

# A STUDY OF HRM CONCEPTS IN 'THIRUKKURAL

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**Introduction:** Thirukkural, one of the ancient scriptures in Tamil, encompasses wisdom in capsule for all walks of life. It was universally acclaimed as a great piece of literature, both by the West as well as the East. Dr. Albert Schweitzer proclaimed, "There hardly exists in the literature of the world, a collection of maxims in which we find so much of lofty wisdom". The works contemporary to Thirukkural lack the ideal perception and ethical vision. Kural goes beyond the reporting of the actual and encompasses the paradigms for the future. Modern management could be read in conjunction with Kural and analogies could be drawn between them. The new theories in Human Resource Management are expressed in an abstract form in Kural. Administration and Management are age-old concepts and they started, whatever in a small form right from the days of settlement and cession of nomadic life. The important elements found in Kural with reference to general administration are applicable without any alteration at any point of time. The objective of this paper is to study the HRM concepts in Kural and their importance in today's administration. The relationship between the advocacies of Kural in the present day context will also be highlighted.

## **HR Functions**

**Four Pillars:** HRM has got four important functions viz. acquisition, development, leadership & motivation, and maintenance functions. Employees were just as much a resource as any other asset and needed to be carefully acquired, used and maintained.<sup>1</sup> Human resource planning, job analysis, selection and recruitment, placement, orientation and outsourcing could be grouped under acquisition function. Training and development, knowledge management, organisational learning, career planning, fair treatment and quality circles could be categorized under development function. Motivation, job enrichment, performance appraisal, rewards, promotion, communication etc. can be classified as leadership and motivation function. Compensation administration, transfers, discipline, safety and health, and grievance redressal could be brought under the title Maintenance function.

**HRM is common sense:** Management is a practice, rather than a science or a profession, though containing elements of both.<sup>2</sup> Hence management is more of common sense and logical deduction. Managing the human resources is the most crucial element in the administration of any organisation. It is clear that the 'resources' capable of enlargement can only be human resources. All other resources stand under the laws of mechanics. A country which is unable to develop skills and knowledge of its people and employ them effectively will be unable to develop anything.<sup>4</sup> Meticulous planning in orchestrating all the four functions of HRM will obviate the future problems and accelerate the progress of the institution. Most organisations waste enormous amounts of time, money and energy cleaning up the mistakes they have made by hiring people without due diligence.<sup>5</sup> The acid test for the competence of a company lies in assessing the efficacy of the HR department. The successful personnel department is one that is recognized as contributing to the overall performance and results of the management, of which it is a part.<sup>6</sup> It is true that management strives to get maximum output from minimum resources. Good

managers, who get the best out of their subordinates and who thereby produce positive results for their organisations, are the keys to an organization's success.<sup>7</sup> All managers are in a sense HR Managers, since they get involved in activities like recruiting, interviewing, selecting, and training.<sup>8</sup> The HR Manager has to play the roles of a counselor, the mediator, the problem solver, spokesman, and a change agent. Therefore, the organisation with a long-term focus has to view HR as an investment to be reaped over a time.

### **Profile of Thirukkural**

**Administration - an overall view:** Thirukkural consists of 1330 couplets short and sweet. They are axiomatic in form and are compressed in terse verse with scope for of elaborate deliberation and in-depth rumination. The Sage Thiruvalluvar has dwelt upon various dimensions of life ranging from domestic life to penance, from bravery to benignity, from rejoicing to renunciation. The great monumental literature falls into three categories viz. virtue, wealth, and love. The second category includes economy, wealth, administration, state, and polity. It occupies a major part of the composition. 700 couplets beautifully woven with very profound nuances form the soul of the magnum opus. The sagacious advice given by Thiruvalluvar to kings and ministers and even citizens of ancient Tamil Nadu still holds good for the managers of the modern world.<sup>10</sup>

**Valluvar - A Visionary:** The intuition and insight of Thiruvalluvar had a vision for future. Thiruvalluvar might not have contemplated the modern democracy but his basic human approach makes his work best suited for democratic government." Eight ingredients have been identified as essential pre-requisites for a good job. They are (1) Direct feed back (2) a client relationship (3) learning function (4) the opportunity for each person to schedule his own work (5) unique expertise (6) control over resources (7) Direct communication and (8) personal accountability.<sup>1</sup> All these points are stressed with clarity in the second part of the Kural. A thorough reading of the work with an open mind will indicate the foresight of the author in deciphering certain issues, which will stand as immortal maxims for humanity.

