

The Principle of Shiva and The Function of Finance



Sangeeta Shankaran Sumesh
Executive Director and CFO
Dun & Bradstreet Technologies

Have you ever been intrigued by the multiple shades of Shiva's personality? He can truly impart the wisdom to live life, and there is much we can learn from him. Being a finance professional and a believer in Shiva, I decided to explore further, and discovered that there are umpteen links between Shiva and finance. The Shiva tattva, or principle, has many underlying connotations, which resonate with the role of the Finance function.

Consider how the word "Shiva" is spelled. It can be split into three syllables: "Sha", "Ee", and "Va" where:

- **"Sha"** stands for "shareeram", or body
- **"Ee"** stands for "eeshwara, or life-giving energy
- **"Va"** stands for "vayu" or motion

Thus, Shiva represents a body that has both life and motion.

Finance can also be similarly split into "Fin", "An", and "Ce", where:

- **"Fin"** stands for "fins", which propel business
- **"An"** stands for analyses, which enables decision-making
- **"Ce"** stands for certifies, which ensures further activity

Thus, Finance represents the propelling factor which enables decision-making for further activity.

- *Shiva is an energy and has no form.*

Finance is the vital force for any business, irrespective of which industry it operates in. It is the base on which business is created and promoted, assets are built, and products are developed and advertised.

- *Shiva is an eternal principle and is a guide.*

Finance is a core function, and serves as a critical yardstick for business performance.

- *Shiva is known as "Eshwara", which means he is the giver of "Aishwarya". Aishwarya refers to wealth, and Finance creates wealth in organisations.*

- *Shiva is also known as "Parameshwara", which signifies that he controls everything in the universe.*

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In the world of business, it is the finance function that is vested with the responsibility of controllership. The finance function seeks to achieve three goals: support business, optimise costs, and ensure effective control. Money is the lifeblood of a business and finance is the nerve centre.

- *Shiva is known to be a yogi i.e. practioner of yoga. And yoga is a discipline, which means “to join”.*

Finance is often called the “backbone” of business, linking different units and functions within an organisation. It is an integral part of running a business, undertaking a wide gamut of activities ranging from basic budgeting to complex accounting.

- *Shiva is absolute and illuminates the universe.*

The Finance function plays a key role in the management of stakeholder expectations. The financial performance of a company

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matters critically to stakeholders, even if it is not the only aspect of value creation that does.

- *Shiva is also known as “Mahadev”, who represents three thoughts – purity, knowledge and spiritual practice*

Finance is engaged in the management of money, in a way that it adheres to three core values of integrity, accuracy, and adoption of best practices.

- *Shiva is depicted in the colour blue, which denotes the limitless sky.*

There is no boundary for Finance either, as it is an integral aspect of every form of transaction (subject to the regulatory aspects).

- *Shiva’s vehicle is the bull, which denotes righteousness.*

Finance ensures that an organisation is compliant with rules and regulations, and is the custodian of compliances.

- *Shiva charges with the trident, which represents the three states of past, present, and future*

Finance charges can be classified as prior period, current, and prepaid charges.

- *Shiva is known to wear three stripes on his forehead, called the **Tripund**. Each stripe represents one **gunas**: **sattva** (harmony), **rajas** (confusion), and **tamas** (laziness). Therefore, the **Tripund** symbolises that Shiva is the possessor of all the three **gunas**, and yet is “**Nirguna**”, that is, unaffected by any **guna**.*

Finance is characterised by a focus on long-term (investments), medium- term (expansion), and short-term (working capital) financial growth. However, the requirement for financial resources is eternal, as it can always be linked to a purpose.

- *Shiva holds the instrument **Damru**, which represents the cosmic sound “OM”*

Finance holds the boundless portfolios which represents the perpetual responsibility of:

- O – Onus of compliance and
- M – Mitigating risk

- *Shiva is depicted with the third eye, which denotes sight of knowledge.*

Finance professionals must be visionary, and develop the ability to foresee. A CFO must be able to identify potential risk areas and frame appropriate mitigation strategies.

- *Shiva is smeared with **Bhasma**, denoting that this world will eventually turn to ash, and that nothing is permanent.*

Finance is governed by various laws and regulations, which keep

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changing and evolving with time. This calls for the ability to be adaptable and nimble, and to make changes as and when required.

- *Shiva adorns the snake, a symbol of wakefulness.*
Finance professionals should always be vigilant and alert.
- *Shiva bears the crescent moon on the forehead, depicting control over time*
Finance bears the responsibility of controls and governance within the entity
- *From Shiva flows the river Ganga which implies knowledge*
From Finance emanates (financial) awareness
The finance function also needs to have the skills to be able to make a successful interpretation, and provide sound business advice that can influence decisions on where the business needs to go.
- *Shiva adorns the chain of rudraksha beads around the knotted bun of hair, heck, arms and waist*
Finance manages the flow of funds between the customers, suppliers, lessors, regulators and shareholders
- *Shiva is also known as Rudra, the destroyer*
One role for the Finance function is to “demolish” evil practices such as bribe-taking and corruption.
- *Shiva is also the warrior, Veerabhadra*
Finance acts as a “challenger” to other units and functions, especially when they do not meet their budgets.
- *Shiva is a tattva, or principle, from where everything has come, everything is sustained in, and everything dissolves in.*
Finance is a function from where everything arises (capital), everything is continued (business activity), and everything is subsumed in (profits).
- *All forms are the manifestation of the formless Shiva that is the consciousness that is present all over.*
Success in all types of business ventures is measured by indicators of financial performance, irrespective of industry.
It is thus that the principle of Shiva, and the function of Finance, go hand in hand. Finance professionals can observe and learn from this. If the ‘ee’ is removed from Shiva, it gets reduced to “sha” and “va”, or “Shava”, which means a lifeless body. Anything with Shiva is something that has life, and anything without Shiva is without life. Shiva is auspicious, Shiva is potential. ■