

BUSINESS ETHICS IN INDIA AND ABROAD: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Recent Years have witnessed a sea change in the very approach to corporate governance. Modern corporate governors do not view 'maximisation of shareholders' value' as the sole mission of corporate management. Safeguarding and protecting the interests of the cross-sections of the society has come to occupy the 'central stage' of corporate planning today. This 'new-found corporate philosophy' is popularly referred to as Business Ethics in management jargon. Of late, the coverage and scope of business ethics have started expanding by leaps and bounds. Corporate practices the world over amply bear out today that the contours of business ethics are no longer confined to an abstract do's and don'ts for business but represent a set of fundamental beliefs about the same. Observance of corporate ethics has become a global phenomenon with the US emerging as world leader. Other (developed) countries, however, do not lag far behind. Modest attempts have also been made in our country. We do have a host of socially responsible corporates: Tata group of industries providing the beacon light. Yet, we have a long way to go, particularly from the viewpoint of protecting the interests of the consumers, who are badly unorganised even today.

Key words: Business Ethics, Consumers, Corporate Governance, Profit, Society,

INTRODUCTION

Gone are the days of Milton Friedman, Nobel Laureate in Economics and patron saint of *laissez-faire*, who asserted that the sole objective of any business is, and should be, the maximization of shareholders' value. Social missions, according to him, are the responsibility of individuals, social agencies and the government. However, Friedman has since become a thing of the (forgotten) past.

One the other hand, there is a thriving school of thought that believes: ".....private business has

pursued brute profit ruthlessly long enough unmindful of its obligations to, and impact on, society at large."¹

The opinion is growing that business owes a debt to society and that it should repay it in a transparent and easily perceivable manner. No doubt, business – a social organisation cannot and should not be allowed to conduct itself in a manner detrimental to the interests of the cross sections of the society as also to the various constituents of business at large.

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Professionalization of corporate governance must therefore be reflected in the increasing acceptance of business ethics; and this is precisely why the issues related to business ethics have come to occupy a 'centre-stage' in all discussion on corporate governance in modern times.

The paper attempts to delineate the current status of the Indian companies in observing business ethics in their various facets and dimensions. A modest attempt is also made to analyse the progress made on this count in some countries overseas (US to be more specific). Such an analysis, it is believed, would enable us to identify some broad areas where Indian corporates may find it convenient to experiment with the experience of their counterparts in other countries of the world.

BUSINESS ETHICS CONCEPTUALISED

Growing importance of business ethics notwithstanding, the very conceptualization of the term appears to have been done rather inadequately.

The word 'Ethics' which in Latin is called 'ethicus' and in Greek 'ethikos', has come from the word 'ethos', meaning character or manners. Ethics is thus said to be the science of morals; a treatise on this; moral principles; recognised rules of conduct. As applied to business firms, ethics is the study of good and evil, right and wrong, and just and unjust actions of businessmen.²

Corporate ethics does not differ from generally accepted norms of good or bad. Peter Drucker says: "There neither is a separate ethics of business, nor is one needed." For, "men and women do not acquire exemption from ordinary rules of personal behaviour of their works or job. Nor, however, do they cease to be human beings when appointed vice-president, city manager, or college dean. And there have always been a

number of people who cheat, steal, lie, bribe or take bribes. The problem is one of moral values and moral education of the individual, of the family, of the school."³ Likewise, Post and Davis in their masterpiece work Business and Society opine: "...if dishonesty is considered to be unethical and immoral in the society, then any businessman who is dishonest with his or her employees, customers, shareholders or competitors is an unethical or immoral person. If protecting others from any harm is considered to be ethical, then a company, which recalls a defective or harmful product from the market is an ethical company. To be considered ethical, businessmen must draw their ideas about 'what is desirable behaviour' from the same source as anybody else would draw."⁴ Businessmen should not try to evolve their own principles to justify 'what is right and what is wrong'. Employees and employers may be tempted to apply special or weaker ethical rules to business situations. But the society does not condone such exceptions. People who are in business are bound by the same principles that apply to others."⁵

While agreeing with Drucker and others in principle the modern practitioners of corporate management would decidedly like to have a clear-cut conceptualization of business ethics so that corporate policies and programmes are formulated and implemented in a way that endears business to the society at large rather than help develop a situation where a business is termed as the usurper of the societal interests.

