INSIGHTS INTO LEADERSHIP MANDATES AND IMPERATIVES IN A VUCA WORLD

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Abstract

"Leadership behavior is multidimensional. These dimensions are finite in number, and vary according to leader personality, the requirements of the task to be performed by him and his followers, the attitudes, needs, and expectations of his followers, and the organizational and physical environment in which he and they operate."— [**Alan C. Filley and Robert J. House]** Effective leadership, in any situation, should give direction to the efforts of the members of the society in general and those of the individual organization specifically in accomplishing the organizational and societal goals respectively. Without leadership or guidance, the link between the people and the goals might become tenuous leading to a situation of sub-optimization wherein the selfish interests of the individuals are achieved making the overall organizations inefficient and compromising the exalted goals of the society. As per Keith Davis, without leadership, an organization is but a muddle of men and machines. Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor which binds a group together and motivates it toward goals. Management activities such as planning, organizing, and decision-making are dormant cocoons until the leader triggers the power of motivation in people and guides them toward goals. Leadership transforms *potential* into *reality*. It is the ultimate act which brings to success all of the potential that is in an organization and its people**.**

This Paper is presented in **FIVE** Sections. The academic world has witnessed drastic and dramatic changes in the normative ways of teaching and learning in the very first few months of the academic year 2020, when the least expected and understood COVID-19 has descended on to the whole world. So, i**n Section-I**, an attempt is made to enumerate and explain the various leadership challenges the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are currently facing with special focus on the status of HEIs in the Post-COVID scenario and the way forward. As per World Economic Forum, there are at least five ways in which COVID-19 has changed the ways in which the workforce is managed.

The world's response has resulted in the most rapid transformation of the workplace. **In Section-II**, with the emergence of Society 5.0 in the evolution of human society, the paradigm shifts in the leadership Practices under Industry 4.0 and Marketing 4.0, and Marketing 5.0 are discussed. It also throws light on how Industry 5.0, which is characterized by going beyond producing goods and services for profit and as something that lies next to and beyond Industry 4.0. It also provides an overview of how the constantly changing and evolving trends in industry and shifts in marketing philosophies are placing constant pressures upon the business leaders and industry captains. VUCA has become a catch all phrase and today, it is frequently used in the context of the global business/marketing environment.

So, in **Section-III**, the issue of what business leaders need to do to survive and thrive in a VUCA World is addressed by giving real life VUCA examples and analysis to demonstrate several things to the business leaders. **Section-IV** debates about the leadership imperatives to

keep the organizations healthy and viable in a VUCA society. Competition in global markets in virtually every product, service, industry, and market segment is fierce and will grow even fiercer. Finally, under **Section-V**, the need for and importance of an innovative marketing strategy to effectively deal with the multiple challenges and threats that organizational leaders and members are facing today are presented. In summary, the primary hallmarks of leaders of VUCA world and the leadership interventions are mentioned citing some practical examples from the corporate domain**.**

Keywords: VUCA Society; Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs); Workforce Management; Society 5.0, and Innovative Marketing Strategy;

➢ INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP IN A VUCA SOCIETY

One single acronym that succinctly captures the essence of the complex, evolving, and dynamic environment confronted by global societies is VUCA! Having originated in the American Military context, it stands for describing extreme conditions during warfare that are Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. Today, it's become a trendy managerial acronym to represent four epithets that characterize the modern business world viz., **volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.** It has become not only a catchall phrase to depict that it's crazy out in the society, it's also misleading as it conflates four distinct types of challenges that demand four distinct types of responses.

Lifting up the institution and catapulting it to an Ivy League leadership position immediately and providing the same sustainably for future regardless of its concomitant benefits are the two distinct objectives of leadership imperative in a given societal context. Simply stated, organization leadership is bringing about organization change for greater effectiveness or efficacy through organizational impacts and outcomes.

