

Original Article

Management thoughts in Assamese Sayings of DAK with Reference to Life Management

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Abstract - In Assam, the Assamese sayings or maxims of Dak (popularly called in Assamese as *Dakar Bachan*) are an asymmetrical source of traditional knowledge in the Assamese society. It is one of the richest sources of oral literature in Assamese. The study aimed to explore whether any management thoughts exist in the Assamese sayings of Dak. The study is an attempt to contextualize the Assamese sayings of Dak from the management perspective and to explore the management thoughts from the sayings in the Assamese language for the management of life and how far they would regulate the life of human beings in their thoughts and decision making. The study concentrates on the Assamese sayings of Dak, which is spoken in the Assamese language. The study is both interpretative and exploratory. The data have been collected from secondary sources, i.e., ancient texts, archives, relevant books written by eminent Assamese authors, literature by scholars, research papers and journals, and contents from the web and print media. In this study, the researcher has selected some Assamese sayings of Dak, mostly related to life management. The sayings of Dak are very popular among the people of Assamese society and Assam as a whole. Most of these Dak's sayings are educative. The result signifies that there is a great potential to use these sayings of Dak as a base for developing management thoughts in various fields. Management thoughts from the Assamese sayings of Dak presented in this study provide us with a new way of defining the idea of management. The study addresses that management thought is hidden in the Assamese saying of Dak.

Keywords - Management thoughts, Assamese sayings of Dak, life management.

1. Introduction

The sayings of *Dak* are very popular among the people of Assamese society and Assam as a whole. This Maxim (*Bachan*) can be defined as a principle or rule. A maxim is a wise saying, especially one intended to advise and recommend a course of conduct. It refers to speech communication and reflects the social relationship and everyday experiences of the people of Assam. The sayings of *Dak* are a large number of folk sayings or aphorisms in the Assamese language. These sayings are important in imparting informal education to the literate and the illiterate.

Basically, in Assam, it is assumed that these sayings were the words of mouth of a man of humble origin named '*Dak Purusha*' who was said to have been born in the *Lehi Dangara*, the modern village '*Lauhagaon*' about seven miles to the south of Barpeta in Kamrup district of Assam. The sayings or maxims of *Dak* (*Dakar Bachans*) are an asymmetrical source of traditional knowledge in the Assamese society. It is one of the richest sources of oral literature in Assamese. *Dak* is supposed to be a contemporary of '*Barah-Mihir*,' the fourth to sixth-century astronomer. A *dak* is a historical person or a creation of the Assamese masses' popular minds and folk tradition. In Assam, *Dak*

proved to be a very knowledgeable person (tradition) in various fields.

The present study is an attempt to contextualize the Assamese sayings of *Dak* from the management perspective and to explore the management thoughts from the sayings in the Assamese language for managing human life and how far they would regulate the life of human beings in their thoughts and decision making. So, the study is based mainly on Assamese sayings in Assamese society.

2. Objectives of the Study

The following two objectives are being developed to understand the management thoughts in Assamese sayings better.

The objectives of the study are as under:

- To contextualize the Assamese Sayings of *Dak* from the management perspective.
- To highlight the management thoughts of Assamese sayings of *Dak* regarding life management.

Thus, the study will investigate the existence of management thoughts in the Assamese sayings of *Dak*.



3. Literature Review

Various authors have contributed many research findings related to the extraction of management thoughts from religious books, epics, folklore, sayings of saints and great personalities, philosophers, and so on. Here's a collection of such reviews of kinds of literature presented here:

