

'Chalta hain culture & herd mentality suppress talent, promotes mediocrity'

Arun Kumar Jagatramka

WHAT does the oft-repeated term CSR mean? What makes a corporate citizen stand out as a socially conscious one? What are the responsibilities that a good corporate should bear to be one that can be recognised as a socially responsible corporate citizen? Is the entire premise about paying lip service by adding platitudes that mean nothing and filling in a few paragraphs in the website or the brochure? Surely, for a corporate, whose *raison d'être* is to add value and create wealth, esoteric concepts like these should not divert the attention from its basic functions. Then why is the din so deafening?

Is CSR all about photo opportunities then? Politically correct picture post cards posted from the slums of the city? Pictures of smiling malnutrition, of pot-bellied children who do not have access to two square meals a day, savouring candies provided by a corporate as part of its annual function? Of the boss' wife unveiling the 'safe sanitation week' in collaboration with the officer's wife's institute that profess the virtues of sanitation to those who do not have access to it? It is not in my nature to belittle efforts of others, however trivial they may seem against the yardsticks of practicality. Far from it. I salute the efforts and I honour the spirit behind each one of them.

It is just that I define the entire premise in different terms. My take is far more fundamental. The measures that I take and hope to continue taking are far more basic. And I try to approach the whole thing by virtue of being an Indian first. An Indian industrialist, if you may. I add the term industrialist because, as one, I have access not only to the requisite funds, but also to the management skill sets to ensure their optimal deployment and effective usage.

And, like a true corporate soldier, before going into the blitzkrieg, I assess the objective that has to be secured, the resources required to achieve the end, the means that have to be deployed and try to identify pitfalls on the way to achievement.

So what is the objective? To help create an India that our forefathers dreamt of. An India that has secured her rightful place in the League of Nations. More importantly, an India that has learnt how to hold her head high.

And what is the biggest obstacle on the path? An age-old value system, that has steadily corroded over the last couple of decades. We have a judiciary that is loaded by the legislature about the severity of punishment as opposed to certainty of punishment. We have a political system that is concerned merely about its own continuity by dividing the nation in terms of caste, creed, region, religion, colour and language so that it can play one group against the other for political gains. We have a bureaucracy where entry ensures continuity to eternity without accountability. All three of which have combined to create a nation which is run on the motto "chalta hai"! The reign of mediocrity that doesn't not allow talent to foster, for it is more prof-

itable to be a part of the herd — be that the Muslim herd, or the Maharashtra herd, or the Dalit herd, or the villager herd — than stand-out as an Indian.

Naturally, this India is the hotbed of corruption. Whether a birth certificate or a death certificate, everything comes at a cost. The local police station, the municipal corporation, the registrar of companies, the Income Tax department, the department dealing with motor vehicles — are all fountainheads from where sprouts the hydra headed monster called corruption. We jump up and down in joy when the lone politician is 'exposed' in a sting operation, but do nothing about tackling the malaise.



The target is the future. It is my mission to ignite a million minds and ensure that they take the message forward, so that my children and their children can live in the India that our forefathers had dreamt of.

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We clap our hands and move on. We move on because we do not think twice before jumping the traffic signal when there are no policemen around. We move on because we do not think twice before 'greasing' the odd palm, to move just that bit up in life. We move on, because we do not consider corruption an ill. We move on because, in this age of instant gratification, we too want things 'done'. We too want to get on with life and are willing to pay that 'extra' bit to achieve our ends. And here, I am talking of you and me.

The same you and me, who swore eternal revenge when the Mumbai terror attacks happened. The same you and me, us, who professed the idea of hot pursuit. 'Us', who heaped indignities on the politicians for having "compromised" the security of the Nation. For having 'sold' national needs for pecuniary benefit. For having 'compromised' national security — the same you and me, who had looked the other way when a police constable's son had, over decades, grown into a 'don'. The same you and me who had not raised our voice when an unknown 'Indian' had let in

'his' consignment of deadly RDX for a 'fee'. The same you and me who use 'hawala' to evade a few rupees in taxes as we send money to our children studying abroad. The same hawala, that the mongers of terror use to finance attacks on the nation.

And it is here that I want to strike. Into the very heart of this apathetic, 'sanitised' thought process. It is not an easy task. Of injecting 'integrity' into the very consciousness of India, of every Indian. It is not an easy task. It is not impossible either. And I have taken it on me to spread the word.

The target is the future. Young impressionable minds that are awaiting ignition. It is my mission to ignite a million minds and ensure that they take the message forward, so that my children and their children can live in the India that our forefathers had dreamt of.

Jai Hind!

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