### **Management and administration aspects in Kural**

**SWOT analysis:** Thirukkural has dealt about the general traits required for an administrator, leadership qualities, communication skills, financial management, project management, decision making, impartiality, role of experts, team management, SWOT analysis, timeliness, place of action etc. in detail. SWOT analysis is to comprehend the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats for managerial decisions. It may be launching a product or expansion of the business or closing a unit, which will affect the operations of a concern. SWOT Analysis is made on a comparative basis weighing the competition prevalent. It has been nicely brought out in the couplet 471. The strength of the task, our own strength, the strength of our opponent and our aides are to be weighed before we act.<sup>13</sup>

**Application of mind:** Nature is filled with tendencies and obstructions. Extremes beget limitations, even as a river by its own swiftness creates obstructions for itself. One should be watchful as he goes up in the ladder of progress and mindless advancement will result in debacle. One who has reached the pinnacle, should watch his steps before he goes further.<sup>14</sup>

The timeliness in carrying out the actions is the reason for phenomenal success. Valluvar codifies the importance of timely action in Kural. The owl will conquer the crow in day time and the obverse will occur in the night.<sup>15</sup>

The place is equally important in deciding the success of the market forces. Sun-Tzu in his 'The Art of War' talks about the terrain as one of the factors, which determine the warfare. Business is on par with war due to the heavy competition and many a time the survival of the fittest may not be the survival of the best. In deep waters the crocodile will be victorious and in terrestrial land the other beasts will subdue the reptile.<sup>16</sup>

The law of marginal diminishing returns is an important concept in economics. It is beautifully brought out in the couplet, which propounds that even if the cart is laden with excess of peacock feathers, the axle will break.

**Decision making:** A.Simon, Nobel Laureate, breaks the decision making process into three activities. They are intelligence activity, design activity and choice activity.<sup>13</sup> Decision-making has been decentralized by Delphi Questionnaire, Brain Storming, Game theory, Operation research and other techniques. All these three activities have been dealt in the couplets 466<sup>18</sup>, 470<sup>19</sup> and 467<sup>20</sup> respectively.

Acquisition function

**Selection & Recruitment:** Selection and recruitment is the most crucial function in HRM and it decides the performance. The employers very often judge the people by their appearance. It is like judging a book by its cover. Stereotyping is another version of this attitude.<sup>21</sup> Valluvar advises us not to despise any person on seeing his appearance and compares this tendency to underestimate the axle-pin of the mighty rolling car.<sup>22</sup> Even today discrimination is found on the basis of race, colour and creed. Equal job opportunity is more than putting a black man in a white man's job. The barriers must be removed, not just moved.<sup>23</sup> The HR Manager who recruits for a vacant job is seldom the one responsible for supervising its performance. He or she must therefore know exactly what the job entails and this means speaking with the supervisor involved.<sup>24</sup> Valluvar is for proper selection process after subjecting the recruits to severe trials. He is of the opinion that nepotism and favouritism will land us in endless troubles.<sup>25</sup>

**Optimism honoured:** When we select an individual, we should give preference to the optimists. They say that the mind is like a parachute and is useful only when it is open. It is also said that the optimist invented the aero-plane and the pessimist, the parachute. One who discerns the good and the bad, but astute in preferring the good should be given the employment. Kural emphasises the selection such incumbents for the organization.<sup>26</sup> It is common place but true that if wrong people are selected, then no amount of development through good management will make them effective. The whole of HRM specialist and operating manager activity hinges on this point.<sup>27</sup> The person who manages the affairs of the kingdom should be capable of enlarging its resources, increase its wealth and tackle the problems that creep in.<sup>28</sup> Some people may be good in ideal situations but fail in field conditions. People often reveal that inner most selves in the most innocent of situations.<sup>29</sup> Kural underlines the fact that many a candidate may pass all the selection tests but have to be dismissed as dismal failures in the actual performance of duty.<sup>30</sup>

**Placement:** Clear-cut placement is also vital in deciding the success of a candidate. Placement involves assigning a specific job to each one of the selected candidates. The importance of placement lies in the fact that a proper placement of employees reduces employees turnover, absenteeism, accidents and dissatisfaction, on the one hand and improves their morale on the other.<sup>31</sup> Thiruvalluvar underlines the necessity of considering the weightage of the deed and ability of the executive and matching them.<sup>32</sup> Seven point plan of Alec Rodger comprising the components viz. the physical make up, attainments, general intelligence, intellectual capacity, special aptitudes, interests and disposition,<sup>33</sup> stressed by modern management are expressed in a subtle fashion in Kural.

**No unfits:** There are no unfits and we have only misfits. Everyone is a potential winner. Some people are disguised, as losers and their appearance could not befool us.<sup>34</sup> Provision of opportunity is important for bringing out the best in a person. This is argued in the Couplet saying that prosperity will desert the ruler who resents the liberty taken by the executive in the job.<sup>35</sup> Non craving for property is one of the four components for trusting an employee.<sup>36</sup> The over ambitious employee will start a rival unit, sacrifice his integrity, may embezzle public property and shall misuse or abuse the government machinery. Outsourcing the expertise is one way of improving the delivery of services without causing much financial burden. By choosing outsourcing, the past record has to be taken into account.<sup>37</sup> They are dispensable at our convenience. Kural advises the consultation of able man with outstanding experience in taking key decisions as and when required.<sup>38</sup> It will reduce the expenditure and fulfil the purpose of outsourcing. Executives wanting to lower overhead expenses who sacrificing the knowledge and service levels of their Human Resources departments are outsourcing the function; contracting with Human Resources Management firms.<sup>39</sup>