S.L. No.	Author(s)	Year	Objectives of the Study	Major Findings
1	Ramani. M	2017	To examine the existence of any management thoughts in <i>Kamba Ramayana</i> , an ancient Indian Tamil Literature, and to establish a relationship between ancient management thoughts from <i>Kamba Ramayana</i> and contemporary management thoughts.	This particular research work made an analytical study by examining some selected verses of <i>Kamba Ramayana</i> . This research work has found management thoughts on Planning and Organizing. It is explained concerning the meaning and elucidated by quoting recent courses in management. The study has some selected Kamba Ramayana stanzas, which were required to analyze the relevance of management thoughts on directing and controlling.
2	Muniapan, B	2008	To explore managerial effectiveness from the perspectives of the Bhagavad-Gita, which presents one of the Indian (Vedic) views on managerial effectiveness.	The study reveals that the philosophy of Bhagavad-Gita should not be viewed from spiritual perspectives only but also as a guide in developing managerial effectiveness. The study's findings show that managerial effectiveness's scope, content, and context are wide. The study discusses three basic principles for improving managerial effectiveness from the selected verses from the Bhagavad-Gita. These three principles are mind management, management of duty, and the principles of self-management.
3	Imtiaz. S.	2014	To explore the management thoughts on life and time, the leadership effectiveness and skill, and motivational aspect hidden in the lyrics of Bhupen Hazarika.	The findings of the study showed that leadership always influences/subordinates. Hazarika pointed out that one should adopt five qualities in life - peace, patience, kindness, mercy, hope, and struggle. These will help one to lead a life in a period of depression. He has thought that management or precise managers should have five C's, i.e., Calmness, Conscience, Compurgation, Confidence, and Combats. With these five C's, a manager easily emerges from any depressive situation. The study concludes that modern managers can benefit from the philosophy of texture of this literature which serves as a guide in developing managerial effectiveness.
4	Sarcar. C.D	1965	To address the Assamese sayings of <i>Dak</i> and <i>Khanna</i> .	This book focuses that the sayings of <i>Dak</i> (Assam) are similar to the sayings of <i>Khanna</i> (a female Bengali astrologer, North Bihar). The study found the meaning of <i>Dak</i> (Assam) and <i>Khanna</i> (North- Bihar). However, the representation of the persons so named in Bengali tradition respectively as female and male astrologers has shadowed the real meanings of the works. The study opines that <i>Khanna</i> is derived from Sanskrit' Ksanada-

				prakit' <i>Khanna</i> , meaning an astrologer, while <i>Dak</i> may be taken to mean 'A proclamation' (a shouting cry or call) and <i>Dak</i> 'an announcer of proclamations'
5	Jha.S	2009	To explore how these sayings constitute a field of knowledge production in contemporary Mithila (North Bihar), revealing claims along the trajectories of caste, gender, and historical lineages.	The study addressed the different aspects of agricultural life. These sayings in Maithili agrarian society suggest a complicated and contested relation between modern and non-modern practices of the time in a general and agricultural environment in particular. The study primarily focused on the politics of making claims that go into the making of this textual field. Finally, the study deconstructs the middle-class perception of this region's domain of the 'folk.' The paper has set out a schedule for writing the history of rain and weather in the context of north Bihar.
6	Dutta.D	2013	To address the Sayings of <i>Dak</i> , " <i>Dakar Bachan</i> " is a collection of <i>Dak</i> 's sayings in Assamese.	The book found that <i>Dak</i> 's sayings are more popular in the Assamese community. Primarily these are used by an agriculturist, householders, business people, and all individuals to manage the business, cost, time, money, life, etc., although many are of general interest. The book reported that some similar sayings are popular in Bengal, Mithila (North Bihar), Uttarpradesh, and Rajasthan.
7	Konwar. L	2014	To explore the possibility of using these folk media of Assam without breaking their original form and also to explore the various folk media forms of Assam and document the effects they have on behavior change among the rural folks of Assam.	The study indicates that <i>Dakar Bachans</i> are many folk sayings or aphorisms in the Assamese language. The sayings of <i>Dak</i> are related to agriculture, rain, fortune-telling, religion, health, etc. The study found that for effective community-level communication strategies, cooperation and planned use of folk media and mass media are necessary for achieving optimum impact and obtaining desired feedback. The study investigates that <i>Dakar Bachan</i> could be used for social upliftment works through its modified form.

4. Research Gap

The above literature found that the previous studies had not examined the thoughts on management in any kind of sayings. None of the reviewed literature was related to the management thoughts in Assamese sayings concerning the sayings of *Dak*. Therefore, this study was undertaken to look into the management thoughts in sayings. This particular research study is intended to fill the research gap and examine the existence of management thoughts in the Assamese sayings. So, the researcher thinks to highlight and explore management thoughts from the Assamese sayings of *Dak* to provide a new management perspective.

