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Management

DIVYANG ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA : MULTIFACETED APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

At the starting of this paper, I should plead guilty in a case where I ignored the sentiments, problems and difficulties faced by handicapped persons, which are now called by much superior name, Divyang persons. In this paper, all the difficulties faced by Divyang people, who want to become entrepreneurs, from Government agencies, competitors, customers, family, friends etc. are discussed. Then, many examples are given to prove that Divyang persons are no less than fit persons. In the end, some suggestions are given to Divyang persons who wish to become entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

At the very onset, I would like to plead my case with the conclusion that "I am guilty". When I was fit and healthy, I was totally unconcerned about the handicapped people, or special ability people. At that point of time, I was more concerned with other walks of life, like making money, developing friendly relations with other fit and healthy people. In short, I was enjoying life to fullest.

I was not against the special ability people. If they needed my help at any point of time, I was ready to help them. But overall, due to my ignorance and some sort of ego, I preferred to stay away from these people. By ignorance, I mean that I was not aware of the reasons due to which they have become handicapped people. So, ignoring the medical reasons, I believed in stupid things like religious beliefs, some sort of black magic etc.

But the situations changed after some time. When I became handicapped due to paralysis on my right side of body, the sixth sense of mine became active. Then, I learnt about the medical reasons of my disease. Then automatically, my mind forgot all those things like religious miss happenings, or black magic etc. Overall, medical science became more powerful that those silly and stupid things.

Then the new challenges arose in front of me. I have to be satisfied with only half portion of body. And to top it all, the mouth was also distorted, leading to speech troubles. And, since I was in the teaching fraternity, right side paralysis meant the I would not be able to use my right hand, to which I was apt to writing. This thing would have taken away my job but it was saved because I was also able to write with my left hand.

So, after this, I learnt every little thing once again. It was just like a child who is learning every little thing on a new basis. And at this point of time, I realized the difficulty which every special ability people, now called as Divyang people, have to face in every walk of their life. The problems multiply when such people and already in the job or are searching for a job. They face many reactions at the same time, pathetic kind when the fit people feel sorry about Divyang people, hate kind, savage type when those fit people bully the Divyang people or in the minor case, the reactions can be "not concerned" type of reactions.

Thus, there have to be some alternative solutions to these problems. The next section deals the alternative solution to this problem.

Alternative Approach

The alternative solution is entrepreneurship. If a Divyang people set up their own business and if it runs properly, all the above-mentioned problems will be automatically resolved. Let's take some examples to further elaborate this concept.

In first example, we are going to discuss Ability Cafe in India, employing special abilities people with the aim of providing occupational rehabilitation to the mentally challenged people. This café is in Kozhikode, Kerala.

The Ability Cafe offers beverages along with snacks. The crucial thing is that the café is run by mentally-challenged persons. Community Disability Management and Rehabilitation Programme (CDMRP) of the Department of Psychology, University of Calicut took the responsibility of training them to make them well versed with the intricacies of business.

In second example, take the example of handicapped entrepreneurs, who attract savage visitors at Surajkund Crafts Mela In Faridabad and converted to curious onlookers. The participation of about a dozen divyang entrepreneurs has added to feathers of Surajkund Crafts Mela in Faridabad, Haryana. These persons had become entrepreneurs after they took help of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation.

In third example, many differently-abled artisans, entrepreneurs display their products at cultural event, Ekam Fest. This fest was held under aegis of National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC). The fest attracted customers from nearby areas and they were simply enthralled by food, massages and product demo and demo of making of these products.

The above three examples are a crux to a huge mountain of successful disable entrepreneurs. But, if we look at this thing from a practical point of view, we don't notice so many Divyang people turn into entrepreneurs. There are many sources of finance, there are many skill developments programmes, many sources of different support of Divyang people etc. But still, Divyang people don't come forward and engage themselves in entrepreneurship.

Why so less Divyang Entrepreneurship?

So now, the time has come to explore the causes behind less Divyang entrepreneurship. If we look at this thing from practical point of view, the cases of Divyang entrepreneurship is quite low, approximately nil. So, there has to be some causes behind this thing.

1. Less faith in himself/herself

When a healthy person becomes Divyang, the physical strength obviously becomes low. The reason being very simple – he/she has to complete all the task with a less complete body. Therefore, these tasks are completed late using time which is much greater that the normal time, or they are not completed at all.