### **Development Function**

**Training:** Training is an important mechanism for inculcating organisational knowledge and values in the minds of the employees. It is essential for the growth of the employee to attain self-development, career development and to update his acumen for knowledge management and talent management. Training is viewed as a benefit or a perk, nor as an investment. Employee benefits fall for short of employee's real needs. Cost cutting often leads to corporate anorexia. Too many organisations value profit over people.<sup>40</sup> "The one minute manager" vouches 'The best minute I spend is the one I invest in people'.<sup>41</sup> There are two contradictory couplets under the chapter 60 titled Zeal. The Couplet 597 says that the resolute minded do not lose their zest and are like the elephant that stands firm even being pierced with a shower of arrows.<sup>42</sup> Couplet 599 says that the elephant though mammoth in size gets scared when assailed by a fearless tiger.<sup>43</sup> A careful observation demystifies the contradiction. The elephant in the forest is timid and is frightened of the ferocious tiger despite its huge size. But the same species when trained for warfare becomes courageous and is ready to encounter a mighty army with enthused mind. Valluvar tries to impress that by imparting training; even a dull and depressed individual could be motivated into an elated enthusiastic entity.

**Learning, a continuous process:** Before deciding a training program, a vital task is to identify the training needs in order to define the gap between what is happening and what should happen.<sup>44</sup> Training is to relate what we have learnt to life.

It is the act of increasing the knowledge and skills of an employee for doing a particular job.<sup>45</sup> Valluvar is for flawless learning and application of the knowledge earned in real life.<sup>46</sup> The same point is highlighted by the recent management studies. The trainee should be asked to start the job or operative procedure. Some instructors prefer that the trainee explain each step before doing it, particularly if the operation involves any danger. The trainee, through repetitive practice, will acquire more skill.<sup>47</sup>

**Knowledge management:** Knowledge management embodies several distinct motions that it involves continuous cycles of creativity and innovation that it is experiential and primarily driven by knowledge workers facilitated by organizational vision and support.<sup>48</sup> Kural wants to educate us by saying that water will spring from the sandy well depending upon the depth of digging; similarly the knowledge horizon of person increases with the height of learning.<sup>49</sup> The urge for learning ultimately decides the quantum of knowledge.<sup>50</sup> Level of education is supposed to be correlated with social skills and bridging social net work. The higher the level of education, the more likely is the entrepreneur to socialize in a variety of milieus.<sup>51</sup> Thiruvalluvar declared that for the learned, every nation becomes the home town.<sup>52</sup>

**Emotional intelligence:** Today people have very high intelligent quotient but low emotional quotient. Most of the organisations have of late realise that emotional involvement and commitment of the employees determine the contribution to the company rather than their intelligent quotient.<sup>53</sup> Kural has devoted an entire chapter (63) for this purpose and epitomizes how a manager could remain undaunted by troubles. Whenever an administrator comes across any sorrowful incident or an irksome trouble, it is better for him to cultivate the habit of laughing it away and not falling a prey to it.<sup>54</sup> One gets exhilarated to find a similar reference in the book 'What they don't teach you at Harvard Business School'. In the business of releasing tension, the adage 'laughter is the best medicine' is true. In the USA, and more recently in the UK, laughter therapy sessions are being used to treat patients suffering from stress.<sup>55</sup>

### **Leadership and Motivation functions**

**Communication demystified:** Communication skill is pivotal in deciding the success of a manager in a concern. Very often the HR Manager is expected to negotiate with the employees as well as the clients, suppliers and buyers. An astute communicator spells out his ideas in eloquent and sweet language so that his ideas reach the persons at the other end. It should be so irrespective of the fact that the other person is his hero, subordinate, colleague or society at large.<sup>56</sup> This aspect of communication is covered in the couplet 648 which says that the gift of the gab will make a person charismatic.<sup>57</sup> Communication has got the information function, commandant and instructive function, influence and persuasion function, and integrative function.<sup>58</sup> These functions are covered by the couplets 650, 648, 643, and 646 respectively.<sup>59</sup> Business communications are aimed at particular individuals or groups. They have a particular practical purpose—to inform, analyse or persuade. The style is subservient to content and lucidity.<sup>60</sup> Those who do not know how to speak precisely will be verbose in<sup>61</sup> communication. Once a person has mastered the art of placing related words and sentences as close as possible to each other, he will be amazed at how smooth his formerly awkward writing becomes.<sup>62</sup> The entire chapter 65, lucidly deals with the power in speech and could be called 'Communication special'. Selectivity, effectiveness, Flawlessness, invincibility of speech, pleasing

disposition, and precision and self-explanatory delivery are all highlighted in this chapter and it is worth emulating by an administrator.