5. Research Methodology of the Study

The study explores life management thoughts in the Assamese sayings of *Dak*. The present study is both interpretative and exploratory. According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings. Interpretive research focuses on identifying, documenting, and 'knowing' – through interpreting world views, values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and the general characteristics of life events, situations, ceremonies, and specific phenomena under investigation. The goal of the interpretative study is to

document and interpret as fully as possible the totality of whatever is being studied from the people's viewpoint or frame of reference.

Despite the tremendous development of science and technology, *Dak's* sayings continue to find expression in human languages. This particular aspect testifies the fact that these sayings are fundamental. In most countries, folk kinds of literature are in use. But in India, the Assamese saying of *Dak* is very old as it has been used since immemorial / for a long time.

Assamese society has full of different traditional sayings. The present study concentrates on the Assamese sayings of *Dak*, which are spoken in the Assamese language. If we see these sayings from historical perception, these similar sayings are equally popular outside Assam; say, in West Bengal, the sayings of *Khana (Khanar Bachan)* are spoken in the Bengali language, and in Odisha, formerly Orissa, those were spoken in Odia language. However, this study excludes the sayings of *Khana*.

The area of the present study is mainly confined to Assamese society in Assam. The data have been collected from secondary sources, i.e., ancient texts, archives, relevant books written by eminent Assamese authors, literature by scholars, research papers and journals, and contents from the web and print media. In the present study, the researcher has selected some Assamese sayings of *Dak*, mostly related to life management. The justification for such selection is that all these sayings cover management thought as interpreted.

6. Discussion and Interpretation

Management is a very dynamic subject, and management thinkers are developing new theories even today. Management is getting the right things done in the right way, at the right time, by the right persons with the right amount of resources and effective use of resources. Management is an important element in every organization. It is not only important in an organization, but it also plays a pivotal role in every aspect of life.

Management thought may be defined as acquiring knowledge of thought and concepts of different authors about the basic theory of management. Management thought is the gathering of knowledge about the origin of management, assessing the proper foundation of management research of different authors about the basic concepts of management. The importance of studying management is thought to consist of the basic theory of management/ helping problem-solving/increasing managerial efficiency/ basis of future development/ quality development of management etc. Management has achieved enviable importance in recent times.

The Assamese sayings of *Dak* are brimmed with worldly wisdom and practical knowledge, which help and guide the people of Assamese society in fruitfully leading their lives. The wisdom and knowledge enshrined in the sayings of *Dak* have contributed immensely to the all-round development of the individuals. Many sayings encompass within themselves the ways and guidance for everyone to proceed in every step of life, find a solution to every problem they face, and judge and analyse what to do and what not. The wisdom and knowledge found in *Dak* direct and guide an individual to lead his life in a just and proper way.

Managing life is one of the most important resources of a human being. Life management explains all the things to manage our life well. Only those who can manage their life well will be able to freely develop their intellectual, religious, and potentialities, which in turn make them able to live in a society with freedom, security, peace, and prosperity. The Assamese saying, which many generations have used, has many good impacts on the management of life, especially in the Assamese society. People use these sayings of *Dak* in their day-to-day practical life.

Following are some selected Assamese sayings of *Dak* relating to human life which has been followed or used by the Assamese community through generations. Some of such life-changing and most popularly used *Dak* sayings by the Assamese people through generation after generation are stated in the following lines.

Baat buliba dekhi, Cowrie laba lekhi

(Look ahead before you go, 'Cowrie, i.e., a small kind of shell used as coin means money,' receives money only after counting it.)

This saying of *Dak* is used to warn us that whatever we do, we should do it consciously and reasonably to avoid any misfortune arising from it. Similarly, money which is most important for us, should be counted twice. The monetary transaction is needed for almost everything. So, we should be serious while dealing with money matters in daily activities so we may not lose it.

Thus, this saying of *Dak* means that before starting work, we must know its pros and cons. After we have had proper knowledge about the work to be done and its probable consequences, then it helps us to minimize probable losses.