In common parlance, the terms 'business ethics' refers to set/systems of principles and rules of conduct applied to business. In practice, the term has been used to describe the do's and don'ts for business, the various things that business should or should not do, viz., not violating any law, avoiding unethical practices, making donations to charitable causes, taking up development projects in backward areas, paternalism towards

employees, good public relations etc.

However, the contours of business ethics have undergone a sea change over the past couple of years. Far from being a set of abstract do's and don'ts for business, business ethics have come to represent a set of fundamental beliefs about business such as:

- a) Employees do their best in a good workplace;
- b) Companies do their best in healthy communities with a good quality of life;
- c) Companies achieve more if they respect the environment and conserve resources;
- d) Companies must take a long term view of their operations;
- e) A company's reputation will become as important as its profits in the years to come;
- f) There is no reason why, as between various stakeholders, the interests of shareholders should prevail unconditionally over others' interests.⁶

FACETS AND DIMENSIONS

Looked at from the broader societal angle, corporate ethics appears to be a multi-faceted corporate practice. The major interests that the business must envisage to take care, nurture and promote may be identified as follows:

- 1) Business must accept responsibility to the society and its various constituents as a trustee for the goods and services that it produces, consumes, saves and reinvests.
- 2) Ethical aspects of business extend beyond the business to the lives of the people and the community and as such they should be endeavouring to:
 - a) play their proper role in civic affairs within the zones of the business;
 - b) promote amenities and help create better living conditions;
- 3) Ethical aspects of business again demand that:
 - a) It owes it to itself, as a primary obligation, to give a fair and square deal to its customers. They should be charged a fair and reasonable price which should be well within their reach. The supply of the goods be of uniform standard, and of reasonably good quality. No business should directly or indirectly indulge in profiteering, hoarding or creating artificial scarcity.
 - b) It should not mislead the consumer and community by false, misleading and exaggerated advertisements. Obscene advertisements are demoralizing and a danger to public morals.
 - c) It should develop its management in such a way as to promote a spirit of cooperative endeavour between employers and employees.
 - d) It should endeavour to pay:
 - i) Fair and reasonable wages to its labour;
 - ii) Fair and reasonable remuneration and salaries to its staff;
 - e) Fair and reasonable return to themselves for their work and capital contribution.
- 4) It should develop and adopt a progressive labour policy based on:
 - a) Recognition of genuine trade union rights, settlement of disputes and reconciliation;
 - b) Participation of the workers in management;
 - c) Creating a sense of their belonging to the

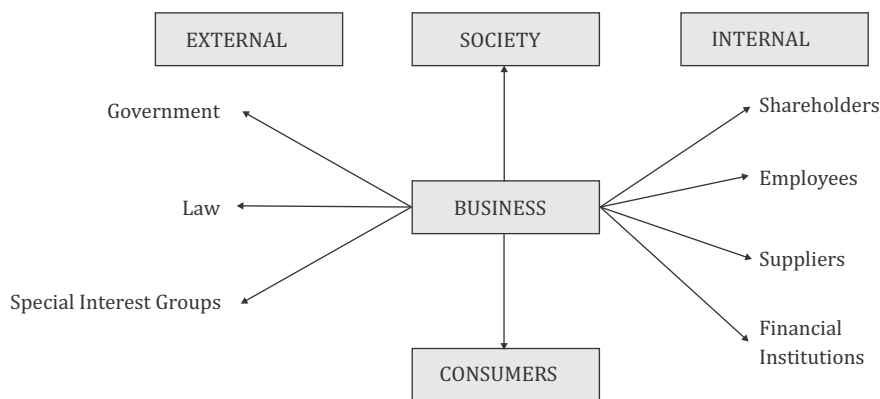
- business; and
- d) Improving the human qualities of labour by education, training, living-conditions and providing housing facilities, leisure and amenities.
- 5) The ethical aspects of business also include a healthy cooperative inter-business relationship between different businesses and avoidance of such unfair practices as price rigging, undercutting, patronage and so on.
- 6) The social and ethical responsibilities of business towards the State demand that:
- a) The businessman will be a law-abiding citizen;
 - b) He will pay his dues and taxes to the State fully and honestly;
 - c) He will not corrupt public servants and the democratic processes for his selfish ends;
 - d) He will not buy political support by money or patronage;
 - e) He will sell his goods and services without adulteration;
 - f) He will maintain a fair trade policy and avoid activities leading to restraint of trade.⁷