***The art of listening:*** Listening is considered as the forgotten skill in communication. It is clear that knowledge resides between the ears of the people. The most important challenge to knowledge management is how to persuade people to share it and let it be part of the organizational knowledge repository.<sup>63</sup> In Thirukkural, Chapter 42 profusely deals with all the segments of listening. It reminds that the wealth of listening is the chief of all treasures.<sup>64</sup> The ability to listen, really to hear what some one is saying has far greater business implications, of course than simply gaining insight into people. Insight demands opening up our senses. One can learn almost everything one needs to know and more than other people would like one to know, simply by watching and listening, keeping the eyes peeled, ears open and mouth closed.<sup>65</sup> This is what Kural stresses in the Couplet 419.<sup>66</sup> The humility of speech is rarely possible for them who are not the listeners of subtlety.

***Body language:*** Most of the human communication is by non-verbal means. 93% of our feelings are expressed in a non-verbal way and our words only convey 7% of what we are saying.<sup>67</sup> Even the manner of crossing the legs can communicate so many clues like the nativity, race and culture. During the Second World War, the Americans who went to Germany to do espionage were identified by virtue of the figure four positions, which is strikingly different from the European way of crossing their legs.<sup>68</sup> Today the sitting posture itself can give hints about the authority, position and attitude. The body language signifies the stand taken by an individual in the negotiation table. The way a handshake is executed can speak volumes about the individuality of a person, whether he is firm or daisy. Valluvar had devoted a chapter for understanding the mind Of the king and is relevant for administrators of the present day. Shakespeare in his tragedy Macbeth utters through Duncan. *'There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face'* Valluvar differs by<sup>69</sup> saying that the face is the index of the mind. He also points out that eyes are crucial in reading the mind of a person.<sup>70</sup>

***Motivation:*** Motivation is one of the easiest concepts to understand yet one of the most difficult to implement. Often the difference between successful and mediocre organisations, is that the people in successful organisations are motivated and the management is engaged in giving "The Extra task; motivating employees to exceed expectation" and a plan for keeping employees motivated.<sup>71</sup> The zeal of the individual plays a major role and gets manifested in all his actions. Keeping the spirit high is called "Motivation" in the management parlance. Valluvar quotes the water borne plants to appreciate this aspect.<sup>72</sup> One of the key components for the Manager as developer in reaching excellence is the establishment of an overarching goal for the unit, which serves to give coherence, excitement and meaning to the department's work. An overarching goal can motivate and provide direction for change in the department.<sup>73</sup> The same concept is advocated in the couplet 596.<sup>74</sup> One should have very high objective and aim at the sky so that by striving he can at least reach the top of the tree. It is a bare fact that most of us use only a small portion of our mental and physical abilities. To exploit the unused potential in people, they are to be motivated. Needless to say that such exploitation results in greater efficiency, higher production

and better standard of living.<sup>75</sup> The employees with unshaken vigour will become affluent not by fortitude but by attitude.<sup>76</sup>

**Achievement motivation:** The C.E.Os of top American Firms identified four characteristics basic to the leadership styles. (1) They set difficult goals for themselves (2) They are single mindedly, almost slavishly committed to achieving their goals. (3) They need continuous feedback. Consequently they set goals that will provide immediate results. (4) They want their achievements to bear the stamp of their unique ability and drive.<sup>77</sup> Valluvar is also a vociferous advocate for having a mighty goal in mind and continuous striving towards it. He appreciates great failures instead of a simple victories. Browning in his dramatic monologue, Andrea del sarto says, "the man's reach should exceed his grasp". Placing an ideal goal for achievement is important for succeeding in business enterprises. Coco Cola Company coined its slogan, "we compete with water" and achieved in turning around a thundering success. Kural says that it is better to carry the spear that missed an elephant than the arrow that killed a hare.<sup>78</sup>

**Leaders are self-created:** Leadership paves the way for roaring business, huge turnover, and a sizeable profit in any organisation. A good leader gets his group moving so smoothly toward its goal that it continues to move even when he is absent.<sup>7</sup> Courage, generosity, wisdom and energy are the four characters enunciated by Thiruvalluvar for a good captain.<sup>80</sup> In case of modern management, the award procedure may be somewhat different. It should be based on a pragmatic pattern. Award procedure helps in motivating workers because positive reinforcements is the best method for motivation. Superior intelligence, devotional maturity, motivation drive, problem solving schemes, managerial skills are important for a leader.<sup>2</sup> These qualities are expressed in the couplets 389, 382, and 385 in Thirukkural.<sup>83</sup> Valluvar is not for just borrowed knowledge. He is of the opinion that innate intelligence will prevail over the bookish knowledge.<sup>84</sup> The same point is highlighted by the statement that creative people tend to be brighter than the brilliant. They are original in thinking. They are interested in the nature of the problem itself. They tend to suspend judgment until they collect ample facts. They are non-conformists.<sup>85</sup>

**Management by accessibility:** Thirukkural subscribes for an easily accessible and soft-spoken leader. It does not believe in management by terror and management by firing. The simplest but crudest method, usually adopted by hardnosed managers is the deep stress approach.<sup>87</sup> But this will fail in the long run and the organisation will come back to square after some time. So, the leader is expected to use soft words and be liberal in his magnanimity.<sup>88</sup>