Leadership is all about channeling the intelligence, experience, and creativity of organization members in systematic, participative programs in which the members themselves find solutions to their most pressing challenges—a powerful formula and mantra for change. Introducing most apt and appropriate change interventions into the organizations successfully is one of the solutions. Leaders need to employ a process for teaching the members of the organizations as to how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and learn how to do that better and better over time in a VUCA World. Some of the problems that leaders face today are poor morale, low productivity, poor quality, inter-personal conflict, inter-group conflict, unclear or inappropriate goals, inappropriate leadership styles, poor team performance, inappropriate organization structure, poorly designed tasks, inadequate response to environmental demands, poor customer relations, inadequate alignment among the organization's strategy, structure, culture, and processes, and the like. Leaders can improve the situation where individuals, teams, and organizations are not realizing their potential. Leadership is expected to introduce behavioral science interventions—not engineering or machine-focused ones—for organizational improvement. Leaders are required to effectively make use of applied behavioral science discipline dedicated to improving organizations and the people in them through the theory and practice of planned change especially in the context of a VUCA World. Let us examine how VUCA Analysis and VUCA Framework are going to be of immediate application and immense assistance citing different contexts of given society.

SECTION-I

➢ Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and Leadership Challenges in a VUCA World

"I think higher education is just on the edge of the crevasse. Generally, universities are doing very well financially, so they don't feel from the data that their world is going to collapse. But I think even five years from now these enterprises are going to be in real trouble. [Clayton Christensen (2013)].

In the theoretical context, when we apply the VUCA approach in academia, certain challenges arise out of both exogenous and endogenous factors. However, envisioning future oriented leadership beyond VUCA is a *sine qua non* for its survival. It is also inevitable for making the future of the academic world growing and sustainable in the long term. The current academic leadership all over the world due to pervasive factors of globalization is destined to grow subject to VUCA. But challenges of sustainability and the prospect of resurrection from the downward swings are different in the developed and developing world. One distinct example that can profoundly demonstrate this is the COVID crisis. The volatilities witnessed in the developed world had their ripple effects in the form of a drastic reduction in the intake of students from the most populous and originating countries like China, India, Bangladesh, and so forth. This has impacted many reputed educational institutions of the developing world. Lack of digital infrastructure and many other peripherals acted as major constraints in providing online education in the developing countries. The fact that the capacities for coping with the uncertainties are totally different in both the developed and developing worlds has emerged very strikingly during the pandemic times.

The foresight and sagacity of leaders in a given sector are appreciated mainly due to their ability to predict uncertainties, if not manage their consequences when they actually unfold. However, the degree of uncertainty involved in some "unknown unknowns" is so high that the present set of leadership skills was put to test. It is proved that present leadership competencies are insufficient to face up to and deal with the emerging challenges. This has forced many a HEI to explore and experiment with paradigms that are completely new and untested/untried. While the academic leadership perennially needs to deal with the uncertainties involved in the job market for the products offered by HEIs and the skills sets demanded by them are always in a state of flux. Very often, the unforeseen economic realities resulting from the technological explosion make them beyond the comprehension of any linear thinking process of academic leaders. In this context, academic leadership should focus on and invest in research, invention, and innovation. It should also test the actual applicability of all these three in reducing the extent of uncertainty both in the academic institution and the demand side of the market.

Confusion is the hallmark of the entire academic discipline. This should in fact lead to and justify further academic inquiry and more proactive research. If the leadership is encouraged to take risks in investing into different approaches, syllabi, pedagogies, and teaching learning techniques, it would be highly rewarding as well. However, we continue to witness the world is still experimenting under great hazy confusion whether to integrate management education with technical education like engineering and medical sciences and to integrate sociology in the study of hard sciences and management. They are also mulling over whether astronomers should also be trained for psychological aspects of empathy, tolerance, and perseverance. These issues are continuously debated and experimented by the academic world. Wherever able academic leadership was demonstrated, integration and disintegration aspects have yielded fantastic results. Conversely, absence of promising and visionary leadership has failed even the best concepts.

But one overarching question that is being asked repeatedly is whether the leaders are doing the right thing, and unquestionably a right thing or adopting an approach that can unequivocally be stated as a very productive approach with complete surety. Today, when we live in a universe of ambiguity, the answers to these questions may not be right or wrong.

