

A Qualitative Case Study of a Daily Practice in a Spiritual Company

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Abstract

Background: The Purushārthas (Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa) highlight the four pursuits in human life. Most technology companies work on Artha, Kāma, and leave Dharma (and Mokṣa) as an individual pursuit, however a spiritual company works with universal values and aligns its goals and daily practices to these and the well-being of its employees and the world. This study looks at C3STREAM Land Designs (C3SLD), a commercial unit in Auroville where rural youth *learn, grow, work, and teach* as an organization of growth (spiritual organization). The youth work on advanced technology - chip design and programming while teaching children in STEAM education in schools every day. The paper offers an alternative to the current lack of well-being in Indian workplaces.

Objectives: This is a qualitative case study of daily morning meetings at C3SLD and the value they add to the youth. We use "morning meetings" to offer multifaceted interventions. The specific activity varies by day but consistently includes learning, contemplative practice, and collective engagement, bringing employees together for meditation, exercise, health, leadership, technical learning, and reflections, etc.

Method: N = 35 rural youth (engineers, STEM educators, trainees; 85% aged 19–31, with a few older facilitators). Inclusion criterion: ≥ 6 months of morning-meeting attendance, all eligible participants were recruited. Data consisted of non-identifiable, open-ended written reflections, analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. Verbal consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Results: Thematic analysis of the data revealed themes reflective of the Purushārthas mapped to skills (Artha, Moha), competencies (Dharma), and inner capacities (Dharma and Moksha). Skills -

collective learning strengthened team connections and community building including inner grounding and self-awareness, responsibility and integrity, personal leadership, and the cultivation of appreciation, gratitude, and a positive organizational culture. These findings should be interpreted in light of the single-site context and the self-report nature of the reflections.

Conclusions: Designing the beginning of the day collectively in intentional and supportive ways is crucial for both organizational development and individual growth. A case study is presented here that can serve as an inspiration for other companies to foster individual and collective growth and well-being.

Key words: workplace spirituality, team routines, well-being, organisational development, qualitative case study, Purushārtha

Background and Rationale

Of late, the discourse on burnout and workplace well-being has been gaining significant attention worldwide. A 2025 study undertaken by the Live Love Laugh Foundation in India reported that 59% of Indian employees reported feeling burnt out (Bazaz, 2025). Further literature (Suttie, 2021) reported that burnout is not an outcome of an individual's inability to deal with stress but a systemic issue. Some of the major factors leading to burnout were lack of control or autonomy, inadequate appreciation, and poor workplace relationships. Meaningful prevention of burnout requires systemic change, placing primary responsibility on employers to create healthy, sustainable work conditions.

Purushārthas (Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa) highlight the four main goals of human life as per the Indian way of life (Hiriyanna, 2005). Dharma is considered a righteous life and broadly a moral and virtuous conduct leading to liberation, spiritual growth, and enlightenment. It is in light of Dharma that Artha - prosperity, material success, as well as Kāma - desire, love, and psychological values were to be pursued. Mokṣa is viewed as liberation, spiritual realization, and enlightenment. Businesses predominantly design systems around Artha and Kāma while leaving aside Dharma (spiritual growth) and Mokṣa (enlightenment) to individual practice (Suman & Ashok, 2015). Extrinsic motivation theories in management, which treats extrinsic motivators like pay, bonuses, promotions, and penalties as key levers, also primarily work on Artha and Kāma, but if intrinsic motivation to

learn and progress can be tapped into (Bandhu, et al., 2024) then it could support Dharma and Mokṣa.

A conceptual paper maps Purushārthas to the Life Quotient, a tool to assess an individual's overall quality of life (Satpathy, 2024), and proposes that a balanced pursuit of the four Purushārthas can support holistic well-being. There is a beneficial relationship between spirituality, healthy behaviors, and well-being (Bozek, 2020). Incorporating spirituality at the workplace may enable every human being to contribute to society and the nation meaningfully (Saini, 2017). This case study will look at the morning meetings at C3SLD, as a space of growth mapping skills, competencies, and inner capabilities (Monica, 2017), which we will map to the Purushārthas later in the paper.

