and communism have included Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, etc. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the socialistic model also collapsed and socialism became part of history. It may be indicated that this socialism was essentially 'socialism by the State' wherein coercion was used as an instrument to achieve the goals of socialism. It was not a 'socialism by the people' or through popular efforts to achieve the goals of socialism.

The major advocates of capitalistic thinking have included Adam Smith, Max Weber, Friedman and many management gurus. They emphasize the role of markets and labour as the dominant ideology. However, with emergence of the idea of 'sustainable development', need for some correction in capitalistic thinking was strongly felt.

While the sustainable development paradigm introduced environmental concerns in capitalistic thinking, it did not go to the next step, namely, spiritual and ethical concerns. Hence, the need for a 'third vision', or a holistic vision. The prophets and leaders of this vision include Mahavira, Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi as well as many new age management gurus. It may be indicated that new age management gurus differ from management gurus in terms of their approach. While most management gurus operate from the capitalistic premise, new age management gurus take a holistic view. It may also be indicated that the holistic vision also has roots

in ancient Indian thought, which has always emphasized the concept of balancing between *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. Mahatma Gandhi (1938) provided a critique of modernity and argued for a balanced view of life as well as trusteeship form of organizations. Schumacher (1973) argues in favour of Buddhist economics, Elkins (1989) suggests the need for a 'living economy'. Chakraborty (1991, 1995, 2003) stresses the need to incorporate human values in management and shows a pathway for the same. Acharya Mahaprajna (2000) argues in favour of 'Economics of Mahavira' and suggests the need for holistic view of life by harmonizing spiritualism and materialism. Sharma (1996, 1999, 2001) argues in favour of a holistic approach to development. These ideas are pointers in the direction of a holistic vision. Table 1 sums up the essence of three visions.

Table 1
Three Visions of the World

<i>Vision</i>	<i>Focus of Vision</i>	<i>Intellectual Roots and Intellectual Heroes</i>
Socialism/ Communism Socialistic Vision	Equality	Marxism Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and others
Capitalism/ Capitalistic Vision	Wealth generation for one's own ends	Adam Smith, Max Weber, Friedman and modern management gurus
Holistic Vision	Wealth generation with values	Mahavira, Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi and new age management gurus and thinkers

It may be indicated that the nature of wealth generation has undergone a substantial

change. During the period of Mahavira, Buddha and Guru Nanak, modern technology was not available and the use of science and technology in wealth generation was limited. However, recently information technology has brought in new means of wealth generation. The new age management gurus take this into consideration. While drawing upon the thoughts of the ancient thinkers in relation to approach towards wealth

generation with values, these gurus emphasize the role of science and technology in wealth generation.

The three visions presented here have their own analytical tools, jargons, phrases, expressions and language. 'Workers of the world unite' moved millions. 'Survival of the fittest' rules the mind of many. For a comparative analysis, we list the key phrases and analytical tools for the three visions in Table 2.

Table 2
Key Phrases of Three Visions

<i>Socialism/Communism</i>	<i>Capitalism</i>	<i>Holistic Vision</i>
Dialectical materialism	Wealth of nations	Betterment of all and development of all
Dictatorship of the proletariat	Survival of the fittest	Duty of the fittest, live and let live
Workers of the world unite	Per capita income	Per capita income and per capita happiness
Religion is opium of the masses	Private property	Trusteeship
Egalitarian worldview	Utilitarian worldview, transactional approach to life	Ecoterian worldview, transformational and transcendental approach to life
Means of production in the hands of the state	Globalization	Global connectivity <i>Viswanization</i>
Wealth distribution to achieve equality	Weber's 'spirit of capitalism'	Spirit of balancing between wealth, ethics, pleasure and transcendence
	McClelland's 'Achievement Motivation'	Collective achievement
	Civic society	Sacro-civic society
	Business organizations as economic entities	Business as sacro-economic activity and business organization as sacro-economic entity
	Hierarchy bias in factors of production: Capital becomes a belief system	Symbiosis in factors of creation (corporate social <i>dharma</i>)
		Spiritually guided materialism (per capita happiness along with per capita income)
		Religion is medicine of the masses
		Spiritualization of modernity