But in the final analysis, it is the leadership that has to prove whether they are right or wrong. Effective leadership alone will prove that every ambiguity leads to an unambiguous certainty and absence of such leadership will make a poised exit from the world 'VUCA'. When the leaders are managing fund starved and cash strapped HEIs, the ability to generate revenues on a sustainable basis calls for (i) successful collaboration with external stakeholders of HEIs ecosystem and (ii) profitable engagement with the players of the commercial world as two necessary preliminaries to overcome gnawing problem of extreme illiquidity. Moreover, excessive emphasis being laid for accreditations from international agencies is definitely putting an extra pressure that is challenging the Universities even more. This is resulting in constant nudging and more and more nagging of their members with the "Publish or Perish" slogan and

needling them to go for more and better Intellectual Property Rights in the form of patents, copyrights, and designs.

- **Higher Education Post-COVID**

Emmanuel Métais, Dean at EDHEC Business School in France said, "The most striking thing for me is that people are really aware that the role of teachers is going to change tremendously in the coming years. Education will be less about repeating the same thing to classes of students. 'Standardized knowledge', such as basic courses in maths or finance, might be delivered online or by robots, whilst professors will have to be focused more on providing very specific knowledge. They will be involved in the human side of teaching – encouraging the acquisition of soft skills, teaching the right learning methods, and motivating students." The academic world has witnessed drastic and dramatic changes in the normative ways of teaching and learning in the very first few months of the academic year 2020 when the least expected and understood COVID-19 has descended on to the whole world. Undoubtedly, online offerings have emerged as the single largest and dominant option available for imparting knowledge and providing education. When pandemic times arrived like a bolt from the blue, leaving no preparation time whatsoever, all the stakeholders of the HEIs were thrust into *virtual* teaching and learning situations overnight in the place of the erstwhile physical and in-person conventional modes of imparting education.

- **The way forward**

The magnitude of the complexity of education requires responsive practices to facilitate effective teaching and learning across all levels of teaching-learning globally. A strong resolve to go for digitization, digitalization, and digital revolution become not only important but highly imperative in this transformation journey and odyssey. The agenda for contemplation and future course of action for the academic leaders should ideally be:

i. Explore alternative formats of HE outside and beyond the realm of the present dominant imaginary of educational field

ii. Revisit, rethink, and revamp all the faces and facets of HE ecosystem

iii. Striking a fine balance between avowed learning objectives and the emerging technologies adopted

iv. Finding out and understand what the technologies can deliver and what they can't for the new normal conditions

v. A thoughtful and thorough review of the Learning Objectives

vi. Design, develop, and deliver the capacity to adopt, adapt, and modify the new models of knowledge, information, and change.

vii. Slowly and evolving and swiftly forging forward towards newer and best practices

SECTION-II

- **Role of Leadership during Periods of Changed Workforce Management**

As per World Economic Forum, there are at least five ways in which COVID-19 has changed the ways in which the workforce is managed. The world's response has resulted in the most rapid transformation of the workplace. Working from home has become the new normal and we have gone from digitizing the relationship between firm and customer to digitizing the relation between employer and employees. Covid-19 has emerged as a catalyst to reinvent the future of work for the organizational leaders who take the opportunity to make things better than they were. Emerging new technologies have necessitated new roles that in turn have provided a compelling reason to encourage the learning and acquisition of new skills.

As a result, employees will undoubtedly get benefited from being taught new mindsets, behaviors, and values in the quickly-changing and newly evolving workplace. Some of them are: (i) Rapid re-skilling (and Up-skilling), (ii) Quick adoption of new and advanced technologies, (iii) Changing leadership and management competencies, (iv) Corporate culture and leadership skills focus on empathy, (v) A culture of trust, transparency, and openness, (vi) 'Each for all and all for each' value whereby everyone to become and remain supportive of one another, (vii) Individual and social well-being, (viii) Mental, social, physical, and financial well-being, (ix) Working in a more agile way, and (x) Simpler, faster, and less expensive ways to operate.