**Performance management:** Performance appraisal helps the employees in making them aware of their limitations and the employers in ranking their staff for the future use. If we do not do this exercise, there would not be any difference between the staff and all of them would become obsolete in the long run. Iago, the motiveless, motive hunting villain in the play Othello cites the lack of performance appraisal as one of the reasons for his heinous behaviour.<sup>89</sup> Dr. George Odiorne in his famous *Human Resources Portfolio* classifies the employees into four categories (1) Dead Woods - Persons with low potential and low performance (2) Workhorse - Persons with low potential and high performance (3) Problem children - Persons with low performance and high potential (4) Stars - Persons with high potential and high

performance.<sup>90</sup> As Odiome clarifies, categorization is important by performance appraisal for various reasons. Valluvar also specifies that performance is the sole indicator of caliber and stature.<sup>91</sup> It is not only for ranking but also for information, feedback, counseling, diagnosing deficiency, placement and for preventing grievances and indiscipline. Valluvar is very careful to specify that the prejudices and preconceived notions like Halo effect, Regency Effect and Personal prejudices should not jeopardize the appraisal done. He is for proper analysis done in an objective way, enumerating both the positive as well as negative points of an individual.<sup>92</sup>

**Judging upwards:** Nowadays the superiors are also assessed by the subordinates under various systems. Kural emphasises that the King also would be assessed by the citizens by stability to produce, acquire, conserve and apportion wealth.<sup>93</sup> It shows how democratic Thiruvalluvar was in his approach in the days of monarchy with unquestionable authority. He also wanted the promotions to be given according to the degree of performance and merit and not due to the mere kinship.<sup>94</sup>

### **Maintenance function**

**Feedback:** Feedback is important for understanding the psyche of the employees and to have a vigil over their activities. The chief of the organisation has to know about the behaviour of the staff, their loyalty to the organisation, the corrupt practices etc. to rectify the defects and punish the delinquents. Thirukkural has devoted Chapter 59 exclusively for narrating the salient features of espionage, which is on par with the vigilance wing of today's administration. Valluvar cautions that the information gathered from one source should not be totally relied upon and should be confirmed by another source.<sup>95</sup> If they are diametrically opposite to each other, they should be verified by a third source. The chief should be accessible to receive necessary feed back from various agencies. That is why he should be simple and soft spoken.<sup>96</sup> Without feed back, we may form wrong opinion on right people. During a study, eight out of ten executives reported having made a major mistake with respect to trusting the wrong person at least once in their careers.<sup>97</sup>

**Delegation:** Delegation is an important maintenance function and it done for three reasons. (1) to get the job done by the deputy (2) to develop the deputy (3) to enrich the job content. Delegation may appear to be time consuming but a short-term sacrifice will lead to a long-term advantage. Charles Handy, calls 'spider web', a situation where a single person sitting in a corner room takes all the decisions. Valluvar is all for proper delegation after clearly ascertaining the talents of the individual. He is for entrusting both authority and responsibility to the officer designate.<sup>98</sup>

**Maslow and Valluvar:** Maslow's hierarchy of needs comprises physiological needs, safety needs, acceptance needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs.<sup>99</sup> Satisfying the first three needs are the responsibility of the organisation and the other two falls under the arena of the individual. Valluvar codifies that the chief should fulfil the physiological, safety and health needs as well as the acceptance needs. He should see that the people do not suffer from starvation, epidemics and hostilities.<sup>100</sup>

**Disciplines the worker:** The ideal goal of any disciplinary programme is to strike a balance between an overly rigid and heavy handed approach that presents management as hard and unreasonable and a too-lax one that given employees the impression of poor control in an organisation.<sup>101</sup> Discipline could be positive by way

of self-imposed orderly behaviour. It requires the creation of an atmosphere to rewards, appreciation, incentive payment, promotion, constructive support etc. to motivate the employees. It may be negative by way of enforced conditioning.

***Punishments & penalties:*** Valluvar is of the opinion that one should return to be severe in one's posture but mild in actually penalizing the delinquent.<sup>102</sup> The same sentiment is expressed in the book "the one minute Manager", if we are first tough on the behaviour and then supportive of the person, it works miracles. There are a whole set of punishments like oral warning, written memo, censure, punitive suspension, increment stoppage, pecuniary penalty, demotion, discharge, and dismissal. One should not go to the last rung without taking recourse to the other steps of the penal ladder. The proceedings are intended only to punish and not to finish the individual. Like the proverbial porcupine, an abrasive person seems to have a natural knack for jabbing others in an imitating and sometimes painful way.<sup>103</sup> One may not actually punish, however may use a foul language to abuse the employees. Even such harsh words may inflict severe injury in the minds of the individual and their self-respect may be eroded.<sup>104</sup> They become nervous and commit mistakes even in the known areas and familiar tasks.

