

## Role of Creativity and Innovations in Industries and Educational Institutions in India



HRM

KEYWORDS :

M. JEYAKUMAR

Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, PMU, Vallam, Tanjavur.

Dr. K.V.R. RAJANDRAN

Head, Department of Management Studies, PMU, Vallam, Thanjavur.

### INTRODUCTION

Indian economy is one of the most vibrant and promising economies in the world today. The liberalisation regime has done wonders to the nation in terms of GDP growth, Per Capita Income, Forex Reserve, Science and Technology, Defence, Industrialisation, Education etc. This is only one side of the coin wherein the other side is far from desirable.

Despite the unprecedented growth in the fields of Information Technology and Medical Science we still face problems of illiteracy, malnutrition, infant mortality and child labour. On the social front, while many of the Indian women make news in the international arena their sisters back home are still struggling for their personal safety, health and honour.

In spite of the rampant corruption and general apprehensions in the society, India is slowly but steadily progressing on its growth trajectory. Many of the Indian companies have taken over foreign companies while MNCs are moving into India. Self reliance and Indigenisation are the main concern in our nation these days. These are not overnight phenomena and this transformation entails introspection, sense of responsibility and out of the box thinking (innovativeness and creativity) at all levels.

### NEED OF THE HOUR

There is a need to reinvigorate our traditional views and policies in order to build a stronger and safer India. The change proposed is not merely in terms economic growth; it should be in terms of enabling our future leaders-the students. To achieve this, we need to foster creativity and innovations at the grass root level i.e. the educational institutions. All the stakeholders including academicians, policy makers, industries, parents and students need to resolve and adopt social responsibility as one of the common objectives.

This paper attempts to analyse the significance of creativity and innovation to the industries and educational institutions in India. The analysis and views expressed are based on the experience of the authors and the recommendations may be validated under the settings of any industry or institution.

### ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Life is like a war, wherein we have to face series of battles viz, education, profession, health, wealth, social life etc. Sound strategy is needed to succeed in this long drawn war. Numerous concepts have been propounded by scholars and industrial experts for enhancing HR potential in any organisation. The HR plan must be a strategy because it mostly addresses long term objectives whereas marketing or production plans may be tactical in nature barring a few policies.

### Indian Industries

Innovations and Creativity have been the effective tools throughout the history of mankind for its survival. In the authors' opinion, following are few of the creative and innovative strategies that would contribute towards enhancing growth of Industries in India:-

**HR is not overhead, it is the capital** – In any organisation, the most important resource is the motivated employees. It is pertinent to note that the Human Capital is the best investment that could generate exponential returns. While the measures such as automation, newer technology etc would cut cost and

enhance efficiency, it can never replace the human. This is more applicable in service industries like Defence, BPO/Call centres, Hospitals etc. Hence, it should be borne in mind that HR is not an over head but is a capital investment.

**Invest in People** – The incentives given by the company need not always been in terms of monetary benefits or perks. Money may motivate a few employees that too only to an extent but the sense of accomplishment, achievement, recognition would work wonders. The culture of enabling must be promoted in the organisation. It can be elucidated better if one compares the performance of two categories of employees of government viz civil servants and defence personnel.

With due regards to the patriotism and professionalism of the highly qualified civil servants, the dedication and devotion to the duty exhibited by the armed forces are par excellence. It is very essential to note that both hail from same society and serve the same nation. But, what makes the difference is the way they are enabled within their organisation. Except the rigorous regimen, other aspects of enabling culture that prevails in the defence forces can be effectively followed in all the departments of government. This would ensure better services and corruption free environment in our nation.

**Environment Friendliness** – While every nation harps on the issues related environment protection and eco-balance, the ground reality is far from the ideal. The double standard of these champions of eco protection can be clearly understood if you introspect as to why the multinational companies are interested in establishing their manufacturing companies in India. They are neither interested in uplifting the Indian economy nor inclined to eradicate poverty.