SECTION-III

➢ **Paradigm Shifts in Leadership Practices under INDUSTRY 4.0 and Marketing 4.0, and Marketing 5.0**

Industry 4.0 refers to the combination of several major technology innovations, all maturing at the same time that is expected to significantly shift the landscape of the manufacturing industry. These technologies—advanced robotics, artificial intelligence, sophisticated sensors, cloud computing, and big data analytics—all exist in manufacturing today in some form, but as they integrate with one another, the physical and virtual world will interlink and transform the industry. Similarly, while Marketing 1.0 is product-driven, Marketing 2.0 is customer-centric, Marketing 3.0 is human Centric, and Marketing 4.0 is *a* marketing approach that combines online and offline interaction betweencompanies and customers. It also blends style with substance in building brands, and ultimately complements machine-to-machine connectivity with human-to-human touch to strengthen customer engagement. ["Marketing 4.0—Moving from Traditional to Digital" by Philip Kotler] These constantly changing and evolving trends in industry and shifts in marketing philosophies place constant pressures upon the business leaders and industry captains. Now, they require them to rise to the occasion so that they will be able to meet the multiple and greater demands expected of them.

• **Industry 5.0 shall be the next phase beyond Industry 4.0 Marketing**

Next to and beyond Industry 4.0 lies ahead Industry 5.0, which is characterized by going beyond producing goods and services for profit. It shifts the focus from the *shareholder* value to *stakeholder* value and reinforces the role and the contribution of industry to society. It places the well-being of the worker at the centre ofthe production process and uses new technologies toprovide prosperity beyond jobs and growth while respecting the production limits of the planet.

It complements the existing "Industry 4.0" approach byputting research and innovation to a sustainable, human-centric and resilient European industry.

• **The Emergence of Society 5.0 in the Evolution of Human Society**

History of mankind reveals that evolution of human society has been fueled by technological advances, with key steps along the way where a man in Society 1.0 is characterized as a hunter-gatherer, Society 2.0 is agrarian, Society 3.0 is industrial in nature, and today, we live in Society 4.0 which is typified by information, and lastly "Society 5.0 is a human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolutions of social problems by a system that integrates cyberspace and physical space." Society 5.0 achieves a high degree of convergence between cyberspace (virtual space) and physical space (real space). Huge amount of information from sensors in physical space is accumulated in cyberspace. In cyberspace, this big data is analyzed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the results from the analysis are fed back to humans in physical space in various forms.

Things and systems are all connected in cyberspace and optimal results obtained by AI exceeding the capabilities of humans are fed back to physical space. Society 5.0 would also contribute to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the Union Nations. Japan aims to become the first

country in the world to achieve a human-centered society (Society 5.0) in which anyone can enjoy a high quality of vigor. It intends to accomplish this by incorporating advanced technologies in diverse industries and social activities and fostering innovation to create new value. Several new values such as mobility, healthcare and care giving, manufacturing, agriculture, food, disaster prevention, and energy are going to get introduced.

SECTION-IV

> **What Business Leaders need to do to Survive and Thrive in a VUCA World?**

What is the Purpose of a Business? In his book, The Practice of Management, Peter F. Drucker declares there is only one purpose of a business: ***to create a customer.*** Marketing is coming up with a basic definition of the basic needs and wants that the marketers want to basically *sense, serve, and satisfy.* Where 'sensing' is done through Market Research, 'serving' is done through Production and Operations Management, and 'Satisfying' is done through Customer Relationship Management.

Peter F. Drucker has identified eight Key Result Areas (KRAs) and has placed Marketing at the top of the hierarchy to be followed by Innovation, Physical Resources, Financial Resources, Human Resources, Productivity, Social responsibility, and Profitability.

• **VUCA in a Business Environment**

VUCA has become a catch all phrase and today, it is frequently used in the context of the global business/marketing environment. Real Life VUCA Examples and Analysis demonstrate several things to the business leaders. The 21st Century Third Millennium World is extremely complex, uncertain, ambiguous, and volatile. Business leadership requires special capabilities and unique ability to quickly adopt newer technology and innovate rapidly. For instance, after enjoying the supreme position of a market leader for over 120 years, Kodak took no time to file for bankruptcy. All players of the business ecosystem and political as well as economic observers are using VUCA instances to effectively describe this fast-changing and dynamic world. They get us rich insights on its relevance for marketers and to learn why they must have the skills, mindset, and the ability to survive and thrive in a VUCA world. Business practices do change suddenly and unpredictably in this volatile environment, often going in extreme directions before the products/services go outdated/outmoded/obsolete/redundant.

