



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

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

Theme: **“Doing Business Consciously & Creating Entrepreneurial Employees:**

Imperatives for Building a Better Society”

(Role of Students, Institutes, Entrepreneurs and Enterprises)

Venue: **Yashada, Pune** | Date: **13th & 14th November, 2010**

APPROACH PAPER

We are an institute which follows the Gandhian tenets of truth, transparency, simplicity and trusteeship in all our actions and transactions. We believe that businesses can earn good profits and reap rich all round dividends without cut throat competition and the insecurity & fear associated with it, if the products and services are focused on “the needs & wellbeing” of people and the processes are not against the laws of nature. In fact, such businesses can never go out of business. If conviction and conscience rule the minds of entrepreneurs and professionals, businesses can be done gently and consciously. Offering solutions to problems, prevention of newer problems, meeting the needs of people and other beings, etc. offer great and varied opportunities for business – gentle & conscious. Such businesses regenerate resources, create assets and build better societies of wealth, health, harmony & happiness. In such societies it will be difficult for violence and conflicts to germinate or survive. Originality, care, concern, verve, vigour, passion, mission, tenacity to achieve etc. are essential for such businesses also to succeed. Unhealthy, expensive, unholy and dirty, competition against others to woo/entice customers/consumers is more in want focused businesses. In gentle and conscious, wellbeing and need focused businesses, the entrepreneurs compete with selves (and not others), to offer their best to the community there of. In greed, glamour, vanity and wants focused businesses, aggression, unhealthy practices and deceitful gimmicks & ugly warfare, rule the environment. They operate in fear of losing or someone out-smarting them. Such businesses can probably improve the standard of living of a few, measured by possessions, status, positions, etc. but not the quality of living of the masses measured by health, harmony, happiness, positive relationships, peace, prosperity and so on.

With this conviction, we pick up students as much as we can find, from the taluka & district towns / smaller cities and rural areas. We look for those who believe in family and Gandhian values and are willing to work hard propelled by a passion to achieve, but have also the patience & perseverance to evolve into successful and inspiring professionals / entrepreneurs with no

shortcuts even occurring in their minds. The environment being as it is, we succeed in getting 20-25% of our students, in this category, every year. Others are not behaviourally as such but would like to be so in their inner most. We groom both. In addition to the usual curriculum we put our students through a series of processes aimed at re-engineering their minds for them to be proactive, open, gentle, truthful, tolerant, collaborative, compassionate, empathetic, conviction driven, transparent, systemic & scientific in thinking and so on. We believe that the mind is where hell & heaven, evil & good dwell and also multiply. Also, we believe the saying that “there are lights everywhere except in the minds of men”. Corruption, cunningness, greed, violence, dogmas, lust, selfishness etc. are in the minds. That gets manifested in behaviours. Business behaviours and business itself, including all actions & transactions and products & services offerings, are all products of these minds. Love, affection, compassion, care, camaraderie, giving, oneness etc. are also products of the same minds. Hence our efforts, focusing on positive mind-set change in addition to academics, to create entrepreneurs and professionals who will do / help do business being gentle and conscious, for a better society, while pursuing personal wealth and happiness for themselves.

However, although our aspirations and efforts are in the direction, and 20-25% students are of the kind, as stated above, the behaviour orientation of today’s youth in general, is more towards pleasure, quick fixes, fast buck and scaling great heights in the shortest possible time. On the other side they are more sharp, fast, experimentative, risk taking and techno savvy. They enjoy rebelling against / challenging the status quo. Both are ok and no complaints. But some aspects of serious concern, are their lack of depth, and at the same time the unbridled ambition to grow taller without strengthening the roots / building strong foundations, and being impatient at it getting depressed if things don’t go their way. They are unable to accept the fact that wisdom, stamina and maturity take time to develop. This is also ok, as every generation might have had these generalizations from the earlier ones. But then 85% of our graduates today are unemployable, not employed or under employed, affecting the economic, social, political, administrative, legal, environmental, governance and even family facets of life, adversely. It is going to cost all of us and the country dearly. Can we afford to ignore the current and emerging reality of acute workforce scarcity? Who will make things work? Where are we going to create the workforce for the kind of society we want to build if today’s youth are not made work ready? Employment is not equal to work. Employment may be scarce but work is aplenty if one is skilful / competent and ready to work. Also we complain about wide spread corruption, erosion of values & morals, ascendancy of greed & selfishness, and conflicts & violence all around. Then how to build peaceful, harmonious, happy, prosperous, interdependent and co - existing societies of mutual support, respect and understanding without morally right and ethically upright men and women of mission, skills and competencies? The oceans of knowledge, mountains of “money” (currency), countless spiritual leaders (and dealers), expansionist (also compassionate) religions, ancient & modern philosophies, legion of thought and talk leaders, ever increasing rules, rule of