It's not out of place to mention here that business ethics do not preclude profitability, much less regard it as 'dirty.' Being profitable compels efficiency in operations and profits create and widen a company's base for future growth and enhance its capacity for being more and more socially responsible. Thus, profit is itself an aspect of social responsibility. What is unacceptable is converting social irresponsibility into profits. Thus, profit still continues to be an integral part of the total picture; but it is certainly not the primary purpose. Business no longer can shun moral values, nor can it ignore its functional compulsions. The real need is for some focus of accountability on the part of the business that is not confined to the shareholders alone but from the broader perspective of what is best for the society at large.

CURRENT TRENDS IN BUSINESS ETHICS

Taking cue from the high expectations of the society from the business, a new attitude is emerging the world over about the crucial role of corporate management. Management today is widely perceived as an agent of social change rather than being only an agent of technical or economic change. In his new role a modern day manager is called upon

Figure - 1
BUSINESS AND INTEREST GROUPS



to play the role of a system regulator in order to keep operations in true harmony with the environment. As a productivity-catalyst managers have to take into account both economic and social inputs (costs) and the economic and social outputs (benefits) while planning, formulating and evaluating any business project. Managers are now interested in social results along with economic results. Hence, we have to give equal emphasis on utilization of economic and social resources. Managerial relationship is also called upon to recognize the importance of democratic and participative management in order to satisfy the expectations of modern matured employees. MBO, job enrichment and Organizational Development are implementing the necessary changes in leadership styles. Leadership must evince social awareness and bring about social improvements. Social needs and goals are now compelling managers to work towards high quality of life as well as towards high economic productivity. It has been called the **quality of life management**. Quantity of life satisfies the hunger of body. Quality of life satisfies the hunger of mind and spirit – higher level human wants and aspirations.

In fact, a manager who looks forward to practice management in a truly ethical sense considers work and business as an extension of the social framework. Work as per this approach is important in a person's life not only because it provides him with purchasing capacity and all the necessities and luxuries of life, but also because it provides him with an opportunity for self actualization and self development with fulfilling human relationships while working with others. Work is what provides a man with exciting possibilities and endless challenges to develop himself mentally, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. It gives him status and recognition in society but most importantly, it provides him with an opportunity to work with others, to grow with others, to enrich his life through building bonds

with others. And that is exactly why work and business are termed as an extension of the social framework.⁸

If an organization can improve the quality of life of customers and help to solve their problems, then the operations, activities and relationships of the organization will automatically grow. Also, there is every possibility of an integration of private and public good simultaneously. It is in the goal of serving society that the personal interest of company and the interest of society meet. The more closely a company concentrates on solving a particular problem of the society or of its customer (who are members of the society), the better it is able to solve its own problems of growth and prosperity.

A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Corporate ethics are no longer confined to academic discussions. Business houses the world over have started practicing them in all facets and dimensions. The United States has emerged the world leader in this field. Given below are some instances of the ethical practices of business in the United States as also in some other countries of the world.

UNITED STATES

Some important corporates practicing ethical trade in the United States are:

Levi Strauss:

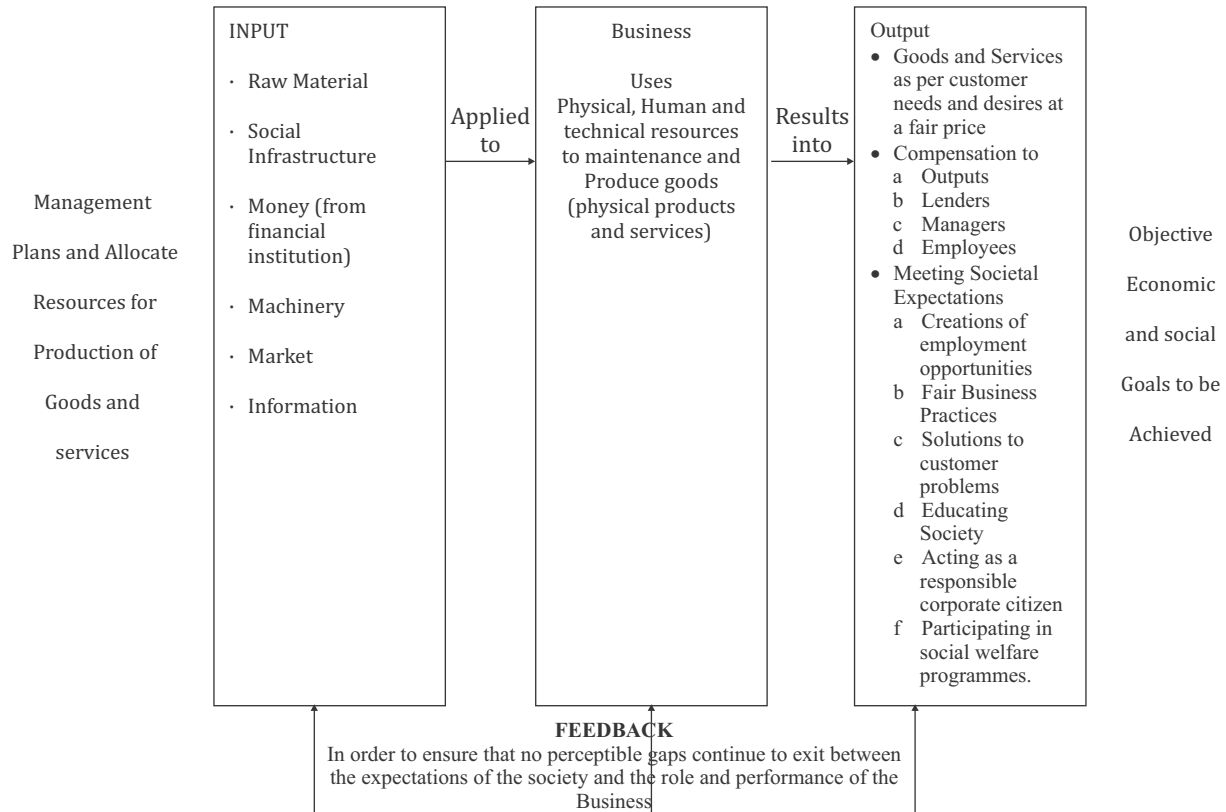
Widely hailed as the '*leader in socially responsible behaviour*', Levi Strauss acted promptly consequent upon a report of the use of child labour in one of its projects in Bangladesh. Globalization is reported to have resulted in an increase in the use of child labour. When Levi Strauss was accused of using child labour in Bangladesh, its top executives immediately went there, stopped their contractors from using child labour, put the children in school and promised to employ them in future.

a. Levi Strauss

refused to open factories in Albama, which

practiced segregation. It also refused to operate in South Africa where apartheid existed.

Figure – 2
BUSINESS-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP: A SUSTEM APPROACH



On the other hand, the company deliberately decided to operate in South Africa and assist the non-white population there to enter business. All these decisions were taken in disregard to profit or growth consideration.

3. **Levi Strauss** is also a pioneer in attempting to systematize the concept of social responsibility into a corporate responsibility assessment proforma. It covers the following parameters each of which can be used for point-rating a company.

I. Corporate Practices and Standards:

Legal compliance, code of ethics, global adherence, supplier relations, purchase policy, socially responsible investment, human rights.

II. Financial Performance:

Soundness, profitability, timely, accurate disclosure.

III. Products:

Meeting customer expectations, quality, safety, honest, responsible advertising and labeling.

IV. Management:

Innovation, responsible use of assets, in

production and marketing, open honest communication – internally and externally.

V. Workplace:

Merit based hiring/promotion, work force diversity, labour relations, layoff policy.

VI. Wages and Benefits:

Equitable health care, family benefits, training and development.

VII. Work Environment:

Safe and healthy, respect for employees, fair, trusting culture.

VIII. Corporate Citizenship:

Environmental compliance, energy conservation, waste reduction, recycling, pollution prevention, disclosure on environment.

IX. Community Involvement:

Donations policy, company facilities for community use, employee community service, etc.⁹

JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Johnson & Johnson, a leading multinational of the world, practices ethical business in true sense of the term. We are reproducing below the **credo** of Johnson & Johnson to give an impression about the ethical practices of the company.

We believe our first responsibility is to our customers who use our products and services in meeting *fully* their needs, desires and expectations. Everything we do must be of high quality. We must constantly try to reduce our costs in order *to* maintain reasonable prices. Customers' orders must be serviced promptly and accurately. They should get the delivery of goods *just in time*. Our suppliers and distributors must have an opportunity to make a fair profit.