Rapid ***innovation*** is an important tool to maintain leadership in a volatile environment. ***'Challengers'*** within an organization must be developed and encouraged to create disruptive services and products that can replace existing ones. When important ***information*** is either not easily available or not authentic, marketers are compelled to make decisions on intuition rather than information, which can lead to failure. Marketers face several obstacles while making decisions in a VUCA marketplace.

• **How does VUCA Framework Help Business Leaders?**

For instance, Bangladeshi marketers took high-stake decisions to diversify, internationalize, and grow. Marketers are required to rely on the digitally available data to make big and critical decisions now. However, experience and intuition cannot be disregarded as history shows how valuable they are even today. Data is the means to scientifically and logically support marketers' intuition that empowers them to take calculated risks at critical moments. Organizations and business leaders can benefit in understanding the market space better in which they operate. CEOs and industry captains are increasingly referring to VUCA world examples before adopting VUCA Analysis. It's providing them with an approach to tackle different challenging situations arising from external factors like society, economics, technology, environment and politics. To gain real insights, we can have a look at VUCA world examples as we analyze the four elements of VUCA viz., volatilities, uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities.

- **Volatilities in the business landscape:** Volatilities emerge when business activities are interconnected on the global stage. And, volatile markets change unpredictably and rapidly. One of the VUCA examples that displayed volatility recently is ***China's economic slowdown.*** Financial markets were impacted globally as the supply chain of products was affected along with international import and export of products.

- **Uncertainties in business context:** Business exigencies can't be relied on as they are unknown or indefinite. An organization launching a product can impact competitors as it can affect demand and sales. We can immediately cite **Uber** and **Airbnb** as the two popular VUCA examples of uncertainty. While Airbnb impacted the hotel industry by innovating processes, Uber revolutionized the taxi industry by creating ease of booking. They both had unique models that heavily relied on technology to disrupt the industry.

- **Complexities at the business environment:** They are generally seen with businesses that operate internationally or over large geographical areas. Different cultures, environments, and regulations can create complexities that a marketer must be prepared for. One product may generate huge revenue through sales in a region but may be undesirable or heavily regulated and taxed in another. This creates complexities in production, operations and supply chain management (logistics).

- **Ambiguities at the marketplace:** Marketers should get prepared to face the ***unknown*** at some point in their organizational lives. An ambiguous landscape offers no simple answers. When it comes to market situations and marketing problems, there are multiple layers to them that have no obvious meaning and are open to interpretation. ***Globalization*** is an example of venturing into ambiguous landscapes that can reap benefits due to expansion or losses due to inability.

Leaders can learn from VUCA examples and show a good understanding of possible outcomes when dealing with these elements in business. They need to open their eyes and see the interconnected and rapidly changing environment of the modern marketplace. When there are huge pressures to succeed and customers have high expectations, marketers need to adopt the right mindset and strengthen their abilities to successfully navigate such challenges.

- **Let us examine some powerful *"Thinklets"* of Thought Leaders that can benefit Businesses**

Simple notions underlie marketplace success. In the words of Bell and Rosenzweig, to be able to put 'Team Work' in 'Work Teams', leaders need to get the right people together for a large block of uninterrupted time to work on high-priority problems or opportunities that they have identified and that are worked on in ways that are structured to enhance the likelihood of realistic solutions and action plans that are implemented enthusiastically and followed up to assess actual versus expected results. Innovative leadership calls for a high-level collaboration mindset and the leaders need to be skilled at cooperative teamwork. In this context and emphasizing the need for collaboration in conducting business operations in the 21st Century, Mr. Narayana Murthy of Infosys has stated the following: "For instance, the development of a product or service might typically be split among countries, with experts in ***America*** defining the customer requirements, the ***British*** defining the product attributes, the ***Australian***s defining the technology architecture, the ***Indians*** doing the software development, the **Germans** or the ***Japanese*** doing the manufacturing, and the ***Taiwanese*** doing the packaging". This new business model will distribute high-quality jobs around the world and deepen international collaboration.