law & rule by laws and so on, are not going to create material prosperity without right men for right action / work in right numbers. Who will create such “work ready” men out of our youth if immediate course correction is not initiated on a war footing? Here is the angst seeing the behaviour trends of the youth in general today and the bureaucratic, stereotype approach to educational reforms focusing more on knowing rather than application & action. Actions will keep creating newer knowledge for better actions improving things continually.

Enlightened entrepreneurial citizens, who believe in gentle and conscious business, offering products & services addressing more of the needs and less of wants and / or towards solving / preventing problems, acting in a spirit of “Seva” (service), can make a more positive & original nation (as against an imitative nation) faster and better – a nation which will have enough space for everyone to grow and go. Such community of businessmen, professionals and workers (all who work) in fact are the need of our country & the world today, as want based businessmen are aplenty everywhere. The business community which taps the resources, converts and distributes it value added as above are better positioned to power forward that nation / world of choice, for the benefit of all. This calls for processes change in our education system to appropriately coach, guide and mentor our youth and offer them to the world being work ready and conscientious. Therefore, leaving them in their own ways in the name of – “they are adults, they know better what they want”, following the western approach, may turn out to be very costly for the country, community and the youth themselves.

Our approach in grooming youngsters originated seeing things this way. We are successful to a great extent in re-engineering the mind sets of most of our students so that they are not in the herd / crowd being blind to these not easily seeable realities / truths. But when it comes to utilization of brain power, the super computer gifted by nature, it is sad to see our students also behaving like their peers elsewhere becoming prisoners of mobile phones, laptops, calculators and the Bollywood syndrome – the make belief world of being trendy & fashionable, crying for attention / recognition, glamour and splurge. Reading, doing & learning, exploring & finding out, learning from the wise and the learned are passé. Information stored in laptops is being considered as knowledge. Paper certificates are being considered as evidences of competence and passing exams is considered as being skilful. How can they be made employable / work ready this way? From the attitudinal side we have made headway in changing mind-sets. At the intellectual and skill level, although we are at work and in the right direction, we are still miles away.

With the above in our mind, we envisage every speaker in this seminar to share his / her story – the story of his / her journey so far, the pain, the struggle, the challenges faced and the lessons learned & still learning, rather than any theoretical or prescriptive advises as one’s life is the best & the most convincing message one can deliver. May be a few amongst the gathering would get inspired and free their selves from the herd and take the path of real learning for conviction

driven action and for that, start learning the rope determined to be skilful & competent to deliver performance. While the experienced can deliver know - how and shorten a learners' path to success, we academicians can only transfer knowledge. This seminar is for our students to get enlightened from the experienced.

Therefore, you may please feel absolutely free to tell your story and the learning. It will influence them more, far and better than any academic discourse.

Also it is not necessary to subscribe at all to any of the above views of the undersigned. You are absolutely free to be you and express yourself as wisdom is varied and there is no one or same solution / approach to any problem. The seminar is a buffet. Let the students pick up what they like to. We are beneficiaries of our forefathers' toil. Let us be guiding lights for the youngsters as much as we can. Let their world be a better world than that of ours. But they need to be guided & re-engineered to avoid the pitfalls we faced. Leaving it to them alone may amount to we abdicating our responsibility. Therefore, what are the roles of the learner, the institute & the industry to groom work ready youngsters, may also be dealt with in your interaction.

Looking forward to the honour and privilege of your being with us and with warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

M. S. Pillai

Founder Director, SCMLD.