Meetings are imperative for the smooth functioning of an organisation and have been found to contribute towards encouraging employee motivation. They align the employees towards organisational goals and create a sense of shared understanding between employees. Thus effective meeting practices play an important role in supporting organisational growth (Kapur, 2020). While meetings are a known and a common practice in all workplaces, a study (Novotney, 2006), found that meetings can also negatively influence employee well-being, another study (Rogelberg et al., 2006), found that meetings are often perceived as an interruption by goal oriented employees - the more meeting such employees attended the less they liked their workplace and reported a lower sense of well-being at work. Therefore, if meetings are not well planned and thoughtfully designed, they can have detrimental effects. However, in meeting literature primary focus is on goals, productivity, and efficiency (Rogelberg et al., 2006). However, meetings can equally encourage the growth and well-being of employees and act as a space for growth.

Context: Auroville Charter

The context of such a distinct organisation is the spiritual township of Auroville (South India). The Charter of Auroville (The Mother, 1968) is inspirational and sets the agenda of this international city. It states, “Auroville will be the place of an **unending education**, of **constant progress**, and a youth that never ages.” This directive to encourage constant progress and growth of individuals applies not only to educational units but also to commercial units in Auroville. In line with the theme of this conference of bridging ancient and modern thought, the charter further states that “Auroville wants to be the **bridge between the past and the future.**” Sri Aurobindo, on whose philosophy Auroville was created, was a

seer who systematically synthesised Eastern spiritual psychology with Western rational and individualistic psychology to propose a **future stage** (Sri Aurobindo, 1949). Further, the charter also states that “Auroville will be a site of **material and spiritual research** for a living embodiment of an **actual human unity.**” These inspirations lead to companies (commercial units) like C3SLD in Auroville.

Context: About C3STREAM Land

C3STREAM Land is a combination of a commercial unit and its educational arm. The focus of this paper is the commercial unit C3STREAM Land Designs (C3SLD). The tag line *learn, grow, work, teach* indicates what they broadly do and the focus of the organization on learning, reflection and personal growth which makes C3SLD a spiritual organization. Technically, there are teams that work on chip design - analog VLSI layout, full-chip AMS verification; and in software - graphical user interfaces, VLSI design automation, and board drivers. At the same time, each member of C3SLD volunteers every day for educational initiatives. Together they work with over 300 children and 50 youth both as Seva (time volunteered) and Dana (financial support). With children they work on Mathematics, EVS, Art, Programming and AI as well as Electronics through STEM centers. With Youth they work on developing skills in programming and electronics. These technical skills are always linked with competencies and inner capacities (Ranganathan,2020).

C3SLD also runs a one-year Becoming and Being a Shifu (Master) program (Arulselvam, 2022). This program supports youth to master their inner capabilities (self-awareness, responsibility, self-regulation, etc - through Vipassana meditation, leadership programs), competencies (creating empowering environments and cultures) and in skills (programming, chip design, or STEM education, problem-solving). Most graduates of this program join C3SLD at the end of the program, continuing the culture of learning, reflection and growth. This paper also includes the youth in the Becoming and Being a Shifu (Master) program and trainees at C3SLD who participate in the morning meetings.

Context: Radical Transformational Leadership (RTL) Programs

RTL (Monica, 2017) can be understood by the name itself: Radical (from the root of our being/what universal values do I embody), Transformational (equitable and enduring change including systems and culture), Leadership (the ability to create a new future based on universal values). These programs support participants to identify who they are as universal

values and source these in thought and action. The program provides over 42 tools and design templates (over 9 days) to participants for strategic action for equitable and enduring change.

Tools allow various reflective ways of working and being and include distinctions and new processes. Here are some examples of distinctions explored - the difference between distracted and deep listening, fact from interpretation, judgement from discernment, being assertive from being aggressive or submissive. Examples of new processes are ‘speaking to inspire others to commit to action’, ‘identifying commitment for action behind complaints’, committed requests, committed responses, feedback to foster growth, etc. Design templates allow participants to create their own breakthrough initiatives in any area that they deeply care about at home, workplace and community. An example of this is the Conscious Full Spectrum Response model, which looks at technical solutions, system and cultural transformation and embodying universal values that are needed to create radical transformational results.