***Impartiality:*** Impartiality is an important tenet of an administration. Valluvar fails not to emphasise the essentiality of this trait even in domestic life.<sup>105</sup> Impartiality is the pre-requisite for judging the events in management. One should not be carried away by what the others exaggerate about the facts. The manager should explore, enquire, experiment and experience before he comes to the conclusion. In the Chapters on knowledge of the Truth and the possession of knowledge these points have been highlighted.<sup>106</sup>

***Kindness works:*** Valluvar had allotted a separate chapter (58) for envisaging the importance of compassion and benignity. The entire maintenance function requires a HR Manager to be considerate in all his actions. He should be performance oriented by matching the objectives of the organisations with the needs of the employees. If the manager is companionate, he would be unbiased and more matured in dealing with the personnel. The labour relations, welfare services, transfers, job rotations, fringe benefits, and grievance redressal will all be achieved without any friction and faction. The importance of empathy is essential for listening to the problems of the employees and solving them.<sup>107</sup> At this juncture, Valluvar does not hesitate to point out that one should not be too considerate at the expense of the organisation.<sup>108</sup> HR Manager should not be too close to the management. His proximity may distance him from the personnel and he will be viewed as the voice of the management. He should keep an optimum distance like those who warm up near the flame of fire during the chill weather.<sup>108</sup> HR Manager should delay certain decisions where they are required and expedite the urgent decisions to accentuate the progress.<sup>110</sup>

***Conclusion:*** Human Resource strategies make a greater contribution to the performance of any firm. Frederic W. Taylor was the first person in recorded history who deemed work deserving of systematic observation and study. Elton Mayo, working primarily at Harvard, developed Human Relations, that is, the study of relationship between people working together though in human relation, work itself, that is, the task to be done, received almost no attention.<sup>111</sup> But long before these scholars, sage Thiruvalluvar was able to identify the importance of HRM and he went

on to impress us with well stated aphorisms amenable for various interpretations. Rock Feller once said 'I will pay more for the ability to deal with the people than any other ability under the sun'. Dealing with the people is the most arduous job, as they cannot be precisely predicted at any point of time. Thiruvalluvar has dealt with all the four functions of HRM in a subliminal way leaving the comprehension to the ingenuity of the individual who peruses them. His findings and human behaviour are not based on research or experimentation but by his genius, acumen and analytical power. He did not study in any university, but learnt them from the universe. He should have been a keen observer of human nature and their basic behaviour. The study reveals that management has evolved over a period of time with basic concept being the same. It is like the laws of gravitation with the application resulting in sending the spacecraft. The idea is not to conclude that modern management is nothing and everything has been already said in ancient scriptures. Such a finding may tantamount to stretching the analysis too far and blowing it out of proportion. Management is a growing discipline and inputs are added every minute to enrich it. The fundamental aspects have remained uniform through out the human history and only the finer aspects have been designed with finesse. Some of the aspects of administration covered in Thirukkural are astounding and are relevant even for the present day administration. Repeated reading of Thirukkural in conjunction with modern management will help us in understanding the aesthetic aspects and literary dimensions of the four management functions, planning, organizing, leading and controlling. It will make us more effective apart from remaining more efficient. Such an exercise becomes interesting and awe inspiring when we have in the back of our mind that it was contributed by a single individual, nearly 2000 years ago.

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14. "Who daring climbs, and would himself upraise Beyond the branch's tip, with life the forfeit pays" (476)
15. "A crow will conquer owl in broad daylight; The kind that foes would crush needs fitting time to fight." (481)
16. "The crocodile prevails in its own flow of water wide, If this it leaves, its slain by anything beside." (495)
17. With peacock feathers light, you load the wain; Yet, heaped too high, the axle snaps in twain. (475)
18. "It's ruin if man do an unbecoming thing; Fit things to leave undone will equal ruin bring." (466)
19. "Plan and perform no work that others may despise; What mis be seems a king the world will not approve as wise." (470)
20. "Think, and then dare the deed! Who cry. 'Deed dared, we'll think, 'disgraced shall be.'" (467)
21. Franz Metcalf & Bj Gallagher Hatley "What would Buddha do at work. 101 Answers to work place Dilemmas" © Tata Me Grand Hill Edition 2003 -P. 144.
22. Despise not men of modest bearing; Look not at form, but what men are: for some there lice, high functions sharing, like linch-pin of the mighty car! (667)
23. Edward W. Jones Jr. "What it's like to be a black manager" - Harvard Business Review July-Aug. 1973
24. Gary Dessler, Human Resource Management - P.98
25. "Trust where you have not tries, doubt of a friend to feel, Once trusted, wounds, inflict that nought can heal." (510) "By fond affection led who trust in man of unwise soul, Yields all his being up to folly's blind control." (507)
26. "Who good and evil scanning, ever makes the good his joy; Such man of virtuous mood should kind employ." (511)
27. Christopher Molander & Jonathan Winterton- Managing Human Resources -P. 10 Who swells the revenues, spreads plenty o'er the land, Seeks out what hinders progress, his the workman's hand. (Couplet 512)
28. "What they don't teach you at Harvard school.-P 29
29. Even when tests of every kind are multiplied, Full many a man proves otherwise, by action tried. (Couplet 514)
30. S. S. Khanka- "Human Resources Management Texts & cases"-P.87
31. Let kind first ask, 'Who shall the deed perform?' and 'what the deed?' Of hour befitting both assured, let every work proceed. (Couplet 516)
32. Christopher Molander & Jonathan Winterton- Managing Human Resources - P.66
33. Dr. Spence Johnson - The One Minute Manager -P.71
34. Fortune deserts the kind who ill can bear, Informal friendly ways of men his toils who share. (Couplet 519)

