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## *Ethics of Marketing – Indian spirituality*

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*Abstract: Ethics are the collection of the moral principles and values that govern the actions and decisions of an individual or group. The ethics provide the guidelines for the action on how to react to a situation rightly. Lay man assumes that the actions which violated the law are considered as unethical. Marketing ethics is concerned with the systematic study of moral and standards which are applied to the marketing decisions, behaviors and institutions. Our Indian spirituality is all about showing the respect to everyone. We assume that we are on this earth to spread the message of love, compassionate and care to everyone. Indian spirituality want to spread the positive values and love to one-another. The managers those who deals with a lot of pressure and stress must use the Indian spirituality as this help them to de-stress their work load and pressure. The manager has to manage themselves, as they manage themselves then only they can work efficiently. This paper focuses on the requirement of ethics in marketing and how the Indian spirituality is required for the ethical marketing. This paper explains the Indian spirituality's need for the managers and the marketing.*

*Keywords: Ethics, Patanjali, Indian spirituality, Pranayama, Karma.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing ethics is the practice of examining the moral and ethical issues faced by marketing managers and organizations. It is commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development while improving quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large (Mohamed Labbai, 2007). If the goal of any company is optimizing the profit of their organization and the company use false, deceptive and unethical way of campaigning the product, then the company is not running an effective campaign. In such a situation there may be short term gains, but the loss of trust and respect in the market will also prevails. On contrary to this if a company campaign in ethical manner they will reap long term rewards for their actions. They will build a positive image, loyal customers and enjoy word of mouth referrals, in their prospects mind about their business. Some stakeholders i.e. suppliers, consumers, government etc. of a firm are there who are attached with the company:

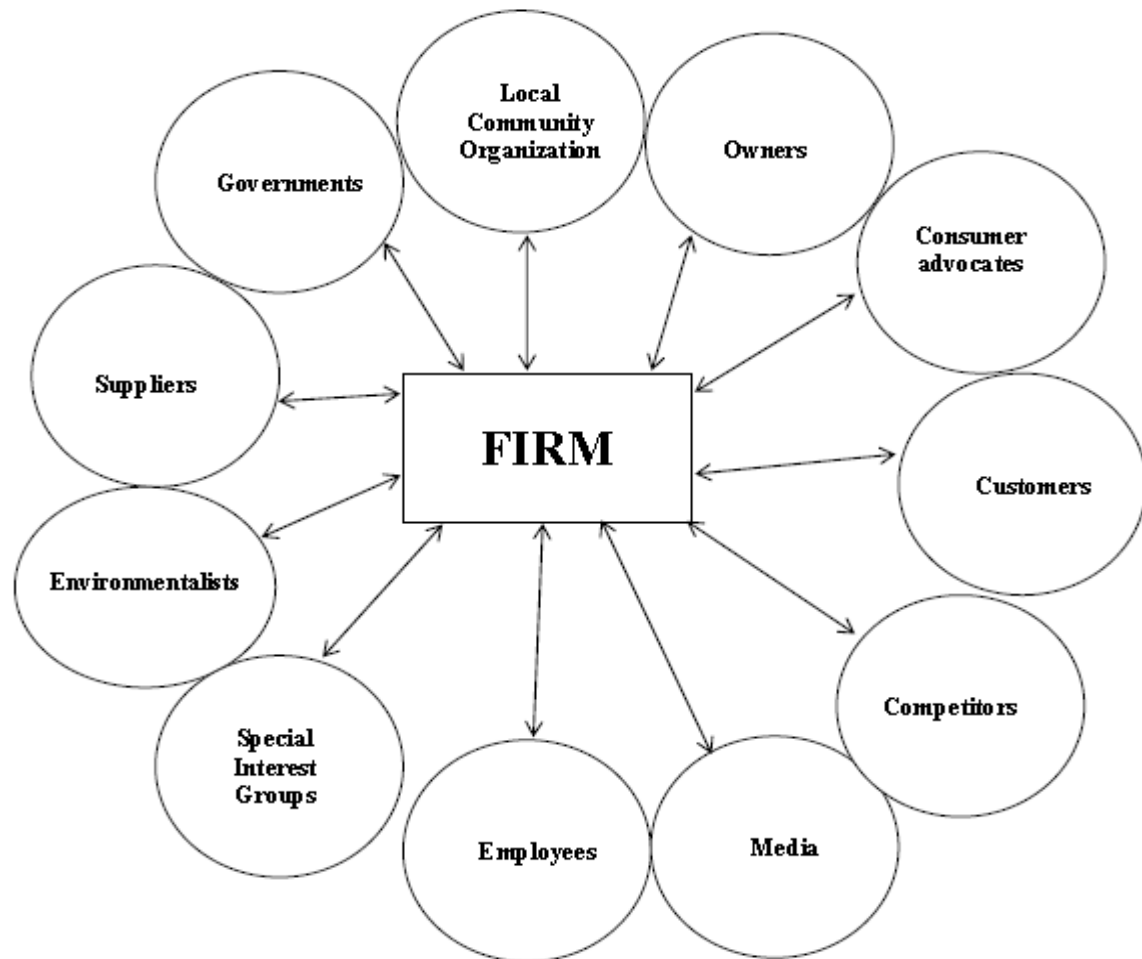


Figure-1 STAKEHOLDERS OF A FIRM

Source: Freeman Edward R (1984)

It is assumed that only actions that violate laws are considered unethical. While it is true that illegal activity is also unethical, a business activity can be unethical even though no laws are violated. For instance, it is not viewed as illegal activity to promote unhealthy foods to children by marketing companies. In discussing concerns for consumers well being, we must address the challenges that marketers have to 'self regulate' and become more socially responsible. It is our responsibility to behave ethically. If marketers do not change their ways, and become more socially responsible, they will become subject to more government controls. Service is an art of offering a consumer more than just the product they are purchasing. Part of that offering is to provide consumers with an assurance that they are marketing to them is based on ethically sound principles (Bone, Paula F., and Corey, Robert J. 1998). Do consumers are treated with respect? Is there is an honesty in communicating with consumers? Nowadays consumers' awareness has increased and advocacy groups' increases pressure on organizations and government. The organizations must place their priority on the ethical implications of their marketing places. In service industry all that matters is the only relationship between the consumers and the service provider. If the consumer feels that they are being treated unethically they will go elsewhere. But not only will they leave, they will take with them as many others as they can. The risks that organizations face by unethical marketing.

## II. SPIRITUALITY AND MARKETPLACE

Scholars in marketing, psychology, religion, philosophy, nursing and counseling have argued for over two decades on the definition of the term spirituality. Confusion between the concepts of spirituality and religion is what mainly fuels this debate (Dialmy 2001, Zinnabauer, Pargament and Scott 1999). The word spirituality comes from the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning breath- the breath of life (Benner, D.G 1989). Why all the sudden interest in spirituality at workplace? Globalization of the markets requires more creativity from employees. Greater demand and corporate downsizing has left the workers too tired and

stressed to be creative. Organization has to offer a greater sense of meaning and purpose to their workforce if they want to succeed in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. In today's competitive environment, best talent holders seek the organizations those who provide opportunities for their personal development, reflect their inner values and community service, not just bigger salaries. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, economics are information and services dominated. As they require instantaneous decision-making and building smooth relationship with customers and employees. To fully comprehend the spirituality phenomenon and to explain its dynamics in the marketplace would require considerable research, both qualitative and quantitative. Segmentation models may be designed by incorporating spiritual variables comprising of both beliefs and practices.

### III. SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM

The reasons for this situation are not much far to seek. The western ideas of management are making the workers and managers to work more efficiently and productively. Now a day's company offers more salary to workers in lieu that they will stick to them without looking for other alternatives. They give them more so that they work more, produce more and sell more. In order to improve the bottom line in the organization they extract better talent and take work more from the workers. They consider the workers as a hireable commodity, which can be used, discarded and replaced whenever they need. That's why workers are reached to a state of a mercantile product. In such a situation, workers start using strikes sit-ins (gheraos), lock-outs, go-slows (dharnas), work-to-rule etc. in order to get maximum benefits for themselves from the enterprise. These factors are going to cause harm to the society and culture. Hence, we reach at a situation where the management and workers become separate and contrary to each other on a conflicting interest. Both the parties do not share any common goal or understanding with each other. This will lead to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes (Jones, Thomas M., and Ryan, Lori V. 1998). The organization starts lacking human values and erosion of human touch in organizational structure which further lacks confidence. Western idea of management or the western philosophy may have created prosperity for some people at a certain point of time but fails in improving the individuals' life and social welfare. Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-examine the objectives, scope and content of management disciplines. The concept of management has to redefine in order to underline the development of the workers as a human being, not as a mere wage earner and as a person. This changed scenario of management can make it an instrument of social development and indeed national development.