We are responsible to our *employees* who work

with us throughout the world. Everyone must be considered as a *human being*. We must respect their dignity and recognize their merits. We must practise the ethics of care perspective which is characterized by a sense of connection to others, a life of affection and caring for others, recognising interpersonal relationship as a *Network* or web, and reflecting *holistic* approach in management. Our compensation plan must be adequate and fair. We must be conscious of ways and means to help our employees fulfill their family responsibilities. Our employees must feel free to make suggestions and, complaints. There must be equal opportunity for employment, for development and training, for advancement for those qualified. We must encourage the self-management and self-development of employees. We must provide competent management and their actions must be ethical and just.

We are responsible to the *communities* in which we live and work and to the world community as well.

We must be good citizen – support good work and charities and bear our fair share of taxes.

We must encourage civic improvement and better health and education. We must maintain in good order the property we are privileged to use. We must duly protect the environment and natural resources.

Our final responsibility is to our *Shareholders*. Business must make a sound profit. We must develop creativity, innovations, research and development. New equipment must be purchased, new facilities provided, and new products launched. Reserves must be created to provide for adverse times. Management of change must be effective.

b) Park Plaza Hotel and Towers, Boston is a model of social responsibility with its low/flow

shower-heads, which conserve water, refill container for soap, shampoo etc. minimizing trash and massive recycling of water used by occupants.

c) IBM has built a computer with only seven screws, which can be completely taken apart and each part reused or recycled separately.

d) Springfield Re-manufacturing Co., Illinois made all *its* books of accounts and other records accessible to all employees and even trained them to read and understand them. This has now become famous as Open Book Management (OBM).

e) Reebok organizes Volunteer Fairs annually at which organizations in need of volunteers meet willing employees. Levi Strauss even funds some of the social service projects identified by its employees.¹⁰

OTHER COUNTRIES

MBB the biggest German aerospace company has donated expensive equipment to a New Delhi hospital for bloodless surgery. **Brown Boveri and Migros**, two large Swiss companies have involved themselves in a massive programme of consumer education.

The Midland Bank of England had spent about three crores in terms of Indian rupees to organise a Great Japan Exhibition in London to promote Anglo-Japanese relations a few years back.

The **Cadbury family** which pioneered and built-up the chocolate and cocoa industries in Great Britain in the Nineteenth century came from a strong religious tradition. The Cadbury Company was always determined to be profit makers, but along with making profits for the company, it was resolute to be practitioners of ethical standards of behaviour. Based on their corporate mission, they undertook several welfare measures for their

employees, thereby improving the quality of their lives to a great extent. The factories and houses that they built for their staff at Bourneville in Birmingham remains as a model for others to emulate even today.¹¹

INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

It is heartening to note that quite a good number of business establishments in our country are fully aware of their responsibility towards their employees and are doing a lot for their improvement.

The first name to be mentioned in this respect is the **Tata group of companies** whose corporate name is synonymous with ethical practices and their high standards of public duty. For Jamshetji Tata and J.R.D. Tata establishment of their industrial empire was more of a social duty than for private earnings, a duty to make India more industrialized and self reliant. J.R.D. Tata wanted to bring about an industrial revolution to an economically backward India, so that the country could stand on its own. The result of his efforts was the establishment of hydro-electric power project at Bombay, the steel industry at Jamshedpur and the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. Thus the three specific goals of J.R.D. Tata at that time – hydro-electric power as a cheap source of energy, a steel plant in India and the establishment of a technical school — had been responsible for sowing the seeds of industrial development of the country almost a century back. J.R.D. Tata conducted his business in a very socially responsible way. He set up a pension plan for his employees and introduced the eight hour work day much before the law enforcing it (the Factories Act) came into being in 1948. Russy Mody, the able disciple of J.R.D. Tata and who shaped Tata Steel for more than half a century is said to have stated: “My values were fashioned by the house of Tata's. These were to so conduct your business that profit was not your only motive. The happiness of those who worked in your business:

a fair deal to customers who bought your goods, and efficiency in your job. The same beliefs were echoed by Ratan Tata who said in an interview in 1996: "Ethics for Tata's means conducting business in a manner which is fair and just to employees, suppliers and shareholders; having a concern for the community in which one is operating. It would involve putting combined interests above personal gain or exploitation."¹²

Associated Cement Companies (ACC) has been rendering social service for over three decades. It launched a village welfare scheme in 1952 and has been continuing with setting up schools, colleges, health centres, bundhs, agro-based and local based industries and cooperative societies with the sole aim of providing employment and improving the quality of rural life. From the help from ACC, farmers in Andhra Pradesh have doubled their per acre yield of rice, whereas in Bihar they have raised crops of protein rich soybean as a matter of routine.