SECTION-V

➤ **Need for and Importance of an Innovative Marketing Strategy**

Competition in global markets in virtually every product, service, industry, and market segment is fierce and will grow even fiercer. In order not only to endure but to prevail, organizations will find that bringing products to market that are Bobbsey Twins relative to existing products is a strategy doomed to failure.

More and more marketers will find themselves locked in fierce competitive combat as more and more countries join the global economy. Banks, telecommunications, retailing, coffee shops all have global giants that replicate their operations in many countries. The result of this competition is to create many **winners**—lower prices, better service, wider variety of products—and some **losers**—those who worked in the present bankrupt businesses.

- **Successful Leaders Leverage Innovation as a Strategy Weapon**

In his widely-read book Innovation: The Attacker's Advantage, longtime McKinsey consultant Richard Foster notes how innovation is a vital strategy weapon against marketplace incumbents. They must have leveraged scale economies, size, and learning with experience. Innovatively differentiated products that create substantial additional value, relative to what customers can buy already, alone can succeed. After all, t*he marketplace success is the sum total of strategy, production, marketing, finance, and an innovative idea.* Leaders realize that great technology is not a sufficient condition for business success nor is great technology a necessary condition for business success. That there is no superior technology or engineering in Barbie or Dell amply illustrates this point. Leaders keep one point in their minds—a creative, winning business design can be a sufficient condition for business success and profit. Moreover, the combination of great technology and a superior business model can prove virtually unbeatable. Innovative marketers improve their chances for success by becoming great listeners. They develop this skill by **listening to the four innovation voices** viz., their products, customers, organization, and their own inner voice and make each of them an integral part of their own unique innovation system to achieve consistent innovation success far above the one-in-ten average.

Innovative leaders should put a major part of their creative efforts and resources into the **design of the business model**—the value statement, pricing strategy, and cost structure—that accompanies their new products and services. Failure to do so is one of the key mistakes that cause many start ups, and long-established firms, to fail. Winning business designs can, like Barbie dolls, dominate their market for decades. And according to a Hebrew saying, smart managers know how to **escape from tight spots** that wise managers avoid. One may adapt this to read: Smart managers optimize trade-offs that wise and bold ones defy.

- **Leadership Imperatives to Keep the Organizations Healthy and Viable in a VUCA World**

Leadership at once assumes different meanings across its four different dimensions viz., creating an agenda, developing a network for achieving the agenda, execution, and outcomes. Under creating an agenda, the leader establishes direction; develops a vision and the strategies needed for its achievements. Developing a network for achieving the agenda involves aligning people, communicating the direction, by words and deeds, to all the members whose cooperation may be needed to help create teams and coalitions and strategies, and accepting their validity. Under execution, the leader motivates and inspires besides energizing people to overcome major bureaucratic, political as well as resource barriers to change by satisfying basic human needs. As outcomes of their efforts, leaders produce change, often to a dramatic degree.

They have the potential of producing extremely useful change, such as new products desired by the stakeholders.

- **Leadership Skills required in a VUCA World**

A leader should be oriented toward driving change, and anticipating environmental changes and is more concerned with (i) vision, (ii) dynamics of a situation, which provides hints on how to leverage or shape; (iii) setting or changing the culture, (iv) empowering, and (v) building and/or reshaping the organization, and (vi) removal of performance barriers. Leaders should be willing to use skills of persuasion to advance vision and ideas of possibilities—regardless of position. Their actions demonstrate skill, but are strongly character based. They fully understand their strengths and weaknesses, and are willing to learn from their mistakes and grow; able and interested in helping others do the same. They see relationships as

opportunities for growth and keep their personal goals in alignment with organizational goals while recognizing that realizing the interdependencies is the best way to achieve goals. They never fail to build systems to support goals, empower others, and provide direction while simultaneously promoting sharing and collaboration for the continued growth of team members.