### IV. DISCUSSION

#### How to be effective in their job?

- Bhagavad Gita proclaims that "you must try to manage yourself". Whenever the managers reaches a level of excellence and effectiveness, he or she will become a merely face in the crowd. So, managers have to create an excellence in their working. If they are well managed then the enterprise is also well managed.
- The managers have to do meditation, yoga and Patanjali (James Haughon Woods). The yoga helps the workers and managers to relax their body and soul. This will help them to do more work with a more efficiency. If they want to de-stress their work load they have to use these methods. These methods will be effective for the managers to do their work effectively.

#### Indian Management is Differ from Western management

The Bhagavad Gita has explained all the facts of western management or modern management concepts of leadership, vision, excellence in work, motivation, giving work meaning, achieving goals, decision making and planning and many more. But there is one difference- the Bhagavad Gita deals with the issues from the core of the human thinking roots and western management deals with the issues from the external, material and peripheral levels. The quality of the individuals' actions and their results reflects the basic thinking of an improved manager. The western philosophy is based on the materialism and the perennial thirst of profits only. They do not deal with the quality of the actions and researches. India is not concerned with this

trend and do not follow this trend practically. The western management focuses on increasing wealth only and caught the fancy of all the countries (Berman, Barry, and Evans, Joel R. 1998). It is also called as a management by materialism. India has been in the forefront for importing the Bhagavad Gita concept in order to break the centuries old doctrine made by colonial rulers that Western is superior and Indian is inferior. India is trying hard to remove this inculcated feeling from the market. Huge investment is made in the building schools of modern management education which do not show any visible change in the quality of life. Thus, this kind of education is not going to show any remarkable change in our society. Although the standards of some individuals has gone up due to this modern management. On the other hand others are struggling in almost all the sectors of the economy, exploitation, criminalization of institutions, social violence and other vices are seen in the politic body.

### **Culture required for having satisfaction in Work**

The vigorous and arduous pursuits in the task reflect its effectiveness. The effective work culture consists of the vigorous and arduous features. The Bhagavad Gita explains two types of work culture-“*daivi sampat*” or divine work culture and “*asuri sampat*” or demonic work culture. These work cultures has a wide concept and requires a lot of efforts and calculations to explain (Swami Paramarthananda 2006). Practically these cultures explain how a worker or a manager can achieve a mental and physical satisfaction in his work very efficiently? Shri Krishna has defined these types of culture in detail in Bhagavad Gita.

- **Daivi work culture-** This type of work culture involves the fearlessness, sacrifice, purity, self-control, calmness, straight forwardness, absence of greed, gentleness, absence of Envy , pride and self denial. When we perform our work with purity, fearlessness, sacrifice etc. then our work fall under this category of work culture.
- **Asuri work culture** – This type of work culture involves egoism, delusion, personal desires, improper performance and work not oriented towards service. This situation prevails when we become greedy for our work position, pride and money. In this situation we use to think only about our own benefits and try to fulfill our personal needs and desires. Here the workforce become egoistic and start working below their performance.

More work ethic is not enough. The hardened criminal exhibits an excellent work ethic. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work. It is in this light that the counsel, “*yogah karmasu kausalam*” should be understood. “*Kausalam*” means technique or skills of work which is an essential component of a work ethic (Shreeram Manoj Kumar 2011). “*Yogah*” is defined in the *Gita* itself as “*samatvam yogah uchyate*” meaning an unchanging equipoise of mind (detachment.) Yoga helps to do the work more efficiently (Text-48 1972). When we do yoga we feel a kind of relaxation in our body which helps to do more work. Some researchers tells us that acting with an equable mind is Yoga. When we make our mind stable and do our work with motivation then only we can achieve good results. The *Gita*, evolved that when we have to do our work we have to do the work with ethics, without ethics no mind can attain equipoise. The guru, Adi Sankara (born circa 800 AD), says that it is necessary to have a patience in the situation of failure and success. We have to maintain skill necessary in the performance of one's duty is that of maintaining an evenness of mind in face of success and failure (M.P. Bhattathiri 2011). When the mind of the individual is calm, then only he can search for the causes of the failure. So, it is preferred to stay calm and search for all the prospective for the reasons of failure and take corrective steps to avoid the shortcomings in future. When we reduce our attachment to personal gains and money in our work place we can achieve greater heights. In *Gita*, it is explained with great care in order to attain equanimity. This principle will reduce the lack of incentive for effort and striking at the very root of work ethics. It is effective because it reduces all the greedy factors of workers and enforces motivation only. In contrary to this situation, concentration on the task for its own sake leads to the achievement of excellence – and indeed to the true mental happiness of the worker. Thus, while commonplace theories of motivation may be said to lead us to the bondage or extrinsic rewards, the *Gita*'s principle leads us to the intrinsic rewards of mental and indeed moral satisfaction