Another group of industries that have rendered important social service is the **Hero group**. The company came into being well before independence, and today it is a Rs.11,800 crore-enterprise. This company started with a mission way back in the 1940s to 'provide excellent transportation to the common man at a price he could easily afford. One of track records of the company included emerging as the world's largest manufacturer of bicycles as early as 1987 and getting an entry into the Guinness Book of World Records and maintaining it till 1996-'97.

The company's constant refrain is that the triumph of the Hero group is not as much due to business acumen of its founders as due to undying spirit and commitment of the common workmen and hundreds of skilled engineers. This is hardly surprising that the company was way ahead of industry norms in rewarding their workers with a uniform allowance, houses rent allowance and leave travel assistance (LTA), long before any

other company in India did so. Further, the company organised regular medical check ups at the company cost not only for their full time permanent workers but also for migrant labourers working in the company and even for their parents.¹³

Companies like **Cadbury India, Glaxo and Richardson Hindustan** are also helping farmers with their crops.

The **Mafatlal Group of industries** is also engaged in rural welfare activities and in helping the poor. It has constructed homes for the homeless, provided drinking water, distributed books, stationery and scholarships to students in rural areas. In association with **Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundations**, it has developed a complete package of technology with facilities for breeding, testing and treatment of high-yielding milch cattle which has been successfully extended to a number of villages in the backward districts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. This group has also carried on a Food for Work programme in collaboration with the Gujarat Government to grow superior varieties of fodder grass.

Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL) also for a long time have carried out numerous social welfare activities. They have implemented a number of welfare schemes not only for their employees, but also for people living in the townships where they have their operations. It has identified specific problems of its surrounding communities and have cooperated with local bodies, authorities and voluntary agencies in providing their solutions. BHEL has, in the past, implemented schemes for provision for drinking water facilities, construction of external sewerage, roads and culverts, providing health facilities, improving employees' quality of life through job redesign, job enrichment etc.

Maruti Udyog Ltd, is another name associated with social responsibility. In the year 1997, of all the cars sold between January and April this responsible company recalled about 50 thousand of their most popular product, the Maruti 800 passenger cars from the market, because they suspected them to be made of inferior steel. This made newspaper headlines as it was the biggest ever recall of cars from the Indian market place.¹⁴

Another company acting in a socially responsible manner is **Infosys Technologies Ltd**. This company is a much sought after company by employees due to its personnel policies and welfare schemes like the Employee Stock Option Plan. According to this plan, every employee has the option to be made a partner in the common endeavour to achieve excellence in the software industry. In five years, this company's sales zoomed from about a modest 10 crores rupees in March 1992, to about Rs.135 crores in March 1997, a jump of a mind boggling 1250%. The **CEO** of the company attributes this to its corporate philosophy. He stated: *'From day one, we recognised that to succeed we had to operate on certain principles, and having decided to go public, we made sure that wealth is created within the business.'*¹⁵

Apart from the companies outlined above, mention must also be made of some more ethical and socially responsible organizations like the **Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Aditya Birla Group of Companies; Asian Paints, NDDB, the TVS Group of industries** and so on. These companies have been practicing ethical business conduct in all their dealings with customers and the public at large. Moreover, they have been functioning as socially responsible corporate citizens and have taken business conduct as a whole, to new heights of ethical excellence.

The companies in India have made good headway

in containing environmental pollution.

