



CORPORATE BEHAVIOUR AND GUNAS OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this paper is to correlate the three types of corporate behaviour, namely, aggressive, submissive and assertive behaviour with the three gunas of Indian ethos, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas, as both perceptions explain the personality of man.

KEY-WORDS: Behaviour, Aggressive, Submissive, Assertive, Gunas, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas Corporate behaviour may refer to the combination of legal rules, ethical codes and social responsibility that shapes, defines and differentiates a business organization from that of others.

THE THREE TYPES OF BEHAVIOR

Taking inputs from psychology, the corporate world have identified three primary types of behavior exhibited by individuals, namely, Aggressive behavior, Submissive behavior and Assertive behavior.

Let us now briefly see the characteristic features of the three types of behavior.

Aggressive Behavior: Aggressive behavior is the type of behavior wherein one's intent is to stand-up for one's own rights in such a way that the rights of others are willfully violated. According to Anderson & Bushman (2002), aggressive communicators dominate and try to fulfill their desires at the cost of others.

Submissive Behavior: Submissive behavior is the type of behavior wherein one's intent is not to stand-up for one's legitimate rights and thereby enabling one's rights to be violated by others. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000) defines submissive behavior as a "pervasive pattern of negativistic attitudes and passive resistance to demands for adequate performance in social and occupational situations".

Assertive Behavior: Assertive behavior is the type of behavior wherein one's intent is to stand-up for one's own legitimate rights in such a way that the rights of others are not violated. *The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science* (2002) states that assertive behavior is an honest, direct and appropriate expression of one's feelings, beliefs and opinions.

Gunas of Traditional Indian Knowledge System

According to Indian ethos, the mind is compound of three substantive forces called *gunas*, namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which are also the basic constituents for the entire universe. In his *Vivekacudamani* (Verse 111-119), Sri Sankara states that *maya-avidya*, the cause for the emergence of the mind, consists of the three *gunas*. *Tamas* has its veiling power (*Avrti-shakti*) promoting ignorance. laziness and causes man's repeated transmigration. *Rajas* has its projecting power (*Viksepa-shakti*), promoting worldly activities causing bondage. Pure *sattva* (unmixed with *rajas* and *tamas*) promotes cheerfulness, contentment and devotion to the *atman*. The *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter XIV, Verses 5 & 17) and the *Pancadasi* (II, 14-16) of Sri Vidyanarya also defines the three *gunas* according to their effects, namely, *Sattva* represents knowledge and calmness, *Rajas* represents activity and desire, and *Tamas* represents laziness and ignorance.

Every man is a combination of all the three *gunas*, in varying proportions. The predominance of one of the three *gunas* over the other two determines the dominant personality trait of a man's nature. The *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter III, Verse 33) states that every man acts in accordance with his/her own nature dictated by the combinations of the *gunas*. The three *gunas* constantly act on one another.

Correlation between the Types of Behavior and the Gunas.

It would be interesting to correlate the three types of behaviour and the three *gunas* as both perceptions explain the personality of man.



The aggressive behavior correlates with the traits of activity and desire, as exhibited by the *Rajo-guna*, and reflects a state of existence where *Rajas* predominates over *Sattva* and *Tamas*.

The submissive behavior correlates with the traits of laziness and ignorance, as exhibited by the *Tamo-guna*, and reflects a state of existence where *Tamas* predominates over *Sattva* and *Rajas*.

The assertive behavior correlates with the traits of knowledge and calmness, as exhibited by the *Sattva-guna*, and reflects a state of existence where *Sattva* predominates over *Tamas* and *Rajas*.

A Tabular Representation

The above correlation between the types of behavior and the *gunas* may also be presented in the form of a table, as under.

Features	Aggressive Behavior	Submissive Behavior	Assertive Behavior
Intent	To stand-up for one's own rights by willfully violating the rights of others	Fails to stand-up for one's own legitimate rights and violated by others	To stand-up for one's own rights without violating the rights of others
Feelings	A sense of false superiority	A sense of false inferiority	A sense of self-esteem and confidence
Characteristics	Activity & desire	Laziness & ignorance	Calmness & knowledge
Predominance of <i>gunas</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Tamas</i>	<i>Sattva</i>

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