**What state of mind should have managers?**

Sound mental health is the most primary goal of any human activity. Sound mental health is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO 2001a). For effective functioning and foundation for well being of an individual mental health is required. Pre-requisites for this mental health are peace and internal constancy. Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:

- Envy is an unusual emotion. Envy is aroused in managers regarding others' achievements, success and rewards.
- Anguish is created through the comparisons of several managers. All this create a feeling of suspicion, anger and frustration.
- Greed for power, position, prestige and money is more in minds of managers.
- Ego get build in the minds of managers because of their own accomplishments.

The competition and speed is working as a driving force in today's business. All these factors force an erosion of the moral fiber and permit oneself immoral means- tax evasion and illegitimate financial holdings. This also caused deliberate oversight in audit, being "economical with truth" and too-clever financial reporting.

This phenomenon is called as "Yayati syndrome" (Mani, Vettam 1964). In the book, the *Mahabharata*, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, after some time he comes back to his son to take back his youth because of sensual enjoyments' was unsatisfying. This Yayati syndrome is the conflict between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. The extrinsic motivation is the externally directed acquisitions and intrinsic motivation is the inner value and conscience of an individual.

**How the truth, doing right things, right work, viewing the world as family, welfare of the mankind will lead to success?**

Now we have to discuss whether viewing world as a family and doing only right things is beneficial for the organization or not. If we produce bad thing and try to sell it as a good one then we are going to earn a little amount of profit but after some time consumers switch to another product and we use to face the loss. Here are some great Sanskrit hymns from ancient Indian texts.

- ✚ **"Vasudaiva Kutumbam"**-It means that "the whole earth is a family" (Mahapanishad VI. 71-73). When we produce any product or service we have to produce it like our family members is going to consume it. We use to treat our customers' as our family. Globalization concept which is introduced recently is a very old concept in India. So, we have to do the work ethically and in a proper manner.
- ✚ **"Satyamev Jayate"** -This statement states that "truth always triumphs". The managers will feel great satisfaction and pride resulting from the success or victory from the truth. When we use truth in our marketing we get a lot of profits and success. On the other hand if we use false marketing customers switch to other product and not only themselves have they taken some other prospective costumers' along with them. Marketing by false attitude may win temporarily, not permanently. So adapt truth. It is beneficial for the organization and the work force.
- ✚ **"Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha"** - In Bhagavad Gita, "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha" is explained as "he who carries out his duties shall be protected". Marketers should protect Dharma means any one which exists in that region so that it will protect them also.

- ✚ “Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu” - May all the people in this universe live with happiness and prosperity. This statement is true to some extent. When the marketers / products given the delightful satisfaction, then there is no need to market because the product will market automatically. This helps us to do less marketing and earn lot of profits.
- ✚ “Asatho Ma Sathgamaya, Thamaso Ma Jyothirgamaya, Mruthyorma Amrthangamya”<sup>7</sup> - Lead me towards truth from untruth, Lead me towards light from darkness, Lead me towards immortality from Death. Social responsibility refers to a company posture relative to the community (either narrowly or broadly defined). Indian companies are taking social responsibility and involving in all the activities which upheld the society. So world has to adapt this.
- ✚ “Annam Na nindhyath, Annam Na parichaksheeta, Annam bahu kurveeta” -Do not abuse food; do not discard food, Grow food in abundance! Marketing with right attitude. If you see this concept how the hidden strategies will affect the home country, then the companies will never enter into the market because already the image is spoiled. It is preferred to respect the religion, rituals and faiths of the region in which we are going to market our product.
- ✚ “Satyam Vadha Dharmam Chara”- Speak the truth, follow the righteous path is the complete meaning for this statement. So marketing practices should be right i.e. not hidden, unhealthy competition, adverse advertisements etc. The marketer has to take care that he will present the product in its original way not in a manipulated way. They will not going to hide anything, do not do malpractices and adverse marketing in order to make their product sell in the market.
- ✚ “Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma phaleshou kada chana, Ma Karma Phala HeturBhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani”<sup>7</sup> - In simple terms it means: Keep on performing your duties without expecting for any reward in return, leading a selfless life – this it what it is all about. According to this we have to do our marketing only and we do not have to expect anything from return. In this we have to live a life of saint, in which we have leaved the personal benefit. Marketing companies have to adapt the societal concept

