

BIMTECH-I

AIMA-BIMTECH Business Responsibility Summit Death of CSR - Birth of Responsible Business



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Mr. Arun Maria, in his latest book, 'Transforming Capitalism', remarked, "CSR programmers on the fringes of business as usual and philanthropic schemes, no matter how good-hearted, will be inadequate to save the world".

All India Management Association (Alma) in association with BIMTECH organized a two-day 'Business Responsibility Summit' on July 18-19, 2008 in New Delhi with the theme of 'Death of CSR and Birth of Responsible Business'. Leading management thinker, Dr. C K Parallax, delivered the Keynote Address at the summit while Mr. Arun Maria, Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group, acted as the Summit Director.

Some of the other high profile speakers at the summit included Dr. R Gopalakrishnan, Tata Sons; Mr. Baharat Wakhlu from Tata; Prof. PO Jose, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; Dr. Neelamegham, NIILM; Dr. Venkataratnam, IMI Delhi; Mr. Chintamani Rao, CEO, Times Now; Dr. A K Ghose, Jubilant Organosys; Ms. Amita Joseph, BCF; Mr. Uddesh Kohli, Global Compact and Swami Sukhbodhanand, a spiritual guru.

Mr. Kamal Singh, Director, Centre for Management Development (AIMA-CMD), sharing the objective of the summit said, "The objective of the summit is to address broader issues than the traditional view of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The summit is organized for business community to rethink their responsibilities towards society and build appropriate link between the community and stakeholders."

The above quote captures the essence of the theme of the summit. The inaugural session began with lighting the ceremonial lamp by all the dignitaries on the dais. "What should be the objective of any

corporation around the world, Wealth creation or the method of wealth creation?" was the key question posed by Mr. Arun Maira in the Summit Director's address. CSR and Birla group are synonymous to each other. Dr. H Chaturvedi further added in his opening remarks that as preached by Gandhiji, -II Birla Institutions are following the doctrine of trusteeship since their inception. He assured the corporate world and academia that BIMTECH will keep on assigning the highest weightage to the value system while taking in the management students as well as designing and delivering management curriculum for these selected students.

In his Keynote Address, Dr. C K Prahalad reconfirmed the role of a manager to work for maximizing shareholder wealth. But he surprised everyone by asking the meaning of maximization of shareholder wealth. He discussed various economic and social pressures which are forcing the organizations at all levels to be high performers. Ecological stewardship and scale remained at the top of his list of socio-economic factors. He concluded by sharing the case of BP hybrid chula which makes use of both bio-mass and LPG. This case is a true manifestation of achieving scale through self help groups on an innovation meant for rural development and energy saving measures.

The first session was on the topic of 'Redefining Responsible Business'. The session was chaired by Mr. Bharat Wakhlu, Resident Director, Toto Group, Delhi, where the speakers were Mr. Anurag Goel, Secretary, Ministry of Company Affairs and Mr. K Ranganath, CMD, Kundremukh Iron.

The second session had the discussion on 'Listening to Voices of Citizens'. The speakers of this session were Mr. A K Ghose, President (CSR), Jubilant Organosys and Ms. Amita Joseph, Director, Business

and Community Foundation, amongst others. Mr. A K Ghose from Jubilant Organosys described Responsible Business to be an evolutionary process which started in the guise of Philanthropy and is now becoming an instrumental value to inclusive development. He discussed an interesting model on the role of stakeholders in one's journey through Responsible Business. The Model put across influence versus impact of stakeholder on your CSR initiative. This model, at the end of the day, defines the parameter for stakeholder's engagement in the act.

Ms. Amita Joseph from Business and Community Foundation advocated a new dimension to business responsibility through listening to the voices of the customers. She discussed in detail about the Ministry of Consumer Affairs initiatives like NCH (National Consumer Helpline), Consumer Coordination Council and VOICE magazine. An interesting data sheet highlighted telecom, defective products, banking, LPG and insurance to be amongst the front runners in consumer complaints in descending order. She shared the vision of National Consumer Helpline (NCH) as Nation of awakened, empowered and responsible consumers and socially and legally responsible corporations.

"Is the investment community sensitized as to the end-use their funds are put to by the companies that they are investing in", was the theme for a panel discussion presided over by Mr. Chintamani Roo of the Times of India Group. Among others, Prof. K K Krishnan represented BIMTECH in the discussions.

The point made by Prof. Krishnan was that long term financial institutions like the life insurance companies in India were investing as per the mandate of government regulations and were fully conscious and aware of the end-use of the invested funds. The investment guidelines stipulated that over 50% of the incremental investible surplus was to be channeled to government and other approved securities, which were targeted for the financing of infrastructure and social development. As institutions like insurance companies played a major role in the investment landscape of India, it could be said that a significant portion of investment was anchored in the corporate social responsibility framework".

The first session on the second day on 'Sowing the seeds in B-Schools' was moderated by Mr. Arum Maria. The panelists of this session were Dr. H Chattered, Director, BIMTECH; Prof. PO Jose, 11M Bangalore; Dr. C S Venkataratnam, Director, International Management Institute,

New Delhi and Dr. S Neelamegham, President, NIILM Centre for Management Studies, New Delhi. Dr. S Neelamegham surprised everyone by quoting from The Economist; "Five years ago, business schools, particularly in America, came under attack from all sides. Fairly or not, they took some of the blame for the corporate scandals that erupted at firms such as Enron and WorldCom. Jeffrey Skilling, the former boss of Enron, was a star of the Harvard Business School class of 1979. Other corporate villains and their lackeys have boasted MBAs. Many agreed with one commentator that the only way to solve the ethical problems of corporate America was to fire everyone under 35 with an MBA'.

The session was highly interactive and involved the audiences also. The contribution of business schools towards making the future managers understand their responsibility towards society and all the stakeholders at large was felt greatly. Everyone highlighted the mannerism in which their respective institutions are delivering high value systems to their students to be human first before becoming a manager. Empathy with the social issues was considered as a key value to be inculcated during the curriculum and even community service should be a mandatory part of the curriculum.

The next two sessions were a true feast to the audiences seeking spiritual enlightenment. It all started with Swami Sukhbodhanandji, who in own style of delivery, emphasized on four most important aspects of life, " To love, To Learn, To Give and To Enjoy". He told everyone to transcend through the journey of thinking, feeling and being. His own explanation of ego as "Edging God Out" was taken up with a big applause of appreciation by the audiences. Dr. H Chaturvedi felicitated Swamiji with a holy idol on this occasion and sought his blessings for all the gatherings and students of BIMTECH.

The summit concluded with the valedictory address by Dr. R Gopalakrishnan. The title of the Presentation, "Success is a Thief", in itself was very astonishing for the audience. Dr. Gopalakrishnan in his own style explained that Success is a thief of Time and Ethics. He said that even after winning a rat race you remain a rat only. In his delivery he tried to prove the importance of context in the whole of the learning process. He supported his points with a lot of video clippings and anecdotes.