



## Charismatic Leadership in Educational Institutions

It is often stated that leadership makes or mars an institution. Without a leader to lead, the organizations often have a tendency to become weak, disorganized, unstable and can even crumble. This is true even in the context of educational institutions. One of the important traits that the leadership should in this context possess is what is known as the quality of being charismatic.

Charismatic leadership is not a phenomenon by birth but an art developed by an alert eye and mind. Rather, leadership is gained by experience, by absorbing knowledge, by seeing and listening to the world around - both inside the organization and beyond the peripheral. Max Weber, a sociologist has defined charisma (Greek word for "gift") as a trait of a person, which differentiates him from ordinary people and is considered blessed with specifically exceptional powers or qualities. Amiable personality and charm, rather than any form of external power or authority enables the charismatic leaders to gather followers.

What makes charismatic leaders champions is the fact that they differ from the normal leaders by virtue of greater self-confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and unconventional behavior. Charismatic leaders convey values

through words and actions and set an example for followers to emulate. Various studies have proven that charismatic leaders create an emotional contagion with their employees and thus, boost their performance. Martin Luther King's speech 'I Have a

tution to the heights of success through various innovative collaborations, quality education and uplifting the values of the institution.

**ETHICS AND SENSITIVITY:** Educational leaders with charisma incorporate ethical analysis as an ongoing way of

### EXPERT SPEAK: HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

#### Charismatic leadership plays a big role in building successful institutions

Dream' which evoked emotional reactions and pursuant actions by the crowd brings to light how a charismatic leader can spread his emotion to his followers. Research has proved that there is definite correlation between charismatic leadership and level of performance & satisfaction of the team. Charismatic leaders motivate their employees and they, in turn, put in extra work and efforts due to respect and work satisfaction, thus creating valuable institutions that nurture a better society.

Key Characteristics of Charismatic Leaders include:  
**VISION AND ARTICULATION:** Vision creates a sense of continuity for followers as it links the current with a better future for the institution. Charismatic leaders give life to vision that has clear articulation through its powerful imagery, thus taking the insti-

thinking and explore important issues that act as a framework for decision-making based on core values. They exhibit fairness and transparency in the decisions they take. Charismatic leaders take into account abilities of the people they work with and respond to their needs and feelings. For them displaying confidence in the team members is paramount. They believe that their people possess the potential for development and can achieve goals without his/her being present constantly. They encourage the team's development by sponsoring them for conferences, urging them to participate in research and enabling their learning processes thereby, generating progressive transfer of knowledge to the students.

Pulling strings phenomena: Charismatic Leaders are

very persuasive and make very effective use of non-verbal as well as verbal communication to create bonding with their team. The way they interact and gather admiration of the staff, students and other stakeholders is mere "charisma". They are attention-givers and in the process gather attention of the masses. They would give the person they are talking to, at any one moment the feeling that he is, for that time, the most important person in the world.

**RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES:** The popular saying is that an employee doesn't leave the company, he leaves his Boss. A charismatic leader has the capacity to satisfy his/her employees with courteousness, empathy, and motivation skill. This enables not only improving the employees but also retaining the best performing employees within the given extreme competitive scenario.

In brief the acid test of a charismatic leadership is to manage the differing and often conflicting interests of the various stakeholders that include students, teaching fraternity, non-teaching staff, parents, external customers including corporate and the society at large.

Nevertheless a leader cannot lead unless someone chooses to follow. So the exemplary qualities of the institution leader help retain talent and facilitate its progress. Effective leaders are not necessarily loved or admired as popularity does not dictate leadership but results do. So the institutional head has to be quick in decision making as well be result oriented. Leaders have to set examples, be it through mentoring, or by managing external environment, or by communicating with students and other stakeholders, by managing the campus and other actions, more so because they know they are highly visible. Last but not the least; leadership is not about rank, privilege, title or money. It is about responsibility that makes a charismatic leader!

*(This article has been authored by Prof. Lakshmi Mohan, Associate Director, Times Business School, Vashi and a life member of Higher Education Forum (HEF).*

## "Leadership is a learned behavior"

How do you see the growth and evolution of the Indian education system, over the last few years? Where is it lagging behind?

The higher education scenario in India has gone through significant change in the last decade and this has led to the emergence of several critical issues relating to governance of higher education institutions. For instance affiliation of colleges and acute shortage of good quality teachers in higher education are the major problems faced by the Indian Education system. The government has also asked all the universities and educational institutions to start correspondence courses in various disciplines. But there are constraints inherent in the process and cannot serve the needs of those who desire to have knowledge of science and technology, the rudiments of which cannot be comprehended without the use of laboratories, machinery etc.

In your view, where is India headed as a nation and what role education can (and should) be playing in this journey?

Our education system needs to be surely revamped in the areas of higher education. Higher education needs to be made equally accessible to all, through progressive introduction of free education. In this era of knowledge economy, educational institutions have to gear up to meet the challenges that will be posed due to the advent of the foreign universities. The thrust has to be on improving quality of education by innovation and academic advancement.

What elements should the present-day education system incorporate in the curriculum as well as teaching methodology to produce more socially responsible citizens?

Modern day students rely on internet and books for 70 per cent of their knowledge and thus their dependence on classroom inputs has reduced to 30 per cent. Knowledge is available everywhere, anytime. Even children use cell phones and internet to gain knowledge. In this case educational institutions should change their outdated and old teaching methodologies. Teachers should modify their role to keep pace with the changing methods of learning, adopted by the students.