This saying of *Dak* advises us to go along the way known to us and receive it only after counting it. If we are not familiar with the road, we may get lost. Similarly, if we do not count the money, there is also the chance of loss. Therefore, this saying is very important for a person to manage his life well. It has been used by simple rural folks of Assam in their daily financial dealings. But it can be used in a broader sense and applicable to commercial organizations

to make people aware of the use of money. Most of the problems of human beings arise from money. Especially in this age of competition, people earn more and more to become richer. Still, everything will run smoothly only when people are mindful and careful in money transactions in life management. Similarly, in business management, this saying relates to management's first function, i.e., planning.

In this context, we remember one definition of planning. i.e.

"Planning is deciding in advance what is to be done. When a manager plans, he projects a course of action for the future, attempting to achieve a consistent, co-ordinate structure of operation aimed at the desired results."

Theo Haimann

Planning is based on the theory of 'thinking before acting.' It is decided in advance what is to be done. Planning is an integral part of our life and organisation. Planning is concerned with the 'what,' 'how,' and 'when' of performance. Planning always reduces the risk and uncertainties. It also reduces overlapping and wasteful activities.

Planning is the central and primary function of management. This function includes Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives, Strategy, Policies, Rules, Procedures, Programmes, etc.

The monetary transaction is a very important factor in any business organization. If it is not dealt with properly, that business will incur heavy losses. Therefore, this saying of *Dak* is also a piece of important advice for us to be careful in every walks of management of life and business organisation, including financial matters. So, forecasting, cost control, management accounting, budgetary control, statistical control, and financial planning are all included in financial management. This saying of *Dak* signifies that a person should be foresighted and plan properly before going to any action in an organization and must carefully handle all the financial matters. In the present scenario, every person and an organisation must be concerned about proper planning for the smooth running of his life and business.

If we delve deep into these sayings of *Dak*, we find that these sayings stress certain fundamental points in favor of the management of life and business. Here comes the importance of proper planning for every activity in the organisation or an individual's day-to-day activities. Accounting is also essential for all financial transactions, whether in business or personal life.

Aapon karjyak ji kore hela, Tahar ghare nai Lakshmir khela

(He who neglects his duty does not have the blessings of the Goddess of Lakshmi in his house. 'Lakshmi' is the Goddess of wealth.)

This saying of *Dak* reveals that a person who neglects his work, wealth, and money will not be available in his house. This is a very important saying of *Dak*, which tells us to be dutiful in life. Doing our duties is necessary to earn a living and provide for ourselves and our families. This makes our life secure with savings for the future, but the person who does not mind his duties will not be able to earn anything, and money will not come to his house, which means that the Goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi) will not stay in his house. People neglecting their duties soon sink into poverty and have to live in misery. Duties also mean taking good care of old parents, one's own family, and providing them with their needs.

Therefore, this saying of *Dak* includes important management thought that a person who neglects his duties in a family could never earn money. This saying of *Dak* is important teaching which guides us to manage our life and overall development of life. If every family member performs their duties well, the whole family will be financially strong and independent. From the management perspective, it is similar that when an employee neglects their duties and responsibilities in an organization, the entire burden of the work is faced by the whole organization itself. We know that profit maximization is the major goal of every business organization. All the employees must concentrate on their duties well and try to fulfill the organisational goals.

Bhal kapur nasta hoi nite lale jhapat, Bhal Po' nasta hoi nusudhile baapat

(Fine clothes get soiled if we use them daily in bed to get rid of the cold. Similarly, good sons get spoiled if he is arrogant and proud and does not seek their father's advice.)

This saying of *Dak* has commented that the best things get spoilt when used daily, and even a good son goes astray when he does not seek his father's advice. Proper use of valuable and good things is very important, so things do not get spoilt. A good son is always obedient to his parents. He listens and obeys his parents. But when he does not obey their advice, he will ruin himself as parents always advise their children for their well-being. Therefore, this *Dak* saying has made it clear that it is very necessary to use things properly and seek advice from one's parents while doing anything in managing life. After God, it is our parents who care and think of our well-being. Whatever they do is for our good, so we should not do anything without consulting them, especially our father, who is wiser and more experienced than us.

Similarly, the subordinates must obey and take the advice from the seniors as the seniors are more experienced and skilled and reach the top positions of an organization. Thus, whether easy or difficult, it should be consulted with the elders and take their advice, which is essential for juniors. So, this saying of *Dak* guides us that an employee may be in

trouble if he does not heed the advice of learned and experienced members of an organization. Therefore, it is clear that good coordination is necessary for both father and son, and similarity between senior and junior employees in an organization helps the strong relationship. Coordination creates a good working environment and helps achieve goals through collective efforts.