It may also be indicated that we can identify three types of scholars according to their orientations: the opium scholars who were influenced by Marx's famous phrase, 'religion is opium of masses', the spirit scholars who are in the tradition of Weber's 'spirit of Capitalism' and the 'holistic scholars', who take a holistic approach to life. Each vision has also led to establishment and development of institutions where intellectual pursuits are influenced and guided by the analytical tools and philosophy of the particular vision. Many universities at one point of time were ideological fortresses of communistic or socialistic vision. Business schools and management institutes are largely within the framework of capitalistic vision. Emergent new age institutions belong to the holistic tradition. Thus, three intellectual traditions can be discerned and academic orientations of scholars and institutions could be viewed within the context of these traditions. Each tradition has its own set of literature that provides the required analytical tools and the language to look at the reality around us.

It may be noted that in the holistic vision, business is a 'sacro-economic activity' and business organizations are 'sacro-economic entities'. In contrast, in the capitalistic vision, business organizations are merely 'economic entities'. When human activities are treated as sacro-economic in nature, there is a change in the mindset. Thus, labour is not merely a factor of production but co-venturist in the creation and development of institutions and organizations. The relationships between various stakeholders of an organization are to be viewed in symbiotic terms and not in competitive terms alone. Hence, the relationships are in the nature of trusteeship. Further,

in the holistic vision, society is conceptualized as sacro-civic in nature. In essence, holistic vision aims at 'spiritualizing the modern'.

In the subsequent discussion, our focus is on the holistic vision and historical unfolding of this vision through unfolding of material and spiritual dimensions of life. It has been mentioned earlier that in the ancient concepts of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*, holistic vision was articulated in the form of four aspects or variables. This concept has been reformulated as the 'WEPT' model indicating wealth, ethics, pleasure and transcendence as the four goals of human endeavour. These four variables can be converted into a two variable model with wealth and pleasure representing the 'M' or material dimension and ethics and transcendence representing the 'S' or spiritual dimension. Thus, the concept of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* can be captured through the MS model. When viewed as a single variable, M and S are intertwined and represent the unity of the secular and the sacred aspects of life.

The MS model is helpful in analyzing the evolution of various philosophies of life. The 'M' dimension has manifested itself in varying forms such as various modes of production and development of technology. Its dominant manifestation has been in the form of science, socialism and capitalism. Issues of environment and ethics have become important; hence, it is now emerging in the form of holism. If we take a historical view of manifestation of the 'S' form, we find that the 'S' dimension of life has been captured by many religions/philosophies such as paganism, Hinduism (and related religions such as Jainism, Buddhism), Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Atheism (of the nineteenth

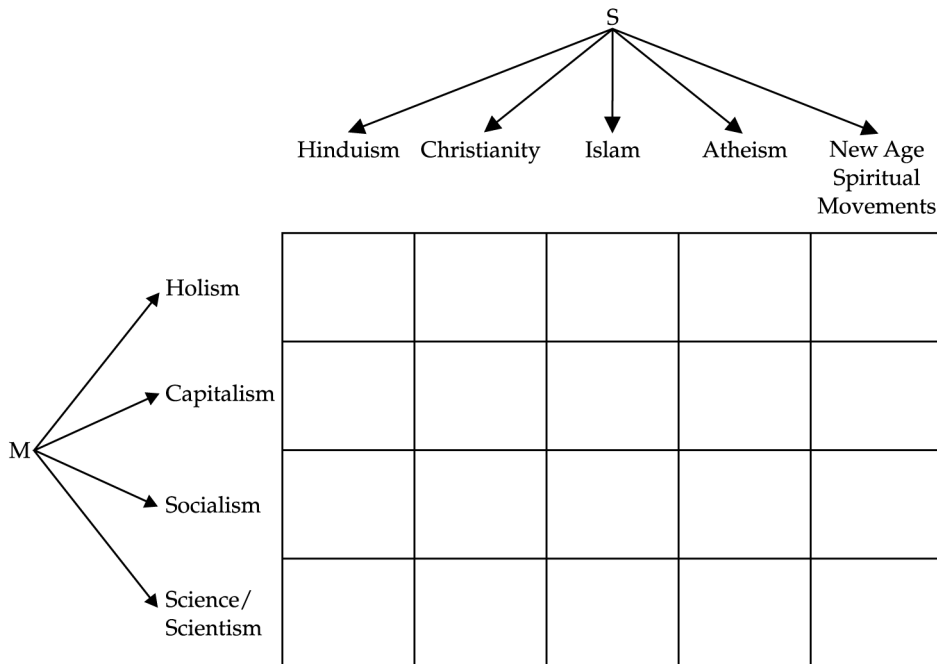
and twentieth centuries), new age spiritual movements such as ISKCON, Transcendental Meditation (TM), Brahmakumaries, Art of Living, etc., in that order of historical evolution. When we juxtapose the historical manifestations of the 'M' and 'S' dimensions of life, we arrive at the unfolding of the MS matrix as presented in Figure 1.

