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The indispensable cultural change

Every organization has a particular culture that suits well its line of business. The culture of an organization is a set of norms that reflect the behavior of top management and the way management and subordinates interact with each other. The culture is nurtured over a period of time and shapes of behavior, which in turn determines the nature of the work environment and productivity. The success or failure of any organization is dependant on the fecundity or futility of its culture.

Different types of culture are found in organizations in various parts of the world. American organizations, for example, harbour a so-called "Professional Culture" where people work only for good remuneration; handsome salary packages are used to lure and retain the employees who may be fired even upon committing small mistakes. The hire and fire rate is very high and so is the turn over rate. Despite many of its drawbacks, this culture works well in many organizations. The culture found in Japanese organizations is just opposite and is the apotheosis of other cultures. In this culture a life-time partnership is built up with the employees; mistakes committed by a person are considered his/her investment in the job and the hire and fire rate is very low.

Pakistani organizations are quite unfortunate to harbour a unique type of culture- "Saith culture". This culture is based mainly on the Machiavellian theory; unity is the

first step towards defiance, anarchy and revolt. Nothing will get out of control if people are kept isolated. So the policy of "Divide and rule" also finds its best application in these sorts of workplaces.

This "Machiavellian theory" oriented approach is incongruous with the needs of modern times. If people are kept separate and divided, they won't communicate with each other and there will not be sharing of opinions and exchange of ideas and so there will not be innovations, no improvement at the work place and no increase in productivity. An antithetic approach is found in the Japanese organizations in the form of Quality Control Circles (Q.C.C). The Q.C.C is a group of employees who meet regularly to discuss their work-related problems and find out their solutions, but in Saith culture organizations, a congregation of people is considered a threat to the authority of Saith. In such organizations, decisions are thrust upon the individuals without soliciting their opinions notwithstanding the fact that people who are actually in the operational duties know their job and job-related problems much better. Also this is a universal fact that the more a person is away from a job, the less acquainted he is about that job. Such a non professional culture is the greatest hindrance in the progress of these organizations. People work in such organizations only because they have stable jobs in hand and there

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are not many options available to them. Such businesses which thrive on the misery of the multitude are like dandruff on the head of society. The non-professional culture is a deterrent in their futile efforts to proliferate the business. They do assign their subordinates responsibility but never delegate the authority that is required for the proper execution of that job. In fact authority is exclusively the prerogative of the Saith. They have a strong grip on their business like a crab's and their sole objective is to fortify this grip and any malpractice can be carried out in this endeavor.

For this reason many of them are actually standing at the same place where they were many years ago, successfully contradicting the old saying that "Money multiplies rather than adding in the business". There are only a few success stories and a few "Self-made billionaires" in this country.

In the new WTO regime, firms actively involved in the exports business will be required give their customers documented evidence of complying with Social Accountability standards (SA 8000). These standards ensure that child labor, discrimination on the basis of sex, verbal abuses, physical and corporal punishment, taking work for long hours, excessive overtime and all other malpractices characteristic of non-professional organizations are not carried out in that organization. An inability to

comply with these standards will disqualify them for export to many of their labour standards-conscious customers. This will give them a tough time and many of them will be liquidated and vanish from the scenario. Don't forget we have already been inflicted with the wrong brand of using child labor.

Obsession of formidable control haunts many entrepreneurs to unseen paths and obfuscated situations that sometimes lead to irrevocable damage to the reputation and profits of that organization and to the morale of its employees.

Young professionals are always very keen about their career development. Unfortunately these citadels of sheer non-professionalism have seldom produced professionally competent personnel and have exacerbated the misery of this country. This country needs more leaders - visionary, enlightened and edified leaders who can guide and lead the people rather than assaulting them.

As we are moving towards globalization, competition is increasing to the cut-throat competition level. To cope effectively with future challenges, we have to change from the existing "Saith culture" to the "Corporate culture". As Charles Darwin said, "The species that survive are not the strongest nor the most intelligent but the most responsive to change". The question is not, to change or not, but when to change. Change is compulsory; stubbornness is not a strength, they should know it, the earlier the better.