Their grand business plan is to protect eco-system of their nation and to get cheaper labour and raw material from India. This concept may seem radical and pessimistic especially in light of their contribution towards growth of GDP, FOREX reserve, employment and industrial development. Nonetheless, there is a need to balance growth with preservation of natural resources through sensitising all the stake holders viz, investors, customers, government towards mitigating the ill effects of industrialisation through effective implementation of pollution control measures.

**Social Responsibility** - Today every company carries a tag of 'socially responsible entity'. While few companies are doing genuine service even a company selling tobacco and liquor claims to be socially responsible. There is no denial of the fact that they invest millions towards welfare and community development, but the question is- 'Why create cancer and spend fortune to eradicate it?' While we raise voice against tobacco, alcohol, plastic etc do we ever realise that these are the major industries which contribute towards the revenue for the government. This is an oxymoronic situation where we redress the maladies of the society with the revenue generated from the same industries which cause these ills. There is a need to review our economic policies and licensing procedures.

**Practice Inclusive Management** -The traditional management style has the advantage of effective control and monitoring of the functions of the organisation. But, the responses and reactions of the workers below the level of managers have generally been ignored. The case study in respect of various corporate

houses and companies would highlight the impact of the management culture on the revenue as well as the reputation of the company.

Take few cases of Indian corporate houses namely, 'Sahara Pari-var' which has been booked for cheating investors, Air India where the unsatisfied employees and customers have weakened prospects of the industry major. There are many other examples where the governments have become unpopular as in the case of 'Tata Nano Project' in West Bengal. These all episodes highlight only one thing i.e. insensitivity towards the needs of stake holders which include investors, employees, customers and public. How do we practice inclusive management to overcome these issues?

- Keep the investors informed about the plans and profitability besides responding to their needs. More than dividend or bonus they look forward to the sense of accomplishment through affiliation to the company.
- Understand that mere salary and perks cannot buy loyalty of employees. There are other aspects of motivation which include affiliation, self esteem, job satisfaction, family welfare, personal growth etc. The top management must understand that if the employees do not identify themselves with the objectives of the company, no technology or investment can save it. Handsome salary and perks may attract talent but offering a life style can foster devotion to duty.
- As for as the customers are concerned, they are not mere buyers of the products and services. Consider every satisfied customer as a brand ambassador with conviction. There is a need to win the heart of the customers with better service and products which would ensure brand loyalty and permanent bonding with the customers.

**Catch Them Young and Grow Together-** This is the principle observed by most of the companies. Conducting campus interviews and selecting candidates with the right aptitude and attitude have the advantage of moulding the young fertile minds as required besides the savings on the pay package.

The next level in this direction should be to boost the institution-industrial interaction wherein the institutions can be sensitised towards the needs of the industries while the industries can collaborate to set up R&D labs wherein the promising candidates may be encouraged to take up innovative projects. This would provide an opportunity to bridge the void between the academic knowledge and skills needed for the industry. This will be a win-win proposition for both the industry as well as institution which in turn would benefit all the stake holders.

**Nurture Leadership Skills -** While a manager begins with 'how to' accomplish the task, the leader seeks to understand 'why to' do such a task before asking 'how to?' It is a known fact that 'Leadership' is a force multiplier and hence the management must nurture it at all levels. Effective leadership will also ensure that the companies manufacture and export goods and services only and never our national pride. The questions related to environmental issues, labour safety, minimum wages etc can be addressed only if the corporate leadership is effective and progressive in its approach. Leadership is not a overnight phenomenon; it needs to be nurtured over the years.