The Central and the State (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Boards have conducted a countrywide survey to identify water polluting large and medium scale industrial units, along with the availability of effluent treatment facilities. The study points out that as on 31st December 1984, out of the 4045 industrial units in the country, 1731 large and 2323 medium sized units which had been identified as relevant to water pollution, 2075 units (51 per cent) had taken approximate precautions to treat waste before discharge, 67 per cent units in the large scale sector and 39 per cent firms in the medium scale sector had adopted appropriate pollution control measures. Yet another study conducted by the FICCI reveals that 96.7 per cent of the polluting units had already initiated some steps for pollution prevention and 96.1 per cent have taken measures for treating effluent wastes.¹⁶

As government pressure has intensified, several companies all over the country are slowly smarting to beef up their environment portfolios by increasing budgets, hiring or upgrading specialized staff and acquiring state-of-the-art-technology. **Tisco**, for instance, spent Rs.27 crore on upgrading its pollution control plants between 1988 and 1991. For the next three years it has more than doubled its budget for the purpose. Tisco also has a staff of 24 people in its environment department, including specialized environmental engineers and scientists, headed by a director.¹⁷ Thus, corporate India seems to slowly waking up to the need for better environment management, whether due to government fiat or self-motivation.

Business in India has also started taking keen interest in cultural activities of late. **ITC, Calcutta**, for example, supports cultural activities in a variety of ways, such as employing artists and musicians, organizing exhibitions of

contemporary paintings, sponsoring cultural programmes through TV, instituting awards for excellence, sponsoring Sangeet Sammelans, and maintaining Sangeet Research Academy.

Earlier beauty was not taken as a worthwhile component in designing and constructing factory buildings in India. The result was not just an absence of beauty, but distasteful; ugliness, sometimes called the “*nineteenth century school of factory design*”: Things are different now. Factory buildings are now constructed keeping in mind aesthetic values. Many factory sites are now industrial parks, more beautiful than surrounding residential houses. All these factors play their role in promoting better quality of life. Better quality of life, in turn, improves recruitment and retention pattern of the employees. It also improves satisfaction of the employees with their community, provides a better place for their children to grow up, and encourages each employee's own cultural growth. The effects continue in many directions in the same way that a stone cast into the water extends its ripples to the limits of the lake.

Very recently, a novel institution – the Confederation of Indian Industry–**Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre (CII Godrej GBC)** – is fast coming up at Hyderabad. GBC promises to be a catalyst for green revolution in the construction of commercial buildings, a new concept to countries such as India. The physical infrastructure of GBC will be a unique example of a 'Green Building', a building that incorporates eco-friendly features, and when completed will be first of its kind in India.

The concept of GBC focusses on the belief of 'sustainable development', and will provide a platform for creating awareness and promotion of green buildings and associated technologies for commercial buildings. The Centre looks forward

to taking up *social audit* also in course of time. The house of Godrej has contributed Rs.5 crores to the project.¹⁸

THE GREY AREA

In respect of responsibility towards consumers, the performance of our businessmen is far from satisfactory, honourable exceptions notwithstanding. Consumer is not the king in our country but a vehicle conveniently used by businessmen for driving towards the goal of profit maximization. Government is interfering in a big way to protect the interests of consumers and consumers themselves are forming into a movement, popularly called **consumerism** to protect their interests against business malpractices.

SUMMING UP

Indian corporate sector in this way appears to have made significant strides in the observance/execution of business ethics over the past couple of years. However, compared to most developed nations (United States, in particular) it has yet a long way to go. **J.R.D Tata**, who was instrumental in conducting the first social audit in India and perhaps in the world, was of the opinion that “*while on the side of production, of growth, of efficiency Indian industry, on the whole, did remarkably well, usually against odds and in spite of crippling infrastructural shortages unknown in advanced countries, on the distributional side, however, its record was often poor and, in some respects, dismal, judged by the size of the black-market, the volume of black money and the general corruption that pervaded our economic life.*”¹⁹ It is in the same spirit that **Doraiswamy** cryptly remarks: “*In India, half-hearted enforcement of labour legislation and reluctant, minimal compliance thereof by companies, occasional donations by companies to the Chief Minister's or the Prime Minister's Relief Fund (which incidentally are tax-deductible) and some amount of consumer litigation constitute the active aspects of the*

*business ethics*¹²⁰

Gone are the days when profits and ethics were accepted as unmixables like oil and water. Today, business is expected to instill a sense of interdependence among its stakeholders, and to communicate with all of them more often, more openly and more compassionately. "The aim of business," said Peter Drucker, "is the exploitation of socially desirable opportunities profitably." The American Management Association went even further and defined management itself as "the efficient achievement of desirable ends through acceptable means." And that, ultimately, is what business ethics is all about.

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