This *Dak is* saying expresses that fine clothes get spoilt if we use them daily in bed to get rid of cold. Similarly, good sons get spoiled for their arrogance and negligence of their father's advice. If we observe it from the business management point of view, we can comprehend that the resources and infrastructure of an industry or business organisation should be well maintained. It will assure optimum utilization of individual resources. As a son may go astray if he ignores the advice from his parents, the desired results of a business establishment may not be achieved if the advice and suggestion of top-notch officials are ignored.

Alap khai pelai prasur, Dake bule taik nikal dur

(A woman who wastes more than she eats should be driven away.)

It is found from this saying of *Dak* that a homemaker who wastes more than she eats should be abandoned. This saying strongly criticizes women who do not know how to save but only waste and do not value essential commodities. A woman must do almost all the domestic chores, including cooking and household activity. She is supposed to know the value of everything in the house. Her inability to properly use the essential things brings chaos and disorder to the house leading to disqualification and quarrels. A woman of such nature is a curse for a family. Therefore, a woman must be economical and not extravagant. Every woman should practice limitations to use necessary things economically and manage her household well, so that scarcity of essential things does not arise in the house.

This family management concept of using money and resources economically is not the case in an organization from the business management perspective. Each employee works in different departments and workplaces in an organization where the employee can never waste any resources. His wisdom may help the organisation save money and resources for the future.

A wise note is meant for all while *Dak* says that a woman who wastes more than she eats should be driven away. Nobody will deny that wastage of eatable items is a bad habit. The practice of this habit may lead a family to a poor economic condition. Similarly, the wastage of any kind of resources and materials in an industry will hinder the organization's growth and development. Hence, *Dak* has warned us against such malpractices so that neither the personal life nor the life of industry gets hampered.

*Udyogi purush Shinghar saman
Elehua hol kapurushar nissan*

(A dynamic/hard-working person equals a lion, and laziness signifies a coward.)

According to this saying of *Dak*, a dynamic person equals a lion because, by dint of hard work, a person can become successful in life. An industrious man becomes mighty like a lion. A lion is the jungle king, and his might cannot be compared with any other animal. Similarly, a dynamic person becomes mighty and wealthy by working hard. But a lazy person never likes to work and keeps every work for tomorrow. He cannot stand on his own feet and always depends on others. Therefore, he is considered a coward by *Dak*. So, being industrious is very important in managing one's life smoothly and developing. Industrious traits are seen in a lion. Being industrious includes working hard with perseverance, energy, and devotion. The only dynamic person can overcome obstacles and realize their dreams. On the other hand, a coward is a person who has no courage and is afraid of work because of the problems that he might have to face.

One of the essential aspects of success in life is the ability to work hard, and this important aspect is given due importance in *Dak's* sayings. Anyone who works hard is sure to get success in personal life. The same is the case with the people associated with business organizations. Only their hard work contributes to a business organization's overall success. From a management perspective, this saying of *Dak* is similar to an owner in a business organization because if we see the success story of every business organization's owner in our country, we find he is diligent. He is full of all the capabilities to perform the overall business activities actively compared to an owner failing to manage his business well.

7. Conclusion

Management thoughts from the Assamese sayings of *Dak* presented in this study provide us with a new way of defining the idea of management. Management of life is an art. *Dak's* sayings discussed in this research work delineates how to manage our life in a befitting manner. Business management also highly welcomes the skills and qualities needed for managing life well. It has been observed that these sayings of *Dak* mainly focus on thoughts on management and show us the right directions in managing human life. In our life full of complexities and problems, the importance of these sayings can't be disputed. These sayings make the task easy for any difficult situation.

Thus, the study addresses that management thoughts are hidden in the Assamese saying of *Dak*. The use of these sayings in our daily life and their relevance in the modern age are to be treated as a matter of serious study. Hence, it is

necessary to preserve and disseminate these sayings so that they might help our people in general in solving many problems they face in their life. So the researcher feels that a

favorable change in their economic and social life can be achieved if the entire Assamese community honestly follows these Dak's sayings.

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