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

##### **'Nothing comes from nothing' - Parmenides**

We need good professionals to run better industries. Thus, to ensure industrial growth there we need to revamp our educational system. The educational institutions with its students are the bedrock on which the future performance of the industries rests. It is pertinent to note that the industries have a greater role to play in moulding the budding leaders at the institutional level. Towards the authors recommend the following measures:-

**Educate the students -** The difference between literacy and education must be clearly understood and the students must be taught to prepare for the future challenges rather than what

existed in the past. Before a student ventures into learning modern science and fine arts, s/he must be taught the nuances of life skills and personality development. To start with avoid teaching history in Science classes. Let the students think of inventions and discoveries rather than memorising 'Who? When? What?' Instead teaching when and who invented the computer; teach them why and how it was invented and what difference could it make. This will trigger their quest to learn more and invent more.

Educational institutions especially the colleges and universities must function as store houses of knowledge rather than manufacturing units producing graduates with very high percentage of marks. The aim should be to guide the youth to become responsible citizens before becoming exceptional professionals.

The top level institutions like IIT, IIM, NIIT, REC etc should take up the challenge of transforming ordinary students into thorough professionals rather than polishing the best lot into shining stars. The challenge lies in bringing out the best from the worst which is done by institutions such as Periyar Maniammai University which strives to spread higher education amidst the rural masses.

##### **Expose the students to the industries which need their expertise-**

Industrial Visits organised for the students are more of the curriculum requirement rather than a purposeful visits where the students are exposed to the probable working environment in future. These visits should be made meaningful in terms of applying the academic knowledge into the industrial set up. To achieve this we must have a greater interaction between the institutions and industries wherein the academicians and professionals interact at various levels and establish a mechanism where the curriculum and teaching is in sync with the trend of the industry and vice versa.

**Multiskilling -** These days there is a proliferation of super specialist courses and professionals. Though it is the need of the hour, one cannot deny the significance of multiskilling especially when 'produce more with less' is the norm of any industry. At institutional level this aspect can be addressed very easily by increasing the syllabus for interdisciplinary learning.

The project works are the best way to promote multiskilling wherein the students of various departments can work together. It will enable them to learn about other fields of work besides exposing them to a corporate culture where they have to work with people from all other streams. It also can educate them about dignity of labour. It is very essential that the project work done by students must be original and application oriented. It should not be treated as one more criteria for awarding the degree.

**Internal Assessments -** While the internal assessments are necessary to ensure consistency in the performance, it should never kill the inquisitiveness of the students. Let them ask stupid questions and explore the unknown. The aim is not to find an answer for every question but to have a meaningful question for every aspect. This can be achieved by involving the industries and professionals to interact with the students during their formative years.

**Examinations Methodology -** The examinations over the years have become a battle ground where everything revolves around the gradings. The real meaning of learning has been lost in the race for marks. Every institution wants their students to achieve 100% marks and hardly anybody is bothered about what the student has understood really. The merit of the student should not be based purely on the marks scored on one examination. Hence, the examination methodology and grading must be based on the consistency of performance and true measure of the knowledge and expertise rather than memory contest.

**Invest in Laboratories and Attract Talent -** Invest more in research oriented facilities rather than mere buildings and other

visible infrastructure. Employ academicians and professionals with good track record or at least groom them once they join the institution. The quality of the students would greatly depend upon the faculty rather than the syllabus or facilities available in the institution. One satisfied employee is worth thousand machines because the power of HR is such.

**CONCLUSION**

In this competitive world, organizations should come up with innovative ideas to survive and succeed in their respective fields. They need to invest in their current employees and also to nurture their future employees i.e. the students effectively. Social Responsibility must be one of the business objective rather than being a mere marketing strategy. We must realise that literacy is not the synonym of education and industrialisation is not the only means to progress.

The organisations must understand their responsibilities towards the society in which they exist. Towards achieving this, Human Resource managers should follow creative & innovative HR practices. This will ensure mutual growth of both the employer and the employees while enabling the employees to align their personal goals with organisational goals. Ultimately, we all must understand that is the human capital which can employ creativity and innovativeness effectively holds the key for success of any organisation which in turn would contribute to the growth of our nation.