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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE - AN IMPORTANT CONTRIVANCE FOR INNOVATION

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Abstract: *In the corporate world, emotional intelligence is crucial, especially for the innovative purposes, where there is a need of continuing relationships and feedbacks between the superiors and subordinates. Organizations should consider emotional intelligence as a vital tool to improve the innovative climate which in turn derives optimal performance and high return on investment (ROI). In this paper, the application of Emotional Intelligence skills and concepts at the work place is discussed to make the innovations meaningful and successful for individuals and organizations, which will generate a positive work environment.*

Key words: *Emotional Intelligence; innovation; organizational climate; relationship management; work culture*

I. Introduction

“Innovation need people and better the people, better the innovation”

With the increasing competition in all the sectors due to globalization and privatization, it is imperative for organizations to bring about innovations and focus on innovative processes. The innovation is the need of the hour in view of continuous changes taking place all around. It can be an innovation of a product or process or business practice, but the innovation cannot be achieved by theory. People have to break the inertia, give respect to the innovative ideas and be prepared to take risks within reasonable limits after providing resources. On the part of all concerned, there is a need for in depth knowledge on the subject; one is dealing, either with a person, or knowing where it is available.

Successful businesses are always looking for new ways to do business, finding different solutions for the range of problems, new products and more efficient systems. To stay competitive, it keeps innovation at the top of its business agenda. Thus the study about any concept which will help in successful implementation of innovative methods and processes is very imperative and necessary one at any cost. In this way the study about emotional intelligence principles having high impacts and applications on innovative processes comes to prominence. This paper attempts to study the role of Emotional Intelligence in an innovative and creative process in organizations and its effectiveness implying thereby that Emotional Intelligence should be an integral part of an organization's overall innovative attempts.

II. Innovation

Innovation refers to novelty in ideas, approaches, methods, processes, structures, behaviors, attitudes and cultures as well as in technologies and skills. It is referred to the process by which an idea or invention is translated into a good or service for which people will pay, or something that results from this process. To be called an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. Innovation involves deliberate application of information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater or different value from resources and encompasses all processes by which new ideas are generated and converted into useful products. In business, innovation often results from the application of a scientific or technical idea in decreasing the gap between the needs or expectations of the customers and the performance of a company's products. In a social context, innovation is equally important in devising new collaborative methods such as alliance creation, joint venturing, and flexible working hours and in creative buyers' purchasing power through methods such as lay away plans for our purposes, management innovation is anything that substantially alters the way in which the work of management is carried out, or significantly modifies customary organizational forms and by doing so advances organizational goals.

Patterson (2005) argues that creativity and innovation are overlapping constructs, but the main distinction is with regard to novelty. Creativity is exclusively concerned with generating new and entirely original ideas. Innovation is a broader concept as it also encompasses the application of new ideas to produce something new and useful (in the context of groups, organizations or societies). Innovation is often referred to as a process, because implementing new ideas necessarily involves influencing others (whereas creativity could be achieved in isolation). Employee innovation goes beyond individual creativity as it also concerns the extent to which

employees implement and sustain innovations. Further, an innovation could be the application of something familiar in one organization to another unfamiliar organization (i.e., imported innovation).

III. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capacity to recognize our own feelings and those of other for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in our relationship. It is the ability to monitor and regulate one's own feelings and use feeling to guide thought and action (Goleman, 1995). EI is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge from our emotions and the emotions of others. We can use the information about what to say or do (or not to say or do). EI is not about being soft! It is a different way of being smart - having the skill to use our emotions to help us make choices in the moment and have more effective control over ourselves and our impact on others.

The discovery of the emotional intelligence and its impact on the interpersonal relationships and human consciousness in the modern times has so far been endorsed to Goleman's Emotional Quotient (EQ) model, wherein he propagates the self and its supreme acceptance by the individual mind by making self-awareness, self-assertiveness and self love as the centre piece of all interpersonal relationships be it in the social sphere, the work place or the dealing and living with the people skills.

The concept of EI, defined as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), has become very popular in recent years. Some suggest that EI has a positive influence on organizational innovation, both for leaders and individual employees. Specifically, researchers have suggested that employees who show high levels of EI are likely to benefit more from both positive and negative creativity-related feedback (Zhou, 2008). Similarly, leaders' levels of EI are likely to accentuate the employees' inclination to engage in the innovation process (Zhou & George, 2003).