All participants of C3SLD participate in this program for personal, organizational, and planetary development. Using the corresponding Conscious Full Spectrum Response (CFSR) model template, C3SLD can be described by the following:

CFSR – C3STREAM Land Designs

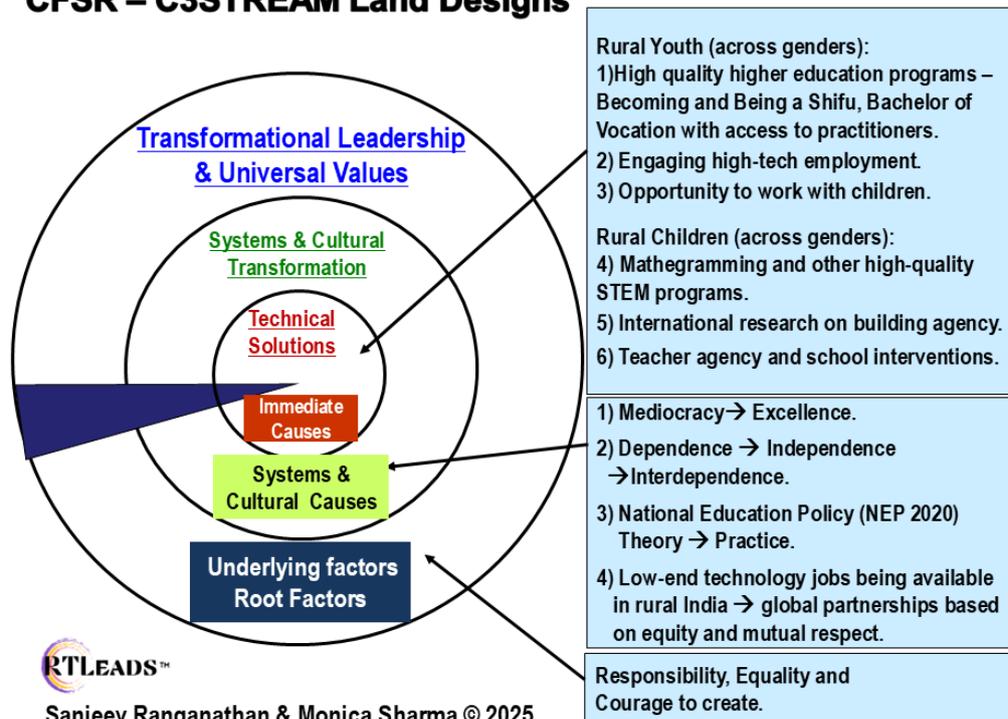


Figure 1: Conscious Full Spectrum Response for C3SLD

In line with the CFSR we can also view capacity development as **skills, competencies, and inner capabilities** (Monica, 2017). Skills are the mastery of a discipline and problem-solving related to the inner circle of technical solutions. Skills support Artha and Kāma. Competency is the ability to recognize invisible patterns and shift disempowering systems and cultural norms, creating a moral, ethical, and integral world in the middle circle of systems and cultural transformation. This is in line with Dharma of a righteous life and well-being of all, and fostering leadership in self and others. It also supports open grounded communications which creates trust, kinship and connection a deeper aspect of Kāma. Inner capabilities are self-awareness, self-regulation, responsibility, equity, and compassion that correspond to the outer circle of embodying universal values. This knowing of self supports both Dharma and Mokṣa.

Methodology:

Aim: This study aims to explain how the daily morning meetings at C3STREAM Land are intentionally curated to foster spirituality (as inner growth) in a company and to identify how daily morning meetings in a spiritual company contribute to rural youth's inner development.

Design: A qualitative case study was adopted to assess the influence of the morning meetings among the participants based on their lived experiences.

Context and sample: 35 people participated in the study. Only those who have attended the morning meeting for more than 6 months were included in the study. 85 percent of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 31 and work as engineers, STEM educators and trainees in the organization.

Data collection: An open-ended survey was conducted using Google Forms. Participants were invited to provide reflections on their experiences and insights based on their personal learnings, behavioural changes and the benefits that they perceived through the program.

Data Analysis: The study was carried out using Inductive thematic analysis. Codes were extrapolated from the collected data and fed into AI for pattern identification and theme consolidation.

Ethics: The anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by separating reflections from identifiable personal information. Verbal consent was obtained from the respondents before their participation.

Intervention/ Design of the morning meetings:

The morning meetings at C3STREAM Land have been designed to support the growth of both the individuals and the organization. For the individual, it works on building skills, competencies, and inner capacities. For the organization, it allows breaking silos of five different technical groups as well as multi-level STEM education to support teamwork and create breakthroughs together.