The MS matrix has implications for understanding the past, present as well as the future directions of the unfolding of new ideas and new institutions. A historical perspective indicates the development of religious institutions as unfolding of the 'S' dimension and creation and development of many secular institutions such as universities, corporate businesses, etc., as unfolding of the 'M' dimension. The 'M' dimension has manifested

itself in the form of ideologies, while the 'S' dimension has manifested itself in the form of cultures and civilizations. While there have been clashes of ideologies and civilizations in the past, the MS matrix gives us a new vision in terms of integration of various manifestations of 'M' and 'S'. The 'MS' integration represents the future path of the MS matrix, in the form of MS vision.

A historical perspective of MS manifestations indicates that during the ancient period this manifestation was in the form of Sm where 'S' dominated over 'M'. Hence, we have represented it as Sm. Subsequently, 'm' became enlarged and acquired importance nearly equal to 'S'. Hence, we can represent it as SM, wherein 'S' still retained its importance being the first in SM sequence. With the

Figure 1
Unfolding of the MS Matrix



advent of science and technology, the priority got reversed and 'SM' emerged as MS with 'M' acquiring importance over S. Subsequently, the importance of S reduced further, and MS manifested itself as Ms. Thus, the cycle of history could be depicted as below:

Sm → SM → MS → Ms

In its next cycle, Ms could again turn into Sm. Thus, this cycle represents the interaction and unfolding of 'M' and 'S' dimensions of life in a historical perspective. This cycle resembles the well-known 'yuga-cycles' in Indian thought. Thus, the concept of 'MS' cycles provides an explanation for developments in history as an unfolding of the MS matrix. This discussion can be summed up in the form of a diagram given in Figure 2.

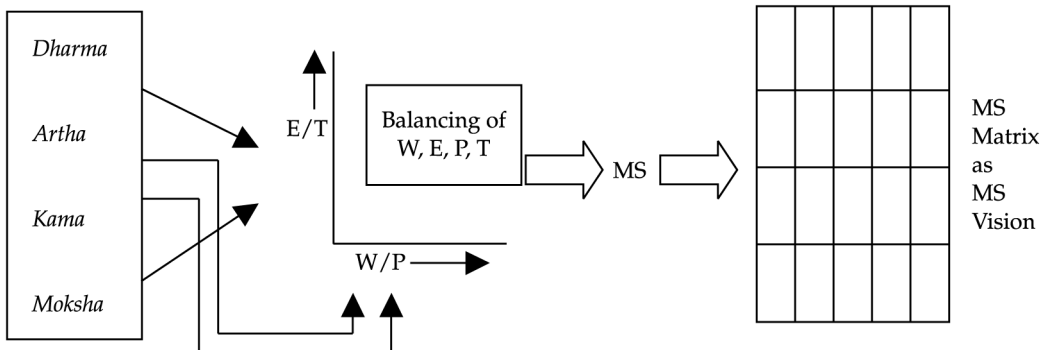
It may be indicated that the MS matrix presented in Figure 1 could be considered as a 'world matrix' because it incorporates histories of various dominant experiences emerging from various space-time contexts. After integrating these histories in various cells of the matrix, it unfolds the future vision in the form of a new unity between the secular and the sacred; a unity that transcends

the past histories and takes us towards a new future vision. Thus, history can be viewed as unfolding of the MS vision in different space-time contexts and in varying forms. There is a need for a new learning from such space-time contexts and transcending ourselves beyond these contexts for the better development of humanity.