Before we go through various aspects of emotional intelligence, we should understand the meaning of the word of emotion. The word emotion connotes various meanings to various people. Going by the Oxford dictionary, emotion is defined as "any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion, any vehement or excited mental state" (Baron & Parker, 2000). Emotions vary in accordance with the blends, variations and mutations of the mental state. In such emotional repertoire, each emotion plays a unique role as prompted by their biological tendencies. The bodily response towards the emotional stimuli could be classified into various feelings like anger, fear, happiness, love, surprise, disgust and sadness.

IV. Four Provinces Of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman (1995), in his book "Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ", theorized four domains of emotional intelligence. They are briefed below.

A. *Self-Awareness*: (Emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence)

This is about how aware one is and how accurately he can assess his own emotions. It is the ability to recognize emotions and how they affect thoughts and behaviors. It reflects the importance of recognizing one's own feelings.

B. *Self-management*: (Emotional self-control, transparency, trustworthiness, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative, optimism and conscientiousness)

It is the ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage emotions in healthy ways take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances. It helps in regulating and distressing affects like anxiety and anger and to inhibit emotional impulsivity.

C. *Social Awareness*: (Empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation)

It is the ability to observe and understand the emotions, needs and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization. It generally encompasses the competency of empathy.

D. *Relationship Management*: (Inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, team work, collaboration, communication)

It is the ability to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict. In other words it means having good social skills and being competent in relating to the emotions of others and remaining connected.

V. Role of Emotional Intelligence on innovation

EI is the crucial and key factor in accelerating innovative processes in many organizations. If the superiors and subordinates are trained well in emotional intelligence skills, they can undoubtedly, act as the catalysts of innovations and overcome all difficulties related with it. Emotionally intelligent human resources will be well aware of their emotions and of others and they can control and manage all blends of emotions and feelings. They can develop a positive attitude towards innovation and understand the things in the right perspective. They

can think that the problems are bound to occur and challenges are always there in any job instead of complaining and brooding about unpleasant matters and situations, they will stay calm and will focus on how to handle the deadly situation.

Employees with Emotional Intelligence will always keep smile, enjoy the work and encourage others to do the work better for innovative purposes. EI skills help them to accept criticism in a positive way and support team members whenever there is an innovation opportunity. Though being emotionally intelligent they can manage their work and life at once and maintain a balance between the both. All these positive attitudes and optimistic beliefs lead him finally to the better performance and great success at the workplace. Thus the emotional competencies and motives work as the generator of innovative steps in an organization. By ensuring better relationships at work place brings some changes at culture and climate of workplace, which leads to gregarious innovation practices in the organization.

A. Ensure relationship management

Innovation process produces a range of emotions and feelings in an individual as it brings a certain kind of organizational change that require micro level management. The emotional skills are highly required to successfully manage these organizational changes. As the relationship management domain of EI act as a change catalyst initiating and managing changes it is mostly required in this aspect.

One of the most important characteristics of innovation is knowledge accumulation and it comes from complex and dynamic interactions between the firm's own internal innovation capacity and external expertise. The emotional intelligence is very essential for keeping these interactions healthily and it comes under the relationship management domain of emotional intelligence as described by Daniel Goleman.

B. Culture and climate at innovative workplace

Innovation at the individual, team and organizational level can be affected by the organizational climate and organizational culture. Climate and culture are important antecedents to creativity and innovation to the extent to which risk taking and idea generation are encouraged (Ciarrochi, 2000). Supportive and challenging climates encourage innovation whereas environments characterized by distrust, personal hostilities, limited autonomy and unclear work goals inhibit the implementation of ideas. Organizational support for innovation is characterized by support for members pursuing new ideas, and encouragement of innovation through both words and deeds. The espoused expectations and organizational values in relation to innovation (such as openness to change and willingness to experiment with ideas) are likely to have a major influence on employee behavior, work environments that are influential in promoting innovation. A supportive and stimulating work environment enhances idea generation and innovation. Various other sources contribute to providing a supportive and stimulating work environments including, amongst other; supportive management practices and leadership, constructive evaluation and feedback and supportive and stimulating co-workers.

An organization can build the innovative culture and climate which will lead to the increased employee morale and robust revenues through training its human resources in emotional intelligence skills. All EI domains and principles such as relationship management and social awareness have a direct linkage to the creative and innovative work place culture.

VI. Conclusion

The study finds that EI practices play a positive and significant role in the innovation process. This paper conclude that EI principles are an important part in building a positive and innovative environment inside the organizations helping them to introduce and keep introducing new processes and products into the market. Organizations have to come forward to develop emotional intelligence skills in its employees and train them well on its principles to make its innovative agenda successful.

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