#### V. FINDING AND SUGGESTION

- ✚ **Taking responsibility:** Marketers in past do not take responsibility of the product. They defend themselves on the basis of “It was what the customer wanted.”But now a day’s marketers have to take responsibility for their products, services and their decisions. If organizations fulfill all the needs of society, the goodwill will rise up in the market.
- ✚ **Respecting consumers rights:** The marketers has to respect the rights made for consumers i.e. right of redress, right to privacy and right to information. They have to provide the full knowledge about the product, do not hide the information, and do the proper advertisement and many other things in order to make the profit (Etzioni, A. 1993). The consumer has a right to get paid in compensation for loss or injury. So the marketer has to respect the consumers and their right (Hilton, M. 2005).
- ✚ **Deceptive pricing:** Marketers has to take a proper care for the pricing of the products. He or she has to take care of the misleading sales prices, omitting important conditions of sale or presenting a misleading introductory offer. For instance, pushing customers into forced continuity programs is considered unethical. This is where a person gets something for free, usually with just a small shipping and handling charge, but doesn't realize that they've also signed up for an ongoing, fee based program.
- ✚ **Offensive Marketing Tactics:** Many marketers try to get creative in their advertising campaigns. There's nothing wrong with this, provided a company has looked to see if the campaign might be considered offensive. While it's true that one can't please everyone, there is a general consensus among marketers that some things should usually be avoided. For instance, overtly sexual advertising, stereotyping of races or gender, and aggressive, high pressure selling methods are usually never effective and often leave people with a bad impression of a business (Kennedy, J.F. 1962).



- ✦ **Privacy Issues:** This issue is important when doing market research, as well as when handling information on your prospects and customers. No one likes to be surprised about how or what information is shared on them. You should have an established privacy policy that is clearly displayed and strictly followed in your company. It may seem like a small issue, but privacy rights are a big concern, and a potential lawsuit waiting to happen.
- ✦ **Value-oriented framework:** The boundaries of business are determined by the prevailing values of the society. For instance, do we allow environmental pollution and if so, of what kind and how much? Such questions are determined by the prevailing values in the society. Ethical problems on the basis of the values which they infringe e.g. honesty, autonomy, privacy and transparency is maintained.
- ✦ **Stakeholder-orientated framework:** The stakeholders are the persons who are interested in the organizations or company's affairs. We have to consider the stakeholders if we want to develop organization. We have to analyze the ethical problems on the basis of which they affect the stakeholders, consumers, competitors, society, suppliers, environmentalists, employees, media, consumer advocates, governments, local community organization, and special interest groups as a whole.
- ✦ **Process-orientated framework:** The process is a series of actions which are carried out in order to achieve a particular work. The marketer has to analyze ethical problems in terms of the categories used by marketing specialists i.e. research, price, promotion, placement and product.
- ✦ **Market research:** The marketer has to research in the market about the need, demands, desires and likings of the consumers. They have to produce according to the needs of the market so the market research is necessary to expand and to remain in the market. There are some ethical danger points in marketing research which include:- Invasion of privacy and Stereotyping.
- ✦ **Market audience:** The marketing has to be done according to all the categories whether it is child, teenage, adolescent or aged. If we make the promotional programme considering all these then we can make more profits. It is ethical to make the advertisement according to the audience needs, desire, age, tastes etc. if we produce like this then the organization can attain the different space in the market. Some ethical danger points include:-
  - Targeting the weak and unprotected one in the society. They are the individuals those who can be hurt more physically and mentally such as children, elderly etc.
  - Selective marketing is used for potential customers to exclude them and the selective marketing is used to discourage the demand from the undesirable market sectors. The selective marketing is also used to disenfranchise the potential customers.
- ✦ **Pricing ethics:** The marketers have to fix the price of the product according to the rules and regulation laid down by the authorities. The marketers have to consider the fair pricing methods for pricing the product and should have to avoid the manipulations. Here is the list of some unethical pricing practice:- Price fixing, Price skimming, Price discrimination, Price wars, Bid rigging and Dumping. It should be avoided if the marketer wants the long term benefits from the product in the market.
- ✦ **Advertising and promotion:** Advertisement use to effect the consumers mostly and strongly there are some ethics given for the appropriate advertisement they should be followed and it has been taken care of that no unethical advertisement has to be done in order to earn profit by doing wrong way of advertisement. The promotion of the product should be done with honesty, truth and with positivity. Some of the ethical pitfalls are:- Issues over truth and honesty, Issues with violence, sex and profanity, Taste and controversy, Negative advertising etc (Kotler, Philip, and Armstrong, Gary. 1999).