The MS matrix can also serve as an analytical tool to analyze the nature of institutions that have evolved over long periods of history. Further, the MS canopy can accommodate even contradictory philosophies and ideologies as it provides sufficient space for various and varying manifestations of 'M' and 'S'.

The MS vision is essentially a new formulation of the ancient and historical concept of unity of the secular and sacred that has been expressed through the metaphors of *Purush-Prakriti*, *Shiva-Shakti*, Yin-Yang, Osha-Oshe, etc. The concepts of matter and spirit have been known since ancient times. However, with the movement of history, their unfolding has taken different forms. The MS matrix captures this unfolding and thus liberates our mind from technical phrases and expressions that are rooted in the specific

Figure 2
Unfolding of the MS Vision



ideologies from various space–time contexts. Further, the matrix suggests a movement forward rather than a return to the past.

The matrix presented here could serve as a foundational premise for developing a new ‘Body Of Original Knowledge’ (BOOK), which we may call the MS Book. Such a BOOK would of course draw upon the historical experiences of humanity as reflected by the MS matrix. The MS matrix also has implications for ideas, institutions and individuals, and therefore, for ideologies, societies and nations. It helps in liberating individuals, institutions and nations from the prisons of paradigms that are represented by various cells of the matrix. Once liberated, individuals, institutions, communities, societies and nations could go even beyond the matrix and identify new creative ideas for manifestation of the ‘M’ and ‘S’ dimensions of life. For example, science and technology has helped in exploring new dimensions of manifestations of ‘M’ and ‘S’ and thereby the spirit of MS, including the idea of atheistic spiritualism.

With this discussion on unfolding of the MS vision or the holistic vision in mind, the following are various areas of its application in our social context.

I. Modernization of Villages and Spiritualization of Cities

Though the world has become a global village, there are many territories in this global village. With the impact of modernity, cities have become places of stress and crime. This is a historical fact. While villages need modernization, cities need spiritualization for a holistic development of the global village. In fact, ‘spiritualizing modernity’ could as well emerge as a new agenda for converting the holistic vision into reality. It is now a historical fact that modernity has created many

side effects, which have become its main defects. These defects could be cured by spiritualizing modernity. It implies that in future, there would be more demand for a new blend of tradition and modernity.

II. From Western Enlightenment to Eastern Awakening and their Fusion

While Western Enlightenment was rooted in the primacy of reason, Eastern awakening has led to awakening of the intuitive dimension. Both are needed for the holistic development of society. Western Enlightenment gave us science and the scientific approach which focused on the outer world. Eastern awakening gave us the spiritual approach with focus on the inner world. Holistic vision implies a fusion of both, that is, connectivity between the outer and the inner worlds. Western Enlightenment created the concept of modernity, Eastern awakening is leading us towards the concept of ‘spiritualization of modernity’.

III. Convergence between Religions, Science and Spirituality

Evolution of human thought can be viewed in terms of three waves, namely, wave of religions, wave of science and wave of spirituality. Religions emerged from ‘civilizational awakening’ during a particular space–time context. This awakening took place as a result of revelations, insights and observations of saints, sages, seers and prophets. When such insights were codified in the form of holy books, religions emerged. In India, ‘civilizational awakening’ took place during ancient times in the form of ‘*sanatana dharma*’, which was later named as Hinduism. Similarly, other religions originated from ‘civilizational awakening’ in different space–time contexts. This is now all a part of known history. The second wave of human thought emerged in the form of science and

scientific method. The earlier insights and revelations were put to scientific scrutiny and it was found that some of the earlier observations were not true. This created a challenge to earlier ideas and opened doors for a radically new approach of scientific methodology. Humanity benefited because of this approach as it led to development of science and technology that subsequently influenced almost every aspect of human existence.

With science and scientific approach reaching maturity, we are now witnessing the emergence of spirituality as a new knowledge system. While science focused on the outer world, spirituality focused on the inner world.