35. A loyal love with wisdom, clearness, mind from avarice free; Who hath these four good gifts should ever trusted be. (Couplet 513)
36. S. Sundara Srinivasan "Thirukkural and Modern Management" - P.61
37. "To life with man of greatness that their own excels, As cherished friends, is greatest power that with a monarch dwells" (Couplet 444)
38. Stephen Norman and Rob Arbuckle - "Human Resource Outsourcing - A money saving strategies - Human Resources - Annual Editions 03.04 © 2003 by McGraw Hill/Dushkin Guilford—P.2-4
39. Franz Metcalf & Bj Gallgher Hatley "What would Buddha do at work. 101 Answers to work place Dilemmas" © Tata Me Grand Hill Edition 2003 -P. 139
40. Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson-"The One Minute Manager"-P62
41. "The men of lofty mind quail not in ruin's fateful hour, The elephant retains his dignity mind arrows deadly shower."(Couplet 597)
42. "Huge build of elephant with pointed tusk all armed, When tiger threatens shrinks away alarmed!" (Couplet 599)
43. B.S. Bhara and G.S. Batra - "Human Resource Development" © 2000 Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi—P.9
44. S.S. Khanka - "Human Resources Management (Text and cases)"- P.107
45. So learn that you may full and faultless learning gain, Then in obedience meet to lessons leant remain. (Couplet 391)
46. P. Subba Rao "Personnel and Human Resource Management"-P. 164
47. Mohan Thite - Managing People in the New Economy - Response Books - A division of Sage Publications P.5
48. In sandy soil, when deep you deive, you reach the springs below; The more you learn, the freer streams of wisdom flow. (Couplet 396)
49. With soil submit they stand, as paupers front a rich man's face; Yet learned
50. en are first; th' unlearned stand in lowest place. (Couplet 395)
51. Jan Inge Jensen and Stein Eristiansen - "Subcultures and Entrepreneurship - The values of Social capital in Tanzanian Business" - The Journal of Entrepreneurship January-June 2004-Vol.13, No.1 Sage Publications, New Delhi- P.1 -27.
52. The learned make each land their own, in every city find a home; Who, till they die; learn nought, along what weary ways they roam! (Couplet 397).
53. P.Subba Rao "Personnel and Human Resource Management"-P.99
54. Agamudai Nambi "Management Philosophy of Thiruvalluvar in Public Administration- P.50
55. Sue Bishop/David Taylor "Training for change - A sourcebook of activities - Viva Books PvtLtdl999-P.38
56. S. Sundara Srinivasan "Thiruk kural and Modern Management" - P. 16
57. Swiftly the listening world will gather round, When men of mighty speech the weighty theme propound. (Couplet 648)
58. Memoria and Gankar "Personnel Management - (Text and cases)-P657
59. Like scentless flower in blooming garland bound. Are men who can't their lore acquired to other's ears expound. (Couplets 650). Swiftly the listening world will gather round, When men of mighty speech the weighty theme

- propound. (Couplet 648) "It is speech that spell-bound holds the listening ear, While those who have not heard desire to hear." (Couplet 643)  
 Charming each hearer's ear, of other's words to seize the sense, Is method wise of men of spotless excellence. (Couplet 646)
60. John S. Fielder "For Better Business writing" - Harvard Business Review - Jan. Feb. 1965
  61. Who have not skill ten faultless words to utter plain, Their tongues will itch with thousand words men's ears to pain (Couplet 649)
  62. John Fielden "What do you mean I can't write" - Harvard Business Review May-June 1964
  63. Mohan Thite - Managing People in the New Economy - Response Books - A division of Sage Publications P.24
  64. Wealth of wealth is wealth acquired be ear attent; Wealth mid all wealth supremely excellent (Couplet 411)
  65. Mark H. McCormack "What they don't teach you at Harvard Business School" © Profile Books Ltd, London-P21
  66. 'Tis hard for mouth to utter gentle, modest word, When ears discourse of lore refined have never heard. (Couplet 419)
  67. Gerdd I. Nierenberg & Henry H. Caleso - Ashish Dutta 'All about Body language' © 2004 Goodwill Publishing House P. 13
  68. How to read a person like a Book? "As forms around in crystal mirrored clear we find, The face will show what's throbbing in the mind". (Couplet 706)
  69. "Who by the sign the signs interprets plain, Give any member up his aid to gain." (Couplet 703)
  70. Fred H. Maidment "Creating a productive work environment - Annual Editions.- Human Resources 03/04 - 2003 McGraw-Hill/Duskin-P.65
  71. "With rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds; The dignity of men is measured by their minds." (Couplet 595)
  72. David L. Badford Allon R. Cohen "Managing for excellence" P. 100
  73. "Whatever you ponder, let your aim be lofty still, Fate cannot hinder always, thwart you as it will. (Couplet 596)
  74. P. Subba Rao "Personnel and Human Resources Management (Text and Cases) - P261
  75. The man of energy of soul inflexible, Good fortune seeks him out and comes a friend to dwell. (Couplet 594)
  76. Chris Argyn's "The C.E.O's behaviour - key to organisational development" Harvard Business Review-Mar. April 1973.
  77. "Who aims at elephant, though dart should fail, has greater praise. Than he who woodland hare with winged arrow slays." (Couplet 772)
  78. Edward McSweeney "How do you move on leadership" - Advanced Management Journal Sep. 1959-P.21-22.
  79. Courage, a liberal hand, wisdom, and energy; these four. Are qualities a king adorns for evermore. (Couplet 382).
  80. S. Sundara Srinivasan "Thirukkural and Modern Management"—2001 Minerva Press © S. Sundara Srinivasan-P9.
  81. Richard M. Hodgetts "Modern Human Resources at Work" -P.255.