This thing has tremendous impact on psychology of Divyang people. They become habitual of having less faith in

themselves. It is clear that physical strength and psychological strength, both become weak as the persons becomes Divyang.

2. Less faith in Divyang person by society

By nature, if you see a healthy person and then a Divyang person, the first impression is pity towards handicapped person. So, it is the duty of society themselves to get rid of this mentality themselves.

We have to learn that Divyang persons also can do the job as efficiently and effectively as a healthy person. At least, we only have to give them a chance. If they fail, then it is in our hands to believe in that person in future or not.

3. Less faith by the managing agencies

The next hurdle is by the managing agencies, who are entrusted with boosting entrepreneurship among the masses. If the Divyang person approaches any managing agency, the first aspect is the *negative Halo effect*. All the agencies have the first reaction "why do you want to excret yourself in this industry; go and rest at home". And one thing to remember – the agency employees also belong to the society. So, as mentioned in the second point, the society must heal itself of thinking Divyang people less effective than healthy persons.

4. Less faith by the customers

If the Divyang people set up their industry, the next and biggest hurdle is to gain confidence from the customers. The customer may not exhibit full confidence in Divyang persons due to various causes.

There is one more thing that author will like to discuss, and which may not be accepted by the readers of this paper. When the author was healthy, before the paralysis thing happened, I preferred to take anything from healthy person, rather the Divyang person. The reason at that time was something related to religious beliefs. I did not preferer to take anything from Divyang person because I didn't know the real cause of their handicap. I believed then that those handicaps must be caused by God and to top it all, I believed that that handicap is easily transmitted. So, in those times, if I see a blind people, or a paralysis people, or somebody which only one functional leg or arm, it was a firm belief in my mind that handicap is due to anger of God, that is religious mishappening and that handicap can be easily transmitted.

When author became handicapped, then the perception really changed. Now, the author firmly beliefs that the perception change and the act of becoming Divyang himself is the act of God. The God has punished author for not believing in Divyang people.

And thing, I repeat is my personal observation and I do not impose this thing on my readers.

5. Less faith in competitors, peers and employees

If a Divyang starts an enterprise, then he/she faces the problem of less faith in all the persons mentioned in the heading of this points. And it is natural too because they also belong to the same differentiated society.

6. Less faith by family members and friends

If the family members and close friends do not believe that Divyang person can start an enterprise, it is horrendous, horrible and terrible thing that a handicapped person has to face. Since Ramayan times, it has been proved that "Ravan was beaten in the war because of Vibashana, who was is real brother". So, if the family and friends refuses to believe in Divyang, the maximum fight is lost by Divyang.

This and many more things are making the life of Divyang persons more miserable.

Some suggestions

All the things discussed above are long term effort, which are going to take many years, or perhaps decades. But, the Divyang persons have to act quickly to make their life more worthy of living. Thus, in this section, we will deal with those things that can be done immediately.

1. Approach some agency which is made for this purpose only
All the Divyang persons, who wish to start their own business, should approach that agency which has been created to help Divyang people. Their, the chances of less faith in Divyang person will be quite less or nil.
There are some agencies which are listed in this section and point - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (SJE), National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) etc.
2. Thing about the opportunities which every fit entrepreneur does. Never constrain your thinking in realm of your disability. In words of entrepreneur Kirk Keating "Begin your search for an opportunity just like anyone else would; don't have the knee jerk reaction of thinking about everything in terms of your disability. Do what fits your style and matches your skill set." So, we have to think in totality, not constrained by our disability.
3. Use the disability to your advantage. As the proverb says "if you have nothing to lose, the best ideas come to your mind". Being the person with disabilities and leading a miserable life from the society, the ideas come to the mind more often rather than a fit individual.
4. Learning from other successful Divyang entrepreneurs is always beneficial. It can help a lot in tackling competition, arranging the funds for business, getting the customers in easy way and many more things. So, always try to search for Divyang entrepreneurs who have succeed.
5. Being an entrepreneur gives you the freedom of arranging the workplace according to you. You don't have to rely on employer and work at that workplace which is not according to you.
6. Training needs are must for every individual. Look out for those agencies which offers training in your field.

If these points are being taken care of, the chances of Divyang persons life to become self-sustainable will be increased.

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