Holistic vision is a convergence vision, wherein there is convergence of religion, science and spirituality. A complementarity of the three thought systems is sought with a view to making use of all the three approaches for the benefit of humanity.

IV. Holistic Vision in Market Context In the market context, the relationship between the market and state is an interactive relationship. Though markets dominate policy making, the state has to deal with public policy. In addition, the dialectics between an individual and society is also manifested in terms of freedom and responsibility. When dialectics between individual and society is presented on a horizontal axis, it can be considered horizontal dialectics, while that between the market and the state presented on a vertical axis can be termed vertical dialectics. An analysis of interactions between the two dialectics can be referred to as *swastika* analysis. It leads us towards a holistic view through balancing the interactions between market, state, individual and society. In these

interactions both material and spiritual aspects must be considered for holistic development of societies.

V. Visions and the Models of Man Three visions have three underlying models of man. In the socialistic vision, man is a social being with a revolutionary fervour, always ready to create a change in favour of socialism. In the capitalistic vision, the model of man is economic, wherein man wants self-actualization and displays an individualistic achievement orientation. At best, he can have some meta values and display some peak experiences as suggested by Maslow (1977). In the holistic vision, model of man is a multi-dimensional holistic species striving for Higher Order Purpose of Existence (HOPE), displaying an orientation towards transcendental values and ability to experience the super-peak and *nirvana* experiences. Thus, in the holistic vision, the model of man transcends Maslow's model of man.

Translating Holistic Vision into Reality: Fundamental Equations of Holistic Development

For translating the holistic vision into reality, we suggest the following three fundamental equations of holistic development.

Equation 1 Holistic Development = E + E + E (Economics + Environment + Ethics). This equation takes us beyond the idea of sustainable development by including ethics as a part of the equation. Ethics provide a touch of sacredness, and thus, in this model, business becomes a sacro-economic activity and a business organization is a sacro-economic entity.

Equation 2 Total Values Chain = Market values chain + human and social values chain + spiritual values chain. This equation is in consonance with three aspects/dimensions of human life, namely, market dimension, human and social dimension and spiritual dimension. Accordingly, total values chain consists of market values chain with emphasis on market values, human and social values chain with emphasis on values such as equity, gender issues, human rights, etc., and spiritual values chain with emphasis on values such as truth, goodness and beauty, etc. Holistic development implies a balancing of the tripod of values represented by market, social and spiritual dimensions of life.

Equation 3 Holistic Development = HRD + HSD + HQD. This equation of holistic development is in consonance with total values chain equation. In HRD, the human being is modelled as a resource, in HSD (Human and Social Development), the human being is a social being and in HQD (Human Quality Development), the human being is a constellation of qualities.

So far, management thought has largely been a prisoner of capitalistic vision. In this paper, we have analyzed the unfolding of the holistic vision. This unfolding provides us with a new foundational premise for future development of management thought. Further, the fundamental equations of holistic development discussed in this paper also

give us a basis for new directions in development of management thought beyond the narrow confines of an age that converted 'capital' into an 'ism'.

Do we have any examples that may indicate movement of corporates towards holistic development and holistic vision? In fact, the concept of 'Profit, People and Planet' representing the 'triple bottom line' is a pointer in this direction. This concept is indicative of the link between 'sustainability' and 'corporate management', leading to 'sustainable corporate management'. The three equations given here could be considered as foundational equations of sustainable corporate development as well as of a holistic approach to management.

In addition, the emergence of the concept of Socially Responsible Investments (SRI) is also indicative of a movement towards holistic vision. In India, Tata group had provided the leadership in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by undertaking many initiatives for neighbourhood development and other social development activities. There is an increasing realization of the concept of *social dharma* of the corporates, because corporates have emerged as dominant institutions of society. These pointers indicate that in future, the holistic vision may become a new intellectual anchor for management and social thought and its soundbytes may also reverberate in the corporate corridor.

NOTE

1. This is a revised version of the paper presented at the First AIMS International Conference on Management Scholars in a Global Village: Challenges

and Opportunities, organized by Association of Indian Management Scholars (AIMS) International, held at IIM, Bangalore, 28–31 December 2003.

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