



Sadhana Educational & Empowerment Foundation's (SEEF)  
**Sadhana Centre for Management & Leadership Development  
(SCMLD)**

Seminar: **“Learning from the Leaders”** - Series X

Theme: **“Redefining Business: Success vs. Purpose”**

Venue: **Yashada, Pune** | Date: **16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2010**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

*“Entrepreneurs and professionals, the two classes making a new India, have the ability to correct problems in governance. It can only be done by the two classes. We must learn to face the facts... Our society does not want to face the facts because then we have to change our conduct.”*

- Arun Shourie

Business is primarily associated with profits for private success. Connections and license raj manipulations and restrictive trade practises brought success in the earlier era. Faced by the heat of competition, law, social unrest, environmental issues etc., markets are now abuzz with words and phrases like “wealth creation and distribution”, “branding”, “marketing warfare”, “customer relations”, “corporate social responsibility”, “bottom line, top line”, “acquisitions”, “aggressive growth”, “talent crunch & war for talent” and so on. Paid news, surrogate advertisements, endorsements, public relations events, gimmicks of discounts and free-ship are all resorted to, “to sell”. Seeing the incestuous relationship between the media, business, PR firms, governmental systems and listening to the cacophony, a lay mind wonders as to why people enter the business sphere knowing fully that there is war out there to sell. The simple answer appears to be that business is a game of making money by using/getting someone else’s money at any cost. It is a world of smart people playing with the greed, wants and vanity of others by inventing and reinventing their never-ending wants and illusions. Advertising gurus work on the psychology of people having more than required, by making them feel they have little. Finally, marketing, mass consumption and inventions unfriendly to nature led to Copenhagen and raised hopes. But as predicted, greed prevailed there too.

In the financial sphere we have moneylenders called venture capitalists, vulture investors & angel investors and terms like boot strapping and so on. Finally, Lehman Brothers happened. Then came bailouts using taxpayers’ money. The world seems to be learning no lessons at all. Inventions and consumption are pushing the world to an environmental disaster.

This is not to acknowledge the contribution of business houses, entrepreneurs, scientists and technologists who served and are serving mankind to live better and more comfortably by making and distributing great products and services. They focussed their ventures to address the needs of the people and not wants.

From time immemorial all wise men- saints, seers, philosophers, kings, emperors, statesmen, scientists, and artists- pained by the blind herd behaviour of people and smart ones cashing in on them, propounded that there is enough for everyone to live in abundance. They emphasised on need. But the world is not to be so.

Recession, depression, boom etc. are the consequences of a greed driven minority, thrust upon a want driven middle class and the hapless poor.

Today, solving problems created by man himself, uplifting people from depraved conditions, mitigating conflicts, prevention of hoarding, educating and enlightening people, creating a just society of “enough” and giving away surpluses in exchange of need, environment friendly infrastructure creation, health care system, water management and so on throws up great business opportunities. In short, businesses focussed on need and poverty mitigation emphasising on quality of living rather than standard of living can bring purpose driven business enterprises to reasonable and meaningful profits. That must have been in the mind of Arun Shourie when he said that only entrepreneurs and professionals could build a new India.

Therefore, in this seminar, we would like you to share your views, experiences and learning as to how you charted a path of your own away from the herd and how one could still be a successful businessman by serving a purpose. It is time for the right thinking people to “decline the public ways and walk on unfrequented paths”. SCMLD is one such initiative.

The objective of this seminar is to expose our students and faculty to such inspiring entrepreneurs and professionals to kindle a fire in them to travel the less travelled path where challenging opportunities await them. That is to choose a purpose and be successful rather than chasing success following the herd. The world today needs people who believe that being simple is being healthy, wealthy & happy; having less is contribution & conservation; losing (greed, ego, possession, position) is winning; winning is to take responsibility that no one loses in life; and that giving is freedom and taking is obligation. For the ordinary, more is less. For the extraordinary, less is more as they live meaningful lives.

These are our stray thoughts and we believe that great businesses and enterprises can be built on these principles and thrive on trust, credibility and respect of their customers and society. You are at liberty to disagree with anything stated above and share your experiences, learning, the challenges faced and the choices you have made in your journey so far.

Yours sincerely,

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Founder Director, SCMLD.