82. The king of worth, who can words bitter to his ear endure, Beneath the shadow of his power the world abides secure. (Couplet 389). Courage, a liberal hand, wisdom, and energy; these four Are qualities a king adorn for evermore. (Couplet 382), A king is he who treasure gains, stores up, defends, And duly for his kingdom's weal expends. (Couplet 385).
83. In subtle learning manifold though versed man be, The wisdom, truly his, will gain supremacy. (Couplet 373).
84. Andrew J. Dubrin "Human Relations: A job oriented approach (Reston Va: Reston Publishing Company inc: 1978-P 53-54).
85. Where king is easy of access, where no harsh word repels, That land's high praises every subject swells. (Couplet 386)
86. The Hindu Speaks on Management Volume II-Page 61.
87. With pleasant speech, who gives and guards with powerful liberal hand, He sees the world obedient all to his command (Couplet 387).
88. Preferment goes by letter and affection, Not by the old gradation. M. Harihara Mahadevan The Hindu Speaks on Management Vol.1 P.48 © Kasturi & Son Ltd. 1996.
89. Of greatness and of meanness too, The deeds of each are touchstone true. (Couplet 505).
90. "Weigh well the good of each, his failings closely scan, As these or those prevail, so estimate the man." (Couplet 504).
91. A king is he who treasure gains, stores up, defends, And duly for his kingdom's weal expends. (Couplet 385).
92. Where king regards not all alike, but each in his degree, Neath such discerning rule many dwell happily. (Couplet 528).
93. Spying by spies, the things they tell To test by other spies is well. (Couplet 588).
94. Where king is easy of access, where no harsh word repels, That land's high praises every subject swells. (Couplet 386).
95. Roderick M. Kramer "When Paranoia makes sense"-Harvard Business Review - July 2002-P.63-69.
96. "This man, this work shall thus work out, let thoughtful kind commend; Then leave the matter wholly in his servant's hand" (Couplet 517).
97. Harold Koontz & Heinz Weihrich "Essentials of Management" © 2004 Tata McGraw-Hills Publishing Company Limited-P271.
98. That is a 'land' whose peaceful annals know, Nor famine fierce, nor wasting plague, nor ravage of the foe. (Couplet 734).
99. Laurence Miller "The threat of workplace violence" USA Today magazine Mar. 2002 © by the Society for the Advancement of Education.
100. "For length of days with still increasing joys on Heaven who call, Should raise the rod with brow severe, but let it gently fall." (Couplet 562).
101. Harry Levinson "The abrasive personality" Harvard Business Review May-June 1975.
102. "Harsh words and punishments severe beyond the right, are file that wears away the monarch's conquering might." (Couplet 567).

103. To stand, like balance-rod that level hangs and rightly weighs, With calm unbiased equity of soul, is sages' praise. (Couplet 118).
104. "Whatever thing of whatsoever kind it be. It is wisdom's part in each the very thing to see."(Couplet 355)
105. "Though things diverse from divers sage's lips we learn, It is wisdom's part in each the true thing to discern." (Couplet 423).
106. Since true benignity, that grace exceeding great, resides In kingly souls, world in happy state abides. (Couplet 571).
107. Who can benignant smile, yet leave no work undone; By them as very won may all the earth be won. (Couplet 578).
108. Who warm them at the fire draw not too near, nor keep too much aloof, Thus let them act who dwell beneath of warlike kings the palace-roof (Couplet 691).
109. Slumber when sleepy work's in had: beware Thou slumber not when action calls for sleepless care! (Couplet 672).
110. Peter F. Drucker "People and Performance" -P.234

***The couplets used in this article are adopted from the English Version translated by G. U. Pope.***