
Singh P and Asha Bhandarkar: **CORPORATE SUCCESS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**, Wiley Eastern Limited, New Delhi, 1990, pp xiv + 356.

The authors of the book have in the past jointly written a number of case studies and research papers and contributed to the literature on management especially as related to organisational behaviour. The book under review primarily consists of detailed case studies of five Indian organisations in different fields.

The five organisations are:

1. MMTC (Minerals and Metal Trading Corporation)
2. National Fertilizers Ltd.
3. IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertilizers Co-operatives)
4. TISCO (Tata Iron & Steel Company, Jamshedpur)
5. WCL (Western Coalfields Ltd.)

The authors have collected a great deal of information from each of the companies on various questionnaires that were administered to the managers of the organisations. The main thrust of the book as the title indicates is to provide an indepth understanding of how a 'great leader' can have a very significant and all pervasive influence on the working of an organisation. The authors have spent a good deal of effort and devoted a lot of pages in bringing forth the personality and style of functioning of the chief executives of the five organisations. For eg. on pages 55, 56, 57, 58 it gives a detailed profile of Mr. S.V.S. Raghavan who was leading MMTC and who is regarded by the authors to be responsible for the transformation of the organisation.

Following are the quotations from page 57:

"the level of awareness about what we are doing has gone up within the company" (Joint Divisional Manager).

"Today we interact with the Chairman without fear or favour; we even oppose him" (General Manager).

"There is perfect communication from top to bottom" (General Manager).

"The open-house helps remove false notions. He (Raghavan) keeps us informed about all things. He tells us we are ambassadors of MMTC" (Senior General Manager).

"Communication has improved and this is beneficial to the company" (Divisional Manager).

"The message is clear that the top management is accessible. This started with

Raghavan and has now moved down the line" (Joint Divisional Manager).

"People are involved in work through open-house meetings and communication meetings" (Senior General Manager).

"In the open-house, there is free exchange of views, and sharing of ideas and suggestions for improvement" (Deputy Divisional Manager).

Similarly the personalities of the leaders of the other four organisations are also clearly brought out by the authors. For eg., about Mr. Russi Mody.

"One of the things Mody did was to transfer eighteen superintendents (incharge of producing units) at one go. He intuitively judged which of them had good leadership qualities and shifted them to critical and problematic departments. This was a drastic shift from the earlier situation, when one's technical specialisation, whether sheet mills, flat products, or metallurgy, etc., determined one's career path. In fact, earlier, the concept of such shifts was not favoured. Therefore this drastic change shook up the entire organisation" (President, General Manager).

Everyday, even today, Mody spends one hour for meeting people whenever he is in Jamshedpur. "I meet at least 25 people in one day. The Director (Personnel) is also present in this meeting for on-the-spot decisions. Failing an immediate decision, people are sent a written reply within a week. "Both positive and negative replies giving reasons for the decisions taken are sent out in a week's time with my signature."

In the first year (1969) itself, I sent personal replies to 3,600 people (Mody). In addition to the morning meetings, Mody is available at home and on his rounds in the plant over a period of time, the style of open-door, immediate problem-solving and letter writing have been adopted by all the top level executives, (President, vice-President-3, General Manager-1).

"Open dialogue has been the brain child of Mody. It has introduced a new organisational culture and ethos, a spirit of inquiry, equality, freedom and liberty. Now, everyone feels that he is involved in building TISCO. There is a sense of co-partnership, a sense of belonging and a feeling of commitment. People feel that they now have a say in managing TISCO. Apart from these, it also provides an opportunity for psychological catharsis, unloading of anxieties, frustration and depression. Needless to say, these are important for psychological health" [Vice President, (Personnel and Industrial Relations), President]. What Mody has done needs great courage and conviction. "Many times, we have seen Mody being besieged by both managers and workers" (Manager-12, Foreman-10, Superintendent-6, Union Leader-11).

In an attempt to emphasise their viewpoint of the great significance of a leader (which is backed up by significant empirical research including good deal of

statistical analysis of data), the authors have given relatively little emphasis to the over all reality of Indian society and many factors (including political, social, governmental, cultural and financial which effect the fate and operation of Indian organisations. For example the working of MMTC after Mr. S.V.S. Raghavan left the organisation is not comparable to its functioning while Mr. S.V.S. Raghavan was the Chief Executive, due to a myriad of factors.

The important issue of the internationalisation of an organisational culture and values by the managers and the employees of the organisation vis-a-vis the change of the chief executive is not adequately dealt with. As we know in India, in the public sector and government controlled organisations, the chief executives are liable to, and do change quite often. Therefore it is a moot question as to what extent a leader can really transform the organizational culture of his enterprise.

In case of an organisation like TISCO where the chief executive has been at the helm of the affairs of the organisation for a long period of time, one can justifiably speak about transformation whereas the same will be difficult to say of an organisation like MMTC though Mr. S.V.S. Raghavan might have done his best for transforming the working environment & culture of MMTC.

The book is a very welcome addition to understand the role of dynamic leaders who have the abilities in them for bringing about a sea change in the functioning of an organisation and make heroic efforts in changing culture of organisations.

It would be very worthwhile if the authors were to revisit and study the working of the organisations (included in the sample) wherein the chief executives have changed and find the extent to which the organizational transformation has survived the departure of the transformational leaders.

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