

Chapter 25

Capacity Building through Knowledge Management: How Vedic Concepts Can Interpret the Occurrences at Maruti Suzuki India, Manesar

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ABSTRACT

This chapter talks about the history of Maruti which is marked by exploitation of workers through extraordinary work pressure, harassment by arbitrary issuing of show-cause notices and charge-sheets, transfers, suspensions, criminal intimidation, terminations without inquiry, reducing the labour costs by contractualisation of work-force, devising mechanisms to extract maximum work effort from workers, getting rid of the relatively older workers or those with disabilities or medical condition etc. are methods that act against the interest of workers. In this chapter one of the Vedic philosophy's systems namely Karma- Mimamsa is explained by the author who thinks that karma alone awards fruits to the performer of Vedic ritual and the reward is consistent with the karma of the performer of the ritual. Where there is good karma, there is good fruit and vice versa. Dharma comes from the Lord, karma comes from the Lord, but the fruit comes from karma itself.

INTRODUCTION

The word *karma* refers to any action that results in a reaction, whether it be good or bad. The word *Mimamsa* means to analyze and understand thoroughly. The philosophical systems of *karma-mimamsa* and *vedanta* are closely related to each other and are in some ways complimentary. *Karma-mimamsa* may be understood as a stepping stone to *vedanta*. Since *Karma-mimamsa* is to be taken up by householders as stated in the Vedas, its philosophy is to provide a practical methodology for the utilization of the Vedic religion (*dharma*) for the satisfaction of the urges for wealth (*artha*) and sensual pleasure (*kama*). In

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so doing, *karma-mimamsa* provides a materialistic explanation of the Vedic rituals for persons whose material desires have blinded them to spiritual understanding. Many people are very concerned about their rights but little aware of their duties. Demanding rights without accepting duty leads to many problems, as is evinced by today's chaotic global society. The execution of duty handed down by higher authority is the path of honor in all human cultures; conversely, the path of dishonor is the neglect of duty for the satisfaction of animal urges. History teaches that when the family, society and nation fail to fulfill traditional duties and instead follow the whims of lust as their only value system, they are soon destroyed. All those activities that coordinate one's individual life with universal life constitute one's duty or *dharma*. Most people lack a positive attitude of inspiration toward their daily duties, performing them only to earn money or status. *Karma-mimamsa* explores the subtle levels of sound by delving into its origin. *Vak shakti* refers to both thought and expression and is actually a law of communication that is responsible for conveying thoughts and concepts, both individually and collectively. The urge to create wealth, as provided in Vedic literature as well as expansion into developing territory drew the Japanese to do business in India. Maruti was the result of this venture.

Maruti Suzuki India Limited commonly referred to as Maruti and formerly known as Maruti Udyog Limited, is an automobile manufacturer in India. It is a subsidiary of Japanese automobile and motorcycle manufacturer Suzuki. For carrying out business with a foreign partner both partners must be culturally tuned towards each other. However there is a huge socio-cultural abyss between the Indians and the Japanese. *Vak shakti* as stated in *Karma-mimamsa* was found to be absent here. The practice that increasing the productivity of workers by fair means or foul will generate increased production was a Japanese idea and is the very antithesis of the strategies a typical business firm in India follows namely corporate, business or functional strategy. This case study shows how and why certain strategies to boost productivity of workers failed. The execution of duty handed down by higher authority is the path of honor in all human cultures as stated in *Karma-mimamsa*. But the same execution was done without delving into the socio-cultural milieu of the Indian workers. The case study also sheds light on some of the region-specific socio-economic issues relevant to the company and why labour-management relations have to be handled with care taking into consideration the culture, region-specific features, the labour policies of the state, the education level of the workers etc.

BACKGROUND

Maruti Suzuki manufactures and sells a complete range of cars for every segment of the population. As of November 2012^[update], Maruti had a market share of 37% of the Indian passenger car market. Originally, 18.28% of the company was owned by the Indian government, and 54.2% by Suzuki of Japan. The BJP-led government held an initial public offering of 25% of the company in June 2003. As of May 2007^[update], the government of India sold its complete share to Indian financial institutions and no longer has any stake in Maruti Udyog Ltd.

Maruti Udyog Limited (MUL) was established in February 1981, though the actual production commenced in 1983 with the Maruti 800, based on the Suzuki Alto kei car which at the time was the only modern car available in India, its only competitors- the Hindustan Ambassador and Premier Padmini were both around 25 years out of date at that point. The company's manufacturing facilities are located at two facilities Gurgaon and Manesar in Haryana, south of Delhi. It exports more than 50,000 cars annually and has domestic sales of 730,000 cars annually. Maruti Suzuki's Gurgaon facility has

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