- **What are the multiple challenges and threats that Organizational Leaders face today in a VUCA World?**

Today, we face threats to effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability; challenges from turbulent environments, increased competition, and changing customer demands; and the constant challenge to maintain congruence among organizational dimensions such as technology, strategy, culture, and processes; and also the daunting task of keeping organizations healthy and viable in today's VUCA World.

- **Then, what are the challenges being faced by organizational members?**

Finding satisfaction in and through work, fighting obsolescence of one's knowledge and skills; maintaining dignity and purpose in pursuit of organizational goals; achieving human connectedness and community in the workplace; simple survival—continuing to have an adequate job—a major challenge today in light of constant layoffs and cutbacks; old jobs being destroyed at an accelerating pace; and knowledge work is replacing muscle work.

Facing an enormously demanding present and future both by the organizations, searching for and coming up with strategies to help people and organizations cope, adapt, survive, and even prosper in these vexing times is the real challenge for leaders. They need to primarily focus on the issues and challenges related to the "human side" of an organization's human and social processes.

In this endeavor, the dual focus on developing/improving organizations/individuals shall be the unique strength of effective leaders. Successful leaders ideally make the people within their organizations to collaboratively manage the culture of those organizations in such a way that the goals and purposes of the organization are attained and at the same time that human values of individuals within the organization are furthered. They conceptualize, design, develop, and successfully implement the programs that energize the talents of organization members in the pursuit of their own self-interests in making the organization more successful and making their Quality of Working Life (QWL) more satisfying. Leaders are expected to provide the ingredients required for this powerful change formula—not on a trial-and-error fashion – but by crafting a coherent improvement strategy. This is not possible unless leaders steep into the lore and technology of Group Dynamics. Leaders are required to apply this knowledge to improve team functioning and inter-group relations in their respective organizations. They are advised to extend this formula to other human and social processes in organizations such as the design of work tasks, organization structure, conflict resolution, strategy formulation and implementation, and the like. This is one of the best strategies for coping with the rampant changes occurring in the marketplace and society in a VUCA World. These insights should be incorporated into any of the most preferred improvement strategies that leaders may come up with in a VUCA World that the 21st Century organizations that are currently facing and dealing with.

- **Leadership Interventions in a VUCA World: Some Practical Examples**

Microsoft relied on OD interventions aimed at behavioral changes and operational changes.

Cisco initiated change through substantial structural interventions, statistical evaluation interventions and process interventions. It also focuses on CSR initiatives. Dell focused on Six Sigma strategy as an OD intervention for zero defects in their operations. Hyundai and Toyota focus on cultural interventions and quality management systems. Wipro adopted OD for internal organizational restructuring to meet customer specific needs. ONGC relies on succession planning, employee participation, training, organizational remodeling and climate surveys as OD interventions. Infosys has a broad base of OD

interventions like Leadership development programme, personal development initiatives, cross functional assignments, 360-degree feedback, psychometric testing (MBTI) for individual personality assessment.

- **Concluding Comments**

In a VUCA society, we are witnessing threats to effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability as well as challenges from turbulent environments, increased competition, and changing customer demands. There is a constant challenge to maintain congruence among organizational dimensions such as technology, strategy, culture, and processes. So, keeping the organizations healthy and viable in today's VUCA World is a daunting task. In the final analysis, leaders in a VUCA Society need to adopt a systematic process for applying behavioral science principles and practices in organizations to increase individual and organizational effectiveness. The focus of the leadership shall be on organizational efficacy and making them function better through a total system change. Their *orientation* is always on action—achieving results as a consequence of planned activities. Their target is human and social processes viz., the human side of the organizations. For the real leaders, the setting is real organizations in the real world.

All their efforts and energies are centered on organizational improvement strategies. They are always worried about how people and organizations function and how to get them to function better. They need to approach the VUCA World challenges through responses that are based on knowledge from behavioral science disciplines either themselves or with the help of external consultants.

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