Every day, the morning meetings begin with 2-minute warm-up exercises. On Mondays, the participants sit for Vipassana meditation for about 40 minutes. After the completion of this grounding meditation session, the participants recite a peace prayer (Shanti mantra in Sanskrit). Then the participants receive feedback on their reflections of the week as teachers from a senior teacher.

The rest of the days of the week begin with the warm-up, then a short 10-minute breath meditation (Anapana) followed by the Shanti mantra and a different activity for each day.

On Tuesdays, learning sessions are co-created, and often the participants share something new that can be valuable to others. Sometimes participants watch educational videos like TED Talks. Some days, people from outside the organization are invited to deliver these sessions. As an example, on a few Tuesdays facilitators came in to give a talk about Physical and Mental Health. Both during and after watching the video, participants discuss the sections that they find difficult to understand individually. At the end, people share reflections and insights on what they learned and could practice in their own life based on the learnings.

On Wednesdays, the participants review an RTL tool or template for leadership. Leadership is the ability to create a new future, and RTL reaffirms that anyone, at any 'level', doing any kind of job can bring about a sustainable change in society based on universal values. At the end of the session, some participants share their insights on what they learned about themselves and can practice in life.

To deepen the understanding of RTL, on Thursdays, we read and reflect on the RTL book. Each participant brings their RTL book and reads out one passage at a time. During this session, the difficult words and concepts are clarified through conversation so that the intent of the theory behind the practice is collectively understood. The person reading explains what

he/she has understood from the paragraph, and these discussions are enriched by the sharing of examples and reflections from one's own life with the whole group or in smaller groups.

On Fridays, the focus is on technical skills. One of the members does a presentation of the technical work that is ongoing. It often includes code reviews and project progress. Others provide constructive suggestions that help in the collaborative debugging.

Saturdays are dedicated to reflecting on the week and closing it by reflecting on practices such as sharing acknowledgements, gratitude, 'how I worked from my full potential rather than business-as-usual', integrity, and other such reflective themes. Everyone shares their acknowledgements in the group so that each one gets to hear the insights of the other. Acknowledgements are a deep appreciation of a quality that we see in others that we wish to embody. Participants focus on a theme each Saturday and reflect on examples and write it down, and then share insights (what they learned about themselves) and one example. Acknowledgements are written and pinned to the wall for anyone to see till the next time we do them.

Results:

An inductive thematic analysis was carried out on the collected data. Using AI-assisted pattern identification, a set of preliminary codes were generated from the raw data that were thoroughly analysed by the researchers. Followed by identifying themes from the codes, the first set of themes were yielded by the AI and reviewed by the researchers, AI came up with five themes that were in-line with the data. However, AI generated themes were not rooted in the RTL context, mapped to Purushārthas. Hence, the themes were revised by the team based on the identified codes. The themes are as follows.

THEME I: Inner Capabilities: Stillness, value-based leadership, reflective RTL tools

Participants reflected that the daily morning meeting helped them to calm their mind and have a centred state of mind which in turn enabled them to begin the day with clarity. Several participants said it improved their level of concentration and aided them to have some quiet time dedicated while paying attention to their thoughts. Inner awareness and self-reflection were crucial for noticing their feelings. Participants were able to notice themselves becoming more confident when they spoke or presented in front of others. The positivity spread improved because of the practice of expressing gratitude.

“When I do meditation, I am able to make myself still and accept what it is and improve my concentration.”

“Monday morning meetings feel like a fresh start of the week when it begins with meditation. It gives the space to calm myself, focus more and improves concentration. It helps me to come out of the agitations I have in mind and to be at full potential in the work I do. Followed by meditation, the discussion on teacher's notes helps me to understand how to be an effective teacher. Though I am presently not teaching, it gives me an idea of where to focus on and how to improve my teaching skills so that there would be a better outcome among the students.”

The repeated refreshment of the RTL tools has supported the participants in improving their understanding of the RTL concepts. Participants put forth that application of the RTL principles in real life situations have helped them in making decisions and handling challenges while working with their teams.

“Each session helped me understand myself better. By becoming aware of my inner world, fears, and strengths, I learned how to respond instead of react.”

“Every Wednesday we complete the RTL tool, and through this I discover new things about myself. I start to see where I can improve, and it supports my growth in many ways.”