What is the role and the relevance of the private sector in the field of education - across levels i.e. from primary level onwards up to the university and PG level?

Private sector is coming in a big way in education. The entry of private-sector in education has been on the basis of a realistic recognition of

### IN CONVERSATION



Leaders can be made. Politics can be taught. Education system needs changes. **Mr. Rahul Karad**, Dean of MIT School of Government, Pune holds forth on some of these issues in an interview with B. Manisha. Excerpts.

the needs and interests of the population. It has added new dimensions and alternatives for the education-hungry population. Private educational enterprises offer greater variety of educational choices that match the greater variety of educational needs and interests inherent in a radically expanded and more heterogeneous student population. Not just variety but modernity in course-content appeals to the students, craving direct relationship between the job market and formal education. Short-term, part-time, placement-oriented courses are a niche opportunity successfully catered to by the private institutions.

#### A GOOD LEADER SHOULD BE:

- Action oriented
- Influence oriented
- People oriented
- Process oriented

Can you share the genesis of the relatively new and unique course in politics and government, being offered by the Pune-based MIT School, with which you are associated? What are the pedagogical methods being deployed to impart learning?

Inspired by John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, the Pune based MIT School of Government (MITSOG) established in 2005, is the pioneer and the only institute in Asia to initiate a leadership program in politics

and government. The Masters Program in the Government (MPG) primarily seeks to have an enlightened public representatives and parliamentarians. The career prospects for the students who graduate from MIT School of Government are excellent. Guided by ex-bureaucrat and former Chief Election Commissioner of India, T.N Seshan acting as the Chairman, the institute provides a comparative study of five parliaments of different countries like UK, Switzerland, France and others which the students also get to visit. For Students interested in actively pursuing politics, this course is an eye-opener as we are exposing them to all the facets of government & nuances of politics in India as well as providing them with the much-needed global exposure.

A career in politics and government seems to be a very different academic pursuit. How ready is the market for something like this? How has it been accepted?

India is still a developing nation where politics is not seen as a good career or a noble profession. Hence there is an urgent need of honest educated intellectuals to join the stream and not only cleanse the system but give it a proper direction backed by the knowledge on functioning of day to day affairs of government, policy drafting and decisions on national and international affairs, so they could become better managers and administrators to run the government. The fact that they will be educated and trained on all these issue will certainly put them in a better position to take good decisions. The program is to develop a person holistically rather than mastering a specific field. Students of this course can look forward to work with leading political leaders, social leaders and various government bodies as functional advisors, strategists and policy makers, as back-office executives in political parties, as political analysts & election consultants. The choices are many.

Leaders can be created (or they are born) - which according to you think is more relevant in current times?

Leadership like most attributes is a learned behaviour. True, some people have these learning experiences earlier in life and as a result have more practice. Yet others have been practicing leadership skills without a formal definition of leadership. Leaders can certainly be made but should have the basic attributes to become a leader such as intellectual stimulation, flexibility, courage, dependability, integrity, sound judgment and respect for others.

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## 'SCHOOL OF TOMORROW' - COMING TOGETHER OF GREAT MINDS

### CURTAIN-RAISER



#### About iDiscoveri

iDiscoveri is an innovative social enterprise with a vision to transform India's schools. Led by alumni of Harvard, IIM, IIT, XLRI, it has high quality curriculum, training, assessment and ongoing support capability. Its flagship program XSEED, a path-breaking and comprehensive solution for quality teaching and learning in K12 schools, reaches over 400 schools across the social spectrum.

THE second edition of 'School of Tomorrow', an XSEED annual international conference on education to be held on December 7, 2010 in Mumbai will bring many tough-leaders under one roof. Eminent speakers like former President Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Prof. Peter Senge from MIT, Prof David Perkins from Harvard University, Mr Gurcharan Das, author and ex-CEO P&G, would provide simple yet powerful and actionable vision for the schools of the future from an Indian and international perspective.

Slated to be the biggest confluence of education leaders in this part of world, School of Tomorrow will offer a platform to schools to engage in a high-quality dialogue with thought-leaders from all walks of life and thereby create a momentum for progressive change in school-education.

The programme will be seamlessly integrated across four cities (New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai) using Internet and video-conferencing technology. The event is being organized by iDiscoveri, the innovative education enterprise focused on learning and leadership.

The event will open with two enlightening keynote addresses, where Dr. Abdul Kalam will outline his vision for the kind of citizen India needs to emerge as a knowledge super-power, followed by Prof David Perkins who will speak on effective schools of future. Each city will feature two facilitated panel of experts - education domain-experts and business and government leaders who will discuss micro and macro trends that can transform school-education.

According to Ashish Rajpal, CEO, iDiscoveri Education, "This event is an unprecedented effort to

bring together over thousand leaders of the most respected schools across four Indian cities together with international education experts, entrepreneurs and policy-makers to give shape to the future of school education. The objective of such a conference is to inject the schools domain with cutting-edge ideas from

thinkers and practitioners across the world on what possibilities exist for schools to redefine teaching, learning and leadership-practices and to get connected to the changing demands of society on the schooling system. "It would indeed be a coming together of great minds under one roof, for the education-fraternity.

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