✚ **Media Role:** The media plays a vital role in every one's life as we are attached with it. But now a day's marketers are using it in a wrong way. They are using it in a negative way and earning money. Media is spoiling our society in a very drastic way that it is targeting the children's, old age citizens and women's. Media use to show children's, women's and senior citizens as helpless creatures which in turn made them as a soft target in the society for criminal offences. Media is spoiling our society in the following ways:

- Media is spoiling our culture as they show the vulgar and sexy advertisements which cannot be seen with whole family. The media use the sexual picturisation, filthy languages etc which is spoiling our children's (coming future).
- Media is paid for the advertisement so some of the promotional programmes are of no use to some category of the society, so they are educating unwanted products.
- Media advertise for all the products which also include the luxurious and normal product. But the promotion of the luxurious product attracts the middle class people and activates the desires of buying beyond their limits. This in return put a burden on them financially and mentally.
- Producers promote their product by using the celebrities in order to increase their sale. These kinds of promotion by the celebrities use to misguide the customers.
- Media show the vulgar, sexy and some unethical things which use to affect the soft minds of the children and make them to react according to the promotional programme. These in return are spoiling the children.

✚ **Internet & Mobile marketing:** In India, mobile and internet is growing at a very fast speed. So as the mobile and internet advertisement. This made E-mail spam's, sending the mails by collecting the email ID's and phone numbers misguiding the customers. They promise to fulfill the promises, ask them to deposit money and once the money is received the company will disappear. These are known as the cyber crimes and due to less knowledge among the consumers they got trapped in the web. So consumers and producers both have to take care of these kinds of situations.

✚ **Satisfaction:** In 21<sup>st</sup> century, all the human being has a long list of desires to be fulfilled. But we have limited resources and more desires so we have to cut short either desires or to start earning more. Hence, finally neither seller nor buyer is happy because both are having endless desires to make profits by selling and searching the satisfaction in materialistic things.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Ethics in Marketing is a very essential part in today's scenario. The organization who wish to succeed in the market, remain in the market, serve the society for long term and want to earn profits for a long period of time they have to use the ethical marketing. This become the essential part because the consumers and the other stakeholders are aware of the quality of the product, pricing of the product, its services, brand image nature of the company and about the marketing ethics also. The success and the continuity of the business depends on the capacity of the company to satisfy the consumers and stakeholders which in return are closely related to the adoption and implementation of high standard of business and marketing conducts. Good marketing is that in which the consumers get the maximum level of satisfaction and a good relationship with consumers. Ultimately the Indian spirituality is the only solution to create ethics in marketing as in Indian spirituality the values are hidden in all the activities of life. The companies have to abide by a code of ethics for serving people not themselves. The society must use the law to define as clearly as possible and they should known the illegal activities, anti-social and anti competitive activities. The companies have to make a code of ethical conduct and must build a tradition for the ethical behavior .The companies has to keep a cross check over the employees whether they are following the ethical and legal guidelines or not. In case of individual marketers they have to practice a "social conscience" in their dealings with customers and stakeholders. After



studying all the concepts of ethical marketing it is better to apply the Indian spirituality if we want to succeed. The Indian spirituality provides the yoga, Patanjali and Pranayama, all these help the workers and managers to manage their work more efficiently and perfectly. This makes the workers and managers to work with physical as well as mental satisfaction. The excellence in their work can be attained with the help of this only. Indian spirituality will help the managers to manage themselves so that they can work more and a fruitful work. The workers and managers can relax and de-stress themselves. As the Indian spirituality will help the quality of actions and researches, improve leadership qualities motivation, vision, decisions-making, planning, giving meaning to work and many more so it is beneficial to adopt the Indian spirituality in the organizations

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