THEME II: COMPETENCIES: Team interaction, peer collaboration, collective growth, and RTL practice

Participants have mentioned that the morning meetings have played an important role in making the team interaction stronger, collaborating more productively, and supporting the progress and growth of the whole team. Furthermore, meetings served as a space for breaking the silos since people from different roles and teams came together to share updates, challenges and insights in a common forum. Participants also feel that the morning meetings gave them an exposure to exchange information among different teams which again paved the path for breaking silos and making expertise more accessible.

“Even team members from other areas contribute, which helps us understand different approaches and algorithms. This practice breaks silos by giving me visibility into each other's work, reducing the “unknowns” in the team.”

“Sharing our thoughts and learning together has built mutual respect and a strong sense of community. The mindfulness, learning, and collaboration we practice defines the unique culture of STEM Land.”

The meetings gave regular opportunities for everyone to speak, listen and understand each other better. The participants felt that they were able to solve problems together through the support they got through the code reviews. The contributions of one another were recognized through the practice of acknowledgements which also strengthened the team relationships. They have also quoted that the regular RTL refreshment sessions and book readings every week reminds them to be in continuous practice of its principles. They feel they are able to have conversations to solve issues in their teams and also make commitments to resolve them.

“Listening to others’ reflections also gave me new perspectives and helped me realize how each of us connects differently to the same idea. ”

“Practice RTL tools to support team building and having conversations that take the organization together. Bring up issues and make a commitment to resolve them.”

THEME III: SKILLS: Learning and knowledge expansion and skill practice

Participants expressed that the morning meetings supported them to learn and become more knowledgeable. Many even pointed out how the discussions during shared learning on Tuesdays gave them a deeper understanding of the topics as it gave them an opportunity to do peer learning. They were able to see situations differently and broaden their way of thinking as different activities undertaken during the meetings exposed them to new perspectives. For example, the feedback on codes during Fridays, listening to other’s reflections of Wednesdays and so on. They even mentioned that their overall personal and professional development improved and went up as they were able to gain technical knowledge through the technical tools, methods and the skills introduced during Tuesday meetings.

“The Tuesday morning session was really beneficial for me. It provides opportunities to interact with other teams, understand what they’re working on, and learn how they approach problems differently. It was insightful to see the variety of methods and tools being used to solve similar challenges.”

“On Friday, looking back at our code helped us identify mistakes and areas to improve. Feedback from others gave us new perspectives and better ways to approach the problem.”

Morning meetings helped the participants to improve their practical work skills. Several participants have mentioned that they were able to solve technical issues in their projects through the knowledge gained through the Tuesday or Friday sessions.

“Improved my listening skills and confidence. Listening to others' projects broadened my perspective and sharpened my problem-solving.”

“On Tuesday, we learned new things such as SNAP programming and some useful math shortcuts. I discovered concepts that I didn't know before, and this helped me explore new ways of thinking. Learning these skills not only improved my creativity and problem-solving abilities but also made me more confident in trying out new ideas.”

Discussion and future work:

Meetings have a high transactional cost and should be respected as spaces that bring people together energetically. Beyond being efficient and solving technical problems, meetings could be a space of continued learning and breaking workplace silos.

Designing the beginning of the day together in thoughtful and supportive ways is important for both organizational development and individual growth. The design has been presented here that includes having the discipline to come together and start the day together, meditate. Further, looking beyond just skills into competencies and inner capabilities including RTL practice allowing members to talk to each other about breakdowns leading to breakthroughs. A workplace can be about unending education and the constant progress of its members. This case study can act as an inspiration of design in other companies specifically seeking to solve the problem of employee burnout.

While skill development can support Artha, Kāma these are meant to be guided by Dharma. Supporting inner capabilities and competencies invests in the growth of individuals and the organization supporting Dharma and Mokṣa. This along with the goals and activities of an organization for the well-being of the world, makes a spiritual or Dharmic organization. These organizations can be successful in the “real world” as well, which means that employees meet their key performance indicators and material success and wealth for themselves and their community.

In the future, other aspects of the work of C3SLD can be studied and documented with more rigor to serve as possibilities for other organizations. Datasets are available for others to continue work or do further analysis. Collaboration is invited of researchers who find the work of C3SLD inspiring.

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